

## Organization and Program History

The architecture program is part of Southern Polytechnic State University, a University System of Georgia comprehensive university, and is administered in the School of Architecture, Civil Engineering Technology and Construction. The university is regionally accredited by SACS and is polytechnic in nature as well as in name. Architecture is co-located in the school with other primary disciplines focused on the built environment. The three disciplines of architecture, civil engineering technology and construction are accredited by their respective national accrediting bodies along with the four year degree program in surveying and mapping. A BS program in construction engineering was initiated last year and the construction management program offers a masters degree as well as certificates and concentrations in the undergraduate curriculum that many architecture students access.

The Bachelor of Architecture degree for Southern Polytechnic was authorized in 1992 following strong endorsement of the proposal by the voices of industry and the architectural community in Georgia. Over the past six years, the architecture program has experienced dramatic growth and has provided a constant enrollment increase of approximately fifteen percent annually. It is clear that architecture has been a significant force for stability and growth of the university in bad economic times as well as good. It is anticipated that the B. Arch will not continue to expand indefinitely but will plateau and divert some students to a four year architectural science program in addition to the current feed it provides to other programs on campus, especially to the construction management and civil engineering related programs.

The architecture program is structured in a 2+3 format with the first two years devoted to design foundation and the upper three years constituting the professional program. There is also an evening track for students who have completed a four year pre-architecture or closely related degree. The program is headed by a department chair who utilizes a strong committee structure to facilitate management and development of change. He is assisted by a senior faculty person who is the principal department advisor and thesis co-coordinator with the chair. Secretarial support is provided by an administrative assistant who is also the primary student contact point.

The program has a degree of autonomy comparable to that afforded other relevant professional programs within the institution and sufficient to assure conformance with all the conditions for accreditation. The program through the chair conducts its affairs in close liaison with the school dean who focuses on strategic issues and the constant struggle for resources.

## Human Resources

Since the last accreditation visit, the program has made remarkable strides in human resources. There has been a net gain of seven tenure track faculty over nine which roughly tracks enrollment increases. This is manifested in several critical areas. The ratio of full-time faculty to students has improved significantly. We are now in the second year of a 16/1 policy for all studios. This is excepted for the beginning of first year fall semester, which typically experiences a high attrition rate and we are currently starting those sections at 18/1 due to the continued high interest in the program. Opportunities in the adjacent departments of

construction management and civil engineering technology are strong magnets for students who find they are not happy with the initial design foundation experience. Generally, after several weeks, the first year student sections progress through the fall semester at a 16/1 or less ratio.

The presence of half-time and half-time plus faculty whom are primarily practitioners has proven to improve the overall faculty picture. We consider the half-timers as regular faculty due to the stability they represent opposed to that of adjuncts hired on a semester basis. Underlying numerical enrollment figures have grown to approximately 550 in fall of '07.

A salary equity program has been established in the university and we have had two successive years of equity adjustments made to deserving faculty. It is the vice president's plan to continue this until all appropriate equities have been accomplished.

The continuing process of adding new full-time faculty is now showing dividends at the first year level. This current year we have managed to staff the ten first year studios with four regular and three seasoned adjunct faculty members and three seasoned practitioners. We hope next year to have at five or six regular faculty assigned to first year generating a 1/1 regular/adjunct minimum situation there. Our target is to have all first year studio instructors as regular faculty.

#### Physical Resources

Physical resources have increased substantially since the last NAAB visitation. Continued growth of the architecture program and forecast for extension of that mode resulted in decision by the university president to renovate and reopen the old architecture building to accommodate the increase in student load. A minor capital project for 4.9 million dollars was approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents and a partial increment of that was funded by the legislature and the governor in the spring of 2007.

The total project includes renovation of the existing building and new construction of an addition comprising approximately 12,000 square feet. Programmatically, the reclaimed and new space will be used to house the design foundation years primarily, and a yet to be initiated four year Bachelor of Science in Architectural Science. Prior to full approval of the project, it was necessary to reopen and reconfigure the upper floor of the old building for first year students. Ten studio sections are now fitted in a quality teaching environment with adjacent jury space and faculty offices. This summer (2007), similar construction work has started on the first floor which will ultimately provide space for an additional six studio sections, convertible jury space/classrooms, and faculty offices. While initial use of this floor may be for second year students, they will ultimately shift to the new addition which will contain space for eight studio sections and a major jury/theatre space. The original building first floor studios are planned for the yet to come BS Arch Science program. Both the renovation and new construction are intended to thematically reflect the open, industrial feeling of the main architecture building.

The establishment of ten sections for first year entrants has set a de facto constraint on growth of the program which should be slowing and stabilizing at around six hundred students in the fall of

2011. The M-136 evening studio space has been upgraded to generate a much higher utilization rate with design communication and structural design classes now being scheduled and held there. Site-wise, the M building labs are central to both the design foundation and professional studio locations. Evening students have been integrated into the day time studio spaces for more consistent interaction. Improved retention overall through more rigorous admission and additional full time faculty is expected to result in an optimum usage of the present and projected physical resources.

## Financial Resources

The emergence of Georgia from a severe tax revenue shortfall in FY's '03-'04, and '04-'05 combined with arrival of a permanent vice president of academic affairs in July '05 have worked to the benefit of the architecture program's financial health. In addition to budgeted resources, architecture receives a special fee for each student in studio and laboratory classes each semester. Budgeted and studio/lab funds must be spent each fiscal year.

The program is now in its fifth year of holding a fund raising golf tournament for scholarship and discretionary capital purposes. Through four years, an endowed scholarship in memory of Professor Emeritus James Fausett, FAIA has risen to over \$50,000 and each year some thousands of dollars from the tournament are deposited in the program discretionary foundation account. The Fausett endowed scholarship earns 5% of capital each year and that amount is available for scholarships targeted to senior students.

Additional funds for scholarship include:

- Jimmy Goldgeier Memorial Scholarship
- AIA Georgia Annual Scholarships
- AIA Georgia Mulford Scholarship

Fundraising and scholarship build-out efforts continue.