



Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture

Ron Leighton
Accreditation Manager

August 24, 2010



RECEIVED

Board Members

Professor Mark Boyer, ASLA, Interim Department Head
Department of Landscape Architecture
MEMH 230
1 University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72707

AUG 27 2010

Practitioners

Larry D. Walling, FASLA
National Park Service

Richard N. Ciardella, ASLA
Ciardella Associates

Karl Von Bieberstein, FASLA
Newman Jackson Bieberstein

Educators

Stephane Rolley, FASLA
Kansas State University

Karen C. Hanna, FASLA
California State Polytechnic University

Richard Hawks, FASLA
SUNY at Syracuse
LAAB Chair

Dear Professor Boyer:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board at its August 6-7, 2010 meeting granted accreditation for six years to the course of study leading to the first professional BLA degree at the University of Arkansas, subject to review of annual reports and maintenance of good standing. Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis.

The six-year period of accreditation ends June 30, 2016. Accordingly, the BLA program is next scheduled for a review during the spring of 2016.

In making its decision, the LAAB considered the program's self-evaluation report, the visiting team report, the institution's response to the team report, and discussions with team members and program faculty.

Enclosed is a copy of the final visiting team report and a list of recommendations affecting accreditation (to be responded to in annual reports) and suggestions for improvement. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting. Please note that the LAAB changed the assessment of Standard 3 to met and the recommendations following it to suggestions.

Public Representatives

Judith Ellis
Stuart Pack

Enclosed is a copy of the final visiting team report and a list of recommendations affecting accreditation (to be responded to in annual reports) and suggestions for improvement. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting.

ASLA Representative

Whitney Falcott, ASLA
Falcott & Associates

On behalf of the visiting team, I would like to thank you for the hospitality extended to them by the faculty, staff, and students.

CELA Representative

Mary Myers, Ph.D., ASLA
Temple University

Sincerely,

Richard Hawks, FASLA
LAAB Chair

CLARB Representative

Ferry DeWan, ASLA
Terrence J. DeWan & Assoc.

Enclosure

cc: Dr. G. David Gearhart, Chancellor
Visiting Team

Report of the Visiting Team

Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board

**BACHELORS OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ACCREDITATION**

**Landscape Architecture Program
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

VISITING TEAM MEMBERS

Educator/Team Chair
William "Chip" Winslow, FASLA, Professor

Academic Administrator
Dixon Hanna, Vice Provost
Virginia Tech University

Practitioner
Michael Leigh, ASLA



Bachelors of Landscape Architecture
University of Arkansas
Accreditation Visit
March 28 – March 31, 2010

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF VISITING TEAM

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Team members - Dixon Hanna and Chip Winslow arrive in Fayetteville and check in at

Saturday
Day 1 Sunday

March 27, 2010 Carnall Hall
March 28, 2010

Afternoon Team member Michael Leigh arrives in Fayetteville. Checks in at Carnall Hall

5:30 PM Reception with Practifioners and Alumni Brickhouse

Mark will meet Team at 5:15 pm in lobby of Carnall Hall & escort to reception

7:00 PM Team Dinner and executive session with Faculty Team's choice of restaurants

Day 2 Monday

March 29, 2010

7:00 AM Breakfast with Department Head Ella's Restaurant Carnall Hall

Mark will escort Team to Chancellor's Office

8:00 AM Meet with Chancellor David Gearhart and Provost Gaber Chancellor Gearhart's Office
425 Administration Bldg.

Sarah Geurtz will escort back to Memorial Hall

9:15 AM Meet with Dean of the Fay Jones School of Architecture, Jeff Shannon Mark will escort Team to Dean's Office

10:00 AM Meet with Architecture Department Head, Marlon Blackwell ARCH Department Office
209 Vol Walker

10:30 AM Tour of Vol Walker and Orientation of Student Work John will escort team

11:00 AM Curriculum Review by faculty to visiting team; Tour of Memorial Hall LA Department Office
230 Memorial Hall
Escort

11:45 AM	Tour of University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC). Steve Luoni, Director.	104 N. East Avenue <i>Kimball Erdman and Carl Smith will escort</i>
1:00 PM	Lunch for Team and Faculty	LA Department Office
2:00-4:30PM	Interviews with Students 2:00 First Year 2:30 Second Year 3:00 Third Year 3:30 Fourth Year Faculty Interview - Kimball Erdman 4:00 Fifth Year	Classroom of Memorial Hall
4:30-6:00 PM	Open review of student work	Vol Walker/Memorial Hall
6:30 PM	Team dinner and executive session	Team's choice of restaurants - Powerhouse Seafood and Grill

Day 3 Tuesday

March 30, 2010

7:30 AM	Working Team Breakfast	
8:30 AM	Interviews with individual faculty Fourth Year Class 8:30 Kimball Erdman Interview 9:30-10:00 Carl Smith 10:00-10:30 John Crone 10:45-11:00 Judy Brittenum Adjunct Faculty 12:00 Noon Judy Brittenum	230 Memorial Hall
10:30 AM	Open to review student work	Vol Walker/Memorial Hall
Noon	Working Team Lunch	Conference Room Vol Walker Hall
1:30 PM	Dr. David Hensley, Horticulture Department Head	Conference Room Vol Walker Hall
2:00 PM	Charlotte Taylor, Director of Development for School of Architecture	Conference Room Vol Walker Hall

2:30 PM	Interviews with other staff	Conference Room Vol Walker Hall
	2:30 Melinda Smith, Judy Stone, Sheri Lynn Tuck, School of Architecture Academic Advising Center	
	3:00 Bob Byers, Director of Garvan Woodland Gardens	
	3:30 Michelle Parks, Communications Director for School of Architecture	
4:00 PM	Inspection of related facilities Smart Media Center, Vol Walker Hall-Chris Hilker Fine Arts Library-Phillip Jones, Librarian Mullins Library-Phillip Jones, Librarian Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST), JB Hunt Bldg-Brian Culpepper, Research Assistant (Robyn Dennis)	John Crone will escort
5:30 PM	Team dinner and executive session, preparation of the report	Team's choice of restaurants - Theo's

Day 4 Wednesday

March 31, 2010

8:00 AM	Breakfast meeting with Department Head to brief team's overall findings	Ella's Restaurant Carnall Hall <i>Mark will escort to Dean's Office</i>
9:00 AM	Team checks out of Carnall Hall	
9:15 AM	Discussions of the team's findings with the Dean of the School of Architecture, Jeff Shannon	Dean Shannon's Office 120 Vol Walker
10:00 AM	Exit meeting with Chancellor David Gearhart and Provost Shannon Gaber	Chancellor Gearhart's Office 425 Administration Building <i>Billy Fleming will escort to Giffel's Auditorium</i>

10:45 AM	Report of team findings to Landscape Architecture faculty and students	Giffel's Auditorium Old Main
Noon	Team departs from campus	

SECTION 1: OVERALL ANALYSIS

A - INTRODUCTION

The landscape architecture program at the University of Arkansas is located in the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas, a town of nearly 69,000 people. Fayetteville is located in northwest Arkansas and is one of the most rapidly growing areas of the US with the MSA area of Springdale/Rogers/Bentonville/Fayetteville having a population of nearly 396,000. The University has an enrollment of about 19,000 students. The program's students primarily come from Arkansas; however, it has attracted several students from across the US – i.e., Mississippi, Missouri, New York, California, Kansas, Texas, and Florida; as well as Jamaica, and Africa. The multicultural diversity is encouraged by the University, the School, and the program. Five minority students participated in the interviews.

The program was established in 1975 with full accreditation granted in 1984. The bachelor's program in Landscape Architecture has a rich tradition, focusing on "integrating site planning and design with a strong construction sequence sensitive to historical, environmental and cultural issues". The intent is to produce students who are well equipped to enter the profession with an emphasis in site planning and design.

The program is located in the nationally renowned Fay Jones School of Architecture. The School of Architecture offers two 5-year professional degrees: the Bachelor of Architecture and Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. In addition, two non-professional 4-year bachelor's degrees are offered in Architectural Studies and Landscape Architectural Studies. The program and the School have undergone several administrative changes over the years and are making plans to include another design discipline in its ranks with the addition of Interior Design expected within this year. It is anticipated that refinement within the School and its departments will be taking place over the next few years; however the current School structure will be the norm for some time to come.

The visit with the Chancellor and Provost was an opportunity to be informed from the top and an opportunity for the evaluation team to provide visibility for the program to the leadership of the university. They were very knowledgeable of the program and expressed positive support of the program, looking forward to a bright future in its service to the university and the community. The possibility of a graduate program was discussed and received a positive reaction by the leadership, from the Chancellor down to the Architecture Department Head.

The University has experienced budgetary cutbacks; a problem shared by nearly everyone in this day of national financial stress. The Chancellor, however, noted that the affects for the University may not be as extreme to date as in other institutions across the nation. In fact there is funding in place for an \$18.7 million renovation to Vol Walker Hall, the home of the school of Architecture, and a proposal to obtain funding for a 30,000 sq.ft. addition to that building that would bring the Department of Landscape Architecture and the Interior Design program under one roof with the Department of Architecture.

The faculty is small, and with a full curriculum, little opportunity is available to explore the margins of the profession, possibly stifling true professional development and personal growth. It is the Visiting Team's opinion that – even with such stretched faculty resources – there is very high quality student work being produced at all levels. The program enjoys a very dedicated and energetic faculty with bright, inquiring, and enthusiastic students. There is evidence of strong alumni support and respect by practitioners of the students' skills. The curriculum has been well constructed to build on each experience. The student work is process oriented and competitive when compared to equivalent programs.

It is the Visiting Team's opinion that the program is stalled in its efforts to take advantage of opportunities presented by the recent addition of two faculty whom bring equally new and diverse ideas for the education of the future landscape architectures . With that in mind, the context of this report will reflect those realities. The team is very confident that the program has "Good Bones" and recognizes the current curriculum has helped build a respected brand of practice-ready professionals. However, it is also noticed that curriculum atrophy has begun to set in and changes are needed as the program looks ahead to take advantage of opportunities at hand and produce graduates with skills relevant to the profession. This report will make some strong recommendations and suggestions to help the program in its efforts to move forward.

B - REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING ACCREDITATION FROM 2004

Recommendation: Define the outcomes/effects of the mission, objectives, and goals on graduating students. (Standard 1: Program Mission and Objectives)

Program Objectives – b) –“ At least some of the program objectives are stated in terms of what students should be able to do when they graduate from the program. Other objectives should be related to the achievement of student outcomes.”

Progress Toward Attainment – “The program systematically assesses student learning as it relates to mission and objectives. The assessments are used to make progress toward achievement of the objectives. “

- *Guideline* - Results are continually updated and improve the program
- *Guideline* - A variety of evaluation methods are acceptable. The program determined which method(s) are most appropriate.

2010 Visiting Team Commentary:

The program response in the SER (SER p. 3) lists several items a graduate of the program should know and be able to do:

- *Understand and apply a design process*
- *Must have entry level construction skills*
- *Must have entry level communication skills (graphic, written, and verbal)*
- *Be aware of public service opportunities and professional practice ideas that embrace ethical standards and promote land stewardship*
- *Understand basic health, safety, and welfare issues that lead to licensure*
- *To make wise and rational decisions in their professional life and maintain a humane global perspective in all their professional activities.*

The Visiting Team believes that although there is a list of what students should be able to do upon graduation; and that there are two methods of evaluating the students' abilities (1. The senior capstone project and 2. End-of-semester curriculum reviews by the faculty) strategies of the program do not contain assessment methods to evaluate student outcomes for those items.

The Visiting Team believes the senior capstone project is a good tool to assess several items of the list. However, it may be the case that all students do not have a project that contains the context for all those goals specifically, thus it would be difficult for the faculty to determine the achievement of all items desired for all students.

Therefore, the visiting team is recommending the faculty reconsider the program mission statement and the goals and strategies to include more explicit language as to what graduates are expected to do (measurable learning outcomes) as set out in the LAAB guidelines.

SECTION 2: REPORT ON EACH STANDARD

1. PROGRAM MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by educational objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress toward their attainment.

Assessment: Met with Recommendation

Rationale:

The program's mission and goals delineated in the Self Evaluation Report (SER) are those promulgated for the BLA program in the program literature reviewed by the visiting team, and are further consistent with those shared for the University and the Fay Jones School of Architecture. The program's mission embraces the professional preparation of students for careers in landscape architecture. However, the mission statement does not reflect the program's student learning outcomes or clearly state what students should be able to do when they graduate. Further, the seven goals of the BLA program set out in the SER (pp. 12 – 16) reflect the program's commitment to the practice of Landscape Architecture, an integration of a liberal arts education, and professional curriculum content including skills and knowledge necessary for a successful educational experience. But again the specific articulation of the goals and strategies do not state what students should be able to do upon graduation from the program. Therefore, the visiting team is recommending the program reconsider the mission statement and the goals and strategies to include more explicit language as to what graduates are expected to do (measurable learning outcomes).

Interviews with faculty members indicate various mechanisms are employed to evaluate the performance of students as they progress through the program, including a portfolio review at the end of the second year and a required capstone project. However, the Visiting Team did not see evidence that faculty are assessing student performance against the program mission and goals; and from these assessments making changes in the content or delivery of specific courses or used to make significant curriculum revisions. The establishment of measurable learning outcomes for the program should involve the faculty as a whole and developed into a rubric or assessment instrument to be used for all capstone projects.

The Visiting Team found current curriculum goals are supported by a series of learning opportunities including independent study, field study projects, field trips, a required summer study abroad experience, and community-based projects and sites used in several courses.

The visit confirmed the School of Architecture and the program is engaged in long-term planning but suggests the faculty revisit the program's strategic plan as a component of its reconsideration of their program mission and goals. The Visiting Team found a faculty anxious for a renewed vision for its future and the long-standing curriculum in need of review. The Visiting Team in discussions with the faculty, together and individually, concluded that the faculty need to discuss and address the several changes occurring within

the School, the stress on resources resulting from lost state revenue, and a large teaching load from a very packed and overly structured curriculum.

The BLA program literature fully and accurately describes the program's philosophy and accredited status.

Recommendation Affecting Accreditation

1. Reconsider the program mission statement and the goals and strategies to include more explicit language as to what graduates are expected to be able to do (measurable learning outcomes).

Suggestion for Improvement

1. Create or refine the student learning outcomes for the BLA courses, especially the final capstone project, and develop measures to assess outcomes.

2. GOVERNANCE/ADMINISTRATION

The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its educational objectives.

Assessment: Met with Recommendation

Rationale:

The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) program is administered as a discrete program in the Department of Landscape Architecture, one of two (to be three in July) academic units within the School of Architecture. The interim department head holds a full-time, 12-month faculty appointment, exercises effective leadership and management of the program, and enjoys the support of the faculty as well as his superiors. The role of department head provides a 50% release for administrative duties. However, the visiting team heard from several program constituents that continued delay in appointing a permanent department head for the program has generated some uncertainty as the program works to grapple with its heavy teaching loads.

The School allocates operating resources to the department that have rarely increased in over 15 years (SER, page 48). The dean recently supplemented the budget for guest lecturers and critics with approximately \$10,000 annually. Much of the non-academic program support activities – development, advising, media lab, communications and information technology support – are organized and provided centrally, school-wide to both architecture and landscape architecture faculty and students. The interim department head participates in all school administrative activities, including the process for requesting resources for the school from the university. The interim department head handles most administrative and management duties with the academic advisor handling student advising and student records.

The Visiting Team concluded that the funds for operations and other resources available to the BLA program, though minimal, were in character with those available to the architecture program in the School and sufficient to support its activity. The University of Arkansas administration encourages entrepreneurial initiatives and delegates to the School/department-sponsored indirect cost recoveries when available, which may provide the department some flexibility to cope with the declining resource environment.

The Visiting Team verified that the BLA program had, in the period under review, more than the minimum FTE faculty required for program accreditation. However, in discussions with both faculty and students, the, the recent growth in enrollment and increased expectations for scholarly productivity are creating significant stress to the current five filled faculty lines. The college has been assisting with supplemental funding for adjunct faculty appointments. However, the Visiting Team is concerned with the reliance on adjuncts to teach core studios. In a few cases adjuncts were given short notice for the academic preparation of these appointments.

The visiting team heard repeated frustration from the students that few professional electives were available from the LA faculty. The faculty reported that there was not sufficient time to prepare or schedule electives. Further, the Visiting Team was concerned

that many opportunities for collaboration, extramural activities, and participation in college initiatives were being missed as a result of instructional loads. Therefore, the Visiting Team recommends the School move to resolve the question of permanent leadership for the program and fill at least one additional faculty line to ease instructional loads.

The small BLA faculty appears to operate on an informal basis, utilizing a faculty committee-of-the-whole approach for review of program and curricula issues as well as routine administrative duties.

The Landscape Architecture Department follows university equal opportunity/affirmative action policies in the recruitment of faculty and students. However, the Visiting Team felt more attention should be given to the recruitment of minority students, which is one of the seven program goals presented in the SER (pp. 12-17). The student body is populated with a very homogeneous mix of in-state rural and suburban students. While the proportion of students of color in the UA student population is approaching 19%, very few students of color or differing nationalities have matriculated through the Landscape Architecture program.

The visiting team reviewed the tenure and promotion guidelines found in the department documentation, with the copy furnished dated 1999 signed by then Department Head Karen Hanna. When this subject was discussed with the current Interim Department Head, Mark Boyer, he stated that recently guidelines have been approved by the faculty, but have yet to clear through the administrative ranks. With two new faculty in the tenure track, one of those faculty coming up for mid tenure review next academic year, it is important that the most current T&P guidelines be approved and available for personnel reference.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. Resolve the question of permanent leadership for the Landscape Architecture program and fill at least one additional faculty line to ease instructional loads.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Increase efforts to achieve progress in meeting the School's diversity strategic goal.
2. Pursue the approval of the revised Tenure and Promotion Guidelines with the Provost.

3. PROFESSIONAL CURRICULUM

The first-professional degree curriculum must include the core knowledge skills and applications of landscape architecture: landscape architectural history, philosophy, theory, values, ethics, practice, planning, design, implementation, and management.

The purpose of the curriculum is to achieve the learning goals stated in the mission and objectives. Statements of objectives that address the curriculum should be related to the program's mission and learning objectives.

- a) In addition to the professional curriculum, a first-professional degree program at the bachelor's level shall provide an educational context enriched by other disciplines, including but not limited to: liberal and fine arts, natural sciences, social sciences and opportunities for students to develop areas of interest.**

Assessment: Met

Rationale:

The department mission states the professional curriculum integrates a strong liberal arts education with a site planning design orientation, and values interdisciplinary endeavors that serve the needs of the community, state and society at large. As defined in the SER and in program literature, the curriculum is designed to produce well rounded entry level landscape architects with a connected yet flexible range of coursework. The five year BLA Degree requires 160 credit hours total, which contains a 95 cr.hr. professional core, 35 hours of controlled electives in the natural and social sciences, fine arts and humanities, language arts, history/political science and math. Additionally there are 15 credit hours of professional electives and 12 hours of free electives to encourage a good general education core and allow for exploration of a student's individual interests. Eight design studios are focused on critical thinking, functional needs, and aesthetic design. Four construction labs cover the professional technical core and are integrated with design issues when possible. The remainder of the professional courses covers a wide range of social and environmental issues, history and theory, ethics, values, and professional practice.

Overall, the curriculum has depth in the three professional subject areas of design, construction, and history/theory. By design, the required professional electives are grouped into the final four semesters offering opportunity for students to experience the profession and find an area of study that meets their particular interests. However, the Visiting Team heard from the students that finding relevant professional electives within the time allocated in the curriculum is difficult.

Professional electives taught by the LA faculty are on the books, but rarely offered due to faculty loads. This is a concern because those courses offer the faculty an outlet for scholarship and a chance to focus on their particular interests. They also benefit the student by enriching the learning opportunities in subject specific professional areas.

The curriculum is divided into a two year pre-professional sequence and a three year professional sequence. To enter into the professional curriculum, a portfolio review is required after the second year. A minimum GPA of 1.67 must be attained to qualify for

admission to the professional curriculum. The portfolios are reviewed by all faculty in the department.

A 6 week summer study abroad requirement (Italy, France, England) between the third and fourth year is also in place to ensure experience outside the university and with unfamiliar cultures.

Accountability of the students is in place with the implementation of course grade attainment thresholds for required courses as well a cumulative average threshold for courses outside the professional core.

The scale of design projects reflects a wide range, progressing from site scale in the early design courses to community scale in the latter courses.

The incorporation of digital technology in the course work is a weakness in the curriculum that was been observed by the Visiting Team and reinforced by discussion with alumni and students. The team saw a limited range of digital tools, particularly AutoCAD and GIS applications, exhibited in advanced student work (4th and 5th year).¹

The Visiting Team found it refreshing that an emphasis on hand drawing was in place. Also, more importantly, students said they chose this program because of the thoughtful inclusion and accomplished instruction of hand graphic techniques.

Potential employers of the program's students are expecting more integration of computer technology into the coursework. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Visiting Team that the limited range of application of digital tools, must be increased to better prepare students for entry level professional positions.

Since it is a stated program goal, collaboration with the architecture program is another issue to address to better prepare the students for professional practice expectations.

The program presented an extensive display of student work. The curricular sequence and planned exercises were well thought-out and the work was of a high quality. With the exception of digital applications in the latter years, the work at least met and many times exceeds the objective of graduates having the knowledge, skills and abilities of the entry level professional.

An inclusive archive of class materials was made available to the visiting team. The documentation of teaching was extensive. A current syllabus is maintained and followed for each required course, including course objectives and procedures. The one missing part for most courses was a method of systematic evaluation to review project and or course effectiveness in achieving specified outcomes.

¹ See Institution's Technical Accuracy Review letter

From the portfolio of student work the curriculum demonstrates appropriate outcomes from a mix of design history and theory, construction, and ecology. Free hand drawing projects from the first year demonstrated good use of the media and composition and craft.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

None

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Review the current curriculum for course loads and sequences to provide the students opportunity to take professional electives earlier in the curriculum.
2. Increase coverage of digital tools to better prepare students to meet entry level professional expectations.
3. Establish curricular ties with allied disciplines, especially architecture.
4. Provide faculty the opportunity to offer courses related to their scholarship and creative interest.

4. FACULTY AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

The qualifications, academic position and professional activities of faculty and instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and objectives of the program.

Assessment: Met

Rationale:

Qualifications of the core faculty are appropriate to their instructional roles. The faculty members in the program are teaching courses that center around their strength and expertise.

The program has a systematic method of regularly assessing and evaluating the faculty's development and effectiveness in the classroom and studio. On an annual basis (spring semester) the faculty review process involves peer as well as department head input and evaluation. The faculty have an opportunity to discuss their individual evaluation with the department head. Faculty are typically rewarded for improvement through awards or acknowledgements, and for outstanding service by salary increases.

The program faculty is comprised of five full-time faculty for the BLA program, including the chair. The chair, who has a lighter teaching load (21% teaching/25% research/54% administrative), holds the rank of Associate Professor while the other four full-time faculty hold the ranks of Professor (1); Associate Professor (2); and Assistant Professor (1)². The typical ratio of teaching/research/service for all full-time faculty regardless of rank is 65% / 25% / 10% respectively. *
increased

Five different adjunct faculty taught courses over the duration of the review period. Adjunct faculty have taught from 1 to 4 courses per year. One adjunct position is funded by an endowment for the Garvan Woodland Gardens. This position is an annual appointment as a Visiting Professor typically for the Spring Semester. Depending on the adjunct appointment, that person may teach either an elective course or core course to the curriculum.

There are no teaching assistants as instructors of record. However the department is using undergraduate teaching assistance to help with course preparation and studio critiques, as well as professional practitioners as teaching assistants for individual critiques and grading support³. This practice is not sustainable and suggests that additional faculty lines are needed to carry the curriculum to the standards desired.

The SER (pp 80-82) provides a list of excellent speakers and visiting critics. Although weighted heavily with architects (57 architects vs. 16 landscape architects since 2004), the list of practicing professionals, visiting lecturers and critics represent a diversity of viewpoints, populations, and interests providing educational enrichment for the students.

² See Institution's Technical Accuracy Review letter ✓

³ See Institution's Technical Accuracy Review letter

The faculty are engaged in continued academic inquiry through the development of peer reviewed papers and subsequent publication in conference proceedings or journals. Each faculty has a stated area of research or scholarly interest that is brought into the classroom. The faculty are also active in professional organizations (ASLA, CELA, CLARB, IFLA, etc.).

Diversity of faculty in rank is appropriate and suggests growth potential for faculty as well as the establishment of continuity within the program. With one female faculty member, gender diversity reflects the diversity within the student ranks at around 20%.

Faculty members hold academic rank and receive salaries commensurate with their colleagues in related fields in the institution. At this early point, the work of the junior faculty looks consistent with a successful track towards tenure within the present guidelines. Faculty members clearly participate in institutional service, student advising/mentoring and other activities related to the effectiveness of the program. The faculty represents a diversity of populations and academic viewpoints as well as a balance of professional interests and experience in teaching, service, research and practice.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. None

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Increase opportunities for adjunct faculty to participate in curriculum development and evaluations.

5. STUDENTS

Program shall demonstrate that students are being adequately prepared to pursue a career in landscape architecture.

Assessment: Met

Rationale:

From meeting with the students and with the work presented, the Visiting Team concludes the students are able to understand the learning objectives, problem statement, information collection, and analysis of a project site and are able to define an outcome for the project. Further, students have opportunities to be exposed to many different types of project scopes, problems and analysis from residential scale, land planning, and urban sites. This range provides the students with the understanding and ability to pursue a career in landscape architecture.

Student products range from quizzes and exams, studio projects containing models and design/build products, to comprehensive design projects at various scales. Written content of many student works is also incorporated into a project. The SER states that student product evaluation ranges from written metrics to oral critique with other students, surrogate or real clients, alumni, and faculty. The feedback can be informal or formal. The visiting team, however, found inconsistent evidence that those forms of student product assessment were formalized to the satisfaction of the expectations for Standard #1 – Program Mission and Objectives.

Students are subject to minimum academic standards set by the department. A minimum grade of C- in all professional courses is required. A grade of D or F results in the student repeating a course. If unsuccessful in a course for a second time a faculty comprised Design Review Board is convened to assess the student's terms for continuation in the program or counseling toward an alternative education choice.

A department wide annual review of the student work is also implemented as part of the process to insure adequate student preparation in terms of curriculum goals and individual course goals and objectives.

The students are enthusiastic about their program and energetic as they participate regularly in extra-curricular professional related activities (LABASH and the Texas A&M Workshop), as well as community service related activities (creek clean-ups, recycling initiatives, etc.).

Students are free to contact the dean and department head with concerns about the program curriculum, faculty, and individual issues. Through the Purdue Cafeteria Evaluation, students are able to evaluate each course/faculty member. Students also participate in the planning and conduct of the curriculum through individual discussions with faculty and the department head. On a higher level and with opportunities to participate in cross disciplinary input some of the program's students are on the Dean's Board of Students.

Immediately prior to graduation, the students are evaluated through the senior demonstration project, a self-defined project which demonstrates some detail resolution of the design problem. The student product is supported with traditional design drawings and a written project report to further document their capabilities. Critique of the senior project is performed by all faculty to ensure a cross-section of evaluation and input to the student.

Academic advising for students is by a School's Academic Advisor who is available to provide consistency in interpretation of the curricular schedule and students progress, as well as other sensitive issues. Faculty remain available for mentoring in terms of students professional goals.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. None

Suggestions for Improvement

1. None

6. ALUMNI

Program shall provide evidence of alumni's professional accomplishments and their involvement in advancing the program.

Assessment: Met

Rationale:

The representative community of the graduates interviewed is very far reaching from running a family landscape contracting company to being involved in Doctoral research, to working in public practice in the local area.

The Visiting Team was not able to ascertain whether or not the students were able to see what the alumni have done or are doing on a regular basis. It came to the Visiting Team's attention from the students that local field trips are not common and they do not know what the Community Design Center or other outside the program entities are doing or can contribute to their learning experience.

In analysis of the SER and from talking with the alumni group attending, a large percentage of the accomplishments listed in the SER are from former alumni much older than the last LAAB review (of the 19 alumni listed, nine are from nine or more years ago). The visiting Team believes that measures should be implemented to solicit the alumni for updates to the professional merits of the student alumni of the program.

The extensive Alumni survey performed in 2001 provided strong feedback very related to the design profession. It appears that the outcome of that survey allowed the department to make changes in the curriculum in regards to graphic studio, construction studio, and other course work. It is uncertain to the Visiting Team how the later surveys in 2002-04, and again the exit interviews starting in 2006, have served to improve the program's efforts to maintain contact with the alumni for funding and outreach.

The Visiting Team has observed that Alumni involvement with the program is very heavy on the academic side in regards to assisting the teaching needs of the program – as alumni of the program regularly serve as adjuncts - which suggests strong alumni connection to the program. However, the practice of using alumni (almost exclusively) in the adjunct teaching efforts limits the diversity in teaching and ability to provide a broader range of opinions and opportunities.

The Visiting Team was unable to determine what was being done to maintain and follow up on alumni accomplishments or professional accomplishments. Therefore the Visiting Team suggests the program develop an Advisory Committee to keep the faculty in tune with what is happening in the profession on a quarterly basis. A program with surrounding state ASLA chapters or alumni from the program to stay in touch and contribute to the program would be a valuable addition. Regular communication of significant alumni activities to the Communications Director of the School would also

help to document Alumni accomplishments and possibly promote a wider base of Alumni interaction with the program.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. None

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Establish a program advisory committee to keep faculty and students apprised of changing trends in practice.

7. PRACTITIONERS

Program shall provide evidence of interaction with practitioners from landscape architecture and other disciplines.

Assessment: Met

Rationale:

The Fay Jones School of Architecture has a Professional Advisory Board comprised of 35 members, of which 6 members are Landscape Architects. The Board includes Contractors, vendors, etc.

As noted in the commentary on Standard #4, the program lists a number of excellent speakers that enrich the educational experience. However, the Visiting Team was unable to determine the extent of interaction with those professionals other than that of a lecture presentation.

The Visiting Team has observed a noticeable lack of interaction with outside disciplines in the activities of the program. Though a program goal expresses an interest in strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, the Visiting Team found little evidence that the faculty engaged other disciplines in the instructional program.

The Garvan Chair Visiting Faculty position has been filled in the past with practicing landscape architects, several being alumni of the program, to teach core courses. There is an opportunity for that position to be filled by a variety of design related persons to teach elective courses that would enrich the student's experience.

Recent alumni accomplishments included a large percentage in the public sector planning element. However, the Visiting Team was unable to determine any direct student experience with those alumni – another opportunity not taken.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. None

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Expand the pool of adjuncts, lecturers and critics to include disciplines other than Landscape Architecture, for example engineers, architects, fine arts, planners, and scientists.
2. Overtly embrace collaboration with established design professionals outside of Landscape Architecture.

8. RELATION TO THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

Program shall promote positive relationships with the university and the community.

Assessment: Met

Rationale:

The program has consistently engaged in a number of community based projects around the state, ranging from small site residential projects, town parks, reclamation projects, and master plans, providing students with “real” projects and clients that provide the students an opportunity to engage with local communities. In the evidence presented, the Visiting Team however, did not see direct and interactive relationships in those projects with public agencies, community citizens, or other professional disciplines.

There are many opportunities immediately available to the program to engage for curricular ties as well as scholarship interests of the faculty and students. The Community Design Center (CDC) and Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST) are entities within the University (located outside of the program) which bring much expertise to the table regarding integration of digital technology into the teaching objectives as well as collaborative outreach opportunities for the program. Based on evidence displayed and in the SER, the Visiting Team concludes that the program is not actively engaged with existing local entities such as the CDC and CAST.

The Visiting Team sees the Garvan Woodland Gardens as an underutilized resource that could be used as a center for design and construction projects as well as exploring issues of environmental focus.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. None

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Establish ways to engage students in the Community Design Center projects to perhaps include establishing elective studios with the Center.
2. Establish ways to engage students in community-based projects directly involving public agencies.
3. Establish ways to support and engage students more directly in the use of the Garvan Woodland Gardens.

9. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Facilities and equipment necessary for conducting professional studies shall be provided for faculty, students and staff.

Assessment: Met with Recommendation

Rationale:

The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) program is housed in Memorial Hall, a building shared by Air Force ROTC, the Department of Psychology, and a Psychological Clinic. Functionally, Memorial Hall provides minimally adequate, non-ADA compliant space for the delivery of the BLA program⁴. Specifically, the program has designated space in the building for student studio space, limited jury and classroom space, faculty and staff offices, and a very small 4-station computer lab and IT output facilities. One faculty member, typically the adjunct(s) or Garvan Chair, is housed in Vol Walker Hall, home of the Fay Jones School of Architecture. Vol Walker, about a two minute walk from Memorial Hall, is a more substantial building providing much more desirable space for all functions of the School's programs. However, Vol Walker is primarily occupied by the Architecture Department. Both the School and university administrators affirmed that plans were proceeding to relocate all the programs in the School – architecture, landscape, and interior design – to a renovated and expanded Vol Walker Hall within the next 5 years.

The visiting team concluded the two library facilities available to the BLA students, the Fine Arts Library and the Mullins Library, meets the requirements of this standard. The Fine Arts Library is a formal branch of the UA Library. Combined, the libraries contain more than 27,000 state, local and federal documents, more than 4,000 vertical file pamphlets, and over 50 serials. The visiting team found general satisfaction among the members of the BLA program community with the library facility and services. The Library facility is open 75 hours each week with thousands of volumes directly related to the Landscape Architecture program's curricular needs.

Each of the student-years is housed in a studio space on the 1st floor of Memorial Hall, formerly a ballroom. The visiting team found that all faculty have assigned private offices and all BLA students (1st through 5th year) have permanently assigned, but cramped, workstations. The studio spaces appeared minimally furnished – drawing tables, stools, and lockers – and existing equipment, though dated, appears openly available for student use.

A consistent complaint from all students interviewed related to the inadequate information technology (IT) facilities and support available in Memorial Hall for the program. The consistent complaint was the limited scan and plotting equipment, recurrent failure and maintenance problems, the large delay in getting output through the systems when projects were due, and the inconsistent technical support available. The visiting team correlated some of the shortcomings in the utilization of CAD and other digital technologies in the student work with the lack of equipment capacity and student frustration. Therefore, the Visiting Team recommends the School Administration review the IT equipment situation

⁴ See Institution's Technical Accuracy Review letter

and consider opening computer facilities in Vol Walker Hall for use by the landscape architecture program.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. Review the IT equipment situation in Memorial Hall and provide equal access to computer facilities in Vol Walker Hall for Landscape Architecture students.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Initiate an update of the IT equipment and services for the Landscape Architecture program, including student workstation access to school's input and output devices.
2. Pursue funding to accomplish the planned renovation of Vol Walker Hall and engage the Landscape Architecture program in planning process for the renovation and addition.

SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PROGRAM

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation:

1. Reconsider the program mission statement and the goals and strategies to include more explicit language as to what graduates are expected to be able do (measurable learning outcomes) (Standard 1).
2. Resolve the question of permanent leadership for the Landscape Architecture program and fill at least one additional faculty line to ease instructional loads (Standard 2).
3. Review the IT equipment situation in Memorial Hall and provide equal access to computer facilities in Vol Walker Hall for Landscape Architecture students (Standard 9).

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Create or refine the student learning outcomes for the BLA courses, especially the final capstone project, and develop measures to assess outcomes (Standard 1).
2. Increase efforts to achieve progress in meeting the School's diversity strategic goal (Standard 2).
3. Pursue the approval of the revised Tenure and Promotion Guidelines with the Provost (Standard 2).
4. Review the current curriculum for course loads and sequences to provide the students opportunity to take professional electives earlier in the curriculum (Standard 3).
5. Increase coverage of digital tools to better prepare students to meet entry level professional expectations (Standard 3).
6. Establish curricula ties with allied disciplines, especially architecture (Standard 3).
7. Provide faculty the opportunity to offer courses related to their scholarship and creative interest (Standard 3).
8. Increase opportunities for adjunct faculty to participate in curriculum development and evaluations (Standard 4).
9. Establish a program advisory committee to keep faculty and students apprised of changing trends in practice (Standard 6).
10. Expand the pool of adjuncts, lecturers and critics to include disciplines other than Landscape Architecture, for example engineers, architects, fine arts, planners, and scientists (Standard 7).
11. Overtly embrace collaboration with established design professionals outside of Landscape Architecture (Standard 7).
12. Establish ways to engage students in the Community Design Center projects to perhaps include establishing elective studios with the Center (Standard 8)..
13. Establish ways to engage students in community-based projects directly involving public agencies (Standard 8).
14. Establish ways to support and engage students more directly in the use of the Garvan Woodlnd Gardens (Standard 8).
15. Initiate an update of the IT equipment and services for the Landscape Architecture program, including student workstation access to school's input and output devices (Standard 9).
16. Pursue funding to accomplish the planned renovation of Vol Walker Hall and engage the Landscape Architecture program in planning process for the renovation and addition (Standard 9).

INSTITUTION'S TECHNICAL ACCURACY REVIEW





UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Department of Landscape Architecture

18 May 2010

Mr. Ronald C. Leighton
Accreditation Manager
Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street
Washington D.C. 20001-3736

Re: University of Arkansas, Department of Landscape Architecture

Dear Mr. Leighton,

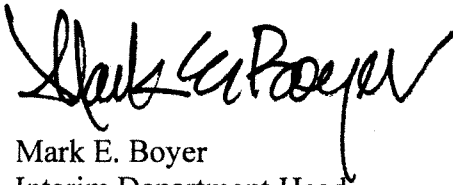
I write to offer technical corrections to the draft accreditation report of our program. Since there are very few, I offer a list with page and paragraph number.

- Page 15, Paragraph 4: Please offer evidence that there was a limited range of digital tools, particularly AutoCAD, exhibited in advanced student work. Construction III project work, in fall of 4th year, is entirely completed in AutoCAD. Fourth year Design VII work is in part completed in AutoCAD and senior projects utilize AutoCAD extensively—all of these classes had student work in the exhibit. (Since this Standard is evaluated as Met with Recommendation, and one of the recommendations is to “Increase coverage of digital tools to better prepare students to meet entry level professional expectations”, I would also ask to have evidence provided of what constitutes “entry level professional expectations.” Further, I would submit that based on research conducted and presented by Calabria (2010), that our program is providing an introduction to the top five software programs listed by professional offices surveyed. Whether students choose to use computer graphics over hand graphics in the two studios that constitute the 4th and 5th years is up to them unless the instructor stipulates methods.)
- Page 17, Paragraph 3: The program has one (1) Associate Professor, and two (2) Assistant Professors.
- Page 17, Paragraph 5: Undergraduate teaching assistants are **not** being used in studio critiques. Only professionals as assistants are being utilized in design studios.

- Page 25, Paragraph 1: Says the building is non-ADA compliant which is incorrect.
- Page 25, Paragraph 1: Faye is misspelled, should be Fay.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the visiting team report. If you have any questions or comments on any of the statements presented above, please call or email anytime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark E. Boyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark E. Boyer
Interim Department Head
Landscape Architecture

Copy: Dean Jeff Shannon

Calabria, Ashley. 2010 "The art and science of design communication media in landscape architecture today" Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture Annual Conference. May 10-15, Maastricht, Netherlands.