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ARCHITECTURE PROGRAMS
ACCREDITATION REPORT AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report for the Bachelor of Architecture and the Master of Architecture programs in the College of Design at Iowa State University.

Executive Summary: The programs (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the conditions of accreditation defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The programs were accredited for the maximum eight-year period through 2021. However, four of the 55 conditions were not met. Continuing accreditation is subject to two reporting requirements: (1) submit annual statistical reports; and (2) submit an Interim Progress Report two years and five years after the on-site visit. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities for “access, affordability, and student success; educational excellence and impact; and economic development and vitality.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of undergraduate program.** The Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.) program consists of one year in the College of Design’s pre-professional Core Design Program, followed by four years in the professional B.Arch. program. The B.Arch. program provides the foundation for becoming a licensed, registered architect within five years. “The practice of architecture includes any professional service, such as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, and design, or responsible observation of construction of buildings, or related structures and projects, or the addition to or alteration thereof, wherein the safeguarding of life, health, or property is concerned or involved.”¹
- ◇ **Description of graduate program.** The Master of Architecture (M.Arch.) program emphasizes architecture as an integrated knowledge of design/media, intellectual rigor, science/technology, and professional responsibility.
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met state and national standards for its development and evaluation. To employers, graduate schools, and licensure, certification, and registration boards, graduation from an accredited program signifies adequate preparation for entry into the profession. In fact, many of these groups require graduation from an accredited program as a minimum qualification. Accreditation is also intended to protect the interests of students, benefit the public, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).

¹ Iowa State Board of Architectural Examiners definition of architecture.

- ◇ Review Process. The self-studies prepared by the Architecture programs contained the responses to the appropriate conditions required by the accrediting body – institutional support and commitment to continuous improvement; identity and self-assessment; resources; institutional and program characteristics; policy review; student performance; curricular framework; evaluation of preparatory/pre-professional education; and public information.
- ◇ On-Site Team Report. In March 2013, the visiting team determined that the Architecture programs met the requirements for accredited status, although four conditions were not met.
- ◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
 - ☑ “There are various aspects, and unique qualities, which have contributed to the development of a balanced and comprehensive center for architectural education based on a mission statement that emphasizes “study of architecture as a cultural discipline in which issues of practice of the multiplicity of social formation...are enfolded with the subject matter of building design – construction, space, material, form, and use.
 - ☑ The institution is committed to preparing students for practice as visionary problem-solvers and developed thinkers, as well as informed decision-makers for the betterment of society.
 - ☑ The framework of the program within the context of the university has demonstrated design innovation and interdisciplinary initiatives in architecture education. Students are trained and nurtured to become future practitioners and designers with a broad vision, while being equipped with requisite knowledge and skills to practice in a diverse globalized world.
 - ☑ The College of Design is enjoying the presence of a supportive visionary dean who has provided a novel momentum of restructuring and reinstating various design disciplines and providing opportunities for development of new programs.
 - ☑ A highly motivated faculty dedicated to the cause of architecture education has created a rigorous, challenging, and dynamic interdisciplinary climate for teaching and learning.”
- ◇ Conditions not met in Educational Outcomes and Curriculum.
 - ☑ Historical Traditions and Global Culture – Understanding parallel and divergent canons and traditions of architecture, landscape and urban design including examples of indigenous, vernacular, local, regional, national setting from the Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern hemispheres in terms of their climatic, ecological, technological, socioeconomic, public health, and cultural factors. “For the B.Arch., the team determined that this requirement was not met to the necessary degree within the required history/theory sequence, Arch 221 History of Architecture I, and Arch 222 History of Architecture II. The program also strives to meet this requirement through the required electives component, Studies in Architecture and Culture (SACs). However, the team found that some of the electives, particularly Arch 597, did not sufficiently cover non-Western architecture history, therefore, not guaranteeing every student equal exposure to non-Western tradition. The course

syllabus also did not identify itself as fulfilling this SAC required elective, even though students were advised that it would meet this requirement.”

- ☑ Accessibility – Ability to design sites, facilities, and systems to provide independent and integrated use by individuals with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. “Although there is ample evidence that Accessibility is thoroughly covered in the elective course Arch 571 “Design for All People,” the team could not find evidence of ability demonstrated in work of design studios or other required courses, in the B.Arch. and M.Arch. Programs.”
- ☑ Life Safety – Ability to apply the basic principles of life-safety systems with an emphasis on egress. “No evidence of this student performance criterion was found in the course work. Although the Arch 245 Building Science and Technology Module 2 – Assemblies and Materials – syllabus indicates it will be addressed, there was no further documentation of this. The second round of projects in the later submission addressed certain life safety applications; however, there were a considerable number of errors and code oversights, particularly in high pass projects. Similarly, the integration of life safety requirements in studio designs was not evident, with particular neglect of egress considerations.”
- ☑ Comprehensive Design – Ability to produce a comprehensive architectural project that demonstrates each student’s capacity to make design decisions across scales while integrating all of the student performance criteria. “The B.Arch. and M.Arch. Programs have two comprehensive design studios (Arch 401 and 403; Arch 601 and 603). Although both documented multiple source research, the analysis of facts, the development of a rhetorical argument, bibliographic information, and the proper citation of sources in papers, there was no evidence found in the work shown that any students had developed the ability to integrate Accessibility and Life Safety into their project solutions.”

◇ Causes of concern.

- ☑ Physical Resources. “Physical resources have been identified as a concern to both faculty and students. Currently, the physical resources of the architecture department seem *barely* adequate for students’ educational needs, supplemented by the innovative faculty solutions (such as *Design on Main*). However, support spaces such as the woodshop, lab, and other resources do not fully address the needs of the entire student body. Faculty offices are also becoming an increasing issue.”
- ☑ Required Sets of Elective Options. “While the ‘required sets of elective options’ allow for a deeper exploration of specific knowledge for both students and faculty, the existing structure of these courses still does not guarantee equal exposure to the entire NAAB Student Performance Criteria for all students.”
- ☑ Core Studies. “Students and faculty have questioned whether the College of Design core courses in the freshman year (pre-architecture) prepare students for the B.Arch. Program, both in terms of rigor and relevant academic advisement.”

◇ Conditions Met with Distinction.

- ☑ Technical Documentation. “Students showed admirable skills in the design and construction of physical scale models.”

- ☑ Collaboration. “Collaboration was not only required in many levels of learning in both the B.Arch. and M.Arch. Programs, but integral to the learning culture of the school both for students and faculty as they acknowledge it as essential to professional work and interpersonal relationships as a whole.”

- ◇ Accreditation Status. In August 2013, the National Architectural Accreditation Board awarded accreditation to the Architecture programs at ISU for an eight-year period through 2021 with two requirements – (1) submission of an Annual Statistical Report; and (2) submission of an *Interim Progress Report* two and five years after the on-site visit. Programs are also required to make all related accreditation documents available to the public. The accrediting body does not require an immediate response from the College on the items which were not met. An initial review by the College leadership identified that the issues can be readily addressed by the department and the college. The faculty will begin to develop plans and implement changes during Spring 2014.