



Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture

Board Members

August 11, 2023

Educators

Weimin Li, Ph.D., ASLA
California State Polytechnic University

Daniel H. Ortega, ASLA
University of Nevada Las Vegas

Allan Shearer, Ph.D., FASLA
University of Texas at Austin

Michael Fleischacker, RLA, LEED AP
Associate Professor and Department Chair
Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Sciences
Delaware Valley University
Doylestown, Pennsylvania 18901

Practitioners

Erin Degutis, ASLA, RLA
SWCA Environmental Consultants

Dale Jaeger, FASLA, PLA
WLA Studio

Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA, PLA
LAAB Chair

Dear Professor Fleischacker:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its July 10, 2023, meeting granted provisional accreditation for a period of two (2) years to the course of study leading to the professional BSLA degree at Delaware Valley University (DeVal). This status is subject to review of annual reports and maintenance of good standing.

Public Representatives

Derrek Niec-Williams
Howard University

Patty Reece
The Volland Store

David N. Yellen
University of Miami School of Law

Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis. The two-year period of accreditation ends June 30, 2025. Accordingly, the BSLA program at DeVal is next scheduled for a review during the spring of 2025.

ASLA Representative

Kona Gray, FASLA
EDSA

LAAB Accreditation Standards state an academic unit that offers a single professional degree program at the continuing full accreditation status has a faculty instruction full-time equivalence (FTE) of at least five instructional faculty, at least four of these faculty members hold a professional degree in landscape architecture, at least three of whom are full-time in the department. See LAAB Accreditation Standards, Minimum Requirement for Maintaining Accreditation, p. 6.

CELA Representative

Roxi Thoren, ASLA
LAAB Chair-Elect
Pennsylvania State University

At the time of initial accreditation in 2017, the program met FTE requirements of at least three FTE instructional faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, at least one of whom is full-time. However, given the increase in FTE for programs seeking re-accreditation, DeVal received a Recommendation Affecting Accreditation (Recommendation) that stated "Anticipated retirement of two senior faculty and replacement of them with faculty with landscape architecture degrees is essential to achieve requisite FTE faculty numbers for the accreditation standard of 5 FTE faculty with landscape architecture credentials for programs seeking re-accreditation (Standard 2)." However, the DeVal BSLA program only has one full-time faculty member, and that faculty member splits their service to the institution both as an educator and as a program administrator. At least eight of the eleven Recommendations appear to be program-level administrative issues that may be more easily addressed via the addition of at least two more full-time faculty members, allowing the program administrator more time to focus and address administrative issues.

CLARB Representative

Christine Anderson, ASLA, PLA
LAAB Secretary
Mark Thomas

Director

Kristopher Pritchard

As such, given that; there was a long and serious discussion by LAAB concerning the program. The DeVal BSLA program does not meet the minimum requirement of three full-time faculty members with professional degrees in landscape architecture, and the number of Recommendations increased from one in 2017 to eleven in 2023.

Therefore, LAAB voted to grant DelVal provisional accreditation for a period of two (2) years which will require an accreditation visit to take place during spring 2025, allowing DelVal time to meet all minimum requirements for maintaining accreditation.

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

Enclosed is a list of recommendations affecting accreditation. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting. 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,



Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Benjamin E. Rusiloski, Ph.D., President

Delaware Valley University
BSLA Program
LAAB Meeting
July 10, 2023

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. Initiate a long-range planning process. The program is currently revising its curriculum, but the planning process needs to be broader and more comprehensive including clear alignment between institutional, school, and program mission goals and objectives, strategic priorities, professional competencies, learning outcomes, key performance indicators as well as assessment processes and corresponding timeline to evaluate, measure, and advance progress (Standard 1).
2. Develop systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout the program. While the University created a President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion in 2019 and the institution's values embrace respect and inclusion, there's no evidence that specific DEI policies or action plans have trickled down to the department or program level that prepares faculty and students with a broad range of cultural competencies to navigate a diverse professional world as applied to its educational goals, community engagement projects, and student activities (Standard 1).
3. Disclose all the requisite information about the professional landscape architecture degree in the program's promotional literature and website. This will require the Program to work with department, school, and university administrators to identify, collate, and report this information on a regular basis (Standard 1).
4. Increase program faculty numbers from the current one full-time faculty member to three full-time faculty members. This is the minimum standard for a single professional degree program at the continuing full accreditation status (Standard 2).
5. Increase competencies in construction documents, geo-spatial analysis, and graphic representation in preparation for professional practice and licensure. Beyond compartmentalized modules or courses, these competencies need to be fully integrated throughout upper-level studio sequence to demonstrate their holistic application as part of the design process (Standard 3).
6. Develop clear procedures, methods, and metrics for curriculum evaluation incorporating all Program instructors and external professionals (Standard 3).
7. Integrate adjunct and part-time faculty into the curriculum evaluation and revision process (Standard 5).
8. Formalize a process to systemically evaluate teaching effectiveness of all faculty (Standard 5).
9. Provide DEI awareness training for faculty as part of the Program's larger adoption of DEI values and policies (Standard 5).
10. Improve Program facilities to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Life Safety Code, and applicable building codes. In addition to not complying to ADA standards, the Team observed a leaking roof and non-functioning water fountains that, according to faculty and students, has been reported but nothing done. The team is also concerned with life-safety non-compliance of the workshop, including a lack of mandatory safety training for all equipment (Standard 7).
11. Replace and upgrade computer hardware in the studio space to support the software needs for students to be prepared for professional practice (Standard 7).