Winners Announced for the 2026 Interschool Student Design Competition!

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arlington, Va. – AIA Northern Virginia is proud to announce the winners of the 2026 Interschool Student Design Competition, held on Sunday, September 20 at the National Building Museum (NBM) in Washington, D.C., in partnership with AIA Potomac Valley, AIA DC, and AIA Baltimore."

Each year, this highly anticipated event brings together architecture students from across the region for an intensive, one-day design charrette. The competition is a collaborative effort among the region's six architecture programs: The Catholic University of America, Howard University, Morgan State University, University of Maryland, University of the District of Columbia, and Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC). The event was hosted by NBM and generously sponsored by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), whose ongoing support makes this opportunity possible for aspiring architects.

This year's program, titled **"Dupont Deck-Over Pavilion: A Place for Public Performances & Gatherings,"** challenged student teams to imagine that they had been hired to add an event pavilion to the ongoing civic improvement project, the Dupont Deck-Over, a project that creates a public plaza gathering and event space by decking over the Connecticut Avenue underpass north of Dupont Circle public park.

Following an intensive 8-hour design session, projects were reviewed by a distinguished panel of jurors, with awards announced at a formal ceremony on September 24. In addition to First, Second, and Third Place designations, a Faculty's Choice Award was presented by representatives from the participating schools. Community engagement was also encouraged through a public voting process, which determined the recipient of the People's Choice Award.

2026 Interschool Student Design Competition Winners

1st Place: Spandolf Way

Team Members

- Berru Nas from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Elena Poll from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Eva-Sychell Mitchell from Howard University
- Kevin Rowland from Morgan State University
- Maki Villegas from University of Maryland
- Sopheak Dy from Catholic University of America

2nd Place: Dupont Deck-Over

Team Members

- Alexander Gomes from Catholic University of America
- Carla Martinez Pineda from Morgan State University
- Dinh Thien Ngoc Le from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Kayla Diaz from University of Maryland
- Neha Kumawat from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Siyalakha Kentane from Howard University

3rd Place: Pringle Pavilion

Team Members

- Lydian Holt from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Maya Butler from Howard University
- Rafael Castillo-Grynberg from Morgan State University
- Rainelle McNeil from University of the District of Columbia (UDC)
- Sebastian Morales from Catholic University of America
- Valeria Castillo-Hernandez from University of Maryland

Faculty's Choice: Cascading Point

Team Members

- Adja Sylla from Howard University
- Ahmad Boukhres from Morgan State University
- Alisha Woods from University of the District of Columbia (UDC)
- Jillianne Calupaz from Catholic University of America
- Kate Thepnorarat from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Yash Agarwala from University of Maryland

People's Choice: Spandolf Way

Team Members

- Berru Nas from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Elena Poll from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Eva-Sychell Mitchell from Howard University
- Kevin Rowland from Morgan State University
- Maki Villegas from University of Maryland
- Sopheak Dy from Catholic University of America

Honorable Mention: Layers in Motion

Team Members

- Addison Bowman from Catholic University of America
- Alexis Orihuela Mencia from University of Maryland
- Geselle Guzman-Serrano from Morgan State University
- Himadri Maheshwari from Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC)
- Najae Purvis from University of the District of Columbia (UDC)
- Noah McBride-Lawson from Howard University

"This competition gives students an exciting opportunity to put their creativity and design skills to work while tackling real-world urban design challenges. It's a chance to explore new ideas, collaborate with others, and gain valuable experience while seeing firsthand the impact thoughtful design can have on our communities," said Sonia Jarboe, AIA, 2026 AIA NoVA Schools Connections Committee Co-Chair and Senior Architect at Wiley|Wilson in Alexandria, Va.

Organizers would like to thank the event host, NBM, and sponsor, NCARB, without whose continued support the event would not be possible.

For more information about the Interschool Student Design Competition, please visit https://aianova.org/isdc/.

About AIA Northern Virginia

The American Institute of Architects Northern Virginia Chapter is a non-profit professional association representing more than 1,200 Northern Virginia architects, interns, and allied professionals. It encompasses 25 cities and counties in Virginia and was chartered by the American Institute of Architects in 1975. AIA Northern Virginia is one of five local components affiliated with AIA Virginia. The Chapter offers professional development, networking, and outreach opportunities as well as tours and lectures to advance the knowledge of architecture and practice among professionals and promote awareness and appreciation of architecture among the public.

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