Cassandra Pair, NAAB Accreditation Manager  
National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc.  
1735 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

RE: 2011 AR Part II (Narrative Report)  
Mississippi State University  
School of Architecture (B.Arch)  
Program Administrator: Michael A. Berk, Director  
AIA | 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 2011 NAAB Annual Report guidelines; Part I has already been submitted on-line. This is a continuation and follow-up to the 2010 AR Part II Narrative submittal from last year.

Background:
This narrative is in response to the recent 2010 Visiting Team Report (VTR) dated July 27, 2010. The School of Architecture (S|ARC) received the final 2010 VTR the first week in August 2010.

It has been a little over a year and the faculty (and curriculum committee) have now had adequate time to analyze and carefully reflect . . . and, are now taking a longer view with respect to the VTR Report and the noted deficiencies. Most of the SPC deficiencies centered on issues of incompleteness in the areas of tectonics and building assembly in the design studio.

During the Academic year 2010-11, the faculty was charged by both the Director (myself) and the Dean to look at significant ways that components of the S|ARC curriculum and pedagogy could coincide and overlap with parts of the Building Construction Science (BCS) program’s curriculum; the BCS program is housed within our same college (CAAD). This proposal comes about as a proactive reaction to the natural evolution that we are witnessing in a construction industry that is clearly moving toward an IPD Model (Integrated Project Delivery) --- this model demands integral collaborations between builders and designers. Our school is strategically positioned to engage this new 21st century pedagogy. It should be noted that the BCS curriculum (at Mississippi State) is one of only two ‘studio-based’ construction programs in the country; given that their studios also meet at the same time as S|ARC’s studios (MWF 1-5pm), there are ample opportunities for interdisciplinary activities.

The S|ARC faculty met at the end of the Spring 2011 semester (May 2011) for a 2-day Faculty Retreat (which is typical at the end of each semester) to discuss and strategically adopt integrative and tectonic models for collaboration with BCS in our curriculum. This proposal also addresses our earlier concerns of deficiencies in the areas of tectonics and building assembly within the design studios.

The integrative/tectonic curriculum’s centerpiece hinges on the modification of two of S|ARC’s ten existing studio courses --- it will require the re-focusing of two studios emphasizing the issues of ‘tectonics and assemblies’ of construction. This revised 2-studio sequence will be called called: ARC 2536 Arch Design 2A (Tectonic Studio I) and ARC 3546 Arch Design 2B (Tectonic Studio II). In this current Academic
Year 2011-12, we are test piloting these Tectonic Studio courses: Tectonic I in the Fall semester; and Tectonic II in the Spring semester. As well, the revision also calls for a new BIM (Building Information Modeling) lecture class; the course will not be implemented until the academic year 2012/13.

It is also anticipated that these two Tectonic Studio courses will become shared (interdisciplinary) courses with BCS in the Fall 2013 --- thus enabling a paradigm-shift that engages and teaches both BCS and S|ARC students within the same upper level studio courses.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions/Criteria Not Met</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four (4) Student Performance Criteria were listed as NOT being met:</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.13.14 Accessibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.13.23 Building Systems Integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.13.26 Technical Documentation</td>
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<td>3.13.28 Comprehensive Design</td>
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*NOTE: Fundamentally, the S|ARC curriculum committee believes that the four (4) SPC conditions not met (as noted) will be directly addressed by the studio course revisions as proposed above in the background section; we are confident that the new Tectonic Studios I & II will directly correct the SPC deficiencies in the near future.

13.14 Accessibility

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

**MSU Response:**

As we transition to the new curriculum, 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 in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; faculty 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 2012 AR. *(See NOTE above about Tectonic Studios.)*

3.23 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:**

As we transition to the new curriculum, the faculty believe that the current courses listed (ARC 3546 Design III-B; and ARC 4546 Design IV-B) to address this criteria in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are still the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; faculty 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 2012 AR. *(See NOTE above about Tectonic Studios.)*

13.26 Technical Documentation

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

**MSU Response:**

As we transition to the new curriculum, the faculty believe that the current courses listed (ARC 4546 Design IV-B; and ARC 3713 Assemblages) to address this criteria in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are still the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; faculty 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 2012 AR. *(See NOTE above about Tectonic Studios.)*

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:**

As we transition to the new curriculum, 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 in the 2009 APR Student Performance Criteria matrix are still the appropriate places to address this issue in our curriculum; faculty 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. *(See NOTE above about Tectonic Studios.)*

**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:**

   *Other programs:* As it relates to Building Construction Science (BCS), the Provost has administratively separated this program from the School of Architecture; it is now a stand-alone program within the college. This decision should clarify most of the administrative and financial concerns that the Visiting Team had with respect to this topic.

   *Shared Shop Resources in Giles Hall:* Student access and pressure on the shop space has been somewhat alleviated through better financial support (from BCS), and through the recent expansion and management of additional work-space accommodations in the basement.

   *Shared studio spaces in Giles Hall:* Last Spring 2011, all of the BSC studio spaces have been permanently moved (out of the architecture building, Giles Hall) into Howell Hall. The Howell Hall expansion (which also included expansion for Art and Interior Design) has alleviated most of the ‘space’ pressure on S|ARC’s building use.

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) with the full support of the faculty formally appointed senior faculty member (and previous Interim Director) Michael A. Berk, AIA, F.L. Crane Professor to be the permanent Director of the School of Architecture. Professor Berk in now in his 3rd year at this position. This appointment should satisfy the Visiting Team’s concerns.
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.

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**MSU Response:**

**Faculty:**

The School was pro-active and successful in identifying and hiring three female candidates for faculty positions in the 2011/2012 academic year. (This is in addition to Prof. Kivett, whom we hired last year as an Instructor). Two of these positions were filled with experienced tenure-track Assistant Professors (Alexis Gregory, AIA w/ 5 years at SCAD; and Frances Hsu, PhD, w/ 7 years @ Ga Tech); the other position is a Visiting Assistant Professor (Amber Ellett, AIA, w/ multiple years as a project architect in one of Mississippi’s premier design firms).

**Currently:**

The gender split of full-time non-administrative teaching faculty in S|ARC is:

- Male - 8 | Female – 6.

Overall, the gender split in S|ARC, including administrators (no deans), adjuncts and professional staff:

- Male - 15 | Female – 11.

S|ARC is confident that we are making significant headway towards satisfying the Visiting Team’s concerns.

The School was also pro-active and successful in identifying and hiring an Hispanic candidate (Miguel Lasala) for a second term full-time Lecturer position for the 2011/2012 academic year. Lasala does not meet the school’s minimum standards for tenure-track; he is not licensed nor has a PhD; he can only be hired as an Instructor or Lecturer.

**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 (Emily Parsons).

[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 two (2) freshman semesters (and a min. 2.5 GPA), they formally apply to the Summer Design Studios where they enroll in the freshman studio; ultimately they rejoin the second year class in the following fall. Success rate of passing the freshman studio courses in the pre-Arch Summer Studio is 95-100%.

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 with the Director and individual advising sessions leading up to the summer studio. This is the first time this school has been pro-active in this area and we are entering our second year of implementation. This past summer 2011, Summer Studio Pre-Arch had the highest enrollment rate in the last 5 years – 18 students . . . including a slightly larger number of African American students in the mix.

The Director has also been more pro-active in visiting and recruiting talented High Schools with a large percentage of African American students (i.e. Mississippi School for the Arts).

S|ARC is confident that we are making progress towards satisfying the Visiting Team’s concerns.
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 (Master of Science):
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 in the Fall of 2010 or 2011. Currently, the program only has one student; they are positioned to graduate within the year.

Building Construction Science Program:
As noted above, the program in Building Construction Science (BCS) has been administratively separated from the School of Architecture (S|ARC); it is now a stand-alone program within the college. The Dean 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. The Dean asked the committee to also look at places in the curriculum for joint studios. As noted earlier (in the background section), Tectonic Studios I & II are being test-piloted by the School of Architecture; it is anticipated that these studios will be joined together (with both BCS and S|ARC students and faculty) in the Fall 2013.

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 voted and deleted the required professional course ARC 1003 Concept and Form, from its curriculum last year. This provides 3 additional ‘open’ elective (general education) credits for the B.Arch degree; it received approval of the UCCC last year. The S|ARC curriculum committee studied and presented a revised curriculum that folds technical information from two lecture courses (ARC 3713 Assemblages & ARC 2723 Materials) directly into the Tectonic Studios. It appears that these courses will be deleted from the curriculum --- also freeing up 6 credits of additional open electives. The deletion of these technical courses is not expected to occur until 2013. In summary, it is expected that in the Fall 2013, nine (9) additional ‘open electives’ (non-professional choices) will be available to students in the B.Arch program. Formal documentation will be forthcoming upon official approvals.

NOTE: For the record, the faculty believe that the current 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? This question was asked last year --- we did not get a response??

Changes in program since last NAAB Visit

Facilities:
Robert and Freda Harrison Auditorium:
The official dedication and naming: Robert and Freda Harrison Auditorium occurred in January 2011 ($60k).
Shop Space (Giles Hall):
Improvements and significant expansion of work-space with better distribution and set-up of equipment ($2k).

First year Studio Space (Giles Hall Barn):
New wooden 4'-0" high casework walls were constructed to clearly define egress, individual student work-spaces, and circulation; walls also provides safer electrical access for student equipment ($3.5k).

Reconversion Grad Studio (Giles Hall):
Technologically renovated the old graduate studio lab (in the basement) into a lecture/review/critique space (as a back-up space to the Jury Room). Projection and sound provided. Additional pin-up space provided. ($2.5k)

Gallery Improvements (Giles Hall):
Finalized the rehab of NAAB panel exhibit system. The gallery has first-rate movable exhibit system for both critiques and gallery shows. ($1.5k).

Bob + Kathy Luke CAAD Library (Giles Hall):
Plans are underway to renovate the Architecture Library. We added 617 gift titles to the collection in the Giles Library. Approximately half of these were a major gift from Professor Nick Davis, a retired faculty member (Auburn University) with an emphasis on the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. These titles included some rare and signed items not widely found in many academic or research collections in the region or nation.

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. At this time, there are no budgetary implications.

Outreach:
BARNworks 09|10 (student monograph publication):
S|ARC published it first monograph book of student work. 450 volumes were produced with (w/ ISBN #) and distributed ($13k). The second edition is under way; we are currently looking for sponsorship. See following web link for web version and/or PDF files: http://www.caad.msstate.edu/caad_web/sarc/barnworks.php

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

It should be noted that we did not receive a NAAB response following last year’s report. We would respectfully like a response and also an official answer to the General Education Credits question noted earlier in the report.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Berk   AIA   |   F.L. Crane Professor
Director – School of Architecture

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