

National Architectural Accrediting Board
Special Program Focused Evaluation Report



Louisiana State University

School of Architecture

Jori Erdman, Director

Last Team Visit: March 14, 2007

INTRODUCTION

*The 2007 Visiting Team Report (VTR) evaluated the **Bachelor of Architecture** and **Master of Architecture** degree programs in the LSU School of Architecture. The VTR identified the following as Conditions Not Met:*

- **Social Equity (4)**
- **Physical Resources (8)**
- **Human Diversity (13.13)**

As directed in the NAAB Procedures for Accreditation, 2009 Edition, Section 6, the LSU School of Architecture submits this report with the following sections:

- i. A narrative describing the program's response to each item identified, in the most recent decision letter as being the subject of a Focused Evaluation, and*
- ii. A brief narrative summarizing changes that have been made or may be made in the accredited program.*

At the time of the VTR the School was evaluated under the NAAB Conditions for Accreditation, 2004 Edition.

Conditions/Criteria Not Met**4. Social Equity**

FROM VTR:

The accredited degree program must provide faculty, students, and staff-irrespective of race, ethnicity, creed, national origin, gender, age, physical ability, or sexual orientation-with an educational environment in which each person is equitably able to learn, teach, and work. The school must have a clear policy on diversity that is communicated to current and prospective faculty, students, and staff and that is reflected in the distribution of the program's human, physical, and financial resources. Faculty, staff, and students must also have equitable opportunities to participate in program governance.

	Met	Not Met
B. Arch.	[]	[X]
M. Arch.	[]	[X]

Overall, the educational environment seems to be supportive of a diverse community of students. The number of women and minority students in the student body meets commendable levels of representation in the current years and has shown sustained progress. The focused efforts of the administrative staff to recruit minority students and to reach out to high school students with the one-week summer program deserve special recognition. The establishment of NOMAS to strengthen the support network for students of diverse background is likewise applauded.

The tenured and tenure-track faculty is a complement of 15, with one woman, and two faculty members with international backgrounds, including a recently hired ethnic minority, R. Singh. There is one additional woman architect who is term-appointed as a professional-in-residence. Her primary responsibility is administering the programs and research of the Office of Community Design and Development, including some teaching assignments supportive of this role.

The program has been cited in the last two consecutive VTRs for the lack of diverse faculty. The low percentage of tenured or tenure-track women faculty is particularly egregious, given the general availability of many fine women candidates and practitioners nationally. There are also no African-American faculty, even among the adjuncts, which is a concern given the racial makeup of the region and state that the school serves.

The inability of the facilities to accommodate students and faculty with disabilities creates significant challenges as outlined in the team's response to condition 8. Some progress has been made, with the addition of the lift at the first floor east entry to Atkinson Hall and the exterior ramp to the basement, and flexibility in the arrangement of studios is marginally acceptable in the short term.

2008 Annual Report -- Since the Teams visit, the School has hired two new full-time women – an assistant professor and a director/full professor. During the previous semester, the assistant professor was hired away by one of our neighboring institutions. Women and minorities continue to be a priority in our upcoming faculty searches. The other component of social equity that we were cited for had to do with our building not being ADA accessible. We are pleased to report that the University has committed funds to this cause and will be selecting an architect during the spring '09 semester.

2009 Annual Report – The School has continued to recruit and support the enrollment of a diverse student body. One of our administrative staff members dedicates a percentage of her time to this effort, along with members of the faculty. The School supports the NOMAS chapter including various mentoring activities and opportunities for student leadership training.

The new Director began in January 2009. She is a full professor as well as Director and is the first woman holding an administrative leadership position in the School.

During the spring of 2009 we conducted a search to fill two faculty positions. That search was successfully conducted and resulted in the interviewing of four candidates from whom two were

selected to make offers. All four of the final candidates were of diverse populations: one Asian male, two European females, and one African American male. It should be noted that the successful candidates were the most qualified applicants from the pool.

Although the candidates did not ultimately accept our offers, we are optimistic about our ability to recruit and attract a diverse coterie of people in our upcoming search. This year we are searching for three positions and we continue to actively recruit a diverse applicant pool.

Please see the response to Condition 8 below for updates on our response to the concern about facilities.

2010 FE Report – The School conducted a successful search this year for two new faculty members who will be joining the faculty in the Fall 2010 academic year. A third position remains unfilled at this time. Due to aggressive recruiting by the Search Committee five of our top six candidates were women or minorities. With these new hires, our current faculty composition (15 total faculty) now includes: 4 full-time women and one full-time Hispanic American male. Of these, one woman is a Full Professor and Director, one woman is an Associate Professor, one woman is a Professional in Residence, and the remaining two are Assistant Professors.

This shift in the demographics within the School administration and faculty composition marks a complete change from the 2007 VTR. While we will continue to aggressively recruit qualified minorities and women, we are no longer in such a difficult position and we are optimistic that our efforts to recruit students will be positively impacted by these changes.

Our recruiting and support of minority students continues to improve as we have developed stronger relationships with high schools, colleges and professional organizations. This coming year we will begin working closely with Morehouse College in Atlanta to recruit their students into our 3-year Master of Architecture program. Initial meetings with them have been very positive. We also continue to develop our relationship with our NOMA regional director, Antoine Bryant. The NOMA and NOMAS chapters related to the School have provided a great source of support to our students and a productive connection to the profession.

Please see Condition 8 below regarding VTR concerns about facilities.

8. Physical Resources

The accredited degree program must provide the physical resources appropriate for a professional degree program in architecture, including design studio space for the exclusive use of each student in a studio class; lecture and seminar space to accommodate both didactic and interactive learning; office space for the exclusive use of each full-time faculty member and related instructional support space. The facilities must also be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable building codes.

	Met	Not Met
B. Arch.	[]	[X]
M. Arch.	[]	[X]

Progress continues to be made in physical resources, although slowly and not maintaining the schedule presented to previous visiting NAAB teams or those included within more recent school facility documents. Atkinson Hall and other buildings used by the school were observed to be clean, and orderly, with student work displayed and well-organized along the corridors. This building has yet to be made completely ADA compliant. Apparent code violations include missing stair handrails and a dead-end corridor system in the basement.

It should be noted that the school uses space within other college and university buildings, most of which are nearby, with the exception of the library located at the far end of the quadrangle. Since this report, the school has also gained rights of use to additional basement areas within Atkinson Hall. An exterior ramp forms the only accessible access to the basement level.

Design studio space appears adequate for the number of students with a desk available for each student. Securable storage for each student is lacking. Desk and table conditions vary from studio to studio, with the lesser quality furnishings being located among the earlier years. The school has received funding to improve the condition of furnishings for entering students with these improvements scheduled to occur with next year's entering class. It was reported by the faculty that studio space is tighter in the fall semester when a greater number of students are in the school. Studio space in the basement is not of the quality of the studios on the upper two floors regarding natural light and access to other students and faculty.

Lecture and seminar space is lacking, and what is available is of low quality. Within Atkinson Hall, acoustics (particularly poor) and lighting is lacking and not conducive to group student work reviews or juries. Corridors are often used for juries, leading to interruptions and a lack of focus for the participants. These spaces lack projection technologies creating frustration for faculty and students alike. Space in adjacent college buildings is available on a scheduled basis but this remoteness is viewed as problematic and disruptive.

Office space for faculty is adequate, although sharing of offices is common. This lack of privacy may lead to lower productivity for faculty and challenges to students during office hours. It should be noted, however, that some faculty have elected to remain in shared offices when offered a private office.

Instructional support spaces and materials, such as reference books, periodicals, model shops, printing and computers, and image archives are available but located in adjacent college buildings. Although not at great distance to Atkinson Hall, the lack of proximity is less than ideal.

A report, entitled "Facilities Assessment, College of Art and Design", produced by Eskew+Dumez+Ripple Architects, New Orleans, LA, was delivered to the college in October 2004. This report states the school occupies a total of 37,400 gross square feet (GSF) and 23,400 usable square feet (USF) located within Atkinson Hall, and that 88% of this space is either adequate or functional, with the remaining 12% falling into an inadequate category. This report includes an allowance figure of \$5.6m for renovations and fees. ADA issues are described in the report and, presumably, costs to rectify these

issues are included in this figure. Other facility goals developed with the school and included in the report are: creating additional interaction space, improving security, upgrading the studio environment, and window replacement.

Because of the preponderance of deficiencies noted by the team, in particular those related to code and accessibility issues, this condition is not met.

2008 Response -- This citation primarily had to do with our building not having an elevator. We are pleased to report that the University has committed funds to this cause and will be selecting an architect during the spring '09 semester.

2009 Response – Please see the response here from the University Architect:

The State of Louisiana, Division of Administration, authorized by Act 27 of 2006 (Supplement from A7 2008) provided \$975,000 for the facility enhancements which supports the School of Architecture premier program and will address facility conditions of a historical building constructed in 1924. These funds will provide for the installation of a new three story, ADA compliant elevator, renovations to and creation of ADA toilets within Atkinson and the replacement of the original windows. These strategic enhancements will address not only code issues, but will provide energy savings and interior environmental atmospheric control by addressing moisture entrance.

Also, through funding by student fees, University funds and matching funds by the Division of Administration access will be provided at the northwest Basement entrance on the historical University Quadrangle. This access will provide those with impairment to easily access the new three story elevator at the Basement level.

Over the past 5 years the University replaced the clay tile roof and expended \$180,000.

Renovation funds are in place and the bid documents for the projects are actively being prepared. The renovations are anticipated to occur beginning May 2010 with a phased completion to accommodate the academic programs that will occur during the next 12 months. Atkinson is an extremely active building supporting the students with design labs and computer labs and the physical heavy construction will be scheduled around the students learning activities.

2010 FE Report – LSU, as many other schools, is experiencing unprecedented budget restrictions and budgetary shortfalls. As of this writing we are waiting to hear from the State about the renovation project scheduled for this summer. The Chancellor has frozen all projects supported by state funding so there is a very good chance that this construction will not proceed this summer.

However, the existing ADA ramp into the basement was upgraded from a wooden ramp to a more substantial and stable concrete ramp. This has greatly improved the access to the basement levels classrooms and facilities.

13.13 Human Diversity

Understanding of the diverse needs, values, behavioral norms, physical ability, and social and spatial patterns that characterize different cultures and individuals and the implication of this diversity for the societal roles and responsibilities of architects

Met Not Met

This criterion is not met. The program's focus almost exclusively on the surrounding region and its familiar constituencies has limited its ability to give students an adequate exposure to the full range of issues affecting human diversity and the architect's response. There is no required coursework that is tied to diverse perspectives in social sciences, environmental behavior responses, or cultural or international exploration to allow student to develop this understanding. Highly commendable individual investigations in elective coursework and individual study examples were presented, but are neither widespread nor part of the core area of study.

2008 Report -- Following Hurricane Katrina, the School focused considerable effort on projects in and around New Orleans. In order to address this citation, a number of studios at various year-levels have undertaken more diverse and non-traditional projects. For example, our second-year graduate studio (ARCH 7003) recently did a project sited in Afghanistan, and one of our fifth-year studios (ARCH 5002) did a project sited in Detroit.

2009 Report – The School continues to seek ways to fulfill this Student Performance criterion. One highlight continues to be our participation in the Virginia Tech Washington Alexandria Architecture Consortium, which brings together an international body of students and architectural educators at their campus in Alexandria, Virginia. Approximately 40% of our upper level students choose to participate in this program for either one or two semesters.

In addition to encouraging our students to participate in the WAAC program, we augment our curriculum with field trips, the lecture series and LSU Programs Abroad. For example, this spring our third year class used their mandatory field trip to travel to Mexico City and used the information and experiences from that trip for a design project. Our second, third and fourth year students all have a required field trip that is intended to take students out of their familiar environment and engage with diverse human environments.

In addition, our sequence of history courses, ARCH 3005, 3006, and 4007 draw on a diverse set of cultures and built environments to develop this understanding in our student body.

2010 FE Report – Our history sequence has addressed this deficiency through a revision to the course outline and schedule. In addition, we continue to offer summer programs that develop this understanding within our students.

A brief narrative summarizing changes that have been made or may be made in the accredited program.

In summary, our program has made the following changes since the last visit to address deficiencies:

- Hired one female Full Professor as Director of the School of Architecture.
- Hired two tenure-track Assistant Professors, one female and one Hispanic American.
- Replaced wooden accessibility ramp with concrete, permanent ramp to basement.
- The state has authorized funds to build an elevator as well as improved weatherization.
- The architectural history sequence includes components addressing the diversity of architectural issues and cultures.

Future plans for change include:

- Successfully recruiting and hiring another minority faculty member.
- Continue to build on recruiting efforts for a diverse student body.
- Implement a strategy for all of our students to participate in an international experience.
- Investigate alternative funding possibilities to make needed facilities improvements including alumni development campaign, grant possibilities, raising student fees.