2014 Academic Program Review Summary

College for Design and Social Inquiry
School of Architecture

Part 1: Overview

A. Degree Program

Bachelor's (BA)   Architecture (5 year professional degree program)

B. Mission and Purpose

The School of Architecture prepares students for the profession and practice of architecture. By developing an understanding of the design process as it embraces the interrelated and interdependent processes of planning, design, construction, and governance, the students develop the capability to recognize their ethical and societal responsibilities for improving the quality of our physical environment, and with it, our quality of life, for we respect our environment, resources, and fellow beings.

C. Major changes since the last program review (2007-2014)

- Five new faculty hires have been completed, however two faculty losses were incurred.
- Three Directors have headed the school within the last seven years.
- A new directorship began in July, 2014.
- Technology has been expanded to keep pace with other accredited programs in the U.S.
- The undergraduate curriculum was redesigned and changes were implemented in Fall 2014.
- Awards and grant funding for research and pedagogical activities has increased modestly. A total of $577,000 has been awarded between 2007 and 2014.
- The School was reaccredited for six years in 2011.

Part 2: Findings

A. Strengths

- Collaboration with other units in the College and University.
- The diversity of the faculty and student body in an urban location enables rich cross-cultural interactions for learning.
- FAU's School of Architecture is the only tangible urban outpost-teaching establishment that

nearly all South Florida schools of architecture (and elsewhere) are emulating.

- The combination of various areas of expertise can complement each other well, and the faculty's international perspective that does not restrict application of scholarship to the South Florida region is another asset.
- Engagement and integration of curricular and non-curricular activities in local art and design, both on a grass-roots level (artists groups, professional workshops), and at an institutional level.
- Urban inquiry, outreach and community engagement efforts through the Broward Community Design Collaborative and MetroLAB.
- The student body benefits immensely from increased interaction with the faculty, an opportunity to build depth into the student learning experience.
- International recognition for the quality of the program and the outcomes of our exchanges and collaborations with other institutions. The 4th ACSA International Subtropical Cities Conference, October 2013 at the Fort Lauderdale Campus and FAU's 2nd annual Sea Level Rise Summit are two examples.

B. Weaknesses

- There is a need as a faculty to develop more innovative pedagogical agendas within the curriculum and to help advance speculative frameworks of thought in research. The work of design is becoming more "open-ended" and it is our responsibility to respond to this shift.
- We have a weak marketing strategy for student recruitment.
- The library and its limited access is a great concern. It has limited hours and it is underutilized as a resource. Ideally, the library should be open 24 hours a day.
- The lack of a graduate program limits support to faculty research.
- There is a lack of some physical resources, primarily space allocation for photography, materials lab and research equipment, and storage for student work.

C. Recommendations

Summarized below is the Review Committee recommendations, the School's action plans, and the Dean's support for each recommendation. Those requiring no additional funding will be implemented by the School of Architecture; those requiring funding will be prioritized with other College needs and presented as part of the College's budget request for 2015-16.

1. *Recommendation 1: The School should take a new look at their Mission Statement.*
   Following a faculty workshop in the spring of 2014, the faculty is currently revising the mission statement.

2. *Recommendation 2: The SOA needs to establish a direct means of meeting the university goals to create a vital contribution to the economic development of SE Florida as related to the needs of the local architectural workforce.*
   The Director of the School has established a mentoring   program and speaker's series with the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. This program will be expanded regionally as contact has been made with the regional representative. The student chapter of the AIA is now actively engaged with the organization.

3. *Recommendation 3: Based on the University goal #2 to serve the aspiration of becoming a high-level research university, the definition of research within the school and should be expanded to include professional practice, creative activity and traditional scholarship. Student participation in faculty research, whether graduate or undergraduate, should be part of the expanded definition.*

High-level contemporary architectural firms are focusing more and more on research as practice as well as scholarship and students need to be prepared for this as they enter the world of practice.

> The development of a MS Arch and/or a MARCH will greatly bolster pedagogical goals that meet this need. Committee work has begun to review this program.

4. *Recommendation 4: Considering the direction that architectural education is taking and the emerging trends in academia and practice, the School should consider transforming the existing program to a 5+ or six-year graduate program that has an imbedded practice and research component. Additionally, consideration should be given for one year specialized Master of Science degrees to both define a program unique to the Atlantic coast as well as attract international students.*

> See response to Recommendation 3.

5. *Recommendation 5: The School should consider opportunities for dual degree, minors and specialized certificate programs. Ideally, these programs would be aligned with a new mission statement. FAU should consider as a longer-term goal the creation of a facility that is befitting a robust and nationally recognized architecture and design program and that expresses outreach to the local community. The Ft. Lauderdale community should be made more aware that a quality architecture program is within its midst and readily accessible.*

> The faculty has approved the development of degree minor program offerings in performance based design, sustainability, and architectural history.

6. *Recommendation 6: As the current "face" of the program to the community, the new MetroLAB needs to be supported with permanent funding so that robust programs can occur in this location.*

7. *Recommendation 7: Whether or not a graduate program is created, the SOA needs to find support for a rigorous grant writing and fund raising program for theoretical and applied research to support the mission and to align with university goals. As noted above, the faculty are involved in a diverse range of research and this research needs to be supported.*

8. *Recommendation 8: It is critical in architectural education and its global perspective that a structured program for study abroad be pursued.*

> Two liaisons with foreign universities are in place. One additional program is offered during alternative years. All are summer programs. Although six to seven scholarships are earmarked annually for study abroad, only a small percentage of the student demographic can currently afford to study abroad. Hence, more sponsorship must be pursued.

9. *Recommendation 9: In regards to recommendation #7, the university should as a long-term goal consider developing a "center for design" at the Ft. Lauderdale campus as a vibrant creative community for artists, designers and architects and thereby resolving the issue of "isolation" of the architecture program.*