

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY:
MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by Iowa State University to establish a new Master of Landscape Architecture Program which will be administered by the Department of Landscape Architecture in the College of Design.

Executive Summary: The proposed program will allow the department to become competitive with other graduate programs which offer a three-year master's degree for students with a bachelor's degree who wish to become practicing landscape architects. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to "provide educational excellence and impact."

Background:

- ◇ Description of proposed program. The proposed program will concentrate on basic professional competencies necessary to take the licensing exam, together with advanced studies in a focused area of landscape architecture as required by accreditation standards. The proposed program will be targeted to the student with a non-design undergraduate degree who desires a professional practice program. The curriculum will include a minimum of 30 credits of advanced courses, which will be both required and elective.
- ◇ Relationship to existing program. The proposed program will be different from the Master of Science in Landscape Architecture (Agenda Item 4m), a research-oriented program that does not lead to licensure.
- ◇ Duplication. There are no other institutions of higher education in Iowa that offer an accredited Master of Landscape Architecture Program.
- ◇ Student demand. Currently, most of the department's graduate students undertake a concurrent BLA/MLA program to obtain an accredited degree, a process which typically requires five years of residency. This time-frame is undesirable for most students, who already have a bachelor's degree in another field, and makes the program less competitive. Furthermore, the concurrent degree has been a source of confusion for students and the accrediting body resulting from a lack of understanding of which courses apply to which degree, particularly in terms of the bachelor's degree program general education electives in such areas as basic English composition, history, and humanities.
- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected cohort size is 12 students. The target audience will include (but not be limited to) students with undergraduate degrees in related disciplines, such as ecology, horticulture, civil engineering, and specific social sciences and arts. These students seek to enter landscape architecture with the intent of practicing as a licensed professional in either the public or private sector.

- ◇ Unique features. Department faculty members are highly productive in research and have elevated demand and resources for research/scholarship-oriented students. The department has an increasing number of faculty members with the Ph.D. in addition to professional degrees and this trend in increasing research is expected to continue.
- ◇ Need for proposed program. The primary reason for the proposed program is to become competitive with other graduate programs which typically offer a three-year master's degree for students with a bachelor's degree who wish to become practicing landscape architects. This audience has been the largest market for the proposed program nationwide.
- ◇ Resources. The Department of Landscape Architecture anticipates finding synergy between the bachelor's and master's degree programs in offering the proposed program and studios. Existing bachelor's degree courses will meet many of the accreditation requirements. The master's level concentrations for the proposed program will be met by current 500-level course offerings in the department. Program growth is expected to fund additional faculty lines over time.
- ◇ Cost. The University anticipates that the proposed program will not incur new costs.
- ◇ Accreditation. Provisional accreditation status for the program is anticipated to be granted in September 2010. A team visit in 2012 will likely lead to full accreditation.
- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The proposed program addresses ISU's Strategic Plan priority "to strengthen undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to enhance student success at ISU and beyond."