

Washington University in St. Louis
2014 NAAB Annual Reports
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Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design
Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts

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Program Administrator: Bruce Lindsey, AIA, Professor and Dean

Part II – Responses to Deficiencies listed in VTR dated July 21, 2006

2. Conditions Not Met
Student Performance Criteria:

A. 10. Cultural Diversity: Understanding of the diverse needs, values, behavioral norms, physical abilities, and social and spatial patterns that characterize different cultures and individuals and the implication of this diversity on the societal roles and responsibilities of architects.

[X] Not Met

Response: The third and final core studio AR 419 has been redesigned to meet this criteria. The subject is multi family housing and each of the 6 sections has a site in a different country. Each studio begins with research around cultural, behavioral and social patterns. The research product is a team produced book that is shared among the sections.

B. 2. Accessibility: Ability to design sites, facilities, and systems to provide independent and integrated use by individuals with physical (including mobility), sensory, and cognitive disabilities.

[X] Not Met

2012 Team Assessment: There is a clear directive to incorporate accessibility requirements in course syllabi, but little evidence of ability was found in the design project coursework of AR 419. No evidence was found in AR 438. Evidence of understanding was found in AR 346 coursework exams.

Response: This criteria has been emphasized in the redesign of AR 419 and Degree Project

B. 7 Financial Considerations: Understanding of the fundamentals of building costs, such as acquisition costs, project financing and funding, financial feasibility, operational costs, and construction estimating with an emphasis on life-cycle cost accounting.

[X] Not Met

2012 Team Assessment: AR 646: Professional Practice introduces subjects such as contracts, cost estimating and schedules, but does not cover the fiscal responsibility of the architect in relation to projects. Pre-design activities, building budgets, construction fiscal management, and post construction economic performance are not covered. A few option studios and electives engage students briefly in fiscal concerns. Overall, no definite evidence was found to ascertain a level of understanding was achieved by every student in the program. In the team's meeting with the students, some expressed eagerness and concern to understand the roles architects play in bringing projects and initiatives to fruition in future economic climates.

Response: AR 646 has been redesigned and a test has added in AR 646 to ensure evidence of this criteria being met.

C. 8. Ethics and Professional Judgment: Understanding of the ethical issues involved in the formation of professional judgment regarding social, political and cultural issues, and responsibility in architectural design and practice.

[X] Not Met

2012 Team Assessment: Evidence was not found in AR 646 Professional Practice that supports an understanding of Ethics and Professional Judgment. It is clearly stated on page two of the AR 646 syllabus (under 'the Ethical Base') that ethics and codes of professional behavior are addressed in an open discussion format. The lack of documentation for the discussions does not allow for a holistic assessment of the degree of student comprehension and performance of the issues associated with ethics and professional judgment. There is secondary evidence found in exams and an arbitration exercise that addresses aspects of the subject matter, but in a more fragmentary way.

Response: AR 646 has been redesigned to address this criteria and a test has been added to ensure evidence of this criteria being met.

C. 9. Community and Social Responsibility: Understanding of the architect's responsibility to work in the public interest, to respect historic resources, and to improve the quality of life for local and global neighbors.

[X] Not Met

2012 Team Assessment: The criterion is listed in the syllabi of AR 419 Housing Studio and the option studios AR 511, AR 512, and AR 611. Evidence was not found indicating that all students are required to demonstrate understanding. Demonstration of understanding is uneven, particularly regarding historic resources. Yet, it is clear that the program is committed to community involvement and encourages students to be socially responsible. This is shown in a number of projects such as the design-build studios, the uHome Studio, the pavilion for Tower

Grove studio, the New Orleans studio, the San Diego/Tijuana studio, as well as a number of student-led competitions.

Response: The AR 419 housing studio has been redesigned to stress this criteria through the initial research exercise previously described above.

3. Causes of Concern

1.2.2 Administrative Structure & Governance:

Administrative Structure: An accredited degree program must demonstrate it has a measure of administrative autonomy that is sufficient to affirm the program's ability to conform to the conditions for accreditation. Accredited programs are required to maintain an organizational chart describing the administrative structure of the program and position descriptions describing the responsibilities of the administrative staff.

[X] Administrative Structure is adequate for the program

2012 Team Assessment: The Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts was created out of the association of the former schools of Architecture and Arts along with expanded programs including the Kemper Art Museum and supporting facilities. A new and equally expanded organizational structure was introduced to meet the new demands of this institution and diverse offerings, now in its 6th year of operations. The administrative structure maintained many of the positions that existed in the original components, and new positions were introduced. The team understands this is an evolving structure, and that it is under review.

However, there is a concern that the organizational structure and lines of communication are not clear and transparent. The roles and responsibilities within the SF School and the needs of the professional units are not fully defined or delineated. Priorities for funding and space allocation are both impacted by this lack of clarity. This confusion is both at the student and faculty levels.

Governance: The program must demonstrate that all faculty, staff, and students have equitable opportunities to participate in program and institutional governance.

Response: Through a year-long process involving faculty across the school a new administrative structure has been implemented with the goals of increasing transparency, improving lines of communication, and increasing interdisciplinary collaboration.

B. (1.2.3) Physical Resources. See comments under 1.2.3.

1.2.3 Physical Resources: The program must demonstrate that it provides physical resources that promote student learning and achievement in a professional degree program in architecture. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

Space to support and encourage studio-based learning

Space to support and encourage didactic and interactive learning.

Space to support and encourage the full range of faculty roles and responsibilities including preparation for teaching, research, mentoring, and student advising.

[X] Physical Resources are adequate for the program

2012 Team Assessment: The visiting team found that the physical resources of the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts at Washington University are adequate for the M. Arch program within the Department of Architecture. Enough space is allocated for the typical student work area to allow for studio-based as well as didactic and interactive learning, both of which are requisite to promoting architectural education. The uniting of the academic units of Art and Architecture with the Kemper Museum to form the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts in 2006 has significantly increased the physical resources. The addition of the Kemper Art Museum, digital fabrication labs, Art and Architecture Library, lecture halls and other key spaces has expanded the space available to the professional graduate architecture program. The 2007 renovations to Steinberg Hall have further improved studio spaces.

However, the visiting team has some concerns regarding this condition. The doubling of graduate enrollment since 2006 has neutralized many of the improvements simply by over-subscription to the space available. Studio space allocated to the M. Arch has been maximized, and studios are spread among five buildings. These have positive and negative consequences. On one hand, students from the various programs—art, architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design— share spaces. This increases the potential for cross-pollination and improves the chances for developing the interdisciplinary identity the Sam Fox School aims for. On the other hand, M.Arch students are dispersed, impacting their sense of community, and thereby generating some tension. No flexibility remains for increasing future enrollment. A lack of space for design review pin-ups, meetings, and gatherings associated with studio places restrictions on studio life and limits opportunities for interactive learning. The faculty offices are now shared by up to three full-and part-time faculty members. This space limitation results in diminished effectiveness in advising, scholarship, and research work. Also, universal accessibility is challenged, particularly in the areas connecting Givens, Steinberg and Bixby Hall. A member of the academic community or guest with mobility challenges will find the connecting paths confusing and difficult. Student mobility with large models and construction components on connecting stairwells is limited. The current preplanning for a new facility, including the enhancement of faculty offices for graduate student programs, will allow the return of students and programs now off campus to the new unified Sam Fox School campus. The enthusiasm for this significant additional facility by the chancellor indicates that concerns on this condition will be resolved in the foreseeable future.

Response: The school is in the final stages of selecting an architect for new graduate art, architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture facility. The 80,000 sf building will increase research, fabrication, review and exhibition, and faculty office space. The building is scheduled to be complete in 2019.

Changes in Program since last NAAB visit

Associate Professor Heather Woofter has been appointed Chair of Graduate Architecture.

Professor Rod Barnett has joined the faculty as Chair of the graduate program in Landscape Architecture.

Associate Dean Peter MacKeith has left the faculty to become dean of architecture at the University of Arkansas.

Professor Kathryn Dean completed her five-year term as Director of Graduate Programs and has returned to the faculty.

As part of the administrative restructuring the position of Director of Graduate Programs in architecture and Associate Dean of the Sam Fox School have been eliminated.

A new position Assistant Dean for the Sam Fox School has been established and Nicole Allen has assumed this position.