

March 8, 2011

Robert S. Harris, FAIA, DP-ACSA  
Professor Emeritus  
Director, Landscape Architecture Studies  
School of Architecture, Watt Hall 204  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0291

Dear Professor Harris:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board at its February 25-26, 2011 meeting granted initial accreditation to the course of study leading to the first professional MLA degree at the University of Southern California. This status is subject to review of a satisfactory progress report to be submitted by July 1, 2013, 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, 2016. Accordingly, the MLA program is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2016.

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.

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,

Whitney Talcott, FASLA  
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Dr. C. L. Max Nikias, President

## **University of Southern California**

### **MLA Program**

### **LAAB Meeting**

**February 25-26, 2011**

## **Summary of Recommendations and Suggestions**

### **Recommendations Affecting Accreditation**

1. Initiate the process of long-range planning for the program's continued development by the new permanent Program Director (Standard 1).
2. Include in the strategic or long range plan information on faculty hiring both in terms of the rate of expansion and areas of focus (Standard 1).
3. Appoint a permanent MLA program director credentialed in Landscape Architecture (standard 2).
4. To complement and complete the program's emphasis on emerging technologies and innovative design strategies, adjust course offerings to ensure that students learn basic design implementation skills such as detailing and practical applications of grading for stormwater and circulation (Standard 3).

### **Suggestions for Improvements**

1. Add additional tenure-track or tenured faculty to support program growth (Standard 2).
2. Hold MLA program faculty meetings (Standard 2).
3. Encourage a more active student ASLA chapter (Standard 4).
4. Hold regular meetings for curriculum review (Standard 5).
5. Carefully monitor the teaching/research/service workload balance for tenure earning faculty (Standard 5).
6. Encourage self-promotion at the Program level of service learning and other public outreach activities, with emphasis on institutional reporting (Standard 6).
7. Constitute an advisory board specific to landscape architecture (Standard 6).