

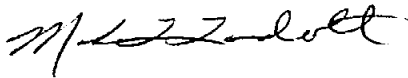
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January 17, 1999

To: Lee L. Huntsman
Provost

From: Marsha L. Landolt
Dean and Vice Provost



Re: Ten-year review of the PhD in Urban Design and Planning, Interdisciplinary Urban Design and Planning Group

Recommended action:

At its meeting on January 7, the Graduate School Council considered converting the PhD in Urban Design and Planning from provisional to continuing status. The Council recognized that the Program has made considerable progress towards achieving continuing status but recommended that the program remain in provisional status for 5 years. I concur with the Council's recommendation. The self-study, report of the review group, and the response of the Group to the review report are attached.

Background:

The PhD in Urban Design and Planning was first housed in the Department of Urban Design and Planning (then the Department of Urban Design, there was a separate Department of Urban Planning at the time) in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (then the School of Architecture). The first PhD was awarded in 1970. The program continued to be housed within the Department until 1989. The 1989 academic program review found that the faculty in the Department of Urban Design and Planning had an unacceptable level of scholarly research and publication to offer the PhD degree at this university, and that there was a lack of support for the program on the part of the Dean of the College. However, it was thought that the program was of sufficient value to the University that it should be salvaged. In response, the Graduate School recommended that an Interdisciplinary Group be formed of faculty selected from throughout the University. The Interdisciplinary Group was formed in 1991 with 4 faculty and the present Interdisciplinary Program for the PhD in Urban Design and Planning was initiated in the fall of 1991. There are currently 31 faculty in the Group. Seven have primary appointments in the Department of Urban Design and Planning, six in Geography, three in the Graduate School of Public Affairs, two in each of the College of Forest Resources and the School of Marine Affairs and the Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Political Science, and one each in the Departments of Anthropology, Civil Engineering, History, Sociology, and Zoology.

Enrollment fluctuates in the range of 20-25 and approximately 2-3 degrees are awarded annually. There is a strong demand for graduates of this program. Funding for the Group, other than faculty salaries, comes from the Graduate School and includes 1/3 staff FTE (\$13,240 annually), \$1,500 annually for support of a part-time instructor, \$31,482 for 3 9-month research

assistantships (sum of tuition and benefits), \$2,000 for operations, and \$800 annually for discretionary temporary support. A 9-month recruitment position was also awarded to the program last year.

The Graduate School Council considered the review of the Group in two meetings. At the first, it met with the members of the internal review committee. This meeting resulted in a list of concerns transmitted to Professor Anne Vernez Moudon, Program Director, for discussion at the meeting of January 7 (a copy of this letter is attached). Many concerns, including mentoring of junior faculty in the Department of Urban Design and Planning¹, improving service to graduate students and balancing the membership of faculty with interests in Urban Design with those that have interests in Urban Planning, were adequately addressed by the Director at the meeting. The following is a list of unresolved concerns and a summary of the current status of each respective issue.

1. *Program Director.* Shortly after the review group's site visit, Professor Gary Pivo, then Director of the Program and Chair of the Department of Urban Design and Planning, announced his resignation from the University in favor of a position at the University of Arizona. In the course of the review, Professor Pivo was very strongly complimented on his leadership of the program and much of the success of the program was attributed to that leadership. The review group recommended that the new Program Director be an individual who would also be Chair of the Department of Urban Design and Planning. If that is not possible, it was hoped that the new Director and the new Chair would work in very close collaboration with regard to the interdisciplinary PhD program.

Professor Anne Moudon of the Department of Urban Design and Planning has replaced Dr. Pivo for a two-year term as Program Director. Professor Moudon's primary appointment is in the Department of Urban Design and Planning. The Department Chair position has not been filled and the role this individual will play in the Program is seen to be very important. Only 7 of 13 faculty in the Department are members of the Interdisciplinary Group; the remainder do not have active research programs. The new chair will be an important determinant of the research strength of the Department and the strength of the Interdisciplinary PhD Program. He/she will also be an important factor as we decide how to proceed when Professor Moudon's term as Director expires.

2. *Vision and Strategic Plan.* The review committee and the Graduate School Council observed that the self-study was deficient in stating a vision and presenting a coherent strategic plan for the future of the Group. Establishing a clear vision and strategic plan is particularly important during the transition in leadership. The Group responded that it has begun this process. The Group sees itself as (1) interdisciplinary and (2) as unique in linking planning of metropolitan areas with design. Very few programs offer this combination. It is expected that the strategic plan will be finished by the end of the academic year.

The Graduate School Council asked whether this program should, at some time, be moved back to the College of Architecture and Urban Planning. The Director replied that only 1/3 of the Group is currently comprised of College faculty (Group membership is addressed in item 3 below). Dean Finrow added that the Group could ultimately be housed in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, the College of Arts and Sciences or the Graduate School of Public Affairs.

¹ It is particularly noteworthy that new faculty in the Department have begun to establish strong extramurally funded research programs.

Currently, the leaders of these other units play at best a minor role in the Program. This situation presents continuing challenges in fulfilling the interdisciplinary vision of the program. Involvement of faculty from outside the Department of Urban Design and Planning waxes and wanes as research activity, availability of time and involvement with supervisory committees fluctuates. Other interdisciplinary programs share this problem.

3. *Group Membership.* The Review Committee developed the impression that the active faculty in the program were largely drawn from the Department of Urban Design and Planning. Professor Moudon responded with a list of current faculty showing that 7 of 31 current members come from the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and an additional 4 come from other units of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning. While fifteen of the current faculty have served on the Interdisciplinary Program Steering Committee, relatively few faculty from outside the Department seem to participate regularly in Program retreats or colloquia. Thus, although the program can list significant involvement from departments outside the Department of Urban Designing and Planning, one cannot be sure at any given time as to just who the active faculty are. This is problematic for both prospective and continuing students. Moreover, the Interdisciplinary Program is not assured of their continuing commitment to the program.

In order to be converted to continuing status, the Group must either demonstrate ongoing active involvement of an interdisciplinary core of faculty or the Department of Urban Design and Planning must be sufficiently strengthened to support the program without firm commitments from outside the Department. Support of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Director of the Graduate School of Public Affairs may be needed to encourage a strong interdisciplinary commitment.

It should be recognized that the Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning is supportive of the program as shown by the recent appointments of junior faculty to the Department of Urban Design and Planning who have initiated strong research programs, and by commitment of space for the PhD students in this Program. It is also clear that the unit that stands to lose the most if this program were not to continue is the Department of Urban Design and Planning. The review committee stated that with the appointment of one individual in addition to the replacement for Professor Pivo the Department would have sufficient faculty strength to support the program. However, it also stated that the present administrative location could aid the development of a strong vision and strategic plan as well as help solidify core course requirements and program options. Prior to the next review, the College and the Department will have to directly address resumption of primary responsibility for this PhD program that seems to be central to their missions.

4. *Enrollment.* The review committee observed that the number of students enrolled in the program should be increased to sustain a healthy learning environment. The program has recently increased enrollment to meet this objective. However, enrollment at the level desired is jeopardized by a lack of commitment of graduate student support from faculty grants. This situation is due in part to the fact that the first loyalty of the faculty from outside the Department of Urban Design and Planning is to the graduate programs of their respective departments. Faculty from outside the Department interviewed by the review committee commented that the departmental faculty should strengthen efforts to secure extramural support for research that could be used to support graduate students. If the solution to the issue of financial support is faculty grants (as is likely), it appears that there is little recourse other than to grants obtained by faculty in the Department of Urban Design and Planning.

In conclusion, interdisciplinary programs established without permanent funding (and even some of those with such funding) are at a considerable disadvantage in relation to departmentally

based programs. They must compete for faculty attention with departments that provide faculty lines, merit raises, approve promotions and make the initial argument for retention in the face of competitive offers. Decisions made in each of these areas are very often based on the contributions of the individual faculty member to the department's programs rather than to those of the University more generally. Thus, the first priority of the faculty is to the programs sponsored by their home departments, leaving interdisciplinary programs to scramble for support of students on faculty grants and faculty effort in guiding the program.

It is recognized that innovative research and scholarship often comes at the boundary of traditional disciplines. Furthermore, strong graduate students often do not feel the disciplinary constraints that commonly bind those more seasoned in the academy. It is certainly in the University's interest to continue to encourage the interdisciplinary work of the faculty and education of its graduate students. Continued success in this regard requires addressing the administrative and loyalty problems faced by many interdisciplinary programs even as it is recognized that lack of permanent commitments allows such programs to form and dissolve as the current demands of scholarship and education dictate.

With regard to this specific program, a decision to convert to continuing status requires attention to the issues raised above. A favorable decision would be encouraged by more formal commitment from units other than the College of Architecture and Urban Planning. Alternatively, the Department of Urban Design and Planning must be strengthened to the point that the Program becomes less dependent on the contributions of other units.

c. Richard L. McCormick, President

Jerry V. Finrow, Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Anne Vernez Moudon, Director, Interdisciplinary Group in Urban Design and Planning

Debra Friedman, Associate Provost for Academic Planning

John T. Slaterry, Associate Dean for Academic Programs

Augustine McCaffery, Assistant to the Dean

Graduate School Council

Urban Design and Planning Review Committee