

Department of Architecture
University of Washington
RESPONSE

to

"Ten Year Review of the Department of Architecture"
18 October 2001

The faculty and administration of the Department of Architecture are delighted that the ten-year review resulted in an unqualified recommendation to continue both the professional Master of Architecture and the pre-professional Bachelor of Arts (Architectural Studies) degree programs for the next decade. We are proud to be recognized as among the top group of architecture schools in North America, and as among the very best architecture schools in public institutions. We are especially gratified that almost all of the areas of concern that are identified in the review are attributed to the erosion of resources that the Department has experienced, rather than any shortcomings of our faculty, students, staff, administration or curriculum.

As requested by the Graduate School, we have prepared this brief response to the "Ten Year Review of the Department of Architecture." This reflects discussions with the faculty and with Dean Bob Mugerauer of the College of Architecture & Urban Planning. This response includes a summary of the Committee's findings and recommendations, an outline of anticipated responses by the Department, and a description of the dissemination process that will lay the ground work for our future actions.

Committee Findings

The Committee Report recognizes the Department's *vibrant academic environment*, specifically citing the exceptional faculty, superb teaching, excellent students, solid curriculum, and centers of achievement (international education, design/build, design computing are noted) that give the Department national and international distinction.

The Report identifies the Department's *pivotal role in the community, state and Northwest region*, indicating that it is a venue for intellectual exchange, a clearinghouse for information, and a source of knowledge generation.

The Report clearly recognizes the Department's *stewardship of resources*, stating that the Department has become stronger even in the face of declining central support.

At the same time, the Report notes *areas of concern related to faculty well-being*, including faculty overload due to loss of FTEs, unequal distribution of thesis load, loss of key areas of expertise, potential for "burn-out"—all areas specifically related to the erosion of central support and the resulting loss of faculty positions.

In addition, the Report notes *areas of concern related to students*, including a lack of adequate financial support, lack of clarity and direction in thesis, lack of exposure to the national/international architectural community through visiting faculty—areas primarily related to the reduction of centrally provided resources.

And, the Report notes *areas of concern related to day-to-day operations*, including a low level of staff support and need for additional computing resources—both related to insufficient central support. The Report also notes the need for additional space.

Committee Recommendations

The Report recommends the continuation of both the professional Master of Architecture and the pre-professional Bachelor of Arts (Architectural Studies) degree programs for the next decade.

The Report proposes several interventions at the Department level including continuing with the next steps of strategic planning, becoming more entrepreneurial, improving administration of thesis, and streamlining some aspects of graduate admissions.

At the University level the Report recommends five new faculty positions, as well as additional resources for computing, for staffing, and for enrichments such as visiting faculty, faculty travel and conference participation. The Report also indicates the need for more space.

The Report offers a clear vote of confidence indicating that the Department has excelled in spite of reduced support, and thus recommends that the University "allocate funding . . . [in support of the] . . . viability of this highly successful program." The Report clearly questions whether the level of success the Department has achieved can continue if resources that have been lost are not replaced.

Department Responses to be Undertaken

The Department will continue its strategic planning process as recommended in the Report. This process will focus on both the question of reinforcing the areas of excellence that currently exist as well as developing specific proposals related to the additional five faculty positions proposed by the Committee to be provided to the Department. This will provide additional support for the Committee's recommendation of five new faculty positions by showing how these will enhance the distinction of the Department.

This strategic effort will also support the current efforts of the College of Architecture & Urban Planning in preparation for the anticipated University Capital Campaign.

The Department has already begun a discussion of the revision of the Master of Architecture thesis. A preliminary proposal was developed by the Chair and has

been under review by a faculty committee. It is hoped that changes to the Master of Architecture thesis may be adopted some time in the next academic year.

Department faculty will continue to work with other faculty in the College on the proposed college-wide Ph.D. program. That program would foster additional research efforts in the College which would facilitate the seeking of external grant and contract funding.

The Department administration will also work with the CAUP Dean's Office and the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Outreach in the development of courses and/or programs which may contribute some new revenue to the Department.

The Department will need to look to the College and University for their responses to the Review Committee's recommendations for increased central support for five more faculty positions (partial replacement of FTE lost to budget reductions), as well as increased support for staff, students, enrichments and space.

Dissemination Process

In mid-2000, the Department of Architecture made the "Ten Year Self-Study" available to its faculty, students, and stakeholders. The Department has also made the "Ten Year Review" Report widely available. Copies of the report were distributed to all faculty and the report was discussed at the regular departmental faculty meeting, 6 June 2001. Copies were also made available to members of the Department of Architecture professional stakeholder group, the Professionals Council. Information about the report has also been made available to students in the Department. A copy of the "Ten Year Review" was also included as an Appendix in the *2001 Architectural Program Report* prepared by the Department and submitted to the National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc., in August 2001, in preparation for an accreditation visit early in 2002.

The Department believes this widespread dissemination of these reports contribute to the community-building necessary to achieve our goals and undertake responses to the recommendations.