

## I.1.5 Self-Assessment Procedures

### University Assessment Policy

The University's Student Outcomes Assessment Policy, which was in effect at the time of our last accreditation visit in 2008 can be viewed at

[http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student\\_outcomes\\_assessment\\_poli.htm#Student%20Outcomes%20Assessment%20Policy](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_outcomes_assessment_poli.htm#Student%20Outcomes%20Assessment%20Policy)

In 2011, the Office of the Provost began a comprehensive strategy for updating and revising the unit assessment plans across campus. At the same time the University was a year into the process of establishing its new strategic plan—included in Part One(I)Section 1.4—and a parallel process of providing course learning objectives as part of a state-wide mandate to create common course numbering systems within the Montana University System. All of these new initiatives provided guidelines for developing this assessment process. This review of the assessment process has continued over the last 2+ years and will be reviewed as part of the University's on-going regional accreditation review in AY 13-14. Part of this process has been the requirement for each department on campus to prepare an updated assessment plan, student learning outcomes and course objectives. In order to provide some consistency across campus, Associate Provost Ron Larson developed a series of documents designed to assist departments in reviewing their existing assessment plans and updating or revising them to meet some of the standards set out in Associate Provost Larson's documents. Following are links to these documents

Assessing Student Learning: Overview

- [http://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/001%20Assessing%20Student%20Learning%20Outcomes%2009\\_12\\_2011.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/001%20Assessing%20Student%20Learning%20Outcomes%2009_12_2011.pdf)

Developing Program Learning Outcomes

- <http://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/002%20Developing%20Program%20Learning%20Outcomes.pdf>

Step-by-Step Assessment Plans

- [http://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/003%20Step\\_by\\_Step\\_Assessment\\_Plans%20Oct%202011.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/003%20Step_by_Step_Assessment_Plans%20Oct%202011.pdf)

### School Assessment Policies

Assessment of the School of Architecture occurs on an on-going basis and utilizes a range of methods. In addition to the formal assessment plan required by the university, we utilize a range of meetings, surveys, evaluation forms, etc, and involves a wide array of constituencies—students, faculty, staff, alumni and employers. The School promotes and maintains an on-going discussion between faculty, students, alumni and the profession and the information received from all of these groups is utilized to help shape the direction of the program. We are at the beginning of a 3-year cycle of assessment as outlined in our updated assessment plan dated May 2013. What follows is a description of the process utilized to develop our current assessment plan as well as other methods of self-assessment the School has developed as part of a regular process of review.

### School of Architecture Formal Assessment Plan

Throughout 2011, the School of Architecture faculty and curriculum committee worked to develop a series of course learning objectives for all of its course offerings. Once these learning objectives were completed, the school began the process of reviewing its 2009-2011 assessment plan. We utilized the above documents to guide us through the process of developing the School's 2013 Assessment Plan which can be found at

<http://www.arch.montana.edu/pdf/ArchitectureAssessmentPlan2013.pdf>

In developing this assessment plan, the School tried to align the program learning outcomes to the student learning aspirations contained within the 3 realms of the NAAB Conditions for Accreditation: Realm A: Critical Thinking and Representation, Realm B: Integrated Building Practices, Technical Skills and Knowledge and Realm C: Leadership and Practice. These student learning aspirations were aligned with the student performance criteria, which were connected to specific courses within our curriculum. The process for reviewing the various program learning outcomes was scheduled in such a way as to review similar course areas each year. Thus in AY 2012-13, data was gathered on the design studios through our portfolio admission process that will be analyzed in AY 2013-14 and the outcomes of that assessment will inform the changes that we make in our design studios for the coming year. In AY 2013-14, data will be gathered on our history/theory and graphics courses and a similar analysis and

feedback loop will take place in AY 14-15. As part of the university-wide development of our formal assessment plan, the School has created a committee that will oversee and implement the assessment plan activities—including gathering data, developing rubrics and analyzing data for presentation to the faculty at our annual meetings.

### **Assessment Information from Students**

The Director maintains regular meetings with the AIAS soliciting discussion and input from the student organization. At the beginning of each semester, the Director holds a State of the School meeting to provide general information to all students and to receive comments and feedback from the entire student body.

*Studio Forum:* At approximately the mid-point of each semester, the Director of the School holds an open forum for all interested students to attend. The purpose of the forum is to provide a venue for students to talk with the Director in an informal setting and to provide student feedback on any and all aspects of the school. There is no formal agenda so the discussion is typically student led. Topics have ranged from concerns about limited network connections in the graduate studio (currently being addressed as part of the Cheever Hall seismic upgrade construction), a desire for additional courses (currently being addressed in our 2014-2016 curriculum revisions), the need for more student commons/lounge/study areas (addressed through the renovation of the 'Fishbowl' and other student commons areas). Attendance at these forums will vary in number and representation across the years, but all students are notified of these meetings and they are scheduled at a time when the vast majority of students do not have class. We vary the schedule from semester to semester in order to provide the greatest opportunity for all students to attend.

When specific circumstances arise—such as this past summer's extensive construction as part of the seismic upgrade of Cheever Hall—special meetings are held with the appropriate groups of students. For example, as soon as the extent of the summer construction was evident to us, we met with the graduate students to gain their input and made plans to provide a reduced schedule of classes in the summer that still allowed those students choosing to move at an accelerated pace to accomplish that task.

*Learning Culture/Studio Culture* Since 2004 a Studio Culture Committee (now called Learning Culture Committee) was formed that was comprised of undergraduate and graduate students along with a representative group of faculty members. In addition to reviewing our studio culture policy on a regular basis, this committee undertakes an annual Studio Culture survey which provides the schools with a student assessment on a broad range of issues. Student participation in this survey is generally high—in particular from the graduate students which is quite beneficial as those students have the broadest and most complete perspective of our program since they have experienced all 5½ years of our curriculum. In recent years, in response to concerns about workload in the third year of our program, additional questions were added to the Studio Culture Survey to gain data and student perspective on this issue. The result was a change to Spring 2012 courses to alleviate some of the student concerns. This committee is charged with the following duties:

- Solicit student membership/feedback for this committee per the adopted studio culture policy (May 2013)
- Review data and comments from each year's Studio Culture Survey and provide recommendations or changes to current policy as needed
- Obtain feedback from faculty and staff on studio culture policy
- Undertake annual Studio Culture Survey each spring semester and provide feedback/analysis of survey data including a comparison of trends across the last few years of the survey.
- Undertake additional learning items or initiatives as identified by faculty, students or committee members.

*Incoming Freshman Survey:* As part of the Freshman Orientation Sessions, we ask incoming students to complete a survey on their perceptions of the program just prior to starting. This survey queries students on how they heard about our program, the perceived strengths of the program and aspects of our program are important to them.

### **Assessment Information from Faculty**

*Faculty + Staff Retreats:* The School holds an annual retreat at the beginning of each academic year. The structure of the retreat has changed in recent years to be a split day event. This first session focuses on sharing information, data, and policies with all of the faculty and staff. The retreat continues on the morning of the second day. This second day is typically used for discussion—often breaking into smaller groups. At the 2012 retreat, the second

day's session was used to conduct the initial steps of our strategic planning process. Students were invited to participate in this retreat/planning session. A half-day start up meeting also occurs at the start of Spring Semester and while compressed in nature is utilized to provide faculty and staff with the information needed for the semester.

*All Studio Review:* The School has instituted an additional assessment opportunity at the end of each semester called the All Studio Review. Occurring during finals week, representative projects from all design studio sections are pinned up in our review space. Faculty provide a brief overview of the studio project after which faculty discuss the strengths and weaknesses that they observed within the process and outcomes of the various studios. These discussions lead to recommended changes in the studio—or curriculum—in the following semester or year. This review has been helpful in discussing the integration of non-studio and studio course material.

*Faculty Meetings:* The School holds faculty meetings every two weeks to address topics of importance to the School. When special topics—such as the recent revision to our Role, Scope, Criteria and Procedures document and Assessment Plan—require additional discussions, meetings are held weekly.

*Portfolio Reviews:* The School has two gates in its overall program—one at the end of the first year undergraduate program to enter into the Environmental Design program and the other gate occurring during the fourth year of the program to enter into the Master of Architecture program. Students must submit portfolios of their work at each of these admission gates. Five faculty are selected to review these portfolios, rating the portfolios on a 12-point scale. In addition to this overall rating, the faculty are asked to assess other areas of the work presented by each student. Depending upon the specific admission gate, these areas can include: overall design quality, visual communication, technical ability, concept development, etc. In addition to being used to determine which students we accept into our program, the results of these portfolio reviews are used in our assessment plan for studio courses.

*Standing Committees:* While the faculty meetings act as a committee of the entire faculty there are a number of standing committees that are responsible for reviewing and assessing specific aspects of the program. All standing committees are given a charge at the start of the year but committee members and faculty members are encouraged to bring forward issues for this committee to consider.

*Assessment Committee:* With the development of the School's new Assessment Plan, we have created a new committee that will focus on assessment of our courses and program. This committee has been given the following charge for the coming academic year:

- Review the submitted School of Architecture Assessment Plan
  - Make recommendations for changes to the plan as needed
- Identify courses and program outcomes to be assessed during 2013-14
  - Working with faculty, develop rubric for assessing program and course outcomes
  - Gather assignments and projects from identified courses
  - Utilize rubrics to gather data
  - Analyze data and present recommendations to faculty at Fall 2014 Startup meeting
- Review Second Year Admission scoring sheet and Graduate Admission scoring sheet and make recommendations for changes to this rubric as needed.
- Additional items as deemed necessary by the committee or faculty

*Curriculum Committee:* The Curriculum Committee oversees items related to the architecture curriculum. Proposed changes to the curriculum are developed within this committee and forwarded to the faculty and Director for consideration. Over the past year the curriculum committee—which includes student representation—has undertaken a comprehensive review of the entire architecture curriculum as we make the shift from 162 credits to 168 credits in our combined undergraduate and graduate program. The curriculum committee met on a weekly basis to develop this curriculum change. Over the course of the last two years, the committee met with each individual faculty member to discuss the needs and opportunities of each required course in our curriculum. The committee also held a number of open forums to gain student feedback on a wide range of curriculum proposals. These sessions were helpful in obtaining the students' perspective on the best strategies to add credits to our curriculum.

*Computer and Equipment Committee:* The Computer Committee and the Equipment Committee are combined into one committee given the overlap that exists between each of these two categories. This committee submits an application to the university each year to receive funding from the computer fees and equipment fees that all MSU

students pay on each credit they take. This committee, which includes student, faculty and staff representatives, meets on a regular basis to assess the computer and equipment needs of the school for the coming year. Student input is quite valuable on this committee and for some issues—such as the question of adequate wireless connectivity in the graduate studios—were followed up with a survey amongst the appropriate groups. This committee typically secures between \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year for computer and equipment funding.

*Strategic Planning Committee:* The strategic planning committee is charged with looking at the long range goals of the school and providing the School's administrators with an assessment of the current state of the school and a long range strategy for achieving the outlined goals of the school. With the formalization of the University, College and School's strategic plan this past year, this committee will be charged with overseeing the implementation and assessment of the School's strategic plan.

### **Assessment Information from the Profession**

*Advisory Council :* At the time of the last accreditation visit, the School had both an Advisory Council, comprised of architects from around the country, and a Business Alliance, comprised of individuals in allied construction, supplier and manufacturing fields. Over the last six years, these two groups have merged—the Business Alliance was folded into the Advisory Council membership. In addition, we have continued to maintain the Graduate Council, comprised of young professionals who are often only a few years out of school. These young professionals provide another valuable perspective to the Advisory Council since they are now in a position to bridge their recent academic experiences with their new positions in professional practice. The School has utilized both groups to provide feedback on the quality of the program and to provide information on the current and future trends in the design and construction industries. The Director and members of the faculty meet with the Advisory Council on a regular basis by having meetings at the School twice a year. The Advisory Council also has contact with students at these regular meetings.

*Internship Employers:* As part of the School's Internship Program, we have a part-time faculty member, Lindsay Schack, who is assigned to oversee the internship program on a 12-month basis. This faculty member receives regular reports from all employers involved in our internship program. These reports provide the School with information on the quality of our graduates and their strengths and weaknesses within the firm. Any deficiencies identified are then addressed through the appropriate faculty and/or course.

*Celebration of Architecture:* In 2004, the School instituted a new annual event called the Celebration of Architecture. This event is sponsored by firms from around the country and is a chance for firms to come to Bozeman and interview our students for potential internships and summer jobs. In addition the Celebration kicks off with a formal dinner and silent auction in which firms sponsor tables for students and faculty to attend the dinner—allowing students and the firm's representatives to have informal discussions about their education and the profession. It has proven to be a successful way to celebrate the successes of our alumni and our students while providing internship opportunities for our students. This event also provides the Director of the school with feedback from the firms attending the celebration on the state of the profession and on the quality of our students.

*Architectural Associations:* Similarly, the Director and faculty are active in soliciting assessment information at a number of statewide events such as the AIA Montana State Convention, and the Billings Architectural Association Meeting in the Mountains. Every other year AIA Montana hosts their state convention in Bozeman which provides an opportunity for the school's administrators to talk with the state practitioners and allows students and faculty to attend the lectures and vendor presentations at the convention. The design coordinators for third and fifth year also solicit information from alumni and practitioners during the annual field trips taken in each of those years. By visiting a number of firms and meeting with alumni, the coordinators can better assess the issues that our students will need to address in the profession. In addition, the third year field trip typically includes an alumni reception at the cities visited each year. The Director attends these alumni receptions providing another opportunity for the Director to gain feedback on the school and our students.

*Professional Organizations:* The School receives valuable information from faculty who serve as officers in statewide architectural organizations. Currently Chere LeClair, a full-time faculty member recently completed 7 years of service on the Board of Directors for AIA Montana—including the role of AIA Montana President, while Tom Wood, Professor, served on the State Board of Directors for NCARB serving as Regional Chair for Region 5. Tom Wood continues to serve on a number of NCARB committees. Associate Professor Christopher Livingston is

the MSU School of Architecture Internship Development Coordinator and attends the annual IDP Coordinators Conference. Both Professor Henry Sorenson and Steve Juroszek have served as president and treasurer of the Design Communication Association (DCA). Associate Professor Zuzanna Karczewska is currently serving as Treasurer of the DCA. Henry Sorenson also remains active as past-president of the American Society of Architectural Illustrators (ASAI). Associate Professor Maire O'Neill is currently serving on the State Licensing Board of Architecture and Landscape Architects. All of these positions provide the faculty and school with information and feedback utilized in the development of the architecture program.

*Alumni:* Similarly, the annual phonathon, while used primarily to solicit funds from alumni, includes a side benefit in that it provides an opportunity to inform alumni of events and changes within the school. The School distributes a monthly newsletter to alumni providing short updates on the School. In addition, the School provides updates on its Facebook page and a LinkedIn page which generates regular feedback from alumni. The Director and Director of Development officer travel throughout the country to meet with our alumni. Feedback is solicited at these meetings.

### **Program Assessment**

*Catalog Revisions:* Every two years, the School is required by the University to review all School and course information in the MSU Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin and to submit changes to the University for the new publication. This biennial process provides the School with the opportunity to review course content and diversity as well as program policies concerning admission, retention and graduation. The initial review of these issues is undertaken by the Director, Graduate Program Coordinator and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator followed by additional review with faculty and students. The curriculum committee is involved with these discussions from the outset in order to provide a consistency across the curriculum.

*NAAB:* Similarly, the Architecture Program Report prepared every six years for NAAB provides the school with an additional assessment process as the report allows the faculty, staff and administration to review all aspects of the program, identify strengths and weaknesses and develop remedies for any deficiencies. The annual reports provide an opportunity to regular assess our progress relative to the deficiencies in the previous report.

*Expansion Program Review- Curriculum Committee:* In the Fall of 2006, the School of Architecture expanded its student numbers from 65 students admitted into second year and 52 students into the graduate program to 91 students accepted into second year and 72 students into the graduate program. This expansion led to a review of the entire curriculum and pedagogical structure of the Master of Architecture program and resulted in significant changes to our curriculum including the requirement for all students to complete a summer design studio. With the lower student enrollment that resulted in 2009 after the start of the economic downturn, the school began a curriculum review coupled with our discussion to increase the number of credits in our program to 168 credits. This review established a curriculum that reflected our current enrollments, 50-65 students in each undergraduate year rather than 91 students. The resulting proposal still allows the school to achieve at least some of its original expansion targets. This review has taken place over the last two years and is reflected in the new 168-credit curriculum which is presented in greater detail in part Two(II) Section 2.2 Professional Degree and Curriculum.

### **Course Assessment**

*Course Evaluations:* The School has continued to use a faculty-course evaluation form that is much more specific than the standard University faculty-course KNAPP evaluation form. Because use of the KNAPP form is required by the university, we utilize both forms in our faculty-course evaluation process. The School of Architecture form asks students to evaluate the course, the faculty and their own contributions to the course. The School's evaluation form is seen as benefiting the evaluation and improvement of our courses.

Using the standard 8 question KNAPP evaluation form has allowed us to compare our evaluations with other units across the campus. Using the more specific 27 question Architecture evaluation form has allowed us to better assess the quality of our courses and teaching as well as the efforts of the students. The 27-question evaluation form asked students to answer specific questions to evaluate the course itself, the instructor of the course and their performance as students within the course. By asking students to evaluate the course, the instructor, and the student's role as an active learner the evaluation form provides constructive feedback and assessment in all three areas.

*Review Week:* At the end of each semester, all students present their studio work to a group of faculty and practitioners not directly involved with that studio section. This allows for the work in the design studio to be

assessed by a larger range of faculty and professionals each semester. It provides students with a broader critique of their work and allows other design faculty to assess the issues that must be addressed in preceding or following years. These reviews are open to all faculty and students and are scheduled to allow and encourage student attendance. Since the last accreditation visit, we have dedicated a separate week for first year reviews, undergraduate reviews and graduate reviews. By spreading these reviews out over the course of three weeks it provides the opportunity for students to attend the reviews in other years, which we see as a valuable part of their education.

*Scholarship Selection Process:* Each year, the school utilizes an internal scholarship selection process for design competitions in the first, second, and third year of the program. This process requires that faculty select student projects from their design studios which are displayed in the review spaces. All faculty in the school are then invited to review the work and select the top projects for specific scholarships or competitions. While this review will often focus on the upper tier of student work in first and second year design studios, we typically pin-up all projects whenever a national competition is being used as the studio project. In both cases, it allows all faculty a chance to review the quality of the work in each year and helps to identify any strengths or weaknesses that may be evident within a specific year or project.

*Graduate Program Review Process:* At the conclusion of a students' final graduate design studio, the final projects are reviewed by a committee of faculty members which constitutes the students comprehensive exam. Students must demonstrate that their projects address the course objectives in order for them to successfully pass their comprehensive exam and these courses. This provides an assessment of the student work at the end of their graduate degree program and is utilized to maintain the quality of the student work and the program.

*School Exhibits:* The School maintains an on-going exhibit of current student work. This exhibit includes work from all years of the program and includes coursework from support courses such as graphics and environmental controls as well as the design studios. This work is displayed in Cheever Gallery and in the hallways of Cheever Hall. The work shown is of an exemplary nature and provides students and faculty with a benchmark by which to gauge the quality of work being undertaken each semester.

### **Teaching Assessment**

*Peer Evaluations:* Coordinators are assigned to each of our five years of design. They provide continuity within each year and maintain communication between the Director, Graduate Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Curriculum Committee and other faculty. Faculty are assigned to sit on the final review during review week or each design studio. Typically 2-3 faculty in addition to the studio instructor are assigned to these reviews. This provides an objective assessment of the quality of the student work and the faculty member's instructional efforts on a regular basis each semester. The School has initiated a policy of inviting outside professionals to sit on these final reviews providing for additional perspective and feedback for the students and the school. Many faculty also invite these professionals to participate in mid-semester reviews for their studio. An evaluation form is filled out at the design studio review for any tenure-track or tenured faculty member in the year prior to their retention, tenure or promotion review. This provides a formalized review process of the teaching effectiveness of the tenure-track/tenured faculty members.

*Annual, Tenure, Promotion Reviews:* Each January, all tenured/tenure track and non-tenure track faculty are required to submit materials to the Director for their annual review. The materials must include a list of teaching activities, research/creative activities, service activities, a self-assessment for the year, and a list of goals for the coming year and copies of the student's instructor/course evaluations.

Tenure-track faculty are required to submit a more extensive document in their third year of employment which is reviewed by a School Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee, the Director, a College (P&T) Committee, the Dean, a University (P&T) Committee, the Provost, the President and the Board of Regents. A decision on retaining the faculty member is made from this extensive review. A similar process is undertaken during the sixth year of appointment at which time a decision on tenure and promotion is made for each tenure-track faculty member. A similar process is undertaken whenever a tenured faculty member applies for promotion from the rank of Associate Professor to Professor. Non-tenure track faculty are required to submit an application for continued employment at the end of each one-year or multi-year contract. These applications are reviewed by a Faculty Appointment Advisory Committee and recommendations are made to the Director.

## Alumni Assessment

*Professional Licensing Exam:* Data is gathered from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards on a regular basis. This information, though limited in application, provides general information on passing rates in the different subject areas. Because this examination can take place a few years after graduation, the information tested relates a great deal to the intern experience but remains useful as a means of judging the relative success of our graduates in the profession. The most recent licensing information is shown below. As of the writing of this report, the national passing rates for 2012 have been posted on NCARB's website but passing rates for individual schools have not yet been posted.

*ARE Performance Statistics:* Following are the Architectural Record Examination Pass Rates for students who have graduated from Montana State University and the National Pass Rates for the calendar years since the last accreditation visit. The chart compares the national passing rates to the passing rates for Montana State University Graduates for the years 2005 through 2011.

### pre-2008 ARE Divisions

	2005		2006		2007	
	MSU	National	MSU	National	MSU	National
Pre-design	94	76	83	78	100	79
General Structures	85	75	100	75	84	76
Laterla Forces	93	76	67	75	96	79
Mech. And Elec. Systems	84	68	100	70	74	69
Materials and Methods	87	77	80	77	97	79
Const. Docs and Services	73	77	100	77	81	77
Site Planning	77	73	72	66	70	66
Bldg. Planning	65	63	87	68	67	65
Bldg. Technology	62	66	66	67	87	69

### 4.0 ARE Divisions

	2008 (4.0)		2009 (4.0)		2010 (4.0)		2011	
	MSU	National	MSU	National	MSU	National	MSU	National
Programming, Planning & Practice	73	49	70	56	63	62	73	62
Site Planning & Design	89	59	81	69	64	76	78	73
Bldg. Design and Constr. Services	57	47	56	57	70	63	66	62
Structural Systems	100	57	57	64	81	66	77	71
Building Systems	57	59	73	66	74	65	84	68
Construction Doc and Services	83	56	64	59	79	63	66	64
Schematic Design	57	65	74	71	63	74	86	77

#### Note:

MSU numbers shown are the percentage of MSU graduates who passed the exam

National numbers shown are the percentage of all Architectural Interns who passed the exam

Gray indicates where MSU Passing Rates equal or exceed the National Passing rates

*Advisory Council:* The vast majority of the Advisory Council and Graduate Council members are alumni of the school. These groups meet twice a year in Bozeman and provide feedback to the school on the quality of the program and our recent graduates. The advisory council utilizes four committees within its organizational structure—Advocacy, Knowledge, Networking and Resources to evaluate the needs of the school and provide advice and assistance on methods toward achieving the needs of the school in these three areas.

## Program Self-Assessment

### *General Background on Enrollment and Budget Changes since the Last Accreditation Visit*

Throughout this APR, there will be some discussion and information about the 2006 expansion of the School of Architecture from 65 students to 91 students admitted into the second year of the program along with an increase from 52 students to 72 students to be admitted into our graduate program. This expansion in 2006 happened just prior to our last accreditation visit and was done in response to the School turning away qualified students each year. The University provided a significant increase to our base budget from 2006 to 2009 to accommodate this 40% increase in student numbers. The University also provided 5.5 FTE of fiscal-year non-tenure track faculty positions to teach the additional course sections. However, no additional space was allocated to the School in 2006 and as a result, the school had to shift to a year-round program in the graduate year and required all graduate students to take a required summer semester design studio.

From 2006-2009, the School met the target enrollment number of 91 students admitted into second year. As these students moved through our graduate program in Fall 2009 we began admitting o 72 students in our graduate program. However during that same year, Fall 2009, our second year enrollment dropped to 52 students—much of

which appears to be a result of the Great Recession's effect upon the profession and the limited number of job prospects for our graduates. Subsequent years since 2009 have seen second year enrollment continue to range between 50 and 65 students as well as lower numbers of first year students. Enrollment in our graduate studios have remained constant during this time as the initial expansion students have worked their way through the program. However, beginning this year, the lower enrollment cohorts of students will be starting to move through our graduate program.

Funding for the 2006 expansion was phased in over a four year period, 2006-2009, as the School met its target enrollments. Funding was added to our base budget. As enrollments decreased over the last three years, the School continued to be funded based upon the original expansion figures. However, in July 2013, the School's base budget was reduced to reflect the fact that the School's enrollment had dropped a great deal since Fall 2009. This decrease in our base budget was centralized at the college level and redistributed to other units in the college to address enrollment growth or issues of equity within these other units. The School was very fortunate to have had a robust budget for the last few years and it allowed the School to strongly support faculty research, travel, professional development, teaching enhancement, attendance at professional meetings as well as provide support for students to attend AIA conferences. In addition, the School aggressively pursued recruitment of prospective students through participation at college recruiting events in Chicago, Boston and at AIAS Forum. The School also developed publications on the school—v16 referred to elsewhere in this APR being one example—in an attempt to increase our recruitment and retention of students. The School was aggressive in using the additional funding to try to increase our enrollment and to increase the quality and quantity of research, outreach/engagement opportunities and the quality of teaching/learning within our program. Funding for many of these endeavors is now either centralized at the college level and more equitably distributed across all four units or decreased at the School level. In a number of these areas, such as travel funding for attendance at conferences, the funding is similar to what was reported in the last accreditation visit—i.e. \$1000 for travel support in 2007-08 vs. \$800-900 in travel support in 2013-14—so that a 'decrease' is relative to the last few years rather than in comparison to the last accreditation visit. Because the restructuring of our budget has only happened in the last two months, the School is still in the process of assessing the impact that it will have on our program. Some of the budget now centralized at the College will be returning to the School. But, the redistribution of the budget is going to require that more sources of funding—both external to the school and external to the university—be aggressively pursued. Initiatives related to the Strategic Plan can be pursued for additional funding from the university. This coming year will be one in which the School will need to develop new strategies for supporting the faculty and students' endeavors.

In Fall 2012, the School conducted an all-day strategic planning session led by an outside consultant, Deidre Combs. Faculty, staff and student representatives participated in this all day event. A portion of this meeting was devoted to a discussion of what we believe is working well and what could be made better. The following list of program strengths and weaknesses is a result of feedback from that meeting, subsequent all-school meetings and numerous faculty and committee meetings as well as the results from the Studio Culture Survey.

### **Program Strengths**

#### *Reputation of the program*

Within the University, the School of Architecture continues to enjoy a strong reputation despite the fact that our enrollments have been declining while the university as a whole has experienced significant growth. We are seen as an example of a strong program—one that the University features when it talks to outside constituencies or when it brings outside constituencies to the school. Our Community Design Center was cited as one of 15 programs on campus when the University received the Carnegie Foundation's recognition for community engagement. Work by our faculty and students is regularly featured on the University's website and print publications. Similarly, because of the successes of our students and faculty, our program has enjoyed a strong reputation within the design and education community beyond Montana.

*Design studio sequence.* – Studio courses remain a strength and focus of the program. Beginning in Fall 2014 the School will be adding an additional design studio class in the second year of our program to provide a studio course in each of the eleven semesters of our combined program.

#### *Three-semester graphics curriculum*

The School has a strong reputation for its graphics curriculum as we have always maintained a strong emphasis on hand drawing as an important design and communication skill. The School is the headquarters for the Design



Communication Association—an organization that promotes graphics and design communication in architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, planning, industrial design and other allied fields. While the school has always tried to maintain a strong balance between hand and digital media, the school is trying to keep up with the ever changing and expanding digital applications and is looking at ways to increase this digital exposure throughout the curriculum without abandoning the core foundation we have built in the analog world of graphics. The School has added updated CNC and 3D printing digital fabrication tools and two of our faculty have begun to focus in these areas. It is hoped that some of our new TT faculty will bring an enhanced digital application approach to our program.

#### *Wide Range of Options for Students*

Over the last 5-6 years, the School has been able to provide students with a wide range of educational and travel opportunities. Our students have traveled to 6 different continents and we have been able to maintain multiple study abroad semesters since our last accreditation visit. Students have the opportunity to participate in study abroad course that range in duration from 2 weeks to 12 weeks and often include design-build or service learning components. Each student participates in three field trips—two of which are 5-7 days long—that allow students to experience significant regional or national urban and rural centers. Students have the opportunity to participate in internships or community design. Numerous design-build projects are undertaken by students and faculty—and a number of these design-build projects receive state-wide design awards. There is a strong ethos of ‘making’ in our program that can be seen in the large number of students who utilize the craft shop and in the number of non-studio courses that require the design and construction of full-scale footbridges, seating devices, details, and other objects in classes such as structures, graphics, building construction and history. As one former faculty member stated, ‘one of the strengths of the program is the fact that our students and faculty are ‘out there’ everywhere doing things.’”

#### *Holistic Approach with Breadth and Difference*

Being a medium-sized school, we have maintained a generalist approach to our program. We do not have a large faculty and as such faculty have to cover multiple areas when needed. Having only one graduate program allows us to focus our resources and time on that single program. At the same time it demands that we constantly rethink what Architecture needs to become in order to remain relevant and viable. Having a single program also allows us to nurture different points of view under the umbrella of Architecture. But our generalist approach—focusing on design as a fundamental tool that can be applied in specialized areas—remains an important part of our program. This basic education, coupled with instilling a strong work ethic within our students, has prepared our graduates to gain positions within very good firms throughout the country and abroad. Feedback on our students constantly reinforces the idea that they leave MSU ready to ‘hit the ground running’ and the longtime success of our students on the Architectural Registration Exam has always appeared to support this feedback.

#### *Human Resources—Students, Staff and Faculty*

Despite many changes that have happened over the last six plus years, the faculty continue to undertake high quality research/creative activities. This is evidenced by the number of publications and awards the faculty receive each year. Faculty have received the NCARB Prize Honorable Mention, AIA Honor Awards, and ACSA Collaborative Practice Awards. Faculty have published numerous books over the past few years. Faculty have led national and international conferences, hosted regional design charrettes, served on design review boards and are extremely active in the design community of our region. This knowledge and innovation is integrated into the day-to-day teaching activities of each faculty member.

Students continue to bring a level of enthusiasm and energy to the program that continues to lead to high quality work. Their interest in community and social issues is an area we try to tap into whenever possible. Similarly, their interest in new technologies and in ‘making’ is another strength of our program. Student work—both in design and in the area of graphics—has received external recognition in a number of national and international venues. . Because MSU is a moderately sized university set within a small but growing town, a strong sense of community exists amongst the students, faculty and staff. The fact that we have been able to keep our studio sizes small and that students have their own desk in an open plan studio environment—once they are in the Environmental Design program—contributes to this strong sense of community.

We have been fortunate to have a dedicated and professional staff with very low turnover amongst our staff. They are knowledgeable in their areas and time and time again prove invaluable in helping the students and faculty navigate the many intricacies of our program and the university. Although increased demands have added some

strain on the staff, the optimism and caring attitude of the staff has remained as a positive constant within the school. Staff members continue to update their skills and knowledge through professional development opportunities. In addition, staff members have contributed to the shared governance of the university as member of various university committees. The school recognizes the staff as a valuable component contributing to the success of the program and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

#### *Development Activity*

Under previous Directors, the School has spent 15-20 years cultivating a strong alumni and donor base. There has been significant progress in this area and the School continues to benefit from these efforts. Scholarships for students have increased by 50% since the last accreditation visit. Over the past six years, support for faculty and staff has increased within the school, although the recent change in base budgets as a result of lower student enrollment will have an impact on funding for professional development and decrease this coming year. The addition of a second development officer in the college will further assist the school in focusing its developing priorities. The School is committed to building upon the efforts and foundation of the past two decades. The School has a very strong and active Advisory Council and has been told a number of times that our Advisory Council is a model for other units in the College and across campus. Our relationship with the Advisory Council, AIA Montana and the professional community of the State is a strength our program.

### **Program Challenges and Future Directions**

#### *Constant Change*

For the past two accreditation visits, a common theme has been that the “School appears poised to consolidate its gains of the past few years.” Change is perhaps the new normal, but over the last seven years the school introduced a brand new year-round curriculum to accommodate the physical space challenges of the 2006 enrollment expansion only to now begin the process of unwinding many of those changes to reflect the lower enrollment of the last few years. This shift back and forth has led to some confusion and frustration as a lot of energy is expended upon what always seems to be a moving target in our curriculum. This is evident in our graduate curriculum as the School phased out the requirement for a Master’s Thesis studio to address concerns at that point in time. However, there is now consensus that the School lost something in the process and as such a student-directed studio, ARCH 560 Masters Studio Project, will be reinstated beginning Fall 2014. This is a positive change but is one example of the back and forth in our program that we have experienced for quite some time.

Added to our own internal changes has been a series of significant changes throughout the university with the development of a new strategic plan, development of new assessment plans and the development of a new Role and Scope document to address the initial Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The CBA no longer exists for tenure track faculty, as the tenure-track faculty union was decertified this past spring, but remains in effect for non-tenure track faculty. All of these changes, combined with our own curricular and procedural changes, have placed a heavy time burden on staff, faculty and administrators.

#### *Administration Transitions*

Since 2007 there have been three transitions in the Director’s position in the School of Architecture, including two stints with an Interim Director being appointed. While the School has continued to make steps to move forward—and in many respects has made significant progress—the uncertainty surrounding this position does present some challenges to the School. Originally, a national search for a Director was scheduled for AY 12-13 but with the departure of 3 tenure-track faculty in the spring, the decision was made to conduct those faculty searches this year and delay the Director’s search to AY 14-15. It is hoped that this will lead to a successful hire and consistency in this position.

#### *Faculty vacancies*

Since the last accreditation visit the School had a series of successful searches resulting in multiple hires that were addressing teaching needs in key areas—history, environmental controls and building construction. Unfortunately three of these faculty accepted positions at other institutions. These departures are discussed in greater detail later in this APR, but these departures create a gap in our junior tenure-track faculty positions. At the current time it will be five years before another faculty member goes up for tenure as opposed to only two years for one of the departing faculty members. While we are conducting three searches this fall and it is always positive to have the opportunity to hire new faculty, there was some strong research and design-build expertise in the departing faculty which will

take a while to build back up in our program. Demographics of our faculty suggest that within the next 3-5 years there may be additional openings as faculty retire. Combined with our three current faculty searches this will lead to a significant turnover amongst our faculty which will provide opportunities for addressing needs, enhancing our program and exploring new directions. But the many faculty changes also come with a loss of extensive teaching, research and institutional experience.

A related challenge to these faculty searches is the fact that faculty salaries are an issue—with MSU being toward the bottom of most national surveys in faculty salaries. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education is investigating this issue and some market adjustments were included in the prior Collective Bargaining Agreement—these have been small and are not widely distributed. In addition, housing prices in Bozeman are now at a resort level, making it difficult for new faculty to move to Bozeman and afford a home. As such we have had to substantially raise starting salaries which has created compression between new faculty hires and senior faculty members. This affects faculty morale. (A similar condition exists with staff salaries which are also quite low given the cost of living in Bozeman) In addition, while the University has started to work toward making spousal hires as a means to attract new faculty, most of these spousal hires are non-tenure track, multi-year positions. For some faculty, their spouses would have to give up tenure-track positions to accept a non-tenure track position which has proven to be problematic.

#### *Faculty Diversity*

The number of women and minority faculty members in our program is still low. While some gains were made since the last accreditation visit with the hiring of new faculty, the previously mentioned loss of some faculty this past spring has negated much of that progress. The School has actively pursued increasing diversity through hiring highly qualified non-tenure track faculty, but the ultimate goal is still to increase the diversity of our tenure-track faculty. As mentioned in greater detail elsewhere in the APR, the School will be working with the ADVANCE Director, Jessi Smith, in order to follow best practices to increase the diversity of our applicant pool and the possibility of hiring highly qualified faculty.

#### *Culture of Collaboration and Entrepreneurship*

Collaboration opportunities need to be expanded both internally within the school and between other programs on campus. The School has been very effective in developing collaborative opportunities with many of its study abroad and design-build projects but this is often on a case-by-case basis in the program and our students would benefit from a broader application of these collaboration opportunities. This has been identified as one of the strategies to pursue in the School's strategic plan and was identified as a weakness in our Studio Culture Survey. It is hoped that this collaboration would involve both teaching and funded research opportunities. Some of this is tied into a desire to broaden the structure of the curriculum and include more liberal arts education and foster a more entrepreneurial culture within our students—one in which students are inquisitive and willing to take and accept calculated risks in their approach to a problem. In many respects, the School believes that reintroducing student-directed studio projects in their final semester of the graduate program will assist with some of these areas.

#### *Facilities*

For a number of years, the daylighting and ventilation within the building was seen as a detriment to promoting a strong and desirable learning environment. This has been an ongoing issue and MSU, like many institutions, has limited funds to address issues such as this in many buildings. However, the recent seismic retrofit yielded some additional funding to provide new windows throughout the building as well as an upgrade in finishes in many public areas and classrooms—some of which will not be completed until next summer. There is still a need for additional work in this area—and there were some tradeoffs in the construction—but as we settle back into our building this coming year we will be able to assess any outstanding needs and we can direct our energies to address them.

It is hoped that improving the working environment within Cheever Hall will also make for a healthier working environment. Related to the previous item, one of our needs is to look at studio layouts that can foster greater collaboration and discussions amongst our students and faculty. All of these items have been included as priorities within the School's strategic plan.