



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL
for the
ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

**REPORT OF THE SACAP VISITING BOARD TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

26-28 March 2012

Date of report: 11 April 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Visiting Board appreciated the thorough preparations for the visit (the introduction documents, exhibitions, presentations and appointments), the well-equipped venue allocated to the Board, as well as the arrangements for transport, accommodation and refreshments. In addition, the Board experienced openness, transparency and friendliness, which unquestionably contributed towards making the visit a memorable experience.

The Visiting Board wishes to thank the leadership of the University of Pretoria, and individuals and staff from the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Information Technology, the Quality Unit, and the Department of Architecture for their hospitality, for their efforts in preparing for the visit, for making time available and for sharing information:

- Prof. Cheryl de la Rey.....Vice-Chancellor and Principal
- Prof. Stephanie Burton Vice-Principal
- Mr Hugo MoutonDirector BINEB
- Prof. Roelf Sandenbergh Dean
- Prof. Karel Bakker.....Head of Department
- Ms Isobel Vosloo, Ms Karin Kellerman and Ms Mart van Aswegen..... Quality Unit
- Staff and students..... Department of Architecture



Interviewing the Head of department, Prof. Karel Bakker, in the space allocated to the Visiting Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) conducted its four-yearly validation of the qualifications offered by the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria from 26 to 28 March 2012. The process involved inspection of the facilities, evaluation of subject contents and assignments, and interviews with staff, students and external examiners, as well as a review of the Department's contributions to architectural education and research in general.

The Visiting Board recommends to the SACAP Council the Continued Unconditional Validation of the following programmes:

- Bachelor of Science (Architecture) – BSc (Arch)
- Bachelor of Architecture (Honours) – BArch (Hons)
- Master of Architecture (Professional) – MArch (Prof)

General comments

Detailed commentary will be presented in the full report on the visit. The list below simply highlights some of the most pertinent observations:

- It was clear that the Department had responded very purposefully – and effectively – to the previous validation report.
- The Visiting Board found substantial support for the Head of Department in all sections of the Department; amongst both staff and students.
- The smooth transition from the previous HoD to the present demonstrates the maturity and stability of the Department.
- Both the staff and students declared much confidence in the structures of the academic programmes and the value of the qualifications.
- The academic programmes are well-balanced and integrated.
- The departmental leadership seems to be responsive to student requirements, with the result that staff and students were generally satisfied with facilities and infrastructure.
- The Department seemed adequately resourced.
- The commitment of the staff to the Department was very obvious in every respect.
- There was evidence of a strong commitment to community outreach and upliftment. The result is a strong sense of social responsibility among both staff and students.
- It was abundantly clear that the Department had a clear appreciation of its past and a well-defined vision of the future.

Advice

Only three aspects needing some consideration could be identified.

- The bottleneck caused by limited spaces in the postgraduate programme is a major concern to the Head of Department and his staff. Funding to expand postgraduate space and resources had been requested. This initiative is wholeheartedly supported by the Visiting Board. However, it should be noted that this issue currently affects most architectural learning sites in South Africa and is indeed a national difficulty.
- Some lecturers from outside the Department responsible for support subjects suggested that offering those subjects in a concentrated block format would make it easier for them, as well as for the students. This would be an internal arrangement, but the Visiting Board supports such rationalisation.
- The Visiting Board suggests that, because the Department attracts such gifted and dedicated students, the complexity of learning content in the undergraduate years could perhaps be increased.

Conclusion

There can be absolutely no doubt that the qualifications offered by this Department of Architecture are of outstanding quality and surpass the prescribed minimum standards by a considerable margin. The Department is on a course that should ensure its qualifications remain relevant. The Visiting Board trusts that the Department will continue to reflect and reinvent itself in order to maintain momentum.

Visiting Board

The Visiting Board consisted of Mr Eugene Barnard (Chair), Mr Rakau Lekota, Mr Khotso Moleko, Prof Paul Kotze, Ms Anja Lareman (Student member), Prof Rodney Harber (SAIA Education Committee) and Prof Gerald Steyn (Secretariat).