



Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture

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Stephanie Rolley, FASLA
Program Head
Landscape Architecture Program
College of Architecture, Planning and Design
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Dear Professor Rolley :

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its February 5-6, 2016 meeting granted accreditation for a period of six (6) years to the course of study leading to the first professional MLA degree at Kansas State University. This status is 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 December 31, 2021. Accordingly, the MLA program is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2021.

In making its decision, 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 list of recommendations affecting accreditation (to be responded to in annual reports) and considerations for improvement. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting.

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, appearing to read 'Gary Kesler', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Gary Kesler, FASLA
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Kirk H. Schulz, President

**Kansas State University
MLA Program
LAAB Meeting
February 5-6, 2016**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

N/A

Considerations for Improvements

1. Monitor student retention rates carefully should the current academic advisor be given additional advising responsibilities. Consider and discuss options for sharing administrative and advising resources such that it is possible to retain a dedicated academic advisor that specializes in the requirements of the MLA and RCP degrees to work on recruiting students in the first or second year, and advising students in the programs from their third year on (Standard 2).
2. To improve diversity and student recruitment outcomes, it is suggested that the faculty and students consider community service and outreach opportunities that will expose lower income and vulnerable population groups as well as ethnic and racially diverse groups to the field of landscape architecture (Standard 2).
3. In future reviews and evaluation of the curriculum, consider ways in which students can have greater flexibility to pursue minors and electives in outside areas of interest. Further, it is suggested that a review of post-professional MLA curricula from across the country be used as a context to consider the number and scope of electives for an advanced MLA degree. The team recognizes that the breadth and scholarly accomplishments of the faculty provides a strong basis for integrating a broad spectrum of issues and topics relevant to the profession into required coursework, but believes that offering students more opportunity to pursue outside areas of interest could inform their work on complex landscape architectural issues (Standard 3).
4. It is suggested that the upcoming curriculum review pay specific attention to the well-being of the faculty, administration and students to assure opportunities for professional development are factored into everyone's work load. This may require consideration of expanded responsibilities on the part of committee chairs or potentially identifying an associate/assistant department leadership position. Consideration should be given to shaping the curriculum outcome measures so that wellbeing and personal and professional development are included in the evaluation. This suggestion intends to assure long-term sustainability of the program in a continued environment of full community well-being. It is also suggested that a legacy planning be undertaken in the context of the mission statement and vision so that leadership can be mentored during future transitions (Standard 5).
5. Opportunities to work with the Center for Engagement and Community Development are one of the areas in which the Landscape Architecture department contributes community service. It would be beneficial to all parties if there were a structured approach to vetting potential community service projects that come through the

CECD such that a good match between community needs and faculty/departmental expertise can be made. It is suggested that representatives from all units that work with the CECD meet to discuss ways in which that structure can be implemented, such that community groups seeking technical assistance from the University have a clear process to follow for submitting technical assistance requests, and that the CECD and all departments working on such projects have a clear process for responding to those requests appropriately. This discussion should also consider funding concerns for such projects; some requests may warrant pro bono work, but some may warrant funding to adequately respond to the request (Standard 6).

6. The new APDesign building broke ground during the accreditation site visit. During the construction period, studio spaces, computer labs and classrooms are relocated to remote facilities (“APDesign West”). Construction is projected to take about two years. We suggest that the department include a progress report on the construction, adequacy of temporary facilities, and whether timelines are being met in its annual report to LAAB. Once construction is complete, the annual reports should detail how the new building is functioning for the department until move-in and transition to the new spaces is fully completed (Standard 7).