



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

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Board Members

March 16, 2020

Educators

Jack Ahern, Ph.D., FASLA, FCELA  
Chair-Elect  
University of Massachusetts

Ned Crankshaw, FASLA  
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Lynn Ewanow  
Kansas State University

Edmundo R. Colon-Izquierdo, ASLA  
Associate Professor and Program Coordinator  
Landscape Architecture Graduate Program  
School of Architecture  
Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Practitioners

Joy Lyndes, ASLA, Chair  
Coastal Sage

Ramon Murray, ASLA  
Murray Design Group, Inc.

Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA, PLA

Dear Professor Colon-Izquierdo:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its February 7-8, 2020 meeting granted provisional accreditation for a period of two (2) years to the course of study leading to the professional MLA degree at Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (PUPR). This status is subject to review of annual reports.

Public Representatives

Gilbert Holmes  
University of LaVerne College of Law

Tom Jacobs  
Mid-America Regional Council

Lucinda McDade, Ph.D.  
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis. The two-year period of provisional accreditation ends December 31, 2021. Accordingly, the MLA program is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2021.

LAAB Accreditation Standards state an academic unit that offers a single first-professional degree program at the continuing full accreditation status has an 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. 3.

ASLA Representative

Leonard Hopper, FASLA  
Weintraub Diaz, LLC

For more than a decade, Puerto Rico has been in a financial crisis and recession, which has caused enrollments to decline. Since 2013, one of the full-time faculty members resigned, leaving just one full-time faculty remaining. Due to institution-wide financial hardships, that full-time position has not been filled. Since then, the faculty has been composed of the program coordinator and, at least, eight adjunct professors, three of whom are licensed, four others with landscape architecture degrees. Also, "austerity measures" at the institutional level have negatively impacted the program by demoting the program director to program coordinator and increasing the academic burden of the program coordinator.

CELA Representative

Roxi Thoren., ASLA  
University of Oregon

CLARB Representative

Christine Anderson, ASLA, PLA  
Mark Thomas

There was a long and serious discussion by LAAB concerning the program. The board recognizes that in September 2017, Puerto Rico suffered catastrophic damage from Hurricanes Irma (category 4) and Maria (category 5) and more recently, 100+ earthquakes have rocked the island with the most powerful being a 6.4-magnitude temblor. And while the island, and program, are slowly recovering there has been incalculable damage done to the human resources, both physically and morally, as well as facilities which suffered from wind and water impact. As such, the board recognizes the importance of this program, the only graduate landscape architecture program in the Caribbean region, and is giving special consideration regarding meeting the minimum requirements for accreditation due to recurring natural disasters.

Executive Director

Kristopher Pritchard

Therefore, LAAB voted to grant PUPR provisional accreditation for a period of two (2) years which will require an accreditation visit to take place during fall 2021, allowing PUPR 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joy Lyndes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Joy Lyndes, ASLA  
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Ernesto Vazquez Barquet, President

**Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico  
MLA Program  
LAAB Meeting  
February 7-8, 2020**

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendations Affecting Accreditation**

1. Update the program mission statement, educational goals and strategic plan to reflect the post-Hurricane Maria context and provide a roadmap for next generation curriculum, faculty development, student enrollment, alternative funding sources, program leadership and processes for continuous improvement. This should be seen as an investment by the institution and school to ensure a sustainable future for the program (Standard 1).
2. Return the program administrator title to Program Director. This will assign equivalent status held by peer professional programs in the institution and provide appropriate status to the position when recruiting and representing the program outside the university (Standard 2).
3. Discontinue the unfair practice of pro-rating adjunct faculty pay based on enrollment numbers as imposed by the university (Standard 2).
4. Implement the university's laddered (1-3-7), multi-year contract policy for full-time faculty in the School of Architecture. Remediating this unfair practice will demonstrate an institutional commitment to the landscape architecture program and increase its stability by enabling full-time faculty to plan beyond a one-year time horizon (Standard 2).
5. Hire additional faculty to achieve the LAAB minimum requirement of three (3) full-time faculty members for a program seeking re-accreditation (Standard 2).
6. Reconsider and reduce the number of required teaching assignments/contact hours for the program coordinator, and recognize the value of their time commitments and contributions for program leadership, administrative oversight, and community/university service (Standard 5).