



Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture

Ron Leighton
Accreditation Manager

March 13, 2012

Board Members

Professor Marisabel Rodriguez, ASLA, Head
School of Landscape Architecture
Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico
P.O. Box 192017
San Juan, PR 00919-2017

Practitioners

Larry D. Walling, FASLA
National Park Service

Richard N. Gardella, ASLA
Gardella Associates

Karl Von Bieberstein, FASLA
Newman Jackson Bieberstein

Dear Professor Rodriguez:

Educators

Stephanie Rolly, FASLA
Kansas State University

Karen C. Hanna, FASLA
California State Polytechnic University

Gary Kesler, FASLA
Pennsylvania State University

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board at its February 24-25, 2012 meeting granted initial accreditation to the course of study leading to the first professional MLA degree at the Puerto Rico Polytechnic University. This status is subject to review of a satisfactory progress report to be submitted by July 1, 2014, 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, 2017 and the beginning is the time of the LAAB visit in spring 2011. Accordingly, the MLA program is next scheduled for a review during the spring of 2017.

Public Representatives

Linda Battarain
Judith Ellis
Gennady Schwartz

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

ASLA Representative

David H. Walters, ASLA

On behalf of the visiting team, I would like to thank you for the hospitality extended to them by the faculty, staff, and students.

CELA Representative

Mary Myers, Ph.D., ASLA
LAAB Chair
Temple University

Sincerely,

CLARB Representative

Ellis Antonez, FASLA

Dr. Mary E. Myers, ASLA
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Ernesto Vazquez Barquet, President

**Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico
MLA Program
LAAB Meeting
February 24-25, 2012**

Summary of Recommendations and Suggestions

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. Develop policies that describe the faculty expectations and criteria for promotion and retention (Standard 2).
2. The Director and the Provost should establish clear enrollment thresholds that will result in increases in faculty, staff, resources and facilities (Standard 2).
3. Bring the building into complete ADA compliance (Standard 7).

Suggestions for Improvements

1. The university and program would benefit from enhanced multiple media recruitment materials. One of the key messages needs to focus on the fact that students can come from non-design backgrounds (Standard 1).
2. The two full time faculty, particularly the Director, need more time to devote to the growth and development of the program (Standard 1).
3. The School should develop more concisely written goals and objectives that include measurable metrics to measure progress (Standard 1).
4. Review the placement of the school of landscape architecture in the organizational structure of the university to maximize the programs potential to achieve its mission and objectives (Standard 2).
5. Increase the integration of allied professions into studio courses by reaching out to other faculty within the university (Standard 3).
6. Review the curriculum for opportunities to enhance student understanding of physical terrain and the relocation of the Representation: Tools and Techniques course in the sequence of courses (Standard 3).
7. Establish an advisory council to assist in curriculum review and student recruitment (Standard 3). Develop a more formalized process for assessing student learning outcomes (Standard 4).
8. Conduct annual reviews of faculty clarifying expectations for job performance (Standard 5).
9. Create stability in the program with multi-year contracts (Standard 5).
10. A future faculty hire with construction knowledge would strengthen the faculty greatly (Standard 5).
11. If the administration decides that the LA School will remain in La Casita, a study of the interior space utilization of the building should be undertaken and funding should be encumbered for the rehabilitation when possible. The existing facilities are inadequate if the program achieves its enrollment goals (Standard 7).
12. Extend after-hours access to the studios and improve Internet connectivity (Standard 7).