FOCUSED EVALUATION Report

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National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)
Focused Evaluation Team
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This Special Program Focused Evaluation report responds to both the most recent Visiting Team Report (VTR) completed in 2010 and the Letter from the NAAB dated January 9th, 2013 requesting this report. The letter documents the satisfaction of many items from the 2010 VTR (based on Annual Reports from 2010, 2011, and 2012) and indicates the following continuing items needing to be addressed below. They are:

8. Physical Resources (not met)
2. Program Self-Assessment D (cause of concern)
6. Human Resources E (cause of concern)
7. Human Resource Development F (cause of concern)
10. Financial Resources G (cause of concern)

In the report below, I will report on our efforts, initiatives, successes and plans for dealing with each of the items above. Please note that the text in italics (and red) is that of the NAAB or from the VTR. Additionally, I recommend that the review team consult the Annual Reports submitted in 2010, 2011, and 2012 to see the progression of responses to the items described above.

Part 1a: Special Program FE Report Narrative Addressing Identified Items

8. Physical Resources (NAAB Requirements)
   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.

2010 VTR Comments re: 8 Physical Resources
   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.

Program Actions since 2010

The program has made huge strides in making the most of existing, and expanding, our program resources available to students. As always, and as a state institution we are challenged by resource-scarcity, but within these means we have done much to better the student experience of study at UTSA. Some general comments about program resource usage since 2009 are below prior to individual comments on each identified item.

**General A: Enrollment.** With the implementation of controlled enrollment (prior to 2010 we were an open-enrollment program), we have been better able to manage our available resources (both faculty and building) as well as recruit, house, and attract high-quality transfer and change-of-major students to fill the spaces left by students who decide to enter other majors. Together this means we are able to control the amount of students in the program and better manage their access to available resources and facilities.
**General B:** Space. In absence of a new building dedicated to the architecture program, more of the existing building has been allocated to the overall program including the entire 3rd floor being made available for the accredited graduate program (an 80% increase), and additional space on the 4th floor (that includes two studios, two faculty offices, computers and plotting capabilities). Together these changes result in an increase of space for project layout, communal gathering and presentation space, and space for plotters and other equipment supporting studio activities.

**General C:** Equipment. New equipment purchases have been very important to expanding the opportunities for our students over the past three years they include:

1. Environmental equipment: light meters, I & C thermometers, hygrometers, data loggers, a weather station, and heliodons.
2. Environmental software (purchased and used in coursework) include: IES-VE, Ecotect, Energy Plus, Climate Consultant, DaySim, BEES. These packages are actively used in required technology coursework that impacts approx. 200 students a year.
3. Design-exploration: We have put into active use 2 Laser-cutters and a CNC router, and are in the process of purchasing one or two 3D printers (for Fall 2013).
4. Design & Instruction: We have added significantly more computers and plotters, software, Drafting chairs with backs for Juniors and Seniors (who previously sat on stools), Wifi (throughout the building), SmartBoards, and regularly offer more digital coursework in support. This summer (2013) we are replacing old plotters and adding new ones in addition to two large format scanners.

1. “Hot Desks”

   UTSA Program Actions: Hot desks remain for freshman only as this serves as our foundation year in which students from many disciplines experience and try out architecture as a degree pursuit. It is open to all after which is a gateway review process to allow the best students to continue into the architecture undergraduate program. As such, we must maintain open studios and allow for fluctuating enrollment. All studios from second-year through graduate have dedicated desks for the semester. Work is currently underway renovating the foundation year studio space to better improve the facilities. Three strategies have been implemented to ameliorate the “hot desk” situation: 1) A room (the “flex-room”) was set aside for foundation year students adjacent to the studio, for work outside of class-time; 2) Storage lockers are available for each student in the foundation year so while they share desks they have individual securable storage; 3) Curriculum alterations to coursework held in the foundation year studio space now call for smaller projects to facilitate the commuter students, who make up the vast majority of our student population.

2. Storage (secure)

   UTSA Program Actions: Foundation year students and graduate students are provided lockable storage spaces to adequately secure their equipment. In the graduate studios, and all studios located on the second, third, and fourth floors spaces are monitored and secured behind key-card swipe security mechanisms. Foundation students are provided individual lockers.
3. Exit Corridor
UTSA Program Actions: We continue to use the hallway space (9 feet wide) (at right) that links the studios, offices, woodshop, computer labs, and gallery as a place of display of student work and sometimes, informal presentations. It is the most active and communal space in the building and as such is a hub of activity that we enjoy. Formal presentations are no longer held in this ample corridor, as dedicated spaces have been established in each studio bay on the first floor and within each studio space on the upper floors. Final presentations in the Spring are held within dedicated review spaces for the final collective week of classes.

4. Woodshop.
UTSA Program Actions: A shop with full woodworking equipment, two laser cutters, and a CNC machine have been available for student use for more than a year individually and used as a part of coursework (this Spring we completed our first furniture design and construction class). We are currently negotiating additional space to be added on the outside of the building for a “work-yard” and additional building to expand these opportunities over the next year.
5. Student Lounge Space
UTSA Program Actions: As mentioned above the “flex” room has been made available to Freshman students for work and gathering when not in class, serving as a freshman lounge in addition to serving as a workspace. For other undergraduates the University has established a satellite Café (below right) in the Architecture Building with food and drink until 3 pm, vending machines, a sink, a microwave all in a space that serves as a lounge space. Immediately adjacent to the café is additional outdoor seating (see below left). For the Graduates, by nearly doubling the available space there is now sufficient room for a Lounge for which furniture was purchased and installed in 2012. In addition, across the street on the main part of the DT campus, there is a copious lounge space with recreational games, a large cafeteria, a food court and Starbucks.

6 &11. Student Group Office Space
UTSA Program Actions: Student organizations (AIAS, IIDA, USGBC, and Forum (local graduate student group) each have office space (at right) 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.
7. Printing & Plotting
UTSA Program Actions: As documented in annual reports and above, we have added more than a dozen new plotters, two with large format scanners, bring the total of plotters available to students to 20. Additionally laser printers are provided in limited locations and PrintSpot printers (print on demand) are available throughout the building. In 2011, a new computer lab was opened consisting of 24 new workstations (below right). Additionally desktop computers and plotters are available in all 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floor studios. Studios located on the first floor take advantage of the three labs, plotters, and printers. Facilities are more than adequate at this stage.

8. Faculty Office Space
UTSA Program Actions: In 2011, the Program in consultation with the College re-assessed space needs throughout the Monterey (Architecture) building to better consolidate faculty with similar interests as well as make available space for future new hires. Since then we have hired 4 new faculty (three last year, one this year) and each has a private office with a window. In addition these faculty hires have also been allocated ample start-up packages for equipment and have been granted travel accounts towards research start-up. In addition, It is worth noting that in response to the original VPR, the previous Department Chair disputed part of this criticism as a misunderstanding as there was always sufficient space for the planned two hires at the time of the visit.
9. Small Graduate Desks
UTSA Program Actions: In 2010, with the expansion of graduate space there was also an expansion of furniture for graduate students. The first year graduate studios are outfitted with larger, more traditional drafting desks. The second year studios continue to have the smaller desks, but more (1.5 to 2) are now allocated per student for more work surface area. Nonetheless, this summer, we are in the process of purchasing and installing one (63” X 31” and shown below) large desk per student to accompany the smaller size desks. Overall, the expansion of space allocated to graduate students in the accredited program has allowed for more presentation, layout, and common spaces within the studios.

10. Shared Offices
UTSA Program Actions: Shared offices for full-time and part-time NTT faculty remain, although in acquiring two additional office spaces there is now slightly more space per faculty member. In addition, as we work to consolidate more faculty into full-time NTT status, resulting in less part-time faculty, more space should become available.

12. Climate Control
UTSA Program Actions: A University Facilities issue with no near term solution when occupying a building based on centralized HVAC with in-operable windows. To date, no complaints or concerns have been made with regard to this issue as we have actively consulted students with regard to their circumstances and concerns. At times, the environmental control systems do fall out of balance, but again this is usually mitigated readily, and is primarily an issue for building maintenance operations.
**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

2. **Program Self-Assessment, Item D (Cause of Concern I.1.5)**
   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.

   UTSA Program Actions: In 2013, UTSA’s Office of Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness initiated an overall program evaluation process that began in 2012. As this process gets underway, it is intended to sync up with outside accreditations (such as NAAB and CIDA (Interior Design) for us) that will be a work in progress. This year we had a successful assessment of our M.S. Program and anticipate participating in regular University/SACS reviews. In 2009 we completed an exhaustive review of the new College and architecture program to develop our 2016 strategic plan. This year we have revisited this process and recently completed a new strategic plan for the College, and planned for individual programs (architecture, interior design, and construction science) to develop our own next year. With regard to alumni we have not only extended our alumni-tracking process we are in the process of developing an advisory council that includes specific representation of an independent alumni group (most of our are relatively new to industry) as an important constituency. We are also working with Ball State University on a post-graduate on-line questionnaire. They developed it and shared it with us recently and we plan to test it this summer or Fall. We are implementing a formal self-assessment program and process via our curriculum committees in the Fall of 2013 that will compliment the various other assessment programs in place both external and internal. As we work closely with the local AIA chapter, we have always had good communication and feedback from the profession.

6. **Human Resources, Item E (Cause of Concern I.2.1)**
   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.

   UTSA Program Actions: A new workload policy (College) took effect for the Fall 2013 semester that aligns teaching loads with other peer institutions. Our faculty are now on a 2-2 workload requirement, for which the typical teaching load is a studio + another course for the first time within our program. Additionally the Dean has secured funding for each Tenure-Track faculty member to have a minimum of $2500 / year of funding to attend conferences and disseminate their research. In addition, new workload expectations allow for credit for participation in Master’s thesis committees and other similar important academic pursuits not previously acknowledged.
7. **Human Resources Development, Item F (Cause of Concern I.2.1)**

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.

UTSA Program Actions: While we continue to expect and support faculty being more entrepreneurial in terms of research funding, we are also (as described above) now providing $2500 per year / per tenure-track faculty member for travel funding for the presentation / dissemination of their research and scholarship. This change has now allowed the original travel funds to be reserved and available for tenured and Non-tenured faculty, greatly reducing and in some cases eliminating the need for faculty to finance their own travel.

10. **Financial Resources, Item G (Cause of Concern I.2.4)**

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.

UTSA Program Actions: This criterion remains difficult to address based on its breadth as much of the same budgetary issues affect these concerns and many discussed above. Financial resources have been declining over the last three years since the 2010 review, yet we have worked hard to advance and open up opportunities for our students (all as described above) and been successful. So while we have no control over the capricious process of funding provided by the State and allocated by the Coordinating Board, we have been able to provide excellent service and opportunities to our students with the help of our Provost and Dean. During this time, our study abroad program has grown, as has our design-build, our community engagement opportunities, our facilities, and our ability to provide opportunities available to most Architecture programs in the US. In addition, through management of enrollment and acceptance of transfer students we have been able to maintain an excellent student body and experience.

Part 2: **Special Program FE Report Narrative Summarizing Present and Future Program Changes**

Past changes to the program were included in previous reports. These include:

“**A major change to the pre-professional Bachelor of Architecture degree became effective in Fall 2010 with the publication of the new undergraduate catalogue (2010-2012).** The College changed the structure of the undergraduate program to accommodate a Freshman Common Year for all students entering the undergraduate program. The former structure included a combined architecture and interior program in the first two years of the program and a gateway process where students were assessed for promotion (or non-promotion) to the third year of either the architecture or interior design program. When the College added a Construction Science and Management program in Fall 2008, this structure and its inherent curriculum inequities between architecture and interior design resulted in a new approach to course preparation for College freshman students. The Freshman Common Year required of all College of Architecture is a 28 credit hour set of courses aimed at exposing students to all three College disciplines and improving student preparation for subsequent courses in design, technology,
history/theory and quantitative analysis. Applicants entering UTSA from high school and transfer students will be directly admitted to the Foundation Year Program of the College of Architecture. The 28-semester-credit-hour Foundation Year is designed to provide a broad exposure to the professions of the built environment and provide a strong foundation for future study in each of the College’s three academic majors. Students must complete the Foundation Year Program in order to be accepted to one of the three academic majors."

Since then, we have learned about Foundation Year programs, and about the compatibility of Construction and Architecture programs to the mutual benefit of all. More importantly, at the same time the UT System revised the requirements for “core curriculum” courses, and the revised NAAB requirements came into our focus, as our 2010 accreditation visit was based on the 2004 criteria. We have worked diligently to satisfy both entities and developed a revised curriculum for both our undergraduate and (a qualified contributor to our accredited) graduate program. For the undergraduate program we have revised the structure to be more architecture-centric in the upper-division that includes four upper-division studios (vertical) all focused on the design and detailing of buildings. We have also revised our technology sequence to include (for structures and environmental considerations) a set of principles courses followed by more intense courses required in the upper division. In 2012 we worked to reassess the accredited graduate program courses, sequence, and admissions review processes for student from other institutions, all in relation to the 2009 NAAB criteria. We also began work on some slight course content revisions and in particular have set the comprehensive design requirements to be satisfied by our ARC 6146 – Technical Studio among other goals to be worked out in the next year. We will work to flesh-out changes to the graduate program in the Fall of 2013 via the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) in anticipation of the new graduate catalog for 2015.

Of importance as well, we have agreed to work towards a program that describes itself as a “2 + 4” program. In this way we plan to offer coursework and processes that allow our best undergraduates to seamlessly enter our graduate program; and also allows students wishing to pursue a general education degree focused on architectural studies to find and pursue and adequate degree path. This is a means to see the entire undergraduate educational process as an endeavor unto itself and as well as a platform for advanced participation in a professional program that results in most qualifications for licensure.

End of UTSA 2013 Focused Evaluation Report Narrative

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