MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Hartmeister, Dean, Graduate School  
MS-1030

FROM: Alon Kvashny  
Dept. Chair  
Landscape Architecture

DATE: May 3, 2010

RE: Post Graduate Program Review

Our responses to the crucial item in the Graduate School review are as follows:

Please note that we do not offer a MS degree – upon graduation our students earn a Master Degree in landscape Architecture (MLA), which is the terminal degree in the profession.

Each item listed by the Graduate School will be quoted follow by our response.

- "Low faculty productivity in research and the resulting impact on student research activity"
  The heavy teaching load in the past ten years limited the ability of our faculty to engage in research. In landscape architecture there are very few research opportunities. Now that we have nine faculty members, productivity should increase.

- "Need for TA & RA position to support more graduate students in the program." As 98% of our graduate students come from disciplines other than landscape architecture, we can not use the students to help teach our professional courses. In addition now that we have nine faculty members, we can not justify additional teaching loads of TA’s.

- "The heavy load (73 hours) for an MS Degree was considered high and should be reduced.”
  We offer first professional degree (MLA) and to meet the accreditation requirements we have to offer “leveling courses”, these must be complete before the students can take the program main courses. Therefore, all the courses we offer are needed (with exception of the “core directed electives” that could be reduced from 12 to 6 hours).
• "Students are not allowed to take classes from other programs within their degree plan." I have no idea where this statement came from. It is erroneous! Ours students are required to take 12 hours of core directed electives; these courses are taken in other programs. The course "Research Methodology for Planning and Design" (LARC 6301) for example, is taken in Agricultural Education (AGED 5302). Thus 15 hours are taken from other disciplines.

• "A perceived lack of available classes offered for graduate students" Courses are available to the graduate students every semester. Some of the courses are offered as "piggy back" due to the need to economize since at time we have fewer than five graduate students.

• "Lack of involvement of a majority of faculty on graduate student committees" This is not a true or correct statement! If one reads the self evaluation report given to the graduate school review, one can see that each of the faculty was involved in the graduate student committees and at least the faculty served as committee chairs for our students.

• "Consideration for modifying the procedures for advising graduate students, especially with respect to only assigning students to specific faculty during their second year" This statements lacks clarity especially in light of the fact that the graduate students select the faculty that they want on their committee and are advise to do so.

Another comment is that since the review by the Graduate School, we had a site visit by our accreditation and the program was granted full accreditation as a first professional degree for the next six years. The review offer only one recommendation and very few suggestions, a very positive report!

I hope that my responses clarify some of the items on the list and dispute others that should not have been there in the first place. An earlier communication would have cleared them (#'s 4, 6, &7)

cc: Dr. John Burns, Dean