Template
Academic Program
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
The University of New Mexico

**A. College, Department and Date**

1. College: *School of Architecture + Planning*
2. Department: *Landscape Architecture*
3. Date: *December 11, 2008*

**B. Academic Program of Study***
*Master of Landscape Architecture*

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**
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**D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

## LA Program Student Performance Criteria / Knowledge and Skills Areas

*(NOTE: please see attached matrix that correlates levels of ability to be attained in these areas with the curriculum)*

### Verbal And Writing Skills

- Students will be able to speak coherently and effectively on subject matter contained in professional curriculum and in articulating design ideas

- Students will be able to write clearly to express ideas, positions and critical commentary

### Collaborative Skills

- Students will be able to identify and assume divergent roles that maximize individual talents, and cooperate with other students when working as members of a design team and in other settings

### Graphic Skills

- Students will be able to employ appropriate representational media to convey and communicate essential information at each stage of the design process

- Students will be able use digital technology in effective ways to represent and communicate design ideas

* Academic Program of Study is defined as an approved course of study leading to a certificate or degree reflected on a UNM transcript. A graduate-level program of study typically includes a capstone experience (e.g. thesis, dissertation, professional paper or project, comprehensive exam, etc.).

## Research Skills

- Students will be able to identify and employ coherent methods of data collection and analysis to inform all aspects of investigation and design synthesis

## Critical Thinking Skills

- Students will be able to reflect on landscape architecture as a discipline that operates in the context of social, cultural, environmental and aesthetic theory

- Students will be able to develop analytical skills in reading and assessing landscape

## Design Skills & Knowledge

- Students will understand the fundamentals of visual perception and the systems of order that inform the three dimensional design of outdoor places

- Students will understand the spatial language of the landscape which enables human habitation and interaction at individual, social and cultural levels

- Students will be able to design as a process of reflection and experimentation

- Students will understand the design of landscape as an integration of environmental and cultural processes

- Students will understand comprehensive landscape architectural design from schematic design through the detailed development of programmatic spaces, landscape construction materials, assemblies and systems

## Human Process and Form

- Student will understand the theories and methods of inquiry that seek to clarify the relationships between human behavior and the physical environment

- Students will understand how landscapes have emerged throughout human history within the context of various systems of values, beliefs and thought

- Students will understand the idea of the cultural landscape and the diversity of needs, values that characterize different cultures and social groups

- Students will understand urban design principles and theory

## Natural Process and Form

- Students will understand the natural processes that give form to the environment and the ability to interpret and use these to inform the design process

- Students will be able to identify the indigenous and horticulturally available species, the environmental conditions needed for them to thrive, the complexity of associated species and the appropriate use of biotic materials in the design of a landscape

- Students will understand the basic principles and ethics of ecology, resource conservation and sustainability in landscape architecture at the urban, regional and global levels

## Site Planning

- Students will understand the basic factors that inform the design of a site including biophysical and cultural systems

• assessment of client and user needs, a critical review of appropriate precedents, and an inventory and analysis of site conditions

• respond to natural and built site characteristics that reflect identity and context, in the development of a program and in the design of a site

### Landscape Construction

• the conventions, standards, applications, and restrictions pertaining to landscape construction

• the appropriate application of landscape constructional systems and their resistance to potential human and natural destructive forces

• technically precise drawings and specifications of a proposed design for purposes of review and construction

• national and regional codes, regulations, and standards applicable to landscape design projects

### Professional Practice

• the laws pertaining to professional registration, professional service contracts, international trade agreements, and the formation of design firms and related legal entities

• the basic principles of office organization business planning and marketing as they apply to the practice of landscape architecture

• the different methods of project delivery, the corresponding forms of service contracts, and types of documentation required to render competent and responsible professional service

• the landscape architect's role in project management and contract administration

• the ethical issues involved in the formation of judgments in environmental design and landscape architecture practice

## E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

All programs are expected to measure some outcomes annually and to measure all priority program outcomes at least once over two consecutive three-year review cycles. Describe below the plan for the next three years of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Over the next three years we hope to cover all of our learning outcomes. This will be carried out using assessment review teams that are formed based on topic areas within the curriculum. The assessment groups will comprise the instructors for all of the courses within the topic area, and they will address the learning outcomes based on the knowledge and skills matrix (see attached), and the level to which the performance criteria, listed above, apply to the courses within the topic area. Assessment groups will address the following areas:

Design
History / Theory
Environmental Systems
Construction Technology
Graphics + Computing

Professional Practice

Relationship to UNM Student Learning Goals (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

| University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Program SLOs** | Knowledge | Skills | Responsibility | Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals. |
| Design | • | • | • | |
| History / Theory | • | • | • | |
| Environmental Systems | • | • | | |
| Construction Technology | • | • | | |
| Graphics and Computing | • | • | • | |
| Professional Practice | • | | | |
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| | | | | |

2. **How will learning outcomes be assessed?**

At the end of each academic year the instructors whose courses fall within each of the topic areas listed above will hold a series of meetings to discuss the learning outcomes based on student performance on their classes. Each course syllabus has a section on learning objectives, and these are consistent with the objectives on the *Student Performance Criteria / Knowledge and Skills Areas* listed above.

Each group will assess the outcomes based on student work as demonstrated in assignments and projects, the level of class discussion, and exam results where these are applicable. For example, in the design sequence, which has already been started, students are asked to submit portfolios of their year's work.

Outcomes will be evaluated on the following scale: unacceptable, acceptable, strong, or excellent. These will be qualitative measurements, as that is the nature of our disciplinary engagement, but they will still be direct measurements. Both the learning objectives and the basis upon which student work is evaluated is articulated in each course syllabus, and this would be the basis of evaluation.

*Unacceptable* = less than 65% of the students have achieved acceptable performance
*Acceptable* = More than 65% but less than 80% of the students have achieved acceptable performance
*Strong* = between 80% and 90% of the students have achieved acceptable performance
*Excellent* = 90% to 100% of the students have achieved acceptable performance

*The evidence will be based on all students in the program*

**3. When will learning outcomes be assessed? When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed?**

Spring 2009 Design, History / Theory
Spring 2010 Environmental Systems, Construction Technology
Spring 2011 Graphics + Computing, Professional Practice

Immediately following the assessment meetings at the end of each semester, each group will develop a set of recommendations for improving outcomes in the courses within their topic area, as well as how integration within the curriculum could strengthen outcomes. Many of the performance criteria apply, at varying levels, across the curriculum. The recommendations will be discussed at a faculty retreat in late summer dedicated to assessment outcomes.

**4. What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?**

Much of this section is described in 2 and 3 above. Each assessment group will meet with the Program Director to give a preliminary report of findings and recommendations. The set of recommendations as a whole will be reported and discussed at the Faculty retreat and an outline of specific strategies fore improvement will be drafted at the retreat.

The Program director will work with each instructor to help finalize the changes within the curriculum. The Program Director will form a small committee to work with strategies and initiatives that fall outside the formal curriculum.

*Source: Kansas State University Office of Assessment*