

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Jay Kalra, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee of Council

FROM: Bruce Sparling, Co-Chair, School of Architecture Working Committee

DATE: June 7, 2010


RE: School of Architecture Submission to Council

Thank you, Dr. Kalra, for the expeditious consideration of the Planning and Priorities Committee for the School of Architecture proposal.

An expression of support in principle for the School of Architecture concept from the Planning and Priorities Committee, as well as from Council, with encouragement to proceed to a final proposal, will be a key driver in moving toward securing formal financial and other commitments. The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada is holding its annual conference in Saskatoon in late June of 2010. With the support of Council and the province, a statement of intent to create a School of Architecture at the University of Saskatchewan is planned for the conference.

A document summarizing the key elements of the proposal is attached for submission to Council. A detailed business plan for the School of Architecture is currently being developed by the Working Committee and will soon be ready for consideration by the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning.

If you have any further comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



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c.c. Colin Tennent, Associate Vice President; Facilities Management Division

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

June 17, 2010

Prepared by:

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WHY A SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE?

Demand for university-based architectural education continues to increase and the opportunity to attract students from across Canada is well established. The University of Waterloo, for example, accepts 72 students in architecture annually from an applicant pool of 1700. A survey conducted with Saskatchewan high school guidance counselors in 2009 by students of Dr. Mona Holmlund in the department of Art & Art History indicated a very high interest in professional architectural education within Saskatchewan.

The demographic profile of architectural practitioners in Canada projects a severe shortage of registered architects in the next decade. That shortage has already become acute in Saskatchewan, due to the loss of prospective students of architecture to other provinces and the resultant need to import practitioners. A conservative estimate of \$40 million is lost annually to the provincial economy from over-taxed practitioners reluctantly forfeiting potential work to out-of-province architects and their design teams.

Community engagement is diverse and enthusiastic. A large majority of the province's architecture professionals are located in Saskatoon and Prince Albert and many have expressed a commitment to participate in the school as community-based faculty. The school is seen as a strong catalyst for cultural advancement. Strong support has been offered by the Chamber of Commerce, Saskatchewan Association of Architects, all BIDs, the city manager and city councilors, allied design professions, the construction industry, Meewasin Valley Authority and MLAs in both government and opposition. All have expressed a readiness to engage when the initiative for the school is formally announced.

Two clear academic themes for the school have arisen:

- Indigeneity in architecture is an area of scholarship in which distinction can be readily achieved and for which a CRC in Indigenous Architecture will be pursued
- Northern climates and Winter Communities

A school of architecture will increase the size and scope of graduate education at the U of S, increase undergraduate enrolment and will provide opportunity for prospective students to remain in the province, contributing to the academic diversity of the University of Saskatchewan and the cultural and financial well being of Saskatchewan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS AND PROPOSAL

A feasibility task force was established by the SAA in late 2008 to explore the potential for a Saskatchewan school of architecture. The findings of the task force review were presented to the SAA membership at the 2009 annual general meeting. The conclusion of the review was that a school was highly feasible and should be pursued.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was presented to the Planning & Priorities Committee of Council on December 9, 2009. A formal Working Committee was subsequently established and met initially in January of 2010. The membership expanded the preliminary group under the direction of Dr. Fairbairn as executive sponsor. Dr. Bruce Sparling of the College of Engineering and Colin Tennent of Facilities Management Division serve as co-chairs.

A proposal presented to the Planning and Priorities Committee on May 19, 2010 resulted in the Committee's intent to present a report for information to Council in June, expressing support in principle for the initiative to establish a school devoted to architectural studies at the U of S.

Mission, Goals and Guiding Principles The school aims to establish a reputation for the highest caliber of general architectural education and as an acknowledged leader in the signature areas of specialization. The following guiding principles will be adhered to in the development of the school:

- a. Attract and retain outstanding faculty and staff;
- b. Recruit and retain a diverse student body comprised of the best-qualified and most academically promising students;
- c. Build an academic program structure to accommodate multiple points of entry;
- d. Establish relationships and transfer articulation agreements with other institutions including SIAST, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Syllabus program, FNUC and others to capitalize efficaciously upon the diverse strengths of these learning institutions;
- e. Achieve and maintain a high level of accreditation with the Canadian Architectural Certification Board through adherence to international standards;
- f. Meet the needs of the profession of architecture and of the province by preparing students for the knowledge age;
- g. Establish catalytic partnerships with the broader community, including outreach and engagement with neighborhood and business associations across the province, the allied design professions (i.e., planning, civil engineering, landscape architecture, interior design), various levels of government and with conservation authorities;
- h. Build upon existing U of S strengths in research, artistic and scholarly work;
- i. Create an acclaimed program of architectural education based on signature areas of distinction and our sense of place; and
- j. Establish a major and distinguished presence through a research program based on both architectural theory and practice, centred upon multi-directional collaborative relationships with academic entities such as Native Studies, Regional and Urban Planning, Art & Art History, Public Health, Public Policy, Environment & Sustainability, Law, Business, Engineering and others.

LEADERSHIP, FACULTY AND TEACHING RESOURCES

The School of Architecture will be an entity within the College of Engineering. This relationship is consistent with approximately 60% of the 10 schools of architecture in Canada. An executive director, reporting to the Dean of the College of Engineering, will lead the school.

The proposed academic program for the school will be delivered using a blend of new and existing faculty, SIAST personnel and practicing professionals. This flexible approach will ensure the development of a critical mass of highly qualified architectural specialists while maximizing the utilization of existing expertise within complementary programs at the University of Saskatchewan and SIAST and promoting the active engagement of the wider community.

These new faculty will provide the academic leadership required to develop and implement innovative and reputable degree programs. In keeping with the teacher-scholar model, these faculty members will also be expected to establish vibrant research groups in targeted areas that align with the strategic priorities of the institution and the needs of the profession. A distinctive identity for the architectural faculty at the University of Saskatchewan will be molded by a “sense of place” that is framed both by our cultural and geographic setting, leading to a focus on the selected themes of “Indigeneity in Architecture” and “Winter Cities”. It is anticipated that approximately ten or eleven new tenure-track faculty positions will be required. Building on the strong tradition of mentorship within the profession of architecture, as demonstrated by an active involvement in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Syllabus program of studies, the school will establish a number of adjunct appointments for distinguished professional architects who will be an integral component of the program delivery. The adjunct appointments will enhance the academic vitality of the school by ensuring that the program remains relevant and current, and by facilitating links with the professional and construction communities.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & RESEARCH

Architects in Canada are licensed at the provincial or territorial level. To become a registered architect, one is required to fulfill the requirements of a three-stage process, including education, work experience (an internship) and a set of licensing examinations. Professional university degree programs in architecture offered in Canada are accredited by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB) and all culminate in a Master of Architecture degree. There are currently 10 CACB accredited M.Arch programs in Canada.

The proposed academic program in architecture offers a flexible approach with multiple points of entry, able to accommodate most potential categories of applicant as follows:

- 4-year Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch) degree
- 2-year professionally accredited Master of Architecture (M.Arch) degree, open to candidates with an undergraduate degree in architecture or related discipline
- 4-year professionally accredited Master of Architecture (M.Arch) degree, open to candidates with an undergraduate degree in any discipline

This multiple entry point model is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Architecture is an intellectual discipline as well as a field of professional practice. The school will become a catalyst for the establishment of an internationally recognized research centre focused on selected themes in architectural theory and practice. In keeping with the

university's strategic priorities of our "sense of place" and "community engagement", distinctive research programs in the areas of "Indigeneity in Architecture" and "Winter Cities: Architecture in Northern Climates" have been targeted. As identified in *The Second Integrated Plan: Toward an Engaged University*, an institutional imperative for the University of Saskatchewan is to "embrace the fundamental importance of ... relationships with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Indigenous peoples". The school will provide an avenue to explore Indigenous culture and social issues as they relates to the built environment. In addition to investigating culturally appropriate architectural forms, this research theme encompasses the much broader question of building design and construction methods tailored for urban and northern aboriginal communities, including both residential and institutional facilities. Opportunities for collaborative research initiatives would therefore be available with diverse groups across campus, including the Indigenous Land Management Institute, Regional and Urban Planning and Engineering.

The theme of "Winter Cities: Architecture in Northern Climates" lends itself to a wide variety of potential research areas, with both cultural and technical dimensions. It could relate to ways in which communities in northern climates can be designed to celebrate, maximize the benefits and mitigate the constraints of a winter climate. This research theme could also address the design of cold-climate buildings to promote energy efficiency and other sustainable building practices. Sustainable building design is a subject of acute societal concern and an area of growth and opportunity within the architectural profession. Natural synergies are expected to develop with the School of Environment and Sustainability and the College of Engineering.

RESOURCES AND SPACE

Preliminary commitments from community partners have been substantial. Suggested in-kind contributions include a building in Saskatoon's downtown core, design and construction services, real estate development management services, cash contributions and legal services. Synergies between schools of architecture in mid-size cities and the downtown core of those cities have been demonstrated, with significant mutual benefits.

The request of the province will be significantly reduced, given the substantial support from the community. Reliance upon existing resources will be a focus. However, the school of architecture will not be a net draw on the current faculty complement and resources. Given the substantial economic contribution to the province as a whole that the school is expected to be, additional operating support from the province is anticipated.

PHASING-IN PROCESS

The first year of operation will be the least intensive with anticipation of approximately 36 students. Each subsequent year will require incremental increases in faculty and support resources. Permanent facilities would likely not be required for the first year or two of operation, providing time to renovate the building anticipated as the permanent home of the School of Architecture.

U of S School of Architecture - Program Diagram

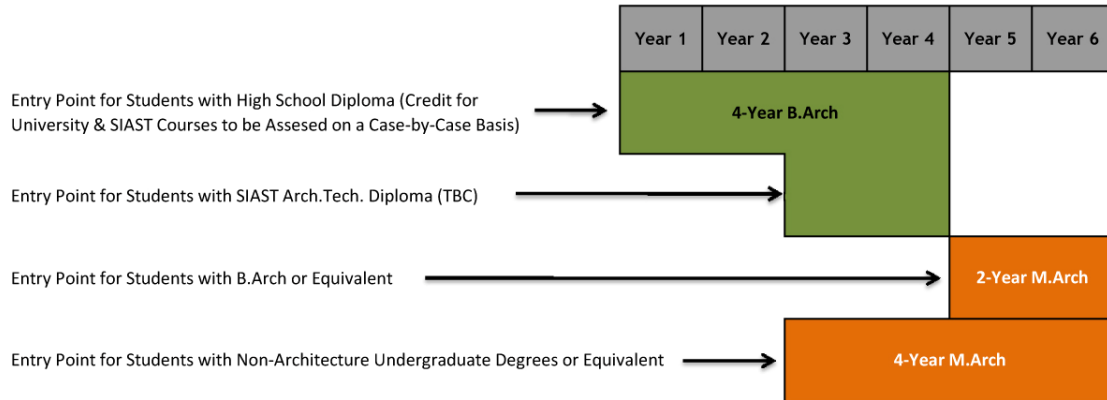


Figure 1. Multiple entry point model for proposed academic program.