

Part Three (III) Progress Since the Last Site Visit

III.3.1 Summary of Responses to the Team Findings

In the previous 208 accreditation visit, two areas were found to be deficient in the School of Architecture and five Causes of Concern were identified in the Visiting Team Report. Following is a summary of the School's annual responses to those deficiencies and causes for concern.

Conditions/Criteria Not Met – 8 Physical Resources and 13.22 Building Service Systems

8. Physical Resources

Team Comments: “The majority of lecture and studio spaces are held in Cheever Hall, a 1970's building with a mix of classroom, studio spaces, and well-proportioned circulation and informal gathering spaces; some spaces in the building are shared or used by other Colleges at MSU. The building has recently moved to a year-round use with the addition of the summer semester resulting in reduced available time for maintenance and an increased occupancy load making the lack of air conditioning an issue. Recent serious roof leaks in Cheever Hall appear to have been addressed and although needed interior maintenance resulting from the leaks is still outstanding, the school staff has developed a positive working relationship with the university's facilities maintenance department. The University Space Management Committee assigns colleges spaces in existing university buildings and space allocation within the colleges is negotiated among the dean and college directors. The provost indicated that no new state-funded university buildings were planned for the next 10 years. However, capital projects could be planned and funded through development efforts within the individual colleges.

The first-year studio spaces are housed in the basement of Romney Gym, a circa 1920's building that are not accessible nor did we find evidence of short- or long-term plans to make them accessible; this is the primary cause for this criterion being unmet but there is a second cause for concern. Accessibility within Cheever Hall is minimally compliant with ADA requirements.

With the addition of a summer semester a positive spirit of space use resourcefulness has been adopted to absorb the increased enrollment; the strength of this approach will continue to be tested as the full implementation of the program expansion takes hold. Although options for addressing the spatial requirements of the planned increases to the student and faculty populations are being discussed between college and the provost, neither a plan for addressing these pressing spatial needs nor the required accessibility modifications to existing buildings to bring them into compliance are in place. Additional students and faculty are being added to a program that is already over using the space available to it.

The team is concerned that the absence of planning to address the anticipated shortfall of offices for full time faculty, studio spaces for upper-level studios, or accessible first year studios and this could severely impact the school's ability to function.”

Summary of Program's Narrative Response: As reported in the 2011 and 2012 annual report, there has been significant progress in addressing this need. In May 2011, the MSU Libraries closed the Creative Arts Library (CAL) and moved all of the Architecture and Art journals and books to the main library building—Renne Library. All of the Architecture books are located in one section of the library to allow students to browse freely amongst the architectural collections. As a result of this relocation, the Creative Arts Library space in Cheever Hall was reassigned to the College of Arts and Architecture. The College in turn assigned this space to the School of Architecture so that it could address a number of the space needs identified in the 2008 VTR. During Summer 2011, the CAL space was turned into graduate design studio space for our Master of Architecture students. By relocating these graduate studios from the first level of Cheever Hall to the CAL space—located on the second floor of Cheever Hall—the School was able to free up space on the first level of Cheever Hall and accommodate our first-year design studios. In addition, the School relocated our Community Design Center, which also had been using space in Romney Gym, to the first floor of Cheever Hall.

In addition, as part of the 2013 seismic retrofit construction, a 2-story 4-stop elevator will be installed in Cheever Hall. The vast majority of the seismic retrofit construction in Cheever Hall has been completed including the elevator shaft construction. The elevator will be installed in late November or early December as manufacturing time for this elevator was not feasible for summer installation. In the meantime, the existing elevator and connecting bridge remain in place to provide ADA accessibility to our building. Once the new elevator is complete we will have much improved access for all levels within Cheever Hall. The seismic construction has also resulted in a number of exposed steel brace frames and reinforced CMU and concrete shear walls that will become useful teaching tools when talking to students about structural elements. The university also invested funding in this project to add a number of large windows in studio spaces, classrooms and offices, which has had a very positive effect on the overall learning environment of our school. Finally, the public spaces around our main office and gallery space as well as spaces adjacent to a number of classrooms have been improved in terms of daylighting, artificial lighting, material finishes, and seating which present a much more positive and design focused environment to students, faculty, staff and visitors.

The only School of Architecture function remaining in Romney Gym is the Integrated Design Lab (IDL), which is a research lab, funded by the Northwestern Energy Efficiency Alliance. This is a research lab overseen by Professor Tom Wood. The lab typically employs two students to conduct research on architectural projects around the State of Montana. The IDL does not offer courses to students nor is it required that students participate in the work of the lab—instead the lab provides some internship positions for a few students each year. Although there was a concern that funding for this lab would be reduced or eliminated, additional funding has been secured for the next 15 months. The University had made plans to renovate the Romney Gym building—it was the top building priority that MSU submitted to the State Legislature for funding in the 2013 Montana Legislative session. This renovation would have updated Romney Gym both structurally and for ADA accessibility and would have provided funding and space elsewhere on campus for the relocation of the IDL out of Romney Gym. Unfortunately, at the end of the legislative session, the decision was made by the Legislature to not fund the Romney Gym project. This has forced us to look at other alternatives and/or funding for the relocation of the Integrated Design Lab. The School is currently working with the Dean of the College to identify some of these options and is also looking at internal alternatives within our building. We will be providing an update on our progress in this area during our site visit in 2014.

At the same time as the Creative Arts Library was relocated back to the main Renne Library building, the School was allocated additional space in the west end of Cheever Hall which has been utilized for additional faculty offices, digital fabrication spaces, seminar spaces and design studio spaces. This was discussed in greater detail in the 2010 annual report and the increased square footage was included in the data presented in I.2.3 Physical Resources.

13.22 Building Service Systems

Team Comments: “The basic principles and appropriate application and performance of plumbing, electrical and fire protection systems were covered in core classes and demonstration of understanding of these was evident in exhibits from the graduate level studios. Although a couple of specification book projects from ARCH 440 did include a section on alarm systems and communication, we could not find evidence of exploration or understanding of these systems in the exhibits or course work of classes intended to cover them (ARCH 241, Arch 331, Arch 332)

Summary of Program’s Narrative Response: The curriculum content and lecture schedules of ARCH 331 and Arch 332 have been revised so that all chapters in *Mechanical and Electrical Equipment for Buildings*, 11th edition are covered in these two classes. This includes three chapters on vertical transportation (Chapters 31, 32, and 33) covered over eleven lecture hours and Chapter 30 Signal Systems covered in three lecture hours. Chapter 24 Fire Protection which includes fire alarm systems is covered over three lecture hours. These required architecture courses now cover the topics identified in this student performance criteria as part of the course’s required materials.

Causes of Concern

Concern #1 Team Comments: “The program is encouraged to enhance and clarify its mission and vision as a public process. It is advised to seek to engage other components of the university and the public to a larger degree than at present.”

Summary of Program’s Narrative Response to Concern #1 With the arrival of MSU President Cruzado in 2010, the University has embarked on a review of its mission statement, core themes and strategic plan. Earlier this year, the university officially approved its new strategic plan which can be found at

<http://www.montana.edu/strategicplan/index.html> . Similarly, during AY 2012-13 the College of Arts and Architecture undertook the development of its strategic plan with input from students, faculty and staff from all four schools in the College. The College strategic plan was formally adopted in May 2013 and has been submitted to the University for inclusion into the main planning document.

The School of Architecture moved ahead in this area as soon as the University approved its strategic plan in May 2012. At our August 2012 faculty-staff start-up meeting, we undertook a day-long strategic planning process, utilizing an outside consultant to guide us in the visioning and mission statement process. We also developed an initial draft of values that are important to our program. A departmental strategic planning committee was established that includes the Interim Director, Graduate Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, two additional faculty members, two staff members, one graduate student and one undergraduate student. We are fortunate that one of the faculty members on our departmental committee was also on the MSU University Strategic Planning Committee—University Planning Council—allowing us to stay aligned with the university mission and informed on the process and information being developed at the university level. The outside consultant that we hired to assist us with this process is also a member of the University Planning Council, which helped us to stay aligned with the bigger issues at the university level. Our departmental committee continued to meet with the outside consultant during the first half of the 2012 Fall semester in order to most effectively move the process forward.

This departmental committee met on a weekly basis to refine the vision, mission statement and values. This work was presented back to the faculty and staff for feedback and will be presented to students for their feedback. Feedback was also sought out from our Advisory Council members both through an on-line survey and at the most recent Advisory Council meeting. The committee then undertook a series of all-school forums and charrette workshops inviting students, staff and faculty to comment on the draft proposals for the vision, mission, and values as well as draft proposals for school strategies to support MSU's mission and strategic plan. The committee followed up with a yearend survey for all constituencies in the School to help guide the final formation of the Schools Strategic Plan. An immediate outcome of our departmental strategic planning has been a new research presentation day developed by our tenure-track faculty in Spring 2013 to engage our students with faculty research efforts as well as a new College Symposium taking place in Fall 2013.

The committee is working on identifying goals and objectives in the university plan that we believe the School of Architecture is currently doing or could do to support the MSU vision and the goals of the University Strategic Plan.

Concern #2 Team Comments: “Clear lines of structured communications are not publicly delineated for all populations of the program. In addition, the faculty carry a significant responsibility for service that may compete with time for instruction and research. This is largely a function of the administrative structure. The program is encouraged to seek alternatives that may reduce these responsibilities.”

Summary of Program's Narrative Response to Concern #2 When the accreditation site visit occurred, the School had an Interim Director and an Interim Associate Director with a shared governance approach used by the individuals in these two positions. These two individuals also oversaw the undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition and as a result of the 2006 expansion in student numbers, the faculty and curriculum committee had just completed a major overhaul of the curriculum resulting in a very heavy service load for the faculty and administrative team.

The School once again has an Interim Director but the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and the Graduate Program Coordinator remain in their roles. Regular faculty and staff meetings occur to provide opportunities for faculty and staff input on issues. Regular staff-only meetings also occur to provide staff with the opportunity for direct communication with the Interim Director. In addition, regular All-School Meetings and student-only forums are held each semester to provide students with direct lines of communication to the Interim Director.

The number of departmental committees has been reduced since the accreditation visit and efforts have been made to evenly and equitably distribute the department committee assignments amongst faculty. In addition, our full-time non-tenure track (NTT) faculty (formerly called adjunct faculty) are assigned to a number of committees in order to reduce the service load on the tenure-track faculty. Staff are assigned to most committees to provide support services for each committee and help with tasks on each of the committee. It should be noted that faculty are not assigned a group of students for academic advising. Academic advising happens in group advising sessions that are

undertaken by the School's Director of Student Services. Faculty provide professional and career advising for students, but the academic advising of students by faculty, which is an assignment for faculty in other departments, has eliminated as a faculty assignment in our program.

One of the struggles in addressing this Cause of Concern is the number of major initiatives that have been required for each unit to undertake—causing the School to ask faculty to take on many self-governance and service responsibilities. From 2011 to 2013, the tenure track and non-tenure track faculty formed a union on the MSU campus resulting in the initial Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The new CBA required each College and Department to completely revise their Role, Scope, Criteria, Standards and Procedures (RSCS&P) policy. In addition, all academic units were required to develop their new strategic plan, as discussed earlier, as well as implement a common course numbering process and to revise their program assessment process. The overlapping of common course numbering activities, assessment plans, revised RSCS&P in addition to our own internal curriculum assessment and revisions has proven to add additional service responsibilities to many of our faculty. However, it is hoped that all of the one-time activities associated with these initiatives will be substantially completed in 2013 allowing us to reduce some of the service requirements for faculty.

Concern #3 Team Comments: “Examination should be made of the history-theory curriculum sequence; these courses would benefit from having faculty who are historians, a more prominent place in the overall curriculum and instruction at the upper levels of the program as a requirement, rather than as an elective.”

Summary of Program's Narrative Response to Concern #3 The School made progress in this area since the last accreditation visit but unfortunately some of that progress was reversed this past year. A tenure-track faculty member, Dr. David Fortin, was hired in 2008 and taught one of our required history/theory courses, ARCH 323IA World Architecture II. Dr. Fortin received a PhD in history/theory from the University of Edinburgh. Unfortunately, Dr. Fortin accepted a position with Laurentian University in Ontario and left our faculty at the end of the 2013 Spring semester. ARCH 322IA World Architecture I had been taught by a non-tenure track faculty member, Dr. Sean Anderson, with a PhD in architectural history but unfortunately this faculty member left to accept a tenure-track position with a university in Australia.

During the current year, we have hired a visiting faculty member, Elisa Renouard, to teach both architectural history courses. Ms. Renouard has an M.Arch from the University of Washington and a B.A. in Humanities and a B.A. in Literature with a minor in Art History from the University of Seattle. She also has a graduate certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Washington. The School is currently conducting a search for a tenure-track faculty member to teach both of our architectural history courses, ARCH 322IA World Architecture I and ARCH 323IA World Architecture II as well as our new graduate level course, ARCH 526 Advanced Architectural Theory—this course will start Fall 2014. The screening of applicants for this tenure track position has begun and we hope to be interviewing candidates prior to the start of our site visit. We hope that this new hire will allow the school to address this Cause of Concern which remerged this past year with the departure of both Dr. Fortin and Dr. Anderson.

It should also be noted that since the last accreditation visit, the history sequence, ARCH 322IA and ARCH 323IA, was shifted to an earlier location in the curriculum—second year—so that it gains a more prominent location within the educational structure and provides students with this foundation of knowledge sooner in the sequence of courses.

Concern #4 Team Comments: The team notes with concern that the present timing of the program (e.g. 5 ½ years) may limit student access to financial aid and summer work. This also compresses the time available to faculty for research and affects the university's ability to undertake physical facilities maintenance without displacing students, faculty, and staff.”

Summary of Program's Narrative Response to Concern #4 The year-round program has been shifted from the undergraduate studio sequence—which was the case when the 2008 accreditation visit took place—to the graduate studio sequence which allows for greater flexibility in student schedules to accommodate work schedules and provides students with greater access to financial aid as a graduate student. With the advent of our new 168 credit curriculum commencing in Fall 2014, we will be able to relax the summer studio requirement for graduate students. Our lower student numbers are not putting the same demand on our facility in Fall and Spring Semester providing us with some flexibility in course scheduling. We will continue to offer first year design studios, community design

center studios, graduate design studios and graduate electives in the summer to allow students to stay on track in our program. For many students, the ability to take summer courses has allowed them to take a lighter course load during the Fall and Spring semesters providing them with the opportunity to be a Graduate Teaching Assistant or work outside of school.

Over the past year, a change in MSU's Graduate Teaching Assistant tuition waiver policy has allowed our non-resident GTAs to be classified as resident students and receive a 9-credit tuition waiver, which has provided our graduate students with significant tuition discounts.

The School continues to make optimum use of the fiscal-year full-time non-tenure track faculty lines it received as part of the 2006 expansion to undertake as much of our summer teaching needs as possible with non-tenure track full-time faculty. We have found over the last few years that many of our tenure-track faculty have chosen to teach in the summer. Some have requested this so that they can teach in our summer study abroad courses and others have utilized graduate studios and electives to explore aspects of their research or creative activities—in particular when design-build projects play a role in their research/creative activities.

Initially, the School worked with Facilities Services on campus to rotate the studio locations within Cheever Hall each summer allowing the custodial staff to undertake regularly scheduled maintenance in Cheever Hall. With the relocation of the graduate studios to the space formerly occupied by the Creative Arts Library (CAL), it has allowed us to free up most of Cheever Hall in the summer and provide MSU Facilities with ample time and space to undertake regular maintenance in these areas. The space in CAL has experienced an increase in use, but there remain 3-4 weeks for maintenance and cleaning between Summer and Fall semesters and another 3-4 weeks between Fall and Winter semesters. Since the graduate studio is a much smaller space these transition periods appear to offer MSU Facilities with the necessary time to conduct regular maintenance and cleaning on these spaces.

Concern #5 Team Comments: “Finally, the team notes is concerned that the program has not had a thorough, facilitated discussion about facilities, especially in the context of enrollment expansion, with the participation of the provost.”

Summary of Program's Narrative Response to Concern #5 As a result of numerous discussions over the past six years between the Provost Office, Facilities Services, the College and the School leadership, space was reallocated from the Creative Arts Library and the west end of Cheever Hall to address most of the significant facilities issues that the School has been facing. The current economic downturn and a subsequent decline in some student enrollment numbers has provided some temporary relief in the demands on the facility, but the school continues to explore ways to better utilize the space in Cheever Hall and to look for other alternatives to meet any increases in enrollment. The recent seismic retrofit construction resulted in not only a safer building but also improved daylighting, upgraded student lounge areas, and better finishes/materials in our public spaces. This has had a positive effect upon morale and enthusiasm amongst all of the students, staff and faculty. In addition, one of our staff is currently a member of the University Space Management Committee, which has provided the School with a voice regarding space issues. Conversations regarding our facilities continue to take place with the above constituencies to address the remaining issues.