

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
PART II – NARRATIVE REPORT 2013

SECTION 1.4 – CONDITIONS NOT MET

Bachelor of Architecture Program

Master of Architecture Program

13.14 – Accessibility (ability)

Ability to design both site and building to accommodate individuals with varying physical abilities.

Although the program demonstrates improvement in the level of student understanding of accessibility issues in the design of site and building conditions, the work does not consistently display the required ability level.

- During FY 13, the SoA Director continued to meet with both the Associate Director, and Undergraduate and Graduate Program Coordinators to ensure steady progress of addressing accessibility measures, building upon the three successful action steps enacted two years earlier:
- Step One: Review ADA Law. Better understand definitions of persons protected by the ADA; review the 4 major federal laws that require accessibility in the built environment, including 1) the ABA, 2) the Fair Housing Act, 3) section 504 of the Rehab Act and 4) the ADA.
- Step Two: Provide a hands-on workshop on accessibility, directed at students in the 3rd Year and 5th Year [comprehensive design] studios of the undergraduate program and in the 2nd Year [comprehensive design] studios of the graduate program. Workshop continued to stress that the disability population is growing and accessible features in the built environment are critical as a part of good design for all; emphasized to students to think critically about accessibility requirements in design work - not just about “meeting the code”; explained design requirements in ADA are rooted in a civil rights law; reviewed with students studies of human dimensions and the range of physical abilities of the differently-abled including the effects of auditory and sight impairment; demonstrated to students what to look for if they were doing a site review of a building to determine accessibility compliance with ADA-AG–Accessibility Guidelines.
- Step Three: Develop Exercises. Increase evidence of compliance through analysis and design diagrams, programming, design, and development of comprehensive projects in undergraduate and graduate studios. For the past three years, students performed a site and building assessment for accessibility compliance on their own design studio project.

13.25 Construction Cost Control (understanding)

Understanding of the fundamentals of building cost, life-cycle cost, and construction estimating.

Although the program provided evidence of a class speaker presenting information about Construction Cost Control through handouts in the Professional Practice course (Arch 4112/5112), the level of understanding is not evident in student exercises, exams, assignment results, or in other courses.

- This unmet condition continued to receive focused attention. The SoA Director again met with key faculty this past year to review unmet condition and reviewed previously implemented action steps, including curricular and syllabus updates, exercises in construction cost estimating and cost management, and exam questions.
- For a second year, Dick Perlmutter, AIA, taught Professional Practice (Sp '13), and Kevin Turner of The Freelon Group delivered a presentation with a required reading from the Handbook of Professional Practice, Ch. 9.3 on Construction Cost Management.

- In FY 13, the SoA conducted a national tenure-track faculty search in ‘Design Practice.’ The position description centered on the changing nature of contemporary architectural practice (new construction methods, emerging technologies, integrated project delivery). In addition to teaching advanced studios and electives, the position was specifically targeted to establish increased leadership in practice, including teaching SoA’s required course in Professional Practice – in part to help us meet NAAB deficiencies in Construction Cost Control. The search was successful. Professor Jefferson Ellinger, a registered architect and practitioner, who previously taught at RPI for ten+ years, joined the faculty this fall.

> SECTION 1.5 – CAUSES OF CONCERN

A. Accessibility

The two previous visits (1998 and 2004) have also found this criterion to be not met and there is a cause of concern. See comments above.

B. Leadership Transition

Since this visit is the first to occur after the transition to a new structure as the College of Art and Architecture from the previously independent College of Architecture, and occurred 6 months after the hiring of Director Jarrett, the team encourages the school to pay attention to an ongoing leadership transition in a way that maintains the same independence and quality of the school as before the transition to the College of Art and Architecture

The school continues to pay attention to the ongoing leadership transition in a way that maintains the same independence and quality of the school before the transition to the College of Art and Architecture. After five years since the College and School restructuring, Dean Ken Lambla continues to demonstrate a serious commitment to the SoA with full budget control and program planning to Director Jarrett, and actively seeks to support its programming and professional development trajectory.

C. Financial Resources

The team underscores that the school’s financial planning is critical to maintain the quality of the program given the known reductions in budgets over the next several years and the uncertainty of the global economy as an externality. This planning is also necessary to make available opportunities for faculty research and development as mandated by the university’s mission as a research institution.

While state budget reductions continue to be of concern, this past year our State Legislature approved (small) pay increases to faculty for the first time in four years – important morale booster. Financial planning is increasingly critical to maintaining the quality of our programs. The School of Architecture’s new, dedicated Business Services Coordinator (BSC) has been an excellent addition to our team, insuring clear budgetary recordkeeping, planning and year-end financial solvency. The financial leadership team in the College of Arts and Architecture is very strong and supportive in all that we do; clear lines of communication, protocols and responsibility are well established.

During FY 13, the State Legislature approved a final Phase III “tuition increment” for graduate study in the School of Architecture. This funding provides financial assistance and academic enhancement programming for students and faculty. The SoA provided a second year of funding toward a new, external peer-review ‘faculty research grant’ program in support of faculty research and development. Also, the College provided year-end one-time funding for select faculty professional development projects.