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January 25, 2013

To: John Schaufelberger, Interim Dean, College of Built Environments

From: Gary Farris, Interim Dean
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Department of Landscape Architecture (2011-2012)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of the Department of Landscape Architecture. Detailed comments on the program can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, department, and administrators (February 14, 2012)
- Landscape Architecture self-study (March 15, 2012)
- Site visit (April 19-20, 2012)
- Graduate & Professional Student Senate Report (May 1, 2012)
- Review committee report (May 9, 2012)
- Landscape Architecture response to the review committee report (June 6, 2012)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (January 24, 2013)

The review committee consisted of:

Lucy A. Jarosz, Associate Professor, UW Geography (Committee Chair)
Miriam Kahn, Professor, UW Anthropology
Robert S. Harris, Professor Emeritus, School of Architecture, University of Southern California
Frederick Steiner, Dean, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on January 24, 2013. After discussion, Council recommended continuing status for the department's degree programs, with the next review to be scheduled for the 2021-2022 academic year. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the department and its degree programs include the following:

Program Strengths

The review committee noted that the Department of Landscape Architecture is small but exceptionally strong, entrepreneurial and engaging. The department is a model of productive energy and creativity. According to the Dean of the College, it is not only the smallest department but also the one that has played a key role in efforts to dislodge old habits and refocus the college. Specific strengths of the department include:

- *Faculty.* The outstanding quality of the department lies in its hard-working, productive and creative faculty. Faculty strengths have been growing in the past ten years, especially with the addition of three new faculty members. Faculty are well known for their commitment to community engagement.
- *Undergraduate Program.* The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program is highly ranked. Its students, primarily Washington residents, are enthusiastic and highly motivated to enter the profession.
- *Graduate Program.* The Master of Landscape Architecture program attracts students nationally and internationally from excellent universities. The review committee was impressed by the students as mature, thoughtful, and smart.
- *Pedagogy.* The department exhibits pedagogical innovations such as its Green Futures Lab, design/build projects, and international projects.
- *Other Strengths.* The review committee noted the following as reasons for the department's strong national and international reputation: the professional advisory council and strong ties to the professional community; interdisciplinary engagement; capacity to work on national, regional, and local scales; focus on community work and service learning; innovative emphasis on urban ecological design and design/build capstones; and commitment to issues of social equality and global health;

Challenges & Risks

- *Resources.* Maintaining the resources to continue the current success of the department may be a challenge in the present budgetary climate. These include resources to extend the curricular and research developments in line with the interdisciplinary focus of the department; keeping pace with the need for curricula that respond to innovations in the field as it grows; increasing student enrollment; and being effectively positioned to recruit a diverse faculty and student body.
- *Lecturers and Teaching Assistants.* State-line funds for lecturers and teaching assistants are no longer available to the department. The department has maintained its current positions through "use of tuition returns based on Activity-based Budgeting (ABB), Provost's Relief Funds, and faculty course buyouts for grant research."
- *Undergraduate Program.* The department's current Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) takes 5 years to complete. A competing alternative model, the Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture (BSLA), takes four years. The department may be able to attract more students if the length of time to graduation were shorter.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

There is basic concurrence between the department and the review committee report. Several specific notes:

- *Resources.* The department underscored the concern regarding budget uncertainty for the department as of Spring Quarter, 2012. As the college implements Activity Based Budgeting (ABB) in coordination with department chairs, the department plans to significantly increase productivity in terms of undergraduate SCH and graduate enrollment. The department concurs that modest investments will yield high returns in supporting lecturers, TAs, labs, staff, and equipment, and it anticipates increased revenue through ABB will allow it to make some of these investments.
- *Undergraduate and Graduate Programs.* The department is pursuing the review committee's suggestion of exploring alternative scenarios for the future. This includes a possible increase in the size of the Master of Landscape Architecture class and development of a new undergraduate major, the Bachelor of Urban Ecological Design.
- *Curriculum.* Curriculum changes are being made in response to specific review committee suggestions.
- *Fundraising.* The department is working with its advisory council and the college's advancement office towards a more sustained fundraising effort.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Council endorses the review committee's findings and recommendations, and recommends continuing status for the department's programs with review in 10 years (2021-2022).

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Ana Mari Cauce, Provost and Executive Vice President
John Sahr, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Jeff Hou, Associate Professor and Chair, Landscape Architecture
Members of the Landscape Architecture Review Committee
Members of the Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President