

**University of Kansas, School of Architecture, Design and Planning**  
**Architecture Department**  
**Nils Gore, Interim Chair**  
**Last accreditation visit: Spring 2010.**

**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. In addition, this part is linked to other questions in Part I for which a narrative may be required. If a program had zero “not mets” in the most recent VTR or was “cleared of future reporting” in subsequent annual reports, no report is required in Part II.

From most recent VTR:

#### **1.4. Conditions/Criteria Not Met**

For each Condition/Criterion Not Met, please include the Team Comments from the last site visit along with narrative from program on

#### **6. Human Resources**

*The accredited degree program must demonstrate that it provides adequate human resources for a professional degree program in architecture, including a sufficient faculty complement, an administrative head with enough time for effective administration, and adequate administrative, technical, and faculty support staff. Student enrollment in and scheduling of design studios must ensure adequate time for an effective tutorial exchange between the teacher and the student. The total teaching load should allow faculty members adequate time to pursue research, scholarship, and practice to enhance their professional development.*

This condition is not met. On several occasions, the faculty and administration expressed critical concern for an increase in teaching load and resulting decrease in time available for scholarship. KU is a Carnegie Doctoral/Research Extensive University, and its mission reads:

*"The university attains high levels of research productivity and recognizes that faculty are part of a network of scholars and academicians that shape a discipline as well as teach it. Research and teaching, as practiced at the University of Kansas, are mutually reinforcing with scholarly inquiry underlying and informing the educational experience at undergraduate, professional, and graduate levels." — Statement of Institutional Mission, KU Lawrence Campus*

Compared to university guidelines for faculty activity to be distributed with a 40/40/20 breakdown for Teaching/Research/Service, architecture has adopted a 50/30/20 model. While meeting the teaching demand of the program, the reduced capacity for scholarship challenges faculty development, and as a result, also challenges the core of graduate education, which relies on the currency of faculty research and scholarship.

The dean and chair have increased teaching loads, which also compromises administration and

leadership. Several faculty are assigned to teach two studios, with over 20 hours of weekly contact time in the classroom, and this represents a significant disparity with regard to university faculty teaching loads and expected research productivity. Recent faculty attrition, combined with a loss of budget has resulted in a net loss to the program of four full-time faculty. When staffing the core curriculum with fewer faculty, seminars, and elective offerings are now being cancelled reducing the expertise of faculty and the student's capacity for choice and specialization.

Student-teacher ratios in the studio are often very high in the early years, reaching close to 20 students in the first and second years. Studio instruction does not drop below 15 until the fourth year. Documentation in the APR notes student to FT faculty ratio as 21.3: 1 and this is far above national standards.

Response 2012:

The general teaching load for tenured faculty members continues to be 50/30/20. For untenured faculty, the load is 40/40/20.

However, we have made changes in several areas:

1. Until this year, two professors that were originally hired for graduate studies (not as studio instructors) were conscripted to teach studio in 2009, when the financial crisis forced us into emergency measures. This year those two faculty have been able to go back to their originally-intended roles as graduate studies professors and researchers.
2. Since the last team visit, we have hired 6 new tenure-line faculty (4 untenured Assistant Professors, one untenured Associate Professor, and one tenured Associate Professor), so our need to have faculty teach more than one studio each semester has been eliminated.
3. We have a Professor of Practice in the first year of his second 2-year term. This professor fills an important role in working with our School's Design department and its Environmental Design undergraduate degree. As time goes on more substantive connections are being made between the Architecture and Design departments, in both class offerings, faculty teaching and research collaborations, and in resource sharing. We are now in our third year of this "marriage," and it has proven to be a positive change for all.
4. We have a current search for a new Chair of Architecture; the Interim Chair is in his third year of service in that role. When that new Chair hire is made, we will be back at our "normal" FTE of tenured/tenure-track faculty. With a fifth consecutive year of unchanged state funding, (typical of many public universities), we anticipate we will build back the recent faculty attrition (four FTE) through these recent hires.
5. Last year saw the retirement of one associate professor. We have one full professor on phased retirement, in his third year.
6. The ratio noted in the last sentence of the VTR, above (student to FT faculty ratio) is now 18.04:1 rather than the noted 21.3:1. This results in noticeable improvements in faculty morale and staffing ease. It also allows us to use fewer adjuncts in architecture studios.

## 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.*

This condition is not met. Additional space allocations have recently relieved some of the concerns of the previous team, however, the result is a network of buildings and spaces that are incongruent and lack a central meeting space. The program has nine separate locations with the central administration and majority of design studios located in Marvin Hall. Non-studio course offerings are located at a variety of buildings across campus. Architecture resources and courses are also located in the East Lawrence Warehouse / studio space; the West Lawrence warehouse / studio space; Snow Hall (studios and offices); the Murphy Art & Architecture Library; The Art & Design Building; and in the Kansas City Urban Design Studio.

The technology offered in computer labs and studios is outstanding, as reported by the students.

Our main concerns were found with the lack common area/ central hub, available classroom facilities, a dedicated lecture hall, and longer-term exhibit/jury space.

There are only two classroom facilities located within Marvin Hall, and because of the smaller class size, architecture classes lose priority within the campus classroom scheduling program, resulting in inconvenient class times for the core lecture requirements.

The lack of a dedicated architecture lecture facility does not allow for all-student meetings or guest lectures to occur within the architecture school, but rather at a variety of spaces across campus. The lack of jury spaces in the architecture school limits opportunities for students to view each other's work and the pressure for space pre-empts formal exhibitions.

### **Response 2012:**

We have consolidated our 2 off-campus shop spaces into one off-campus space, the 67,000 s.f. East Hills construction research lab. That building now has three studio spaces in it, relieving congestion in Marvin Hall, and giving each student in the M.Arch (track 1) degree program the opportunity for an immersive, hands-on experience. The warehouse is approximately 10 minutes from campus, a necessary separation given its nature, but still convenient access. The building expands learning opportunities for students and research opportunities for faculty in unprecedented ways. Since last year's report, we have invested significant funds in the electrical and tool infrastructure at East Hills, to accommodate even more Architecture and Design students, as well as faculty research.

To our knowledge, there is no equivalent at any architecture school in the US. Considering KU's emphasis on materials/tectonics and our internationally-recognized Studio 804 program, it is an essential addition to our teaching resources of just a few years ago, and goes a long way to

defining the fundamental character of our program.

We have no scheduled classes or studios in the Art & Design Building, and we have no Architecture studios scheduled in Snow Hall. We now use studio resources in four buildings, down from the seven (rather than nine) mentioned in the last VTR.

KU officially initiated a major capital campaign last year and we will benefit from that. We continue to increase funds toward achievement of "The Forum," an addition to Marvin Hall which includes a commons area for exhibition, program gatherings, jury space and a large lecture room for 210 seats. The accumulation of course fees will enable construction within the next two years.

## **10 Financial Resources**

*An accredited degree program must have access to sufficient institutional support and financial resources to meet its needs and be comparable in scope to those available to meet the needs of other professional programs within the institution.*

This condition is not met. In order to compare the architecture program with other professional programs within the University of Kansas, the team considered the data provided in the APR regarding the School of Fine Arts and the School of Engineering as comparative schools of reference. Historically, American architectural education at the university level has grown out of either an engineering-based program or a fine arts-based program. At KU, the former is the case; therefore, the team has taken note of particular financial numbers from the School of Engineering. For the sake of a broader comparison, the team has considered the School of Fine Arts' financial numbers, given the similar type of design studio courses and fine arts studio courses offered within that school.

The team took note of the data provided in the program's APR from the University of Kansas' Annual Financial Information, FY 2005-2008. The team observed that the School of Architecture's financial resource support through general revenue expenditures for FY 2008, Upper Division, was \$238.78 per student credit hour (SCH). By comparison the General Revenue support for the School of Engineering was \$446.27 per SCH, and the general revenue support for the School of Fine Arts was \$451.30 per SCH in the Upper Division. In the Upper Division these other two professional schools receive between 180% and 190% the general revenue support that the School of Architecture receives per SCH, weighted. In other divisions, these two other professional schools receive between 104% and 156% the general revenue support given to the School of Architecture per SCH. In comparison to other programs, the School of Architecture is funded on average at 26% lower than the aforementioned programs, while at the same time providing high profile internationally recognized award-winning programs. This condition was identified as a cause for concern during the last accreditation visit and is exacerbated by the current economic downturn

### ***Response 2012:***

With the aforementioned absence of new state funding over the past five years, we are nevertheless working with KU central administration to create greater leverage for discretionary funds to support various programs and initiatives. For example, the university has assumed

financial responsibility for utilities and maintenance of our remote facilities, and is working with us to support initiatives in our innovative studio projects through contacts in our (now) current capital campaign.

The “differential tuition” funds (course fees specific to the academic unit) serves the department increasingly well (computer labs; shop, AV, miscellaneous equipment) since its inception in 2003 and escalates by approximately 6% annually. These funds provide support for the improvements at East Hills and for teaching infrastructure in Marvin Hall.

### **1.5. Causes of Concern**

*For each Condition/Criterion Not Met, please include the Team Comments from the last site visit along with narrative from program on*

The school and faculty have a distinguished history with a strong and innovative curriculum that has produced celebrated alumni, acclaimed faculty, and unique pedagogy. At the same time, the team observes that this context has remained uniquely constant and with relatively little change over the last fifteen years. The team expresses concern for the program’s development trajectory in the areas of leadership, faculty, pedagogy, and physical resources.

**A. Leadership:** Over the past 15 years, the dean’s leadership and guidance has set a successful course for the school, and is highly respected within the university community. In 2006, an external search resulted in a new chair for the architecture department, and all accounts portray a fair, hardworking, and effective administrator. Both the dean and chair have increased teaching loads, with new responsibility for several courses a year. This comes at a time of significant need for external development and fundraising, as well as internal administrative duties related to the addition of the design department to the school, enrollment growth, new graduate student populations, and curricular changes. Clearly a strong collaborative leadership team is essential for success. The team is aware of counter currents that seek to resist the chair’s leadership and support for curricular evolution and staffing changes. In conclusion, the team expresses concern for continued effective leadership at this time of significant need.

#### **Response 2012:**

Since the last team visit the Chair was promoted to Associate Dean of Graduate studies, filling a vacuum in that area. An interim Chair was appointed from within the faculty for a three-year term, and a current external search for a new Chair is underway.

**B. Faculty:** The mean average age of the twenty full-time faculty is close to 60 years old. Four of the seven full professors are very close to retirement, and the last full professor acquired tenure in 2001. An investment in teaching and recent enrollment growth has created a type of glass ceiling for the associate-level faculty that preempts successful full professor candidates. A loss of four full-time faculty, followed by more recent budget cuts, compounded by increased teaching demands create concern for the professional development of faculty at all levels. The team is concerned that a plan to match faculty resource to curricular content is not apparent; likewise, a plan for faculty development and retirement is not apparent.

**Response 2012:**

With the addition of six new, younger faculty and the retirement of two full and two associate professors (since the last visit) the Faculty's mean age has been reduced from 60 to 54, and as previously outlined, we continue to build (through annual searches and Professor of Practice appointments) toward full replacement of the aforementioned faculty attrition.

We continue concerted efforts to simplify the professional degree curriculum with an eye to reducing the total number of required courses, and increasing the number of elective offerings. We succeeded in eliminating two required courses this past year. This will have several benefits: 1) It will allow students to customize their own education towards their own skill sets and career interests. 2) It will allow faculty to offer more elective courses, aligning with particular research interests and individual interests. 3) It will provide a greater set of opportunities for new course materials to be offered and developed. 4) It will promote the creation of innovative course offerings (interdisciplinary, team-taught, etc.) It is our intention to have the curriculum revisions in place before the new Chair starts next fall.

**C. Teaching Assignments and Faculty Development:** The team observes many unique upper level design studio offerings led by practicing professionals from Kansas City and Lawrence. In addition, the comprehensive design studio includes studio sections that are led by practitioners. The team considers these to be exciting and positive design studio opportunities that address the emergence of architectural building technologies, sustainable practices, the culture of the contemporary office, and new material cultures in the studio. Our concern is for the continued development of the standing faculty to address and incorporate these contemporary issues into design, for the evolution of design studio teaching, and the issues that motivate contemporary design practice. The team notes some discontent among the faculty on these issues and the resulting staffing decisions.

**Response 2012:**

As mentioned above we no longer have the need to assign double studio-teaching duties to any of our faculty. We have resumed the preparation of the School's Strategic Plan following a hiatus during which the University has developed its own institutional strategic plan. Which bears important and very positive ramifications for us. A draft of the plan will be vetted by the architecture faculty at the outset of the Spring 2013 semester with the goal of completion prior to the end of the current academic year. The aim is to articulate specific engagements (community, professional, inter-disciplinary within KU) that broaden personal capabilities and instructional expertise.

The addition of the Design Department (Industrial Design, Interior Design, Visual Communication, Photomedia, Design Management, Interaction Design) to our School has significantly enhanced opportunities for expanded collaboration at both the student and faculty level.

**D. Physical Resources:** Recent space allocations for the program have resulted in a network of nine separate buildings and spaces that are incongruent, without cohesive identity, and lacking a central hub. The team observes that this configuration causes faculty isolation and prevents interaction between academic year-levels and a lack of awareness for work among the

studios. Unfortunately, without a shared public space the opportunities for synergetic intellectual exchange continue to diminish. The lack of classrooms within Marvin Hall and the current university classroom scheduling process creates a disadvantage for architecture class scheduling, often resulting in inconvenient class times, distant learning environments, or inappropriate teaching spaces for the courses offered. Additionally, the lack of a dedicated architecture lecture facility for a group size of 80 – 150 forces the school to host all-student meetings or lecture classes in spaces often far from Marvin Hall. In conclusion, the team expresses concern for the significant loss of culture and student performance as a result of these deficiencies.

***Response 2012:***

The addition of Design to our School has also brought with it some facility advantages that help the Architecture department. We now have access to the Art and Design Gallery space at least once a year for architecture exhibitions and access to two large classroom spaces for instruction, special events and juries.

As described above, in “8. Physical Resources,” we have consolidated physical facilities to reduce the dispersion of operations. While the lack of a central meeting space remains a deficiency, we are focused on achieving funding for this in the next two years.