1 June 2009

Lee W. Waldrep, Ph.D.
Associate Executive Director
The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)

RE: Special Program Focused Evaluation Report
Iowa State University, Department of Architecture
Bachelor and Masters of Architecture

Dear Dr. Waldrep,

We have responded to the specific request for a Focused Evaluation of our Professional Degrees and Curriculum as requested in the letter reporting our six-year accreditation approval from the NAAB on 19 July 2007. We understand that we are to continue reporting on the unmet conditions of the 2007 NAAB Visiting Team Report when we submit our 2009 Annual Report due in November.

Thank you for your assistance in clarifying the expectations of our 2007 Focused Evaluation Report. Please contact us if you need any additional information or clarifications.

Sincerely,

Calvin F. Lewis FAIA
Professor and Chair
Department of Architecture

CFL:jmh

Cc: Cassandra Pair
The National Architectural Accrediting Board
2009 Focused Evaluation
Department of Architecture
Iowa State University

Our Department of Architecture has been asked to respond to the comments regarding Professional Degrees and Curriculum as identified in the 2007 NAAB Visiting Team Report for our department.

12. Professional Degrees and Curriculum

The NAAB accredits the following professional degree programs: the Bachelor of Architecture (B. Arch.), the Master of Architecture (M. Arch.), and the Doctor of Architecture (D. Arch.). The curricular requirements for awarding these degrees must include professional studies, general studies, and electives. Schools offering the degrees B. Arch., M. Arch., and/or D. Arch. are strongly encouraged to use these degree titles exclusively with NAAB-accredited professional degree programs.

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<th>Degree</th>
<th>Met</th>
<th>Not Met</th>
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<td>B. Arch</td>
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<td>M. Arch</td>
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The department has two professional degree programs: the 164.5-credit undergraduate degree program leading to the Bachelor of Architecture; and a 100-credit graduate degree (plus undergraduate degree) leading to a Master of Architecture.

The program also uses the M. Arch. degree title for the one-year post-professional non-NAAB-accredited degree program. This is contrary to the NAAB encouragement to use this title only for the first professional degree programs. Consideration should be given to change this non-accredited degree title.

Response

There has been an ongoing discussion regarding this matter within our graduate program since the accreditation visit in spring 2007. The issue remains unresolved, but the discussions have attempted to address the broad range of issues that are influenced by this degree nomenclature.

It is clear and understandable that NAAB prefers the exclusive use of the M. Arch. designation for their accredited degree. The dilemma occurs within the academic community, who believe the use of the M. Arch. designation also represents an appropriate designation within the broader
context of degrees available through the academy. As a clarification of this breadth, the use of M. Arch. II has become an understood designation to identify the appropriate academic standing of a post-professional graduate degree, while subtly differentiating that degree from the professional M. Arch. graduate degree. We adopted this M. Arch. II designation, which had become one of the defacto national standards.

Our particular non-accredited M. Arch. II degree is a 30-credit post-professional studio-based thesis. This makes the M. Arch. II designation of particular value to B. Arch. students, like our own, and attracts them to our program. We have averaged around three students per year in this program.

The determination of this degree designation has been complicated by a broader discussion of degree nomenclature. We have had very preliminary discussions about the adoption of a 5.5-year professional M. Arch. degree to replace our 5-year professional B. Arch. degree. Several of the schools in our Big-12 conference have already made this change, leaving us as one of the very few 5-year B. Arch. programs in the region. For us, the issues regarding this change are complex, controversial, and greatly impacted by our university’s new budget model that distributes more resources to graduate programs. We intend to have a comprehensive review of this alternate consideration over the next academic year.

In conclusion, our review of the appropriate degree designation for our 30-credit post-professional masters degree is still in process. The final decision on all of our degree nomenclature will be profoundly impacted by the future direction we take with our B. Arch. professional degree. This critical decision is likely to take at least a year to determine. We intend to continue using the M. Arch. II designation for our post-professional masters degree during this internal review process; it appears to be the most consistent and effective designation for our unique set of circumstances. To minimize any potential confusion, we will continue to make sure that the few students we have participating in this program are well aware of the non-NAAB-accredited status of this post-professional degree.