Contact: Diana Gonzalez

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 program was accredited for the maximum six-year period through 2013. However, accreditation was granted with the stipulation that a focused evaluation be scheduled in two years to review Condition # 3.12 (Professional Degrees and Curriculum) and the progress that has been made in this area. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to "offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students."

Background:

◈   Description of undergraduate program. The Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.) program consists of one year in the collegiate pre-professional Core Design Program, followed by four years in the professional B.Arch. program. The B.Arch. degree provides the foundation for becoming a licensed, registered architect. "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.I) program examines the relationships between local, regional, and global contexts with a particular emphasis on the dynamics of the contemporary American Midwest.

◈   Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation.

◈   Accrediting Agency. The accrediting body is the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).

◈   Review Process. The self-studies prepared by the Architecture programs contained the responses to the appropriate conditions required by the accrediting body – program response to the NAAB perspectives; program self-assessment procedures; public information; social equity; studio culture; human resources; human resource development; physical resources; information resources; financial resources; administrative structure; professional degrees and curriculum; and student performance criteria.

◈   On-Site Team Report. In March 2007, the visiting team determined that the Architecture programs met the requirements for accredited status, although several conditions were not met.

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[1] Iowa State Board of Architectural Examiners definition of architecture.

◈   Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.

   ☑   "The students are a group of highly motivated young scholars who demonstrate an interest in their chosen profession and have embraced the corresponding responsibility to society."

   ☑   "The architecture department demonstrates a strong emphasis on field trips, guest lecturers, and foreign study opportunities for both programs."

   ☑   "The information resources continue to be exceptional. The availability of information resources in both the Design Reading Room and the nearby Parks Library enhances the educational opportunities of the students in the architecture program. A good working relationship between the faculty in the architecture department and the humanities bibliographer has helped shape and maintain a current collection of architectural publications."

   ☑   "The higher administration is committed to the success of the department and the college. They are very well informed about the issues the school addresses and are knowledgeable of the vision set by the faculty and chair of the department."

   ☑   "The design-build classes treat the college environment as a laboratory and are effectively transforming the environment to be more hospitable and didactic."

◈   Conditions not met in the student performance criterion.

   ☑   Speaking and writing skills. "The team was unable to find adequate traditional examples in the undergraduate program of academic writing using documented multiple source research, the analysis of facts, the development of a rhetorical argument, bibliographic information and the proper citation of sources in papers available for review."

   ☑   Western traditions. "The graduate program needs a broader historical view of the western architectural canons and traditions in architecture that includes periods before the 19th century. While a summer reading list is provided to matriculating students, this activity is not considered to be performance at the level of understanding."

   ☑   Non-western traditions. "Neither the undergraduate, nor the graduate programs address the non-western traditions to the level of understanding. Several students selected non-western research topics for papers but this is not consistently accomplished by all students. There are several excellent electives in this area; however, electives cannot be used to satisfy the student performance criteria."

   ☑   Program preparation. "There is extensive and inventive evidence of program analysis, but no evidence of assessment of actual client and users needs, detailed inventory of space and equipment size requirements beyond gross square footage notations or consistent design assessment criteria implementation."

   ☑   Site conditions. "The program has addressed this issue through analysis but there is no evidence in the design of large site contexts, site drainage, parking layout, and site circulation for required course work. Site conditions are addressed in the options studios but not in required studios, so it is possible a student may not be exposed to these important criteria."

☑ Construction cost control. "The team was unable to find evidence of construction cost estimating that includes life-cycle cost in student work. While building economics is indicated as a learning outcome for Professional Practice, the team could not find any evidence of student work to indicate that this criterion is met by the required curricula. There is evidence that this criterion is addressed in design-build elective studios but electives cannot be used to satisfy NAAB student performance criteria."

☑ Technical documentation. "Evidence of this criterion is found in the course work for Materials and Methods I. The course effectively teaches students technical documentation through a combination of generating verbal and graphic documents and 'red lining' each other's work. This process mirrors practice and effectively demonstrates a student's knowledge and ability. The team expresses a concern that the exclusive use of light wood frame structures inhibits the full potential of this course. The graduate program does not exhibit the thoroughness of various building systems, the full range of scales or all the forms of representation that are typical of technical documents. There is significant reliance on an elective course to inform the technical documentation knowledge; however, this course is not taken by all students."

☑ Comprehensive design. "Architectural Design V does not meet the requirements for comprehensive design. However, there was ample evidence that Architectural Design V when taken in concert with the elective Integrated Design Workshop met the expectations for comprehensive design. However, electives may not be used to fulfill NAAB student performance criteria. The team found Advanced Architectural Design III in the graduate program meets expectations even though there were inconsistencies among projects. The team found no explicit rubric for evaluation that is shared with students and describes all the variables that need to be considered when comprehensive design is combined in one studio course."

The department requested reconsideration of the 'Not Met' evaluation of this criterion for the undergraduate program based on the quality of the work shown for Comprehensive Design Studio and the likely misunderstanding by the Team that much of the work presented for that required course was instead the result of an elective course, Integrated Design Workshop. In fact, it is the required course that provides the substantive background for all of the comprehensive work.

◇ Causes of concern.

☑ "With the increasing reliance on part-time lecturers to teach many of the required courses, there is an increased need to have a well documented curriculum with explicit learning objectives and anticipated outcomes for each course. Without this structure, it is clear that consistent and anticipated student learning is not achieved. New faculty must be aware of the interrelationships between the courses in the curriculum and explicitly informed on expectations and evaluative norms."

☑ "The use of elective courses to satisfy NAAB student performance criteria conflicts with the *Conditions for Accreditation*. Care should be taken to insure that all faculty and students are aware of the student performance criteria and their relationship to the curriculum."

☑ "The undergraduate program has undergone considerable changes in recent years with the implementation of a college-wide core defined as 'a common set of studio and lecture classes…intended to prepare (students) for application to any of the college's professional degree curricula.' Careful assessment needs to be done concerning the impact this program has on upper level studio course content."

◈   <u>Accreditation Status</u>. In July 2007, the National Architectural Accreditation Board awarded accreditation to the Architecture programs at ISU for a six-year period through 2013 subject to a focused evaluation in two years to review the Professional Degrees and Curriculum criterion and the progress that has been made in this area. Accreditation is also subject to the submission of *Annual Reports* which are due by June 1. The reports must include a response to each condition identified as not met in the *Visiting Team Report*, a response to each of the causes of concern in the *Visiting Team Report*, a brief summary of changes that have been made or may be made in the accredited programs, and the two-page statistical report.