

Interim Progress Report Year 5
Texas A&M University
Department of Architecture
Master of Architecture (preprofessional degree + 52 credit hours)
Year of the previous visit: 2014

Please update contact information as necessary since the last APR was submitted.

Chief administrator for the academic unit in which the program is located:

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Any questions pertaining to this submission will be directed to the chief administrator for the academic unit in which the program is located.

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Text from the IPR Year 2 review is in the gray text boxes. Type your response in the designated text boxes.

I. Progress in Addressing Not-Met Conditions and Student Performance Criteria

a. Progress in Addressing Not-Met Conditions

N/A

b. Progress in Addressing Not-Met Student Performance Criteria

Texas A&M University, 2019 Response: Satisfied by Two-Year IPR.

II. Progress in Addressing Causes of Concern

Two Year IPR Review specifically required follow-up on: "Report on the Causes of Concern regarding coordination and documentation of student outcomes in greater detail."

Causes of Concern

2014 Team Assessment: The Conditions Not Met involving Student Performance Criteria identified during the visit involved laudable attempts by faculty to successfully integrate a broad range of content into the three required design studios Arch 605, 606, 607 Design I-III. Variations in the attention to and coordination of student work addressing these SPCs between studio sections resulted in inconsistent achievement by students.

Texas A&M University, 2019 Response: To address the causes of concern noted in the 2014 NAAB assessment the faculty implemented three changes to the program. To address unmet Student Performance criteria A.4, B.6, B.10, and B.11 the faculty implemented a one credit hour seminar as part of the ARCH 605 and ARCH 606 design studio sequence. The success of the seminar prompted the faculty to create a new 3 credit-hour course, ARCH 658, and add three hours to the curriculum. To address inconsistent achievement the faculty restructured the ARCH 607 and ARCH 608 studio sequence. Beginning the Fall of 2015 a seminar was added to the ARCH 605 and ARCH 606 studio course. These courses are 6 credit hours and 1 credit hour was designated to a seminar to address materials and methods in a design context. The seminar included materials, methods, building envelope systems, building codes, and technical documentation. The seminar was required for all four sections of the year long 605/606 sequence as shown in the sample syllabi in the appendix. The seminar was effective in the short-term as student work began to reflect an increase in technical integration. Seeking to build on that success the faculty began crafting a dedicated course to address this material. In the Fall of 2019 the faculty proposed a new course, ARCH 658 Architectural Materials and Assembly Design. This course was approved at the College and University levels and the syllabus can be found in the appendix. In conjunction with the creation of the ARCH 658 course the faculty proposed to add three hours to the current 52 hour curriculum with the intent to make ARCH 658 a required course within the core curriculum. To investigate the impacts of this addition the faculty compared the current 52 credit hour Master of Architecture program and curriculum to other similarly structured 2-year NAAB accredited Master of Architecture programs. It was determined that adding 3 credit hours, resulting in a 55 credit hour program, would accomplish two goals. Adding this course would strengthen the core offerings of our program and keep in step with a noticed trend of Materials and Methods style seminar courses being offered at other programs. The additional 3 credit hours added to the program would keep us competitive with other similarly structured 2-year programs as they range from 52 credit hours to 60 credit hours. This addition was approved at the College and University levels and will become part of the catalog and degree plan for all incoming students beginning in the fall semester 2020. Graphics of previous 52 credit-hour and new 55 credit-hour programs are part of the supporting material in the appendix. The second year of the Master of Architecture program has a design studio sequence of ARCH 607 Design III and ARCH 608 Final Study. All second year Master of Architecture students are required to complete a Final Study design project, often referred to as a Thesis project. This Final Study is a project created by the students under direction and guidance from a committee comprised of three faculty members. The Final Study is completed in the ARCH 608 studio course during the final semester. This model has been in

place in our program for over twenty years. Subsequent to the 2014 NAAB review the faculty proposed to increase rigor and create consistency across this second year design studio sequence by linking ARCH 607 and ARCH 608 through the Final Study. This was accomplished by keeping the faculty committee structure for the Final Study, while the individual sections of the ARCH 607/ARCH 608 course sequence are taught by the same practitioner. This framework allows the creation, direction, and investigation of the Final Study to be directed by the student's faculty committee while the detailed stages of the project development are overseen by same the course instructor across both ARCH 607 and ARCH 608. This structure has resulted in an ARCH 607/ARCH 608 course sequence that has allowed students to investigate both the breadth and depth of an architectural project in greater detail while simultaneously increasing rigor in production and consistency in development.

III. Changes or Planned Changes in the Program

Please report such changes as the following: faculty retirement/succession planning; administration changes (dean, department chair, provost); changes in enrollment (increases, decreases, new external pressures); new opportunities for collaboration; changes in financial resources (increases, decreases, external pressures); significant changes in educational approach or philosophy; changes in physical resources (e.g., deferred maintenance, new building planned, cancellation of plans for new building).

Texas A&M University, 2019 Response: [Click here to enter text.](#)

IV. Summary of Responses to Changes in the [2014 NAAB Conditions](#)

Texas A&M University, 2019 Response: In 2016 Department Head Ward Wells retired. A search for a replacement failed and Professor Robert Warden was appointed as Interim Head for 2 years. Following another failed search Professor Warden continued as Interim Head for another two years. Currently, another search is underway. Also during this time in the university there was a change in president and provost. Dean Vanegas has remained in place but he hired a new Executive Associate Dean in 2016. From 2017 to the present, a number of administrative changes were made in the department. A change in leadership was made for the M.Arch program and the MS and PHD programs. These changes were not made to correct any failures but primarily to bring fresh ideas. An administrative reorganization added an Executive Associate Dept. Head - Shelley Holliday, the previous Undergraduate Coordinator- and filling that position with Dr. Ko Aitani. The department administrative support staff was reorganized with the addition of a new staff member. Enrollment in the undergraduate program increased by 15% since 2016, but enrollment has dropped 20% in the M.Arch program during that same time. Seeing similar trends at other universities, we attribute this to a greater difficulty in international students receiving visas and the robust architectural economy. We have managed our enrollment through a slight increase in our Career Change Program. Funding for the Department of Architecture has increased 30% since 2014. This increase has come from many sources, most notably differential tuition fees paid by students and increased fees garnered from online courses. These funds have some restrictions but we are able to fund special projects, field trips and symposia with them. We have also used them to hire adjunct faculty to fill temporary openings or for special visiting opportunities. Pressure on funding comes at the graduate level from new initiatives by the provost to fully fund all PhD students and to preference PhD funding for graduate assistants over masters level students. We have increased funding for graduate students over the last 5 years, but we are not able to fund fully either 100% of our MArch students or our PHD students. Out of 53 graduate students funded in Fall of 2019, 29 were PhD and 22 were M.Arch students. The pressure to funnel more funding to PhD students requires us to develop more future funding for M.Arch students. In 2017 the department created an advisory council of professionals to explore how the department in general should meet the challenges of a rapidly changing educational and professional environment. Over the past 2 years we have explored many concrete ideas though one, research, seems to be an overarching theme. We are exploring methods for creating design research opportunities throughout our graduate and undergraduate curricula. This endeavor also informs the College of Architecture strategic plan to construct a new architecture complex on campus

to house all existing departments while also including spaces for new pedagogical methods for studio and design research.

- V. Appendix** *(include revised curricula, syllabi, and one-page CVs or bios of new administrators and faculty members; syllabi should reference which NAAB SPC a course addresses. Provide three examples of low-pass student work for SPCs in the following cases--if there are any SPCs that have not been met for two consecutive visits, or if there are three not-met SPCs in the same realm in the last visit--as required in the Instructions.)*

Texas A&M University, 2019 update: Texas A&M University is on a semester schedule, which means the majority of faculty teaching is done in the Fall and Spring of any calendar year. That said, the faculty worked through the Fall of 2018 and Spring of 2019 to evaluate the 2014 NAAB criteria. The matrix in the appendix was generated and adopted for implementation in the Fall of 2019. The intent of this schedule was to be prepared for our 2022 VTR visit. Bob Warden and James Haliburton attended the ACSA administrators conference in the Fall of 2019 where the NAAB 2020 criteria were presented and discussed at length. From their report and subsequent review the faculty unanimously agreed to switch. This switch was predicated upon the forward looking nature of the 2020 criteria. The faculty have created a schedule for the Spring of 2020 to review courses, craft appropriate narratives, and revise course syllabi and schedules as needed to reflect the forward looking nature of the 2020 NAAB Performance Criteria (PC) and Student Criteria (SC).

