

# MSU Departmental Assessment Update 2008

Department: School of Architecture

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## Degrees/Majors/Options Offered by Department

B.A. in Environmental Design, B.A.Ed  
Master of Architecture, M.Arch

# Architecture

## Assessment Activities

### Formal External Review Process

The School of Architecture underwent a formal review by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) from March 15-19, 2008. In September 2007, the School submitted its Architecture Program Report (APR) which was a 400+ page document which addressed the thirteen conditions of accreditation that each Architecture program in the United States must satisfy. These thirteen criteria are:

1. Program Response to the NAAB Perspectives
2. Program Self-Assessment Procedures
3. Public Information
4. Social Equity
5. Studio Culture
6. Human Resources
7. Human Resource Development
8. Physical Resources
9. Information Resources
10. Financial Resources
11. Administrative Structure
12. Professional Degrees and Curriculum
13. Student Performance Criteria (includes 34 specific student performance criteria that must be addressed within our curriculum)

This report was reviewed by NAAB and additional information was requested for Item 5 Studio Culture. This information was provided and the amended APR was accepted by NAAB in January 2008. This amended APR was then sent to the NAAB Visiting Team for use during their site visit to the School of Architecture.

The NAAB Visiting Team consisted of the following individuals:

*Team Chair, Representing the ACSA*

David Mohney, Professor and Dean Emeritus  
University of Kentucky

*Representing the AIA*

Heather H Young, AIA  
Palo Alto, CA

*Representing the AIAS*

Amy Perenchio  
Washington State University

*Representing the NCARB*

Gregory L. Erny, AIA, NCARB  
Reno, Nevada

*Observers*

Lynn McBride, AIA  
Seattle, Washington

Russell Schutte  
Pleasanton, California

The visiting team spent three and one half days in the School evaluating each course in the curriculum against a predetermined set of 34 student performance criteria. The team also met with each constituency in the school to discuss issues related to the thirteen conditions of accreditation. These constituencies included the President, Provost, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Dean, Interim Director and Interim Associate Director, Faculty, Staff, Students, AIAS officers as well as professionals within the Bozeman community.

To prepare for this site visit, the School spent all of February and the first three weeks of March preparing the exhibit rooms for the visiting team. The Exhibit room contained examples of work from every course in the curriculum and it was required that both high pass and low pass work be included in the exhibit for each class. In addition, an accreditation notebook was prepared for each class. This notebook contained the syllabi, course schedule, project statements, readings and handouts for each course. Both the exhibit rooms and the accreditation notebooks included work completed since Fall 2002—the date of the last accreditation report.

The visiting team provided an oral summary of their findings at the conclusion of their visit. The team commented that the four curricular deficiencies, that had been identified in the 2002 Visiting Team Report, are now met—some even well met. One new curricular deficiency was identified in the team's oral summary. Steps have been identified to address this curricular deficiency in the coming academic year.

The official Visiting Team Report (VTR) will not be released until July 2008 at which time the report can be made public. The release of the VTR will conclude an 18 month process of formal review and assessment that began in January 2007 with the initial preparation for the Architecture Program Report (APR)

**Internal Curricular Review**

The Curriculum Committee has continued its work to address the change to a year-round graduate program. Over the past year there has been a significant change in the curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Faculty and students have participated in this process. A review of the revised curriculum was undertaken by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the changes were accepted. The new curriculum is included in the 2008-2010 catalog. The School has developed an implementation plan to make the transition from the 06-08 curriculum to the 08-10 curriculum for our current students.

The curriculum committee will continue to be involved in the on-going implementation of the new curriculum and will be reviewing the transition in the graduate program from a two-semester curriculum to the three-semester curriculum.

## **Studio Culture Survey**

Following up on our assessment efforts in Spring 2007, the School once again conducted a Studio Culture Survey within the School. Over 65% of our students participated in the survey. The questions asked were the same as those used in 2007 so that the school can follow any trends or shifts in students' assessment of the program. The student answers are being analyzed and compared and will be presented to the faculty at our fall retreat and to the students at the annual All School Meeting in the fall. A formal Studio Culture committee has been established to address any issues that arise from this and future surveys.

## **Internal Course and Student Assessment**

The School continues to maintain a structured format for review of the work completed in the ten-semester design studio sequence. Each student makes a formal presentation of their course work to four faculty members—the course instructor and three additional faculty members. This presentation includes a verbal presentation of their design objective and the resulting project as well as graphic drawings and models. Some written work is also included as part of this review. The faculty provide comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each student's design studio project and the faculty also participate in the overall assessment of the student's progress and advancement to the next level of design studio.

## **Program Assessment**

### **Discipline-Specific Knowledge**

Although the official NAAB Visiting Team Report has not been officially released, based upon the team's verbal report, the four student performance criteria that were identified as deficient in 2002 have now been met. One student performance criteria has been identified as not met in 2008. Plans are underway to address this deficiency in our coursework.

### **Communication Skills**

Students' verbal and written skills were assessed by the NAAB visiting team and were seen to meet the criteria established. Improved writing across the curriculum was identified as a positive outcome of the school's efforts over the last few years.

### **Problem Solving Skills**

These skills are assessed through the Student Performance Criteria identified in the Architecture Program Report. Once again, based upon the preliminary verbal report from the NAAB Visiting Team, 33 of 34 student performance criteria have been met in a review of student coursework over the past six years. The one criteria not met focuses primarily on the need for additional content within one course and will be addressed during the coming year.

## **Program Improvements**

Once the NAAB Visiting Team Report (VTR) is sent to us in July it will be shared with the University Administration and with the School of Architecture faculty, staff and students. It will be a major focus of discussion at our annual Fall retreat for faculty and staff. It will identify both strengths and weaknesses within our program based upon their intensive review of the program. We will utilize the VTR as the foundation for re-establishing and refining the long-range and short-term planning within the School.