

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

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**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.*

2008-09 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”<sup>1</sup> that enhances in all students, faculty and staff the feeling of belonging to the School of Architecture and to the University of Arkansas.

The following efforts 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.

Principally through its advising center, together with directed outreach efforts by faculty, the School cultivates relationships with high school counselors who work in schools with a high percentage of minority students. Our on-going relationship with Springdale High School Engineering and Architecture Academy has resulted in an increase of Hispanic students enrolled in the professional program in architecture. In the coming year, we seek to extend this relationship to other magnet programs and charter schools across the state.

#### Involvement of Minority Students and Alumni in Recruiting

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

#### Summer Programs

For the past two 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. Currently, members of the faculty are exploring ways to broaden this model, including efforts to identify funding to support off-campus workshops in Little Rock and in the Delta.

#### Publications

The school is developing publications targeted to diversity. Our sample curriculum and degree requirements have been translated into 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, 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.

#### Diversity and Design

Offered first as an upper-level elective, and currently reconceived for the University Core Curriculum, the School has developed ARCH 1013, Diversity by Design to encourage awareness of the impact of the made-environment on decentered populations and to promote a culture of inclusive design. Architecture students are encouraged to participate in Diversity by Design, in which they can enroll as an elective 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. Efforts have included outreach to post-Katrina New Orleans (Miss Gloria's Kitchen Rebuild, 2006-09).

With a view toward introducing students in two-year colleges, with high proportions of under-represented populations, to the field of Architecture, the School is developing a course, *Introduction to Architecture*, for distance-education delivery across the state. As this initiative develops, we will explore the creation of additional distance-delivered introductory courses in landscape architecture, and historic preservation.

#### International Study

A semester abroad is required for all students pursuing professional degrees, with unique opportunities for expanding students' perspectives on diversity. Changing patterns of immigration in Western Europe in Rome and unprecedented developments in urbanization in Mexico City frame these experiences.

### **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.

#### 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.*

### 2008-09 Response

The School is actively working to secure a blend of public and private funding that will ensure that Vol Walker Hall, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, remains a habitable and functional structure for decades to come.

The 2008 Accreditation Team met with then Vice-Chancellor for University Development, David Gearhart, for their exit interview instead of with Chancellor White. The team impressed upon Gearhart the importance of addressing the ADA concerns in Vol Walker Hall, home of the architecture department. In a fortunate coincidence, Vice Chancellor Gearhart soon became Chancellor Gearhart. Soon thereafter, Gearhart spoke to Architecture Dean Shannon about addressing this concern. As a consequence, 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. In addition, the School is launching a capital campaign to augment this commitment of university funds to make a modest addition to Vol Walker Hall. Therefore, we anticipate that within two to three years the ADA compliance issue will be resolved, thanks to the urgency communicated to the Chancellor by the accreditation 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.*

### 2008-09 Response

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.*

### 2008-09 Response

Since the Team Visit, the School of Architecture has been involved actively in crafting a Strategic Plan. Multi-disciplinary collaboration is an item of top priority 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.

The Architecture and Landscape Architecture Department Heads are engaged in discussion to identify ways to achieve mutually beneficial collaboration in teaching, learning and research, including exploration of initiatives in environmental design and sustainability.

The 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

The Community Design Center 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.

### **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.*

#### 2008-09 Response

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.*

#### 2008-09 Response

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.*

### 2008-09 Response

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, including full-time visiting appointments. 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 impact 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 one staff member, a professional advisor, with a particular view toward addressing student 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 studio art, anthropology, 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.*

##### 2008-09 Response

Library funding, although an area of concern, is beyond the domain of the School of Architecture. Nevertheless, according to the University Library's annual report, In order to develop better services and a fuller understanding of students' and faculty needs, the Fine Arts Library adopted several additional online resources to train personnel and gather statistics. It also reconfigured the staff area to be closer to the service desk and improved security of the collection and equipment. Circulation of books, periodicals, and course reserves in the library rose 3.1 percent—indicating that the branch library continued to be relevant to students and faculty. 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.



## **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.*

### 2008-09 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

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. Celebration of the naming was accompanied by a program of lectures, a symposium on Jones's work, "Light Seeking Shade: The Architecture of Fay Jones" featuring Robert Ivy, Robert McCarter, and Roy Reed, and a keynote lecture by 2009 AIA Gold Medalist Glenn Murcutt.

### Curricular Changes

In 2008-09 the faculty began a self-study of the professional program structure and its curriculum; the investigation will continue into the next academic year.

The faculty adopted a new structure for the fifth year of the Bachelor of Architecture program, implemented in Fall 2008. Students in the fifth year undertake a two-semester Degree Project, conceived to allow each to explore a topic commensurate with his/her interests that will also develop the student's application and integration of knowledge necessary to succeed as a critical practitioner. Three "settings" for the degree project have been created to serve honors students, who are required to develop a thesis, for student who elect to work independently in a studio environment led by faculty, and for students who elect to work collaboratively in a guided research initiative with a faculty member or in the University of Arkansas Community Design Center.

Course work in the architecture technology sequence has been restructured to facilitate the creation of a technology-focused studio (Architecture 3026, the second semester of third-year design) in the architectural design sequence.

#### Leadership

At the end of the spring 2009 semester, Architecture Department Head and Associate Professor Tim De Noble announced his decision to accept the position of Dean at Kansas State University. Following consultations by Dean Jeff Shannon with the faculty concerning the future of leadership in the Department of Architecture, appointments were made, effective Fall 2009, of Professor Marlon Blackwell, FAIA as Architecture Department Head and Professor Ethel Goodstein-Murphree, PhD as Associate Dean of the School of Architecture.

#### Finances

In conjunction with Dean Dan Bennett of the College of Architecture, Design, and Construction, Auburn University, School of Architecture Dean Jeff Shannon succeeded in obtaining approval of the Southeast Conference Academic Consortium (SECAC) to form a discrete consortium of design program administrators. The first content meeting of this group was conducted in January 2009 in Gainesville, FL; a second meeting is scheduled for January 2010 in Baton Rouge, LA. Through the activities of this group, we have become aware of the financial difficulties faced by our peers in SEC schools, and note that we are fortunate that we have not yet experienced cuts in states budgets which have resulted in cuts ranging from 10% to 25 % in this group of peer institutions.

#### Faculty

Assistant Professors Michael Hughes and Tahar Messadi were granted the right of tenure with promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

Associate Professor Laura Terry was granted an Off Campus Duty Assignment during spring semester 2009.

Larry Scarpa, Pugh & Scarpa, served as Fay Jones Distinguished Professor.

Brad Workman held the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Communications Technology in Construction.

Other visiting faculty included: Kate Kulpa, AIA; Edward Richardson Brya, AIA; Russell Rudzinski; Allison Turner; and Bob Kohler, AIA.

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