

**Department of Architecture, Masters of Science in Architecture
Five year Program Review
February 29, 2008**

Review Committee Members:

External Member:

Larry R. Barrow

Associate Professor, College of Architecture, Art & Design
Director, Design Research and Informatics Lab
Mississippi State University

Internal Members:

John E. Toews (chair)

Professor, History
Director, Comparative History of Ideas Program
University of Washington

Cynthia J. Atman

Professor, Industrial Engineering
Director, Center for Engineering Learning and Teaching
University of Washington

Site Visit: January 17-18, 2008

I: Process:

1. Charge Meeting: The internal members and external member (via speaker-phone) of the Review Committee met with Suzanne Ortega (Vice Provost and Dean), Elizabeth Feetham (Associate Dean) Augustine McCaffrey, David Canfield-Budde from the Graduate School and Daniel S. Friedman, Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) on November 20 for a preliminary meeting. Dean Friedman's comments at the meeting and the materials he submitted to committee members the next day (summary of a recent CAUP faculty retreat and a position paper on transformation in Architectural Education) suggested the broader implications of the limited specific charge of the Review Committee.
2. Preliminary orientation meeting: The internal members of the Committee met for an hour and a half with Alex Anderson, Associate Chair, and Associate Professors Brian Johnson and Brian McLaren (faculty leaders in the Design Computing and History and Theory streams of the M.S. Arch. program) on January 15 to gain a preliminary sense of the central issues or concerns in the new programs

II: Site Visit

January 17: The full committee met with administrators, faculty, students and staff with a stake in the two M.S.Arch. streams or tracks (see agenda in Appendix A). The morning sessions included meetings with six representatives of other units with significant interests in the Design Computing stream as well as core members of the Design Computing faculty, and faculty associated with the Design Machine Group (DMG). During the lunch hour the committee talked with five students enrolled in the two M.S.Arch. streams. The afternoon included meetings with the Dean, administrative and computing staff, faculty in the History and Theory Stream and two

former Chairs of the Department who had been involved in the inauguration and early development of the M.S. programs in 2002. The committee feels that many important views from relevant individuals and groups were heard and considered in this report. The committee was particularly impressed with the dedicated and collegial faculty, staff and students who make up this program.

III: Overview

The Charge to the Review Committee was to review the Masters of Science in Architecture (M.S.Arch.) degree program in the Department of Architecture that was originally approved by the HECB in 2001. The first track or “stream” under this umbrella post-professional graduate degree program, in Design Computing, was inaugurated in Fall, 2002. The second stream, in History and Theory, was inaugurated in Fall, 2007. Two of the three core faculty in the Design Computing Stream left the University of Washington without much prior warning in the summer of 2004, creating a need to rebuild and rethink the original stream and its focus. One of the vacant positions has since been filled and the search for someone to fill the other position is currently underway. Both positions are defined as the starting junior faculty level and the research foci of the recent hire and the projected hire are significantly different from those of the faculty members who left in 2004. Due to these issues and the fact that the History and Theory stream was recently started, the Review Committee feels that both streams in the M.S.Arch. program should be viewed as very much at an embryonic, early stage of self-definition and curricular organization.

The Review Committee considers its analyses and recommendations as relevant to this process of self-definition and curricular organization. It would seem premature to try to assess at this time the viability and comparative quality of a post-professional program that has been forced to reconstitute itself during the last three years and has served only a handful of students in its five-year history, and a program that began with an enrollment of only two students just a few months ago. In order to maintain its status as a nationally ranked program and in order to respond to changes in both architectural education and architectural practice, the UW must follow the national trend among peer institutions and institute a post-professional degree program. The relevant question is “how” not “if”. The Review Committee sees its purpose as helping to shape the conversation concerning this “how.” The descriptions and suggestions of this report should be read as assessments, suggestions and recommendations that will inform the ongoing discussions in the department in preparation for the comprehensive Review of the Department of Architecture in 2011-2012.

IV: The M.S.Arch. degree program and its place within the overall curricular structure and organizational map of the Department of Architecture.

The creation of an M.S. Arch. Degree program is situated on the departmental map somewhere between a large, well-regarded professional degree program (M.Arch.) and two small, recently established interdisciplinary research-oriented Ph.D. programs that exist at the School level (in Urban Planning and the Built Environment). Many of the issues we encountered during our site visit emerged from this fundamental structural change within the Department of Architecture. How distinctive should the curriculum of the M.S. Arch program be in relation to the PhD and the M.Arch.? The need for the M.S. Arch. apparently emerged from a desire to expand the curriculum in response to pressures to engage the growing sophistication and specialization of certain areas of architectural knowledge and practice on the national scene, and meet the demands for advanced, post-professional specialized education in areas that exceeded the reach of the professional curriculum. The most obvious area of felt need relates to constantly changing digital technology and its impact on design processes as well as the integration of these practices with the various dimensions of building construction. At the national level, global climate change and

the burgeoning interest in building designs that take into account climate change, resource sustainability, health conscious spatial environments and changing medical practices add new areas of focused interest to the traditional professional training as well. What should constitute the distinctive nature of a curriculum related to these new developments and pressures?

Questions/issues:

1. Should the M.S.Arch. curriculum be constituted primarily as a terminal degree for individuals with an M.Arch. who planned to return to architectural practice, to individuals from related fields of study in product or industrial design, environmental studies, health care, cultural studies etc, seeking specialized training that could be folded back into their professional career tracks, or as a transitional degree for individuals seeking a kind of preparatory training in a research-oriented education that would eventually lead to the Ph.D and a career in academic teaching?

The members of the committee felt that the current established or projected curricula with their clear emphasis on individual mentoring of research projects conformed to the model of a transitional degree leading to the Ph.D. There are obviously resource-related issues regarding adequate staffing that have shaped this choice of curriculum—but it does not appear to address the needs that lie behind the creation of an M.S.Arch degree, and should be rethought, if the programs expect to attract a critical mass of students interested in returning to or entering in to a more specialized and advanced sphere of professional practice.

Changes that could be considered:

- a) Change or at least enhance the individual mentoring of the current curriculum with a program of seminar/studio courses that would bring circa 5-10 students together in project-oriented collaborations. The synergies required for an exciting post-professional education cannot be generated completely from the individual faculty/student mentoring relationship. A critical mass of students in advanced studios and seminars would provide the distinctive character that the program needs to grow and sustain itself.
 - b) Create a distinctive curriculum for the M.S. Arch with advanced and specialized courses different from the M.Arch courses and studios. This could attract more post-professional students. A collaborative project model rather than an individual research model would seem to be appropriate for a two-year post-professional program that can be seen as primarily a transition to the PhD for a only a small minority of enrolled students.
2. How will the M.S Arch. Curriculum be connected to the M.Arch program? Our conversations suggested that the curriculum of M.Arch programs nationally is probably going to undergo major changes in the coming years, changes induced by the same pressures that led to the formation of post-professional M.S. programs (related to digital design, collaborative or integrated practice, sustainability issues, etc.) Could the innovative perspectives and practices that will define these changes be prepared and developed within the advanced and specialized seminars and studios of the post-professional curriculum? The Committee suggests that the Department consider this possibility of the M.S.Arch curriculum as an innovative and transformative engine for the M.Arch. curriculum
 3. The Question of the Relationship between Architectural Education and Architectural Practice. The Committee received many indications during its visit that current innovation in architectural design and in collaborative practices is increasingly centered in architectural firms rather than in architectural schools. To maintain a position at the cutting edge of the field in many areas, therefore, the curriculum should not emancipate itself from

the burdens of practice but attach itself to the energies within practice. The seminars/studios in the M.S.Arch program could take advantage of the innovations occurring in architectural practice and try as much as possible to enhance collaborations between research and teaching faculty and practicing architects.

4. Interdisciplinary and other collaborative connections. How should the M.S. curriculum be structured to take effective and full advantage of the disciplines closely tied to precisely those fields of advanced sophistication and specialization that are changing architectural, thinking, design and practice? Strong existing and potential partners exist on the UW campus for the sustenance and creation of collaborative partnerships. Some of these partnerships have been more assiduously developed than others, for example the connections between the Design Computing faculty and faculty from Computer Science and Engineering and the Information School. The Committee suggests that collaborations with units like DXArts and Building Construction, which are so central to current transformation of design practices, or to programs in the School of Medicine or the emerging College of the Environment that will be critical for other streams in the program, be developed more systematically and consistently. Right now such collaborations are based on personal connections of individual faculty members. We suggest the creation of planning committees or consulting boards that would include students and practitioners as well as faculty to aid the department in developing the kinds of collaborations that will enhance its ability to meet future demands in building and design. Interdisciplinary collaboration could begin in the planning stages and become a part of the process of institutionalizing such collaboration. With this strong caveat: It is obviously critical that Architecture think through interdisciplinary connections from the perspective of its core in architectural design--- not let itself lose its identity and allow itself to be driven primarily by the purposes and strategies of innovation among the collaborative partners.

V: The Individual Streams.

History and Theory Stream.

The History/Theory stream of the M.S. Arch program that was inaugurated this fall begins with some obvious strengths. Historical and theoretical scholarship has been one of the strengths of the Department of Architecture for many years. There already exists a distinguished faculty composed of scholars at all ranks that is clearly ready and eager to take on the mentoring and collaborative work required for post-professional training. Some interdisciplinary connections (to Art History for example) are already well established. The History/Theory faculty moreover have a recognizable profile that could attract exceptional students interested in Northwest regional modernism (and regionally situated modernisms more generally), comparative cultural and environmental contexts (with a global range) of design and construction, and vernacular architecture and the craft tradition . The emphases on contextually sensitive architecture design and building construction is obviously attractive to many current students. The possibility of extending this focus to issues of sustainability and the history of collaborative design is not difficult to imagine.

The Design Computing Stream.

The Design Computing stream has a small but very dedicated set of faculty who are keeping the degree afloat while faculty are hired to replace the senior faculty who left in 2004. The two replacement hires (one who will be hired this year) are at a junior level. The combination of the size and level of experience of the faculty, along with the teaching loads of these faculty distributed across both the M.S. Arch and the M. Arch programs has created a situation where little time is available for the Design Computing faculty to concentrate on defining their stream. This creates a challenging situation for the current faculty. The urgent need to create a strategic plan to address the general issues regarding curriculum and distinctive research focus for the M.S.Arch is critical in this stream, and should be given top priority. Such planning would necessarily involve thinking about the place of the Design Machine Group in the Department. The research agendas in the DMG are most directly intertwined with the Design Computing faculty's own research and teaching agendas. Discussions about the structure and role of the Design Computing M.S.Arch within the Department will be the primary site where critical debates regarding the emergence of new technologies as facilitating tools, as well as framing contexts, for innovative design will, and should take place. Space and time needs to be provided for this to happen.

Future Streams

The Department has not yet developed a clear plan for expansion of the M.S.Arch to other areas of specialization. It probably does not make much sense to do so without establishing a more developed plan about the M.S.Arch as a whole and for the two streams already in place. Stabilizing the Design Computing stream and firming up strategies for institutionalizing the History and Theory stream are clearly top priorities at this time.

VI: The Students

Because of the small number of students enrolled in the M.S.Arch, it seems premature and misleading to attempt a general assessment of issues like applicant profiles, student expectations and evaluations of the curriculum, learning outcomes, time to degree, placement and funding. The students we met were diverse, smart and well-mentored. The critical issue is to attract a critical mass of students in both streams to create program synergy, as well as for amortization of program costs. More systematic plans for monitoring student learning and placement and for creating funding opportunities should obviously be a central part of future strategic planning.

VII Recommendations/Suggestions:

Building on the issues described above, the committee has the following recommendations:

1) The M.S. Arch degree program should be continued with the two initial streams: 'Design Computing' and 'History and Theory'. We understand that the degree will be reviewed again in coordination with the review of the Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and the Master of Architecture degree programs in the 2011-2012 academic year. Creation of additional streams should wait until the two existing streams, and especially the Design Computing stream, are more firmly established and a more systematic general planning procedure is in place.

2) Strategic Planning/Articulating Vision

The department should develop a strategic plan that addresses the following issues:

- Articulating the relationship of the M.S. Arch. to the other degree programs in the unit. The curriculum must be made more distinctive as a specifically post-professional curriculum, and should be conceived in ways that would attract a critical mass of students who are not necessarily proceeding further to the PhD.

- Articulating how the research and teaching aspects of the program fit into the national scene (both the current situation in the field of architecture and the current ‘grand challenges’ the world is facing)
- Articulating how the department and this program can link to other relevant groups on campus

3) Expand input to strategic planning

We recommend the creation of an advisory committee or board to consult on curriculum issues that would include students, local practitioners, national experts and members of potential collaboration partners on campus. In addition to existing collaborations, links to units like Geography, Comparative Literature, Philosophy, DXArts, the School of Medicine, the College of the Environment, Area Studies Program in the Jackson School and Anthropology- as well as the more traditional partners in Art History, History, Computer Science Engineering and the iSchool - should be encouraged.

4) Specifics recommendations for the Design Computing stream

In this current growth phase for the Design Computing group we recommend that the faculty examine the number and type of courses the department offers to students to learn computing software. The core faculty should not be burdened with teaching basic computer courses or basic administrative work, but allowed to focus on research agendas that are design-centered. Technology support and training might be shifted to part-time lecturers, or advanced graduate students. With limited faculty resources it would seem that such resources should be primarily devoted to advancing the **architectural** mission of Design Computing. After the appointment of a third faculty member this spring, we strongly recommend that the core faculty be provided with adequate space and time to articulate the ways in which their individual specialized research expertise can be organized around a distinctive curriculum and programmatic mission for the Design Computing stream. We also recommend that this group more clearly articulate the difference between (and overlap across) Design Computing and the Design Machine Group. This may be an appropriate time to reexamine the name of the Design Machine Group as the ‘M’ for ‘Machine’ seems to be based on the faculty who are no longer here, and it can be misleading for individuals who are not familiar with this history.

5) Get the word out

The existing strengths and distinctive intellectual profile of the Department needs to be more obviously articulated and displayed (can we use the term “marketed”?) to attract a critical mass of high quality, focused graduate students.

6) Pursue resources

In a time of limited resources from the state, pursuing resources from other sources becomes more critical. The department could consider identifying additional resource streams outside the traditional state lines (e.g., professorships or graduate student support funded by local firms).

In closing, the committee would like to reiterate our appreciation for the openness of the faculty and staff we met and to applaud the enthusiasm and dedication to excellence displayed by all members of the department.

APPENDIX A

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
The Graduate School
Master of Science in Architecture
Program Review
January 17-18, 2008**

Wednesday, January 16

5:00 pm

Review Committee working dinner

Enotria (3515 N.E. 45th St., 206-527-5039)

Thursday, January 17

Gould 102

(206- 685-6730)

8:30 – 9:30am

David Miller, Chair, Department of Architecture

Alex Anderson, Associate Chair, Department of Architecture

9:30 – 10:30

Representatives from other units with a stake in Design Computing

Harry Bruce, Dean, Information School

David Hendry, Assistant Professor, Information School

Steven Tanimoto, Professor, CSE (*until 10:15*)

James Coupe, Assistant Professor, DXARTS

Carrie Sturts Dossick, Assistant Professor, Construction Management

Eddy Rojas, Associate Professor, Construction Management

10:30 – 10:45

BREAK

10:45 – 11:45

Design Computing

10:45 – 11:15 **Brian Johnson**, Associate Professor

11:15 – 11:45 **Nicole Huber**, Assistant Professor

Mehlika Inanici, Assistant Professor

Anne Stevens, Lecturer

11:45 – 12:00

BREAK

Architecture Hall 052

(Design Machine Group lab)

12:00 – 1:00

Lunch with graduate students

1:00 – 1:30

BREAK

Gould 102

1:30 – 2:00 **Daniel Friedman**, Dean, College of Architecture & Urban Planning

2:00 – 2:30 **Diane Stuart**, Program Coordinator, Department of Architecture
Shanna Sukol, Program Manager, Department of Architecture

Gould 102

2:30 – 3:00 **Mark Baratta**, Director of Computing, College of Architecture & Urban
Planning

3:00 – 3:30 **BREAK**

3:30 – 4:30 **History and Theory Track**
3:30 – 4:00 **Brian McLaren**, Associate Professor

4:00 – 4:30 **Louisa Iarocci**, Assistant Professor
Robert Mugerauer, Professor

4:40 – 5:15 **Jeffrey Ochsner**, Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, CAUP
Vikramaditya Prakash, Professor, Department of Architecture

6:00pm **Review Committee working dinner:**
Piatti Restaurant (University Village: 2695 NE Village Lane, 206-524-9088)

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Friday, January 18
Gould 102

8:30 – 10:15am **Executive Session** (drafting review committee report)

10:15 – 10:30 BREAK

10:30 – 11:30 **Exit Interview (Gould 102)**
Suzanne T. Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean, The Graduate School
Thomas W. Gething, Associate Dean, The Graduate School
Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost
David Miller, Chair, Department of Architecture
Alex Anderson, Associate Chair, Department of Architecture
Brian Johnson, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture
Daniel Friedman, Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Planning
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School

11:30 – 12:30 **Exit Interview (Gould 102)**
As above; no program representatives.

12:30 – 1:00 **Review Committee debriefing session (review committee only)**
Lunch (*box lunches brought to Gould 102*)

Gould 102 reserved
until 2:30pm