

Report of the Visiting Team

Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE RE-ACCREDITATION

Landscape Architecture Program
Florida International University

VISITING TEAM MEMBERS

Pat D. Taylor, Ph.D., ASLA, FCELA; Team Chair
The University of Texas at Arlington

Mary Anne Akers, Ph.D., Administrator
Dean, School of Architecture and Planning
Morgan State University

Lydia Stone Kimball, ASLA, LEED AP BD&C, Practitioner
Mahan Rykiel Associates
Baltimore MD

Department of Landscape Architecture

Florida International University
Re-accreditation Review
March 4-7, 2012

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF VISITING TEAM

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Schedule for Accreditation Visit

LAA ACCREDITATION TEAM VISIT SCHEDULE 03-07MAR12

03MAR12, Saturday:

Arrival: Pat D. Taylor (Team Chair)

DAY 1

04MAR12, Sunday:

Arrival: Mary Ann Akers (Administrator) and Lydia Stone Kimball (Practitioner)

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2:30pm: | Chair Roberto Rovira meets Team at Hotel St. Michel in Coral Gables and travels with Team to FIU |
| 3-4:30pm: | Team meets with department Chair Roberto Rovira to finalize schedule and to discuss the program in general; review of student work and tour of the School of Architecture (SOA) facilities at Modesto Maidique Campus (MMC); BEA Gallery (PCA140) |
| 5:30pm: | Tour of Miami Beach Urban Studios (MBUS) at 420 Lincoln Road |
| 6pm: | Dinner on Lincoln Road with Chair Roberto Rovira, Accreditation Coordinator Marta Canaves, Advisory Board member(s), select Alumni, local practitioner(s) |
| 7:30pm-9pm: | Team's Executive Session at MBUS |

DAY 2

05MAR12, Monday:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 8:15-9am: | Coffee and bagels; morning kickoff with Chair Roberto Rovira & Accreditation Coordinator Marta Canaves
BEA Gallery (PCA140) |
| 9-9:45am: | Meeting with Dean Brian Schriener
Dean's Conference Room (PCA285) |
| 9:45-10:15am: | Meeting with Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Adam Drisin, and Senior Associate Dean for Budget, Facilities and Personnel David Bergwall
Dean's Conference Room (PCA285) |
| 10:15-10:45am: | Meeting with Architecture Chair John Stuart, Interior Architecture Chair Janine King, and Lower Division Coordinator Claudia Busch
Dean's Conference Room (PCA285)
ASLA Student Officer(s) escort Team to next meeting |
| 11-11:30am: | Meeting with Vice-Provost Elizabeth Bejar (PC 112) |
| 11:35-12pm: | Meeting with Dean of Graduate Studies Lakshmi Reddi and Assistant Dean Victoria Castellanos (PC230) |
| 12-12:30pm: | Campus tour with ASLA Student Officer(s) and Chair Roberto Rovira
Green Library, Frost Museum, campus facilities |
| 12:30-2pm: | Lunch with Alumni, local practitioners and Advisory Board members
Reading Room (PCA341) |
| 2-3:30pm: | Meeting with full time faculty: Professor Juan A. Bueno, Associate in Design Marta Canaves, and Assistant Professor Ebru Ozer
BEA Gallery (PCA140) |
| 3:30-4:30pm: | Meeting with adjunct faculty: Gianni Feoli, Lucia Mora, Felipe Diez, and Marsh Kriplen |

BEA Gallery (PCA140)

4:30pm: Team work session; break for the day

DAY 3

06MARI2, Tuesday:

8:15-9am: Coffee and bagels; morning kickoff with Chair Roberto Rovira
BEA Gallery (PCA140)

9-11am: Meeting with students
Reading Room (PCA341)

11am-11:45am: Meeting with Assistant Dean of Advising Natasha Stubbs, Advising Office Staff, Recruiter & Admissions Advisor Vanessa Peeck, and Administrative Staff
Dean's Conference Room (PCA285)

11:45am-12:15pm: Meeting with Associate Dean of Advancement Karen Fuller and Coordinator of Alumni Affairs & Advancement Maria Claverie
Dean's Conference Room (PCA285)

12:15-1:15pm: Lunch with Alumni, Student Representatives, Faculty, and Advisory Board members
Reading Room (PCA341)

1:15-1:45pm: Meeting with ASLA Student Officers and LABASH planning team
BEA Gallery (PCA140)

1:45-2:30pm: Team tours studios, Digital Lab and Fabrication Lab with Chair Roberto Rovira; meets respective lab managers Eric Peterson and Mike Bisnett

2:30-3pm: Optional meeting time/debrief

3pm: Team session: report preparation; break for the day

DAY 4

07MARI2, Wednesday:

8-8:45am: Coffee and bagels; morning kickoff with Chair Roberto Rovira
Informal report advising chair of team's findings

9-9:45am: Meeting with Provost Douglas Wartzok and President Mark Rosenberg

10-10:45am: Discussion of Team's findings with Dean Brian Schriener and Associate Dean Adam Drisin

11am-12pm: Report of team's findings to students and faculty in BEA Gallery, School of Architecture

Team Departs

VISITING TEAM LODGING

[Hotel St. Michel in Coral Gables](#)

1. 162 Alcazar Ave., Coral Gables, FL 33134, T 305.444.1666, F 305.529.0074
2. Confirmation Numbers:
 1. Pat Taylor: 32302842
 2. Lydia Stone Kimball: 32302998
 3. Mary Ann Akers: 32302932

FIU CONTACT INFORMATION

Roberto Rovira, RLA
Associate Professor and Chair
FIU Landscape Architecture, PCA 277A
11200 SW 8th St.
Miami, FL 33199
T 305.348.6026
F 305.348.2650
C 305.588.1276 (best number)
H 305.567.9053
e: rovirar@fiu.edu

Marta Canaves
Associate in Design and Accreditation Coordinator
FIU Landscape Architecture, PCA 377A
11200 SW 8th St.
Miami, FL 33199
T 305.348.1886
F 305.348.2650
e: canaves@gmail.com

Zinaida Hirlemann
Office Manager
FIU Landscape Architecture, PCA277B
11200 SW 8th St.
Miami, FL 33199
T 305.348.1886
F 305.348.2650
e: zhirlema@fiu.edu

ACCREDITING TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Chair
Pat D. Taylor, ASLA, Director
Graduate Program in Landscape Architecture
Mailing: Box 19108
The University of Texas at Arlington
Arlington, TX 76018-0109 USA
T 817.272.2801
F 817.272.5098
pdt@uta.edu

Shipping: 601 West Nedderman Dr.
The University of Texas at Arlington
Arlington, TX 76018-0109 USA

Academic Administrator
Dr. Mary Ann Akers, Dean
School of Architecture and Planning (SAP)
Morgan State University
Montebello Complex - Ste. D103
1700 East Cold Spring Lane
Baltimore, MD 21251
T 443.885.3333
maryanne.akers@morgan.edu

Practitioner

Lydia Stone Kimball, ASLA, LEED AP BD+C, Principal

Mahan Rykiel Associates

The Stieff Silver Building

800 Wyman Park Drive, Suite 100

Baltimore, MD 21211-2837

T 410.235.6001

F 410.235.6002

lkimball@mahanrykiel.com

PART I

OVERALL ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Department of Landscape Architecture at Florida International University operates as a discrete unit within the School of Architecture along with departments of architecture and interior architecture. The School of Architecture is housed within the College of Architecture + the Arts.

Florida International University is a public institution, located in South Florida, with an enrollment of 48,000 graduate and undergraduate students, and with 180 degree-granting programs. The University's student body is comprised of 61 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Caucasian, 13 percent black, 4 percent Asian, and 9 percent other. Ninety (90) percent of the student enrollment is from Florida.

The University is classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University/High Research Activity.

The previous Visiting Team from the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board identified 2 Recommendations and 9 Suggestions during the Department's last accreditation renewal.

VISITING TEAM SUMMARY

The Visiting Team found a Department that is responding to change in its structure and leadership by aggressively developing strategies and tactics that can stabilize its operational environment. These strategies and tactics have become necessary because the Department has become one of the first LAAB-accredited institutions to initiate a five year Master of Landscape Architecture degree. In so doing, it has been challenged to significantly increase its student enrollment and to take-on other duties associated with the increased responsibility and autonomy that come with this structural change.

The Visiting Team found significant displays of enthusiasm for the Department, its efforts, its accomplishments, and its future. This enthusiasm emanated from faculty, students, alumni, practitioners, and administrators, and much of it was credited to the Department's immediate past Chair and the current Chair who have demonstrated an extraordinary degree of professional leadership since the last accreditation visit.

As is the case with organizations in rapid transition, it is difficult for those most directly involved with organizational activities to assess the magnitude of change going-on around them. Stakeholders in the Department helped the Visiting Team identify change-related issues that can affect the Department's ability to thrive in the near future. Among these issues are:

- Increased and sustained enrollments
- Adequate faculty numbers
- Adequate up-front support necessary to operate in the new academic mode. Revenue generation from constituent sources including sponsored research and sponsored projects, alumni contributions, and development.
- And, proper response to a new model of professional graduate education including such actions as:
 - Imparting to younger students the academic responsibilities of holding graduate status;
 - Assuring that faculty can balance creative works and research while maintaining their performance in teaching and service;
 - Demonstrating (by faculty) that graduate education is different than undergraduate education;
 - Building upon a reputation among private and public practice offices that FIU landscape architecture students are equal to or superior to graduates from other accredited programs;
 - Adjusting quickly and flexibly to barriers or snags common to implementing a new academic model.

The Visiting Team found two broad areas which are likely to contribute most to addressing these issues. One is Departmental faculty and the other is graduate-level education.

The issue of Departmental faculty includes the need for additional faculty whose focus on research (as opposed to creative works) can raise respect for landscape architecture as a discipline worthy of University investment. In addition, sponsored research and research grants are tied to the Department's ability to recruit graduate students of the caliber needed to compete with landscape architecture schools more experienced in knowledge generation.

The issue of faculty also includes concern for faculty workloads which the Visiting Team views as unsustainable under current distribution. New faculty can be recruited for their ability to contribute to the teaching and scholarly requirements of the profession and the School of Architecture.

Also, by raising research to a level appropriate to a graduate program in landscape architecture, the Department addresses the issue of graduate level education within the accelerated five year MLA curriculum.

The program has successfully engaged a cadre of adjunct faculty over the years who are seen as a mainstay of its teaching mission. Adjuncts, including those who are not currently teaching, are enthusiastic. The Visiting Team also noted a somewhat heavy reliance on alumni among those contributing to the program's teaching mission.

The program is undertaking a pioneering strategy in the preparation of future landscape architects yet few seem daunted by the challenge. A prevailing attitude among the program's stake holders is that the potential of the program—along with what it has delivered in the past—is a harbinger of future successes. This attitude appears rooted in a tradition that FIU and the

program have provided intellectual and professional opportunities that would not otherwise have been available to students. To make the point, when asked what he would be doing were FIU and landscape architecture not here, one student simply replied, “I’d be in some dead-end job somewhere locally.”

Confirmation that Minimum Requirements for Accreditation are Satisfied

1. The program title and degree description incorporate the term "Landscape Architecture".
2. An undergraduate first-professional program is a baccalaureate of at least four academic years' duration.
3. A graduate first-professional program is a master's equivalent to three academic years' duration.
4. Faculty instructional full-time equivalence (FTE) shall be as follows:
 - a. An academic unit that offers a single first-professional program has at least three FTE instructional faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, at least one of whom is full-time.
 - b. An academic unit that offers first-professional programs at both bachelor's and master's levels, has at least six instructional FTE, at least five of whom hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, and at least two of whom are full-time.

Programs	FTE Instructional Faculty	Faculty with Professional Degree in Landscape Architecture	Full Time Faculty
<u>Single Program</u>	3	3	1
Bachelors & Masters	6	5	2

5. The parent institution is accredited by a recognized institutional accrediting agency. [such as recognition by the U.S. Department of Education or Council for Higher Education Accreditation]
6. There is a designated program administrator responsible for the leadership and management functions for the program under review.

The program satisfies the above minimum requirements for accreditation.

Review of Each Recommendation Affecting Accreditation Identified by the Previous Review in 2006

(Please note that the Standard numbers refer to the 2003 LAAB Standards.)

Standard 3:

- **Ensure provision of faculty with appropriate qualifications to provide adequate/consistent instruction of core curriculum.**
- **Ensure that delivery and completion of course content are consistent across years.**

Recommendation:

- *Hire additional full-time faculty;*
- *Develop a consistent core of adjuncts to effectively and consistently teach the same courses each year.*

Accomplished:

The department successfully hired a tenure-track faculty member in the Fall of 2005. He has been tenured and promoted, and is currently the program's chair. He officially began his appointment as chair on July 1, 2011. The previous chair has returned to the faculty and continues on a multi-year contract.

A second tenure-track faculty was hired and began teaching in Fall of 2007. She has successfully completed the process of third-year tenure review during the past academic year (2010-2011.)

Since Fall 2006, the same core group of adjuncts teaches and assists the full-time and tenure-track faculty. Such continuity enhances consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. The department continues to cultivate opportunities and to add new adjunct talent for the program.

Standard 3: Ensure delivery of the full range of landscape architecture core knowledge.

Recommendation: *Review core curriculum and conduct analysis of course content to ensure that the range of core knowledge is covered.*

Accomplished:

The faculty met during the Fall of 2010, reviewed and updated the program core curriculum, including improvements in the digital technology course sequence.

PART II

ASSESSMENT OF EACH STANDARD

Standard 1: Program Mission and Objectives

The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

Assessment:

_____X_____Met _____Met With Recommendation _____Not Met

INTENT: Using a clear concise mission statement, each landscape architecture program should define its core values and fundamental purpose for faculty, students, prospective students, and the institution. The mission statement summarizes why the program exists and the needs that it seeks to fulfill. It also provides a benchmark for assessing how well the program is meeting the stated objectives.

A. Program Mission. The mission statement expresses the underlying purposes and values of the program.

Assessment: Does the program have a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the program and does it relate to the institution's mission statement?

Team comments: The program mission statement, adopted in AY 2010-11, is clearly stated **under Standard 1 p. 20 of the Self Evaluation Report** and includes a vision statement and a statement on values.

B. EDUCATIONAL GOALS. Clearly defined and formally stated academic goals reflect the mission and demonstrate that attainment of the goals will fulfill the program mission.

Assessment: Does the program have an effective procedure to determine progress in meeting its goals and is it used regularly?

Team Comments: The program has developed educational goals that aim at educational excellence, research and creative works, problem-solving collaborations, infrastructure and financial stability, and general themes. The Visiting Team found little evidence in the SER, however, as to how these goals were determined, how specific progress toward attaining them is to be measured, or how regularly the goals are used.

C. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES. The educational objectives specifically describe how each of the academic goals will be achieved.

Assessment: Does the program have clearly defined and achievable educational objectives that describe how the goals will be met?

Team Comments: The SER contains 16 (sixteen) educational objectives that, while laudable, are stated more as goals than as objectives, meaning that their attainability is largely unspecified. In addition, there is no description of how the goals will be met.

D. LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS. The program is engaged in a long-range planning process.

Assessment 1: Does the long-range plan describe how the program mission and objectives will be met and document the review and evaluation process?

Team Comments: Descriptions of how the program's mission and objectives will be met were included in additional materials made available to the Visiting Team. These materials reinforced the long range planning process described on pages 21 and 22 of the SER which identified the priorities of enrollment, visibility, faculty and funding.

Assessment 2: Is the long-range plan reviewed and revised periodically and does it present realistic and attainable methods for advancing the academic mission?

Team Comments: The long range plan is reviewed every 7 (seven) years through a University-supported Strategic Improvement Action Plan (SIAP.)

Assessment 3: Does the self-evaluation report (SER) respond to recommendations and suggestions from the previous accreditation review and does it report on efforts to rectify identified weaknesses?

Team Comments: The SER contains responses to the previous accreditation review **including program responses aimed at rectifying identified weaknesses (pp. 8-12.)**

E. PROGRAM DISCLOSURE. Program literature and promotional media accurately describe the program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status.

Assessment: Is the program information accurate?

Team Comments: The Program literature and promotional media accurately describe the program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status. Overall, program disclosure is professionally prepared and managed.

F. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Recommendations affecting accreditation: None

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Determine how the educational objectives will be implemented and measured.

Standard 2: Program Autonomy, Governance & Administration

The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

Assessment:

_____Met Met With Recommendation _____Not Met

INTENT: *Landscape architecture should be recognized as a discrete professional program with sufficient financial and institutional support and authority to enable achievement of the stated program mission, goals and objectives.*

A. Program Administration. Landscape architecture is administered as an identifiable/discrete program.

Assessment 1: Is the program seen as a discrete and identifiable program within the institution?

Team Comments: The Master of Landscape Architecture program functions as a discrete and identifiable program within Florida International University's College of Architecture + the Arts. The program is its own department in the School of Architecture along with the Department of Architecture and the Department of Interior Architecture.

Assessment 2: Does the program administrator hold a faculty appointment in landscape architecture?

Team Comments: Yes, the Department Chair is tenured as an associate professor in the program.

Assessment 3: Does the program administrator exercise the leadership and management functions of the program?

Team Comments: The program administrator has the leadership and management skills to administer the program. He has a clear vision for the Department and demonstrates the commitment and energy in guiding the unit toward that vision.

B. Institutional Support. The institution provides sufficient resources to enable the program to achieve its mission and goals and support individual faculty development and advancement.

Assessment 1: Are student/faculty ratios in studios typically not greater than 15:1?

Team Comments: The current studio ratio is typically 12:1. The overall student faculty ratio is 14:1 based on 5 FTE's. The student faculty ratio based on full time individuals on the faculty 18:1.

Assessment 2: Is funding available to assist faculty and other instructional personnel with continued professional development including support in developing funded grants, attendance at conferences, computers and appropriate software, other types of equipment, and technical support?

Team Comments: Funds are allocated to support full time and adjunct faculty in their instructional duties. They are provided with computers and appropriate software for their classes and studios, research, and professional service activities. Full time faculty members are funded annually to present papers or presentations at two conferences in the U.S. or abroad. Other funds are available through the Dean of the College for selected faculty development activities.

Assessment 3: Is funding adequate for student support, i.e., scholarships, work-study, etc?

Team Comments: Funding in the form of graduate teaching and research assistantship is inadequate to support the program's graduate student needs. However, a high percentage of students in the program—primarily at the undergraduate levels—receive some level of financial aid.

Assessment 4: Are adequate support personnel available to accomplish program mission and goals?

Team Comments: Yes. The Department recently hired an office manager who is shared with the Department of Interior Architecture. In addition, the Department also shares a recruitment officer, digital and fabrication lab managers, student advisors, development/alumni personnel, and support staff for the Miami Beach Urban Studio (MBUS).

C. Commitment to Diversity. The program demonstrates commitment to diversity through its recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students.

Assessment: How does the program demonstrate its commitment to diversity in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff?

Team Comments: Florida International University (FIU) is a minority serving institution. In the Department of Landscape Architecture 62% of students identify themselves as minorities. There is a 50/50 male female ratio in the student and faculty cohorts. The full time faculty consists of three Latinos and one international member.

Support staff are similarly diverse.

D. Faculty Participation. The faculty participates in program governance and administration.

Assessment 1: Does the faculty make recommendations on the allocation of resources and do they have the responsibility to develop, implement, evaluate, and modify the program's curriculum and operating practices?

Team Comments: The Department's operations and decision making processes are transparent and democratic. The Chair consults with the faculty on curricular issues, teaching assignments, resource allocation, and graduate assistantships. They are also actively involved in the development of a departmental vision as well as strategic goals and strategies.

Assessment 2: Does the faculty participate, in accordance with institutional guidelines, in developing criteria and procedures for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure of faculty?

Team Comments: Yes, the faculty participated in developing the Departmental policies and procedures document, the criteria for promotion and tenure, and criteria for annual evaluation.

Assessment 3: Does the program or institution adequately communicate and mentor faculty regarding policies, expectations and procedures for annual evaluations, and for tenure and promotion to all ranks?

Team Comments: The Departmental Policies and Procedures Document, the College Guidelines for Mentoring Junior Faculty, the FIU Tenure and Promotion Guidelines, and the FIU-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement are accessible to faculty. Mentoring of junior faculty also occurs informally from the Department chair and colleagues in the College.

E. Faculty Number. The faculty shall be of a sufficient size to accomplish the program's goals and objectives, to teach the curriculum, to support students through advising and other functions, to engage in research, creative activity and scholarship and to be actively involved in professional endeavors such as presenting at conferences. To address this criterion:

1. a unit that offers a first professional program should have a minimum of five fulltime faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture; and
2. an academic unit that offers a first professional degree at both bachelor's and master's levels should have a minimum of seven fulltime faculty, at least five of whom hold professional degrees in landscape architecture.¹

Assessment 1: Does an academic unit that offers a first professional program have a minimum of five fulltime faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture?

Team Comments: The MLA program has four full-time faculty members and a number of adjuncts, who have one-year contracts (equivalent to 1 FTE,) all of whom hold a first professional degree in landscape architecture.

Assessment 2: Does an academic unit that offers first professional programs at both bachelor's and master's levels, have a minimum of seven fulltime faculty, at least five of whom hold professional degrees in landscape architecture?

Team Comments: Does not apply.

Assessment 3: Does the strategic plan or long range plan include action item(s) for addressing the adequacy of the number of faculty?

Team Comments: The department's Strategic Improvement Action Plan, which was submitted to the Dean, lists four priorities, one of which is faculty recruitment. As a result, the department chairperson requested another faculty position but the position was not included in the College's budget for academic year (AY 2012-13).

Assessment 4: Are the number of faculty adequate to achieve the program's mission and goals and individual faculty development?

Team Comments: The number of faculty is not adequate to achieve the program's mission and goals.

¹ This criterion does not conflict with the numbers listed in the Minimum Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Accredited Status (p. 5). Those numbers are minimums and are expected for emerging programs and programs that are becoming established to enroll a small number of students.

F. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Even as an independent unit, the landscape architecture program collaborates with the architecture and interior architecture programs. Cross-disciplinary enrollment and teaching are common practices as are shared responsibilities and functions among the faculty and chairs of each Department.

The new chair of landscape architecture has demonstrated the skills necessary to lead an autonomous program.

Recommendation affecting accreditation:

- 1. Bring faculty numbers in line with the number needed to achieve the program's mission and goals.**

Suggestions for Improvement:

- 1. Develop strategies and tactics appropriate for graduate education at the master's level.**
- 2. Develop strategies and tactics appropriate for undergraduate students in a five year master's program.**

Standard 3: Professional Curriculum

The first professional-degree curriculum shall include the core knowledge skills and applications of landscape architecture.

- a. In addition to the professional curriculum, a first professional degree program at the bachelor’s level shall provide an educational context enriched by other disciplines, including but not limited to: liberal and fine arts, natural sciences, and social sciences, as well as opportunities for students to develop other areas of interest.***
- b. In addition to the professional curriculum, a first professional degree at the master’s level shall provide instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.***
- c. A first professional degree at the master’s level that does not require all students to have an undergraduate degree before receiving the MLA shall meet the requirements for a and b.***

Assessment:

Met Met With Recommendation Not Met

INTENT: The purpose of the curriculum is to achieve the learning goals stated in the mission and objectives. Curriculum objectives should relate to the program’s mission and specific learning objectives. The program’s curriculum should encompass coursework and other opportunities intended to develop students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities in landscape architecture.

A. Mission and Objectives. The program’s curriculum addresses its mission, goals, and objectives.

Assessment: Does the program identify the knowledge, skills, abilities and values it expects students to possess at graduation?

Team Comments: The program clearly identifies the knowledge, skills, abilities and values it expects students to possess at graduation through the academic tracks laid-out to guide students through the MLA process. The options for accomplishing the MLA accommodate the various categories of students expected to enter the program, which include first year applicants with no college credit, transfers from community colleges and other undergraduate schools, and graduates of undergraduate curricula from non-design backgrounds.

Total credit hours within the graduate curriculum are 84 while the total credit hours for the accredited MLA degree are 156 (84 graduate level credits and 72 pre-graduate credits.) In addition to the tracks leading to the MLA, the program offers a Master of Arts in Landscape Architecture as a post-professional degree in the field.

B. Professional Curriculum. The program curriculum includes coverage of:

History, theory and criticism.

Natural and cultural systems including principles of sustainability.

Public Policy and regulation.

Design, planning and management at various scales and applications including but not limited to pedestrian and vehicular circulation, grading drainage and storm water management.

Site design and Implementation: materials, methods, technologies, application.

Construction documentation and administration.

Written, verbal and visual communication.

Professional practice.

Professional values and ethics.

Plants and ecosystems.

Computer applications and other advanced technology.

Assessment 1: Does the curriculum address the designated subject matter in a sequence that supports its goals and objectives?

Team Comments: Yes, the curriculum sequences are supported with core courses that satisfy the program's goals and objectives.

Assessment 2: Does student work and other accomplishments demonstrate that the curriculum is providing students with the appropriate content to enter the profession?

Team Comments: Student work is strong on presentation particularly where digital products are concerned. Student work also is seen by practitioners as either on par with or exceeding their expectations. The Visiting Team saw less evidence, however, of design process; that is, the physical artifacts indicating skill at attaining form-giving outcomes through hand graphics or non-digital tools.

Assessment 3: Do curriculum and program opportunities enable students to pursue academic interests consistent with institutional requirements and entry into the profession?

Team Comments: Students take advantage of curriculum and program opportunities made available to them with the exception of internships or practicums which are not consistently available. In addition, there is a question of how program graduates who choose careers in academic practice will be viewed when compared with others holding traditional bachelors and master's degree combinations.

C. Syllabi. Syllabi are maintained for courses.

Assessment 1: Do syllabi include educational objectives, course content, and the criteria and methods that will be used to evaluate student performance?

Team Comments: Syllabi typically contain educational objectives, course content, methods and the criteria that will be used to evaluate student performance, in formats that reflect some level of coordination. There is some inconsistency in the style and content of measureable course objectives across courses, however.

Assessment 2: Do syllabi identify the various levels of accomplishment students shall achieve to successfully complete the course and advance in the curriculum?

Team Comments: Typically, syllabi do not refer to advancement in the curriculum, although the sequence of courses is reasonably consistent so that students know their status when a course is completed.

D. Curriculum Evaluation. At the course and curriculum levels, the program evaluates how effectively the curriculum is helping students achieve the program's learning objectives in a timely way.

Assessment 1: Does the program demonstrate and document ways of:

- a. Assessing students' achievement of course and program objectives in the length of time to graduation stated by the program?*
- b. Reviewing and improving the effectiveness of instructional methods in curriculum delivery?*
- c. Maintaining currency with evolving technologies, methodologies, theories and values of the profession?*

Team Comments: Student learning outcomes are assessed primarily through juries conducted each semester. Juries typically include a range of public and private practitioners, faculty, alumni and others engaged in the profession.

In addition, a joint review of semester work is conducted by faculty from architecture, interior architecture, and landscape architecture to assess knowledge acquisition, communication skills, critical thinking-skills, technical integration, and creative expression.

In non-studio courses, student achievement is assessed through tests, quizzes, papers, and class participation.

Assessment 2: Do students participate in evaluation of the program, courses and curriculum?

Team Comments: To assess the effectiveness of instruction, students complete course evaluation forms at the end of the semester, although students generally are not aware of the value to the Department and to faculty of completing the evaluations. Encouragement is given by faculty to complete the process, now on-line.

E. Augmentation of Formal Educational Experience. The program provides opportunities for students to participate in internships, off campus studies, research assistantships, or practicum experiences.

Assessment 1: Does the program provide any of these opportunities?

Team Comments: While the program does not offer consistent internship/practicum opportunities faculty are aware of the value of these experiences and is assessing means of expanding them. The Visiting Team noted that while the region of South Florida is rife with projects led by well-known designers, students are exposed to regional or non-urban landscape architecture projects more than they are to urban projects.

However, students have significant opportunities to engage in international studies, which is seen as an extension of the cross-cultural and international flavor of the program's faculty and student body.

Assessment 2: How does the program identify the objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of these opportunities?

Team Comments: The chair reviews the office that will be providing the internship and determines that the experience is appropriate for the student and that the firm meets the qualifications. At the end of the internship, the chair assigns a grade based on the firm's evaluation of the student and the student's final report.

Assessment 3: Do students report on these experiences to their peers? If so, how?

Team Comments: There is not a formal system for peer reporting.

F. Coursework (Bachelor's Level). In addition to the professional curriculum, students also pursue coursework in other disciplines in accordance with institutional and program requirements.

Assessment: Do students take courses in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences or other disciplines?

Team Comments: Students entering the program as pre-graduate students take the basic courses required by the University. They simultaneously take pre-graduate studios in the School of Architecture.

G. Areas of Interest (Bachelor's Level). The program provides opportunities for students to pursue special interests.

Assessment 1: Does the program provide opportunities for students to pursue independent projects, focused electives, optional studios, certificates, minors, etc.

Team Comments: Not applicable

Assessment 2: Does student work incorporate academic experiences reflecting a variety of pursuits beyond the basic curriculum?

Team Comments: Not applicable

H. Research/Scholarly Methods (Master's Level). *The program provides an introduction to research and scholarly methods.*

Assessment 1: Does the curriculum provide an introduction to research and scholarly methods and their relation to the profession of landscape architecture?

Team Comments: The curriculum provides courses in research methods and analysis methods.

Assessment 2: Does the program demonstrate that theses or terminal projects exhibit creative and independent thinking and contain a significant research/scholarly component?

Team Comments: The team noted that while products from the Master's Thesis or Master's Project and Concentration Sequence are adequate for a capstone project, the scholarly rigor needed to prepare a graduate thesis was not evident.

I. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation:

Suggestions for Improvement:

- 1. Determine where internships and practicums can be better accommodated in the professional curriculum.**
- 2. Demonstrate through capstone exercises the level of research and scholarly rigor expected in graduate education in landscape architecture.**

Standard 4: Student and Program Outcomes.

The program shall prepare students to pursue careers in landscape architecture.

Assessment:

Met Met With Recommendation Not Met

INTENT: Students should be prepared – through educational programs, advising, and other academic and professional opportunities – to pursue a career in landscape architecture upon graduation. Students should have demonstrated knowledge and skills in creative problem solving, critical thinking, communications, design, and organization to allow them to enter the profession of landscape architecture.

A. Student Learning Outcomes. Upon completion of the program, students are qualified to pursue a career in landscape architecture.

Assessment 1: Does student work demonstrate the competency required for entry level positions in the profession of landscape architecture?

Team Comments: Of the 58 degrees conferred since the last SER, forty students hold employment in landscape architecture or a related field.

Student work made available to the Visiting Team demonstrates that students are well-suited for entry level positions. This level of work/performance is indicative of overall student preparedness.

Assessment 2: Do students demonstrate their achievement of the program’s learning objectives, including critical and creative thinking and their ability to understand, apply and communicate the subject matter of the professional curriculum as evidenced through project definition, problem identification, information collection, analysis, synthesis, conceptualization and implementation?

Team Comments: The student work demonstrates competency for entry-level employment. Interviews with practitioners who have hired graduates of the program confirm that FIU students are well-qualified and well-received.

End-of-year “post mortems” are provided by faculty and visiting professionals. Lecture courses follow traditional methods of quizzes and tests using the A, B, C, D and F grading scale. These are all valid means of assessment. A sample self-assessment form was not included in the SER.

Design studio and lecture courses have clear, consistent, and well-defined syllabi and program statements. Variances exist, however, in the consistent appearance of student learning outcomes in syllabi.

Students who successfully complete the work have accomplished the stated course goals and requirements and are provided with the comments from external reviewers through a Student Learning Outcome Evaluation form which was included in the SER.

Data such as the above evaluations from external reviewers comprise some of the information provided to the Dean's Office as part of a self-assessment.

B. Student Advising. The program provides students with effective advising and mentoring throughout their educational careers.

Assessment 1: Are students effectively advised and mentored regarding academic development?

Team Comments: Students have ample opportunity to avail themselves of faculty mentors. Formal advising is required for students to register. In addition, informal advising occurs between faculty and students, the results of which are passed-on to the College advisor for clearance to register.

Assessment 2: Are students effectively advised and mentored regarding career development?

Team Comments: Mentoring regarding career development occurs informally, yet consistently, through student/faculty interaction, participation by practitioners in juries and critiques, visits to practice offices, and other means common to landscape architecture education.

Assessment 3: Are students aware of professional opportunities, licensure, professional development, advanced educational opportunities and continuing education requirements associated with professional practice?

Team Comments: Student awareness of these opportunities seems sufficient.

Assessment 4: How satisfied are students with academic experiences and their preparation for the landscape architecture profession?

Team Comments:

Tally of assessments regarding advising services (pg. 46) indicates 64% of students did not respond. Of the students who responded, 18% were satisfied or very satisfied with the advising process. Thirty-six (36%) were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience. 12% were satisfied or very satisfied with the curriculum.

Students informally interviewed by the Visiting Team demonstrated satisfaction with the program although they were able to articulate suggestions for improvement.

C. Participation in Extra Curricular Activities. *Students are encouraged and have the opportunity to participate in professional activities and institutional and community service.*

Assessment 1: Do students participate in institutional/college organizations, community initiatives, or other activities?

Team Comments: Students appear to take advantage of the ample opportunities available at FIU to participate in a wide variety of professional, institutional and community service activities.

Assessment 2: Do students participate in events such as LaBash, ASLA Annual Meetings, local ASLA chapter events and the activities of other professional societies or special interest groups?

Team Comments: Yes. Students have attended LaBash in recent years and hosted LaBash in 2012. Others have presented papers at CELA and have attended local, state and national ASLA conferences. One student has recently been elected as student representative to the ASLA Board of Trustees.

D. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

There is little emphasis on academic practice as a career option in the program. The importance of this point is that graduates of accelerated (five year) masters programs may be at a disadvantage for entry level teaching positions.

Recommendations affecting accreditation: None

Suggestions for Improvement: None

Standard 5: Faculty

The qualifications, academic position, and professional activities of faculty and instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and objectives of the program.

Assessment:

Met Met With Recommendation Not Met

INTENT: *The program should have qualified experienced faculty and other instructional personnel to instill the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students will need to pursue a career in landscape architecture. Faculty workloads, compensation, and overall support received for career development contribute to the success of the program.*

A. Credentials. The qualifications of the faculty, instructional personnel, and teaching assistants are appropriate to their roles.

Assessment 1: Does the faculty have a balance of professional practice and academic experience appropriate to the program mission?

Team Comments: The faculty possesses an appropriate balance of professional- and academic-practice experience to support the program's mission.

Assessment 2: Are faculty assignments appropriate to the course content and program mission?

Team Comments: Faculty assignments are made according to skills, interests and program needs. Student and faculty feedback suggest satisfaction with teaching assignments. However, faculty workloads are uneven reducing the ability of the program to fully implement the new accelerated (five year) master's curriculum. This in turn places greater reliance on adjuncts to teach core courses which reduce the larger contributions full time faculty are expected to make instead.

Assessment 3: Are adjunct and/or part-time faculty integrated into the program's administration and curriculum evaluation/development in a coordinated and organized manner?

Team Comments: Adjuncts and part-time faculty are a crucial part of the program's teaching mission and are evaluated. Their involvement exceeds standard expectations for part-time faculty.

Assessment 4: Are qualifications appropriate to responsibilities of the program as defined by the institution?

Team Comments: Qualifications of faculty are appropriate to design curricula in which the MLA is considered a terminal degree.

B. Faculty Development. The faculty is continuously engaged in activities leading to their professional growth and advancement, the advancement of the profession, and the effectiveness of the program.

Assessment 1: Are faculty activities such as scholarly inquiry, research, professional practice and service to the profession, university and community documented and disseminated through appropriate media such as journals, professional magazines, community, college and university media?

Team Comments: Faculty accomplishments are documented and promoted through appropriate media.

Assessment 2: Do faculty teaching and administrative assignments allow sufficient opportunity to pursue advancement and professional development?

Team Comments: Faculty are supported in efforts related to promotion and tenure, and to continued scholarly development post-tenure, through funding opportunities for travel and attending professional meetings.

Assessment 3: Are the development and teaching effectiveness of faculty and instructional personnel systematically evaluated, and are the results used for individual and program improvement?

Team Comments: Faculty are evaluated annually by the Program Director.

Assessment 4: Do faculty seek and make effective use of available funding for conference attendance, equipment and technical support, etc?

Team Comments: Faculty seeks funding for conference attendance, equipment and technical support.

Assessment 5: Are the activities of faculty reviewed and recognized by faculty peers?

Team Comments: No formal mechanism exists for faculty review by faculty peers. However, faculty from each Department in the School of Architecture conduct a joint review of student work each semester, giving each the opportunity to have their teaching reviewed by colleagues.

Assessment 6: Do faculty participate in university and professional service, student advising and other activities that enhance the effectiveness of the program?

Team Comments: Faculty are actively involved in professional service, advising and other activities that enhance the program.

C. Faculty Retention. Faculty holds academic status, have workloads, receive salaries, mentoring and support that promote productivity and retention.

Assessment 1: Are faculty salaries, academic and professional recognition evaluated to promote faculty retention and productivity?

Team Comments: Yes. Merit increases are awarded annually depending on availability of funds. Productivity levels for such increases are assessed by the Department chair.

Assessment 2: What is the rate of faculty turnover?

Team Comments: Faculty turnover is not a significant issue in the Department.

D. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation: None

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Review faculty course loads to ensure equitable distribution.

Standard 6: Outreach to The Institution, Communities, Alumni, and Practitioners
The program shall have a record or plan of achievement for interacting with the professional community, its alumni, the institution, community, and the public at large.

Assessment:

Met Met With Recommendation Not Met

INTENT: *The program should establish an effective relationship with the institution, communities, alumni, practitioners and the public at large in order to provide a source of service learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and professional guidance and financial support. Documentation and dissemination of successful outreach efforts should enhance the image of the program and educate its constituencies regarding the program and the profession of landscape architecture.*

A. Interaction with the Profession, Institution, and Public. The program represents and advocates for the profession by interacting with the professional community, the institution, community and the public at large.

Assessment 1: Are service-learning activities incorporated into the curriculum?

Team Comments: Service learning for students is evident in the program's partnerships with local municipalities, agencies and other departments at the institution. These initiatives are incorporated into studios and charrettes.

FIU landscape architecture is involved in a wide variety of FIU committees and workshops that have a direct impact on the design of public spaces both on and off campus, and internationally.

FIU landscape architecture continues to be a sought-after partner in a variety of campus committees that are involved in issues of public space design.

Assessment 2: Are service activities documented on a regular basis?

Team Comments: Such activities are documented through final reports and through blogs, websites and books.

B. Alumni and Practitioners. The program recognizes alumni and practitioners as a resource.

Assessment 1: Does the program maintain a current registry of alumni that includes information pertaining to current employment, professional activity, post graduate study, and significant professional accomplishments?

Team Comments: The program is working to develop a comprehensive database of alumni and is employing multiple methods to track and engage graduates. The new Coordinator of

Advancement and Alumni Relations is building a formal record and building an ambitious program of alumni engagement.

Assessment 2: Does the program engage the alumni and practitioners in activities such as a formal advisory board, student career advising, potential employment, curriculum review and development, fund raising, continuing education etc.?

Team Comments: A newsletter, departmental website, social media, participation on the Dean's Council and exit surveys of graduating students are ways the department engages the FIU community.

C. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation: None

Suggestions for Improvement: None

Standard 7: Facilities, Equipment, and Technology

Faculty, students and staff shall have access to facilities, equipment, library and other technologies necessary for achieving the program's mission and objectives.

Assessment:

 X Met Met With Recommendation Not Met

INTENT: *The program should occupy space in designated, code-compliant facilities that support the achievement of program mission and objectives. Students, faculty, and staff should have the required tools and facilities to enable achievement of the program mission and objectives.*

A. Facilities. There are designated, code-compliant, adequately maintained spaces that serve the professional requirements of the faculty, students and staff.

Assessment 1: Are faculty, staff and administration provided with appropriate office space?

Team Comments: Personnel are provided with adequate office space and equipment with the exception of adjunct faculty who have no convenient/secure space to conduct private critiques or to store materials between classes and studios.

Assessment 2: Are students assigned permanent studio workstations adequate to meet the program needs?

Team Comments: Students have permanent workstations and access to the equipment and work spaces they need.

Assessment 3: Are facilities adequately maintained and are they in compliance with ADA, life-safety and applicable building codes? (Acceptable documentation includes reasonable accommodation reports from the university ADA compliance office and/or facilities or risk management office.)

Team Comments: Facilities are adequately maintained and are compliant with all codes.

B. Information Systems And Technical Equipment. Information systems and technical equipment needed to achieve the program's mission and objectives are available to students, faculty and other instructional and administrative personnel.

Assessment 1: Does the program have sufficient access to computer equipment and software?

Team Comments: Students provide their own computers and software. Faculty also are provided equipment and software.

Assessment 2: Is the frequency of hardware and software maintenance, updating and replacement sufficient?

Team Comments: Faculty hardware and software are upgraded on a three-year cycle.

Assessment 3: Are the hours of use sufficient to serve faculty and students?

Team Comments: Computer lab hours are sufficient. Extended hours are offered as needed during peak times and consultation with staff allows on-going adjustment.

C. Library Resources. Library collections and other resources are sufficient to support the program's mission and educational objectives.

Assessment 1: Are collections adequate to support the program?

Team Comments: Library collections are adequate. A system is in-place for selecting and adding materials to the collection, and the library makes effort to add materials requested by faculty even if the materials are outside of the approval plan.

Assessment 2: Do courses integrate library and other resources?

Team Comments: Library resources are integrated into the course curricula and are available to students.

Assessment 3: Are the library hours of operation convenient and adequate to serve the needs of faculty and students?

Team Comments: Library hours are adequate.

D. OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS. Are there other relevant assessments? If yes, explain.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation: None

Suggestion for Improvement:

1. Provide adjunct faculty with adequate office space.

PART III

Summary of Recommendations and Suggestions

A. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

1. Bring faculty numbers in line with the number needed to achieve the program's mission and objectives (Standard 2).

B. Suggestions for Improvements

1. Determine how the educational objectives will be implemented and measured (Standard 1).
2. Develop strategies and tactics appropriate for graduate education at the master's level (Standard 2).
3. Develop strategies and tactics appropriate for undergraduate students in a five year master's program (Standard 2).
4. Determine where internships and practicums can be better accommodated in the professional curriculum (Standard 3).
5. Demonstrate through capstone exercises the level of research and scholarly rigor expected in graduate education in landscape architecture (Standard 3).
6. Review faculty course loads to ensure equitable distribution (Standard 5).
7. Provide adjunct faculty with adequate office space (Standard 7).