PART II: RESPONSES TO THE MOST RECENT VISITING TEAM REPORT

Name of institution
Lawrence Technological University

Name of academic unit
College of Architecture and Design

Name of program administrator as identified in Section A
Glen LeRoy

Date of last accreditation/candidacy visit
26 March 2008

Narrative Report
Section 1.4 Conditions Not Met

13.15 Accessibility

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

Visiting Team’s Comments:
“Even though this criterion was introduced in the early design studios, the projects in ARC4114 Design Studio 5, and graduate level studios consistently lacked accessible parking spaces.”

Response:

The visiting team’s comments were specifically directed toward the lack of accessible parking spaces indicated on students’ presentation drawings in specific studios, ARC 4114-Design Studio 5 and graduate studios. The visiting team also acknowledged that compliance with the criterion was not missing within the overall curriculum. Since receipt of the visiting team’s report, all students have been required to indicate accessible parking spaces on their drawings in all sections of those studios, as well as to demonstrate the ability to develop site plans to accommodate movement of an individual with a disability from an accessible parking space to an accessible building entry.

13.34 Ethics and Professional Judgment

Understanding of the ethical issues involved in the formation of professional judgment in architectural design and practice

Visiting Team’s Comments:
The team found only cursory references to professional ethics in the professional practice lecture series, and no evidence of understanding in the student work presented.
The team encountered students who had taken ethics classes offered by other programs as part of dual majors; it appears that the architectural offerings in this subject are not on par with other courses in the university.

Response:

After receiving the visiting team’s report, a faculty committee was formed to assess several aspects of the NAAB accredited program. One of the topics covered was ethics, as well as the better integration of ethics into the curriculum.

The committee benchmarked a number of universities, and they formulated a program that was based on a framework developed by Florida A&M University. Implementation of a six step process for better incorporation of ethics into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum is now underway.

Specific courses in the required curriculum were highlighted for the insertion of ethics into the curriculum:

ARC4582   Design Ethics (a required new course in the curriculum)
ARC5912   Professional Practice 1 (enhancement of ethics content)
ARC5922   Professional Practice 2 (enhancement of ethics content)

Other courses in the required curriculum are noted to have the presence of ethics content, which is being more clearly articulated:

ARC2117   Integrated Design Studios 1 and 2
           (Theory Global and Site Global Lectures)
ARC3126   Integrated Design Studios 3 and 4
           (Urban Global and Landscape Global Lectures)
LDR2001   Leadership Models & Practices
ARC5422   Environmental Issues
ARC5643   Design Theory
           (Philosophical ethics, truth, the good life, morality, and aesthetics)

Section 1.5 Causes of Concern

Growth of Student Body Beyond Facility Capacity

Visiting Team’s Comments:
Undergraduate enrollment in the architecture program has grown about 5% per year and now numbers over 700 students, with an additional 125 graduate students. The occupancy of the space allotted to the college has reached capacity to the point where additional students would jeopardize the dedication of individual studio space. The team believes the program has reached
a point where it could consider options either for capping enrollment in the undergraduate architecture program with higher admission standards at various levels or pursuing additional space for the program.

Response:

Due to the economic recession in 2008-09, enrollment in the College of Architecture and Design has decreased in both student headcount and credit hours. The current totals are below the ideal enrollment scenario for the College. For the time being, studio space is available.

Anticipating an economic rebound at some time in the future, the College of Architecture and Design has undertaken several measures to assure adequate space in the future:

1. The College has adopted the highest grade point average for admission to the University, resulting in the highest average GPA for admission to all colleges. This action was initially taken to raise the academic quality level of entering students, but it has also slightly lowered the number of students entering the architectural programs.

2. The College has adopted a preferred enrolment pattern that emphasizes growing graduate enrollment and stabilizing undergraduate enrollment. Graduate enrollment is also less space intensive, because fewer studios are required at that level of study in the program.

3. The College has embarked upon a number of transfer agreements with area community colleges, who teach the first two years of the architectural curriculum. This has led to fewer students in the College during the first two years of the curriculum and, thus, less studio space utilized.

4. The College is exploring the acquisition of additional studio space in Detroit (several miles from the main campus in Southfield, MI). The intention is to increase the availability of urban offerings to students. If implemented, this will also reduce the studio need on the main campus.

5. The College is developing a plan to convert general classroom space in the architecture building into additional studio space.

6. The university is currently raising funds for a new building, which will include a significant block of architectural studios.
History Sequence

Visiting Team’s Comments:

*This team has identified a common thread of concerns that may be symptomatic of a larger issue with the faculty resources for the architectural history sequence.*

*Because so many NAAB Criteria rely on a strong foundation in history, including writing skills, critical thinking, research methods, human behaviors, and western and non-western traditions, the team believes this issue warrants strong and immediate attention.*

*Specifically, the large class size and the lack of teaching assistants seem to create an undue burden on the instructors, which, in turn, prevents the introduction of more rigorous coursework such as essay responses within exams, research papers, and focused discussion groups.*

*While the team understands that core university lecture classes are capped at a class size of 25 and other architectural lecture classes are of a similar size, the history lectures are enrolled with upwards of 95 students. Full-time staffing levels for the sequence appear inadequate, especially since this is a subject area that can be extremely difficult to cover with adjunct professors.*

*Faculty resources and focus on electives in history of theory and contemporary criticism appear to be increasing, and the team is optimistic that rigor will increase as the graduate concentration in criticism gains strength.*

Response:

Since the last NAAB accreditation visit, much progress has been made in the undergraduate history sequence, which is the subject of this cause for concern.

The number of architectural history sections offered has been increased. Class sizes have been reduced from “approaching 95” to a maximum of 40 students per class. This has been accomplished by both shifting the teaching load of history faculty members and retaining adjunct faculty to teach history. Qualified adjunct faculty members exist to teach architectural history in the Detroit region.

Additionally, adjunct graders (with or studying for PhDs in history) have been retained, thus, relieving some of the grading burden for classroom teachers. This has allowed for the incorporation of more essay assignments and test questions in architectural history courses.

Human Resources

Visiting Team’s Comments:

*The Department of Architecture is the largest department in the university with over 825 students. It is headed by a chair who is assisted by faculty coordinators. The university might consider whether it has reached a point in the development of the program where the creation of an associate chair to assist in the managing of the department and providing additional support for coordinators might be appropriate.*
Response:

The College has an open line for a new chair of architecture. It was anticipated that upon filling this line, an associate chair position would be established. The chair position will be filled when the economy and or enrollment improves. It is currently being filled by an interim chair. The interim chair is a member of a College's administrative group consisting of the Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies*, and an Administrator and Assistant Administrator of Student Services, as well as administrative support staff. This group is working as a team to support the interim chair until the search resumes.

*The Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies was very recently killed in a tragic automobile accident. The University has authorized opening an immediate search for this position. It is anticipated that this position will be filled by the summer of 2010.

Advising

Visiting Team’s Comments:

There is a disconnect between the administration’s view of the advising program and the reality experienced by students. The more mature students had little difficulty in charting their own path through the progression flowchart of classes required. Transfer students and some others had difficulty in meeting their advisors face to face and determining the best path of study. Many students mentioned as troublesome the practice of advisors being reassigned every year.

Since the last accreditation visit, advising ratios have been lowered (fewer students per advisor). This has been accomplished, in part, by retaining some members of the adjunct faculty as adjunct advisors. Additionally, students are assigned the same advisor from year to year whenever possible. (Exceptions to this practice occur when a faculty member leaves the university or goes on sabbatical.) All new advisors, as well as advisors for whom the administration receives complaints from students, are required to attend advising training sessions conducted prior to each semester. Quality of student advising is a criterion for a faculty member’s annual review.

Several groups of students have been assigned specific advisors as follows: The Dean advises all students who are on academic probation or who have an unusually high number of withdrawals from courses. All transfer students from Chinese schools are advised by a Chinese-American faculty member. All students in the dual BArch-Civil Engineering degree program are advised by the same faculty member. These, along with several other specialty advising assignments, were created to deliver high quality advising to students with particular needs.

The advising system and list of advisors for all students is posted throughout the architecture buildings prior to “advising week” at the College. Students are
required to see their advisor each semester. During the most recent advising week period, fall 2009, 94% of all students were successfully advised.

For career advising, students may choose to make an appointment with their assigned advisor. They may also seek advice from their studio instructor, any other faculty member, the University’s career services office, or College’s student services office. Additionally, each student may voluntarily request the assignment of a professional “mentor,” as a result of a cooperative program with AIA Michigan.

Writing Skills

Visiting Team’s Comments:

While the team finds that this criterion is met, the team is concerned with the generally low level of writing skills among the student work presented.

The team recognizes that the university has made a focused and aggressive effort at the university level to address writing skills and requires a writing test at the junior level prior to advancement. The team has reviewed samples from these classes as well as architectural coursework.

However, written material from all sources has serious shortcomings and the overall impression of student writing skills is not compelling.

Basic grammar and spelling errors within both graphic presentations and papers are endemic and seriously undercut the professionalism of the students’ work. Written material on boards does not appear to have been written or edited with the same degree of care as the design and technical content.

Given the professional nature of the program and the importance of communicating ideas as well as an impression of competence in practice, the team feels that writing skills merit attention in the studio environment.

Written material from the graduate level courses was minimally acceptable but not at a level commensurate with expectations for advanced students. There are notable exceptions, and examples of competent writing among students were found, especially in the theory and criticism coursework.

At the undergraduate level, the lack of written exam questions and required papers in the history sequence compounded the team’s difficulty in evaluating students’ writing skills. The team has addressed concerns specifically with resources for the architectural history sequence above.

Response:

On February 2, 2009, the College of Architecture and Design’s Faculty Council authorized the establishment of an ad hoc Writing Committee to develop recommendations for incorporating writing assignments and reinforcing writing skills in the College curriculum and to carry out policies established by the
University, the College, and the NAAB Visiting Team, subsequent to the accreditation visit in the spring of 2008.

The faculty of the College of Architecture and Design (CoAD) believes that written and verbal competencies are essential intellectual and professional skills, that competent written communication is an exercise in, and a reflection of, clear thinking, and that coursework must reinforce these skills. In view of this commitment, the following is being pursued:

*Writing in Architecture and Design Courses*

The CoAD will reinforce the importance of writing skills in all appropriate courses and in all assignments that consist of or contain written material. This includes short or extended essays, as well as writing within assignments that are primarily graphic.

*The Assessment of Writing Proficiency*

Writing in course assignments will be assessed for content, clarity, and mechanics by the course instructor. Students will be asked to make corrections where necessary. Accuracy in spelling, grammar, syntax, and format is to be required in the presentation of all writing, including assignments that are primarily graphic. Deficient writing is identified and students are referred to the Academic Achievement Center for help. Instructors are asked to retain examples of writing for the assessment of the progress of students over the course of time.

*Core Curriculum Courses (required non-architectural courses)*

Efforts to enhance and improve core courses will be encouraged so that writing and reading skills may be taught more effectively to students in the College of Architecture and Design. CoAD faculty support these improvement efforts.

*Writing Instruction in the University Curriculum*

Remedial writing courses should be created in accordance with the University’s Foundations of Excellence newsletter recommendation (March, 2009) for those students who lack writing skills after completing required coursework in this area (seven courses and the proficiency exam).

*University Support for Writing Proficiency*

The University has provided funding for additional writing skills instructors/tutors, so that writing assignments can be expanded and properly assessed in history and theory courses. Most faculty members in the College are not trained in the teaching of writing skills. The primary responsibility for teaching writing skills remains with qualified faculty and writing coaches in the Department of English.
and Communication Arts and the Academic Achievement Center (AAC) whose work and commitment the College supports. The effectiveness of the AAC and the Writing Proficiency Exam should continue to be assessed at the University level.

Library Support for Research Skills

CoAD faculty are advised of existing opportunities for research instruction at the University library. Qualified librarians are available to teach students (and faculty) the proper use of library resources, including the use of search tools and databases, research and bibliographic aids, handbooks, and codes. These skills are required for students engaged in precedent research, case studies, and other project work. CoAD faculty members are given instruction in the use of “Safe Assignment” (plagiarism detection tools available on BlackBoard) or other similar tools.

Publication of Standards for Good Writing

The CoAD incorporates information about University and Library resources and specific standards for writing skills into all course syllabi, course descriptions, or other introductory course documents rather than simply referencing them. Writing standards include the “Banned Errors List” and the “List of Common Small Mistakes.”

Grading Written Work

CoAD faculty will assess written communication, just as graphic communication is currently assessed; poor written communication should be reflected in lower grades.

Adjunct Faculty Support

CoAD adjunct faculty members are informed by the faculty’s subject area coordinators of the College’s standards and the University’s support resources. All faculty members are required to support the writing initiatives in their courses.

How and Where Writing is Taught

Students enrolled in the architecture program are required to take the following Humanities Core courses whose content includes the development of writing skills:

COM1001 University Seminar
COM1103 English Composition
COM2103 Technical and Professional Communication
LLT1213 World Masterpieces 1
LLT1223 World Masterpieces 2  
SSC2413 Foundations of American Experience  
SSC2423 Development of American Experience 

All of the courses above have writing components and address skills development for both reading and writing at the university level.

University Seminar (COM1001) requires that students complete ten journal entries and write a final paper on a specified topic. Hence, students have an opportunity in the early weeks of their initial semester to either review and/or hone writing skills learned in high school or at other post-secondary institutions.

English Composition (COM1103) demands three essays (700-1000 words), a research paper (1500-2500 words), mid-term exams, and final exams. In addition, there is an assignment for an annotated bibliography and for a research presentation. This includes meeting in the main library for bibliographic instruction. The course explicitly covers the following types of writing: analysis, explication techniques, comparison and contrast, writing articles about stories, persuasive writing and research.

Technical and Professional Communication (COM2103) teaches clear, persuasive communication. Speaking, writing, and research skills are polished, and group projects develop teamwork. Computer graphics and visual communication are also emphasized.

World Masterpieces 1 (LLT1213) and World Masterpieces 2 (LLT1223). The writing components in these courses include weekly paragraph assignments (“like a journal,” said one student) with highly detailed structural requirements (i.e. the paragraphs must “be at least five sentences long, have a clear topic sentence, include only sentences developing that topic sentence, etc.). In addition, there are three term paper assignments. The course syllabi also contain an “essay outline” that clearly demonstrates and explains the components of a university-level essay (Introduction, Body, Conclusion, Sources). Additionally, according to the course syllabi, the following writing errors are demonstrated, explained, and banned from assignments: fragments, comma splices, subject-verb disagreement, incorrect pronoun usage, and common contraction errors (i.e. its and it’s). Both courses also have written mid-term and final exams.

The American Experience courses (SSC2413 and SSC2423) demand essay papers (two in 2413; three in 2423 consisting of four pages in each); both courses have mid-term and final-term exams. Additionally, SSC2423 requires reading and writing assessments (six to eight), including in-class quizzes on reading and writing exercises and peer editing of paper drafts. These courses present challenging philosophical reading materials and expect students to be
able to write in explanatory and persuasive fashions, utilizing arguments and proofs.

Writing Resources at Lawrence Technological University and the College of Architecture and Design

The Main Library keeps an extensive supply of style guides and writing handbooks in both the Reference section and the stacks.

Writing in Architectural Design Studio Courses

Types of assignments and subjects for writing assignments include:

• Case studies, building types studies, or precedent studies
• Programming studies
• Design brief or program documents
• Design concept, ethics, or strategy statements that accompany design presentations
• Materials or other technical/design related research assignments
• Business plans and business communications exercises
• Writing in presentation materials, on boards or in digital presentation formats

Explaining design intentions in an ordered written or spoken argument is good practice and good training for clarifying one’s ideas. Therefore, the goals for writing assignments in architectural design courses are: (1) the reinforcement of the notion that verbal and written communications skills are essential to the development of clear thinking; and (2) that they are required for educational and professional competence. The primary objective of writing in the studio is the reinforcement and application of writing skills gained in other courses.

It is expected that most studio writing assignments will be brief, often appearing as material within graphic presentations. However, the assignment of essays is also acceptable.

Building, Environmental Systems Design, and Other Technical Courses

Types of assignments and subjects for writing assignments in technical courses include: case studies or precedent studies, evaluations or assessments of technical systems in the work of exemplary architects, materials or other technical and design related research assignments, analytical reports of building mechanical systems with recommendations for sustainable improvements, and building systems narratives or other materials that accompany students’ graphic assignments.
The goals for writing assignments in technical courses are to reinforce the notion that verbal and written communications skills are essential to the development of clear technical and design thinking and that these skills are required for educational and professional success. Explaining design intentions in an ordered written or spoken argument is good practice and good training for clarifying and articulating technical design ideas.

Short essays are acceptable; one or two written pages or about 500 to 750 words is the recommended length.

**History and Theory Courses**

Suggested types of assignments and subjects for writing assignments include formal analyses, comparison and contrast papers, position papers, analytical evaluations, and research papers.

**Assessment of Writing Proficiency**

Writing is assessed for content, clarity, and mechanics by the course instructor, and students are asked to make corrections whenever possible. Accuracy in spelling, grammar, syntax, and format is specifically encouraged. Deficient writing is identified, and students are referred to the Academic Achievement Center for help.

**Changes to the program that may be of interest to subsequent visiting teams or to the NAAB**

Since the last accreditation visit, changes to the undergraduate component of the 4 + 36 credit hour program have been identified in the responses above. They have included: the development of the ethics curriculum, the development of an approach to writing proficiency, and an enhanced approach to advising.

At the graduate level, during the last NAAB accreditation visit, the accredited programs included: (1) the 36 credit hour program for students possessing a BS Architecture from Lawrence Technological University (applicants from other BS Arch programs may require additional credit hours); and (2) a “4+3 program” for students with a degree in a non-architectural discipline.

During the 2007-08 academic year, the College of Architecture and Design changed the nomenclature of its accredited 4+3 program to the new terminology of *M.Arch 3+*. It was considered that *M.Arch 3+* was more comprehensible in terms of standardized naming used by other universities. Another aspect of changing the terminology was to address confusion surrounding graduation requirements of the 4+3 track. Changing the terminology of the M.Arch 4+3 to
M.Arch 3+ allowed the repackaging of existing graduate professional and elective courses into a clearer course of study. It should be noted that the M.Arch 3+ is merely a variation of the existing accredited Master of Architecture degree and not a new program. Students in the M.Arch 3+ attend the same classes as in our M.Arch program and need to meet the same graduation requirements.

The program is focused on students who have a desire to pursue architecture as a career after already completing an undergraduate in a different course of study. The repackaged 4+3 program was identified as having several issues. It left the student in the program in a transitory state between a graduate and an undergraduate program, affecting financial aid, access to resources and studio/academic culture. The student in the M.Arch 3+ program is considered a graduate student upon entrance.

A summary of the M.Arch 3+ program is as follows: General Studies (79 credit hours) are counted as an admission requirement from a previous undergraduate degree program. These are general studies in the arts, humanities, and the sciences. Professional Studies at the graduate level (81 credit hours) make up the core of the program. The professional studies courses are from our standard accredited M.Arch program, with the exception of two studios (see note below). Electives (8 credits) are available for students to explore special interests or develop a minor. In addition to the electives allowing flexibility, each student in the M.Arch 3+ can choose an area of concentration from our accredited M.Arch program. These are Sustainability, Urban Design, Critical Studies, Design and Practice, or Interior Architecture.

Entrance requirements include pre-architecture courses, such as visualization techniques, software and CADD/BIM knowledge, principles of design, calculus and trigonometry, and physics. These requirements must match the Student Performance Criteria of aligned courses presently offered in our undergraduate program.

Two courses have been added to the program, Foundation Studio, (FS) ARC5017, and Graduate Allied Design Studio, ARC5016. It was felt to be important for incoming graduate students to have a “graduate identification” from the beginning of their studies. This is achieved by maintaining graduate students in their own studios, rather than integrating them into the present undergraduate studios. This also enhances studio culture among the 3+ graduate students.

Program

The length of study is 89 semester credits. Three electives may be taken from any offered electives, regardless of the student’s concentration, and two electives are required to be completed from the concentration in which the student is registered: Urban Design, Critical Studies, Sustainability, Design & Practice or Interior Architecture Concentration are typically chosen by Semester 4.
**Preliminary Courses required before acceptance (or equivalent)**

ART 1115 Design Elements and Principles  
ART 1215 Visualization Techniques  
ARC 2813 Electronic Methods 1  
MCS 1414 Calculus 1  
PHY 2213 College Physics 1 w/Lab  
PHY 2223 College Physics 2 w/Lab  

**Curriculum**

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<td>Foundation Studio (FS)</td>
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**Summer Studio**  
Design Studio (MasterClass)  

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**Semester 7**  
Thesis Praxis  
Concentration Elective  
Architecture Elective (graduate)  

**Summary**

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<td>Professional: 81 semester credits</td>
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<td>Elective: 8 semester credits + Concentration Focus</td>
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<td>General: 79 semester credits (counted from previous undergraduate degree ONLY)</td>
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<td>Total: 168 semester credits (NAAB minimum for Accredited degree)</td>
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