

**University of Washington**  
**Report of the Department of Architecture Review Committee**  
**23 March 2012**

**Executive Summary and Recommendation**

In accordance with the charge letter of August 2, 2011 to the Department of Architecture Review Committee, this report records the results of our review of the degree programs offered in the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington: the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Architectural Studies, Master of Science in Architecture, and Master of Architecture (MArch).

It is the unanimous and enthusiastic recommendation of the Department of Architecture Review Committee that the undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the Department of Architecture retain their continuing status with a subsequent review in 10 years.

In addition to a thorough review of the 10-Year Review Self Study prepared by the Department in the fall, we were provided with various documents, including the 2008 NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board) academic program review of the department and various departmental publications. The Committee convened on February 23-24, 2012 for a two-day site visit. In the course of that visit we toured the facilities; and met with and interviewed members of the faculty in groups according to their disciplinary affiliations (Design, History/Theory, Digital/Graphics, Building Sciences, Design Build/Craft) and again according to their rank (Assistant Professors, Lecturers, Visiting Faculty) as well as with the staff. In addition, we met with various groups of students, both undergraduate and graduate (we met separately with representative groups of MArch and MS students). We also held separate meetings with Daniel Friedman, Dean of the College of Built Environments, and David Miller, Chair of the Department of Architecture, as well as with members of the Department of Architecture Executive Committee. Finally, we had a conversation with the members of the Department's Professional Advisory Council.

The two-day site visit concluded with an exit discussion, at which were present Executive Vice Provost Douglas Wadden, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs John Saur, Dean of the College of Built Environments Daniel Friedman, Chair David Miller, and Associate Chair Alex Anderson. In the course of the exit discussion the four members of the Review Committee offered preliminary reports in five areas: Finances, Curriculum, Facilities and Space, Human Resources, and the Integrated Design Lab. These five areas form the basis of our written report, and for each we discuss what we see to be the department's strengths and principal challenges. In addition, we include a final 'catch all' category where we discuss a few important issues that found no logical place in our five categories.

In general we found the University of Washington Department of Architecture to be in very good health indeed. In addition to enviable facilities, the department is blessed with an engaged, vibrant group of faculty and lecturers as well as a dedicated and caring staff. The undergraduates and graduate students with whom we met for the most part had nothing but praise for the quality of instruction and curriculum. Equally impressive is the leadership enjoyed by the department. Chair David Miller, Associate Chair Alex Anderson and Undergraduate Program Director Kathryn Merlino enjoy a good deal of respect, and, along with Dean Friedman, they should be commended for shepherding the department through a challenging period in its history. There are clearly some areas of concern, chief among them being the budgetary challenges and their impact on almost all aspects of the unit's operations, and ways in which the department might improve, which we detail below. Nonetheless, the strengths of this department far outweigh any weaknesses.

The members of the committee would like to extend our thanks to David Miller, Alex Anderson, Kathryn Merlino and their staff, as well as to David Canfield-Budde in the Graduate School, for arranging an informative and entirely congenial visit. We hope our report will prove useful in helping this impressive department move forward.

## 1. Finances

The Department of Architecture has not been immune from the severe fiscal challenges the University has faced over the past few years and continues to face. The College of Built Environments alone has experienced a 34% cut to its operating budget since 2008. Thus it was not surprising to discover that many of the concerns expressed to us by faculty, staff, and students alike center on the impact of budget reductions.

### **STRENGTHS**

- Strong leadership: Perhaps the greatest bulwark against the more debilitating effects of the budget situation has been sound fiscal leadership at both the College and departmental level. As a result, the department has managed to mitigate, though of course not entirely counteract, at least some of the impact.
- Research grants and other sources of revenue: As the departmental review notes (p. 5), research grant funding has increased significantly over the past five years, a reflection of faculty success in this area, along with a serious increase in Research Cost Recovery. Revenue from the Integrated Design Lab alone has more than doubled since the last biennium. While revenues from courses offered through the UW Extension have decreased in the last biennium, the Department has been entrepreneurial in offering an array of professional development courses, and revenues from this quarter are likely to increase as the economy continues to recover. This is just one example of the many ways that the department has connected with the professional community. Similarly, the Professional Advisory Committee, which we discuss below, has done much to help support the department, especially through its subsidies to work-study students.
- Prospects for increased student enrollments and ABB: It is clear that the department is looking closely at ways to increase student enrollments, and thus perhaps benefit more substantially from Activity Based Budgeting (ABB, see below). A proposed BA in Architectural History, for instance, has the potential to attract more students into the department.

### **CHALLENGES**

- Impact of salary freezes: With ongoing salary freezes in place, and given the reputation of the faculty, there is real ‘flight risk’ – the risk faculty will be lured to other, more stably funded institutions and programs. The fact that there have been no raises for three years is without question demoralizing, and if that situation persists, the flight risk will only increase.
- Salary inequities. There are clear inequities in terms of compensation between faculty and visiting faculty or lecturers. This reflects, we realize, a University-wide situation, but nonetheless, such inequities have become all the more glaring in light of the budget situation and need to be addressed. See further on this below under ‘Human Resources.’
- Impact of budget reductions: Reductions have occurred in several areas, including staff, student assistants, the operations budget, and funding for part-time faculty. The department’s (state supported) operations budget alone has experienced a reduction of over 90% between the last and current biennium (from \$160,926 to \$12,000). These cutbacks have placed significant stress on faculty and staff, with the result that everyone is now working at full capacity and more; several faculty indicated that this has also affected research time. Among the other casualties of this situation are, for instance, the imminent cessation of the publication of *Skin*, which showcases student design projects; the inability to staff the wood and metal shops as often as desired (thus curbing student access, as described in the Facilities/Space section below); and the loss of a special events coordinator.
- Graduate student funding: The committee wishes to stress in particular our deep concerns about the extremely low financial support for graduate students, a situation that makes it challenging for the Department to compete at the national level for first-rate students. The Department has limited funding of its own, which is used primarily in recruitment; most of the graduate students with whom we spoke had received limited or no funding (an exception being one graduate student fully supported as an RA through a research grant). This is an issue the department will need to confront, perhaps through still more rigorous fund-raising.

- TAs: A related problem is the small and diminishing number of TA positions. At present there seem to be only a few TAs available in the Department of Architecture, in stark contrast to other comparably (and even not comparably) sized units on campus. These TAs are typically associated with the large lecture classes Arch 150 or Arch 251; how these TAs are assigned is not entirely clear to students or the Review Committee. As the Department seeks to attract more students, either through collaboration with other departments within the College or through instituting new courses, as is envisioned through the proposed BA in Architectural History, increasing the number of TAs will be desirable, so to increase the level of funding for some graduate students.
- Support for fund raising and development: It is apparent that there is an increased need for heightened efforts in the area of fund raising and development. There have been some efforts in this direction and some notable successes (see pp. 6-7 of the Departmental Report), but in general it is noteworthy how little this figured in the report or in our conversations. However, although we did not meet with him, we are aware that the new Assistant Dean for Advancement and External Relations, Edgar Gonzalez, is committed to helping the Department move forward in this respect. Among the most pressing needs is support for students and support for faculty research.
- Funding for computers: A further casualty has been funding for computers and related digital equipment, an absolutely crucial tool for this particular unit. At present it is estimated that a computer can be replaced on average only after six years of use—too long a period of time for the machine to remain viable.
- ABB: The shift to Activity Based Budgeting is, it must be said, opaque to many members of the department. Few of the faculty and staff we spoke with seem to understand it very well, with most assuming that ABB is based entirely on SCH (Student Credit Hours), and thus primarily rewarding units with large classes and enrollments. We were heartened to learn at the exit discussion that the College is preparing a FAQ on the budget and the impact of ABB for the benefit of faculty and staff. This is to be followed by an all-faculty meeting in May on the subject. These events should go far in reducing the anxiety currently shared by many faculty and staff.
- Need for timely budgetary information: While this is beyond the control of the department, the University administration or perhaps more properly the state legislature needs to be aware of the very frustrating situation departments are placed in as a result of delayed and late budget decisions. In recent years the Department of Architecture, like other units on campus, has not received reliable budget information until very late in the Spring Quarter, sometimes even as late as June. This severely hinders the department in renewing appointments and constructing a teaching schedule.

## **2. Curriculum**

### **STRENGTHS**

- Instructional Excellence: The University of Washington Department of Architecture has built an national and international profile for the excellence of the architectural education it delivers. This excellence builds on a history of dedication and innovation in teaching by faculty and departmental leadership over the past several decades, and continues with the current generation. The students benefit from an excellent faculty who, along with their research interests, are deeply dedicated to the teaching mission of the Department. Students and faculty seem to enjoy warm relationships that reflect the relaxed culture of the Pacific Northwest. However, this does not mean that the critique culture of the department suffers: it is rigorous and lively, while also being respectful.
- Excellent feedback systems: An example of the dedication to instructional excellence is found in the extraordinary level of individual feedback in studio courses. The Department teaches studio in the typical manner, with the usual detailed one-on-one instruction, in-class informal group reviews and discussions, and with public reviews. However, there is a tradition of an additional feedback mechanism: at the end of each studio, each student is given a detailed written containing an evaluation of performance in the studio and a discussion of the student's strengths and weaknesses. This is obviously an extraordinary amount of work on the

part of the faculty, but studio faculty are convinced of its importance in student development. The students understand the work involved in such feedback, expressing appreciation and citing these quarterly evaluations as enormously helpful.

- Well structured, clear curriculum: The curriculum of the degrees offered by the Department are clearly structured and designed to develop and structure the student experience, while also giving the students elective choices to discover and deepen specific interests. The MArch Program is fully accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) with the maximum term, and the Visiting Team Report from the last accreditation visit (2008) was glowing—a rare outcome for this demanding review process.
- Very tangible connection to the profession: For the MArch students, the robust connection to the profession of architecture is both an inspiration and a long term advantage. The Professional Advisory Council (PAC) supports a wide range of departmental activities as well as being the central source of commitments to the paid architectural internship available to all 3-year MArch students upon completing the first year of the program (see below for elaboration, both positive and challenging, of this program). In addition, the Department hosts and supports a chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students, a gateway to the professional AIA. The chapter is quite active, and benefits from the PAC's interaction.
- Internship Program for first year, MArch: Students who come to study in the 3-year MArch track have little, if any, exposure to architecture prior to their enrollment. Nationwide, this path to becoming an Architect is very much like the better known format of Law School, it relies on the solid undergraduate education (in whatever discipline) the student has received, and provides three years of intensive education and training. For students early in this program, the work of architects and the structure of the profession is often a mystery. The UW Department of Architecture has therefore begun a program to offer a paid internship to 3-year students in the summer after their first year. Students who have completed this program say it is transformative: it demonstrates to them how practice works, what architects do on a day-to-day basis, shows them the professionalism needed within practice, and so on. They return to their second year in the program with new skills and new perspectives, and insights that they could never have gained in the context of academia. The Review Committee was also informed by the students and faculty that this relatively new program has now become a draw for applicants to the program.

#### **CHALLENGES**

- Freshman admittance to the Architecture major and/or College of Built Environments: The Department and the College are in dialog about requesting Freshman Admittance to either the College or the Architecture Major. The Committee supports this discussion as a positive step in many ways: it will likely increase the diversity of the student body by capturing high school students who have Architecture as a career goal and are looking for direct paths into it (many of these students are first generations to college or first generation Americans), it will connect the Architecture Department to local high schools, and, of course, it adds strength to the Department by increasing student enrollment numbers—thereby funding more faculty and allowing more electives.
- Inconsistent delivery of required course material: The complexity of any accredited Architecture curriculum requires a great deal of effort to ensure that there is a consistency of content and quality across the required coursework. Lack of consistency is not only an issue for the education of individual students and their preparation for the profession, but also threatens the long term health of the MArch Program with respect to accreditation. We understand that there are “Year level” coordinators in place, but it is unclear what these people do, and they appear to have little pedagogical presence. The Review Committee recommends that the Department consider reinvigorating this team to lead the studio curriculum within each year, then add to it a robust group of faculty to serve as coordinators of non-studio streams within the curriculum. The activity and input of this group could then be assured through monthly meetings with the Executive Committee.
- MArch thesis structure needs to be rethought: All MArch Programs around the US are challenged by how to organize a productive thesis experience that accommodates the wide range of abilities and interests of the final year students. In the opinion of the review committee, the current MArch Thesis structure at

UW, while valuable in creating flexibility for students with a range on interests and abilities, needs to be rethought. The MArch Thesis is completed in a Fall quarter after the three years of education. Currently students can opt for one of two options:

- (1) A Thesis Studio, where the student pursues an independent project in the context of a “regular” studio culture—that is, a group that meets three afternoons a week with a faculty member to guide and structure the investigations.
- (2) An Independent Thesis, where the student pursues his or her project without the studio setting, but with a Thesis “Chair” and other faculty as a kind of committee providing input as requested.

The issues that arise with this format are numerous—particularly for the students who choose the Independent track. Students report that it is common to take more than one quarter to complete this track—thus extending the program to almost four years for some students. This time to graduation is of particular concern in a time of contracting resources and scarce employment, as students amass further debt while increasing their time before entering the labor pool.

In addition, Independent Thesis students also have a difficult time finding faculty to commit to their committees, as this role is apparently optional and is not compensated (it is not clear what happens to the income generated by the enrollment of these students). Faculty, especially those who are Affiliate Faculty with active architectural practices or Assistant Professors who need to focus on their own research, report that they are inundated with requests from Independent Thesis students to serve on committees. Both groups have legitimate, though different, reasons to turn down these requests (see Human Resources: Challenges for a detailed discussion of the issues facing Assistant Professors). These refusals leave students with understaffed committees, while also having unstructured design and production schedules.

The committee urges the Department to restructure Thesis in a way that guarantees on-time graduation of all MArch students (in this case in December of the “fourth” year) and ensures that all students have adequate mentoring for their work. One option is to set up a thesis studio for all students, taught by one or two faculty members, but require each student to find at least one additional faculty member to serve as their primary advisor. The thesis studio faculty would coordinate reviews and offer advice weekly, but the outside advisors would likely offer a differing point of view. If the revised structure still includes an “independent” stream, perhaps the Department needs to assign a committee (perhaps from a list of requested members submitted by the student) as part of regular service duties to the Department. The Committee suggests contacting other schools to see how the thesis is organized for ideas that might be tailored to fit the unique curriculum, student body and circumstances at the University of Washington.

- MS streams/students need common ground (course, events, etc) to build community: The small number of students in this new degree program is further segregated by the separate streams within the degree. While it makes sense that each stream works together as a cohort, the students expressed in interviews that “they do not know each other” and are often invisible in relation to the more highly populated degree programs, especially the MArch, whose cohort has a higher public profile and makes greater demands on space and accreditation requirements. The Review Team recommends the Department seek ways to create a stronger identity and common ground for the MS students. Students in the History/Theory stream need a lockable homebase with desks, a meeting table and other support. We also understand the MS students’ desire to share research across the streams in some format on a regular basis, and we urge the Department to make the program more visible to students in other programs within the College and the larger related communities at the University of Washington.
- Equity issues/concerns around internship distribution: While all the MArch students appreciate the value imparted by the paid summer internships offered to students at the end of the first year of the MArch program, there are serious equity concerns about this opportunity. Students who enter the MArch Program in the second year or third year due to undergraduate preparation in architecture do not have the same support by, access to, or employment opportunities from the profession in the region. While some of these students may have had prior experience in an architectural office, this cannot be assumed. Given the current economic environment where firms are likely unable to hire more than one paid intern per summer (if at all), these non-3-year students are at a marked disadvantage when it comes to summer employment

in the region, and, by extension, employment when they graduate. The Committee recommends that the Department consider how to address this inequity in the internship program which has such deep and long-term consequences for students who do not benefit from it.

### 3. Facilities and Space

#### **STRENGTHS**

- The Department of Architecture occupies two major buildings on the UW campus, Gould Hall and Architecture Hall. Both buildings are in good repair, and provide interesting, well-designed spaces for faculty, staff and students. In particular, Gould features a generous central atrium ideal for public reviews and exhibitions. The recently renovated Architecture Hall (a building of historical significance) has many attractive studios with exposed concrete and natural daylighting/skylights.
- Both undergraduate and graduate students interviewed by the committee commented quite positively on the physical environment of the department, including the many outstanding design facilities that are accessible to them at little or no cost. Students provided ample positive feedback for the faculty and staff associated with these resources, which include:

Digital Fabrication Resources: Laser Cutters and CAD/CAM (Computer-Aided-Design and Manufacturing) equipment, and the accompanying software that drives these machines).

Wood/Metal Shop: Space and equipment needed to design and build models, furniture, and small-scale building components.

Digital Commons: A computer lab in the basement of Gould Hall with large format scanners, plotters, and Windows/Macintosh workstations.

Photo Lab/Lighting Studio: A traditional film darkroom with an adjacent lighting studio for photographing models and other artwork.

#### **CHALLENGES**

- The physical nature of architectural education (and the standards of national accreditation) require that each student be provided with a personal workspace in their studio. Capacity and student enrollment is therefore fixed given the variables of desk size and studio space. The department has cleverly reconfigured some studios with smaller desks and shared working areas, but these optimizations have a practical limit, as model-making and construction tend to be high-volume activities. Therefore, student enrollment in studio courses is capped.
- Graduate students not enrolled in design studios (such as the graduate candidates for the MS in History and Theory) need a shared studio space. Shared studio space would help this small group build a sense of community, and allow for greater peer-to-peer communication and collaboration. During interviews with this group, students mentioned that they sometimes felt “forgotten” by the department, since their group was much smaller and more diverse than the MArch cohort. As some schools, MS students work at a set of more conventional desks in the middle of open studios—this scenario may not be workable at the University of Washington, but the review committee encourages the exploration of this and other novel space solutions.
- Given the enrollment limitation of studio courses, it is imperative that the department also offer large-scale lecture courses to increase student access, and to increase the credit hours generated by the department. Unfortunately, neither Gould Hall nor Architecture Hall have a high capacity auditorium suitable for ARCH 150/151, a popular VLP course that often serves to recruit potential department majors. Faculty may be forced to reformat the course (changing the length and number of weekly course meetings) in order to have priority with UW Room Assignments for alternate lecture spaces on campus.
- The wood and metal shop would better suit the needs of students and faculty if the facility could be expanded. Currently, projects are limited to the scale of furniture and smaller objects/models—there is insufficient working and storage space for larger design/build endeavors. Additionally, the shop is

limited in the number of open hours for student and faculty access, given its dual role as both a shop and an instructional facility (it is assigned as a working classroom for certain design studios and digital fabrication classes).

- During student interviews, many undergraduates and graduate students noted (with great appreciation) the low/free cost of many of the facilities (for example, architecture students mentioned that the free use of laser cutters enabled them to produce a greater number of design variations than if they were forced to create models using a hand-held knife.) However, given the need for cost recovery (for maintenance, repairs and additional staff to oversee these facilities), perhaps it may be feasible and/or desirable to institute specific student fees to cover the care of these resources. Course-specific student fees have been established in several UW departments for similar purposes (i.e., to cover the cost of materials in Chemistry labs, or to cover the costs of digital imaging in Art History, etc.)

#### **4. Human Resources**

##### **STRENGTHS**

- The UW Architecture faculty have an excellent reputation both locally, regionally and nationally. The faculty includes several members who are known leaders/key figures in their field; the overall quality of design, research and teaching from the unit is outstanding.
- Despite the current financial difficulties, faculty morale seems high. Faculty appear to be fully committed to excellence in their research and teaching despite diminished levels of support. In fact, several faculty noted that they have still been able to accomplish major research and teaching objectives without significant obstacles “getting in the way.” This comment also demonstrates the positive, collegial nature of faculty interactions within and between individual programs and sub-units.
- All faculty interviewed by the committee mentioned their strong support for the administration of the department. Professor David Miller, the Chair of Architecture, was praised on many aspects of his leadership, but particularly for strengthening the connection between UW and the professional architecture community in the Pacific Northwest. Many junior faculty members also expressed appreciation for the advice and mentoring on tenure and promotion provided by Professor Jeffrey Ochsner, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Built Environments.
- Undergraduate and graduate students also noted the hard work of the administration. Graduate students commented positively on the accessibility of the Chair (David Miller) in meeting with them individually, and in working with the Department’s Student Council. In the UW GPSS Focus Group, several students also cited the “close nature of ties between the academic department and the professional community in Seattle as a valuable asset”— again, reinforcing the strong effort by department in developing and working with the PAC (Professional Advisory Committee). In addition, students appreciated the efforts of Associate Chair Alex Anderson, Undergraduate Coordinator Kathryn Merlino and the staff of the department— particularly the two student advisors. Students felt sure that these advisors were working full-time despite their part-time status.

##### **CHALLENGES**

- In the past, the department has been able to hire large numbers of guest faculty (typically working architects) to teach specialized skills/topics, especially in the area of building sciences and technology (passive design, structural design, construction technologies, materials, energy, sustainability, etc.) Guest or affiliated faculty are particularly suited to teaching in this area, as many of them have substantial experience in the professional realm that can enrich this teaching. The loss of funding for guest/affiliated faculty is an area of major concern for the Review Committee. If eliminated, the architecture department will lose one of its unique strengths. There are excellent full time faculty with expertise in these areas, but not enough to teach all the courses. The committee also believes it is important to hire full time faculty in this area, and has the sense that at least one faculty in structures and one faculty in integrated design should be hired.

- The decline in guest faculty budgets has also greatly reduced the number of full-time lecturers in the department. In committee interviews, lecturers expressed anxiety regarding their future contracts. (Due to budget delays at the state level, the department has been unable to determine the number of lecturers that they can support in the future).

The committee was surprised to learn that full-time lecturers are paid substantially less than full-time tenure-track faculty, despite their higher teaching load (6 vs 5 courses per academic year) and service requirements. This inequity in salary was a source of discouragement to lecturers, especially given their high levels of service. The lecturers acknowledged that salary and load issues were not unique to the Department of Architecture—in fact, after attending university-wide events for lecturers, Architecture lecturers felt their department had tried to support them. However, full-time lecturers felt they were sometimes considered “second-class” citizens, particularly in the area of research support. Several lecturers stated that their research efforts were essential to effective teaching, as research helps them to remain current/relevant in their professional knowledge. However, lecturers are ineligible for many grants and other forms of professional development/research support. Lecturers also mentioned that their input was not always sought or valued in the areas of overall curricular structure and department strategic planning.

- Similarly, while department staff interviews were largely very positive, there was also some concern expressed about staff inclusion in strategic planning. It was noted that “not all staff are secretaries”—and that the department could take better advantage of the education and experience of key staff members.
- Budget cuts have had a strong negative impact on staff in the department of Architecture. Two positions were eliminated for financial reasons, forcing the remaining employees to shoulder new responsibilities in addition to their previous assignments. Given further budget cuts on the horizon, staff members were understandably anxious about their increasing workload and their role as “the person who has to say no”—even to relatively minor requests for basic office supplies and equipment.
- In student, faculty and staff interviews, there was also clear need for additional staff support for the wood and metal shop. Currently, shop hours are limited by the need for two safety monitors. Because monitors are usually work study students, they are difficult to schedule—their availability is restricted by their time in class.
- Similarly, the digital fabrication resources also need additional staff support. The demand for training and education on the laser and CNC machines exceeds the capacity of the current Digital Fabrication Assistant, who is not full-time.
- In the GPSS focus group, graduate students in the Department of Architecture requested an additional staff position—the creation of a graduate career advisor. This request was not mentioned in the committee interviews with graduate students. However, undergraduate students did commend the career advising of the two department advisors. Unfortunately, these advisors may be limited in their capacity by their current part-time status. Perhaps when funding is available, one or both of these advisors might be designated full-time, with the additional responsibility of advising the professional development of graduate students.
- In the area of human resources, the promotion and tenure of junior faculty members is one of the most important decisions that affects the Department of Architecture, the College of Built Environments, and the University of Washington as a whole. After our committee interviews, it was apparent that junior faculty in Architecture would benefit from more clearly articulated expectations for scholarship in the promotion and tenure process. The College of Built Environments does provide documentation of general standards and criteria (<http://www.be.washington.edu/FacultyStaff/promotionandtenure/index.php>) but junior faculty in Architecture seemed uncertain how professional practice would be viewed in comparison to more traditional scholarly publishing (i.e., a full-length book). Faculty need greater understanding of how various academic/professional journals and presses, exhibition venues and other sources of peer review are viewed by the College of Built Environments Council.

The committee noted that the UW College of Built Environments might consider emulating the quarterly “Tenure and Promotion Workshop” offered by the UW College of Arts & Sciences. At these workshops, current members of the UW Arts & Sciences College Council meet with junior faculty members and go over the tenure and promotion process and expectations. Junior faculty have the opportunity to ask



specific questions, and to hear the questions of other junior faculty. The junior faculty member may also request that their program chair accompany them to the meeting. Documentation of all policies is provided at the workshop and online: (<http://collaborate.artsci.washington.edu/sites/dropbox/Shared%20Documents/Finance%20and%20Personnel/Promotion%20and%20tenure%20guidelines.htm>).

- While not expressed by the assistant professors, the committee is concerned that the tenure track faculty could be at risk during their tenure review if teaching loads continue to increase and faculty development funding and travel funding continue to decrease. This would be a major problem for the department, which has a varied group of tenure track faculty, all of whom appear to be important contributors to the culture of the department.
- The committee noted a low percentage of women among the tenured faculty, and broader lack of diversity in the departmental faculty. It appears that department is concerned about this as well, and has attempted to correct this disparity, but the committee feels this is an important consideration for future hiring.
- The committee also recommends that collegial teaching evaluations be assigned and regulated more formally by the Architecture Department for all junior faculty members. The junior faculty members who met with the committee seemed uncertain of the official university policies on collegial teaching evaluations, and were unaware of any specific CBE or Department of Architecture guidelines regarding their scheduling or methodology.

These collegial evaluations serve two purposes. One is to produce positive benefits for the individual faculty member and for the unit by identifying the individual's particular teaching contributions, by sharing teaching knowledge among colleagues, and by the improvement of teaching. The second is to provide material for evaluation in merit, reappointment, and promotion/tenure reviews.

The Department of Architecture should develop a clear methodology/policy for all collegial teaching evaluations so that uniform standards are applied. The chair should not have sole responsibility for conducting the evaluation, and evaluators need not all be senior faculty. Active participation by the individual being evaluated should be encouraged. Appropriate methods might include collegial review of one or more of the following: teaching materials, student evaluations, classroom performance, and student performance. A useful resource is the UW Center for Instructional Development and Research (<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/>).

## **5. Integrated Design Lab (IDL)**

The UW Architecture Department's Integrated Design Lab (IDL) provides technical assistance to local and regional professionals in the areas of energy efficiency, daylighting and artificial lighting. The lab receives funding from research grants and fee-based consulting building projects. Architecture faculty serve as staff of the lab, along with several research professionals.

### **STRENGTHS**

- IDL brings national recognition. IDL has developed a national reputation for public/private research activity—bringing faculty and the professional community together to develop rigorous sustainable design strategies for real buildings. IDL projects have won numerous national and regional awards, including several AIA COTE Top Ten Green Building awards. The University of Washington, the College of Built Environments and the Department of Architecture all benefit from this recognition.
- IDL improves the department's teaching. The Lab is used as a teaching demonstration facility, and in addition to normal classes, the staff holds extension classes related to sustainable design. With the presence of nationally recognized experts in the department, the students are exposed to a higher level of instruction than is possible in many architecture programs.
- IDL provides a unique research outlet for the department and the university. Research funding in architecture programs is typically smaller than engineering or the sciences, and research grants are often difficult to find. With IDL, the Architecture department is able to attract some of the best research and teaching faculty interested in these issues. This raises the overall research profile of the University of Washington,

and it does so with applied research that is tangible and easily understood by the general public. The IDL has received many large grants over the years, and clearly has a strong track record.

- IDL connects the department with the related professions. The professional orientation of this applied research lab helps establish solid relationships with the regional professional community. The interdisciplinary nature of the work also contributes to the richness of the research, and the likelihood that the research will have a direct impact on society.

#### **CHALLENGES**

- IDL needs a grants administrator. A clear priority for IDL, and the Architecture Department in general, is the hiring of a grants administrator. A number of faculty and faculty centers (especially IDL) have been successful in winning grant funding (as stated in the self-study, more than \$7 million since 2005). Research cost recovery from these grants (nearly \$250,000 since 2005) support departmental operations, but thus far have not been used to hire a grant administrator—a staff member who could review, filter and guide faculty toward the most promising grant opportunities, as well as manage post-award activities, such as funder requests, required reports and reapplications. Research faculty at the IDL greatly need this type of support, as basic grant administration duties compete with the time dedicated to research. Sharing this position with the rest of the architectural department would have the added benefit of helping to facilitate research among the entire faculty.
- IDL needs seed funding from UW. The university is fortunate to have a successful research lab that has such a direct impact on both students and the citizens of the state of Washington. To help solidify the future of IDL, the university should provide seed grants to IDL staff. This idea would help support project ideas that need to mature a bit before they can be competitive for larger funding, and are an excellent investment in future work. The grants should also incentivize interdisciplinary participation in this research—which could bring experts from other UW departments or even other universities into IDL.
- Concern regarding a major leadership transition. The long-term director of IDL is going to retire in the next few years. This could be a significant problem for the lab if not handled properly. The committee recommends that the university, college and department collectively take responsibility for a smooth transition. Ideally, this would include some overlap between the outgoing and incoming director, and added support for the new director to help move IDL in the new directions as they see fit. If the leadership transition is not handled appropriately, the department and the university could lose one of the things that makes the University of Washington a unique place.

#### **6. Other**

In this category we address several important issues that found no obvious place in the preceding text.

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Excellent community building. The department has done a superlative job of community building through a variety of outreach endeavors. Of particular note are the departmental blog, a rich and diverse lecture series, and its various publications (e.g., *Column 5*, *Skin*). In this respect the department is a model.
- Professional Advisory Council. One of the great pleasures of our site visit was our conversation with the Professional Advisory Council, a group of professional architects in the community who serve the department in a variety of capacities. This is a remarkably supportive and committed group of individuals who, while they had nothing but high praise for the department and the faculty, is nonetheless deserving of high praise themselves. The PAC has instituted, among other things, a summer internship with local firms for Architecture graduate students; a lecture series; student seminars run by PAC members; and a charette for entering students. Apart from attesting the very healthy relationship this department enjoys with the architectural community in Seattle and the region, the Professional Advisory Council is itself a powerful advocate for the UW Department of Architecture and, most importantly, for its students.

## **CHALLENGES**

- Unclear support for transition to the Intern Development Program (IDP). The IDP is a nationally required program that forms a bridge between architectural education and professional licensure. In our interviews, it was clear that students are not aware of the department's role in supporting their start in IDP. After discussing this with the department leadership, it appears that the situation is in transition. A new IDP coordinator has recently been selected, and that person has begun to plan ways to educate the students about IDP, and to guide students' professional development. The commitment encourages the department to support the coordinator's efforts.
- Lack of integration across departments within the College: Probably the most surprising finding by the committee was the relative lack of integration of teaching and research across the four departments of the College of the Built Environments. The unique collection of related disciplines in the college, located in a major metropolitan area with a robust cohort of professionals, seems like the ideal place to break down boundaries between disciplines. The college leadership is clearly trying to move in this direction, and the committee believes the university should support these efforts in any way possible. Better integration has many benefits, not the least of which is the possibility of placing the college and the department into a select group of academic units in the country that have established productive interaction across related disciplines. The role of the architectural department in this potential transformation is important—not only because of the size of the department, but also because of the interdisciplinary interests of many department faculty. The Architecture Department should continue to push further collaboration within the College to strengthen the department and expand the horizons of the architecture students.

## **Conclusion: 2Y2D**

We conclude this report with the observation that the Department of Architecture is the very model of an academic unit that fulfills the vision of the University of Washington's "Two Year Two Decades" Initiative. As most readers of this report will know, the 2Y2D initiative was launched in 2009 by then-Provost Wise in an effort to answer the question, 'Where should the UW be in 20 years?' Consulting with over 3500 stakeholders across campus and over a period of two years, the initiative resulted in defining a number of key issues with which the University and its constituent units should be concerned. These included environmental sustainability and clean energy, economic vitality, education, health, social justice and inequality, and educated and engaged local and global citizens. (See further: <http://www.washington.edu/discover/leadership/provost/initiatives/2y2d>).

In almost every aspect of its curriculum and operation, the Department of Architecture contributes in meaningful ways to educating its students and members of the community in these very issues. The department, in short, fully advances the University's own stated priorities. It therefore warrants any support the University can provide to help it sustain and continue to improve on a tradition of excellence.

Respectfully submitted,

Alain M. Gowing (Committee Chair)  
Professor and Chair, UW Classics

Karen Cheng  
Associate Professor and Chair, Design Division, UW School of Art

Lisa Findley  
Professor and Chair, Architecture Program  
California College of the Arts

John Quale  
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Architecture Program  
School of Architecture, University of Virginia