

2.1 Summary of Responses to the Team Findings

2.1.1 Conditions Not Met

Condition 6: Human Resource Development

“Student Academic advising is well done by the program faculty, and other advising is available through the University. There is a chapter of the AIAS, although activities appear to be minimal. Faculty promotion and tenure policies follow those of the University, and are satisfactory. A significant number of faculty member are active in practice, and this assists in keeping the program familiar with new ideas in the profession. There is little research activity.

However, the development of the human resources of the program suffers from a long standing lack of financial support. This has made it impossible to provide enrichment activities common in programs in architecture. For example:

The sabbatical program has not been funded for many years. The lecture series, while excellent so far as it goes, has been confined to bringing speakers from the Houston area, since there is no funding to bring speakers who need travel reimbursement. Neither students nor faculty members have available sufficient travel funds for attending meetings off campus (the current annual travel budget for the program is \$1,000). Students have attended AIAS Forums only because private funds were made available. Field trips are unknown, except to nearby locations available through pooled motor transportation.

While recognizing the general financial constraints on the program and the University, the team finds that this condition is not met.”

Visiting Team Report, Pages 8-9, July 10, 2000

Response:

- The School participates in, and supports the University’s student advisory program.
- Student organizations, as more fully described in Section 3.1.2, are functional and active. Increased student participation has been recorded in each group. However, activities and events are still limited due to funding restrictions.
- The University’s faculty development/sabbatical leave program is designed to provide full or partial salary support, and to the extent possible, support for travel and materials need by the faculty who go on leave to pursue a project that will substantially strengthen and enhance the school or college of the university. Full-time faculty who are tenured or on tenure track receive priority consideration. Recipients must produce a creative, innovative product that a department, school or college might adapt to effect systemic changes in the quality of instruction delivered to the students. The University sabbatical opportunities are limited by budget constraints and are competitive.
- The University as a whole is still facing significant budget limitations. In the 2005-2006 Budget, the administration has provided a slight increase in funding available for travel and professional development.

- While acknowledging the continued problems with proper financial support for travel and professional development activities, which might cause them to be inadequately serviced on a need/request basis, the School continues to host and participate in such activities. Each year the School continues to host a Spring Semester lecture series. In 2005, the six-week lecture series titled “Inside/Outside” brought young practitioners, architects, designers, and industrial engineers, to speak to the students.
- Student travel continues to be on an ad hoc basis. Over the past four years the School has been able to organize and arrange an annual visit to Chaco Canyon. This trip for faculty and students is made in conjunction with the College of Architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington.
- Four students traveled to Paris and studied one semester with the University of Houston program abroad.
- In the last two years, students traveled during spring break to New York City with an Art faculty member/Curator to explore the city, visit museums, and attend several cultural activities.
- In the last few years, students’ organization representatives and their advisors attended regional and national AIAS, NOMA, and CSI conferences. (i.e., Washington, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, and Alabama).
- Students participate with faculty members in local, regional, and national student competitions in Chicago, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, and Fort Worth.
- The School of Architecture hosted the Regional ACSA in Houston in 2003.
- Faculty members attend local, regional, national, and international meetings and conferences.
- The Dean of the School of Architecture, in her capacity as an assistant to the previous President and currently a coordinator for facilities planning and design, managed to conduct all the processes of advertising, firm selection, design, review and implementation within the School. Faculty and students were involved in all these activities during the last four years helping the university design and construct four new buildings. This brought nationally renowned architects to meet at the university and afforded students the opportunity to observe and learn from their presentations.

2.1.2 Criteria Not Met

Criteria 12.7 (now 3.13.12) Human Behavior

“The lack of appropriate theory courses in this area and the absence of an architectural historian on the faculty adversely influence the students’ ability to investigate, assimilate and apply knowledge about the relationship between human behavior and the physical environment. The planned addition of an architectural historian in Fall 2000 should improve this situation.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 14, July 10, 2000

Criteria 12.9 (now 3.13.11) Use of Precedents

“The students’ ability to investigate and apply, on their own, architectural history and theory as a source of formal precedents to their architectural design projects is seriously lacking.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 14, July 10, 2000

Criteria 12.10 (now 3.13.8) Western Traditions

“The two required introductory architectural history courses do not achieve an acceptable level of assimilation and comprehension of Western architectural canons. The methods of teaching and evaluation result in some degree of student awareness but fail to ensure that students can paraphrase or summarize information regarding the range of climatic, technological, socioeconomic and other cultural factors which have shaped and sustained Western traditions.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 14, July 10, 2000

Criteria 12.11 (now 3.13.9) Non-Western Traditions

“Although there was some attention to this subject, the team found a weakness in the coverage of non-Western history and its connections to today’s architecture.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 15, July 10, 2000

Criteria 12.12 (now 3.13.10) National and Regional Traditions

“Students demonstrate no awareness of local vernacular building tendencies or of the differences in regional architectural heritage within the United States. There is neither sufficient evidence that national and regional traditions have been incorporated into the Environmental Systems and history courses as claimed, nor is there any mechanism ensuring that students study or experience the built environment in other parts of this country.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 15, July 10, 2000

Response to Items 12.7-12.12:

- Efforts are continuing to fill the historian position which appears to have triggered most of these criticisms. In the academic years of 2002-2003, historian Gail Hook taught at Prairie View and provided input to the faculty on how to improve their courses with historical content.
- As a result of a proposal to the Brown Foundation, the School just received funding for an endowed Chair. It is anticipated that the person filling this position will be an architectural historian.
- In the meantime, the weaknesses articulated in the Visiting Team Report have been challenged both in the history survey and with more specific approaches in the design studios. All of the weaknesses cited have been addressed to some degree in the history survey classes and specific responses are now part of the curricula of studios as follows:
 - Precedents are strongly considered in 1st and 2nd year design studios.
 - Non-western traditions are examined in the history survey and are considered in design studio settings.
 - National and Regional Traditions are considered both in the history survey and regional issues examined in 3rd year design.

- Studio design project assignments have included a 5th year project as Chaco Canyon involving prehistoric architecture, while freshmen design classes had a teahouse design in Japan and the 4th year design studio (Spring Semester 2004 taught in conjunction with Michael Rotundi) included an office tower in Tokyo, Japan.

12.13 (now 3.13.15) Environmental Conservation (Sustainable Design)

“Student work did not show understanding of the basic principles of ecology and of an architect’s responsibility for environmental and resource conservation in architecture and urban design. Most projects were object based and contextual issues were not addressed.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 15, July 10, 2000

Response:

- These issues are presently being addressed throughout the curriculum through a broader and continuous emphasis on comprehensive design. Sustainable design receives specific attention in 3rd Year and again in the 5th Year Comprehensive Design Studio.
- A *Green Building Lecture Series* has been planned for Fall 2005.
- To better understand sustainable design, the students have attended various LEED’s conferences and briefings by the Houston Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute.
- Faculty and students attended the *Green Building Conference* in Houston (Spring Semester 2004), which was planned and sponsored by AIA Houston and AGC local Chapters. In the same conference, students participated in a Lego Sustainable Design Competition and won 1st place and a monetary prize.
- Students in the 3rd year design studio (Spring Semester 2003) participated in a design competition for the City of Austin - Seaholm Project that involved the adapted reuse of a former power plant along the Colorado River. The School took the 2nd place award among other Schools of Architecture in Texas.
- The Texas Vernacular Residential Development in Sherman, Texas, is an example of a sustainable design project.
- The Materials and Methods classes (ARCH 2273 and 3283) include additional emphasis on environmental issues relating to the selection and use of materials.
- Students often take the Energy Alternative Design elective course, where they work on projects and research with their faculty members exploring environmental issues.
- The criticism that “Most projects were object based and contextual issues not addressed” is being taken up in the design studio sequence, although the school believes that this criticism was due more to our not displaying work appropriately to respond to this question. Outside of the 1st year, as the student go into their 2nd year and beyond, the studios focus on projects being site-specific and related to the context of the final result. This includes taking students on field trips to visit the sites in Houston, Dallas, and Austin.

12.15 Site Conditions

“The ability to respond to natural and built site characteristics in the development of a program is not apparent in the students’ work. There is no indication that the students can manipulate contours or understand soils.”

Visiting Team Report, Pages 15-, July 10, 2000

Response:

- The School’s faculty believes that this issue was and remains well covered. We believe that the work presented to the visiting team did not represent the strength of this issue. The issue is being covered and has been covered. In response to the criticism we have incorporated site-specific projects that require students to successfully address steep slopes and sites with grading that require them to solve access and functional issues. In addition, students take a Site Design elective course offered in the School as part of the elective courses.

12.24 Building Code Compliance

“An understanding of Building Code Compliance was not demonstrated in student work or found in the course books presented. The integrations of codes: occupancy classifications, allowable building areas, allowable separation requirements, occupancy requirements, means of egress and fire protection in the design studio will add richness to the projects and equip students with what they need when entering the working environment.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 17, July 10, 2000

Response:

- This criterion is now being met through a curriculum-wide focus on the issue of building codes. Specifically adjustments are noted as follows:
 - The Materials and Methods courses now include references to code and specifications requirements in the lectures and reading assignments.
 - In the Environmental Systems courses, code issues are also addressed.
 - For the CADD Construction Documents and Codes class, greater emphasis is placed on building codes and their relationship to not only the construction documents, but also to planning and zoning issues commonly found in private practice.
 - In the 3rd year design studios, the comprehensive design studio and graduate research class all instructors include lecture components regarding building codes. Most projects in these classes also include design problems that incorporate some form of code compliance issue that the students must address.
- Textbooks have been added as required and optional dealing with building codes. These have been coordinated between the design studios on the upper level and the technical courses
- We have a code consultant lecture series for our 5th year students;
- In the 3rd year studio and up each course takes at least one project and incorporates having to solve a major code or life safety issue
- Faculty juries for pinup and final presentation have incorporate full time and adjunct faculty who are licensed architects and engineers.

12.34 Professional Internship

“This criterion is inadequately addressed by the curriculum. Even upper classmen, usually those who have worked, possess only minimal awareness of the role of internship along the path to registration. While it is recognized that the school allows student to gain academic elective credit for working in the summer, that it has sponsored some IDP seminars, and that it has been building a relationship with the AIA Houston, there

remains little relationship with the state registration board. Despite the fact that so many Prairie View students must leave school in order to work, there is no mechanism to facilitate the work through mentorship and/or enrollment in IDP.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 19, July 10, 2000

Response:

- Required professional internship is coupled with the practicum experience in fifth year. In addition we continue to highlight the IDP program and have offered a continuation course for professional practice to bring about a greater emphasis.
- Since the prior team visit we have added several professors who are licensed architects. In their courses they have incorporated discussions on internship, Architectural Registration Exam (ARE) and professional registration.
- The school has appointed two professors who are licensed architects as IDP coordinators. They are responsible for educating the students on IDP, ARE scholarship funding from the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners (TBAE) and professional practice issues.
- The School’s professional practice course places a major emphasis on registration.
- The School’s master’s degree now includes a new mentoring program instituted in 2004-2005 Academic Year. In this program, students spend one day per week in the offices of a major firm in Houston or other major cities working on their final, comprehensive design project. This affords the students to have licensed practitioners assist them with their projects and a simultaneous exposure to office conditions that can not be replicated in the classroom.
- The TBAE has assisted with providing text materials to the IDP Coordinators. Plans are underway to incorporate a yearly briefing by the appropriate staff member of the TBAE to students on the registration process.
- The AIAS chapter sponsors an annual lecture series on internship for their members.
- The AIA Houston IDP Committee visits the School and gives a seminar to the students at least once a year.
- Special Topics course taught to fifth year students by a newly licensed architect, focus on the architectural internship and licensure processes within the context of a real work environment.

2.1.3 Causes of Concern

The Visiting Team Report noted that “underlying the conditions not met were two basic issues.”

“The marginal funding of the program directly affects the extent and quality of human resource development. This University issue is being addressed by the central administration, but until it is resolved there will continue to be problems because of a low faculty salary level and insufficient funding for supplies, travel, outside lecturers and exhibits, and study programs away from Prairie View.

The small size of the program limits the number of faculty members. Current faculty members are properly focused on the studio, but this means that practitioners are obliged to teach the supporting courses for which they have prepared well, but to which they cannot bring the perspective and focus of specialists. A new faculty appointment in fall, 2000, anticipates adding to the faculty a full time architectural historian. This would strengthen this important non-studio element of architectural education. Additionally, a larger faculty will reduce the current dependence on individual interest, which makes the

quality of the curriculum too dependent on which persons compose the faculty. The program's plans for increased size should be pursued."

Visiting Team Report, Page 3, July 10, 2000

Response:

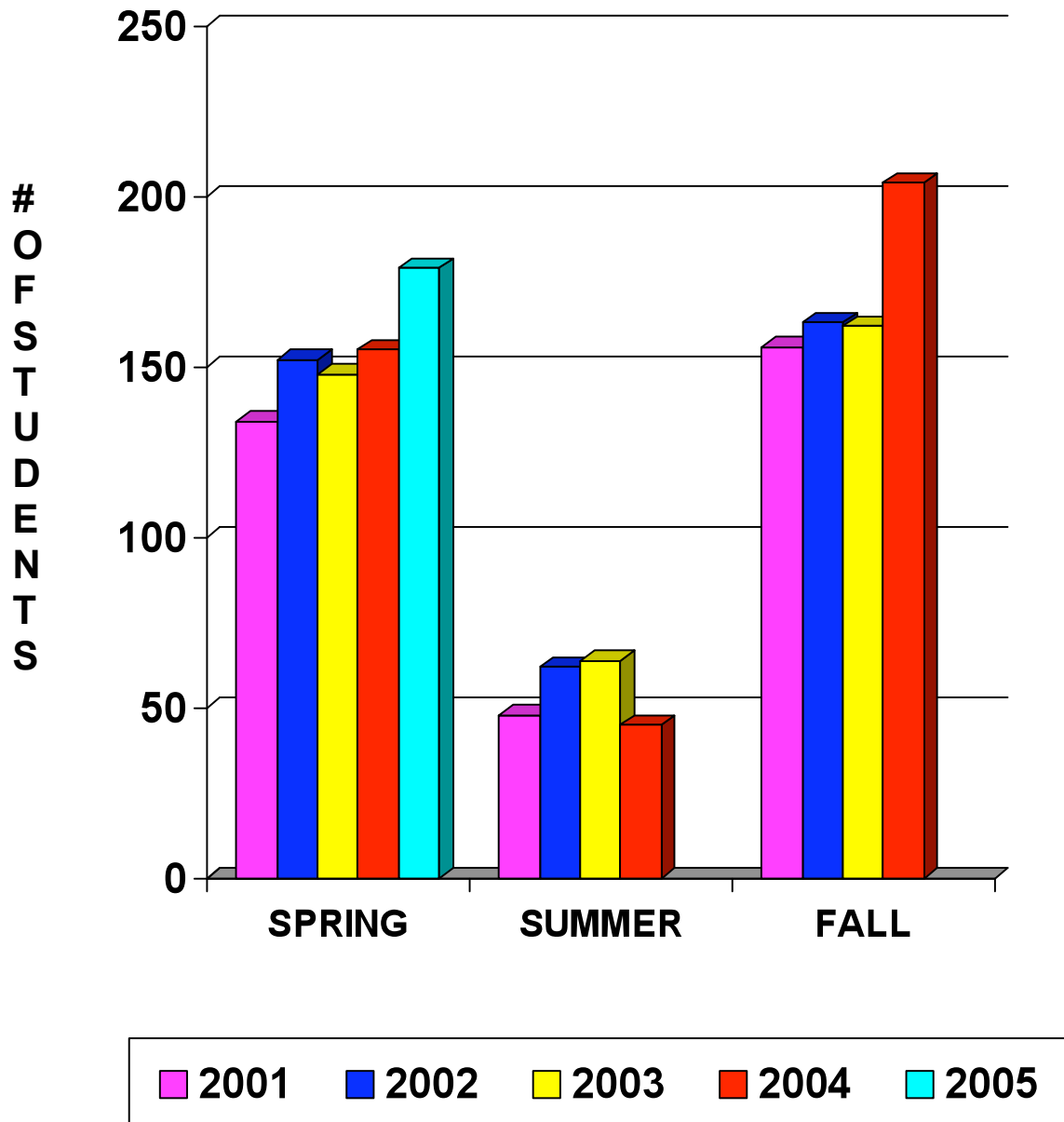
- The School is still dealing each year in the budgetary process with the need for more funding. The most recent budget cycle did result in an increase in operating funds and merit raises to be paid for faculty and staff. The School was promised by the new Vice President for Administration and Finance to get more operating funding in the next year budget.
- In the year 2000, the University received a settlement from the State as requested by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). As a result of this settlement, several new degrees were added to the University and four new buildings were approved. The School of Architecture succeeded in convincing the University of the need for a new building instead of continuing on the second floor of the Engineering Building it was currently occupying. In addition, the University, the Texas A&M Board of Regents, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the addition of a Bachelors Degree in Construction Science, a Masters Degree in Community Development, a Masters Degree in Architecture, and the CURES and Culture Centers. With the increase of number of programs, the School of Architecture budget quadrupled. The challenge that the University is facing as the additional funding due to the OCR Settlement comes to an end, is that these new programs have to receive funding from other sources.
- The School has witnessed a sizable increase in the freshmen class enrollment for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Academic Years. Coupled with increased rates of retention for returning students, the School is now able to hire additional faculty for this year, 2005-2006.
- The School has embarked on an aggressive recruiting program. Led by the Assistant to the Dean for Recruitment and Retention, the architecture program is promoting itself at high schools, community colleges and other forums that offer the opportunity to attract increased interest for new students. The demographic area that the School of Architecture is targeting for recruiting students from community colleges, high schools and first generation are as follows;

- Houston Area District
- Dallas / Ft. Worth District
- Rio Grande Valle District
- Coastal Bend Area
- Gulf Coast Area
- El Paso Area
- Austin Area
- Southeast Texas (Beaumont)

During the Fall 2001 through Summer 2002 recruitment period the School of Architecture visited a total of 43 High Schools and 8 Community Colleges. During the Fall 2002 through Summer 2003 recruitment period the School of Architecture visited a total of 32 High Schools, 3 Middle Schools and 11 Community Colleges. In the Fall 2004-Summer 2005 times period the school visited a total of 93 high schools, 3 middle schools and 8 community colleges.

- Due to the success of the recruiting program, student population has risen over the past three years. Added benefits to this program are the increased diversity of students; the increased enrollment of Hispanic and other minorities, and the 1st generation attendees.

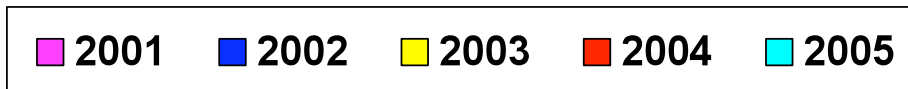
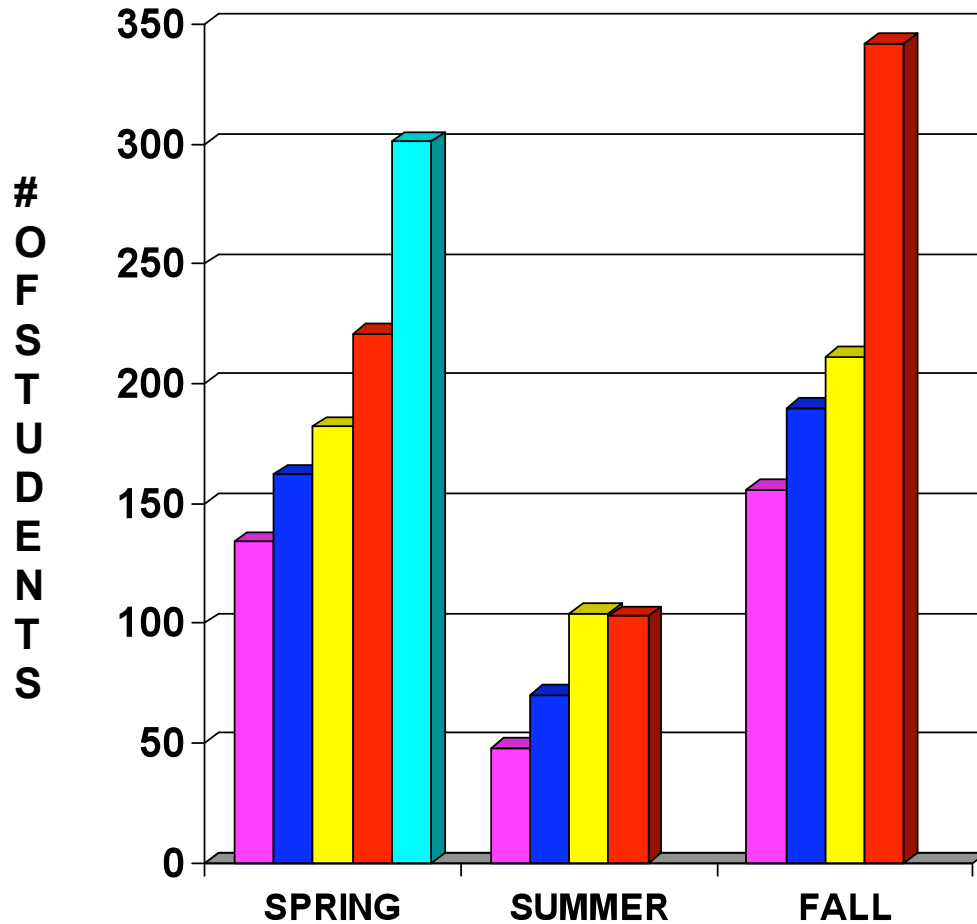
ARCHITECTURE DEGREE Student Enrollment



ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL

Total Student Enrollment

Spring 2001- Spring 2005



- Student enrollment in the School of Architecture has increased as indicated by the following table.

Table No. 2.1 Student Enrollment

Term:	Students:
Fall 2000	115
Fall 2001	163
Fall 2002	190
Fall 2003	211
Fall 2004	341

- The number of Hispanic students in the School has seen an increase.

Table No. 2.2 Hispanic Student Enrollment

Term:	Students:
2001-2002	2
2002-2003	8
2003-2004	23
2004-2005	27

- Graduates from the School of Architecture has also been on the rise.

Table No. 2.3 Graduates

Term:	Students:
Fall 2002	11
Spring 2003	7
Summer 2003	19
Fall 2003	27
Spring 2004	20
Fall 2004	22
Spring 2005	36

- The work of the Assistant to the Dean for Recruitment and Retention and the collective attention of the Dean, Coordinators, and faculty to address each student as a “client” of the School have resulted in improved retention rates for the past two years.
- The role of an architectural historian was filled by Dr. Gail Hook, who was employed at the School from 2002 to 2003. Before she left to pursue research and travel overseas, she shared her lectures with Professor Peter Wood, who adapted her style and developed it more fully. Professor Wood continues to teach the Survey of Architecture History I and II courses successfully, while we are continuing to search for an historian.
- Anna Mod, a historian, has been teaching Historic Preservation courses in both the Architecture and Community Development programs.

In this same section of the prior report the team also noted “three characteristics of the curriculum observed during the visit, which needs to be considered by the faculty in developing future curriculum changes.” These items are summarized below with the lead description.

- “The fifth year contains no element that clearly addresses the transitional nature of this last instructional year as a student moves from student life to professional life.”
- “The design emphasis seems to be too strongly on the design of objects, without full consideration of the context in which the objects will be placed.”

3. “In much of the student work it seemed that the students had adequate knowledge, but had not assimilated and used that knowledge in other ways.”

Visiting Team Report, Page 3, July 10, 2000

Response:

- **“The fifth year contains no element that clearly addresses the transitional nature of this last instructional year.”**
 - With the advent of the Master of Architecture program, the school is moving toward a thesis project. The past year experimented with a thorough research investigation in the fall semester followed by the comprehensive design studio which involved the students being placed in architecture offices where they received support with their design projects from the office professional staff. The result of this new mentoring program was that all of the students placed in nine firms received job offers for full time employment.
 - In the last year, there are two intensive design studios of 6 credit hours and 9 credit hours associated with two research seminars to investigate the comprehensive nature of design and environmental systems starting with the programming process.
 - Internship opportunities through CURES Center has provided the students chances to work on historical projects and to be involved in documenting buildings and providing proposed solutions. This has given the students valuable experience in adaptive and reusable architecture.

- **“Design emphasis seems to be too strongly on the design of objects.”**
 - While the school believes that our presentation to the prior visiting team unduly underrepresented the curriculum concern with context and site considerations, the studio faculty has responded to this criticism by making sure that site and context considerations get attention in all but the beginning, abstract problems. As an example the student design project assignments in the 3rd year studio this past spring included a regional transit train station in Waller, Texas; a bookstore; a hotel and sports arena, and a Texas Vernacular Residential Development in Sherman, Texas.
 - The fifth year design studios included mixed use development projects in which LEED and site analysis were taken in consideration. Medical clinic, resort hotel with a sport complex, and Prairie View Main Street project are some other examples of fifth year student projects

- **“In much of the student work it seemed that the students had adequate knowledge, but had not assimilated and used that knowledge in other ways.”**
 - Faculty have attempted to broaden the scope of student evaluation to include projects, term papers, short essay answers and other traditional alternatives to multiple choice responses. In addition, faculty members are attempting to focus more on the relevance of course material as potentially applied in the design studio.

2.2 Summary of Responses to Changes in the NAAB Conditions

The school's response to changes in the *NAAB Conditions for Accreditation* adopted since the previous visit are summarized below.

Changes in Criteria: The adjustments in the Student Performance Criteria caused no changes in the curriculum. However, it did result in the realignment of some criteria with the courses supporting same.

Studio Culture Policy:

The Studio Culture Policy has been adopted as reported in Section 3.5 of this report.

Other changes:

“Accredited Degree programs awarding the M. Arch degree must require a minimum of 168 credit hours.”

Presently, the M. Arch requires 166 semester credit hours: 130 for the B.S. in Architecture and 36 for the M. Arch. The school will apply for an additional 2 or more semester credit hours to be added to the undergraduate degree through the Academic Council in the fall of 2005.

“General Studies . . . The curriculum leading to the architecture degree must include at least 45 credit hours . . . that must be outside architectural studies either as general studies or as electives with other than architectural content.”

The program presently has 33 hours of non-architecture content classes within the core curriculum and 9 hours of electives in the undergraduate, professional program track with an additional 6 hours of electives within the M. Arch degree. The addition of a 3 hour elective would meet the 45 hour requirement if those electives are restricted to non-architecture classes. The school is investigating the many options and combinations open to meeting this requirement, including possible changes in the University CORE. The School of Architecture will propose a solution to the administrative bodies within the University in Fall 2005 and should have a resolution by the time the NAAB Visiting Team arrives on campus the following semester.