



*Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture*

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March 24, 2023

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Professor and Chair  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
Director of the School of Landscape Architecture and Planning  
College of Design, Construction, and Planning  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Florida 32611

Dear Professor Bruck:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its February 9, 2023, meeting granted provisional accreditation for a period of two (2) years to the course of study leading to the professional MLA degree at University of Florida. This status is subject to the review of annual reports and maintenance of good standing.

Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis. The two-year period of accreditation ends December 31, 2024. Accordingly, the MLA program at the University of Florida is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2024.

In making its decision, LAAB considered the program's self-evaluation report, the visiting team's report, and the program's response to the report.

LAAB had an extensive discussion about the significant changes in administrative leadership, high faculty turnover rates, faculty replacement and changes in administrative decision-making and oversight that have been experienced by the program since its last accreditation in 2016. These changes have included a new College Dean and Associate Dean; the retirement of three long-serving faculty members and the resignation of two others; the addition of seven new hires (since 2020) and one visiting faculty member; and, the 2-year term of an Interim Chair (Instructional Assistant Professor) appointed to replace the chair who stepped down and began a phased retirement. The most recent changes, in 2022, included the arrival of the new Landscape Architecture Department chair, who also serves as director of the School of Landscape Architecture and Planning, and a new assistant professor. In early 2023 a tenure-track Professor and an Assistant Instructor, both of whom have full teaching loads, are expected to retire.

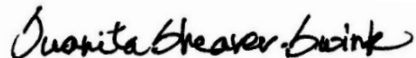
In addition to the potential impact and consequences of these significant changes, the LAAB is particularly concerned about the nine Recommendations Affecting Accreditation, some of which were Recommendations Affecting Accreditation from the last accreditation review in fall 2016.

Since one or more standards were met with recommendation, more than one of which was continued from the previous review, and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall program quality or conformance to standards is uncertain, LAAB voted to grant the MLA program at the University of Florida provisional accreditation for a period of two (2) years.

Enclosed is a list of Recommendations Affecting Accreditation. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting. The program should work to address these recommendations and demonstrate compliance with the standards by the fall 2024 review. As a reminder, provisional accreditation status is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to be appealed, as outlined in the LAAB Accreditation Procedures.

On behalf of the visiting team, I would like to thank you for the hospitality extended to them by the faculty, staff, and students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juanita Shearer-Swink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA  
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Ben Sasse, Ph.D., President

**University of Florida  
MLA Program  
LAAB Meeting  
February 9, 2023**

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendations Affecting Accreditation**

1. While the program currently has stated educational goals and objectives which reflect LAAB's required professional content through a set of desired professional competencies, the program needs to provide a clear description of how these goals and objectives will be met through the coursework of each curriculum (Standard 1).
2. Now that new leadership is in place, the program needs to reengage in the process of long-range and strategic planning and include an intentional and periodic process for review and update in the future (Standard 1).
3. Work with the college to develop a plan for a structured and intentional faculty mentoring program to facilitate faculty success in research and teaching (Standard 2).
4. Prepare a clear set of curricula learning objectives and related knowledge, skills, abilities, and values that align with the LAAB professional curriculum content and to share with faculty, students, and the public (Standard 3).
5. Review and refine delivery of the course content and learning objectives in a sequence that supports a scaffold for student learning (Standard 3).
6. Revise the course syllabi to (Standard 3):
  - a. clearly articulate the specific learning objectives of each course.
  - b. include the metrics by which student accomplishments will be evaluated.
7. Systematically collect and record graduate course syllabi, assignment statements and student work as evidence of objectives and outcomes of the curriculum (Standards 3 and 4).
8. Revise the MLA studios' courses to create distinct studios with unique learning objectives (Standard 3).
9. Clarify the research/scholarly methods sequence and describe how it is delivered within the curriculum (Standard 3).