

Date: November 17, 2009
To: R. Wayne Drummond
Dean College of Architecture
From: Thomas Laging,
Director, Architecture Program
Subject: NAAB 2010

Please find the following NAAB annual report. It is very similar to that drafted last year by Prof. Hoistad. The Accessibility deficiency was again addressed, as were the causes for concern in the focus areas of Digital Fabrication and Sustainability. The third area of concern, Space and Facilities, continues to be difficult for us because of lack of clear upper administrative direction.

Other issues included in the report, but outside the required narrative, address the fifth year entry gate, the changes in beginning design, the current budget difficulties and our initiatives to advance a more collaborative model for the College.

Part II Narrative Report

Conditions Not Met:

13.14 Accessibility

.... *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.*

Last year we reported that we had made progress on this issue. We still are of the opinion that, like sustainability, accessibility should be embedded deeply into the design sequence and in several focused areas of the overall curriculum. These issues are integrated into design studios beginning in the second year. Our end of term studio review process allows us to reflect on the degree of success in achieving the accessibility criterion. From last term's review we believe we can easily demonstrate evidence of meeting this criteria.

In addition, the site planning adjunct to the third year studio ARCH 360 / LA 360 has also instituted an accessibility sketch design. Last year's problem involved a ramping system to the University's Sheldon Art Gallery.

Issues related to ADA compliance, building codes, life safety, construction and technology integration are also covered in ARCH 430 the adjunct to the tectonics studio. Turning radiuses, ramp slopes, stair geometry and safe havens are covered in a lecture format in this course. Students are evaluated by examination and projects in this course.

Causes of Concern

Digital Fabrication:

The program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is taking on the challenge to be among the academic leaders in digital design and fabrication. Our faculty has embraced this effort by hiring the last four faculty with very strong digital skills in design and research.

The fabrication area takes additional resources to meet the production side of digital design. We are currently reasonably equipped with the basics: laser cutters, a 3D printer, and a cad cam router. We will need to acquire more advanced equipment to remain competitive in this growing area of design.

As we reach the limits of our internal production, the faculty is looking outside the College for additional capacity. One class has established a relationship with Nebraska Prison Industries to extend our capabilities utilizing them to produce a new reception area and desk (Bemis InfoShop) for the Bemis foundation, an artist support group in Omaha. This effort received a state AIA award. Another class also utilized parametric techniques to assist in the design and building of the Camel Exhibit done as a collaborative studio with the Lincoln Children's Zoo. This was also a state AIA award winner.

This group of faculty has also taken the initiative to sponsor the first Regional ACADIA conference on Parametric Design in March 2011 at the school.

We are continuing our conversations with the College of Engineering and the Industrial & Management Systems Engineering Department 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.

Sustainability:

Much like the previous area we are interested in continuing the development of how we "green" the curriculum. In this area we have added faculty hires who have played a significant role in adding momentum to both teaching course work and research. An imperative of the school and the profession's future is the fulfillment of the goal of carbon neutrality. As most of us are aware, buildings are the major source of global energy demand while materials by-products are a source of greenhouse gases. Our challenge is to maintain architectural design integrity while not letting our built environment become more of a Rube Goldberg techno-nightmare (towers, wires and odd looking building add-ons). From an academic perspective this means embedding ecological literacy more deeply into both our design studio sequence and its supporting curriculum. We are investing in a research program that integrates building industry players and their energy-related goals. Several faculty are advancing this research effort and are acknowledged leaders in this effort.

We have taken a lead role in a series of research proposals working co-operatively with faculty from architectural engineering and construction management programs at The Durham School in Omaha. They are researching zero energy, single-family housing models for the middle-class market in conjunction with several of the states largest and most energy-conscious homebuilders. Our recent efforts have focused on an \$80,000 grant to pursue the construction of a second zero net energy house in Omaha. These research efforts have resulted in release time for one of our faculty.

We have also finished construction of a LEED-certified house with a non-profit neighborhood development organization. Grants for testing and follow-up research of these housing projects are in the works. Much of this material was presented in papers at the 2010 AIA Convention in Miami.

Our faculty has received REI: Renewable Energy Infrastructures grants.

The AIA Upjohn Research grant combined with the Nebraska Center for Energy Sciences grant have totaled more than \$60,000 dollars. This has enabled research and publication of an urban-based energy farm.

More recently we participated in a joint grant to study lighting with the interior design faculty and Kansas State University. The grant ("Lighting across the Curriculum") was awarded by the Nuckolls Fund.

Space and Facilities:

We are well situated in studio spaces off of campus however, the objective of consolidating space near Architecture Hall remains a challenge. We continue to occupy a portion of Brace hall for the Landscape program, but we have not been able to secure additional space there to consolidate our studios closer to Architecture Hall. Our requests for additional space in the now empty building are being put off as the Physics Department continues to project research needs in parts of Brace and in the building linked with it.

Changes for the Program

Beginning Architectural Design:

An important area of development involves pre-architecture and beginning architectural design sequence. Our recent faculty hire in beginning design is involved with a complete overhauling of the second year sequence with the intent of generating a more integrated set of problems and objectives. We hope to present this package at the 2011 National Beginning Design Conference we are hosting in April.

Newly Required Application to the Fifth Year

This year we are phasing in the first cohort of students who will have to apply to the fifth year for admission to the last two years of the program. This has raised some questions about recruitment of students outside of our program and how we can provide incentives to worthy candidates. We have formed a study committee to recommend specific recruiting strategies for students entering at the fifth year.

More with Less

Budget issues have emerged as a central concern of the State and the University. We in turn, are experiencing budget pressures that have affected our requests to fill positions. The College lost one position last year in Community and Regional Planning that we had hope to share among all

the college programs. We could lose more positions this year. This “program shrinking” will continue to plague us into the near future as the state is looking for a 10% budget cut for the University over the next two years. We project the College share to be about \$300,000. This creates enormous pressures on the programs and budget allocations for the College.

The University has presented a retirement buy out program that has netted 81 faculty positions university wide but only one from the architecture program. This is a historian position and one we cannot afford to give back to the University. We will need two faculty to cover the 12 hours of required undergraduate history and theory course work we have in our curriculum.

The upper administration will soon be looking for vertical program cuts and ways to reallocate resources. We have not yet suffered the major loss of resources that some programs have already endured. However we are looking at strategies on what and where big cuts might be made. On the income side, efforts are still being made to gain approval for increasing our professional fee rate to maintain a working budget for the teaching and research programs. This is a critical issue that is being played against an administrative counter proposal to institute differential tuition that nets more moneys to distribute university wide.

Collaboration Among College Programs

In an attempt to better use our resources, the College is creating more collaboration among the programs in the College. The search for new faculty this year has focused on faculty who can bring expertise to more than one of the programs in the College.

As part of this collaborative effort we have developed a single professional practice class and a single research methods class that serve all our programs. We are also embracing an initiative to offer more on line courses in all the programs. We are making progress on establishing a single Bylaw for the College. Collaboration has historically been a part of the College culture and we continue to move forward with this effort.

The Architecture Program at Nebraska continues to work hard at meeting the NAAB criteria. The Program is raising its regional and national profile by hosting two major conferences this spring. 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.