



UK Landscape Architecture Department

2022 Periodic Program Review

Review Committee site visit April 3 - 6, 2022

Review Report Submitted on April 29, 2022

Review Committee

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Executive Summary

The Department of Landscape Architecture provides students with a broad-based education emphasizing critical thinking, problem solving, and technological proficiency to contribute to society and environmental sustainability in landscape architecture and related professions. The department contributes to the land grant mission of the University of Kentucky through innovative and high-impact instruction, research, and outreach.

It was apparent to the review committee through comments among all listening session groups that the departmental culture of collegiality and genuine dedication to the positive engagement of all parties is the driving force of the department. We see this as a primary strength that infuses energy into all departmental functions and is attributed to intentional cultural development and leadership of the department chair. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni reported genuine appreciation and respect for each other leading to a positive, professional environment with support for innovation, collaboration, and no drama.

The committee finds that the curriculum and faculty expertise is strong and supportive of current and anticipated needs in the field of Landscape Architecture. The department, however, faces challenges related to facilities and faculty capacity that represent potential threats for reduction of impact over the coming years if not addressed.

Brief description of review committee process

- Prior to the review, all committee members received and studied the departmental Self-study Report submitted by the Department of Landscape Architecture.
- The committee received their charge from Dean Cox, and Dr. Lee, Associate Dean for Faculty Resources, Planning and Assessment, conducted listening sessions with departmental faculty, staff, students, alumni, and administration April 3 – 6.
- On Wednesday, April 6, the committee held working sessions and drafted talking points about the program's strengths, challenges, opportunities, and potential committee recommendations.
- Immediately following the working sessions, the committee presented draft recommendations to Dean Cox and CAFE leadership.
- The Committee Chair, Dr. Tammy Stephenson, worked with the committee to prepare this report, which all members of the committee have approved.

We begin this report with a brief list of program strengths, challenges, and opportunities that the committee observed through review of the self-study and listening sessions. This is followed by committee recommendations for the program to consider and act on over the upcoming six-year program review cycle.

INSTRUCTION

Strengths

- Recruitment
 - The program currently has approximately 55 students. According to feedback from faculty, staff, and administrators, 75 or less students is ideal as long as a 15:1 faculty to student ratio is maintained (accreditation requirement).
 - Approximately 20% of students are under-represented minority (URM) students, which is an increase for the LA program.
 - Targeted recruiting efforts have been successful with a new website coming, social media campaigns, and high-quality brochures.
 - Good endowment funding supports high-impact student opportunities including study tours, as well as scholarships.
- Student Success
 - Consistent, strong academic advising model where Academic Coordinator advises all freshmen, who are then transitioned to a Faculty Advisor during sophomore year. This model serves the freshmen well and takes advising pressure off the rest of the faculty.
 - Students are prepared for the job market. Seniors all have jobs lined up and practitioners are pleased with their skill sets.
 - Students pay up-front fees once per year for materials (plotter), keeping production costs low.
 - Students have social, networking and leadership opportunities with organizations like KYSLA/ ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architecture). The student chapter provides social events, formalized mentoring opportunities, guest speakers, supplemental workshops, etc.
- Curriculum
 - Quality and variety of instruction creates a well-rounded educational experience.
 - Studio size and faculty-to-student ratio allows for individualized experience.
 - Classes build on each other well and skills are reinforced in consecutive classes.
 - Students feel like they are making a difference, especially in community work, which brings satisfaction.
 - Professional development courses structured to prepare students well.
- Faculty and Staff
 - Range in faculty area of expertise supports a well-rounded curriculum.

- Faculty is highly accessible, approachable, eager to share information, and build long-term personal relationships with students and alumni.
- The work that faculty, staff, and students are doing in communities brings awareness of landscape architecture, the LA program, and UK in communities throughout Kentucky. In addition, it fulfills UK's land grant requirements.
- Facilities
 - Adjacency of studios and class cohorts helps them learn from and connect with each other, building community.
 - The barn has a certain level of charm.

Challenges

- Recruitment
 - The typical CAFE recruitment audience is different from the typical candidate for the LA program, making it difficult to leverage recruitment opportunities within the college.
- Student Success
 - Unanticipated costs and time associated with instruction, such as travel to conferences, travel abroad trips, professional development opportunities, and community-based learning, take away ability to work and earn money needed to pay for school.
 - Mental health support and resources and faculty training are needed to support students that are stretched thin.
- Curriculum
 - Converting from a 5-year program to a 4-year program has compressed the schedule, so there is a lack of time for electives (e.g., horticulture, NRES, technology, residential design, construction management, sustainability, ecology, conservation, climate science).
 - Limited time in schedule and remoteness of E.S. Good Barn limits UK Core classes students can take.
 - Students learn to ID plants, but not their characteristics or how to use specific plants as a design element.
- Faculty and Staff
 - Faculty and staff seem stretched thin to cover the required courses/administration/service, leaving little room for research and scholarly

productivity. While they are conducting impressive work that could be published, there is little time to conduct research on this work and publish.

Opportunities

- Recruitment
 - Better curricular coordination between graphics and studios courses, rather than separate assignments.
 - Opportunities for targeted recruitment of transfer students, including those from 2-year colleges given that many LA students come in with prior degrees and/or majors.
- Student Success
 - Potential to update technology access for students - shared computer, IT technology support.
 - Update computer requirement specs.
 - Enhance communications about night-time escort services available to students.
 - More support for students to learn about graduate school opportunities.
 - Many students are involved in the student organization, which presents opportunities for targeted fundraising and planned activities.
- Curriculum
 - Incorporate greater exposure to specialized subjects – municipal policies, planning, zoning, cost estimation, and 3D tools, for example – into the curriculum.
 - More interaction with other LA classes (vertical studio) and other design departments.
 - Use CoD endowment money to support student travel for community projects.
 - Adjust education abroad and domestic study tour opportunities to make them more affordable (shorter, domestic, course fees, during school year).
 - Up-front transparency related to program-related fees.
 - In the interim before the Reynolds Building is complete, establish more soft collaborations with the College of Design (CoD) - Design Week, Career Fair, Concrete Week, Tree Week, guest lecturers, other special events; elective courses (e.g., 3D modeling, materials and methods).
 - Workshops on relevant technology (e.g., Saturday morning 4 hrs).
 - Better cohesion with community colleges and associated courses (more seamless transition) and LA.

- More opportunities for students to pursue minors (e.g., Digital Media Design) and Undergraduate Certificates (e.g., Historic Preservation). Scheduling conflicts currently prevent students from pursuing these opportunities.
- Faculty and Staff
 - Faculty capacity, satisfaction, research, and overall productivity could be increased by ensuring a more even distribution of teaching and course offerings within the department; by fully funding a tenure-track position to replace Dr. Brian Lee; by accessing research funding to cover student researchers; and by working with administrative staff to support travel and community work.
 - Mentor faculty at all levels to support advancement.

FACILITIES

Strengths

- Students and faculty feel a strong sense of camaraderie working together in the E.S. Good Barn. The studio spaces facilitate collaboration and make it possible for first- and second-year students to see the work of third- and fourth-year students and thus anticipate their future in the program.
- The proximity of E.S. Good Barn to other CAFE buildings and programs benefits the program.
- Faculty and staff are generally satisfied with the offices in the Agricultural Science Center North.

Challenges

- Safety and security are challenges for students leaving the E.S. Good Barn late at night. Students feel safe while working in the studios but are uneasy about leaving the building.
- The E.S. Good Barn studios provide adequate work space but have insufficient electrical outlets and limited natural light. At present, the multiple electrical cords running from the limited number of outlets create trip hazards.
- E.S. Good Barn is in an isolated location. This makes it difficult for students to reach classes in the center of campus on time and leads to students feeling disconnected from campus life and activities.
- The physical separation between the Landscape Architecture faculty offices and the studios hampers some types of faculty-student communication.
- There is currently limited space near the Landscape Architecture faculty offices for displaying recruitment posters and samples of student work. In addition, the refrigerators, surplus office equipment, and other items in the hallways in Agricultural Science Center North create an unappealing environment for work and make a poor impression with

prospective students and their parents when visiting. The Department of Landscape Architecture should work with other departments and Dean Cox to clear the halls to maintain a professional appearance and provide sufficient wall space for a recruitment display.

Opportunities

- Relocate Landscape Architecture faculty and staff offices to E.S. Good Barn so they are near the studios.
- Develop protocols for ensuring security at E.S. Good Barn after dark. University Police should be asked to patrol the area more frequently, and students should be made aware of the university's on-call escort service. Improved lighting and security cameras also deserve consideration. Students should also be made aware of the closest parking options when working late at night.
- Install more electrical outlets in E.S. Good Barn and develop cord-management procedures and other safety protocols to reduce the potential for accidents.
- The Memorandum of Agreement between CAFE and the CoD should be revisited to explore opportunities for immediate collaboration between Landscape Architecture students the CoD (especially access to fabrication facilities), and to ensure a smooth transition to the Reynolds Building.

OUTREACH/EXTENSION

Strengths

- The Extension faculty member and Extension associate positions currently filled in the department are producing high quality, relevant materials and site work.
- The Extension Program Manager (Senior Program Manager for Community Design) shares a dual role with LA and [Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky \(CEDIK\)](#)
 - Adds value to students – provides support role with students, helps with critiques, advises students on their capstone projects, mentors interns (at least 1 LA student per summer), travels with interns to on-site locations (e.g., Chattanooga, Scotland)
 - Projects include revitalization in Winchester, KY and the Promise Zone region of southeastern Kentucky.
- Students are learning through service.

Challenges

- Extension Program Manager position is a dual-reporting role between LA and CEDIK, creating the need for multiple monthly CEDIK meetings and biweekly LA meetings.

- Extension Program Manager position is soft funded.
- Extension professionals are stretched too thin to fully take advantage of additional grant opportunities.

Opportunities

- Department of Landscape Architecture / CEDIK / CoD are working collaboratively on community-based design. There is an opportunity to further strengthen these relationships through the relocation of LA to the Reynolds Building.
- Collaboration can be further expanded through opportunities for LA to continue working in studios and with community-based work in urban centers.
- Extension and public outreach are a great recruitment tools for underserved rural and urban students as well as educating general public
- Department has aligned strategic collaborations and interactions with NGOs, municipalities/neighborhoods, professional communities and the public at large to share resources for comprehensive service learning projects. Monitor to ensure such experiences align with pedagogical goals of courses, realistic workload, and the value of the community activity engagement.
- Continued improvement in multidisciplinary exposure and experiential learning for students is critical to continued professionalism across various fields involving Landscape Architecture

ADMINISTRATION

Strengths

- Current Department Chair has exceptional rapport and support from faculty, staff, students, and alumni in the program. Chair provides support, sets the tone for how faculty and staff interact, articulates the vision for the department, listens, and supports program cohesiveness.
- Diversity of faculty and staff in LA has improved in recent years.
- The department has committed staff time (currently from Academic Coordinator) to support internal and external communications, as well as website and social media management.
- Department is committed to supporting professional development opportunities for both faculty and staff. These present opportunities to learn new skills and network with appropriate professional organizations.

Challenges

- For faculty lines, women currently hold non-tenure track Lecturer lines while men are tenured in Regular title series lines.
- With the upcoming appointment of a new Department Chair, administrative oversight to support the move to the Reynolds Building will be essential. Advocating for the LA program will also be necessary. The program should strategize opportunities to best capitalize on this transition period and develop an updated Operating Agreement between CAFE and CoD.
- Fundraising limitations for short- and long-term goals stemming from university restrictions on direct program communication with alumni. The committee heard from multiple alums who reported either a discontinuation of communications or communications that do not convey the personalized nature they would anticipate from the LA departmental culture.

Opportunities

- With the upcoming search and appointment of a new Department Chair, faculty, staff, student, alumni, and stakeholder feedback should be sought given the importance of this leadership position. This is especially true because of the pending move to the Reynolds Building and the collaborative opportunities that will become available due to shared space with CoD. It will also be important to clearly articulate the relationship between LA and the CoD, particularly as concerns administrative oversight, funding, and departmental affairs.
- Faculty currently have a high percentage of annual DOEs committed to teaching. This leaves limited opportunities for research and pursuing extramural funding. Regular, Extension, and Lecturer title faculty all expressed an interest in expanding their research efforts but cited low DOE allotments as a barrier.
- If desired by the department, rather than a Lecturer Title Series, the department should develop a proposal for how a Regular Title Series faculty line will enhance not only instructional capacity but also impact research and outreach efforts for the department in specific ways, while filling an existing gap in an essential instruction area of Geospatial analysis.
- The move to the Reynolds Building will allow for new collaborations with the four units in the CoD - School of Interiors, Architecture, Historic Preservation, and Product Design.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Revisit and update the Operating Agreement (originally executed in July 2020) between CAFE and CoD. Take steps to ensure LA program autonomy and support as transition to the Reynolds Building proceeds. (UK Strategic Plan TTA2&3)
 - a. Ensure LA program remains an independent academic unit that reports directly to the Dean of CAFE.
 - b. Ensure LA program has dedicated space in the Reynolds Building and maintains its own identity for the sake of recruitment, communications and community relations.
 - c. Enhance resources to sustain highly productive faculty and staff to ensure the program continues to meet accreditation standards.
 - d. In the short term, investigate opportunities for LA program access to shared resources within CoD, including fabrication facilities, printing, and design specific hardware and software support.
2. Ensure current facilities in E.S. Good Barn and Ag North are safe and support student recruitment, retention, success, and wellness. (UK Strategic Plan SF1 and OP1)
 - a. Student access to a full suite of high-performing design software and hardware that are necessary for the department to maintain accreditation. IT support appropriate for a design department is needed. Ensure equitable access to appropriate technology to support inclusivity in the program.
 - b. Repair and upkeep of HVAC and improvement of electrical systems to ensure basic health, safety and welfare of students, faculty, staff, visitors, and equipment. Recommend timely feasibility study on the HVAC system.
 - c. Enhance safety and security measures for students, faculty, staff, and visitors using and leaving the E.S. Good Barn at night.
 - d. Address accessibility issues in Ag North, including large refrigerators, freezers, and cabinets that are crowding the hallway, making access to LA offices challenging. Related, the hallway clutter creates an unappealing environment for work and makes a poor impression with prospective students and their parents as well as alumni and other visitors. Recommend creating a more inviting entrance to LA office suites showcasing student work and highlighting the profession.
 - e. Consider relocating faculty and staff offices to the first floor of E.S. Good Barn when Philanthropy moves to Cooper House in August 2022.
3. Develop long-range plans to address stability and growth in the department. (UK Strategic Plan MPOC1)

- a. Establish a Department Chair transition plan, including the role the Chair will play in the transition to the Reynolds Building, collaborations with CoD, and maintenance of the critical relationships with CAFE.
 - b. Secure funding for a tenure-track position for faculty with Geospatial expertise.
 - c. Enhance DEI in tenure-track positions.
 - d. Explore potential for Lecturer positions to transition to tenure-track positions, while maintaining a high DOE in teaching due to the student and community focus of the department.
 - e. Secure permanent recurring funding for the Academic Coordinator position in the department.
 - f. Initiate departmental reviews of DOEs to avoid burnout – work-life balance, adequate support for education abroad, service to the community, staff support for faculty.
4. Continue excellence in instruction through high-impact practices that support student success. (UK Strategic Plan SF2&4 and II1)
- Opportunities to continue to enhance instructional reach of the program include:
- a. Better communicating in advance with students about program fees and requirements (e.g., equipment and travel).
 - b. Working with CAFE Office of Philanthropy to secure funding to support the education abroad experience. Consider opportunities to minimize associated expenses and time commitment given many students are working full- or part-time.
 - c. Continue to evaluate curriculum, including natural systems courses and the application of this content to studio courses and specialized workshops to best support the professional trajectory and expertise of LA students.
 - d. Utilizing the expertise of alumni and practitioners to lead supplemental workshops on topics that support instruction and professional development.
5. Increase undergraduate student enrollment in the program while ensuring an appropriate student faculty ratio per accreditation standards (15:1) to maintain excellence in instruction. (UK Strategic Plan SF1,2&4 and MPOC1)
- a. Explore appropriate program-level recruitment opportunities with both CAFE, CoD, and Fine Arts. Explore return-on-investment on recruitment events.
 - b. Enhance pipeline between community colleges and entry into LA program.
 - c. Encourage student involvement in student CAFE and CoD organizations, including Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS).

6. Identify strategies and priorities for enhancing land-grant engagement and opportunities for the program to continue to engage in high-impact practices based on community needs. (UK Strategic Plan SF2 and OP4)
 - a. Explore the potential to expand on the important Extension work being provided by faculty, staff, and students in the department.
 - b. Continue to network with alumni and community partners with relevant and timely projects involving students as part of courses, internships, and other experiential learning activities. Ensure such experiences align with pedagogical goals of courses, realistic workload, and the value of the community activity engagement.
 - c. Work more closely with appropriate college leaders to strategize opportunities to secure funding to support such efforts (e.g., travel to off-campus project sites, research assistants, etc).