

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW for the
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

The Academic Program Review Committee, composed of Dr. Mickey Luria, Clemson University, Dr. Melissa Binder, Department of Economics, UNM, and Dr. Mark B. Lapping, University of Southern Maine, conducted its academic program review during the period of February 26 -28, 2007. The Review Committee met with numerous individuals and groups during its program evaluation process.

According to the criterion established in the University for New Mexico=s program review procedures, the review team found the following:

I) Overall the quality of unit based on both regional and national standards

- Relative to its peer institutions, the program at the University of New Mexico is in the middle range. However, with a small investment the program could be nudged to the top of the peer institutions, in league with those at the University of Oregon and the University of Iowa.

II) The unit=s contribution and mission as related to the strategic directions of UNM

- As a major research university, the program at the University of New Mexico has achieved a modest record. However, in terms of the University=s commitment to the Southwest region, community involvement and outreach, and to diversity, the record of the program is truly exceptional. In many cases, the Community and Regional Planning program is the University of New Mexico=s face in the community. This is as true for smaller and more rural communities in the region as it is in the state=s major urban areas.

III) Impact and visibility of instructional programs

- Regional and Community Planning is highly legible and visible in the community, among practitioners in the state and region, and on campus, especially with its collaborative relationships with Latin American Studies, Public Administration, and other units. It continues to have enormous potential for greater collaboration with still other academic, research and outreach entities within the university community.

IV) Profile and distinction of faculty and students

- Community and Regional Planning is likely the single the most diverse planning faculty in the United States
- Likewise, it may well be the most diverse planning student body in the United States. As an example there are currently fourteen MA and three BA program Native American students in the program. This may well be the highest number of Native American students in any planning school in the country.
- We find that the faculty and staff in Community and Regional Planning are a highly convivial group. There exists a consensus among faculty in approach to planning and pedagogy. The faculty have a shared vision for the program and a genuine commitment to it and to the college and university as demonstrated, in part, by the high level of leadership individuals within the program take for various university-wide programs and functions.
- Among this small faculty there are two faculty who have received two Regents honorsca Regents Professor and a Regents Lecturer.
- The program is well known and recognized for its community-based emphasis. There is a clear opportunity to raise the national profile of the program based on this emphasis and the faculty is urged to devote some time in developing publications which stress its community-based planning orientation for national and international journals and other venues.
- The review team was impressed by the hard-working, high quality and highly motivated student body in the program. We were greatly impressed with the maturity and seriousness of purpose among the undergraduate students as well as the

graduate students in the program. Many of these students have been attracted to the program from outside of New Mexico thus providing additional diversity and demonstrating the national appeal of the program which is itself indicative of the reputation of the program.

- The program is highly distinctive and distinguished for its emphasis on Indigenous Planning, largely but not solely based on the work of Ted Jojola. Every effort should be made to maintain this important and unique thrust, perhaps even to the point of developing international ties with other programs around the world that have a similar focus.
- Likewise, the program is highly distinguished in the area of traditional Hispanic communities based on the impressive experience and work of the Resource Center for Raza Planning, as well as that of Profs. Jose Rivera and Teresa Cordova. Dr. Cordova is an elected County Commissioner and this reflects the high level of engagement of many faculty in the program.
- The program also has attracted highly qualified and enthusiastic adjuncts faculty and their care and feeding must remain a priority of the program.

V) Student success and learning outcomes

- The quality of student work that we examined was uniformly high in terms of content and rigor. The program's students are involved in planning projects and experiential learning throughout the entirety of the curriculum. The several alumni we met with all reported that their training was useful and they appear to occupy positions of responsibility and leadership.

VI) Contributions to other academic units and collaborative initiatives

- The community and regional planning program provides leadership to the University of New Mexico through faculty holding directorships, participating in search committees, leadership for and participation in the GIS working group and in others ways. The program is an integral and growing part of the Latin American Studies program. For example, out of 54 MA students, 23 either concentrate in or are

pursuing a dual degree in CRP. This level of participation is very likely to become even more important with the new LAS concentration in Southwest Studies.

- The program should, however, make greater use of expertise outside of the program to compliment and augment its own resources, especially in, but not limited to, the Law School, and various Arts & Sciences department, such as Economics.

VII) Community service and experiential learning opportunities

- The regional and community planning program makes tremendous contributions in this area. Students are heavily involved in planning projects in the community through course work, internships and as Project Assistants at the Resource Center for Raza Planning. Additionally and not insignificantly, the faculty are heavily involved in numerous community projects. Again, as noted above, the department is the face of the University to many traditionally under served communities throughout New Mexico as well as participating in other civic groups. As examples, Prof. Cordova is a County Commissioner, a member of the County Water Authority, and the Mid-Regional Council of Governments. Prof. Isaac is a board member of the Sawmill Community Land Trust, the Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition and the Downtown Albuquerque Civic Trust. Prof. Jojola serves on the board of Catholic Social Services. Other faculties carry similar commitments.

VIII) Opportunities for further development

Program Mission and Identity

- Given the ebb of other planning programs in the country focusing on community-based planning there is a real opportunity for UNM to become the leader in this area.
- The faculty can enhance their national reputation through:
 - Submitting their community-based projects for state and national awards sponsored by the NM state chapter of American Planning Association and on the national level by the American Planning Association and the

Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Awards for students and faculty winners appear in Planning magazine, which is widely distributed among planning professionals.

- The planning faculty should participate more actively in national conferences, including planning sessions that focus on community-based pedagogy. Further they should translate project work into substantive theory of community-based planning and pedagogy through publication in peer-reviewed journals and books.

- The program can achieve international distinction in traditional Hispanic and indigenous communities, two separate areas. These are both substantially different legal-political environments. These draw on the community-based planning emphasis that defines the program and it is unique among planning programs nationally.

Undergraduate Degree

- We see the undergraduate program as a tremendous opportunity, given growing student interest in environment and sustainability, the degree's potential in providing students with skills for the job market, and as a feeder to UNM's Planning and Landscape Architecture programs. At the same time, however, the BAEPD presents a threat to the already limited and stressed resources of the program and the integrity of the graduate program. When CRP agreed to take on this program no additional resources came with it. The result has been a further drain on already over-extended faculty due to advisement loads of (now) 21 undergraduate students. This is exacerbated by the complexity of meeting the program requirements. Another problem inherent in the program is the mixing of undergraduates and graduates in some classes. While a few undergraduates in a class may not constitute a problem, as the undergraduate representation increases graduate students often feel as though they are being held back. Large class sizes are a problem for seminars, studios and community-based experiences that all require very careful attention to each student and her/his progress and development.

Research and Creative work

- The program should seek to ground more of its scholarly work in the insights of Donald Schön (The Reflective Practitioner), John Friedmann's Social Learning model, and Ernest Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered system. More generally, however, the faculty ought to think about how what they are already doing can be turned into scholarship for dissemination.

Teaching

- Students need a variety of technical skills to gain employment and excel in the profession. In particular, the program must provide GIS and rigorous land-use modeling training. Also the faculty should carefully consider requiring DPAC as an integrative course, thus giving students experience in interacting with architects and landscape architects and other design professionals.

Other

- During our visit the team heard from some faculty concerning the desirability of a PhD program. It is our sense that at this point in time the resources required to maintain current programs are already very limited. Resources for a doctoral program are substantial and currently do not exist. Thus it may well be premature to consider this option at this time.

IX. OBSTACLES:

- The community and regional planning program is currently operating beyond its resource limits; there is an unsustainable demand on faculty time. Faculty are stretched thin and over committed with the existing programs and their university and community service activities. As examples:
 - only one advisor for the entire School of Architecture and Planning.

- 5 of 7 faculty members have administrative responsibilities with no release time.
- service commitments without release time
- lack of clarity on GIS and computer support
- lack of support for adjunct faculty
- studio and community-based curriculum is very labor intensive
- Intensive advisement of graduate students

X. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To stabilize what presently exists, the following changes are needed:

1. The Indigenous Planning concentration is in danger of being lost. The specialization is one person deep and that person is rapidly approaching retirement. To maintain, let alone expand, what could be an internationally significant niche, the University must commit to some institutional planning to resolve this problem. In the short term, there should be someone to step up and work with Professor Jojola now. Some overlap is critically necessary. In the long run, however, beyond the replacement level, we recommend additional resources, such as considering indigenous groups in Latin America and other areas. The University could achieve further international distinction in providing leadership for indigenous planning throughout the world.
2. Additional staff support for the program and the college as a whole is needed to provide advising, internships, job placements, and recruitment support. With some additional staff support, the faculty could better disseminate its scholarship of engagement and scholarship of pedagogy and develop a national/international reputation. A planning academic advisor who also organizes recruitment, internships, and financial assistance for the program would be a great asset and better serve the student population. A grants and contract administrator would relieve faculty of these responsibilities and thereby permit the faculty to concentrate on proposal development, teaching and disseminating the results of their projects.

3. Additional faculty support for the program is needed to move it to national pre-eminence. With two junior faculty lines and one senior faculty line, the CRP program could become a national leader in community-based planning with distinctive program emphases in indigenous community planning and traditional Hispanic community planning. These lines would permit the BAEPD program to grow without jeopardizing the quality of the MCRP degree and community-based activities.
4. Develop a research center within the School to work with grants and contracts to better support students and further both scholarly and creative activities throughout the college. For example, support for the 1000 first-year service learning students at the University could be a source of funding for graduate assistantships in CRP. A connection with the RW Johnson Health Center Ph.D. grant could be used to fund graduate students in CRP if they are interested in health-related issues, especially in ethnic communities. The West Campus planning initiative could also require CRP expertise and assistance. Assistantships and studio support could be a mechanism to provide student support as well as projects.
5. The BAEPDc3-2 option requires more resources or enrollments will need to be constrained. A junior level hire would be appropriate for this program. Given the undergraduate minor in planning it is apparent that there has been too little thought given to the impact on both courses and advising. These courses are doubling in size to 35-75 students in what was to be a seminar format and should be split into two sections, perhaps to be covered with an advanced MCRP graduate student capable of teaching undergraduate students or a part-time instructor. Further, the BAEPD should be simplified in both in structure and direction.
6. It is our understanding that the University of New Mexico is currently engaged in a discussion to sort out how it allocate and provide support to the expanding needs for geographic information systems (GIS) equipment, facilities and instructional resources. It is absolutely critical that community and regional planning's needs in this area be recognized and ultimately supported. GIS has become foundational for planning education, scholarly research and community-based activities.

