March 21, 2023

Dear Professor Barthmaier-Payne:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its February 9, 2023, meeting granted accreditation for a period of six (6) years to the course of study leading to the professional MLA degree at Rhode Island School of Design. This status is subject to review of an interim report to be submitted by December 1, 2024, together with annual reports and maintenance of good standing.

The interim report should provide an update, with documentation demonstrating compliance when necessary, on each Recommendation Affecting Accreditation (RAA) in order to demonstrate compliance, or steps towards compliance, with the respective standard. In accordance with LAAB policy, programs have up to two years to resolve their RAA(s). Upon receipt of the two-year Interim Report, the LAAB will accept that the RAA(s) have been addressed or, if not, the program will be given two more years to resolve the issues. A second Interim Report will be due to the LAAB on or before four years from the receipt of this Accreditation Action Letter. If the RAA(s) are not successfully resolved or, in the case of longer term issues, substantial and verifiable progress has not been made at that time (after four years from this Accreditation Action Letter) then the program may be moved to provisional status, it may be suspended, or in some cases the program’s accreditation may be revoked.

Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis. The six-year period of accreditation ends December 31, 2028. Accordingly, the MLA program at Rhode Island School of Design is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2028.

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

Enclosed is a list of recommendations affecting accreditation (to be responded to in the interim report via the process laid out above) and an Interim Reporting template. 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,

Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Crystal Williams, President
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. Develop and approve a long-range Strategic Plan for the Landscape Architecture Department and its MLA program, involving the faculty of the Landscape Architecture Department in concert with the institutional leadership (Standard 1).

2. Review and update the website for the Landscape Architecture program/department to ensure that it provides clear and direct access to program information as specified in the LAAB “program disclosure” requirements (Standard 1).

3. Resolve the degree nomenclature that the Department has described as hosting two distinct MLA degree programs, i.e., MLA I and MLA II, to instead conform with the LAAB requirement of single accredited MLA program (e.g., one MLA degree with two tracks) (Standard 1).

4. Continue current endeavors to make improvements and adjustments in the content, sequencing, and cross-course integration to make the curriculum more effective and make more efficient use of student time and energy (Standard 3).

5. Enhance alumni support and involvement from the professional community in the program which could include the creation of an advisory board, the establishment of mentorship programs, opportunities for fundraising activities to support the program and expand scholarship, and other creative ideas to stimulate involvement (Standard 6).

6. Develop better records of alumni and systematically communicate with them (Standard 6).
Section 1.
Name of Institution:
Name of Department:
Name of Program:
Date of Decision Letter:

Section 2.
Recommendation Affecting Accreditation: (Copy/paste verbatim the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation identified in the Decision Letter that is the subject of this Report and attach the Decision Letter. If Decision Letter identified more than one (1) Recommendation Affecting Accreditation, complete an Interim Report for each Recommendation.)

Section 3.
Action Taken by Program: (Describe the action taken by the Program to address the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation identified in Section 2 of this Report. Attach any appropriate documentation that supports the action taken by the Program)

Section 4.
Prior Action Taken by Program: (If applicable, attach any prior Interim Report related to the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation described in Section 2 of this Report)