



Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture

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Accreditation and Education
Programs Manager

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Brian Katen, ASLA
Landscape Architecture Program Chair / Associate Professor
School of Architecture + Design
Virginia Tech
121 E Burruss Hall
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

Dear Mr. Katen:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its July 17-18, 2015 meeting granted accreditation for a period of six (6) years to the course of study leading to the first professional BLA degree at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and 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, 2020. Accordingly, the BLA program is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2020.

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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephanie Rolley'.

Stephanie Rolley, FASLA
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Timothy D. Sands, President

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
BLA Program
LAAB Meeting
July 17-18, 2015

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

No Recommendations

Suggestions for Improvements

1. The faculty should pay particular attention to the alignment of their mission statement, strategic plan and other documents with the university, college and school. Establishing a systematic process for assessing these documents and making appropriate changes needs to take place. Establishing a more systematic approach is important as the program hires new faculty who may not have the shared collective knowledge enjoyed by the current faculty (Standard 1).
2. The faculty should engage in a rigorous examination of the various tenure and promotion guidelines/policies that exist at the university, college, school and program levels to determine and, if necessary, clarify/rectify inconsistencies between the various documents (Standard 2).
3. The program should undertake thorough documentation of outcomes assessment and the impact/actions taken that affect the curriculum or other practices (Standard 3).
4. The faculty should continue to review formal (classroom-based) versus informal (not included in a course but expected that students will obtain the prerequisite knowledge via peer or external means) instruction of digital technologies. If continued assessment indicates problems with informal instruction, the faculty are encouraged to consider reprioritizing formal course content to include digital technologies (Standard 4).
5. The alumni advisory board is a valuable asset that is not being fully utilized. Opportunities for greater interaction between the alumni, faculty and students should be organized to help provide career counseling, potential employment and networking and development opportunities. Right now the network is only working because of the active work of the existing faculty (Standard 6).
6. The administration and faculty are encouraged to continue to seek ways to integrate the college's students in the studio spaces allocated to the college. It is important to have the foundation students exposed to second through fifth year students of all disciplines. As the college and university administration consider their space planning objectives, having all of the college's students in one location will further strengthen the community within the college and foster greater collaboration among all of the disciplines (Standard 7).