

**Prairie View A&M University**  
*External Review*  
*of the*  
*School of Architecture*

March 20-22, 2005

**The broad areas of the review are as follow:**

**MISSION**

Is the mission of the School of Architecture clear?

Do the administration, faculty, staff and students know and accept the mission?

Is the mission of each degree program and center/institute clear?

**ORGANIZATION**

Are the academic programs in the departments compartmentalized in a manner that advances the mission without overlap, conflict, or confusion?

Are the programs viewed as programs that contribute to the overall mission of the University?

Are the centers/institutes fully structured as approved?

**ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

Why were the degree programs in the college established?

How have the degree programs evolved over the years?

What is the degree to which the degree programs have adapted to meet change?  
(Describe these changes.)

What is the degree to which the programs have adapted to the changing demographic characteristics of the PVAMU students?

What are the enrollment trends for each degree program (undergraduate and graduate)?

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, Continued**

What are the graduation trends for each degree program (undergraduate and graduate)?

What are the outcome objectives for post-graduation placement?

Are graduates working in the profession? If so, where and in what capacity?

Are graduates seeking advanced degrees? If so, where and in what discipline?

What are the certification/licensure rates of graduates?

Are there degree programs that should be eliminated?

Are there degree programs that should be revised?

Are there new innovative degree programs that should be added?

Is the curriculum of the degree programs appropriate to the depth, breadth, and level of the discipline?

## **PERSONNEL --GENERAL**

Are there sufficient faculty and staff to conduct the work of the college in a normal fashion (e.g. avoid over burdening any professionals or support personnel on a regular basis)?

Do the position descriptions match the actual duties being performed?

Are personnel able to work harmoniously with little conflict or without conflict that negatively impacts the work environment? (If not, what are the dynamics that produce lack of harmony or unity?)

Is every employee evaluated annually and provided an audience with his or her supervisor to discuss strengths and weaknesses?

Are members of the faculty sought as leaders among their peers? (If so, why?)

## **PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

Is travel to seminars, workshops, etc made available to all personnel who could benefit from such opportunities?

What is the nature of the orientation and mentoring that new faculty and staff receives?

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

When asked “What do you think of the academic programs in the School of Architecture at PVAMU?”:

How would non- School of Architecture faculty, staff or students likely respond?

How would the faculty, staff or student within the School of Architecture respond?

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Is the level of technology available to the faculty and staff adequate, above that required or below that desirable?

Is the level of learning technology available to students, faculty and staff adequate, above that expected, or below that expected?

## **MANAGEMENT**

Are faculty and staff members in the School of Architecture able to participate in decision making, especially decisions on whom to employ, how to allocate funds for each year, and what changes are needed to improve the unit?

Is there a strategic plan? If so, who participated in developing it?  
Have the contents (draft or final) been disseminated to all faculty and staff as well as student representatives?

Are faculty and staff members able to discuss issues with supervisors and be confident that their discussion will remain confidential?

Is there a high level of accountability wherein persons are held responsible for doing their jobs and must face consequences if the jobs are not performed as outlined?

Are there opportunities for persons to be groomed for leadership?

Is there a high level of trust evident between the administrative personnel and the staff within the unit?

How do the faculty and staff perceive the attitude of the University’s executive leadership team toward the academic programs in the School of Architecture?

## **BUDGET**

Are the financial resources at, above, or far below those needed to meet the needs of the academic programs in the School of Architecture?

If the resources are inadequate, which areas, in priority order, should be addressed to increase the effectiveness of degree programs in the School of Architecture?

## **RISK REDUCTION**

Are there internal audits routinely or on a cycle to decrease the likelihood of mismanagement of external funds, loss of materials, damage to property, abuse of the facility, etc.?

Are there rules and procedures designed to limit inappropriate or unproductive action reviewed periodically?

Are institutional resources used to assist faculty and staff with job related conflicts or personal concerns that might be presented to a supervisor?

## **FACILITIES**

Are the facilities for teaching adequate?

If not, what could you recommend the University do to create better facilities?

## **INTER RELATEDNESS OF UNITS**

To what extend do the academic programs in the School of Architecture impact other academic programs at the University?

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## **Overview**

The following report reflects the observations that the External Review Team made during its brief visit to the campus from the evening of March 20 until noon on March 22, 2005 and its review of the written material sent to the team just before the team arrived. The schedule, while dense, provided an opportunity for the team to meet with the upper administration of the University including the President, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs as well as the administration, faculty and student-body of the School of Architecture. The Team would like to extend our sincere appreciation for the openness and warm hospitality each segment of the University community afforded us during our visit.

## **Strengths**

- The Team found a strong and committed leader in Dean Ikhlas Sabouni.
- The faculty are passionate, dedicated, and care about carrying out the mission of the School and the University.
- The Team observed an articulate, knowledgeable and bright student body. The student meeting was attended by a representative sample of about 30 students and provided an opportunity for a candid discussion about the program.
- The highly anticipated opening of a new nationally recognized facility at the entrance to the campus will bring prominent exposure to the program and University.
- The Team recognizes the Community Urban Rural Enhancement Center (CURES) and the Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture (TIPHC) as important School of Architecture assets that support the mission of the School, the University and the State of Texas.
- The internship program developed under the leadership of Barry Norwood provides access to the professional practice of architecture for the student-body.
- The mix of disciplines (i.e. Architecture, Construction Science, and Community Development), the service center and institute are ideally suited for the mission of the University and that of the School of Architecture.
- The School's outreach opportunities are complimentary and provide important exposure of the University and School

## **Causes for Concerns**

- The School has embarked on an aggressive and highly successful recruitment strategy for the last 4 years. As a result the School's enrollment has grown between 2 to 3 times in the last two years.
- While the recruitment initiatives and the initiation of new programs have increased the student population of the school, the financial and human resources have not increased at the rate required to match the School's growth.

- Faculty teaching-loads of at least three courses per semester are too high for the number of faculty and the concurrent faculty expectations in service and research activities.
- The Architecture Program does not have sufficient staff support to effectively operate a program of this size. There is currently one administrative staff member for the Dean of the School who manages three programs. No staff support exists for faculty or the program coordinators.
- In 2001 the School of Architecture received funding to start five programs and centers: the Master of Architecture, the Bachelor of Science in Construction Sciences, the Community Urban and Rural Enhancement Service, the Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture, (TIPHC) and the Master of Community Development. Funding for the Community Development has expired and CURES and TIPHC lack permanent funding as well.
- The Architecture Program, the Construction Science Program, and The Texas Institute for Preservation of History and Culture are administered by interim directors.

## **Bachelor of Science in Architecture**

### **Strengths**

- The program is well established and provides a direct track to the accredited Master of Architecture degree program
- The program has experienced rapid enrollment growth over the last 4 years.
- The faculty is passionate and nurturing and spends extensive contact hours with the students. Studios meet four days a week instead of the traditional three in other architecture programs.
- An exciting new facility with dedicated spaces for each year level will be ready for occupancy, fall 2005.
- The new facility will bring national recognition to the program and the University.
- Increased exposure to the profession through an aggressive internship program being developed by Barry Norwood.

### **Challenges**

- Diminishing financial resources amid student and program growth.
- The student to faculty ratios in the studios is excessive in lieu of increased student enrollment and the current faculty teaching loads.

### **Concerns**

- Adequate funding to equip the new shop area and computing labs.
- Reduction in Title III funding to support the Laptop Program and the reduction in OCR funding to support program enhancements such as scholarships.
- Adequate funding to support the demands of the of a growing student population.
- Relationship to and the integration of Architecture to other programs in the School

### **Recommendations**

- The School would benefit from an institutionalized study-abroad program
- The School should consider a reduction in contact hours and/or the number of meeting days for their studios.

## **Master of Architecture**

### **Strengths**

- The program is fully accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).
- The faculty is passionate and nurturing and spends extensive contact hours with the students. Studios meet four days a week instead of the traditional three in other architecture programs.
- An exciting new facility with dedicated spaces for each year level will be ready for occupancy, fall 2005.
- The new facility will bring national recognition to the program and the University.
- Increased exposure to the profession through an aggressive internship program being developed by Barry Norwood

### **Challenges**

- Diminishing financial resources amid student and program growth.

### **Concerns**

- Relationship to and the integration of Architecture to other programs in the School and the other Colleges
- Adequate funding to equip the new shop area and computing labs.
- Reduction in Title III funding to support the Laptop Program and the reduction in OCR funding to support program enhancements such as scholarships.
- Adequate funding to support the demands of the of a growing student population.
- Relationship to and the integration of Architecture to other programs in the School

### **Recommendations**

- School would benefit from an institutionalize study-abroad program
- The School should consider a reduction in contact hours and/or the number of meeting days for their studios.

## **Bachelor of Construction Science**

This is a relatively new degree for the School and compliments the other degree programs in the School very well. The program will graduate its first student with the Bachelor's in Construction Science this year.

### **Strengths**

- The program is a strong complement to the other degree programs and affords the School a well rounded curriculum in the built environment.
- The program is in a high demand area, close to the Houston metro area, and its graduates will be in demand with excellent starting salaries.

### **Challenges**

- The program is currently without a leader. Program leadership is essential for the program to grow and prosper.
- A link with industry is lacking. Industry support is essential for professional programs; the PVAMU program must formalize and utilize an industry advisory organization.

### **Concerns**

- The primary concern is one of resources. A program leader is essential and faculty resources will be needed as the program grows.

### **Recommendations**

- Expedite the recruitment of a program leader.
- Set up a formal mentoring relationship with the Construction Science program at Texas A&M University to promote growth and excellence.
- Begin the process to seek accreditation by the American Council for Construction Accreditation.
- Set growth targets for student population and determine resource requirements critical to accommodate the student growth; be prepared to provide resources as growth is realized.
- Formalize an Industry Advisory Council and utilize it to promote industry relationships.
- Consider a formal industry internship program for students and faculty.

## **Master of Community Development**

### **Strengths**

- The Program is fortunate to have distinguished and diverse faculty with expertise in various fields
- The program enjoys a diverse student body with a rich mix of academic disciplines and professional experience.
- The Master of Community Development is a new and innovative degree program. It is one of only a handful of this type of degree program in the U.S.
- The interdisciplinary nature of the degree insures that collaborations with a diverse range of disciplines within the School as well as across campus.
- The program enables graduating students to pursue diverse careers
- Though young, the program continues to grow.
- The program has a visual and substantive presence in the communities throughout the region.
- It has maintained a strong relationship with the Community Urban and Rural Enhancement Service, Culture Center
- It clearly is a program that exemplifies the integration of teaching, research, and service activities

### **Challenges**

- In order to build upon program richness it will need to invest in maintaining its diverse faculty and student body. Two of the senior faculty are retiring soon.
- Program is in its formative years and it will need to have adequate human and financial resources build and maintain its infrastructure.
- Maintaining an equal balance of cross-disciplinary knowledge as the faculty composition and curriculum structure evolves and changes
- Most entering students are not familiar w/ the “design studio” as a teaching/learning process and environment.

### **Concerns**

- The Team is concerned about the rate of rapid program growth and the lack of permanent funding to support the program.
- Impending retirements of some key faculty members will affect program continuity.
- Relationship to and the integration of Community Development to other programs in the School.
- There is a need for the program and curriculum, which are 4 years-old, to be assessed and evaluated.
- Increased teaching loads as the program continues to grow
- Roles of faculty: balance in teaching, research, and service activities; faculty evaluation mechanism should match the expected roles of the faculty (e.g. increased weight should be given to service activities, as service is of primary educational and scholarly importance to Community Development)

### **Recommendations**

- Begin faculty recruiting process (in advance); recruit faculty that uphold the significance of the interdisciplinary program structure and value student, faculty, and disciplinary diversity
- Develop relationships with other similar programs in the U.S. to formalize a knowledge base, curriculum structure, learning objectives and outcomes, and accrediting body
- Develop a rigorous assessment mechanism for the curriculum (as a whole and for each of its constituent parts), including: learning objectives, pedagogical models, learning outcomes, job placement, needs of incoming students, etc.
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- As the curriculum is assessed and re-structured, revise: a) the program's missions/objectives/outcomes, b) faculty development plan, and c) the faculty evaluation mechanism
- Provide comprehensive orientations to incoming students on: a) the interdisciplinary structure of the program, b) the relationship of the components of the curriculum (i.e. the courses), and c) the history, role, methods, and environment of the "design studio"

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**Agenda at a Glance**

**March 20-2005 ~**

- 3:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Review team arrives and transitions to Crowne Plaza Brookhollow Hotel, Houston, TX 77040
- 6:30 p.m. – 7:15p.m. Welcome Reception/Overview and Charge from Provost E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith, Interim Associate Provost Michael L. McFrazier and School of Architecture Administration
- 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Dinner/Review Team only Preliminary Planning
- 9:15 p.m. Team retires for the evening

**March 21, 2005 ~**

- 7:00 a.m. - 7:40 a.m. Breakfast at Hotel
- 7:50 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Team Departs Hotel for the University
- 9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Team meets w/University Officials including School of Architecture Administration
- 9:45 a.m. - 12:00 Noon Team Conducts Review (*i.e., receives briefing on School, tours facilities, conducts interviews with faculty, staff and students, reviews documents such as org. charts, personnel descriptions, enrollment trends, graduation rates, research and service projects, and external funding sources.*)
- 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. Lunch meeting with School of Architecture Staff
- 1:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Team Continues Review
- 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. School-wide meeting with Students
- 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Windshield Tour of Campus and tour of New Building

**(Agenda Continued)**

- 6:00p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Team Departs for Hotel
- 7:00 p.m. Working Dinner (*Preliminary Report Preparation*)

**March 22, 2005 ~**

- 7:00 a.m. – 7:40 a.m. Breakfast at Hotel
- 7:50 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Team Departs Hotel for the University
- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Finalize Interviews, Documents, etc.
- 10:00 am. – 11:30 a.m. Exit Interviews w/University Administrators
- 11:40 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch ~ President's Conference Room 211
- 12:45 p.m. Departs the University for Airport, Hotel, or other

**Prairie View A & M University**  
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