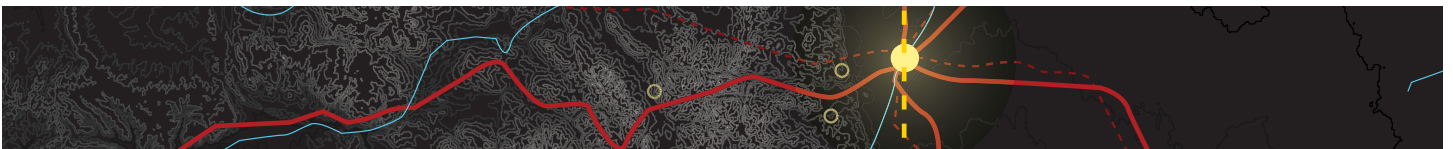




CHAPTER 1

PROGRAM MISSION AND OBJECTIVES



1. PROGRAM MISSION and OBJECTIVES

STANDARD 1: The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

INTENT: Using a clear concise mission statement, each landscape architecture program should define its core values and fundamental purpose for faculty, students, prospective students, and the institution. The mission statement summarizes why the program exists and the needs that it seeks to fulfill. It also provides a benchmark for assessing how well the program is meeting the stated objectives.

A. PROGRAM MISSION

1. State the current program mission and date adopted.

Our academic mission is education, scholarly research, and service in the discipline and practice of landscape architecture. The CU Denver landscape architecture program “focuses on pressing issues and addresses health, well being, and environmental resilience through design in the public realm.” Formally adopted in 2014, this mission statement fundamentally reflects the direction and values of the department over the last decade. Pedagogically, we believe that the design thinking, knowledge and skills we teach using the context of our city and state can be applied to multiple scales and cultures around the world.

Current focus areas operating across the curriculum address critical issues of: hunger and food security; water in the west; emerging technologies and practices for sustainable urban systems; and enhancing community and individual well being through design. Although these issues certainly reflect faculty areas of expertise and interest, they are more importantly responsive and fluid, allowing us to address current problems affecting our state, nation, and world. These focus areas foreground research and design, and afford opportunities to link theory with practice, history with change, technology with invention, and designers with constituents, thus increasing the relevance, depth and impact of the education offered at CU Denver.

2. Describe how the mission statement reflects the purpose and values of the program and how it relates to the institution’s mission statement.

The mission and core values of the Department of Landscape Architecture reflect our intentions to engage big ideas, address pressing issues, and create change through our focus on design in the public realm. We have identified the areas of health, well being and resilience of communities, individuals, and the environment as the areas most suited to accomplish these efforts. These goals and values align with those of the institution. We offer a rigorous professional curriculum that affords hand-on learning experiences and opportunities for service learning and applied research.

Our highly effective, outcomes-based curriculum supports our students' capacity to become innovators and leaders in our field. Design, research practices, and engaged learning are the keystones of our academic focus. We understand and address the imperative for training in ethics, cultural diversity, communication in all forms, critical thinking, research and inquiry, and the professional skills necessary to accomplish the work and endeavors undertaken.

Our efforts and values overlap with and actively support prominence and distinction in the three thematic areas of focus identified by the College of Architecture and Planning:

Enduring Places

Emerging Practices

Engaged Communities

The University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus is a “diverse teaching and learning community that creates, discovers and applies knowledge to improve the health and well-being of Colorado and the world.” To accomplish this and become, by 2020, “a leading public university with a global reputation for excellence in learning, research and creativity, community engagement and clinical care” the university espouses five core values and areas for excellence:

- **Learning and Scholarship.** The University respects academic freedom and the rigorous quest for knowledge and understanding. We share knowledge and foster student success through a continuous process of inquiry, critical thinking, reflection, collaboration and application.
- **Discovery and Innovation.** The University fosters an energetic, collaborative and creative environment where we develop and employ new ideas and technologies. Our entrepreneurial culture enables us to expand the frontiers of knowledge and human experience.
- **Health and Care of Mind, Body and Community.** The University enriches the well-being and sustainability of communities and our cultural, living and natural environments. We promote healthy lifestyles, prevent, diagnose and treat disease and deliver high-quality and compassionate health care.
- **Diversity, Respect and Inclusiveness.** The University seeks the richness that an increasing diversity of our communities brings to our learning, research and service endeavors. Our common humanity leads us to create an inclusive and respectful ethos characterized by caring, empathy, compassion, nurturing, collegiality and mentoring.
- **Citizenship and Leadership.** The University serves Colorado and the world as a recognized source of talent, knowledge, informed judgment, exemplary health care and professional practice. We are responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us and utilize them with integrity for the betterment of our community.

The department's mission and program delivery address these institutional values, and embrace our dynamic, urban campus and the many constituents and opportunities it affords.

B. EDUCATIONAL GOALS

1. State the academic goals of the program.

The program's goal is to develop and deliver a strong academic and professional curriculum that will produce competent, employable and innovative graduates -- life-long learners who will become leaders in their field, and who will leverage their training to produce positive and lasting impact in their communities.

2. Describe how the academic goals relate to the program's mission.

Our pedagogical goals are to deliver an integrated professional curriculum that emphasizes research, hands-on learning experiences, and courses that expand the intellectual and practical capacities of our students.

3. ***Describe how the program regularly evaluates its progress in meeting its goals.***

In addition to monthly faculty meetings devoted to departmental needs, over the past four years we have held working sessions and annual departmental retreats in which we have refined the program goals and objectives, coined our mission statement, celebrated our accomplishments, and debated curriculum and course content, and assessed strengths and weaknesses in our delivery. As a faculty, we value these conversations and are in concert about our work and the program mission; individually, we realize our commitment to effective and inspiring teaching.

In fall 2104 we determined to invite feedback about our program, and took steps to implement a series of "Professional Input Sessions," discussions with students, and surveys of current students, alumni, and professionals. The results of these efforts were the focus of several discussions in spring 2015. Mark Johnson, founding principal of Civitas, Inc. and a participant in our first professional session followed up with this affirming comment about our efforts and mission statement: "... to get to the level of clarity you have is very difficult alone much less with a faculty and students. Your focus on the public realm is right on."

In assessing and thinking about our program delivery, one important tool is the annual outcomes report submitted to the University; copies of these reports from the past three years are included in Appendix C. These reports compile individual "Faculty Course Evaluation" materials into a reflective format that the faculty then uses to discuss changes in the delivery, course sequence, and content of the curriculum. As an example of this "feedback loop" process, the department identified and implemented the current strategy of learning a skill, such as GIS, the applying it in a subsequent course to reinforce the learning and application. These reports are discussed annually in a faculty meeting.

The faculty takes pride in being effective teachers. We have held teaching workshops during faculty meetings with experts from the University's Center for Faculty Development. Topics have included managing team projects, assessing teamwork, writing a strong syllabus, and creating outcomes based rubrics. We have also invited library faculty to our meetings, and had sessions on new resources for research and digital literacy. Such sessions allow the faculty to reflect on their work and how it can be refined to enhance program goals for delivery of a strong academic and professional curriculum.

C. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. ***List the educational objectives of the program.***

The program's educational objectives are structured through five key areas linked to a series of measurable student learning outcomes. The educational objectives are intentionally tracked throughout the curriculum, with special emphasis in core classes. These objectives may also be identified and emphasized within the delivery of electives offered within the department. The five broad categories of curricular learning objectives are:

- **Design.** Students will be able to formulate questions and arguments about landscape and landscape's role as a significant cultural medium; determine processes and practices that lead to conceptual, analytical and formative actions that transform existing situations into preferred alternatives based on ethical, communicative and content knowledge criteria.
- **Communication and Representation.** Students will be able to speak, write, create and employ appropriate representational media to effectively convey ideas on subject matter contained in the professional curriculum to a variety of audiences.

- **Research.** Students will be able to understand and apply appropriate research methods for design and scholarship in landscape architecture.
- **Ethics.** Students will be able to critically evaluate local and global ramifications of social issues, diverse cultures, economic systems, ecological systems and professional practice as guiding principles for design thinking and implementation.
- **Content Knowledge.** Students will be able to develop a critical understanding and application of the histories, theories, ethics and practices of landscape architecture, and its role in reflecting and shaping culture and environments.

Further details relating to student learning outcomes and methods of assessment are included in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report. Copies of the past three years of our annual "Outcomes Reports" are included in Appendix C.

2. *Describe how educational objectives fulfill the academic goals.*

The objectives of the program are consistent with the vision of the University and allow us to describe and measure what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate.

D. LONG RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

1. *What is the program's long-range planning process?*

The program's long-range planning is lead by the Department Chair, working strategically with the faculty to identify needs, initiatives, and resources. There is no formal document guiding this process, which is fluid and responsive. Key items receiving attention currently are the transition in leadership; implementation of the "core competencies portfolio" processes and the extern program; development of the "immersion semester" proposal; development of the undergraduate presence; innovation in course delivery with hybrid/on-line models; recruiting, alumni relations; and scholarship and funding needs for the program.

2. *Does the long-range plan describe how the program mission and objectives will be met and document the review and evaluation process?*

The department's mission and objectives are embedded within the long-range planning efforts, which are targeted to capitalize on our strengths and enhance the program's signature "delivery models" for learning outcomes and student experiences, enhance the research and design training, enhance student success and professional preparation. The transition in leadership and stabilization of the tenure-track faculty depth is important to this effort.

3. *Describe how the long-range plan is reviewed and revised periodically and how it presents realistic and attainable methods for advancing the academic mission.*

Ideas, needs and initiatives tied to the program's long-range plan are reviewed and updated as needed by the Department Chair. Aspects are shared with the dean of the College of Architecture and Planning in order to identify feasible and manageable opportunities for execution and support. It is also shared with department faculty members, and discussed and revised as needed.

E. PROGRAM DISCLOSURE

1. *Describe how program information is disseminated to the public. Provide a link to material on the internet and copies of other materials to the visiting team.*

Material about the Master of Landscape Architecture program exists in both digital and printed forms, and is disseminated through standard venues for these media. Website links to program, college and university details are listed in Appendix A "Pertinent Websites."

Information describing the Program's mission, philosophy, objectives, compliance with equal opportunity requirement and accreditation standards is published annually in the University of Colorado Denver Catalog, and on the College of Architecture and Planning website homepage: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/ArchitecturePlanning/Pages/default.aspx>

Detailed program information including program requirements, curriculum overview and course sequence, admissions and initiatives, and course syllabi are available on the Department of Landscape Architecture's home page on the College of Architecture and Planning's website: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/ArchitecturePlanning/Academics/DegreePrograms/MLA/Pages/MLA.aspx>

The Master of Landscape Architecture program has been fully accredited since 1983. The program underwent its scheduled accreditation review by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board in October 2009. Accreditation was awarded for a six-year period, through December 31, 2015. Our next review is scheduled for October 2015. The 2009 self-evaluation report is available here: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/ArchitecturePlanning/Academics/DegreePrograms/MLA/Pages/Accreditation.aspx>.

Other means of disseminating information about the program include channels at the University, college and department levels. Following are some examples:

At the University level: Information is disseminated via the Official University of Colorado Catalog, and University website, which provides direct links to information about both the college and the Department of Landscape Architecture:

At the college level: Information about the program is disseminated at all college meetings of the faculty and students that are conducted each semester by the Dean. In addition, the Dean's office produces weekly "CAP Announcements" which contains news about faculty and student achievements, significant programs, alumni events and achievements, and general information about the college and its departments. Also at the college level, information regarding the specifics of admissions, advising, and student affairs is delivered by the Office of Student Services. This office prepares materials for new student orientation, continuing students, and post professional students.

At the department level: The Chair of the Department organizes departmental meetings with the faculty and students at least twice a year (typically once a semester) to convey news about the program, registration and courses, scholarships, and other opportunities.

The Chair also prepares occasional newsletters that are primarily intended for alumni but are distributed to students within the college and to the local professional offices. One example was information sent to alumni, students and friends about the "Homecoming event" held in November 2014 when the national ASLA conference was held in Denver.

Over the past three years the Department Chair has sent alumni and department friends "Solstice Cards", designed by a faculty member or student and featuring some significant design project of

event of the year. Other communications via e-mail have been sent to acknowledge significant events or accomplishments, such as students winning a national ASLA award.

The Associate Chair meets with the student ASLA chapter officers and functions as the faculty sponsor for this group. Information is shared between the department chapter and the professional chapter through both the education liaison from the CCASLA chapter, and the student chapter members, who send a representative to attend CCASLA chapter meetings.

ROOT, the student journal, is produced and distributed annually to all students in the program, to faculty in the college, and students across the university. It is also strategically distributed in some other venue each year. Over the past six years these have included national CELA member schools, LABASH, Colorado Chapter ASLA, and local design offices. <http://www.root-land.org>.