Architecture EEP

Identify the evidence you currently use (beyond GPA) to determine that your undergraduates have achieved the objectives you have for them.

The B.S. Architecture is the 4-year part of the NAAB accredited 4+2 M.Arch Program. An extensive team room of student work is prepared for periodic NAAB reviews. Faculty participate in each other's studio reviews and presentations for other classes each semester; in addition, faculty review design portfolios and written work for various scholarships and awards. A faculty team teach core architecture design studios, and collaboratively align learning objectives and evaluation criteria.

Please describe the focus of your inquiry and explain why this inquiry is important to your department right now.

Line of Inquiry 2018: The faculty will be pursuing two distinct architecture majors: architecture as liberal arts major (B.A.) and as architecture as pre-professional degree (B.S. -- existing degree). The B.S. track will focus on coursework that will prepare students for advanced standing in most accredited graduate architecture programs. In order to strengthen this pre-professional track, the architecture faculty will revise some of its existing courses to address some of the updated learning objectives. The faculty propose to expand the number of technology courses that Architecture students take from 2 (current) to 3 (proposed). Ideally, the courses will come from subcategories of structures, materials, and systems. The B.A. track will focus on a well-rounded approach to education that employs multiple disciplinary lenses to engage problems. Students will develop critical thinking skills that will be valuable in a variety of future applications and career paths. The curriculum in this setting focuses on the relationship between the designed environment and the culture in which it resides. There will be stronger emphasis on art and architectural history and a diverse body of studio work that explores the impacts of design on social, economic, and environmental spheres. To develop the proposed liberal arts track, the architecture faculty will more closely align the new B.A. curriculum with that of the FCAS major. This will likely not require more courses, but it will

require closer coordination with Studio Arts, Art History, and the Five Colleges. This program will encourage a cross-disciplinary approach to architectural education and will introduce students to a multitude of ways of thinking about design in history, in theory, and in the studio.

Progress your department has made toward addressing your line of inquiry, and the types of evidence that you have collected to inform your inquiry.

OAPA review of our 2018 EEP proposal suggested that we clarify our initial intent (to develop separate B.A. and B.S. in Architecture degree paths). We have chosen to focus on curricular alignment and on student feedback to help inform the redesign process. In particular, we have linked this study to opportunities to address issues raised in the Senior Survey and 2014 Focus Group results. Our progress has been steady, however, in an effort to be comprehensive; it has also been slower than we originally anticipated. We have approached our line of inquiry with a more thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of our curriculum, and how we compare to similar programs. Among other activities, our EEP work has led to an alignment study of existing course objectives with our Student Learning Objectives (SLOs); a coordination task force for sophomore year design studio and Analysis and Representation course requirements; review of syllabi and development of model syllabus template for our faculty. We have also added a course on career and graduate school preparation as a direct response to student wishes for more career-focused activities, and distributed and summarized a senior exit survey about graduate school and work plans. We have also reviewed our limitations and bottlenecks; reviewed BS in Architecture degree program requirements at comparable colleges/universities; mapped Five Colleges Architectural Studies courses to our Design Studies subplan for comparison; held initial conversations with Art Department faculty to explore better collaboration at the Foundations level to include more architectural precedents and project work that is more relevant to architecture students; and charted a variety of options for introduction of a B.A. in Architecture degree, and options for modification of the B.S. in Architecture degree requirements. Evidence used to support our inquiry includes recent Senior Surveys, our own departmental survey of senior post-graduation plans, Design Intelligence Annual Survey, and 2014 Focus Group results. We have generated a number of documents to collect and interpret data including a curriculum map (draft), a chart of proposed academic pathways, and a comparison of other B.S. in Architecture programs.

What are your department's next steps regarding your continuing and/or upcoming EEP line of inquiry?

We have not reached a conclusion yet and do need further study on our line of inquiry. In some cases, we have implemented new practices, but need to continue assessment or development.

In Spring 2020, we plan to host a faculty workshop with Center for Teaching and Learning staff on developing strong course objectives (we are looking at April 2020 for this workshop). We will continue our curriculum mapping exercise with a goal of better alignment to our Student Learning Objectives, and to identify where in the studio sequence students should have introductory / intermediate / mastery of various objectives. We will also review B.A. in Architecture programs at comparable colleges/universities to understand common curriculum

and compare to our B.S. in Arch Design Studies subplan. We plan to invite OAPA facilitators to host a student focus group and will dedicate time at a faculty meeting or retreat to EEP progress updates and gathering faculty feedback about priorities for changes to our degree pathways.

In Fall 2020, we will explore better alignment with NAAB standards to better prepare students for M.Arch studies. We will plan to meet with Art Department leadership in Fall 2020 with a proposal for changes to our Foundations year agreement. We will explore our Junior Year Writing and Integrative Experience courses for opportunities to introduce more relevant course material that will better prepare students for graduate studies and career, as well as reinforce SLOs. We will determine if we should implement a B.A. in Architecture, and will continue to assess Senior Survey results. In Spring 2021, we plan to implement changes to existing courses and to formalize the proposal for B.A. in Architecture (if we choose this path).

What are the Student Learning Objectives for your department or program(s)?
<u>B.F.A.</u>
- Architecture majors will develop their own creative response and design skills by raising clear and precise questions, using abstract ideas to interpret information, considering diverse points of view, reaching well-reasoned conclusions, and testing them against relevant criteria and standards in the context of an innovative response to architectural design problems.
- Architecture majors will demonstrate mastery of various techniques and appropriate use of media, including in freehand drawing, computer technology, physical model construction, and oral and written communications throughout the architectural design process.
- Architecture majors will recognize talent found in and integrate the varied influences of interdisciplinary design project teams in professional practice and work in collaboration with other students as members of a design team.
- Architecture majors will design both site and building respecting social justice issues, including equity, accessibility, and cultural appropriateness, and with consideration for historical context, for a broad diversity of users and their communities.
- Architecture majors will show ability to think critically about both natural and built site characteristics in the development of an environmentally sustainable and resilient architectural response.
- Architecture majors will integrate building regulations and technologies, including mechanical and structural systems, and building materials into building design.