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Cover Sheet for Assessment Plans

Directions: Please complete a separate cover sheet for each degree program (e.g., Associates – Doctorate). Feel free to make copies of this sheet if needed. Those graduate programs with an integrated master's and doctoral program may submit one cover sheet. The department head and respective dean are to sign before the plans are submitted to the Provost.

Department / Unit: Landscape Architecture/Regional & Community Planning

Title and Level of Academic Program (e.g., Chemistry, Ph.D.): Bachelor of Landscape Architecture

When submitting an Assessment Plan, please check and indicate when the faculty endorsed the plan.

Faculty have met, reviewed, and endorsed the Assessment Plans being submitted for this degree program.

Date of Endorsement:

19 October 2004

Chau Chowdhury

Department Head's Signature

26 Oct '04

Date

D. M. S. J. S.

College Dean's Signature
(Required for Undergraduate Programs)

6 - DEC - 04

Date

Dean of the Graduate School's Signature
(Required for Graduate Degree Programs)

Date

ASSESSMENT PLAN for STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. College: College of Architecture, Planning and Design
Department Landscape Architecture/Regional and
Community Planning
Date 1 November 2004

B. Contact Persons for the Assessment Plans

Dan W. Donelin, Department Head
Lorn Clement, Associate Professor

C. Degree Program

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture

D. Assessment of Student Learning Three Year Plan

In the Department of Landscape Architecture/Regional and Community Planning Student Learning Outcome Assessment occurs in a variety of ways for both the Landscape Architecture Programs and the Regional and Community Planning Program. All three programs have external and internal methods for assessment of student learning outcomes.

One of the most important external assessments of the BLA Program is responding to national accreditation processes. The Kansas State University Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Program is a nationally accredited program. The program was first accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) in 1964 and has been reviewed every five years, maintaining its accreditation to the present day. LAAB is a specialized accrediting agency that accredits educational programs leading to a first professional degree at the bachelor's or master's level. Therefore, in addition to assessing how well a program meets its own specific and institutional educational mission and objectives, accreditation evaluates all programs against standards that ensure the essential educational components leading to entry level professional competence. These standards are developed by the community of interest consensus and are regularly reviewed and assessed. (LAAB has received Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognition and must conform to CHEA standards.)

Programs must respond to the interests of three constituencies that make up LAAB: educators, the practicing profession and the public. The Board is made up of three educators, three practitioners, three public members, and one representative each from the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture, American Society of Landscape Architects and the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards. To maintain accreditation, BLA Programs must continuously comply with accreditation standards.

These standards are:

1. The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by educational objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress toward their attainment.
2. The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its educational objectives. *Objective: The program strives for diversity in recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students.*
3. The first-professional degree curriculum must include the core knowledge, skills and applications of landscape architecture: Landscape architecture history, philosophy, theory, values, ethics, practice, planning, design, implementation, management.

Bachelor's Level

Coursework: In addition to the professional curriculum, students also pursue coursework in humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and other disciplines.

Areas of Interest: The program demonstrates that it provides opportunities for students to pursue areas of interest.

4. The qualifications, academic position and professional activities of faculty and instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and objectives of the program.
5. Program shall demonstrate that students are being adequately prepared to pursue a career in landscape architecture.
6. Program shall provide evidence of alumni's professional accomplishments and their involvement in advancing the program.
7. Program shall provide evidence of interaction with practitioners from landscape architecture and other disciplines.
8. Program shall promote positive relationships with the university and the community.
9. Faculty, students and staff shall have access to facilities, equipment, library and other information systems necessary for conducting professional studies.

The accreditation process requires that a number of activities take place.

- The department is responsible for the development of a Self-Evaluation Report in which faculty, staff and students must contribute.
- A sampling of student work and course syllabi, problem statements and course objectives must be displayed and presented for the accreditation team's review.
- The accreditation team, consisting of a landscape architecture educator, landscape architecture practitioner, and an academic administrator, visit the program requesting accreditation. They spend three days meeting with the program's assigned faculty, its students and staff. They review student work, course syllabi and objectives. Their findings, as to the program's meeting of LAAB's standards, are made known to LAAB which then makes a decision as to accreditation.

The activities noted above can be described as Indirect Measures of Student Learning Assessment.

Other Indirect Measures of Student Learning Assessment include:

- annual Department Head's review of accreditation status and progress
- faculty consultation with employers who participate in professional internship activities, College-sponsored employment fairs, and College-sponsored mock interview activities
- surveys of graduates conducted by the Office of Career Development
- surveys of alumni conducted annually by the department
- an on-campus program review with the Alumni Advisory Council
- participation in national student competitions

Direct Measures of Student Learning Assessment include:

- course evaluations by students
- juried review of student projects, both by faculty and outside critics
- general faculty course reviews at the end of semesters
- annual performance and achievement review and planning the next year's activities between the department head and each individual faculty member
- periodic reviews of Departmental objectives and performance mandated by KSU central administration and the Board of Regents
- periodic faculty review of student and program performance
- discussions with students and the BLA Coordinator on a regular basis
- exit interviews of our graduates by the Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

During the Fall Semester of 2002 and '03 there were a number of activities that took place that identified an educational issue that needed to be investigated. The activities included:

- surveys of alumni conducted annually by the department;
- discussions with the Department's Professional Advisory Council;
- the results of student project reviews by faculty and visiting critics;
- discussions with BLA faculty concerning the progress of the BLA students; and
- discussions by the BLA Coordinator with BLA students.

These deliberations and information revealed that the BLA students were not prepared sufficiently to begin their Capstone Project. The Capstone Project occurs during the final semester (Spring Semester of the fifth year) of the BLA curriculum and is the culminating fifth year design studio, LAR 704 Design Studio VIII. This studio is designed to provide a student the opportunity to review and apply the knowledge, skills and theory which they have learned over the previous semesters to a project of their selection. They individually manage the projects from inception to completion. Recent review by the LA faculty of

work resulting from the Capstone studio indicated that the students were not skilled in the development of a design program for their projects. This resulted in their inability to meet a key Student Learning Objective (SLO) of the Capstone Project (i.e. to create a program with substantive research and analysis of site conditions, user needs, and precedents as a basis for design concepts). Fall Semester 2003, the LA faculty initiated corrective measures to assist students in meeting the SLOs of the Capstone course. LAR 700 Project Programming class was added to the curriculum for the Fall Semester of the fifth year, to specifically prepare students for their Capstone Project.

(**Note:** Prior to beginning the fifth year, students are asked to select and define a Capstone Project. They do this by acquiring a design project from the office in which they interned, or they may contact an alumnus of the program, a design office or a public planning agency to acquire a Capstone Project. It is a requirement of the BLA curriculum that all students participate in an internship prior to graduation.)

Student Learning Outcomes for the Project Programming Course and Capstone Project in Design VIII

Goal

Students will demonstrate understanding and skill in the application of landscape design theory and processes.

A. Student Learning Outcome 1

Students will understand and apply design history, theory and problem solving methods in their design processes.

B. Student Learning Outcome 2

Students will demonstrate critical and creative thinking and their ability to understand, apply and communicate the subject matter through:

- Project identification
- Problem definition
- Information collection/research
- Analysis
- Synthesis/conceptualization
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Implementation

C. Student Learning Outcome 3

Students will apply effective use of investigative processes to further their understanding of issues pertinent to a design project.

D. Student Learning Outcome 4

Students will be able to effectively communicate their work in graphic, written, and oral formats – design process as well as products. This can take the form of project management documentation.

E. Student Learning Outcome 5

Students will be exposed to multi-cultural issues related to landscape architecture design processes.

Relationship to KSU Student Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate Programs

Program SLOs	Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Communication	Diversity	Academic/Professional Integrity
A. Students will better understand and apply design history, theory and problem solving in their design processes.	X	X		X	X
B. Students will demonstrate critical and creative thinking and their ability to understand, apply and communicate the subject matter through: Project identification Problem definition Information collection /research Analysis Synthesis/concepts Evaluation of alternatives Implementation	X	X	X		X
C. Students will apply effective use of investigative processes to further their understanding of issues pertinent to a design project.	X	X	X	X	X
D. Students will be able to effectively communicate their work in graphic, written and oral formats.			X		X
E. Students will be exposed to multi-cultural issues related to landscape architecture design processes.	X	X	X	X	X

How will the learning outcomes be assessed?

In the project programming course and Design VIII there are interim critiques of student work by interested faculty and advisory teams of faculty and practicing professionals. Programs are reviewed in preliminary and final forms during the fall, and there are quarterly reviews of design progress in the spring studio course (Design VIII).

The Project Programming class and the Capstone Design Studio will be reviewed together. The evaluation will be based upon SLOs and the degree of successfulness with which the student had understood and developed their design program for their Capstone Project and resolved design issues related to their project. The Capstone problem statement, developed in the Project Programming course and written by the student contains the SLOs for the Capstone Project, the student's individual program information for their design, the scope of work and the design goals and objectives for their project.

Work resulting from the Project Programming class and the Capstone Studio will be reviewed by the BLA faculty, practicing professionals, and members of the Landscape Architecture Advisory Council. It is important to note that BLA students will also be asked to participate in the assessment through the Department's Exit Interview Process. This process was established in 2004 with the help of Kansas State University's Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation.

Letter Grade	Overall Performance	Fulfillment of Learning Objectives	Quality of Work
A	Excellent Work	All objectives thoroughly addressed with only one or two minor errors	Superb
B	Very Good and Highly Competent Work	All objectives addressed. At most one major problem or a few minor ones	Excellent
C	Acceptable Work	All objectives addressed. One or two major unresolved problems and/or minor ones	Inconsistent
* D/E	Failing - Unacceptable Work	Many or all objectives not addressed. Several major problems	Unacceptable

*Any student in the BLA Program who receives a final grade of "D" or lower in any LAR course must repeat that course.

When will the outcomes be assessed?

The outcomes will be assessed by the BLA faculty and its students at the culmination of the Spring Semester 2005. The Landscape Architecture Advisory Council, during its annual program visit to Kansas State, will make its assessment Fall Semester of 2005. Visiting professionals, who will be critics for the Capstone Studio, will be asked to make

an assessment of student work at the conclusion of their participation in project reviews (quarterly during the spring semester).

When will the results of the assessment be discussed?

At the end of the Fall Semester 2006, the Project Programming class will have been offered for a three-year period. All of the input that has been gathered will be assessed by the BLA faculty. In addition, a survey will be conducted of those students that will have graduated and entered the work force. (Note: Assessment is an ongoing process conducted by the BLA faculty at the end of each academic year. Concerns that may be identified with the Project Programming and Capstone Studio will be discussed by the faculty and an adjustment made to the syllabus prior to the next time they are taught.)

What is the unit's plan or process for using assessment results to improve learning?

If the assessment is positive in meeting the stated goal and SLOs, we will continue to offer and monitor the Project Programming course. However, if the assessment is negative, the faculty will review its options as to how they can more successfully influence a student's understanding and implementation of landscape design processes in preparation for the Capstone Studio Course.

Note that this example pertains to the final year of the design studio sequence of courses – the ten semesters of studio in the BLA program are the applications/integrative core of the curriculum. Similar assessment activities and faculty responses occur in the:

- history/theory seminar/professional practice sequence;
- implementation/construction sequence; and
- plants/natural systems/land management courses.

The landscape architecture faculty continually reexamines course content and sequencing, among and within courses; especially in terms of determining appropriate project or assignment timing, scale, scope and degree of complexity.