

August 24, 2010

Safei Hamed, Ph.D., ASLA,
Professor and Director
Landscape Architecture/Landscape Studies Program
Chatham University
Woodland Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Dear Professor Hamed:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board at its August 6-7, 2010 meeting granted accreditation for a six (6) year period to the course of study leading to the first professional MLA degree at Chatham University, subject to review of annual reports and maintenance of good standing.

Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis. The six-year period of accreditation ends June 30, 2016. Accordingly, the MLA program is next scheduled for a review during the spring of 2016.

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

Enclosed is a copy of the final visiting team report and a list of recommendations affecting accreditation (to be responded to in annual reports) and suggestions for improvement. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting.

The number of suggestions provided to the program is larger than the LAAB typically chooses to make. However, the Board recognizes that the program is becoming established and felt the suggestions could be helpful.

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,

Richard Hawks, FASLA
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Esther L. Barazzone, President

**Chatham University
MLA Program
LAAB Meeting
August 6-7, 2010**

Summary of Recommendations and Suggestions

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation:

1. Rigorously implement the new curriculum in as compressed a time frame as possible (Standard 3).
2. Review in detail student outcomes, products from course work, upon completion of each course and modifications to course syllabi made to adjust for any shortcomings and build on positive results (Standard 3).
3. Clearly instill already identified core program principles such as sustainability, community based design, fundamental landscape architectural skills and processes and scholarly input to planning and design within the curriculum (Standard 3).
4. Continue to monitor and advance the level of scholarly rigor in the thesis process, including content and committee chair and members (Standard 3).

Suggestions for Improvements:

1. Continue to develop a clear set of measurable objectives that are linked to the mission and objectives and continue to evolve the program's long range plan (Standard 1).
2. Update program literature and related PR material to reflect the curriculum changes (Standard 1).
3. Ensure that the criteria and procedures for faculty evaluation such as performance reviews, promotion and tenure, and contract renewal are clearly stated and implemented (Standard 2).
4. Find funding for enrichment activities such as lecture series and specialized workshops (Standard 2).
5. Evaluate the new program evaluation criteria and process (Standard 2).
6. Continue discussions and interaction between all faculty, new full time and adjunct faculty on a regular basis such that the new curriculum can be implemented in a manner that directly addresses the mission, goals and objectives of the program (Standard 4).
7. Implement ways for faculty to share with students their scholarly activities and interests (Standard 4).
8. Reassess the compensation program for adjunct faculty (Standard 4).
9. Consider re-evaluating the relationship between credit hours and contact hours (Standard 4).
10. Consider the addition of a lead-in short program before the start of the first semester that would better equip students with a non-design background towards a faster and smoother transition into the MLA program (Standard 5).
11. Consider the development of a buddy/mentor system among the three years of students (Standard 5).
12. Develop a more systematic and formalized communication protocol with alumni (Standard 6).
13. Continue plans for development of an alumni board (Standard 6).

14. Continue the evolution of bylaws to assure the MLA Board meets the current and future needs of the program including the formation and implementation of a mentoring program for students (Standard 7).
15. Continue develop and implementation of the Board mentoring subcommittee (Standard 7).
16. Continue the development of criteria for engagement in service projects in terms of learning objectives, documentation, evaluation and communication (and/or dissemination) (Standard 8)
17. Provide a large format scanner (Standard 9).
18. Routinely assess studio spaces to determine teaching suitability (Standard 9).
19. Explore the acquisition and incorporation of an informational image/slide system, such as the Madison Digital Information Database (Standard 9).
20. Continue the acquisition of scholarly periodicals and volumes that enhance the research capabilities of the MLA program (Standard 9).
21. Explore the need for defining the identity and recognition of the program given its remote location of the main Chatham campus and the more distant location of Eden Hall (Standard 9).