

Contact: Rachel Boon

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN INTERIOR DESIGN ACCREDITATION REPORT
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report from the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Interior Design in the School of Applied Human Sciences in the College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI).

Executive Summary: The BA in Interior Design at UNI underwent its standard accreditation self-study review with the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), culminating in a site visit February 26-March 1, 2016. The visiting team identified notable aspects of the program and areas of weakness or partial compliance that need attention and response from the university. The program has since addressed all areas. CIDA awarded continuing accreditation for six years to 2022, the maximum allowable time. An interim report is expected in 2019.

Background:

- ◇ **Board Policy.** This report complies with Board policy 3.8 on Accreditation Reporting, and aligns with strategic plan priority 1: Ensuring access to education and student success. It was submitted to the Board of Regents in October 2016. This review is to discuss program improvements resulting from the accreditation visit.
- ◇ **Description of Program.** The BA in Interior Design is a professional degree that prepares students to be creative problem-solvers using systematic, coordinated and sustainable approaches to design process, resulting in appropriate interior environments in the private and public sector. Design careers are in several domains including corporate design, residential design, healthcare design, facilities management, showroom sales, CAD and BIM specialist, and historic preservation. Graduates of this program are well prepared to work towards professional licensing requirements (including the National Council for Interior Design Qualification examination) and/or pursue graduate degrees.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA)
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** Accreditation is a process of quality assurance for a program that indicates it is recognized by peers in the field as having met national standards for quality education.
- ◇ **Accreditor Standards.** There are 16 standards organized into 4 sections as follows:

Section I. Mission, Goals, and Curriculum.

This standard describes the context and overarching purpose and intent of the program.

- Mission, Goals, and Curriculum

Section II. Interior Design: Critical Thinking, Professional Values, and Processes.

These standards describe the framework of interior design practice.

- Global Perspective for Design
- Human-centered Design
- Design Process
- Collaboration

- Communication
- Professionalism and Business Practice

Section III. Interior Design: Core Design and Technical Knowledge.

These standards describe historical, theoretical, and technical contents of interior design practice.

- History
- Space and Form
- Color
- Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment, and Finish Materials
- Environmental Systems
- Building Systems and Interior Construction
- Regulations and Guidelines

Section IV. Program Administration.

These standards describe the institutional and program systems, structures, and resources that are fundamental to an effective higher education learning environment for interior design.

- Assessment and Accountability
- Support and Resources

- ◇ Review Process. The faculty and the School director attended CIDA workshops in 2012 and 2014 to become familiar with the process. We brought in a CIDA consultant in 2014 to review existing curriculum and propose changes. We revised the curriculum and submitted changes through the College and University Curriculum Committees in 2015. We submitted an application to CIDA in 2015 and requested a site visit in 2016. Simultaneously, we created the self-study matrix and Program Analysis Report and submitted it for review to the site visitors (after receiving their names and approving the composition of the site visit team). The site visit team came to campus February 26-March 1, 2016. The program received the report with results in August 2016 and responded with minor editorial changes at that time.
- ◇ Visiting Team Report. After the February 2016 visit, the visiting team identified notable aspects of the program and areas of weakness or partial compliance that need attention and response from the university.
- ◇ Notable Aspects Identified by the Visiting Team. The student/faculty ratio is small, and students indicated that this was a major reason for choosing UNI. They were very appreciative of the dedication of the faculty. The collegiality of the faculty and their support of each other was evident throughout the visit. Students are articulate and critical listeners who are confident and mature. They appreciate the personal guidance they receive from faculty. The program engages with members of the design community as guest speakers and jurors. The program ensures that students visit large metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and St. Louis.
- ◇ Partial Compliance Identified by the Visiting Team. Of the 16 standards assessed, all but one were found compliant. The remaining one received a “partial compliance” designation. Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Curriculum included commendations for mission and goals, but noted the curriculum sequencing was not well aligned in a logical sequence to achieve those goals.

Institutional Response:

- **Standard 1:** A new curriculum sequence was implemented in fall 2016. In this sequence, content delivery is better coordinated in complexity, scale and size of projects.
- ◇ Selected Suggestions from Site Visit Team: All other standards were in full compliance, but the team report included some weaknesses that the institution can choose to address to strengthen the program. Below is a selection of these with the institutional response.
- Students seem to receive insufficient training on space planning.
 - *Institutional response:* In the new curriculum sequence, there is a full semester dedicated to space planning concepts one course. Additional textbook and course assignment enhancements in this area will be added in upper level courses.
 - Inconsistent application opportunities for ADA, universal design and contract document issues.
 - *Institutional response:* Starting in fall 2016 the faculty instituted a multi-pronged approach to help students build a strong foundation and build these skills sequentially.
 - The majority of faculty have not yet attempted the National Council of Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) exam.
 - *Institutional response:* The faculty are currently working toward this goal.
- ◇ Program Accreditation Status. CIDA awarded continuing accreditation to the Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design in the School of Applied Human Sciences at the University of Northern Iowa for six years to 2022, the maximum allowable time. An interim report is expected in 2019.