

## **Identification**

University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
College of Architecture  
Architecture Program  
Interim Director Jeffrey L. Day  
Last accreditation team visit: May 2009

## **Part II (Narrative Report)**

### **1.4. Conditions/Criteria Not Met**

.... Out of the 34 criterion we have found only one that is not met. After reviewing coursework from throughout the program, we do not feel there is an apparent ability among the student body to produce designs conscious of individuals with disabilities.

As reported last year, we believe we have made significant progress addressing the accessibility issue. Accessibility has been embedded deeply into the design sequence and in several focused areas of the overall curriculum. Our end of term studio review process allows us to reflect on the degree of success in achieving the accessibility criterion.

### **1.5. Causes of Concern**

#### **Design Computation and Digital Fabrication:**

The concern with this issue seems to be with our ability to keep building the considerable momentum we have already established in this area. The program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has taken on the challenge to be among the academic leaders in digital design and fabrication. Our faculty embraced this effort by hiring faculty with strong computational skills in design and research. The faculty group took the initiative to sponsor the first Regional ACADIA conference, *Parametricism SPC*, in March 2011 and this event continues to receive very good reviews with regular downloads of the publication that followed the event.

Digital fabrication increasingly requires additional staff resources and equipment to meet the student demand. For a few years we have been reasonably equipped with the basics: two laser cutters, a 3D printer, and a 3-axis CNC-router. However, as demand for more and advanced equipment develops we will need to have both additional staff and technical support. A strategic task force is currently looking at multiple issues: improved and increased space for a new computer lab and a fabrication lab, additional equipment investments tied to specific pedagogical and technological objectives, a render farm for student and faculty use and future faculty hires. One result of this effort is the purchase of two “Maker Bot” 3D printers bringing our total investment in this area to 3 machines. The program is challenged by the loss of one faculty member in this area during 2012.

We are continuing our conversations with the College of Engineering and Interior Design to develop a joint Industrial Design Program. Just as we did in the development of the Landscape Architecture Program, this could yield greater opportunities for our students and positive synergy in both faculty and facility resources in the area of digital design.

We believe these actions could move this digital design effort toward a signature status within the University.

### **Sustainability:**

Like the previous area the team is interested in continuing our momentum in this area. We continue looking at how we “green” the curriculum. An imperative of the school and the profession’s future is the fulfillment of the goal of carbon neutrality. From a curricular perspective this means embedding ecological literacy deeply into both our design studio sequence and its supporting curriculum. While we do offer specific elective courses on the subject, our philosophy has been to see sustainability as a part of everything we do and not as a specialization. In addition, through ARCH 107 *Sustainability Basics* we are offering an introduction to this important issue to the broader university. A new elective course in digital *Energy Modeling* will be offered for the first time in spring 2014.

As reported last year, several faculty are investing in research programs integrating building industry players and their energy-related goals. These projects are ongoing, new projects have been initiated and several new grants are pending.

### **Space and Facilities:**

We continue to be well situated in studio spaces off campus but those spaces will be unavailable in the near future. The objective of consolidating space near Architecture Hall remains a challenge but we have a new plan that will resolve this issue for the current study body.

The off-site space housing the HDR-sponsored Health Care Studio may no longer be available after 2013-2014. The College had to vacate studios in Brace Hall during summer 2012. In light of both of these changes, and the widely-shared desire for our students to be consolidated in or close to Architecture Hall, we have initiated a space study of our home building in order to find ways to accommodate all of our needs. The team has identified the lower level of Architecture Hall East (currently home to the UNL New Media Center and part of the library stacks) as a location for expansion and consolidation. The Senior Vice Chancellor has given preliminary approval to move the NMC out of the building and to consolidate the library so that we may occupy the entire lower level. The additional space, combined with other shifting occupancies in the building will allow us to do the following: 1. bring Landscape Architecture and the Health Care Studio back into the building, 2. expand our shop and digital fabrication labs, and 3. create a new and improved computer lab. The library consolidation will occur in summer 2014 but the timeline of the NMC move is uncertain. This additional space will suffice for our immediate and near-term needs but if our enrollment increases as projected we will need additional space in the next few years. One alternative under study is to demolish the studios in the old Law Library stacks (not well liked as they are) and replace these spaces with a larger and more efficient building addition.

## ***Changes in Program since last NAAB visit***

### **Leadership:**

After the successful completion in fall 2011 of the quick strategic plan known as “The September Plan” the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs approved an international search for a new dean to replace Dean Wayne Drummond who stepped down to return to the faculty. The search committee produced a short list of 3 individuals of whom 2 travelled to Lincoln for interviews and one was given an offer of employment. The successful candidate declined the position for personal reasons and the SVCAA subsequently identified Professor Kim Wilson (then Director of the Landscape Architecture and Community and Regional Planning Programs) as interim Dean of the College of Architecture for 3 years. Although the faculty was not consulted in this decision, Prof. Wilson has entered the position with enthusiasm, seriousness and vision and is a sincere collaborator interested in advancing all programs in the College while we work to address the Chancellor’s mission to expand enrollment, improve retention rates and increase research and engagement. She immediately began a comprehensive, thorough and inclusive Strategic Plan following concepts identified in The September Plan.

Upon assuming office in June 2012 Dean Wilson appointed me, Professor Jeffrey L. Day as interim Director of the Architecture Program. I performed in this capacity through the 2012-2013 academic year and was appointed Director for a 5-year term in May, 2013 after a favorable vote of the faculty. Associate Professor Steven Hardy continues as Assistant Director of Architecture with the specific charge of overseeing a full curriculum review and helping to coordinate any changes that emerge from this study. Dean Wilson has convened a Leadership Team consisting of herself, the directors of the academic programs, the assistant director of Architecture, and a staff member (Student Success Coordinator) to collaborate in the leadership of the college. Professor Mark Hoistad has stepped down as Associate Dean at the end of 2012.

### **Strategic Plan:**

The faculty and staff of the College of Architecture are currently pursuing a detailed, comprehensive and in-depth strategic. The overall goals extend from the Chancellor’s stated objectives. Dean Wilson and the leadership team have formed 5 task forces to develop areas of the Plan: Organization and Community; Curriculum (with Teaching, Research, Engagement); Image, Outreach and Communications; Student Recruiting and Retention; Facilities. Having emerged from The September Plan, the overriding principles guiding this effort are an emphasis on design thinking, the promotion of design-research studios as a vehicle for combining student learning outcomes with faculty research for mutual benefit, and interdisciplinary collaboration within the college and with units across the university. Concepts such as a new common first year curriculum and an interdisciplinary 4<sup>th</sup> year studio have been approved by the faculty. The leadership team intends to complete the Strategic Plan in spring.

**Differential tuition:**

The central administration assigned a differential tuition rate to students in the College of Architecture beginning in fall 2012. This progressive rate (lowest for in-state undergraduates and highest for out-state graduate students) will increase funds to the College but will also present recruiting challenges, specifically for out of state students. The Architecture Program maintains its \$24 per credit hour professional fee but with differential tuition the fee will remain flat. Funds from differential tuition will increase with any future UNL tuition increase.

**Recruiting and Enrollment Concerns:**

Enrollment in the Architecture Program is still low with one particularly small class making its way through the curriculum (the group is in the 5<sup>th</sup> year now). However, younger classes are larger a significant enrollment increase in the fall 2013 entering class is cause for optimism.

**Faculty:**

Professor Janghwan Cheon resigned from the faculty in spring 2013 and 3 Architecture faculty members were successfully tenured in spring 2013. Professor Cheon and Emeritus Professor Duncan's faculty lines are currently on hold.

**Conclusion:**

The Architecture Program at Nebraska continues to work hard at meeting and exceeding the NAAB student performance criteria. In the past year the program faculty have published and given papers at a wide variety of venues regionally, nationally and internationally. They have been awarded many research grants and design awards and most importantly mentored and taught students the fundamentals of the profession.

After several months of hard work last year we have emerged with a new pre-professional common first year curriculum, *d.ONE*, and now the Architecture Faculty is working diligently to transform the professional program curricula starting with second year, the new entry point to the program. We now look forward to positive momentum and a bright future in a reinvigorated College of Architecture.