

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 06-02
BOARD DATE: September 15, 2005

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Articles of Amendment of the **Boston Architectural Center** to award the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture.

The institution shall provide in January 2006, and annually for four years thereafter, a status report on its implementation of its academic programs, including information regarding curriculum, enrollment, faculty, student services, and publications.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et.Seq.
Contact: Aundrea Kelley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

September 2005

Boston Architectural Center

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture

INTENT

The Boston Architectural Center (BAC) filed Articles of Amendment to its corporate charter with the Secretary of the Commonwealth to award the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. Landscape architecture is a profession and a discipline concerned with the design, planning, and management of the land. With an urban Boston location and links with other design programs currently offered at the BAC, the proposed program intends to focus on site and urban design and offer a traditional undergraduate landscape architecture curriculum leading to the first professional degree in the field. The BAC has applied concurrently for initial candidacy for this proposed program from the Landscape Architecture Accrediting Board (LAAB) as the first step toward full accreditation. Upon receipt of accreditation, program graduates who complete an internship under a licensed Landscape Architect will be eligible to sit for the Landscape Architecture registration exam.

A 2004 national survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects revealed that landscape architecture firms are growing in size, billing rates are increasing dramatically, and the client base for the profession continues to expand, most significantly in the public sector.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The Boston Architectural Center is a private, non-profit institution originally incorporated in 1889 as the Boston Architectural Club. The name was changed to the Boston Architectural Center (BAC) in 1944. Over the years the BAC evolved from its origin as a meeting place where people involved in architecture came to learn and teach one another to a formal degree-granting institution. In 1979, the BAC received authority to award the Bachelor of Architecture degree. In 1993 authority was granted to award the Bachelor of Interior Design. The Board of Higher Education awarded additional authority to grant the Master of Architecture and the Master of Interior Design in 1997. The BAC was granted authority to award its third baccalaureate degree, the Bachelor of Design Studies, in 2004. The institution's philosophy has remained unchanged, grounded on apprenticeship and mentorship in the workplace and classroom. If approved, the proposed program will represent the Center's fourth baccalaureate degree.

ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS

Similar to the other currently offered bachelor's programs, students in the proposed program will work in approved, supervised professional settings during the day (practice component) and take academic courses in the evening (academic component). The faculty comprises local practitioners and educators who teach on a stipend and volunteer basis. A core of 15 full-time faculty administrators coordinates approximately 138 adjunct faculty (paid \$2,240 per course on average) and 149 volunteer faculty who receive an average honorarium of \$207 per course. The BAC sustains its links to the profession through the practice component of the curriculum and its primarily practitioner faculty.

The proposed BLA program will require 12 semesters plus summers or approximately 6.5 years for completion. The actual length of stay will vary, depending on prior academic and practice experience, chosen pace through the school, and successful completion of requirements.

The BAC also offers an Academic-Only First-Year option that will enable students with little, if any, academic and experiential background in design to engage in a primarily daytime, "academic-only" program for the first year. These students will begin the concurrent curriculum—academic and practice—at the beginning of their second year at the BAC.

Admission and Projected Enrollment

The BAC maintains an open admissions policy, and no change in this policy is planned for the proposed Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. Admissions decisions are made throughout the year on a rolling basis. Applicants must submit a completed application, a \$50 application fee, and an official high school transcript indicating the date of graduation. Currently, the BAC enrolls 780 degree-seeking students and 300 continuing education students. For the proposed program, the BAC projects a total of 23 new students in the first year of the program, 50 in the second year, and 75 in the third year.

Tuition and Fees

Current tuition for full-time baccalaureate students is \$4,302 per semester (\$8,604 per year). Tuition for baccalaureate students enrolled in the first-year, academic-only program is \$5,770 per semester (\$11,540 per year). Annual fees total approximately \$320.

Curriculum (Attachment A)

Students in the proposed program will be required to complete 123 academic credits (43 classes) along with a 'practice' component of 45 credits.

Academic Component

The academic component of the proposed program will be organized into three segments of approximately equal length. Segment I entails a common foundation curriculum, which overlaps with the BAC's other professional degree programs in addressing basic design and general education courses. In Segments II and III, students in the proposed BLA program will focus on the landscape architecture discipline. A Design Studio sequence will be at the core of the proposed curriculum. Segment III will culminate in the Thesis, an individual student project that integrates the academic and practice components of the curriculum by synthesizing professional and general education learning. Students will be required to complete successfully the 62.5

credits required for the major (22 classes), 39.5 general education credits (13 classes), 16.5 credits in design media and plant materials (6 classes), and 4.5 elective credits (2 classes) for a total of 123 credits (43 classes) for the academic component of the proposed degree program.

Practice Component

The BAC will credit structured, practice-based study as a formal part of the proposed degree program curriculum and will require students to have attained specific quantitative and qualitative learning objectives at key points in their passage through the proposed degree program. Emphasis will be placed on a semester-by-semester review and statement of goals and learning objectives. BAC students will work in approved, supervised settings to earn credit. The practice component of the proposed program will comprise 45 (approximately one-third) of the total credits required for graduation. Credit will be based on a contact ratio of 100 hours of work per one work credit.

Administration and Governance

The Program Director of the proposed BLA program will report to the Executive Vice President. Faculty in the proposed program will meet regularly under the direction of the Program Director. A fundamental operating tenet of the BAC is the substantial engagement of practicing professionals in teaching as adjunct and volunteer faculty under the guidance of full-time and administrative faculty.

RESOURCES

Library and Physical Resources

The Shaw and Stone Library houses approximately 25,000 books and subscribes to over 120 periodicals. Areas of primary focus include architectural, interior and landscape design, urban planning, history and theory, materials and structures, and energy conservation and sustainable design. The BAC Visual Resources collection contains approximately 40,000 slides in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, fine arts, interior design and other related areas. Adequacy of the collections is monitored by professional organizations, and it is expected that additional visual library images will be required as the proposed BLA program grows.

The BAC owns and occupies two integrated structures at 320-322 Newbury Street in Boston and recently purchased space nearby at 100 Massachusetts Avenue. The BAC recently completed an expansion of classroom space at the Massachusetts Avenue site to provide space to accommodate the proposed BLA program, among other objectives.

Faculty and Personnel Resources

A Program Director for the proposed program has been hired and will report to the Executive Vice President. The Program Director is responsible for program planning and administration; faculty hiring, oversight, and development; and teaching courses. The practice component of the proposed curriculum will be managed by the BAC's Practice Curriculum Department.

Over half (58 percent) of the courses required in the proposed program are already offered by the other degree programs at the BAC, and two-thirds of the faculty serving the proposed BLA program will be drawn from current BAC faculty. The Program Director will teach some of the

remaining courses, and the BAC will also engage adjunct and part-time faculty members. Most BAC faculty practice professionally and thus teach only one course. Some faculty within the BAC are paid by stipend, including those who teach computer studies, professional subjects not taught by architects, and several required courses. Volunteer faculty who receive honoraria will be relied upon as well. For the 2004-05 school year, the BAC employed a core faculty of 15 full-time faculty administrators, 138 adjunct faculty (paid \$2,240 per course on average) and 149 volunteer adjunct faculty (paid a \$207 honorarium on average).

EVALUATION

Visiting Committee

The proposed program was evaluated by an external visiting committee comprising Dr. Peter Trowbridge, Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture, Cornell University; Dr. Mark S. Lindhult, Graduate Program Director of Landscape Architecture, University of Massachusetts Amherst; and Dr. Colgate Searle, Professor, Rhode Island School of Design. The Visiting Committee reviewed the petition and appendices in preparation for the site visit, which took place February 20-23, 2005. During the visit, the Committee met with administrators, faculty, staff, and students; and toured the facilities.

Findings

The Visiting Committee commended the BAC in a number of areas, including its leadership and energetic staff. The Committee noted that although the Web-like organization and governance of the BAC is not deep or traditionally hierarchical, “it represents a team of colleagues, which is self-supportive in a common collective vision” and that the directors’ support for one another was expressed as “mutually held responsibility.” The Committee also felt that the resources necessary to mount and continue the proposed degree program had been carefully considered.

The Visiting Committee made the following recommendations:

All courses listed in the proposal to be offered by the Landscape Institute—a continuing education entity affiliated with Harvard University’s Arnold Arboretum, which does not grant academic credit for course work—must be fully under the direction and control of the BAC administration to fulfill any credit hour requirements of the proposed Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree.

While the BAC has clear contractual relationships with its faculty, the conditions for hiring, especially for those individuals working under terms of stipend and honoraria, require clearly stated procedures for recruiting, vetting and hiring.

Properly reference who the faculty members are and their degrees held and the institutions granting them in the online catalogue.

The Visiting Committee made the following suggestions:

Review annually general education courses.

Provide general education elective opportunities for students with either in-house courses or courses offered in the Pro Arts Consortium.

Ensure students receive a high-quality education year after year with different instructors teaching courses through consistent course offerings and strong outlines.

Encourage the continuing work of staff to develop and implement the Student Support Committee.

Encourage the continuing effort by the Registrar and the Writing and Learning Resource Center to develop a writing appraisal and placement process for all incoming students.

Ensure the necessary books and other reference resources students will need are available for the proposed program.

Provide library staff with the list of books required in a timely manner.

Explore options for making room available in the library for the expanded collection of landscape architecture-related materials.

Institutional Response

In response to the Visiting Committee’s suggestions, the BAC provided a guiding philosophy of its general education program, while acknowledging an “active linking” of general education and professional courses. The BAC Curriculum Committee will annually review program curricula each April to ensure that the general education course requirements meet Massachusetts credit hour regulations and truly broaden the student’s education. The BAC submitted further information about its syllabus template review processes, including examples of current templates and stated that this information will be included in the fall 2005 Faculty Handbook. The BAC stated that the implementation of the Student Support Committee will be encouraged and that new space plans include a joint Advisement/Career Services/Practice Component office to provide students with one-stop support services. In regard to incoming student assessment efforts, a writing appraisal and placement process is being developed for use by spring 2006 to replace the current process, which includes a machine-scored test and an essay. There are plans to add an online reading comprehension exam and an online math assessment exam from the College Board for fall 2006. The BAC indicated that the library staff will be provided with the necessary lists for procurement in a timely fashion and that the library needs of the proposed program were considered in the latest plans for school expansion.

In response to the Visiting Committee’s recommendations, the BAC stated that all courses in the proposed curriculum will be taught by BAC part-time or adjunct faculty in-house and under its own auspices. Syllabi for the five courses that were initially proposed to be taught by individuals from the Landscape Institute were provided. The BAC comprehensively described the processes by which faculty are recruited, vetted, and hired. The BAC provided additional information about its faculty, stating that the depth and continuity of faculty are commensurate with other architecture and design schools.

BAC Faculty Type	Equates To	Number	FT/PT	Average Time Served	Average Reimbursement per Course
Core Education Staff	Full-time Faculty	15	15 FT	4.2 years	\$12,500
Faculty with Stipend	Adjunct Faculty	138	138 PT	5.7 years	\$2240
Faculty with Honoraria	Adjunct Faculty	149	149 PT	6.7 years	\$207

The BAC implemented a plan for posting faculty credentials and biographies on its Website. The BAC will provide the same information in the hard copy version of its academic catalog when it is published, including appropriate faculty credentials and status information.

PUBLIC HEARING

The required public hearing was held in the Board of Higher Education offices on May 31, 2005, at 2 p.m. No objections to the proposal were presented.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff thoroughly examined all materials submitted by the Boston Architectural Center and held additional meetings with the President and key administrators.

Staff is satisfied that the proposed Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program proposed by the Boston Architectural Center meets the criteria for a new academic program as set forth in 610 CMR 2.08(3) in the Degree-Granting Regulations for Independent Institutions of Higher Education. Recommendation is for approval with the following requirement:

The institution shall provide in January 2006, and annually for four years thereafter, a status report on implementation of its academic programs, including information regarding curriculum, enrollment, faculty, student services, and publications.

ATTACHMENT A

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total courses required =126)

Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
TM1xx	LA Year One Seg. 1	1
SA 101	Foundation Design A-1 Seg.1	3
SA 202	Foundation Design A-2 Seg.1 (Prereq. SA 101)	3
SB 10x	Design B-1 Analysis Seg.1 (Prereq. SA 202)	3
SB 20x	Design B-2 Concept & Synthesis Seg.1 (Prereq SB 10x)	3
PR 450	Portfolio Review Seg. 1	PF
LA 301	Natural Systems Studio Seg.2 (prereq. PR 450 & Geology)	3
LA 302	Settlement/Housing Studio Seg.2 (prereq. PR 450)	3
LA 304	Urban Infrastructure Studio Seg.2 (prereq. PR 450)	4
PR 890	Portfolio Review Seg. 2	Pass/Fail
LA 305	Campus/Institutional Planning Studio Seg.3 (prereq. PR 890)	4
LA 306	Advanced Studio (elect one)Hist. Preservation, Recreation, or Special Needs Seg.3 (prereq. PR 890)	4
LA 401	Degree Project Studio 1 Seg.3	6
LA 403	Degree Project Studio 2 Seg.3	6
TM xxx	LA Materials & Methods Seg 1	1.5
TM xxx	LA Construction 1 Grading Seg.2	3
TM xxx	LA Construction 2 Drainage Seg. 2	3
TM xxx	LA Construction 3 Site Details/Structures Seg.2	1.5
TM xxx	Planting Design 1 Seg.2	1.5
HT xxx	LA History 1 Ancient to 18 th . Century Seg. 2 (prereq. PR 450 & Writing 2)	3
HT xxx	LA History 2 19 th . Century to Modern Seg. 2 (prereq. PR 450 & Writing 2)	3
LA xxx	LA Professional Practice Seg. 3 (prereq. Pr 890)	3
	Sub Total Credits	62.5
PCRxxx	Practice Component Progress Review Seg. 1 (prereq. A-1, A-2, & B-1 Studios)	Pass/Fail
PCRxxx	Practice Component Progress Review Seg. 2 (prereq. B-2, and at least two C Level studios)	Pass/Fail
PC	Practice Component Credits (@ 1 Credit . 100 hr.)	45
	Total	107.5

Other Required Courses in Related Subject Areas (Total courses required =6)

Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
VS 100	Design Media 1-Design Awareness Seg. 1	3
VS 200	Design Media 2a & 2b-Design Drawing Seg. 1 (prereq. DM 1)	3
VS 300	Design Media 3a & 3b-Design Documentation Seg.1 (prereq. DM 1 & 2)	3
VS xxx	Design Media 4A Seg.2 (prereq. PR450)	1.5
AS xxx	Plant Materials 1 Trees Seg.1 (prereq. Botany or permission of Program Director)	3
AS xxx	Plant Materials 2 Shrubs Seg. 1 (prereq. Botany or permission of Program Director)	3
	Sub Total Related Credits	16.5
Elective Courses* (Total courses required =2)		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
	*Selected courses available to fill electives	
VS 4 A,B,or C	Design Presentation Seg. 2 (prereq. DM 1,2, &3)	3
VS 410	Intro GIS Seg. 2 (prereq. VS-655)	1.5
HTxxx	Boston Parks History Seg. 1 or 2 (prereq. Writing 2)	3
TMxxx	Planting Design 2 Seg. 2 (prereq. Plant. Des. 1)	1.5
ASxxx	Plant Materials 3 Perennials Seg. 1 or 2 (prereq. Botany for Designers)	3
ASxxx	Ecology Seg. 2 or 3 (prereq. PR 450)	1.5
HTxxx	Intro to Art History & Criticism Seg. 2 or 3 (prereq. Writing 2)	3
ASxxx	Global Conservation Ethics Seg. 2 or 3 (prereq. Writing 2 & PR 450)	1.5
	Sub Total Elective Credits	4.5
<i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i> Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		# of Credits
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		20
AS 122 Writing 1 Seg. 1		3
AS 123 Writing 2 Seg.1 (prereq. Writing 1 or perm. Instructor)		3
HT 101 Design Principles-B (prereq. Writing 1 or perm. Instructor)		3
AS 200 Civilization & Ideas Seg. 2 (prereq. Writing 2 or perm. Instructor)		3

ASxxx Public Art Seg. 2 (prereq. PR 450)	1
ASxxx Landscape & the Imagination-Writing about the Landscape Seg.3 (Prereq. LA His. 1 & 2)	4
AS xxx Free Elective (Humanities Suggested) (prereq. PR 450)	3
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences	9
AS 167 Math 2 Seg.1	3
AS 275 Botany Seg.1	3
AS xxx Geology/Landform Analysis Seg.2 (prereq. PR 450 or perm. of Program Director)	3
Social Sciences	10.5
ASxxx Social Psychology Seg. 2	3
ASxxx Social Theory - Urban Villages-Neighborhood Seg. 2 (prereq. PR-450)	3
ASxxx Political Science-Legal Aspects Seg. 3 (prereq. PR-890)	3
ASxxx Social Science Research Methods Seg. 3 (prereq. PR-890)	1.5
Sub Total General Education Credits	39.5
<i>Curriculum Summary</i>	
Total number of courses required for the degree	43
Total academic credit hours required for degree	123
Total 'practice' credit hours required:	45
Prerequisites or Other Additional Requirements: Successful passing of portfolio and practice component reviews/reports.	