2012 Annual Report Narrative

Part II (Narrative Report) is the narrative report in which a program responds to the most recent Visiting Team Report (VTR). The narrative must address Section 1.4 Conditions Not Met and Section 1.5 Causes of Concern of the VTR. Part II also includes a description of changes to the program that may be of interest to subsequent visiting teams or to the NAAB. This report includes responses to NAAB’s response to the 2011 report.

From the Visiting Team Report dated March 3, 2010, approved by NAAB July 2010

Conditions/Criteria Not Met

1.3 Architecture Education and Registration Satisfied.

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

VTR Comments
The significant growth of the program over a short period of time has resulted in challenges in physical resources of the college. An esprit de corps is lacking in the college due to physical deficiencies and many students expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the conditions. Many issues are not acceptable. They include:

1. “Hot desks” in lower level studios. At times two or even three students share the same studio desk.
2. A lack of secure storage for students’ equipment in all studios.
3. Use of an exit corridor for programmatic needs such as design studio jury space and the career fair. This presents life safety issues and is in conflict with code requirements.
4. Lack of a wood shop. This is an on-going problem with no resolution in sight and was identified in the previous accreditation review. The college has the equipment for the shop but it is currently in storage.
5. Lack of student lounge space.
6. Lack of dedicated space for student organization such as AIAS.
7. Insufficient printing and plotting facilities.
8. Lack of office space available for growth of the faculty. Two new tenure-track faculty are expected in the fall of 2010 but there is currently no space available to provide offices for these individuals.
9. Smaller than ideal studio desks for graduate students. Creative approaches to house larger numbers of students have been implemented but this has resulted in compressed workspace.

10. Shared offices. It is not unusual for full-time adjunct faculty to share office space. Efforts are made to pair faculty so that their office needs are not concurrent.

11. Lack of office space for student organizations.

12. Lack of climate control.

The university has developed a downtown campus master plan (copies were provided) that includes development south of the Monterey Building as a first priority over growth that has been identified in other areas of the plan. However, the plan does not specifically address growth needs of the College of Architecture. The college has goals for a new building, but there is no institutionalized plan for implementation; a budget and schedule are not part of the master plan. As a result, there is not clear support for addressing the physical needs of the college at the university level or in the near term.

Students feel the downtown campus is given second-class priority over the 1604 campus and access to cafeterias, bookstore and other facilities is limited. There is not a sense that student fees and tuition is reciprocated back to the college by the administration. Both faculty and students expressed concern about this.

NAAB 2011 Response: The program reported on its efforts to address a number of issues the visiting team noted in this deficiency. Please continue to report on progress.

UTSA Program Actions
The UTSA Architecture program has continued to work diligently with the College, University and our Advisory councils on efforts to improve the physical resources available to our students. I will address each of the items above.

A. Re: Issue #1 - “hot desks”
Efforts mentioned in the 2010 and 2011 reports are now fully implemented that allow us to control enrollment and thus maximize available resources for all students entering the second year of the curriculum. In addition we implemented a freshman admissions process that is selective and focused, including direct contact with each admitted student, that ends our “open enrollment” process and it’s attendant problems. In sum, the “Hot desks” remain for the Freshman students in the Foundation Year, but it is important to point out that those students are not all architecture majors (some intend to study interior design, others construction science) and we no longer count any of the freshman coursework as a demonstration of student performance criteria. The implementation of the Foundation Year Gateway is a selective enrollment process for entry in the architecture major in the second year. So as shared desks remain for the Foundation year studios, the three strategies: 1) Contact intensive classes w/small, portable projects; 2) Storage lockers; and 3) “Flex” room availability for use outside of their scheduled class time; remain in place and have proven effective.

B. Re: Issue #2 – Storage for all students
There remains no structured storage for the undergraduate studios (second to fourth year). Many students still prefer to handle their equipment security individually. In the graduate program the desks include a storage cabinet. Additionally, we have increased security for all studios that include lockable doors with card-swipe access and increased security patrols so that most students feel comfortable with current arrangements with regard to security of their property.
C. Re: Issue #3 – Use of Exit Corridor for …
Dedicated review spaces have been established in each of the shared studio spaces from second to fourth year based on extensive purchased and implementation of display surfaces and shelving. In particular, the second year studios and graduate studios also now have review spaces included within each studio space to augment other available options. The hallway in question is now used regularly for the passive display of student works that is rotated on a continuous basis. At the Spring of 2013, we plan to have our second “year-end Final Reviews” and anticipate having plenty of review space to support this multi-day event.

D. Re: Issue #4 – Lack of Woodshop.
Resolved. Workshop with woodworking equipment, two laser cutters, and a CNC machine are now available for student use individually and as a part of coursework.

E. Re: Issue #5 – Student Lounge space
As mentioned above the “flex” room has been made available to Freshman students. For other undergraduates the University has established a satellite Café in the Architecture Building which food and drink until 3 pm and serves as a lounge space. For the Graduates, lounge spaces have been added to all three graduate studio spaces including couches and coffee tables.

F. Re: Issue #6 & #11 – Space for Student Organizations
Student organizations (AIAS, IIDA, USGBC, and Forum (local graduate student group) each have office space and a dedicated workstation in the Student Organizations Office. It includes a storage closet in which AIAS stores supplies for sale to students throughout the year.

G. Re: Issue #7 – Printing and Plotting
No new plotters were purchased. Plotters in underutilized locations were reassigned to meet needs.

H. Re: Issue #8 & #10 Office Space
In 2011, we hired three new faculty all of which were granted their own offices. With the acquisition of the 4th floor of our building, enough offices for both adjunct and T-TT faculty were made available. We currently have three office spaces idle in anticipation of future hires and adjustments.

I. Re: Issue #9 - Graduate Desks
Nothing new to report. We have adequate desks for graduates, as each has two.

I. Re: Issue #12 – Climate Control
Nothing new to report. To date no complaints or concerns have been made with regard to this issue. In addition we have actively consulted students with regard to their circumstances and concerns.

J. Re: General Issues discussed in VTR with regard to Physical Resources
The College has acquired significant space on the 4th floor of the Monterey Building and has expanded the studio space for graduates and undergraduates. The space includes space for two to three studios, computers, wifi, couches, two faculty offices and a kitchen. It has excellent natural light, pin-up walls, and is fully carpeted. Above I mentioned the large expansion of pin-up or review spaces in the building that have greatly expanded the visual presence of the students and their work. In addition, this year we have begun the process of outfitting students with high-quality stools with backs. This year we have outfitted all senior students (approx. 90) with these new stools. In the next two years, as budgets allow, we plan to outfit juniors and sophomores with the same. In the meantime, we have bought all undergraduate students new stools over the past year.
13.22 Building Service Systems
Understanding of the basic principles and appropriate application and performance of plumbing, electrical, vertical transportation, communication, security, and fire protection systems

VTR Comments
The students demonstrated understanding of the basic principles and application of plumbing and electrical systems in ARC 5513. There was no evidence of work addressing vertical transportation, communication, security and fire protection systems. We were informed that the new textbook for this course that is in use this semester for the first time addresses these topic areas.

NAAB 2011 Response: In the 2012 annual report, the program may want to include a brief assessment of student work related to vertical transportation, communication, security, and fire protection systems.

UTSA Program Actions
ARC 5513 - Advanced Building Technology and Structures has successfully included Mechanical and Electrical Equipment for Buildings by Ben Stein so as to better focus on Vertical Transportation, Signal Equipment/Security, and Fire Protection. From 2010 forward this text and these concerns have been a part of the course. These issues have also been included in graduate studios so as to reaffirm their importance. As we anticipate the future continued development of our curriculum, we are considering new options for the enhanced consideration of these issues as they are construed within the 2009 student performance criteria. We are aware that our next accreditation visit will be based on the as-yet to be developed 2014 criteria and procedures, but feel it prudent to update our coursework and expectations to 2009 standards in the interim.

13.31 Professional Development
Satisfied.

Causes of Concern

A. VTR Comment: Student Voice
The Department does not have a formalized method for students to voice opinions or to be appropriately engaged in decision making within the Department. As the College and the Department goes through curricular change and restructuring it is important that a method be found to give the students a voice and to make them feel more a part of the culture of the school. This is a challenge since many students commute have hot desk situations, and, out of financial necessity, have full time or part time jobs.

NAAB 2011 Response: The program is clearly working to address this concern; please continue to report on progress.

UTSA Program Actions
Student organizations continued to be included / invited to faculty meetings with adequate time to present issues and query faculty about issues. They now have an office giving them greater visibility and access. The College is initiating changes to our by-laws this year that will include student input and participation. Recent developments include the initiation (still in development) of a college-wide student group (made up a representatives of each independent student organization) to together represent, lobby, and gather together to deal with College-wide issues. This committee will have representation of College committees.
B. VTR Comment: Full Time Faculty

The college is located in a large urban area and therefore takes advantage of many talented practitioners to teach studio or other course work. However, to consistently maintain and even raise the academic quality of the program it is important to increase the number of full time tenure-track faculty in proportion to the number of adjunct faculty. This is crucial to the success of the program and the level of quality desired by administration, faculty and students.

UTSA Program Actions
We hired four new Tenure-track faculty in 2011, and are currently searching for an additional faculty this year focused on Building Technology in 2012-13. We continue to receive support (commensurate with economic considerations) for faculty hires.

C. VTR Comment: M. Arch 3 Program
Satisfied.

D. VTR Comment: Program Self-Assessment

The program has matured and should be doing post-graduation assessment from alumni and practitioners in general. The entire program should be assessed, not just the academic part of the program.

NAAB 2011 Response: Please continue to report on efforts to establish an alumni network and other self-assessment initiatives.

UTSA Program Actions
Efforts to establish an alumni network are well underway. The architecture program and College are making headway in tracking and identifying alumni. We are also working on procedures for contacting soliciting, and surveying them. In particular, the Department is in the process of establishing an Advocacy/Advisory Council that will be made up, in part of alumni. Currently the “planning committee” (which includes Alumni representative) is in the process of finalizing the membership rules and protocol for the group and invitations will commence in the Spring 2013 semester. And due to increased accreditation requirements from the state and our regional accrediting body SACS, the amount of self-assessment has increased greatly in measures that includes academics, the program as a whole, graduation rates, and student success after graduation. We have agreed to participate in an effort with the Ball State University Architecture Program to test-pilot an assessment tool for alumni.

E. VTR Comment: Human Resources

Due to the rapid expansion of the program and work load of both faculty and staff there is very little time for much of the faculty to pursue research scholarship and professional development. The faculty makes a concerted effort to have time available to for exchange with and mentoring of students, a fact greatly appreciated by the students.

NAAB 2011 Response: Please continue to report on how the program is addressing these concerns.

UTSA Program Actions
The College has revised its Workload requirements and rules and has adopted a peer-institution based model of workload that reduces the workload of faculty to allow adequate time for research endeavors. We remain understaffed relative to student population, but have relied in recent years on a more robust adjunct teaching faculty and the new hires to further address these concerns.
F. **VTR Comment: Human Resources Development.**

The faculty has limited opportunities for development through the lack of travel funds. Many members of the faculty finance their own travel in whole or part. Conversely, the faculty has been encouraged to become more active in pursuing research grants, which in the end can raise the reputation of the department.

**NAAB 2011 Response:** Please continue to report on how the program is addressing these concerns.

**UTSA Program Actions**
The architecture faculty have received increased support the University and College to secure more research scholarship via staff appointments and enhanced opportunities. These efforts have continued and been augmented by the increased activity of our two research centers and by the Department and College pooling our resources to support more travel. In addition, two recent developments have greatly enhanced travel funding. Beginning in Fall 2012 all tenure-track faculty have been granted a $2500 travel stipend for the year, to use at their discretion. In addition the UTSA Provost has allowed Departments to reallocate unspent funds to remain and be repurposed in the following year, in large part to support the enhancement of travel support.

G. **VTR Comment: Financial Resources.**

Financial resources have been growing steadily over the past six years however the rate of growth is minimally adequate to maintain the program. Concerns include physical resources, full time faculty positions, adjunct and full time faculty compensation, support staff positions and faculty and student development opportunities.

**NAAB 2011 Response:** Please continue to report on how the decline in state funding has affected the program and on efforts to expand development activities.

**UTSA Program Actions**
The University is still experiencing a decline in revenue provided by the State of Texas from the most recent legislative session. The University and College have continued to find ways to limit the affect of these budget restraints on academic activities and were able to award a one-time Merit bonus in 2010 and a Merit increase for 2011. The College is continuing to expand its development activities to encourage funding from external sources.

End of UTSA 2012 Annual Report Narrative