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August 15, 2008

To Phyllis M. Wise
Provost and Executive Vice President
Douglas J. Wadden
Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Gerald J. Baldasty
Interim Vice Provost and Dean
James Soto Antony
Associate Dean for Academic Programs
The Graduate School

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James Soto Antony", written over the printed name.

Re: Department of Construction Management Review

At its meeting of January 10, 2008, the Graduate School Council met with the Chair of the team that reviewed the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) and Master of Science (M.S.) in Construction Management offered by the Department of Construction Management, Gerry F. Philipsen (Professor, Communication), and review committee member Vandra L. Huber (Professor, Management and Organization), and with John E. Schaufelberger (Professor and Chair, Construction Management) and Eddy Rojas (Associate Professor, Construction Management). Daniel S. Friedman, Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, was also in attendance. The program review included a charge meeting on January 24, 2007, between members of the review committee and administrators involved in the review. The site visit, held on February 16-17, 2007, included in-person participation by external reviewers Abdol Chini (Professor, Building Construction) of the University of Florida and John Murphy (Professor and Head, Building Sciences) of Auburn University.

The last review of the Department was completed in March 2002. At that time, the Graduate School Council recommended a shorter review cycle in recognition of challenges the Department faced and its transition with a newly appointed Chairperson.

At the January 10 Council meeting, Professor Philipsen outlined findings and recommendations from the Review Committee Report (submitted April 24, 2007). The committee found that

the Department of Construction Management is a vibrant and energetic unit. The undergraduate program is a significant strength of the department. High student demand exists for the major, the employment of program graduates is outstanding, and industry employers support the program in various ways and consider it to be “state of the art in terms of contemporary industry practice.” The committee recommended that the B.S. in Construction Management degree program be continued.

The review committee expressed qualified support of the graduate degree program. They recommended that the M.S. in Construction Management be continued, but urged the department to increase the rigor of the graduate degree program. The committee noted that construction management is emerging as a scholarly discipline which presents potential for faculty research and professional leadership in the field. The committee noted the low student completion of the master’s program and considered it to be symptomatic of shortcomings in regard to program quality. The department Chair acknowledged that one factor in low degree completion rates was the difficulty that students experienced in completing the thesis. A majority of the graduate students are employed and pursuing the degree on a part-time basis.

The committee acknowledged the department Chair’s leadership and his involvement in every aspect of the unit’s administration. The committee noted the faculty has not defined a clear intellectual vision for the scholarly direction of the department regarding scholarship in construction management and made two recommendations: (1) that the faculty work to articulate a vision and rationale for construction management as an established professional field, (2) that a strategic plan be developed to establish the department as a leader in research and teaching in the field.

The Council supported the review committee’s recommendation that the B.S. and M.S. degree programs in the Department of Construction Management be continued with the next review to occur in 2017-2018. The Council urged the faculty to articulate a clear intellectual vision and direction and seriously consider the issue of rigor in the master’s program. The Council further noted that the department should be recognized for its efforts on access and encouraged it to work to increase diversity in the program.

We concur with these comments and recommendations.

c: Daniel S. Friedman, Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Janice M. DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
John S. Schaufelberger, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Construction Management
Jacob K. Faleschini, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate
Construction Management Review Committee
Graduate School Council
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School