

**University of Arkansas
Fay Jones School of Architecture
Department of Architecture**

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Last Program Visit: February 16-20, 2008

NAAB Annual Report

Part II: RESPONSES TO THE MOST RECENT VISITING TEAM REPORT

1.4. Conditions/Criteria Not Met

Condition 4: Social Equity

Visiting Team Comments:

As noted in the 2002 Visiting Team Report, social equity continues to be a problem. The department has had some demonstrable success, specifically in recruitment of a minority faculty member, and in modest gains in the number of minority students matriculating at the department. However, the team is concerned that both the pool of minority applicants continues to be shallow and that the department's methods of assessing "diversity" is overly dependent on tally up the numbers of minority faculty and students. The department should recognize that all members of the community bear responsibility for creating a robust intellectual environment, and using culturally diverse precedents, where projects and practitioners are introduced into a student's vocabulary. The team urges the department to engage its considerable ingenuity to develop and implement a creative plan to build a deeper pool of minority applicants.

2009-10 Response

In 2006, the Fay Jones School of Architecture adopted a 5-year diversity plan. It is our understanding that we are the only School of Architecture in the country with a formally articulated Diversity Plan. The plan, celebrated by Ted Landsmark in the *ACSA News*, is structured to support Four Goals for Building Diversity:

- Goal 1: Build an inclusive, affirming learning culture that is supportive of all individuals and maximizes their chances to succeed and to reach their full potential.
- Goal 2: Ensure that the rich and varied perspectives of a diverse university and society are reflected in our curricula.
- Goal 3: Recruit, retain and graduate greater numbers of students from under-represented communities and as well as greater numbers of female students; recruit and retain greater numbers of faculty and staff from under-represented communities as well as greater numbers of female faculty and staff.

Goal 4: Build a “climate of inclusion”¹ that enhances in all students, faculty and staff the feeling of belonging to the School of Architecture and to the University of Arkansas.

In 2009-10, implementation of the Diversity Plan and leadership of the School’s diversity initiatives became the responsibility of the newly created Associate Dean’s position.

The following efforts, as described in the Fay Jones School of Architecture’s required submission to the annual University-Wide Diversity Report (May 2010), represent on-going activities dedicated toward fostering both intellectual diversity and cultivating a diverse population of students and faculty.

Student-Centered Initiatives
Recruiting, Advising, and Retention

Outreach to Local Schools.

Our on-going relationship with Springdale High School Engineering and Academy has resulted in an increase of Hispanic students enrolled in the professional program in architecture. Associate Dean Ethel Goodstein-Murphree and Landscape Architecture Department Head Mark Boyer sit on the Advisory Board of the Engineering and Architecture Academy.

Recruiting

The school has enlisted minority students and alumni to participate in recruiting efforts. In fall 2009, women and African American alumni have contributed to recruiting events in Dallas and Memphis.

The school has geared its recruiting efforts strategically to diversify its student population, reaching out to areas of the state that have large minority populations as well as participating in University events directed toward minority recruiting. Typical events included:

- Sept 17th and 18th - UAM College Fair, Monticello, AR. High Schools invited included: Crossett, Drew Central, Dermott, Dumas, Hamburg, Hermitage, Lakeside, McGehee, Monticello, Rison, Star City, Warren and Woodlawn.
- Sept 22nd – North Side High School College Fair, Ft. Smith.
- October 12th – Little Rock Independent School College Night, Little Rock, AR.
- October 15th – Little Rock School District College Fair, Little Rock, AR.
- October 19th – Memphis Area College Night, Memphis, TN.
- October 22nd – Presentation for art class in West Memphis High School, W. Memphis, AR and W. Memphis High College Fair, W. Memphis, AR.

- February 19th – Diversity Impact, U of A Campus
- April 29th – Latino Impact, U of A Campus

Summer Programs

For the past three years, the School has offered a summer workshop, cosponsored by the Springdale High School Engineering and Architecture Academy, to introduce young women to the field of architecture as well as to raise awareness of the profession among women and minorities while also striving to eliminate some of the misconceptions that have served as barriers attaining more diversity in the profession.

This program, the Young Women's Experiencing Design Academy, was offered again in Summer 2010. For the first time, Architecture and Landscape Architecture faculty worked cooperatively to offer the workshop as a multi-disciplinary introduction to design and careers in the design disciplines. The award of a \$4,000 grant from the University of Arkansas Women's Giving Circle provided partial support for the program.

Publications

Our sample curriculum and degree requirements have been translated Spanish, facilitating the ease with which prospective Hispanic students can share pertinent information about the School of Architecture and its programs with their parents and family.

Curricular Initiatives and Opportunities **Teaching and Learning, Research, Scholarship**

Leadership By Design

Diversity in academe and in the profession is a unit in the Leadership by Design course, a foundation-level course required of all Architecture and Landscape Architecture students in both the 5-year professional curriculums and the 4-year Architectural and Landscape Architectural Studies curriculum during the fall and spring semesters of their first year of study in the School of Architecture.

Diversity and Design

In fall 2009, for the first time, ARCH 1013, Diversity by Design was offered as a University Core Course to encourage awareness of the impact of the made-environment on de-centered populations and to promote a culture of inclusive design. Department of Architecture students are encouraged to enroll in the course.

Outreach

Service learning and related outreach projects in the professional curriculum have immersed architecture and landscape architecture students in service endeavors involving traditionally diverse and disenfranchised communities.

In fall 2009 and spring 2010, fourth and fifth-year architecture students designed and constructed an affordable, modular house for the historic Pettaway neighborhood, a Little Rock area south of Main Street heavily damaged by tornados in 1999, immersing them in the spatial and cultural practices of a predominately African-American community.

Funding from the non-profit Downtown Little Rock Community Development Corporation supported the project together with donations and in-kind services from construction industry sponsors. Also, in Spring 2010, this initiative received a grant of \$15,000 from the University of Arkansas Women's Giving Circle.

With a view toward introducing a diverse audience of students in two-year colleges from across the state to the discipline of Architecture, the School is developing an on-line version of its *Introduction to Architecture* (ARCH 1003) course, conceived as a recruiting tool to attract minority students from areas of the state currently under-represented in our programs. Award of a \$3,000 Global Campus Development Grant in Spring 2010 facilitated the introduction of the distance-delivered course in the 2010-11 academic year.

Faculty and Staff Initiatives

Encourage Faculty Research that Addresses Diversity in Design.

Faculty research and, concomitantly, teaching that embraces and analyzes difference and inclusion is supported by the School. Associate Professor Kory Smith's book *Just Below the Line: Disability, Housing, and Equity in the South*, coauthored with UA professors Brent Williams and Jennifer Webb was published by the University of Arkansas Press in Spring 2010.

Initiatives for Supporting a Diverse Workplace

All School of Architecture staff is required to participate in at least one of the diversity workshops sponsored by Human Resources. This year two new members of the professional staff attended diversity workshops.

Faculty and Staff Initiatives

Recruit Faculty from Underrepresented Ethnic Groups, Women, and Global Populations

School of Architecture faculty engage their professional networks and maintain an active presence at professional and scholarly conferences and affinity groups to identify appropriate candidates for continuing faculty appointments as well as visiting positions. Meeting diversity goals also is a key criterion for appointments of distinguished chairs. As a result of these efforts, an offer of the 21st Century Endowed Chair for Integrated Practice was made to an accepted by Santiago Perez.

Encourage Faculty Research that Addresses Diversity in Design. Faculty research and, concomitantly, teaching that embraces and analyzes difference and inclusion is supported by the School. For example, Associate Professor Kory Smith has led a statewide effort – the *Arkansas Universal Design Project* –that has resulted in substantive changes to housing policies and practices in the state of Arkansas, culminating in his forthcoming book *Just Below the Line: Disability, Housing, and Equity in the South*, coauthored with UA professors Brent Williams and Jennifer Webb.

Development

Funding in Support of Diversity

The School will continue to seek dedicated funding for recruiting and retaining minority students. We have been able to secure some money from the Dean's Circle for recruiting, but not on a permanent basis. The creation of a Dean's Emergency Fund, which provides one-time funding and loans to students, has proved successful in facilitating minority students access to participate in Department programs, including field trips and international study. We continue to seek funding specific to helping currently enrolled minority students stay in school.

Condition 5: Physical Resources

Visiting Team Comments:

To the department's credit, the physical facilities have undergone substantial renovation since the last NAAB visit, which have made the first floor wheelchair-accessible, and provided two (locked) accessible rest rooms on that level. However, the only available wheelchair route to the 2nd and 3rd floor is an ancient non ADA-elevator, which is in perpetual repair, and does not give access to the studios and woodshop space in the basement. Overall, the building is not a welcoming environment for a person with mobility challenges.

2009-10 Response

Through the dedicated efforts of Fay Jones School of Architecture Dean Jeff Shannon and University Chancellor David Gearhart, and the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, a blend of public and private funds have been secured to support the renovation of and the construction of an addition to Vol Walker Hall. Once completed, the project will ensure that Vol Walker Hall, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, remains a habitable and functional structure for decades to come. Moreover, the construction of the addition will enable the school to house under one roof the architecture and landscape architecture departments, together with the interior design program, which joined the School of Architecture on July 1, 2010, creating for the first time in the School's history an environment that is fully conducive to multi-disciplinary learning.

As reported in our 2008-09 Annual Report, in response to the above-cited observations of the NAAB Team that evaluated our program in 2008, the

Chancellor has committed \$19 million for the renovation of Vol Walker Hall. While the proposed renovation of the building places a high priority on making the building fully accessible and in compliance with ADA requirements, plans also address repair of the building's mechanical infrastructure, including HVAC, plumbing systems, and electrical accommodations, and weather sealing.

Once university funds were dedicated to renovating Vol Walker Hall, the School launched a capital campaign to secure additional funding for the desired addition. In April, the School was awarded a \$10 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation in Las Vegas that is providing funds for the much-needed addition. The addition will be named the Steven L. Anderson Design Center, in honor of the foundation's president--and a 1976 graduate of the School of Architecture. The planned 31,000 square foot addition, designed by a collaboration of Marlon Blackwell Architects and Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, both Arkansas firms, is intended to be a modern complement to the traditional architecture of Vol Walker Hall and to enhance the spatial character of the historic campus plan.

To facilitate the renovation and new construction, the Department of Architecture and School of Architecture administrative offices will move to temporary quarters at the end of the spring 2011 semester. The Vol Walker Hall project is scheduled for completion by summer 2013. Then, all ADA compliance issues will be resolved, thanks, in large part, to the urgency communicated to the Chancellor by the 2008 visiting team.

Condition/SPC 13.25: Construction Cost Control

Visiting Team Comments

Understanding of the fundamentals of building cost, life-cycle cost, and construction estimating could not be found in studio documentation or course binders.

2009-10 Response

As noted in the 2008-09 Annual Report, Construction Cost Controls are addressed through lectures and student-executed case studies in Architecture 5314, Professional Practice, required of all students in the professional curriculum.

1.5. Causes of Concern

Condition 1: Program Response to NAAB Perspectives

1.1 Architecture, Education, and the Academic Context

Visiting Team Comments

While the department is highly regarded by the university administration, and there is appreciable knowledge about the program, the school and department have not developed sufficiently meaningful teaching and research relationships across campus. With a business department that is leading the development of integrated education, and engineering soon to follow, it appears obvious that joint

courses and research could be initiated. Such models of collaboration are common to practice and would benefit the department community and curriculum. While the team acknowledges the laudable contributions of the architecture faculty to the honors program, these teaching opportunities are most often an overload to core required course teaching assignments in the architecture program.

As the University of Arkansas has signed the Climate Change Protocol, there is an inherent expectation for the department to provide a response, and leadership with respect to sustainability issues regarding both land and building design. Despite the team's repeated attempts to determine the connection between the department of architecture and the department of landscape architecture, the future of this natural liaison remains unclear and may be a missed opportunity for contributing to a holistic approach to environmental design and sustainability.

2009-10 Response

Since the Team Visit, the School of Architecture has been involved actively in crafting a Strategic Plan. An all-school strategic planning session, held in January 2010 and led by *Design Intelligence* founding editor and publisher Jim Cramer, brought together the Architecture and Landscape Architecture faculties to articulate shared visions for multi-disciplinary collaboration, a central objective in this emerging policy document. This strategic planning goal builds upon existing and on-going interdisciplinary collaborations that both enhance the School's teaching mission and extend its influence through outreach into the community. A final strategic planning session, which will include the newest members of our School community—the faculty of Interior Design—is scheduled for January 2011.

Architecture and Landscape Architecture faculty have been involved in the development of a university-wide minor in sustainability, scheduled for approval and implementation in the 2010-11 academic year.

The 21st Century Endowed Chair for Integrated Practice establishes a hallmark for significant collaboration among those professional disciplines and building crafts engaged in the construction process through scholarly and practical investigation of Building Information Modeling software. A search for a new faculty member to serve in this position was conducted in the 2009-10 academic year; an offer of the position was made to and accepted by Santiago Perez who joined the faculty in fall 2010.

The University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC) collaborates regularly with the Department of Landscape Architecture, the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, and the Center for Business and Economic Research in the Sam Walton College of Business, and the UACDC'S pioneering research and design endeavors in the area of sustainable ecologies and communities is nationally recognized.

Condition 3: Public Information

Visiting Team Comments

Although language was available to the public via the web site, navigation to the NAAB Conditions of Accreditation was unclear. All students, first through fifth year, were not fundamentally aware of the criteria when asked about them in student sessions.

2009-10 Response

As noted in the 2008-09 Annual Report, the School of Architecture website continues to maintain a direct link to the NAAB website. The link is included in with information detailing the School's "degrees and programs." See <http://architecture.uark.edu/285.php>. An additional link to the NAAB website is included with information for "Current Students" concerning licensure; see <http://architecture.uark.edu/153.php>.

Condition 5: Studio Culture

Visiting Team Comments

It is important to note that when asked about the Studio Culture Policy, students were not aware that the report had been written or had access to it. Dialogue between students and administration needs to be strengthened and made an integral part of the dynamic of the department of architecture.

2009-10 Response

As noted in our 2008-09 Annual Report, the Department engages in cyclic review and self-study of its Studio Culture Policy. All students receive a copy of the Studio Culture Policy in the first-year Leadership By Design class, which also discusses the implications and responsibilities attached to the policy. Additionally, the faculty is encouraged to include the policy in all design studio course syllabi.

Dialogue between the students and administrators has been facilitated through the operation of the Dean's Student Advisory Board. Composed of a diverse sampling of the School of Architecture student population, the Student Advisory Board was conceived to give students in the School an increased sense of empowerment. It meets regularly to consider a broad spectrum of student concerns, including studio policy.

Condition 6: Human Resource Development

Visiting Team Comments

There is a lack of a clear and comprehensive plan for the professional/academic development of pre- and post-tenure faculty. The team noted inconsistencies in policies governing teaching and service loads, research leaves (OCDAs) and financial support for research/creative work. Communication about these issues between the department administrators and faculty is ad hoc. Of greatest concern is the disproportionate relationship between untenured and tenured

faculty and the apparent lack of strategic hiring policies and faculty development planning. All faculty need to be provided with regular opportunities to offer new courses, which will allow them to explore emerging interest and ultimately identify additional areas in which they will be consistent contributors to the curriculum.

The team is concerned that while there has been some improvement since the last visit faculty salaries at all ranks at the department of architecture continue to lag behind both the regional and university averages.

The team also notes some concern with efficacy of student advising with respect to the development of minors within and beyond the department. The emphasis of the advising office appears to address the needs of prospective and incoming students over those of students in the program.

2009-10 Response

As noted in our 2008-09 Annual Report, the School respectfully disagrees with the Visiting Teams assessment that “there is a lack of a clear and comprehensive plan for the professional/academic development of pre-and post-tenure faculty.” With regard to the matter of personal professional development for the faculty and policies governing equitable access to resources and opportunities, the School believes that the Team may have overlooked both University guidelines, published and available online in its *Faculty Handbook*, and the Department of Architecture Personnel Document. In accordance with the Department personnel document, faculty annual review procedures include the articulation of a personal professional development plan that is discussed with the department head to identify mutually agreeable strategies for its implementation. Furthermore, faculty research and creative activity is supported directly by research funds provided by the Dean of the School of Architecture; funds are made available to faculty at all ranks. In academic year 2009-10, the Architecture Department Head made additional awards to support summer research and scholarship from department funds. Without exception, faculty receives 100% support for presentation of scholarly and/or creative work at the meetings of professional and learned societies. With regard to teaching opportunities consistent with fostering faculty development, each semester, faculty are invited to submit proposals for elective courses in areas of inquiry consistent with their expertise and interests; typically, all such proposals are accommodated.

The School of Architecture administration is keenly aware of the problem of salary compression, and has expressed its concerns to the Provost, who is cognizant of compression as an issue that impacts the entire campus faculty. Although the average salary of architecture faculty has increased due to the competitive salaries offered to new hires, salary compression remains a concern. With the nature of the problem made clear to upper administration, we are confident that gains will be made once the current economic downturn has reversed.

The School of Architecture professional advising staff works in close collaboration with department faculty to serve our community of students, and to promote retention. Both 5-year professional program students and 4-year architectural studies students are assigned a faculty advisor in the fall semester of their third year in the respective programs. With a view toward identifying the

most productive coupling of students and faculty advisors, the Advising Center queries students, through a survey instrument, about their professional goals and what they hope to achieve through the advising process. To the greatest extent possible, assignments of faculty advisors are predicated upon students' responses to the questionnaire.

Through the aegis of faculty advising, we expect increased attention to the cultivation of minor areas of study. Currently, architecture students are pursuing minors in business, anthropology, world languages, and historic preservation (offered through cooperation with the Department of Geography) as well as completing the internal minor concentration in History of Architecture and Urbanism.

Condition 9: Information Resources

Visiting Team Comments

The library's ongoing problem is a general lack of funding. In the short term, this has led to an inability to acquire contemporary books in the field of architecture and landscape architecture, and forced mandatory cuts in the acquisition of periodical and serial publications.

The facility is also seriously overcrowded, and lacks adequate space for expansion of its collection and the creation of comfortable reading and study spaces. Ultimately, it will need expansion.

2009-10 Response

Library funding, beyond the domain of the School of Architecture, remains an area of concern.

We endured two years with absolutely no funds allocated for books acquisitions, and lost three journal subscriptions in spite of very high circulation rates during that time. In the 2009-10 academic year, the department of architecture received book acquisitions budget of \$9,000 with which to try to purchase three years' worth of essential publications. Additionally, a department endowment for the library funded new subscriptions to *Arquine*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, and *Praxis*, effective January 2010. Also this year, the University Library added ARTStor to its collection of electronic databases.

Interlibrary loan remains an effective strategy of compensating for shortcomings in locally available resources. Delivery times for interlibrary loan items have increased substantially with the University Library's membership in the Greater Western Library Alliance and Rapid ILL; faculty have access to Desktop Article Delivery for periodical resources. It also bears mention that processing of the Fay Jones Collection by University Libraries Special Collections was completed, coinciding with the renaming and dedication of the Fay Jones School of Architecture.

The Fine Arts Library benefits from the services of a very competent and dedicated librarian, Phillip Jones, but unlike former librarians whose positions were fully dedicated to Art, Architecture, and Interior Design, he also has charge

of African-American studies, Latin-American studies, and among other interdisciplinary programs, raising concerns about the profile of the fine arts library relative to other disciplines on campus.

Although the Fine Arts Library will remain in its remote location in the University Fine Arts Center, the Vol Walker Hall renovation plan includes the creation of a periodicals reading room, integrated with our Media Center. Discussions with the library are on going concerning the relocation of select, current periodicals to the proposed reading room.

Condition 10: Financial Resources

Visiting Team Comments

While financial resources have been primarily met there are deficiencies in the area of faculty salaries, which fall below both university and national averages. There is additional deficiency in an immediate financial commitment to capital improvements for the physical plant, particularly the shortcomings of ongoing accessibility issues. And lastly, there is a lack of commitment regarding capital investment per student. As example, the under-funding of students attending the Rome program where cultural tours and significant site visits have been curtailed in light of the weakened US dollar against the Euro.

2009-10 Response

Concerns regarding salary compression are addressed in response to Condition 6, Human Resources; the matter of financial commitments for capital improvements is addressed with regard to Condition 5, Physical Resources.

Successful development efforts document the School's commitment to securing capital investments that directly benefit our students. For example, a substantial gift in our previous capital campaign, when fully funded, will provide nearly \$40,000 annually to students for international study; funds from this gift were awarded to architecture students in 2008-09.

Changes in Program Since Last NAAB Visit

The Fay Jones School of Architecture

As noted in the 2008-09 Annual Report, In April 2009, with the support of a \$10 million testamentary gift from Don and Ellen Edmondson of Forrest City, AR, the School of Architecture was officially named the Fay Jones School of Architecture.

School of Architecture Community

Announcement was made that, effective July 1, 2010, the Interior Design Program, located in the Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Science, will be moved to the Fay Jones School of Architecture.

Curriculum Development

In 2008-09 the faculty began a self-study of the professional program structure and its curriculum. The investigation continued through 2009-10, resulting in a decision to preserve the 5-year professional degree structure leading to the

Bachelor of Architecture degree. Discussions concerning refinements of the curriculum continue, with particular attention to the design studio sequence in the upper-levels of the curriculum including study abroad programs; a faculty vote is scheduled for fall 2010.

Leadership

In Fall 2009, Professor Marlon Blackwell, FAIA was elected (by the faculty of the department of architecture) to serve a five-year term as Architecture Department Head. Professor Ethel Goodstein-Murphree, PhD was appointed (by Dean Jeff Shannon) as Associate Dean of the Fay Jones School of Architecture.

Faculty

- Associate Professor Greg Herman was granted an Off Campus Duty Assignment during spring semester 2010.
 - David Buege accepted a three-year appointment as the Fay Jones Distinguished Professor.
 - Wendell Burnette was appointed John Williams Distinguished Professor for the Fall 2009 semester.
 - Other visiting faculty included: Russell Rudzinski; Allison Turner; and Bob Kohler, AIA.
 - At the end of 2009-10 academic year, Associate Professor Michael Hughes resigned his appointment to accept the position of Architecture Department Head at the American University, Sharjah
-