

**Profile of
Arijit Sen**
Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Studies
School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
2020 Regents Diversity Award Individual Recipient

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Ph.D., Architecture, University of California, Berkeley; Master of Architecture, Iowa State University, Ames; Bachelor of Architecture, University of Mumbai, Mumbai.
- Known as a leader in modeling strategies to adjust the curriculum and pedagogy to introduce students to diverse racial, ethnic, economic, and cultural experiences; well-respected among Milwaukee neighborhood leaders for multidisciplinary work with students in underserved communities in Milwaukee, including deep and sustained community engagement.
- Worked with students to design projects in neighborhoods of Milwaukee such as the Washington Park and Sherman Park neighborhoods; students worked closely with residents and business owners to design and produce public seating areas, a communal fire pit, a stormwater trellis, garden structures, and farmers market stands in community open spaces, creating public exhibits of their experience.
- Offers classes that are hands-on, built around the pedagogy of problems-based learning; architecture, urbanism, and culture change are complex topics, sometimes called wicked problems because problems in these areas do not have easy, causal solutions.
- In 2008, co-founded the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures (BLC) area of collaborative research between UW-Milwaukee and UW-Madison; in 2012, began the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures urban field school, a participatory action project that explores how experiential learning can improve diversity and equity in communities. The field school is known as a powerful community and academic learning environment to bridge gaps across race, gender, ethnicity, religious differences, and other forms of diversity and inclusion. Lauded for its sustainable positive impact not only for the neighborhoods but also for the students who participate, the BLC Field School has earned local and national awards for its outstanding curriculum and vision of immersing students in communities to work collaboratively on social justice issues.
- Undergraduate students who took one or more BLC Field School courses continued into graduate programs, earning jobs as museum program directors, architects, and community-based architects.
- Selected Awards: UW-Milwaukee Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year, Office of Undergraduate Research (2015-2016); UW-Milwaukee Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award (2015-2016).

In the words of Arijit Sen:

- “My childhood was nomadic, always a lower-middle class outsider, every time I moved. This experience of marginality explains why, as an architectural and urban historian, I focus on place-based stories and accounts of everyday practices that may be familiar to ordinary people but are often missed by historians and experts. My commitment to diversity emerges from a realization that the built environment is a stage where human difference is enacted.”

In the words of colleagues:

- “He has the uncanny knack of bringing community partners and students together to work on projects, a powerful connection for students as a part of their learning journey.”
—Mark Mone, Chancellor, UW-Milwaukee
- “Professor Sen’s approach produces tangible benefits for the community even as students benefit powerfully from their immersion in the experience.”
—Nancy Frank, Interim Dean, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UW-Milwaukee