Georgia Institute of Technology
Architecture Program, College of Architecture
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Last Accreditation Visit in **2008**

Part II (Narrative Report)

1.4.   Conditions/Criteria Not Met

8.   Physical Resources

Team Comments:
The Visiting Team notes that relative to physical resources, the issues identified in the 2002 VTR and in 1997 relative to adequate studio space and dedicated faculty offices still exist today without significant remedy and remain a concern. While some new studio space in the Hinman Building was made available to the Program, forming the basis for the cancellation of the 2005 Focused Visit, large recent increases in undergraduate enrollment have eroded or even reversed the impact of these modest spatial gains. Additional space anticipated in the Special Report has been a victim of a line-item veto by the State Legislature. While the Program has been resourceful in space utilization, there is no guarantee that necessary improvements will be realized. The Team is informed that the Governor's current budget includes a $6.4 million earmark for the Program's physical improvements, and that it is likely to be signed shortly, but the shortage, if not addressed will sustain lower than acceptable conditions affecting both faculty and student performance. Phasing Plans for future improvements are not clearly articulated.

In addition to studio space, student storage, pin-up areas, and acoustics remain as concerns. Exclusive office space is not available for each full-time tenured or tenure-track member of the faculty. Part-time faculty complain of not having a dedicated space for student conferences. Exhibition space remains largely unsecured.

Program Response:
The project for the renovation of the Hinman Building is going forward. In addition to the $6.4 million in state funds, Georgia Tech has earmarked an additional $2.5 million for the project. The Boston firm of Office d'A is teamed with the Atlanta firm of Lord Aeck Sargent for the project which includes restoration of the building fabric and adaptive reuse of the high-bay workshop as studio space for the Master of Architecture program accommodating approximately 140 design stations. The renovation will include formal and informal jury spaces, accommodations for digital output, research space for the digital design and building performance groups, and several faculty offices. The move of M.Arch. students into this facility will allow more capacious accommodations for undergraduate students in architecture and other disciplines within the main College of Architecture building. This renovation / adaptive reuse project is tentatively scheduled for completion in July 2011. Until then, approximately 75 graduate students in architecture are being accommodated in a satellite studio space (which has been refurbished to include jury/pin-up space, seminar room, and digital output) located in a commercial zone adjacent to campus and a short walk from the College of Architecture.

10.   Financial Resources

Team Comments:
Relative to the number of students taught, the Program's financial resources have eroded since the 2002 Visit. Both the faculty and the administration of the Program express general concern that the quality of specific aspects of the Program is currently declining. This is most evidenced in the students' studio work, most likely the consequence of inexperience in technical mentoring, the result of less experienced, unlicensed faculty. As

studio is the central element of architectural education, it is of considerable concern. Impacts on educational quality also may affect faculty morale and retention.

Some aspects of this result from widespread conditions at the Institute and are largely beyond the College's or Department's control. Program faculty raises have been very modest over this period (approximately 11%). The Program's dedicated budget has only increased by approximately 16% since the prior visit (some of this increase results from the recent establishment of an endowed chair).

In the context of the large enrollment increases that the Program has faced, such relatively static budgetary allocation proves problematic. Student growth has been much higher than faculty growth. The Program is currently holding at least one faculty line open in order to use the funds to pay part-time instructors. Part-time instructors' compensation is below both national norms of architecture programs in major cities and of competing regional programs as well. Faculty discussed recent erosions of general funds for expenditures in the department for a dedicated lecture series for the department, for the full funding of trips to professional conferences, and for exhibitions.

The President informed the Team that the financial resources coming to every College were proportional to the actual enrollment from two years prior to the current year. This suggests that the "bulge" which so stressed the physical and financial resources of the Program during the past two years should be substantially alleviated by next year assuming the dean assigns the architecture program its share of the increase. Between 2002 and 2008 , the state 's allocation increased 41.6%. The college of architecture's allocation increased only 36.6%, and the architecture program's allocation increased 17.8%, while enrollment increased 40% in 2004. As it significantly impacts this Program, adequate financial resources requires confirmation in the coming two years.

The Program has hired a Development Officer to develop a fundraising strategy and implement it as soon as possible. Coming from the world of non-profit arts programs, she appears confident in the potential to expand contributions to the Program.

Program Response:
The global economic downturn has significantly affected tax revenues in the State of Georgia during the last fiscal year. This has in turn led to revenue reductions within the University System of Georgia, including Georgia Tech. During fiscal year 2009, the net reduction to the College of Architecture Budget was $457,000, or 4.6%, and in the current fiscal year, 2010, the reduction has so far totaled 6% which includes mandatory six furlough days for faculty and staff. Despite this setback, however, several factors have mitigated the reductions creating a sense of optimism about the long-term budgetary prospects for the Master of Architecture program. An endowment established by the T. Gordon Little Foundation has made possible the award of approximately six fellowships per year to be used in the recruitment of the most qualified applicants into the Master of Architecture Program. In addition, the Board of Regents approval of the Architecture Program's proposal to assess an additional "differential" tuition for all students matriculating into the Master of Architecture Program has created a significant new revenue stream earmarked specifically for enhancements to the professional program. Beginning with Fall semester 2009, each new student entering the M.Arch. Program is being assessed an additional $1995 per semester, the sum of which is being returned directly to the Architecture Program. After the new tuition rate is phased in over the next three years, this assessment will produce a new income stream to the M.Arch. Program of approximately $480,000 per year. This places the Master of Architecture Program tuition at the mid-point of its public peer institutions.

13.25   Construction Cost Control

Team Comments:
While construction estimating is briefly addressed in the Professional Practice required class, no evidence was found that any student in the Program produced even a superficial cost evaluation or estimate of any project.

Program Response:
While the Architecture Program accepts NAAB's judgment of its deficiency in this area to the level of *ability*—as suggested in the Visiting Team's comments above—it nonetheless is attempting to address any question of deficiency in student performance with regard to *understanding*. First, we have noted the change in scope of this Student Performance Criterion (SPC) between 2004 and 2009:

2004 Conditions
25. Construction Cost Control *Understanding of* the fundamentals of building cost, life-cycle cost, and construction estimating.

2009 Conditions
B. 7 Financial Considerations: *Understanding* of the fundamentals of building costs, such as acquisition costs, project financing and funding, financial feasibility, operational costs, and construction estimating with an emphasis on life-cycle cost accounting.

We are now trying to direct our responses toward this new more inclusive approach through appropriate coverage not only in the Professional Practice course but also through our the inclusion of cost considerations in our technical courses—structures, construction technology, and environmental systems. Furthermore, Building Information Modeling (BIM) approaches where integrated into design studio instruction are providing an important analytical tool aiding in the inventory and comparison of material quantities and costs.

13.26   Technical Documentation

Team Comments:
While specifications are briefly covered in the Professional Practice class, no evidence was found that any student in the Program was required to produce an outline specification.

Program Response:
Architecture Program faculty have agreed through curriculum reviews and discussions in the past year that this deficiency should be addressed through inclusion of outline specification writing in our Construction Technology II course. That course is in turn being reformatted to directly interface with our Options II Studio, the two together forming the basis of our key demonstrable efforts in Comprehensive Design (see below). This approach is being implemented Spring 2010.

13.28   Comprehensive Design

Team Comments:
The Program has focused on large scale projects which evaluate macro scale contextual impacts, programming issues, and responsiveness to sustainable design concerns, and students have exhibited an ability to produce plans, sections, and elevations. But this commendable work has been at the expense of clearly integrating the various building systems required under this specific Criterion. Structural and environmental systems are only superficially indicated in the comprehensive design studio work, and building

envelope systems, assemblies, and some aspects of life-safety are not well demonstrated at an Ability level.

Program Response:
As mentioned above, the Architecture Program is innovating this year within its existing curriculum structure by co-joining the Options II Studio and the Construction Technology II courses toward the agenda of achieving greater design integration in the students' work of matters of envelope systems and assemblies. Greater attention will be paid here as well to life safety concerns in matters of egress, structural planning, and fire safety considerations.

1.5. Causes of Concern

Team Comments:
The Team is concerned that, beyond the studio and faculty office space deficiencies, the significant relative loss of funding to the Program from the Institution with a concurrent increase in enrollment has caused the Program administration to hire less qualified part-time studio instructors than a professional degree program of the quality at Georgia Tech should provide to students. With an increasing number of current hires being either relatively recent graduates or unlicensed professionals, the lack of technical experience and expertise is evidenced in student work in the Comprehensive Design studios. The Program needs to redress this deficiency immediately.

Program Response:
Greater attention is being given to the professional qualifications of part-time faculty hired to teach in the professional program. At the same time, faculty searches in the areas of high performance buildings and digital design & fabrication have been launched this year with the intention of enhancing faculty expertise and depth in areas related to building design and emerging technologies. This approach is being crystallized through strategic choices intended to build focal strengths for Georgia Tech's architecture program; and it is being realized through the financial flexibility allowed, even in these difficult economic times, by the implementation of a new tuition assessment that is returned directly to the program for enhancements to the professional program.

Changes in Program since last NAAB visit

- Changes in Leadership
    - Professor Alan Balfour was appointed Dean of the College of Architecture effective July 1, 2008. He succeeded Interim Dean Douglas Allen who remained to serve as Senior Associate Dean in the College.
    - Associate Professor Ellen Dunham-Jones stepped down from her role as Director of the Architecture Program effective June 30, 2009 after almost eight years of service in order to return to teaching.
    - Associate Professor George B. Johnston was appointed to the position of Director of the Professional Program in Architecture effective July 1, 2009.
    - Professor John Peponis was appointed to the position of Director of the Post-Professional Programs in Architecture.

- Changes in Faculty
    - Associate Professor Chris Jarrett, Associate Director of the Architecture Program, left Georgia Tech to take the position of Director of the School of Architecture at University of North Carolina, Charlotte.
    - Assistant Professor Franca Trubiano left Georgia Tech to take the position of Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.
    - Assistant Professor Ruchi Choudhary left Georgia Tech to take the position of Lecturer in the Department of Engineering at the University of Cambridge.

- o Mario Carpo, previously a faculty member at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris La Villette, joined the faculty in architecture at Georgia Tech with the rank of Professor.
  - o Laura Hollengreen, previously a faculty member at the University of Arizona, joined the faculty in architecture at Georgia Tech with the rank of Associate Professor.
  - o Perry Yang, previously a faculty member at the National University of Singapore, was jointly appointed to the faculties in architecture and city & regional planning at Georgia Tech with the rank of Associate Professor.
  - o Faculty Searches are underway at present to fill positions and build strategic strengths in the areas of Digital Design & Fabrication, High Performance Building, and Architectural Design.

- Organizational Changes
  - o Effective January 1, 2010, the College of Architecture will be administratively reorganized into five distinct schools: Architecture, Building Construction, City & Regional Planning, Industrial Design, and Music. Each school will be headed by a School Chair.
  - o The School of Architecture will encompass the following degree programs: Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Science, Master of Architecture, Bachelor of Science in Architecture.
  - o An interdisciplinary division of undergraduate studies will link Bachelor of Science degree programs in Architecture, Building Construction, and Industrial Design.