

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
SEATTLE, WA 98195

*College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
Department of Urban Design and Planning*

October 23, 1998

Marsha L. Landolt  
Dean  
The Graduate School  
Box 351240  
University of Washington

Dear Dean Landolt:

Thank you for forwarding the committee report on the review of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Urban Design and Planning. The report has been circulated to the interdisciplinary faculty and to the doctoral students. We appreciate very much the scope of the review and the care with which the committee carried out its task. We have already started work on a number of the recommendations and are devising a schedule to address some of the other recommendations.

The following Program response has been drawn from comments supplied by individual faculty and students and from preliminary discussions among Steering Committee members.

First, we need to draw your attention to a few "errors of fact" that we would like to see corrected:

- For some reason, the report lists 14 students in the program (page 2). According to Program records there were 24 students in the program as of May '98 (including nine foreign students). In 1997-98 there were 17 students in residence. This fall the program has 28 students, including six new ones, for a total of 22 students in residence. This discrepancy in student count has an impact on later conclusions on page 4. Generally, we believe the Program has an adequate number of students considering its current mission and level of funding. Nor do we believe the pool of applicants constitutes an issue—there are over 30 applicants each year, at least 12 of whom are considered very strong candidates for admission. The more significant issue relates to the size of student cohorts which, at four per year, has made it difficult to offer special courses. On the other hand, although this year's admitted cohort of six students satisfies the quota for special courses, it also requires a higher level of support for students.

- On page 3 it is reported that in the MUP Program an independent project has replaced the thesis as a degree requirement. In fact, the independent or professional project is an alternative to and not a replacement of the Master's thesis. As such, this change has not significantly reduced faculty teaching responsibilities at the Master's level.

Second, we have already begun to implement the following recommendations:

- Improve the quality (and perhaps number) of courses offered in the first year, including a weekly seminar for students to share research activities and interest (page 7).

The *Ph.D. Colloquium* (UDP 591) course has been restructured this fall to cater specifically to first-year students, introducing them to planning in this region as well as helping them to devise a plan of study and to identify sources of funding and potential financial support.

The *Candidates Colloquium* (UDP 598) has been re-instituted. It is required of all students in residence and focuses on student dissertations and faculty research. It has been extremely well attended by students and faculty this fall.

The *Faculty Forum* will be offered Winter and Spring Quarters, with weekly presentations by faculty. Both the Candidates Colloquium and the Faculty Forum will serve to introduce students to issues related to research design.

Several events promise to further engage the students and the faculty. One is the visit of Professor Allan Jacobs (UCB) for an entire week beginning January 12. Prof. Jacobs is one of the UW Walker-Ames lecturers. His visit provides an opportunity for students to meet with various planning organizations in the region. And the other is the Faculty Winter Seminar that we will hold in February for the third consecutive year. This seminar brings nationally recognized planners to campus, and it should be continued in the next biennium. In the spring the Department of Geography will host Profs. David Harvey and Donna Haraway. Arrangements will be made for our students to participate in activities related to their visit.

The Steering Committee is also beginning to review courses in research offered in other disciplines for the purpose of strengthening student preparation in methodology.

- Improve mentoring of students especially in the first year, including special needs of foreign students (page 7).

Each entering student has an Advisory Committee with which s/he works closely. At the present time the Steering Committee is devising a system to monitor student progress on a quarterly basis, one which will involve their faculty advisors.

The Teaching Fellows program is in full-swing this year with four students teaching a course during Fall Quarter. It adds an important new dimension to the program, formally training students for future teaching careers. Professor Paul Niebank was hired with special funds from the UW, combined with a Graduate School allocation to the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program, to guide the Teaching Fellows, among other tasks.

- Acquire space for individual students and group meetings (page 7) . Five workstations have been secured in a room near the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and a sixth station in the Departmental offices. A formal request has been made to the Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning to allocate permanent space for the program for Fall '99. We anticipate this request will be considered favorably by the Dean.

Third, the Steering Committee will be working on the following recommendations over the next few months:

- Develop a vision and a strategic plan to implement this vision (pages 6 and 7). This work will be based on the program's self-study and involve Prof. Westerlund as the Chair of UDP. It should be noted that the Department of Urban Design and Planning has a two-year-old strategic plan which takes into consideration this Ph.D. Program. Our own vision and strategic planning effort will consider the items that follow.

- Re-constituting the IUDPG faculty (page 5). We will work to establish criteria to gauge faculty involvement in the program. We recognize that three faculty members have retired or left the University since the report was completed. We may want to consider differentiating between the program's "core" faculty and "associated" faculty.

Recently hired faculty in the Department of Urban Design and Planning are establishing their own collaborative ties within the University, ties which we need to consider as we restructure (new relationships developing with PRISM, the Program on the Environment, and the Community and Environment Program).

- Open two additional faculty positions, one to replace Gary Pivo and the other to augment current faculty in the area of urban design (page 6 and Prof. Marans' letter). The Director and members of the Steering Committee are currently involved in defining the position to replace Prof. Pivo in the Department of Urban Design and Planning. As regards the second position, the current search for a new faculty member in the field of urban design being pursued in the Department of Architecture cannot respond directly to the needs of the Ph.D. program. However, it may be possible to find a candidate who can contribute to the doctoral program as well.

- Consider the Urban Design component of the program (page 6 and Prof. Marans' letter). The review committee may not have been aware of on-going efforts to add faculty from Architecture and Landscape Architecture to the Interdisciplinary Group. There are now two additional senior-level faculty from the Department Architecture in the Interdisciplinary Group. A junior faculty person from Landscape Architecture is likely to be included this fall.

In addition, some of the faculty in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning will be reviewing the potential of a College-wide doctoral program over the course of '98-99. This effort will be closely related to the vision and plan developed by the PhD Program's Steering

Committee. Faculty involvement has been secured to link this effort to the Interdisciplinary PhD Program.

- Expand program of "extramural" research (pages 5 and 6). This is a lingering problem both in our program as well as in other programs at this and other universities. On the one hand, incentives are still lacking that encourage faculty to carry out research and support students. We need to address this issue. On the other hand, we recognize that extramural research is on the increase in the Department of Urban Design and Planning. Specifically, recent hires have all been research-oriented faculty who are or will soon be important additions to the Group. Clearly also, we need to seek research-oriented candidates for the new positions.

- Develop rewards for non-DUDP faculty to contribute to program. This item will be considered along with the creation of incentives for extramural research.

- Develop measures of success for the program (page 5). Several Interdisciplinary Group members have expressed concern about the review committee's low ranking of the program with respect to peer institutions. Measures of program success should include not only extramural research, but also student support, publications, and placement of graduates. It is suggested that the program is faring extremely well in terms of student support and placement of graduates. These measures are important to include in an interdisciplinary program such as this one to recognize that research funding is extremely scarce in several areas of interest.

- Considering the future of doctoral education (Prof. Conn's letter). The current project administered by CIDR at the U.W. is an excellent opportunity for us. We are very interested in collaborating with CIDR on this subject, especially in the areas of doctoral education, higher education, and professional development.

I trust this response explains how we would like to address the committee's recommendations. We look forward to continuing discussions on making this program one of the best in the country.

Regards,

Anne Vernez Moudon  
Director of the Interdisciplinary Urban Design  
and Planning Group  
Professor of Architecture,  
Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design and Planning

cc: Jerry V. Finrow, Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
Faculty and Students of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Urban Design and Planning  
Frank Westerlund, Chair, Department of Urban Design and Planning  
AVM:td