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To. Lee L. Huntsman
Provost

From: Marsha L. Landolt
Dean and Vice Provost

Re Department of Urban Design and Planning 10-year Review

Summary and recommended action

At its meeting of February 22, 2001 the Graduate School Council met with the members of the Department of Urban Design and Planning review team and Departmental and College representatives. The Graduate School Council recommended continuation of the Master's in Urban Planning (MUP), the only degree program administered by the Department. It also recommended a review in 5 years that focuses on the issue of whether the PhD in Urban Design and Planning should be returned to the Department, while maintaining the advantages offered by participation of faculty outside the Department. I concur with these recommendations and will undertake the review in 5 years in consultation with Dean Mugerauer.

The self-study, the report of the review committee, the Department's response and correspondence to the Department prior to the second meeting of the Council are attached.

Background

The Department consists of 15 FTE tenure-track faculty, 5 of whom hold joint appointments in other departments, and approximately 60 MUP students. About 18 MUP degrees are awarded annually. The faculty of the Department contribute to several other degree programs, including the BA in Architecture, BA in Community and Environmental Planning, Master's in Architecture, and the Interdisciplinary PhD in Urban Design and Planning housed in the Graduate School. The department also offers an undergraduate minor and a certificate program in urban design open to all Master's students in the College. The faculty shoulder significant administrative duties within the College, Faculty Senate and various Centers. These duties plus a medical leave put the Department, by the Chair's estimate, at approximately half-strength. The Department was last reviewed in 1990 at which time the MUP was continued for 10 years, but the PhD offered by the Department was removed to the Graduate School due to the persistently weak research performance of the Department.

The review team found the Department and its programs to be severely space-constrained. They made specific suggestions regarding the remodeling of Gould Hall that seem to be consistent with Dean Mugerauer's intentions. Space is a college-wide problem with no easy solution.

The review team found the MUP to be fundamentally sound with the potential to assume national leadership. The team complimented the steps the Department has taken to work closely

with complimentary units on campus, this had been a concern during the 1990 review. The team specifically commented upon the new dual Master's program in tandem with the Evans School. In addition, the Department has recently developed new areas of specialization for students, including real estate and disaster planning. However, the new initiatives, implemented without the elimination of less valuable activities, are seen to potentially weaken the Department, particularly as it continues to develop a research identity. Specific suggestions for the MUP program and responses by the Department are listed below

1. Review and revision of core courses, as called for by the recent accreditation review, seem to be overdue. The Department has responded that this activity should be complete by Fall 2001.
2. The department should revise the content of the quantitative methods course so as to add depth. This suggestion has been adopted. It will be facilitated through the additions of Dean Mugerauer and Professor Campbell to the faculty.
3. The specialization tracks should be assessed to ensure that they are adequately supported and satisfy course guidelines. Thought should be given to discontinuing some. This concern seemed to be shared by the accreditation review team. The Department is undertaking a review, but notes that not all of the specializations are staffed entirely by Departmental faculty. Thus, they gain some ability to support the diversity through alliances.
4. Review courses and better sequence them so as to eliminate unproductive duplication of content and ensure appropriate depth. This has been undertaken by the Department.
5. Develop and implement procedures for monitoring studio courses so as to ensure that they meet student needs. The Department has identified structural changes that will address this problem.

The review team suggested that the Graduate School conduct an interim review next academic year to check on progress within the MUP program. I will request a report from the Department to this effect.

The review team was asked for a recommendation regarding the return of the PhD program to the Department. The Department is continuing a transition from a traditional practice focus to a more research-based emphasis with a focus on urban ecology and environmental planning. The team commented that a critical mass of dedicated researchers is still lacking; however, several significant improvements were noted such that the Department may be sufficiently strong in five years to support the program. The Department replied that it is strengthening its ties with the Interdisciplinary PhD program and would welcome its return, but also recognizes the invaluable dimension added by the participation of faculty from other departments. The Department also commented on lack of Graduate School financial support for a department-based program.

The following is a summary of the major suggestions made by the review team for the Department. Several are already being responded to.

1. A senior hire with potential for academic leadership should be sought to strengthen the research environment and to assure effective mentoring for junior faculty. A hire of this caliber would be very useful to this department and is strongly endorsed. The review team was concerned that the faculty might expect too much from such an individual and urged it to concentrate on someone who would attract extramural funding.
2. Several suggestions were made for improvement of internal operations, among them:

- a. Adopt written procedures for promotion, tenure and merit review
- b. Establish a process for mentoring junior faculty
- c. Enhance the involvement of students in departmental governance
- d. Develop a faculty hiring plan in conjunction with the strategic planning process
The plan should recognize resource constraints, curriculum choices and departmental priorities.

The review team hopes that the planned hires in real estate will be incorporated in a manner that strengthens existing programs rather than dilutes them by adding a new appendage. The Department responded that they have considered the issue and regard the new hires as an opportunity to strengthen the planning program. Split (joint) appointments with other units outside the College were encouraged by the review team. Review teams for other Departments have suggested parallel hires with complimentary departments as an alternative to joint appointments. Given the number of joint appointments in UDP, the parallel approach should perhaps be considered.

- e. Re-engage senior faculty in departmental leadership and other critical functions.
It is important to note that a number of the Assistant and Associate Professors believe that some of the most-senior faculty do not consistently contribute as much to departmental leadership and to developing the other faculty as they should. A more active and positive engagement with departmental curriculum, and especially with the professional development of the Assistant and Associate Professors, is desired. The poor track record of promotions in the department was a special cause of concern. The review committee noted a, "high level of estrangement that frequently seems to characterize interpersonal relationships within the Department" and felt that common space for informal meeting would be beneficial. The Department has begun to address these very critical issues. Promoting respect for, and active nurturing of, Assistant and Associate Professors would considerably improve the climate.
- f. Increase the involvement of the Professionals Council in faculty discussions and internship placements.
- g. Generate better financial support so that the strongest applicants can be attracted to the graduate program. This situation has improved considerably from the time of the last review. New initiatives suggest that the improving trend will continue.

This Department has made more progress in the past 10 years than it had in the preceding 20. The faculty are aware that considerable work remains and are taking up the tasks. A senior hire would be an important aid, but success is in the hands of current faculty.

Enclosures

- c: Richard McCormick, President
Hilda Blanco, Professor and Chair, Department of Urban Design and Planning
Debra Friedman, Associate Provost for Academic Planning
John Slattery, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
Robert Mugerauer, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Frederick Campbell, Dean, Undergraduate Education
Members of the Review Committee:

Professors Robert Lee (Chair), Pete Guest, Robert Plotnick, Richard Klosterman, The
University of Akron, William Siembieda, California Polytechnic State University.
Graduate School Council
Augustine McCaffery, Assistant to the Dean
Danielle LaVaque-Manty, Assistant to the Dean