

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE'S  
ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW  
within the  
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & DESIGN  
at  
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

*Mission, Centrality, Uniqueness*

**The Department of Architecture challenges and enables its members and collaborators to surpass their own expectations as they advance the quality of built and natural environments.**

The Department of Architecture furthers the College's mission by providing professional education, and fostering the development and dissemination of knowledge among its majors and those of allied disciplines. The Department of Architecture furthers the university's mission by providing diverse and exemplary career, academic preparation and general education for its students. The department is active in international study abroad programs in Italy and student exchange programs in Prague and Australia.

A specific way that the department contributes to the state's economy, health, safety, and welfare has been to provide graduates who are responsible for directing the construction and renovations of schools, housing, facilities for aging, and other private and public buildings. Through its nationally recognized expertise in energy conservation and sustainable architecture, the department provides research and leadership for the profession and Kansas communities on improved building design strategies that are less reliant on fossil fuel technology.

*Quality of Faculty*

The department is staffed with 19 tenured faculty, 4 untenured faculty, and 5 term appointment faculty. Fourteen of the faculty are licensed architects, and six hold doctorates. Twenty-eight are members of the graduate faculty and four have been approved as core faculty for the college's PhD in Environmental Design and Planning. The 2005 report of the National Architectural Accrediting Board says "the faculty of the Department of Architecture of Kansas State University are also praiseworthy. They are dedicated and effective instructors who are totally committed to the betterment of the program and to the students in their charge. The students view the faculty as both highly supportive of their efforts and regularly available to them." In spite of heavy teaching loads with many contact hours teaching studio classes, they are involved in scholarship and/or creative activities and service. Faculty working with graduate students as Major Advisors or Advisors do so on top of full teaching loads.

The department routinely finds itself in active, and often successful, competition with architecture programs at other major public and private institutions when it recruits prospective faculty members and strives to retain its current faculty. The faculty of the department possesses a diversity of academic, professional and teaching experience gained at institutions and with firms in locations across the nation and abroad. Its members are actively engaged in a wide range of scholarly and creative endeavors, including professional practice.

Faculty in the Department of Architecture are leaders in professional societies. One regular faculty and two emeriti are fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). A selection of faculty achievements includes one being the inaugural Regnier Distinguished Faculty Chair of Architecture; another being honored with the Henry W. Schirmer Distinguished Service Award from the American Institute of Architects Kansas; one receiving the 2006 Service Award from the Environmental Design Research Association; another honored with the K-State Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching; another having professional projects highlighted on HGTV's "Small Space Big Style"; one is on the GSA National Peer Review for Design Excellence; a grant reviewer for the Graham Foundation; and faculty and students are one of twenty teams participating in the 2007 Solar Decathlon sponsored by the

US Department of Energy. Most faculty regularly present papers at national and international conferences.

### *Quality of Students*

The B. Arch. program has consistently been ranked among the top degree programs in the *DesignIntelligence* survey of architectural firms. With the 2006 rankings it is the sixth time K-State's architecture program has been ranked in the top 12. A cross-section of U.S. firms are asked to indicate which accredited programs in the past five years produced graduates most prepared for real-world practice. The Bachelor of Architecture was reaccredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board in 2005 for a full six year term. The new professional Master of Architecture has been granted a nomenclature change and will finish the accreditation term of the Bachelor's degree.

The students in the program are of very exceptional quality. Only students with high grade point averages (GPA) in high school are admitted into the first year Environmental Design program. The average high school GPA of students entering in fall 2006 was 3.76 and the average ACT score was 27. Students apply in the spring of their first year to the department of Architecture, and admission is based on GPA in the first semester university courses. There are limited spaces available. In recent years, the cut-off point for admission to the department has been 3.0. The average cumulative GPA of this year's 5<sup>th</sup> year class is 3.25.

Student demand is high. The college accepts 180 out of 650 applicants for the first year program. There are usually more applicants than can be admitted into the architecture program in 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

Students in the Master of Science in Architecture are recruited globally, and are among the top students in their undergraduate programs. Students have come from India, China, Ethiopia, Serbia, Russia, Turkey and other countries. Admitted Master of Architecture students all have had GPAs in undergraduate work above 3.0 or equivalent for international students. Students have never been admitted provisionally because of academic background. The department has required a higher TOEFL score than the university (600 rather than 550) since in our experience those with higher scores did much better.

### *Employer Demand*

Employment demand is also very high. 99% of graduates of 2006 were employed within six months after graduation. They are recruited for permanent positions (or temporary in the case of international students planning to return home) at the college's recruitment events every spring semester.

The 2005 report of the National Architectural Accrediting Board says "the program in architecture at Kansas State University is one of the most established and successful programs in the Midwest. Graduates of the Department of Architecture are highly valued by the professional community for both the thoroughness of their technical education and for the high level of design competency they regularly demonstrate. The visiting team of 2005 found that the program continues to excel in many areas and the Kansas State University provides a supportive and effective environment for architecture education."

### *Cost Effectiveness*

Because this is a professional program, it is necessary to have small studio and seminar classes in order for students to learn the complexities of design, and the health, safety and welfare of the public and to meet accreditation requirements. Data prepared by Planning and Analysis show the Department is cost effective even though it is a studio-based curriculum. The balance of studio, seminar and large lecture courses means that large courses balance out the low faculty to student ratio needed for studios and seminars. The department contributes faculty and graduate assistants to the Environmental Design Studies program, which serves students in the college and in Engineering. Twenty-five credit hours offered by architecture are taken by all of the Interior Architecture students. The department cooperates in

other ways with the other departments in the college to avoid the duplication of courses, as well as to provide interdisciplinary experiences. The Department offers Appreciation of Architecture to the university population with an enrollment over 250 each semester.

Landscape Architecture and Architecture graduate students participate in the same classes, LAR 898, Proposal Writing and ARCH 725 Research Methods. Graduate thesis committees draw upon all graduate faculty in the college.

### *Summarized Assessment of Student Learning*

The assessment of the previous Master of Architecture (now the Master of Science in Architecture) was done through a portfolio review of material based on a series of courses, including Research Methods, Proposal Preparation, and seminars, as well as through a thesis (or project) proposal and the final product. Professional conduct was to be assessed additionally through evaluations of GTA performance.

In spite of not having a formal assessment process, the department has continually been evaluating the post-professional graduate program and as a result has made changes to the new Master of Science. A new area of emphasis in Ecological and Sustainable Design has been added, and non-thesis options enhanced. Plans for changes to the delivery of courses including less emphasis on a written thesis, are all reactions to issues raised over the past decade. The new degree should result in larger enrollments that can still be handled without a major infusion of new resources. It responds to the changing needs of prospective students and the profession of architecture as well as changing technologies. A new assessment plan was proposed in Spring 2007 based on review of thesis and non-thesis proposals by all students.

For the Bachelor of Architecture degree (now the Master of Architecture) the assessment of the students is seen through the completion of their fourth-year architectural design studio. At the end of their fourth year of study, students will have demonstrated their understanding of the design process as a continuum. The assessment is based on student learning outcome criteria from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). This criteria includes students being able to make informed choices in regard to design decisions, understand how codes affect overall building design, integrate environmental systems with the architectural fabric and design intentions, and produce construction drawings. The direct assessment of the course is shown through the products the students make in fulfillment of course assignments. Analysis of these products includes: the rigor and discipline of the process helped all students. It was particularly helpful to the weaker students; the course demonstrated that design and execution are interrelated and necessary throughout the process; the quality of the work produced was much higher than in the old format; students were able to integrate the lessons of other courses into this design studio (notably structures, systems, and construction courses); documents produced in the class have proven to be useful in convincing potential employers to hire our students.

As a result of this assessment over a three-year period, faculty decided to reduce the size of each 4<sup>th</sup> year studio and to better coordinate assignments with those of other classes.

During the spring of 2008 the department will develop a new assessment plan for the new Master of Architecture degree. The focus will be on the 5<sup>th</sup> year graduate-level courses and learning outcomes required by the NAAB, particularly increased writing in the curriculum.