

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WA 98195

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

February 13, 2001

Dear Graduate Council:

On behalf of the Department of Urban Design and Planning, I thank the review team for their thoughtful and thorough work. I became Acting Chair in September of 2000 when Frank Westerlund took a medical leave of absence for the year. In October of 2000, I received a copy of the Review Team's report and we immediately mobilized to respond to it, in particular to the curriculum concerns. The faculty held a retreat in early November which was facilitated by Lana Rae Lenz of CIDR. We made several decisions at the retreat and organized ourselves into several curriculum committees that have been meeting since then. Although not all committees have completed their tasks, this report reflects decisions taken so far.

Space Needs

We concur with the review team on their assessment of our space needs. The scarcity of space is a CAUP-wide problem. We have conveyed to the Dean our needs in this area—in particular the need for a studio room and graduate student workspace--and he recognizes it as a high priority issue. The department itself is in active pursuit of additional research and office space. The Runstad Real Estate Center and the Urban Ecology Lab have embarked on a collaborative fund raising effort to build out the 4th floor south terrace of Gould Hall, which could generate 5,000 square feet of space. CAUP plans include the building of a computer facility lab in the basement, contingent on Sound Transit funds, which could replace a 4th floor computer lab, thus freeing space for a studio room. In addition, several projects are included in the University's capital facilities plan that could respond to our space needs. However, these may take 4-5 years to reach higher priority within the University list of capital projects. Although there are several projects at various stages of planning which may ameliorate the space problem, there is likely to be no short-term resolution of the problem.

Faculty Recruitment

Unfortunately, this year, a University policy of no new senior hires did not permit us to search for a senior faculty member. In our search for a junior faculty member, the Department identified two major areas of need, one in growth management/land use and another in urban design. Put to a vote, the faculty decided that urban design had the higher priority this year, but that the Department would immediately seek out ways to find resources to hire a land use/growth management expert. The major reasons for the decision were the interest in urban design on the part of a growing number of Master's students and Ph.D. applicants. The search announcement thus reflected the need for an urban designer with a Ph.D. who would be able to teach studios and urban design

410 Gould Hall / Telephone: (206) 543-4190

research methods. The latter would ensure that the person hired could supervise Ph.D. students and have an active research agenda.

We concur with the review team that the faculty of the Department bears a disproportionate burden of administrative responsibility. One of our faculty members has become an Associate Dean, another is a ½ time lobbyist for the Faculty Senate; another is the administrator for the CEP program, and another for the UD program. Combined with Frank Westerlund's medical leave and administrative appointments, I calculated that this year we have 7 ½ FTE faculty to cover the master's (about 60 registered students) and Ph.D. (about 25 students) programs. Administrative loads and resulting use of adjuncts make it more difficult to build an active research agenda. We believe this provides justification for a new line in the department.

The review team noted concern with the upcoming hires in real estate, and how this may re-direct our program. This is a concern. It is in the best interests of the department to ensure that new faculty hires in real estate recognize the links between the real estate development process and the public planning processes, and are prepared to engage in joint research efforts. The real estate program has plans to become a CAUP-wide or university-wide certificate program, and eventually a separate master's program. My own belief is that the urban planning department should be the home of such a program—real estate developers would benefit greatly from understanding the regulatory context of, and environmental constraints on development, and from exposure to design issues. Understanding the regulatory context of development is especially important in a state as heavily regulated as Washington State.

Split appointments, such as Paul Waddell's, are a good way to build links between units across campus and to obtain the critical mass to launch research agendas. We would welcome Graduate School support in identifying and obtaining such split appointments.

Since the review took place, we have had two welcome additions to our faculty that will strengthen our program in the areas of research methods and theory. Christopher Campbell, Acting Assistant Professor, joined our faculty in the fall of 2000. Chris is a sociologist whose work focuses on the relation of the built environment to cultural and social factors. Chris will be available to teach courses in social research methods. Dr. Bob Mugerauer has offered to teach a course on planning history, theory, and ethics and another on qualitative methods. These are courses he taught at UT and are appropriate for both Ph.D. students and Master's.

Location of Interdisciplinary Program

The Department agrees that ideally the Ph.D. program should come back to the Department, but the problem has been, as the review team noted, the lack of resources and of a critical mass of research oriented faculty. The Ph.D. program, where I have been a Steering Committee member for some time, is currently developing a strategic plan, and assessing various options. As part of the strategic planning effort, the Committee has conducted a survey of faculty involved in the program. Two major findings from the survey are that the majority of members of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. group would like to retain the program's interdisciplinarity, and to return the program to the department. Parallel to our strategic planning effort, our dean has just recently initiated a CAUP-wide effort to identify the interest areas for faculty interested in Ph.D. research. The outcome of this effort will be Ph.D. program options for other CAUP faculty that may have implications for the future of the interdisciplinary program.

We recognize the lack of connections between the MUP and the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, and are taking several steps to strengthen the connections. We are reconstituting our specializations in both MUP and Ph.D. to better coincide. This will enable the Ph.D. program to attract more of our Master's graduates, and reduce the need for course offerings in the Ph.D. program.

The Department is more sanguine than the Review Team about the prospects for the return of the Ph.D. program to the Department within the next five years. Two things could facilitate it, both of which the Graduate Council can assist us to obtain: a) a research oriented land use hire; b) 3 R.A. ships per year from the Graduate School. The Review Team noted the need for 2-3 new research-oriented faculty active in securing outside grants or contracts. We are now recruiting for a new research-oriented hire in urban design. An additional research-oriented land use hire within the next year or two will generate the critical mass the Department needs to generate ongoing research funds to sustain doctoral students. If we could count on the graduate school to contribute 2-3 R.A.s per year, this would make up for the RA funds the Department lost some time back as a result of University cuts. The Graduate school RA ships would provide a stable source of student funding to ensure that we could support students even if an expected grant fails to come through. Once these two conditions are met, the Department would be in a position to have the Ph.D. program return. As it is, the department has considerable resources to support the Ph.D. program. Profs. Alberti and Waddell's research grants could guarantee about 4 R.A.'s per year; other faculty could be counted to bring in at least another 2. We have ongoing TA support for at least 2 students throughout the year through our undergraduate program, and another 2 T.A.s can be secured for MUP courses. Lack of resources for current doctoral students is not so much due to lack of resources, e.g., both Prof. Alberti and even Prof. Waddell have had to hire Master's students over the past two years instead of doctoral students because the Ph.D. program has not recruited students interested in the topics of their research or with sufficient GIS skills or other skills to work as their R.A.s. And this can be remedied through more targeted recruiting for the Ph.D. program. Given current resources, an additional research-oriented land use hire, and 3 RA ships from the Graduate School, a departmental Ph.D. program could recruit and support for 3 years an entering class of 4 students per year, which has been the average number of students in the interdisciplinary program

Moreover, the Department is working on two initiatives that could generate ongoing support and research topics for Ph.D. as well as Master's students--a Housing and Urban Development University Partnership Center grant (COPC) to be developed jointly with the Schools of Public Health and Public Affairs, and a joint research center with the Washington State Office of Community Development focused on issues of growth management. The success of either one would guarantee funding for several R.A.s annually, as well as student internships.

In addition to student support, in order to return the Ph.D. program to the Department, department or college administrative resources are needed. Terry Duffey has been instrumental in the operation of the Interdisciplinary program, and her replacement will be critical to the program's success. The Department has suffered many cuts, and continues to bear the brunt of the UIF 1% cuts. Our administrative staff has been overwhelmed with work. But two recent developments will improve the administrative capacity of the department to manage the Ph.D. program: the Dean's office will take over payroll tasks for the Department, and our undergraduate program (CEP) will have its own administrator as of next year. This will considerably free staff resources in our department to provide administrative support for the Ph. D. program. It

should also be noted that increasing resources to support current and new potential Ph.D.-level research activities through ongoing and capital campaign fundraising is a high priority for the new Dean. He is also actively pursuing new interdisciplinary research opportunities with the Deans of other UW units (e.g., Forestry, Public Health, Oceanography and Fisheries, Engineering, Evans School).

On the issue of retaining the interdisciplinary thrust of the existing program, first, urban planning is an inherently interdisciplinary field, and this is the major reason that the program survived as an interdisciplinary program in the Graduate School in its last reorganization. Returning it to the Department would not mean abandoning its interdisciplinarity. I expect that the Ph.D. program could retain the strong links it has developed with various departments and schools across the campus. And, as noted above, discussions in the college may lead to more research associations among the faculty of the four departments. The program could maintain interdisciplinarity by requiring graduate mastery in a field other than planning and continuing to require one or two members outside the department to serve on Ph.D. Advisory committees. Even the governing structure of the Ph.D. program with an interdisciplinary membership could be retained. In short, I believe we could retain the interdisciplinary nature of the current program within its departmental home.

Weaknesses Addressed by PAB

The Department has made a number of decisions to respond to PAB concerns that will be fully implemented by Fall of 2001. We are completing the review of core courses and addressing issues beyond PAB concerns.

With respect to the history and theory of planning processes and practices, equity, social justice, economic welfare and efficiency, and ethics of professional practice--deficiencies in the curriculum noted by the PAB, we will be adding a restricted elective requirement in the curriculum which students can fulfill by taking one or more of several course offerings, at least one of which will be offered annually: A) American urban history; B) History/Theory/Ethics C) Advanced history/theory/ethics. In addition, we are reviewing the content of other core courses to ensure that history, theory, economic values, diversity, and ethics are reflected as crosscutting themes in the curriculum.

Concern with Quantitative Methods Course

The review team's concern revolved around URBDP 510 the Planning Methods course and its attempt to cover too much in one course, including urban design methods. Although the Review Report stated that 510 is the only quantitative course we offer, our program also requires that students take another Advanced Methods course from a restricted electives list.

We concur with the recommendation of the review team in this area. In addition to teaching an urban design studio, the other major teaching requirement for the new hire in urban design will be to teach URBDP 571 Analytic and Research Methods in Urban Design every year. This will free the 510 course from the responsibility to include urban design methods. Moreover, the 510 course is being redesigned into two modules: A) one quantitative, which will include demographic and economic forecasting techniques in planning, as well as planning evaluation methods, both ex ante and ex post, B) a qualitative methods module that will include survey design, and other methods.

With the addition of Chris Campbell and Dr. Bob Mugerauer, we can offer several elective courses to satisfy the Advanced Methods restrictive elective requirement. Prof.

Campbell has offered to teach Survey Design Methods and Ethnographic Methods courses. Dean Mugerauer has offered to teach a Qualitative Methods course. Prof. Miller has been teaching a Program/Planning Evaluation Methods course every other year. And we have been offering a GIS Analysis course annually. We recognize the importance of methods courses for strengthening our research capability and will be placing greater emphasis on the teaching of these courses.

Uneven Strength of the Specializations

The department is embarked in an attempt to define our specializations and to change our program materials to reflect this.

We agree that we have a small faculty, and on the face of it, too many specializations, and that several of them are not well defined.

Our preliminary decisions and plans in this area are as follows:

- 1) We have five specializations--urban design, preservation planning, real estate, land use and infrastructure planning, and environmental planning--but not all of them are operated with in-house resources. As a Department, we participate in two college-wide certificate programs, Urban Design and Preservation Planning. Although historically the department has led these two certificate programs, the administration and course offerings are a college-wide responsibility. We have agreed as a faculty, for the sake of clarity, that students in the M.U.P. program interested in urban design or preservation planning will be enrolled in the certificate programs. As the Review Team noted, the curricula of the two certificate programs are well-defined. The certificate programs will be enriched within the coming year with a new urban design faculty member in the Department of Architecture, and two related hires in the Landscape Architecture Department. Our current search for an urban design faculty member stresses the requirement for an individual with a research orientation that will have an active research agenda, be able to teach analytic and research methods in design, and be ready to advise doctoral students.
- 2) We will have by the end of the year enough real estate courses being offered to qualify as a well-defined specialization within the department. However, this specialization will also soon become a college-wide or university-wide certificate program. Two faculty lines will be added to our department by central administration to develop the certificate program. We are now searching for a senior hire in real estate, and next year we will proceed to search for the junior hire. Currently the course work is being offered by George Rolfe (.5 FTE) and other staff primarily funded by the Runstad Center.
- 3) The Department is committed to two in-house specializations which are at the core of planning practice and research today: land use and infrastructure planning and environmental planning. Without additional resources, we have 5 to 5 ½ FTE (Alberti, Bae, Blanco, Miller, Waddell, Westerlund) whose course-work and research interests lie in these two areas. Most of us have active research agendas in this area, although some of us are more successful in attracting research contracts than others. We are engaged in developing programs for these two specializations that include history/theory, tools/methods, practice and supervised research in these two areas. An

additional research-oriented hire in one of these two areas will help us fill the gaps identified in our curriculum review and enable us to pursue more funded research in these areas.

- 4) Land use has been a long-standing specialization within the department, but changes in faculty have refocused this specialization into a land use and infrastructure planning specialization with a specific emphasis on transportation planning. Since Washington is a growth management state, and growth management incorporates both land use regulations and infrastructure planning and finance, this new refocus is more responsive to our regional context. This refocus also responds to growing recognition of the importance of the land use/transportation link, and more recently to the land use/water link. Paul Waddell and Christine Bae have added several courses to this refocused specialization and Don Miller will be developing a new advanced course on growth management implementation issues for the specialization. We have more than 2 FTE faculty teaching in this specialization.
- 5) Environmental Planning is the new specialization in our department. This specialization has been focused on two areas: urban ecology, led by Marina Alberti, who has developed a number of courses in this subject with faculty from several schools across the campus—the emphasis here is on the relation of urban patterns to natural systems; and natural hazards mitigation, which Frank Westerlund led, and Bob Freitag, the director of the Natural Hazards Mitigation Institute continues in his absence—the emphasis here is in policy and planning to mitigate the effects of potential natural hazards. The two tracks are based on a common core of courses in urban ecology, environmental management and analytic methods. In addition to Profs. Alberti and Westerlund, several faculty, including Christine Bae, Don Miller, and myself are engaged in current research related to this area and can offer courses in this specialization. There are at least 2 FTE faculty that can teach in this area. In addition, this area also benefits from interdisciplinary cooperation with Landscape Architecture, viz., Prof. Christina Hill, and with other units of the University, including Forestry, Oceanography, Geography, and Civil Engineering.

Student Concerns

We are completing a review of our courses to eliminate unnecessary overlap, and to ensure appropriate content and assignments. In addition, we are working with CIDR to offer a series of brown bags for the faculty on instructional improvement. We have already instituted a number of measures to respond to student concerns in this area, including mid-term evaluations.

We recognize that studios have been inconsistent in quality. We are addressing issues of faculty instruction in studios. A thorough assessment of the problems, including student feed-back, indicates the need to identify the studio topic well ahead of time, to have more time available to establish relations with the client, and to collect and analyze data. Our review has led us to conclude that we need to establish a two-course sequence to mount successful first year studios, which are required of all students. The first course in the sequence will organize the students for team work, and offer some instruction on group process; collect and analyze existing information; develop, administer, and analyze survey and other study instruments; and conclude with a scope of

work for the studio. This first course will ensure preparation for the studio proper on the part of faculty as well as students.

I am conducting this year's studio, in order to develop a process for identifying studio topics and establishing guidelines for 1st year and other studios. I am developing a relationship with Washington State's Office of Community Development (OCD) that will enable us to identify as a studio topic a community in need of general plan assistance in the fall quarter, and their collaboration in providing one of their professional staff to join the studio instructional team. This relationship with OCD will enable us to plan ahead our studio courses, and provide valuable professional expertise in the teaching of our studio courses.

In addition to ensuring the quality of our first year studios, which all students are required to take, the committees in charge of the specializations have been also asked to determine their studio needs and to set guidelines for studio instruction.

Internal Operations

Since our priorities thus far this year have been to respond to curriculum issues, and to search for a new faculty member, we have not been able to attend to all the issues identified by the Review Team so far, but recognize their importance. Several areas of concern are in my work program for the spring quarter. These include: promotion/tenure/merit review procedures, mentoring, written procedures for internal department operations, and staffing plan. However, the Department has made progress in the areas of student involvement, and professionals council, and has plans to address senior faculty leadership, strategic planning, and student funding.

- 1) Student involvement. I encouraged the development of a student planning association early in the Fall, and this week elections for the association were held. I have held several meetings with students concerned with curriculum issues, and have requested that all faculty committees include student representatives. Since the fall, we have had two permanent student representatives attending our Faculty meetings. In the next few weeks, I will hold group meetings with students and the faculty teaching methods and studio courses this Spring to go over course syllabi and obtain student feedback.
- 2) Professionals Council and Building Closer Links to the Profession. We have established closer connections with the Professionals Council this year. I have ensured greater faculty and student attendance at Professional Council events. Professionals from the Council have been active in our search process. I have given updates on Departmental issues at the two meetings held so far, and have met and obtained their feed-back on our curriculum review. We are also discussing the opportunities for including members of the Council in studio instructional teams, and for other teaching opportunities. In addition, in our effort to make stronger links with the professional community, I have reached out to the Washington State Chapter of the American Planning Association, and we will be jointly hosting several of their brown bag presentations in the Department this spring. Prof. Alberti and I attended a workshop in January 2001 geared to develop a research agenda for the American Institute of Certified Planners in their effort to create stronger linkages between the profession and academic faculty. Prof. Bae was awarded one of three American Planning Association national awards for collaborative projects

provides up to date information on various growth management issues to professionals.

- 2) Advising. As soon as we complete the revision of the curriculum by the end of the quarter, we will revise the program materials, including our web sites. I have hired a student assistant to respond to student concerns about information on resources within the University. More substantively, our curriculum review will formalize thesis preparation and research advising through courses within the specializations.
- 3) Senior Faculty Leadership. One major way in which we can re-engage our senior faculty in the MUP program is by having them develop new advanced courses within our specializations that capitalize on their recent or current work. I am in the process of negotiating two such courses.
- 4) Strategic Planning. We have re-established a committee to carry on with the work. The committee will be interacting with the curriculum review and other committees. I expect the work of this committee will be completed by the end of the winter or the beginning of the spring quarter.
- 5) Student Funding. Departmental faculty have developed or have collaborated on a number of proposals which are still under review, including two UIFs that will bring student funding resources to the Department. By the end of the academic year I believe we will be able to increase the number of students we can internally fund. We may have a continuing problem in this area, however, since both Master's and Ph.D. students often compete for R.A.s and T.A.s. I believe that paid internships for most Master's students are a better source of funding than internal funding. Internships serve as apprenticeships and open the door to contacts and networks that are crucial in obtaining jobs in the field after graduation. But not all internships are paid. To increase the supply of paid internships, we are pursuing a joint center with the Washington State Office of Community Development. One of the objectives of the center will be to provide funding and to supervise paid internships for our MUP students in communities in need of planning assistance around the state.
- 6) Student Recruitment. During the spring quarter, after we have completed our curriculum review and strategic planning efforts, we will revise our program materials both on paper and on the web in a way that tells our story in a more effective way, as enjoined by the Review Team. The Review Team is right in asserting that financial support is crucial for attracting top-notch students. I believe that the efforts that we are currently engaged in will generate substantially more funding for graduate students in our program, and that this will enable us to better compete for students.

Again, thank you so much for your guidance and attention. Please let me know if you need further information.

Sincerely,



Hilda Blanco

Associate Professor and Acting Chair