RE: 2010 AR Part II (Narrative Report)  
Mississippi State University  
School of Architecture (B.Arch)  
Program Administrator: Michael A. Berk, Director RA + F.L. Crane Professor of Architecture  
Date of last Accreditation Visit: February 2010

Ms. Pair:

Please accept the following Part II Narrative as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the 2010 NAAB Annual Report guidelines; Part I has already been submitted on-line.

Background:

This narrative is in response to the recent 2010 Visiting Team Report (VTR) dated July 27, 2010. The School of Architecture received the final 2010 VTR the first week in August 2010 (3 months ago). The faculty and the curriculum committee met at the end of the Spring 2010 semester (May 2010) for a 2-day Faculty Retreat (typical at the end of each semester) to discuss general school-related issues and the ‘unofficial draft version’ of the 2010 VTR. NOTE: In general, we have had little time to react and/or correct the deficiencies listed below; the 2011 AR Part II (Narrative Report) will be more complete.

Excerpted from the 2010 Visiting Team Report (VTR) dated July 27, 2010:

Conditions/Criteria Not Met

Four (4) Student Performance Criteria were listed as NOT being met:

- 3.13.14 Accessibility  
- 3.13.23 Building Systems Integration  
- 3.13.26 Technical Documentation  
- 3.13.28 Comprehensive Design

13.14 Accessibility  

Ability to design both site and building to accommodate individuals with varying physical abilities

MSU Response:

The faculty believe that the courses listed (ARC 3536 Design III-A; ARC 3546 Design III-B; and ARC 4733 Site Planning) to address this criteria as listed in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; they will ensure that students in these courses will be able to demonstrate ability in the near future. We will plan to submit student examples demonstrating this ability in the 2011 AR.
13.23 Building Systems Integration
Ability to assess, select, and conceptually integrate structural systems, building envelope systems, environmental systems, life-safety systems, and building service systems into building design

**MSU Response:**
The faculty believe that the current courses listed (ARC 3546 Design III-B; and ARC 4546 Design IV-B) to address this criteria as listed in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; they will ensure that students in these courses will be able to demonstrate ability in the near future. We will plan to submit student examples demonstrating this ability in the 2011 AR.

13.26 Technical Documentation
Ability to make technically precise drawings and write outline specifications for a proposed design

**MSU Response:**
The faculty believe that the current courses listed (ARC 4546 Design IV-B; and ARC 3713 Assemblages) to address this criteria as listed in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; they will ensure that students in these courses will be able to demonstrate ability in the near future. We will plan to submit student examples demonstrating this ability in the 2011 AR.

13.28 Comprehensive Design
Ability to produce a comprehensive architectural project based on a building program and site that includes development of programmed spaces demonstrating an understanding of structural and environmental systems, building envelope systems, life-safety provisions, wall sections and building assemblies, and the principles of sustainability

**MSU Response:**
The faculty believe that the current courses listed (ARC 3546 Design III-B; ARC 4546 Design IV-B; and ARC 5589 Design V-B) to address this criteria as listed in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; they will ensure that students in these courses will be able to demonstrate ability in the near future. We will plan to submit student examples demonstrating this ability in the 2011 AR.

**Causes of Concern**
Five (5) Causes of Concern were identified:

1. **Strategic Planning.** The 2010 visiting team has observed some issues that the college and the school need to address as part of their strategic planning for the near future. These issues relate to the role and resources of the college and its expected accommodation of other programs, faculty and students.

   **MSU Response:**
   One of the main issues identified was the fact that the Program in Building Construction Science (BCS) is located within the School of Architecture. The Provost has agreed to administratively remove this program from the school and allow it to be a stand-alone program within the college. This should officially go into effect next semester. Teaching spaces and shop resources are also being shared. This semester (F 2010), significant remodeled space has been provided to BCS in an adjacent building (Howell Hall); this will alleviate pressure on the School of Architecture and its resources. It was also noted that other rooms and facilities in Giles Hall (Jury Room and Auditorium) are also being competitively shared by the Art Department and BCS. It is anticipated that new lecture spaces (opening in Spring 2011) in Howell Hall will also alleviate some of this pressure.
2. Human Resources. There is the issue of a new permanent director for the School of Architecture, the definition of her/his role and responsibilities, and the impact that has on current human resources. These issues also include the effects the new college configuration may have on teaching, research, outreach and recruiting activities of the school.

MSU Response:
On July 01, 2010, the Dean (Jim West, AIA) formally appointed senior faculty member (and previous Interim Director) Michael A. Berk, RA, F.L. Crane Professor to be the permanent Director of the School of Architecture.

3. Social Equity. There is also an issue of social equity regarding both students and faculty that necessitates a plan for recruitment. An increase in the number of minority students as well as minority faculty and female faculty is important to the continued prestige and advancement of the school.

MSU Response:
Faculty:
The School was pro-active and successful in identifying and hiring a female candidate (Jenny Kivett) for a Visiting Assistant Professor position in the 2010/2011 academic year; we identified and interviewed multiple female candidates during the summer. We are currently advertising for a permanent tenure-track Assistant Professor position; we are hopeful that Ms. Kivett will apply for that position and will be successful in the university’s selective hiring process. The School was also pro-active and successful in identifying and hiring an Hispanic candidate (Miguel Lasala) for a Visiting Assistant Professor position for the 2010/2011 academic year; we identified and interviewed multiple candidates during the summer and he was a clear choice in joining our faculty.

Students:
Relative to minority students and recruitment, the new director formed the Pre-Architecture Advisory System; this system is managed by the School’s newly appointed Admissions/Advisor Coordinator (Chris Cosper, AIA).

[NOTE: Our school has a long tradition of provisionally accepting students into the program who did not make the original 45-student Fall admissions cut; they are classified as Pre-Architecture students. They are required to take (and successfully pass) all courses as a typical first year Architecture student --- however they do not take studio. After successful completion of their 2 freshman semesters (and a min. 2.5 GPA), they formally apply to the Summer Design Studios where they make-up the freshman studio work and ultimately rejoin the second year class in the next fall.] This new Pre-Architecture Advisory System helps identify non-traditional and minority students from that pool and provides additional contact time and advising including pizza meetings and individual advising sessions. This is the first time this school has been pro-active in this area.

Below is an update (e-mail memo) from the Admissions/Advisor Coordinator:

From: Chris Cosper
To: Michael Berk
Date: 11/18/2010 1:51 PM
Subject: Pre-Arch Update

Updated notes:
OVERALL: 33 pre-archs advised (some in more than one session)

---14 in good shape for summer studio (7 minority) --- 50%
---4 addition potential summer studio students (2 minority)
---2 potential fall studio students (2 minority)
---10 will likely not qualify for studio (10 minority)
---3 changed majors, on own or as advised (1 minority)
4. **Role of the Master’s Program.** Further, a strategic determination regarding the role of the Masters’ program and growth of the BCS should be implemented.

**MSU Response:**

**Master’s Program:**
The University underwent a budgetary and efficiency analysis in 2009 and early 2010; the President formed a Select Committee on Efficiencies and Innovations (SCEI). The SCEI recommended eliminating the School’s non-accredited Master of Science graduate program. No students were admitted to the program this Fall 2010. The program has a handful of current students that will graduate within the year.

**Building Construction Science Program:**
As noted above, the program in Building Construction Science (BCS) is located within the School of Architecture; at the request of the Dean’s strategic plan, the Provost has agreed to administratively remove this program from the school and allow it to be a stand-alone program within the college. This should officially go into effect next semester. The Dean has also formed a strategic task force made up of Architecture and BCS faculty to look at each program’s curriculum and look at ways to further collaborate. Currently, 4 courses are jointly taught together: ARC 2713 Passives; ARC 3713 Assemblages; and ARC 3904 and 3914 -- Structures I and II; essentially, these lecture classes are anticipated to increase by 30 students each in the near future. The Dean asked the committee to also look at places in the curriculum for joint studios.

5. **General Education.** In addition, by January 1, 2015 NAAB requires that the B. Arch include 45 units of General Education studies outside architectural studies. Refer to 12. Professional Degrees and Curriculum, below.

**MSU Response:** The faculty are in the process of deleting the required professional course ARC 1003 Concept and Form, from its curriculum. This was a course that was added about 5 years ago within the (then) newly formed College of Architecture, Art and Design. All three units in the college have decided to eliminate the course. This will provide 3 additional ‘open’ elective (general education) credits for the B.Arch degree; it is expected to get approval of the UCCC this semester. The faculty will be meeting to discuss additional ways to provide more education studies outside of architecture.

**NOTE:** For the record, the faculty believe that the existing three (3) courses in Architectural History (12 credit hours) should also be considered as meeting the General Education requirements calculation; our university classifies them as general courses to meet the humanities general education requirements. They are broad-based history courses that also teach history/culture, art, and politics. For example, at some schools these same architectural history courses are taught as ART listed courses and not as ARC listed and would probably be counted thusly as general education? **Can we respectfully get a clarification on this issue?**

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**Changes in program since last NAAB Visit**

**Facilities:**

**Robert and Freda Harrison Auditorium:**
The Giles Hall Architecture Auditorium has just been ‘named’ by a donor ($100k); it was significantly renovated this summer [w/ new wall covering (sustainable kenaf material); floor (sustainable Interface carpet tiles); upholstery and painted seating; projection screen paint on stage wall; emergency lighting; stage lighting; new projection system; new stainless steel hand railing along stepped seating (updated code requirement); and refinished hardware and doors]. An
official dedication and naming: *Robert and Freda Harrison Auditorium* will occur in January 2011.

**Director’s Office/Suite:**
A new Director’s Office/Suite was officially dedicated this past summer 2010. It is located at the end of the faculty corridor; two existing faculty offices were joined together and renovated into a suite. The new office is adjacent and conveniently located to the front secretarial/staff and main lobby of the School and Dean’s office. Additional remodeling of the corridor will make a stronger connection to the administrative lobby suite; this additional work is scheduled for Spring 2011.

**Personnel:**

*Admissions/Advisor Coordinator*

In order to assist the Director in recruitment and advising, a new Admissions/Advisor Coordinator (part-time professional staff position) was approved by the Dean and Provost; Chris Cosper, AIA, started in this position in July 2010. One of the key responsibilities of that position is to revamp and streamline (via web materials and tools) the school’s advising protocols and to reestablish a stronger connection with the Pre-Architecture student population, which also includes a large body of minority students.

**Curriculum:**

*M.S Program (non-accredited)*

The Master of Science program has been officially put on hiatus. The program is no longer admitting students. This decision was part of the University SCEI committee recommendation. No students were admitted to the program this fall. The program has a handful of students that will graduate within the year. The one faculty member teaching in that program has rejoined the undergraduate faculty. At this time, there are no budgetary implications.

The School of Architecture will be happy to answer or further elaborate on any of the above-submitted information.

Respectfully,

Michael A. Berk | RA | F.L. Crane Professor
Director

c: Jim West, AIA, Dean
College of Architecture, Art and Design