VISITING TEAM GUIDELINES

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITATION BOARD

(LAAB)

REVISED

August 2010

Effective September 1, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a visiting team member representing the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board. The accreditation process could not succeed without dedicated volunteers like you. As a member of the Visiting Team, team members are acting as a liaison between LAAB and the institution seeking accreditation for its program. Therefore you are a representative of LAAB.

Please refer to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures document to find details on the accreditation process. The site visit is a vital part of the accreditation process.

VISITING TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The following guidelines provide general information regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Visiting Team and its members. While it is not possible to put everything into writing, the following guidelines will give the Visiting Team members a better understanding of their role, duties and responsibilities.

Accreditation reviews provide an important external assessment for programs of landscape architecture. These reviews should provide proactive, constructive, and positive insights focused on improving the quality of landscape architectural education. A great deal of the success of accreditation reviews depends on how members of the visiting team prepare and conduct themselves during the review.

Team members need to be well prepared by reading and reviewing all documents (including student work provided) prior to the visit and by communicating with each other before arriving at the institution. The manner in which the team conduct interviews, reviews work and facilities, the care taken in determining findings and crafting the visiting team report, and the way that findings are presented to the various constituents of the host institution impact the perception, quality and

thus, the success of the visit. Every step in the process requires a thoughtful professional demeanor.

Visit Preparation

Read the entire Self Evaluation Report (SER)

- Know your assignment (given by the visiting team chair) and focus on those standards in the SER

- Identify any additional information (not provided in the SER) you may require to properly evaluate standards assigned to you.

- Formulate questions that need to be asked to properly assess standards assigned to you.

During the visit:

- Be punctual for all meetings.

- Be a good listener; do not overly insert yourself into the discussion.

- Ensure that the team has access to representative examples of student work

- Be objective; your role is to observe, analyze and report. Do not express views that could be interpreted as a bias about program content and outcomes.

- Have a positive attitude and tone in the interviews.

- Keep confidences; this will encourage candor.

- Focus on important issues; stay away from small problems.

- Seek a balanced view of issues; do not let a small faction skew the team's perception of an issue.

- Be thorough in searching for the truth about an issue.

- Identify important issues early (at the conclusion of the first day) so you can revisit them and gather additional information that will or will not support them.

- Write clearly, concisely and provide factual information to support any recommendations; avoid vague terms – "some faculty said…", "it was reported…", etc.

- During the exit interviews, be prepared to discuss the rationale for any recommendations or suggestions in the standards.

OVERVIEW OF THE SITE VISIT

The site visit has four principal objectives:

- To verify information in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER);

- To gather new information through observation and interviews;

- To assess whether the program under review meets LAAB's accreditation standards; and

- To identify/verify program strengths and areas for improvement.

Visit Outcomes

- **Verbal feedback to the program**: the exit interviews conducted on the last day of the visit;

- **Team Report:** a written report completed after the visit that is shared with the program, the administration, and LAAB, and

- **Recommendation to LAAB:** the team's consensus of the appropriate accreditation status for the program, based on their observations. This recommendation is **confidential** and **is not disclosed** to the program during the visit.

TEAM REPORT

A rough draft of the team report should be completed by the conclusion of the visit. The team report follows the Visiting Team Report Template that is sent to the chair of each visiting team. The team report has four sections.

1.   Overall analysis.

2.   Report on each standard.

3.   Summary of recommendations and suggestions to the program.

4.   Confidential recommendation to LAAB.

SECTION 1: OVERALL ANALYSIS

The overall analysis includes two sections:

A.   An introduction that sets the tone of the report and provides the reader with a sense of the program's institutional and regional context and a brief summary (two pages at most) of the team's findings. The assessment should include a statement about the focus of the program and its unique characteristics, a summary of its strengths and challenges.

B.   A review of each Recommendation Affecting Accreditation and Suggestion for Improvement from the last accreditation review, with the team's assessment of whether the issue has been adequately addressed. If any of these items are still of concern, they should be addressed in the appropriate section of the report.

SECTION 2: REPORT ON EACH STANDARD

The team must report on each standard. See the Accreditation Standards and Procedures document for definitions. This section has five parts:

A.   Statement of Standard (included in template)

B.   Assessment of Program Compliance with each Standard (included in template)

C.   Team's Assessment

D.   Recommendations Affecting Accreditation (if applicable)

E.   Suggestions for Improvement (if applicable)

B.   ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM COMPLIANCE WITH EACH STANDARD

The team indicates one of three conclusions about the program's compliance with the standard: met, met with recommendation(s), or not met.

Standard Met - Evidence shows that overall program performance in this area meets LAAB minimum standards. A standard may be judged as met even though one or more criteria are not minimally met.

Standard Met With Recommendation - Deficiencies exist in an area directly bearing on accreditation. The problem or problems have observable effects on the overall quality of the program.

A finding of "met with recommendation" must be justified in the rationale section by stating the evidence the team considered, what deficiencies were found, and why, in the team's view, the deficiencies have a serious impact on overall program quality.   Since one or more findings of "met with recommendation" may result in provisional accreditation by the Board, the team must provide justification of its assessment.

Standard Not Met - Cited deficiency is so severe that the overall quality of the program is compromised and the program's ability to deliver adequate landscape architecture education is impaired.

A finding of "not met" must be supported by evidence that the deficiencies in this area are so severe that overall program quality is unacceptably compromised. A program that has even one standard assessed as not met will be denied accreditation.

C.   TEAM ASSESSMENT

The rationale section provides justification for the team's assessment.

Each standard has one or more criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard. Not satisfying a criterion does not automatically lead to an assessment of a

standard as 'not met'. To be accredited a program demonstrates progress towards meeting the criteria. In this document, criteria are identified by letters (e.g., A. Program Mission).

Each criterion has one or more questions that seek qualitative and quantitative evidence used to assess the level of compliance with or achievement of the related criteria.

The visiting team must report on each criterion following the format in the example section of this document.

For a finding of "standard met," the rationale may appropriately cite areas of strength as well as concern.

A finding of "not met" must be supported by evidence that the deficiencies in this area are so severe that overall program quality is unacceptably compromised.

D.   RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING ACCREDITATION (IF APPLICABLE)

Are issues of serious concern, directly affecting the quality of the program. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation are only made when the visiting team assesses a standard as met with recommendation or not met. Recommendations are derived from the identified areas of weakness in meeting a standard that are described in the rationale sections of the visiting team report. The program is required to report progress regularly on these issues. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation identify issues, and do not prescribe solutions.

E.   SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Areas where the program can build on strength or address an area of concern that does not directly affect accreditation at the time of the LAAB review. Some suggestions may derive from the team's view that if left unattended these concerns could lead to a future determination that it has become serious enough to warrant a finding of "met with recommendation". Although programs are not required to take action on suggestions, they must report their response to them which could range from dismissing them to reporting progress in addressing them**.** Other suggestions may derive from items that the team's opinion that an area can become a greater strength or provide improvement to the program.

Suggestions should be a very useful part of the peer review process. It is important to keep suggestions to a minimum. The maximum number of suggestions shall be **seven (7).** A team may direct more than one suggestion to a particular standard but the total number may not exceed seven. Suggestions, unlike recommendations, may be prescriptive but they should be supported by evidence found in the rationale.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO PROGRAMS

This section summarizes all recommendations affecting accreditation and suggestions for improvement from the reports on each standard. There cannot be any recommendations or suggestions for improvement that were not previously identified.

SECTION 4: CONFIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATION TO LAAB

The team should agree on its recommendation to LAAB of the type of accreditation action. This recommendation is *advisory* only and should be kept confidential. **Do not disclose it in the exit interview(s)**. The recommendation sheet must be completed and signed *(by all visiting team members)* before leaving the campus. The team's recommendation is advisory as the program has the opportunity to respond to the team report and supply additional information to LAAB. The team's recommendation must be supported by the report's text.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE

The visiting team should complete a draft of their report prior to the end of the visit. One way to expedite this process is for team members to bring their own computers.

Within **ten working days** of the visit, the team chair shall send draft copies of the visiting team report to the accreditation manager and to the other team members. The report will be forwarded to the LAAB principal reader. The team chair will be contacted by the principal reader shortly thereafter to discuss the team findings and any questions he/she may have concerning the site visit. The principal reader may also contact the other members of the visiting team. The draft

report may be edited for grammar, spelling, and style before being sent to the program for technical accuracy review and comment.

If there are any difficulties in producing the report or submitting it within the required ten days, the team chair should contact the accreditation manager and provide a revised submission date for the report.

INTERVIEWS

Coming into contact with those who bring the institution to life is one of the most important dimensions of the site visit. The interviews can yield the greatest dividends if appropriate preparation is undertaken.

The visiting team chair and the program chair should confer about the visit schedule as soon as the assignment of the team chair is confirmed. A schedule is printed in the Standards and Procedures document. The schedule should insure the availability of key university administrative officials. Meeting with subordinate administrative staff for primary interviews is not an acceptable substitute. Not being able to meet with the key university administration dilutes the team's potential effectiveness to help the program. In addition, the schedule should be arranged to allow the visiting team to develop a good understanding of all facets of the program by the end the first full day of the visit.

It is important that the interviews be consistent. This document includes sample questions for each group (administrators, faculty, students, alumni and practitioners). The team should agree in advance on the core questions that will be asked in each interview and by whom. The team chair may, at his/her discretion, decide to conduct interviews on an individual basis rather than as a team; if so, it is even more important to agree on the ground rules. Teams should identify the most important areas to cover, leave time in each interview to probe areas of concern, and allow the interviewee the chance to ask any questions he or she may have. The team should extend an invitation to all faculty and students to meet with the team or a member of the team individually (under conditions of anonymity) to discuss specific issues of concern.

EXIT INTERVIEW

There are four exit interviews in a typical accreditation visit: an informal one with program chair at breakfast; a private one with the president or other high-level administrator; a private one with the dean; and a group interview with the program's faculty and students.

The team chair normally conducts the exit interviews. The exit interview should provide a balanced picture of the team's findings. Each Recommendation Affecting Accreditation and Suggestion for Improvement should be reported to all groups. It is best to read the recommendations and suggestions to avoid reporting them differently to different audiences which could leave them open to different interpretations by the various groups. The program should never be surprised by a recommendation or suggestion in the team's written report that was not mentioned in the exit interview.

The team's recommendation on accredited status to LAAB should not be disclosed to anyone.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE VISITING TEAM

(Questions which elicit information already provided in the Self-Evaluation Report generally should be avoided. These questions are examples, to generate conversation and to make sure key areas of the program are discussed. **It is not expected that all questions will be asked**. **Visiting team members should discuss questions in advance of meetings to determine what questions may be most efficient in providing the team with information to make an assessment of the program.** Questions and responses can be used for the team to comment on more than one standard or criterion. ***Team members should listen more than they speak.***

QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

1.   How is the program regarded by other elements of the institution?

2.   How does the program contribute to the institution's mission and record of achievement?

3.   How is the future of the program regarded by others in the institution?

4.   How is the program's faculty regarded academically and as contributors to the leadership (committee) structure of the institution?

5.   Are there some issues or questions that the team should pay particular attention to during the visit?

6.   How is the program perceived within the community outside of the institution?

QUESTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT HEAD/PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

1. Has the department's long-range planning effort influenced recent policy decisions? How?

2. What has been the influence of alumni and practitioner contact in facilitating the program's mission?

3. Are there special efforts underway to recruit able students, particularly women and minorities? How successful have these efforts been? What is the main draw for students who enroll in the program?

4. How do the standards for faculty selection, development, promotion, tenure, salary determination, etc., support the goals of the program?

5. Is there a strategy to assist the faculty in its research and professional development objectives? Is it working?

6. What efforts have been undertaken to update and strengthen the curriculum? What prompted these efforts?

7. Do you think the curriculum addresses contemporary issues?

8. How does the program assist in preparing graduates for employment or additional education opportunities? Does the program have an advisory board comprised of a variety of experts (both LA and non-LA) to provide feedback and direction to the program?

9. Is the advisory board effective in facilitating fundraising efforts for the program? Does the program have other fund raising mechanisms in place?

10. (If not clearly defined in the SER) How do you assess course effectiveness?

11. How do you assess how effective courses are in addressing curriculum goals?

12. How often and by what means (assessment techniques) do you evaluate how well the curriculum is addressing your program mission and goals?

13. How and how often do you assess the overall program mission and goals?

14. How are your assessment/evaluation efforts working? Do you anticipate any revisions? Does the university have resources to help you in these areas?

15. How does the program contribute to the institution's mission?

QUESTIONS FOR FACULTY MEMBERS

1. What are the dean's (program director's) expectations for the program? Have these expectations lead to faculty debate? Is this debate healthy or divisive?

2. What is the faculty's role in the objective-setting process?

3. What effect has long-range planning had on important policy decisions, particularly those involving faculty committee considerations? Have the program's objectives influenced these considerations?

4. How were faculty members involved in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report?

5. Are the standards for faculty selection, development, promotion, tenure, salary determination pulling the program in the right direction?

6. Are you pleased with the students attracted to this program?

7. What are your current teaching-research-service interests? What assistance is available in pursuing these professional interests?

8. What is the greatest source of satisfaction in serving on this faculty?

9. Is your long-term professional growth well served by remaining on this faculty?

10. Do you understand the policies and procedures that lead to your next level of advancement and do you have the mentoring and support to do so?

11. Are administrative and support personnel resources generally adequate?

12. What do you think of the current curriculum?

13. Do you think any changes are necessary in the curriculum?

14. Are the computer and library resources satisfactory for your teaching and research interests?

15. How effective is your program's assessment/evaluation process? For courses? For determining how courses support curriculum goals? How curriculum supports program mission and goals?

16. Are you excited about any current innovative efforts in the institution?

17. How successful are graduates in getting seeking employment? Are they satisfied with the types of positions they obtain?

18. Are you satisfied with the physical facilities that house the program?

19. How effective are the adjunct faculty members?

20. How is the program's relationship with other programs?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What caused you to select this program and this institution?

2. Would you recommend this program to others?

3. To what extent are students involved in the policy-making decisions of the school? Have good ideas advanced from such student involvement been implemented?

4. Were students involved in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report?

5. How soon after initial enrollment are career and placement counseling opportunities made known to students? Are these services adequate? Is the academic advising adequate? *For graduate students, are professional staff and faculty members available as research advisors?*

6. Do you think this program attracts able students?

7. What do you think of the capabilities of other students in the program?

8. If faculty evaluation forms are available to students, have the results of these questionnaires made any difference? If they don't exist, should they?

9. Do you get a sense of the profession from your instructors?

10. Do faculty seem concerned about their teaching performance? Does the program emphasize good teaching?

11. How are faculty research and scholarship introduced into the curriculum?

12. Are course prerequisites enforced?

13. What single learning experience has been most exciting and memorable?

14. Have you been expected to utilize the library resources in your courses? Computer resources?

15. Are the program's handbook, website, and course literature accurate in describing the course content from year to year? Is this material effective in helping you select classes to meet your educational objectives?

16. What are the plusses and minuses of the physical facilities? Are you satisfied with them?

17. How effective are the adjunct faculty members?

18. What is the program's relationship with other programs?

19. How effective are the adjunct faculty members?

Questions for Practitioners and Alumni

<u>**Alumni**</u>

1. How did the program prepare you for your career in LA?

2. Were you prepared to handle the work expectations upon graduation? 5 years? Now?

3. What sorts of contact do you have with the department, school and college? If any, what have you heard, experienced or gathered?

4. Have you hired any alumni recently? If not, would you recommend hiring a grad?

5. Are you in contact with any of your classmates?

6. What do you see as the program's strengths and weaknesses?

7. If requested, and you were available, would you consider advising, participating in the program and or serving on an Advisory Board?

8. How were faculty research and scholarship introduced into the curriculum?

Practitioners

1. What type of practice do you have?

2. What kind of contact do you have with the program?

3. What do you see as the program's strengths and weaknesses?

4. Have you employed graduates from this program and if so, how are they doing in your office?

5. What is their contribution? Do they meet your expectations?

6. How do they compare with employees who graduated from other schools?

Intern - Practitioners

1. What type of contact did you have with the intern?

2. Do you actively recruit interns from (school) and why?

3. What is their contribution? Do they meet your expectations?

4. How do they compare with employees who graduated from other schools?

Advisory Boards

1. What type of contact did you have with the program?

2. Do you meet frequently, what is the setting and who sets the agenda?

3. Do you find that your input is considered by the program and what sorts of issues do you find most important to it.

4. Does the board review of student work?

EXAMPLE

PART I

OVERALL ANALYSIS

A. Introduction

The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program resides in the five department College of Design at XXXXX University in xxxxxxx. The Department of Landscape Architecture shares the college with the Departments of Architecture, Art + Design, Graphic Design, and Industrial Design.

The Department of Landscape Architecture has two degree programs; the BLA and the MLA. Both programs are approximately the same size at 40 students each. This five year BLA program graduates approximately 10 students per year and there is no pressure from the university or college to increase the program enrollment. At this size the faculty/student ratio for the BLA Program is well within the standard of 15:1.

xxxxxx University is located in a university town in the state's central region. The area attracts industry and associated research and development from around the world. This highly developed area is rich in both cultural and environmental amenities. It also has a significant number of landscape architects who have been enlisted by the department in teaching and in the formal mentoring and advising of students. The department has recently developed excellent relationships with other college departments, the professional community and with the city and state-wide municipalities.

The College of Design has developed a rich interdisciplinary curriculum that is unusually progressive in the mixing of students and faculty with a curriculum that engages all college members with a *First Year Experience* that is truly interdepartmental and a later *Swing Studio* that requires mid-curriculum students to enroll in a studio in another college unit.

The college is led by Dean xxxxxx who has provided strong and enlightened leadership by both building the college infrastructure (excellent facilities and IT equipment and support) and a college leadership team and faculty that irreversibly values cross-disciplinary teaching and learning. In 20xx, Professor xxxxxxx was appointed Department Head. Previous issues of program isolation, lack of external interaction and support and curriculum issues have been addressed and corrected. The visiting team commends his tireless and highly effective leadership efforts.

As is the case with all academic programs in this time of budget uncertainties, the future will be difficult but with the university, college and external support, and the able college and departmental leadership, this program should be able to meet the challenges ahead.

All cohorts interviewed and evidence presented suggest that the BLA Program at xxxxxx University has met the LAAB Standards and satisfied the two recommendations coming out of the 20XX accreditation report.

The overall evaluation of the present BLA professional program's direction is commendable.

B. Confirmation that Minimum Requirements for Accreditation are Satisfied

1. The program title and degree description incorporate the term "Landscape Architecture".

2. An undergraduate first-professional program is a baccalaureate of at least four academic years' duration.

3. A graduate first-professional program is a master's equivalent to three academic years' duration.

4. Faculty instructional full-time equivalence (FTE) shall be as follows:
a. An academic unit that offers a single first-professional program has at least three FTE instructional faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, at least one of whom is full-time.

b. An academic unit that offers first-professional programs at both bachelor's and master's levels, has at least six instructional FTE, at least five of whom hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, and at least two of whom are full-time.

Programs	FTE Instructional Faculty	Faculty with Professional Degree in Landscape Architecture	Full Time Faculty
Single Program	3	3	1
Bachelors & Masters	6	5	2

5. The parent institution is accredited by a recognized institutional accrediting agency. [such as recognition by the U.S. Department of Education or Council for Higher Education Accreditation]

6. There is a designated program administrator responsible for the leadership and management functions for the program under review.

Does the program meet the minimum requirements listed above?

The visiting team has seen evidence to show that the BLA program at XXX University meets the minimum requirements.

B. **Review of Each Recommendation Affecting Accreditation Identified by the Previous Review in XXX**

The Visiting Team made three recommendations as part of the 20xx visit. They are

Recommendation 1

Review the balance of hand graphics and computer technology in design and design implementation courses such that the use of computer technology is more fully integrated into all courses (Standard 3).

Response from the Visiting Team:

After a thorough examination of the revised curriculum, discussions with students, faculty, and the department head, and through a careful review of displayed student work, the visiting team concluded that this recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation 2

Expand and solidify the professional practice content on the curriculum (Standard 3).

Through the initiation of a formal Mentorship program which teams a student (both BLA and MLA) with a local practitioner and the professional practice course the team concluded that this recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation 3

Provide the L.A. Department with office and studio space that gives the program more visibility and greater access to other departments and the College facilities (Standard 7).

There have been no changes in the program's facilities and the team concluded that this recommendation has not been satisfied. See the rationale following Standard 7.

C. **Review of Each Suggestion for Improvement From the Previous Review in XXXX (for programs reviewed after September 1, 2010)**

1. **Consider adding references to scholarship/research and interdisciplinary programs in its mission statement (Standard 1).**

The mission statement has been updated to include references to interdisciplinary programs and research. See Standard 1 for more input on the mission statement.

2.   **Consider a comprehensive narrative or equivalent of each curriculum sequence to aid faculty as to the context of their course in the curriculum (Standard 3).**

The program developed a narrative of each curriculum sequence which has been helpful to students and faculty. See Standard 3 on curriculum for more details.

Standard 1: Program Mission and Objectives
The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

Assessment:

_____Met   _____X_____Met With Recommendation   _____Not Met

INTENT: Using a clear concise mission statement, each landscape architecture program should define its core values and fundamental purpose for faculty, students, prospective students, and the institution. The mission statement summarizes why the program exists and the needs that it seeks to fulfill. It also provides a benchmark for assessing how well the program is meeting the stated objectives.

A. Program Mission. The mission statement expresses the underlying purposes and values of the program.

Assessment: Does the program have a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the program and does it relates to the institution's mission statement?

Team comments: Yes. The program mission statement in the program's 2007 strategic plan focuses primarily on the stewardship and enhancement of the urban environment in an effort to improve the quality of life for the urban populous - principally in the northwestern region of the country. This focus is also articulated in the institution's mission statement and appropriate to the urban environment in which the institution is located.

B. EDUCATIONAL GOALS. Clearly defined and formally stated academic goals reflect the mission and demonstrate that attainment of the goals will fulfill the program mission.

Assessment: Does the program have an effective procedure to determine progress in meeting its goals and is it used regularly?

Team Comments: Collectively, the faculty reviews the work in each course as a means of evaluating how well each course is addressing the program's goals. Reviews are scheduled for about one third of the curriculum each year.   At the reviews, faculty also discusses how general education courses and elective choices support program goals.

C. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES. The educational objectives specifically describe how each of the academic goals will be achieved.

Assessment: Does the program have clearly defined and achievable educational objectives that describe how the goals will be met?

Team Comments: Yes. The objectives describe how the sequence of courses, the focus of specific courses, the relationship between courses during the semester, field trips, study abroad programs and internships work together to achieve the academic goals. In addition, the faculty as a whole annually reviews the objectives to determine if they are appropriate and realistic as a vehicle to achieving program goals.

D. LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS. The program is engaged in a long-range planning process.

Assessment 1: Does the long-range plan describe how the program mission and objectives will be met and document the review and evaluation process?

Team Comments: The program has been engaged in long-range planning. The strategic plan defines goals and objectives for a five-year period. The goals addressing the curriculum have a set of objectives which are successfully guiding its development. The objectives supporting the goals that address student recruitment and facilities are weak.

Assessment 2: Is the long-range plan reviewed and revised periodically and does it present realistic and attainable methods for advancing the academic mission?

Team Comments: The long-range plan is reviewed annually at a faculty retreat just prior to the start of fall semester. It has been an important and effective guide for curriculum development but less so guiding student recruitment and facilities (individual faculty offices, crit/seminar space and computer technology).

Assessment 3: Does the self-evaluation report (SER) respond to recommendations and suggestions from the previous accreditation review and does it report on efforts to rectify identified weaknesses?

Team Comments: LAAB made four recommendations after the last visit. The SER reported on the progress made to resolve all four. Two of the recommendations (strategic planning and curriculum development) have been resolved. Recommendations about student recruitment and facilities although addressed to some degree, need additional attention.

E. PROGRAM DISCLOSURE. Program literature and promotional media accurately describe the program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status.

Assessment: Is the program information accurate?

Team Comments: All program media accurately describe the program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status.

F. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Recommendations affecting accreditation:

1. Clearly articulate the Program's mission; and identify supporting educational objective the attainment of which can be demonstrated.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Develop a stronger statement of objectives related to outreach and scholarship and the measures that should be used to evaluate progress towards their attainment.

EXAMPLE

Standard 2: Program Autonomy, Governance & Administration#
The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

Assessment:

_____Met   _____Met With Recommendation_____Not Met

INTENT: *Landscape architecture should be recognized as a discrete professional program with sufficient financial and institutional support and authority to enable achievement of the stated program mission, goals and objectives.*

A. Program Administration. Landscape architecture is administered as an identifiable/discrete program.

Assessment 1: Is the program seen as a discrete and identifiable program within the institution?

Team Comments: Administrators from department heads to the Provost, said the LA program was a discrete and important unit in the college and university. However, the program is a small "program" with less than 50 students, in the much larger Department of Architecture with over 300 students which is the smallest department in the College of Design. The program is not very visible. The only sign on the outside or inside of the building that says Landscape Architecture is in the listing of programs on the Department of Architecture's office door. In addition, LA students do not have their own studio space. They are in architecture studio space. LA faculty and students don't see themselves as being a very discrete unit in the department or college.

Assessment 2: Does the program administrator hold a faculty appointment in landscape architecture?

Team Comments: The program administrator has a faculty appointment in landscape architecture.

Assessment 3: Does the program administrator exercise the leadership and management functions of the program?

Team Comments: The department head has the authority and responsibility to lead and manage the department. The department head reports directly to the dean of the college and participates, along with other department heads, in discussions on resource allocations and management of the college.

B. Institutional Support. The institution provides sufficient resources to enable the program to achieve its mission and goals and support individual faculty development and advancement.

Assessment 1: Are student/faculty ratios in studios typically not greater than 15:1?

Team Comments: At the present time, student/faculty ratios are 11:1; down from the 18:1 that the program has historically had. While the lower ratios have their positive side, there was concern expressed by the department head and the dean that a continued decline in enrollment may well lead to a loss of resources.

Assessment 2: Is funding available to assist faculty and other instructional personnel with continued professional development including support in developing funded grants, attendance at conferences, computers and appropriate software, other types of equipment, and technical support?

Team Comments: Funding for faculty development is available but it's limited. All requests for supported travel have to be made to the provost's office. The university's first priority is to fund travel associated with gaining funded research grants. Second is funding for untenured faculty to present (not just attend) at conferences. Funds for computers, software and other technical support are available. Students pay a per credit hour fee to the university and the college to support technology.

Assessment 3: Is funding adequate for student support, i.e., scholarships, work-study, etc?

Team Comments: Funding for scholarships has historically been adequate. Normally, the program has about 30 scholarships to award among its 100 students. Funds for these scholarships come from the department endowment, the college, and university and off-campus organizations like the garden club. However, the recent turn-down in the economy has reduced this number and last year, the department awarded 13 scholarships. The department has five work-study positions.

Assessment 4: Are adequate support personnel available to accomplish program mission and goals?

Team Comments: The department has adequate support personal. It has two support staff members whose responsibilities center on ("herding cats") student course advising, receiving and managing applications and assisting the department head with clerical tasks. The college provides computer support and some assistance with accounting.

C. Commitment to Diversity. The program demonstrates commitment to diversity through its recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students.

Assessment: How does the program demonstrate its commitment to diversity in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff?

Team Comments: While the department has achieved gender balance of students and faculty, recruitment of minority students and faculty has been largely unsuccessful. There are no minority faculty members and of the 120 students, two are African-American, two are Hispanic, one is Asian and one is from India. The department advertises each faculty position in all LA and related professional media

and request alumni, friends at other universities and practitioners nominate candidates, especially minority candidates for positions.

D. Faculty Participation. The faculty participates in program governance and administration.

Assessment 1: Does the faculty make recommendations on the allocation of resources and do they have the responsibility to develop, implement, evaluate, and modify the program's curriculum and operating practices?

Team Comments: Faculty discusses and makes recommendations on the allocation of resources but the principle responsibility lies with the department head. Faculty also have input on some of the operating practices of the department and a significant role evaluating and modifying the curriculum.

Assessment 2: Does the faculty participate, in accordance with institutional guidelines, in developing criteria and procedures for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure of faculty?

Team Comments: The department's criteria for annual evaluation have been "on the books" for many years and faculty have participated in making minor adjustments to it. The promotion and tenure guidelines went through a major revision two years ago. A faculty committee was responsible for the revisions which were then approved by the faculty. The need for the revision was triggered by a university requirement to add a post-tenure review process.

Assessment 3: Does the program or institution adequately communicate and mentor faculty regarding policies, expectations and procedures for annual evaluations, and for tenure and promotion to all ranks?

Team Comments: The department does not have a formal mentor program. Some untenured faculty admitted they didn't know what the expectations for gaining tenure were and said the department head hadn't discussed it with them. They also seemed a bit uncomfortable when the visiting team seemed to know more about the expectations than they did. The policies and procedures are clearly spelled out in the department, college and university faculty handbooks and on line.

E. Faculty Number. The faculty shall be of a sufficient size to accomplish the program's goals and objectives, to teach the curriculum, to support students through advising and other functions, to engage in research, creative activity and scholarship and to be actively involved in professional endeavors such as presenting at conferences. To address this criterion:

1. a unit that offers a first professional program should have a minimum of five fulltime faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture; and
2. an academic unit that offers a first professional degree at both bachelor's and master's levels should have a minimum of seven fulltime faculty, at least five of whom hold professional degrees in landscape architecture.[1]

Assessment 1: Does an academic unit that offers a first professional program have a minimum of five fulltime faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture?

Team Comments: Yes; three professors, two associate professors and four assistant professors all with at least one degree in landscape architecture and five are licensed.

Assessment 2: Does an academic unit that offers first professional programs at both bachelor's and master's levels, have a minimum of seven fulltime faculty, at least five of whom hold professional degrees in landscape architecture?

Team Comments: Yes; two professors, two associate professors, four assistant professors and three adjunct professors. All faculty except one associate and one adjunct professor have at least one degree in landscape architecture and five are licensed landscape architects and one is a licensed architect.

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[1] This criterion does not conflict with the numbers listed in the Minimum Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Accredited Status (p. 5). Those numbers are minimums and are expected for emerging programs and programs that are becoming established to enroll a small number of students.

Assessment 3: Does the strategic plan or long range plan include action item(s) for addressing the adequacy of the number of faculty?

Team Comments: The strategic plan does not adequately address the number or expertise of faculty needed for the new and emerging Master's Program as envisioned by the department.

Assessment 4: Are the number of faculty adequate to achieve the program's mission and goals and individual faculty development?

Team Comments: The program has adequate faculty to appropriately address all of its responsibilities.

F. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

**Recommendation affecting accreditation*:*

The published requirements in item (2) Scholarship of 3.3.2 Tenure Guidelines and Procedures of the School of Architecture should be examined and potentially revised to reflect the expectations in keeping with the scholarship mission of the university. Increased clarity is imperative for the consistent interpretation of scholarly expectations for promotion and tenure at all levels of review.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1.Develop a Memorandum of Understanding, comparable to that developed for the Community Planning Program (also located in the School of Architecture) to ensure that the necessary authority of the Program Administrator and faculty be formally recognized.

Examples of Appropriate Recommendations Affecting Accreditation:

Arrange the curriculum with greater flexibility and less conflict in order to meet both major objectives of the MLA curriculum; providing "basic competency in the fundamental aspects of design and technology," and "advanced study in an area of concentration."

A specific plan for the full use and maintenance of computer technology for faculty and students should be developed and implemented.

Integrate the use of computers into the curriculum.

Develop a clear set of measurable objectives for the program which are linked to the curriculum.

Improve balance between theory and practice within the curriculum.

Examples of Inappropriate Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

Add a GIS course to ensure all students have knowledge of GIS.

Hire two additional landscape architecture faculty to reduce student/faculty ratios in studios.

Increase funds allocated to program for purchase of computer hardware and software.

Change the administrative structure to make landscape architecture a separate department.

Require all students to participate in a study abroad program.

Convert the program from a four year to five year program.

Team Member Misconduct

Conduct

LAAB expects all visiting team members to act as professionals. Visiting team members must refrain from engaging in any conduct which might be deemed unprofessional or inappropriate. For example, no team member should make any statement or engage in any activity which might offend the reasonable sensibilities of representatives of the program. Conduct which will not be tolerated under any circumstances includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Comments that might be construed as showing disrespect for the program, its representatives or the sponsoring institution.

- Comments or actions that may be otherwise inappropriate for workplace settings, such as:

    Offensive or demeaning terms of a sexual, racial, ethnic, or similar nature;

    Unwelcome suggestions regarding, or invitations to, social engagements or work-related social events.

    The deliberate or careless creation of an atmosphere of sexual harassment or personal intimidation; or

    The deliberate or careless expression of jokes or remarks of a sexual, racial, ethnic, or similar nature to or in the presence of individuals who may find such jokes or remarks offensive.

Any team member who fails to act in a professional and respectful manner at all times may be dismissed immediately from the team by the team chair.

Appendix A

TEAM CHAIR VISIT CHECK LIST

BEFORE VISIT

1. ___   Make travel arrangements and notify program.

2. ___   Review Self-Evaluation Report (should arrive about
   45 days before visit.) Expect to be contacted by LAAB Principal Reader

3. ___   Contact other team members, discuss assignments.

4. ___   Discuss schedule with program.

5. ___   Review Accreditation Standards and Procedures and Visiting Team Guidelines.

6. ___   Exchange home phone numbers with team members,
   program head and accreditation manager to be used in case of emergency.

DURING VISIT

1. ___   Introduction and orientation session with the team, review SER and other materials.

2. ___   Review team member responsibilities and potential interview questions.

3. ___   Complete and sign Recommendation Form.

AFTER VISIT

1. ___   Complete team report within 10 days.

2. ___   Send copies of report to team members and   accreditation manager.

3. ___   Submit expense voucher to LAAB

Appendix B

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION TO THE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITATION BOARD

Date of Visit _____

Institution _____

Degree Title _____

Visiting Team Recommendation

_____   Initial Accreditation

_____   Accreditation

_____   Provisional Accreditation

_____   Accreditation Denial.

Signatures:

_____

_____

_____

Accreditation

Granted when all standards are met or when one or more standards are met with recommendation, and continued overall program quality and conformance to standards are judged likely to be maintained.

Accreditation may be granted up to six (6) years.

A program receiving accreditation may be required to submit special progress reports at the discretion of LAAB.

Provisional Accreditation

Granted when one or more standards are met with recommendation and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall program quality or conformance to standards is uncertain. Provisional accreditation may be granted up to two (2) years. This status shall not be granted more than twice without an intervening period of accreditation. Provisional status is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to be appealed.

Initial Accreditation

Granted on a first review when all standards are at least minimally met and the program's continued development and conformance to the accreditation standards is likely. Initial accreditation may be granted for up to six (6) years. Programs receiving initial accreditation must submit a special progress report after two or three years (time determined by LAAB). LAAB will review the progress report to determine if an accreditation review should be scheduled immediately or as originally scheduled when initial accreditation was granted.

Accreditation Denial

This status results when one or more standards are not met. This determination is subject to appeal.

Appendix C

**LAAB ACCREDITATION VISIT
EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT VOUCHER**

Please type or print clearly. This information is needed to process your reimbursement.

NAME:

ADDRESS**:

 ** Please indicate if this is a new address: _____ yes ____ no

PROGRAM VISITED:

DATE OF VISIT:

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Transportation:

Airfare:

Local Costs:

Lodging:

Meals:

Other:

TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT:

Signature:

**Return this voucher with all receipts to: Accreditation Manager, American Society of
Landscape Architects, 636 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-3736**