

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF 224 GOULD HALL  
OF BUILT BOX 355726  
WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTS SEATTLE, WA 98195-5726

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

January 25, 2010

TO: James Antony  
The Graduate School, University of Washington

FR: Daniel Friedman  
Qing Shen



RE: Response to the Report of the Master of Strategic Planning for Critical Infrastructure  
(MSPCI) Review Committee

We have carefully read the "Report of the Master of Strategic Planning for Critical Infrastructure (MSPCI) Review Committee." We very much appreciate the Review Committee's excellent job in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the MSPCI program, and in making the specific recommendations for substantially improving the program. In this memo, we outline the initial response of the College of Built Environments (CBE) and the Department of Urban Design and Planning (UDP) to this report.

## 1. Continuation of the Program

Our basic position regarding the future of the MSPCI program is the same as the Review Committee's: the program should be continued. We agree with the Committee on the vital importance of planning and managing the nation's critical infrastructure, and on the great value of the MSPCI program in providing the educational opportunity for current and future professionals responsible for safeguarding critical infrastructure. We believe that for the foreseeable future, the market demand for this kind of educational opportunity will continue to grow rapidly primarily because climate change will create fundamental vulnerabilities in infrastructure. There will be increasing need for infrastructure planners who can effectively help cities and regions develop mitigation and adaptation capacities. As the Committee points out, the MSPCI program has clear strengths in academic reputation, faculty resource, educational content, and Advisory Council and alumni support, and therefore is well-positioned to taking a leading role in meeting this market demand.

## 2. Program Improvement

In light of the challenges facing the MSPCI program, we agree with the Review Committee that some major adjustments must be made in order to revive the program. Following the recommendations of the Review Committee, we plan to make the following efforts:

First, we will form a committee to undertake strategic planning for the program. This MSPCI Program Committee, consisting of members representing the faculty, Advisory Council and alumni, will be charged to reexamine the program mission, curriculum, and management, and sharpen the program focus through critical assessment of its competitive advantages in light of the growing

competition (i.e. similar degree programs offered by other universities) and shifting market demand (e.g. growing needs for strategic planning for critical infrastructure in connection to climate change). The Committee will discuss issues of strategic importance, including the topics suggested by the Review Committee. We expect that the Committee will recommend significant adjustments to the MSPCI program, such as reducing total required credits, adding courses on greenhouse gas emissions mitigation and climate change impacts and resiliency, creating flexibility for single course enrollment, using an exist evaluation tool to assess program outcomes, and involving more CBE faculty with particular areas of expertise.

Second, subject to recommendation of the MSPCI Program Committee and financial support from UWEO, we will hire a program director. The director will devote time to both leading and teaching the MSPCI program. Further, we will explore ways to involve addition faculty member across the College of Built Environments in teaching courses within the program. We may also share faculty resources with other institutions by collaborating in course offerings. In the longer term, possible within 2 years, we will connect the instructional needs of the program to the hiring of a tenure-track faculty member in the area of environmental planning, with expertise in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Third, the MSPCI program director will work with the advisory Board, UWEO staff, and UDP chair to develop a marketing strategy for the program. The effort will aim to clearly connecting the program focus with the knowledge and skills to be acquired by the students. It should also identify venues and target audiences for marketing the program. We understand that an effective marking strategy is essential for securing an annual enrollment of 25-30 students required for the long-term financial health of the program. We expect the Program Manager (Karen Fishler) to start some ground work for making a marketing plan before the program director is hired.

Finally, we will ensure timely instructor feedback. We understand the critical importance of timely and frequent instructor feedback to the success of online education. In fact, shortly after the Review Committee's visit, the MSPCI program established an instructor feedback policy. Course instructors are required to provide feedback within one week of receiving student work.

### 3. Schedule of Key Actions

We propose the following schedule for your consideration:

Spring and Summer 2010, strategic planning undertaken by MSPCI Program Committee

Fall 2010, hiring of MSPCI program director

Fall 2011, first students enrolled in the adjusted MSPCI program

Spring 2012 (tentatively), hiring of a tenure-track faculty member with expertise in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation