Annual Report 2012
University of Idaho
Architecture Program
College of Art and Architecture
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Last Visit: Feb. 2010

Part II. Narrative

i. Focused Evaluation Report 2012

Our Focused Evaluation report was submitted May 30, 2012, we provided additional information in September and October, and received the final report Nov. 15, 2012. We were advised that one condition – Public Information – was satisfied and that Financial Resources, Human Resources and Administrative Structure will require continued monitoring by NAAB. Because the four issues mentioned above have already been reported and updated for 2012, this report covers only the student performance criteria that were not included in the FER.

ii. Note on Statistical Report

a. We were unable to get the data for section D-1 due to a change in the reporting system at the University of Idaho. Information should be available for 2013.
b. The revenue and expenditures reported in F. 6. Are not identical with the information provided in the Focused Evaluation Report supplementary information. Our college is still refining the new financial model and the information provided to the program varies slightly with each version. The expenditures reported are more accurate than in the FER.

Conditions Not Met

13. Student Performance Criteria

The faculty are reviewing and revising the learning outcomes for studio courses in 2012-1013, and these will include most of the conditions described below.

13.12 Human Behavior

VTR July 2010. An understanding of human behavior is gained in courses Arch 151 Intro to the Built Environment [Envt.] and Arch 450, Architectural Programming; however it appears these behavior theories are not emphasized in studio problems or reflected in student work.

Idaho Response Fall 2012. As reported last year we began assessing student understanding of human behavior factors in the third year design studio in Fall 2011. In so doing we established a baseline for future assessments. The mean score was 3.2 on a scale of 1 – 5, with a range between 3.4 and 2.7 Our goal is to improve performance, working toward a score of 4. The assessment will be performed again in December 2012.
13.14 Accessibility

**VTR July 2010.** Consistent application of this ability was not found in upper level student design work; concepts are not being reinforced by the faculty.

**Idaho Response Fall 2012.** The disappointing assessment score of 2.8 in Spring 2011 was reported in assessment of the graduate-level Comprehensive Design Studio. We made significant gains in Fall 2011 in the same studio level with an outcome of 3.7. In addition, we have been addressing student performance in earlier studios and began assessing this criterion in Third Year where we established a score of 3.1 in Fall 2011. We will be assessing it again in December 2012, and again a score of 4 out of 5 is our goal in this criterion.

13.16 Program Preparation: Note: Now named Pre-Design

**Idaho Response Fall 2012.** The programming class as redesigned was delivered for the second time in Spring 2012, but at that time the content had not been integrated in a studio offering. We have found that the comprehensive design experience (as noted above in the VTR) is not the best place to develop programming skills because there are so many other expectations for that class. This is a skill that may better be assessed in the Graduate Terminal Project (as well as the Arch 450, Architectural Programming). While the subject of the project differs from student to student, the process of defining the problem and developing a specific program is a significant part of the process. We will be investigating several options including linking the content of Arch 450 and the outcomes of Arch 510 (Graduate Seminar) and Arch 556 (Graduate Project) and evaluating the semester in which the course is offered.

3.17 Site Conditions

**VTR July 2010.** Students take Larch 383 Architectural Site Design in the third year. It is the team’s belief, based on touring studios and discussions with instructors, that site analysis is structured to be part of later-year design studio work. Although the program’s APR matrix indicated this criteria is evident in the work of design studios (Arch 353-354 Architectural Design II-IV, Arch 453-454 Architectural design V-VI and Arch 556 Architectural Design IX), it is not clearly exhibited in final projects. Upper-year design projects are on simple, flat sites, not reflective of the real world (or this region). Students were observed in studios using site analysis tools to aid in the design of their completed projects; however little of this process is evident the final design or presentation. There is concern that the later design studio assignments avoid challenging sites and therefore limit opportunities to develop this ability. Consequently, it is difficult to determine if the students have demonstrated “ability” in this criterion. It is not met.

**Idaho Response Fall 2012.** In Spring 2011, site integration was introduced as a criterion in our assessments of the admissions portfolio for the professional program (prior to third year), Arch 353 (Third Year Design) and Arch 553 (Comprehensive Design). The assessment scores in site integration at the third year level improved from the admissions portfolio from 2.9 to 3.1. In Comprehensive Design Studio, the mean for site integration is 3.5 (improving from the Spring 2011 section) and significantly above what we are finding in Third year. We are still working to achieve a goal of a mean score of 4.0.

13.20 Life Safety
**VTR July 2010.** Although the program’s APR matrix suggests this criterion is best demonstrated by the work of later-year design studios (553, 556, and Professional Practice 575) – it was not clear these projects reflect life safety issues. None of the projects observed included building code information. Several low and high pass design examples from these upper level studios lack acceptable egress routes and exit separation. Consequently, it was difficult to determine if an “understanding” is achieved in this criterion.

**Idaho Response Fall 2012.** We began focusing more carefully on life safety issues in the set up of projects and learning outcomes in Arch 553 (Comprehensive Architectural Design) in Fall 2011. The assessment scores improved from 3.0 in 2010 to 3.7 in 2011. This is due in part to the explicit presentation of life safety issues in final projects. In Fall Semester 2012, we re-tooled Arch 575, (Professional Practice) and it now includes more content on environmental regulation (zoning and building code/life safety)

**13.25 Construction Cost Control**

**VTR July 2010.** This topic is offered in Arch 575, Professional Practice. The reviewer did not find evidence of it in the course syllabus. Evidence of this subject is found in Arch 504, Situational Prototyping, Architecture and the Law, however it is not a required class.

**Idaho Response Fall 2012.** In addition to steps mentioned in our 2011 response, the Professional Practice course (Arch 575) was revised in Fall 2012. The new course content includes some additional work in the areas of cost estimating and invoicing.

**Causes of Concern**

**13. Student Performance Criteria**

**13.18 Comprehensive Design**

**VTR July 2010.** The team felt comprehensive design ability was not evident throughout the student’s skill-set development at each year-level. The fact that it was noted as a concern by the previous team led us to re-express it as a cause for concern.

**Idaho Response Fall 2012.** We began assessing Comprehensive Design in Fall 2010 and have noted an upward trend in assessment scores. As noted above, this may be due in part to requiring more explicit presentations of the content and process of the course. We have also made a move to have students develop slightly smaller projects – allowing them to develop projects in greater detail. In some cases, students worked in groups – including outside consultants, and others the project was done by an individual. To date, the choice of individual or group projects has been up to the instructor; however, this option requires further discussion by faculty.

**ii. Additional Information Requested (none requested)**

**iii. Program Changes**

There have been no substantive changes in the architecture program this year.