

January 28, 2010

SITE VISIT REPORT

School of Community and Regional Planning

College for Interdisciplinary Studies

University of British Columbia

**Master of Arts (Planning)
Master of Science (Planning)**

November 2-4, 2009

Part I. List of Site Visitors and Their Affiliations

Chair

Cheryl K. Contant, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean
University of Minnesota, Morris
315 Behmler Hall
600 East 4th Street
Morris, MN 56267
contant@morris.umn.edu
320-589-6015 (phone)
320-589-6399 (fax)

Second Educator

Kenneth Chew, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer SOE and Vice Chair
Department of Planning, Policy & Design
School of Social Ecology
University of California at Irvine
Irvine, California USA 92697-7075
chew@uci.edu
949-824-6990 (phone)
949-824-8566 (fax)

Practitioner

David M. Haight, AICP
Sr. Project Manager
PBS&J
120 Richard Jackson Boulevard, Suite 230
Panama City Beach, Florida 32407-2516
dmhaight@pbsj.com
850.236.8675 Ext. 221 (voice)
Fax: 850.236.8676 (fax)

Part II. Site Visit Schedule

Monday, November 2nd

- 9:00 – 9:45 Meet SCARP Director, Penny Gurstein
9:45- 10:30 Paula Farrar- SCARP Librarian
10:45-11:15 CFIS, Associate Principal, Research & Faculty, Sneja Gunew, Acting Principal
11:15-11:30 Break
11:30-12:00 President, Professor Stephen Toope; Provost & VP Academic, Professor David Farrar
12:00-12:30 Meet with Associate Units: Director, Professor Paul Evans, Institute of Asian Research, Director, Professor Julien Dierkes, Keidanren, Chair, Japanese Research, Institute of Asian Research
12:30-2:00 Lunch meeting with Masters students: Spring Asrai- Planning Student Association - President
2:00-2:30 Meet with SCARP Faculty - Tom Hutton, Professor
2:30-3:00 Meet with SCARP Faculty - Nora Angeles, Associate Professor
3:00-3:30 Break
3:30-4:00 Meet with SCARP Faculty - Maged Senbel, Assistant Professor
4:00-5:00 Meet with Adjunct Faculty
5:00-6:00 Meet with Alumni, Employers and SCARP Advisory Council

Tuesday, November 3rd

- 8:30-9:00 Meet with Patti Toporowski, Master's Program Support Staff
9:00-10:00 SCARP Director, Penny Gurstein and brief Tour
10:00-10:30 Meet with SCARP Faculty -Tony Dorcey, Professor
10:30-11:00 Break
11:00-11:30 Meet with SCARP Faculty -Tim McDaniels, Professor
11:30-12:00 Meet with SCARP Faculty –Leonie Sandercock, Professor
12:00-1:30 Lunch with Associated Units: Gillian Creese, Centre for Women's & Gender Studies, Director; Hugh Davies, School of Occupational Environmental Health; Susan Herrington, School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture; Reza Vaziri, UBC Civil Engineering, Head; Julie Wagemakers, Liu Institute for Global Studies; Gunilla Oberg, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability
1:30-2:00 Dave Crossley, Planning of Institute of BC, Administrator Director
2:00-2:30 Meet with SCARP Faculty - John Friedmann, Honorary Professor and Larry Beasley, Distinguished Professor
2:30-3:00 Break
3:00-3:30 Meet with SCARP Faculty- Larry Frank, Associate Professor
3:30-4:00 Meet with SCARP Faculty - Bill Rees, Professor
4:00-4:30 Meet with SCARP Faculty – Stephanie Chang, Professor
4:30-5:00 Meet with SCARP Faculty - Mark Stevens, Assistant Professor

Wednesday, November 4th

- 8:15 - 9:15 SCARP Director, Penny Gurstein
9:15-10:10 CFIS, Principal, Mike Burgess CFIS, Associate Principal, Research & Faculty,
10:15-10:45 Vice Provost and Associate Vice President Academic Affairs, Dr. Anna Kindler, Acting Provost
10:45 – 11:10 Break
11:15-12:00 Provost & Vice President Academic, Professor David Farrar, Acting President

Part III. A. Site Visit Report Checklist

CRITERIA and GUIDELINES*	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
1. Mission, Goals and Objectives			
1.1 Statement	X		
1.2 Focus	X		
1.3 Clarity	X		
Guideline: Specific Objectives	X		
1.4 Academic Excellence	X		
1.5 Progress	X		
1.6 Dissemination	X		
1.7 Assessment and Participation	X		
1.8 Diversity	X		
1.9 Educational Outcomes		X	
2. Institutional Relations			
2.1 Opportunities within the Institution	X		
2.2 Contribution to the Institution	X		
3. Academic Autonomy and Governance			
3.1 Administrative Location	X		
Guideline: Department or School	X		
3.2 Program Identity	X		
3.3 Program Autonomy	X		
Guideline: Administrator's Reporting Pattern	X		
Guideline: Independent Entity	X		
3.4 Governance	X		
Guideline: Minimum 1 Full Professor Rank	X		
Guideline: Minimum 2 Assistant Professor Rank	X		
3.5 Participation in Governance	X		
Guideline: Responsiveness	X		
3.6 Program Leadership (Administration)	X		
4. Curriculum			
4.1 Relation to Mission, Goals and Objectives	X		
4.2 Components: Knowledge, Skills and Values			
4.2.1 Human Settlement	X		
4.2.1(a) Social Sciences	X		
4.2.1(b) Environmental Sciences	X		
4.2.1(c) Design Arts		X	
4.2.1(d) Legal Studies	X		
4.2.2 History and Contemporary Planning Practice	X		
4.2.2(a) Purpose and Meaning of Planning	X		
4.2.2(b) History of Urban Planning	X		
4.2.2(c) Economic, Social and Political Institutions	X		
4.2.2(d) Methods and Tools	X		
4.2.2(e) Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans	X		
4.2.2(f) Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans		X	
4.2.2(g) Equity and Social Justice	X		

CRITERIA and GUIDELINES*	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
4.2.2(h) Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment	X		
4.2.3 Practice of Planning	X		
4.2.3(a) Problem Solving Skills	X		
4.2.3(b) Research Skills	X		
4.2.3(c) Written, Oral and Graphic Communication Skills	X		
4.2.3(d) Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills	X		
4.2.3(e) Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation	X		
4.2.3(f) Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects	X		
4.2.3(g) Anticipation of Future Changes	X		
4.2.3(h) Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans		X	
4.2.3(i) Working with Diverse Communities	X		
4.2.4 Values and Ethics	X		
4.2.4(a) Discriminating Among Competing Goals	X		
4.2.4(b) Forms of Decision Making	X		
4.2.4(c) Social, Historical and Ecological Legacies	X		
4.2.5 Specializations (Optional)	N/A		
5. Faculty Resources and Composition			
5.1 Customary Expectations	X		
5.2 Qualifications	X		
Guideline: 5.2.1 Educational Diversity	X		
Guideline: 5.2.2 Educational and Professional Attainment	X		
Guideline: 5.2.3 Practitioners	X		
Guideline: 5.2.4 Adjuncts, Lecturers and Guest Speakers	X		
Guideline: 5.2.5 Planning Predominance	X		
5.3 Faculty Recruitment and Composition	X		
5.4 Continuing Academic and Professional Development	X		
5.5 Size			
Guideline: One Degree: Minimum of Five FTEs	X		
Guideline: Two Degrees: Minimum of Seven FTEs	N/A		
5.6 Concentration of Resources		X	
5.7 Student/Faculty Ratio			
Guideline: Graduate Program: 10:1 students/faculty	X		
Guideline: Undergraduate Program: 15:1 students/faculty	N/A		
6. Teaching, Advising and Student Services			
6.1 Teaching Quality	X		
6.2 Faculty Qualifications	X		
Guideline: Continuing Association	X		
Guideline: Core Curriculum Teaching	X		
6.3 Specializations (Optional)	N/A		
6.4 Course Scheduling		X	
Guideline: Regularity of Offerings		X	
6.5 Advising	X		
6.6 Placement	X		

CRITERIA and GUIDELINES*	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
6.7 Financial Aid	X		
7. Research and Scholarly Activities			
7.1 Policy	X		
Guideline: Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Practices and Mission	X		
Guideline: Instructional Load, Release Time and Leave Opportunities	X		
7.2 Quality	X		
Guideline: 7.2.1 Link with Teaching	X		
Guideline: 7.2.2 Link to Practice	X		
Guideline: 7.2.3 Dissemination	X		
8. Public and Professional Service			
8.1 Policy	X		
8.2 Quality	X		
Guideline: 8.2.1 Link with Teaching	X		
Guideline: 8.2.2 Link to Profsnl. and Scholarly Communities	X		
8.3 Continuing Education	X		
9. Students			
9.1 Quality	X		
9.2 Admission Standards	X		
Guideline: Previous Performance, etc.	X		
9.3 Size	X		
9.4 Recruitment and Composition	X		
10. Institutional Resources			
10.1 Library and Information Services	X		
10.2 Physical Facilities	X		
10.3 Computer Capabilities		X	
10.4 Financial Resources	X		
Guideline: External Resources	X		
Guideline: Contact with Alumni	X		
11. Administrative and Fair Practices			
11.1 Student and Faculty Grievance Procedures	X		
11.2 Non-discrimination	X		
11.3 Inclusivity	X		
11.4 Accurate and Comprehensive Information	X		
11.5 Confidentiality of Student Records	X		
11.6 On-going Monitoring and Evaluation	X		

*All subjects listed are criteria unless otherwise noted.

Part III. B. 1. Overall Assessment of the Program

The School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) master's degree program prepares its graduates to practice community and regional planning with a focus on sustainability and democratization. This vision shapes the program's mission, goals, and objectives. It also influences its curriculum, both in terms of required courses and in the dimensions of planning that must be taken by all students.

The program is extremely solid with a strong cohort of students, a faculty with internationally-renowned experts in their fields, and a practitioner community that supports the program through adjunct teaching, internships, employment of graduates, and financial support. We were impressed with the level of knowledge and support for the program as expressed by all levels of the university administration, including the President. We find this program poised to grow and improve in quality in the future. To do so, we see several key issues that it can and should address. These include key transitions in its faculty, a need to improve the cohesion and consistency in its curriculum, and the opportunities associated with fundraising for new facilities.

Our team found the Self-Study Report (SSR) to have some minor errors and omissions; most were readily rectified during the Site Visit. One of our requests for revised data must still be resolved. The team asked for a re-computation of faculty FTE, as the data presented in the program-customized table (SSR page 10) appears possibly to over report full time FTE by neglecting to account for the many joint appointments listed subsequently (SSR page 74). The team was unable to reconcile the program's complicated scheme of FTE allocation with the PAB's categories.

Part III. B.2. Overview – Outcomes Assessment

The SCARP program prepared a very modest attempt at outcomes assessment, drawing directly from the tables provided in the PAB guidance. We had no evidence of a rigorous attempt to understand program outcomes and relate them to the distinctive mission of the program or its learning objectives.

We did note that several courses had included learning outcomes in their syllabi – an important first step in beginning to relate the activities and curriculum to outcomes for the program. We encourage the SCARP program to undertake a serious effort to define both student learning outcomes and program outcomes, and then seek valid and reliable measures of those outcomes.

Part III. C. 1 Criteria and Guidelines

Met

The criteria and guidelines listed below were determined to have been “met” based on evidence provided in the Self-Study Report and corroborated during our visit, or through information obtained on site during our interviews and review of student work.

1. Mission, Goals and Objectives

1.1 Statement

1.2 Focus

1.3 Clarity

Guideline: Specific Objectives

1.4 Academic Excellence

1.5 Progress

In our judgment, based on the evidence provided, the Program has attempted to address all of the partially or not met criteria from the last review. When we reviewed the areas of enhancement and some of the underlying rationale the previous team used in citing their concerns about the program, we found that many of the same issues remain unaddressed since that last review. These include: a need for a comprehensive curricular review; the true meaning of areas of concentration, streams or specializations for the students and the curriculum; time to degree completion by the students (this has improved, but is still longer than what the program describes); succession planning; and what was referred to as the “one-person” problem in several areas of program focus. The Site Visit Team felt that these issues are critical to the program’s continued success, and should have been addressed in the period between the last and this accreditation review.

1.6 Dissemination

1.7 Assessment and Participation

1.8 Diversity

2. Institutional Relations

2.1 Opportunities within the Institution

2.2 Contribution to the Institution

3. Academic Autonomy and Governance

3.1 Administrative Location

Guideline: Department or School

3.2 Program Identity

3.3 Program Autonomy

Guideline: Administrator’s Reporting Pattern

Guideline: Independent Entity

3.4 Governance

Guideline: Minimum 1 Full Professor Rank

Guideline: Minimum 2 Assistant Professor Rank

3.5 Participation in Governance

Guideline: Responsiveness

3.6 Program Leadership (Administration)

4. Curriculum

4.1 Relation to Mission, Goals and Objectives

The course with the most relationship to SCARP's mission of sustainability planning is PLAN 540A: Omnibus. This course is now required of all students, but had not been required for the two previous years, due in part to personnel changes. The lack of continuity in the offering of this course in the recent past raises concerns about the program's commitment to ensuring that its curriculum does indeed focus on sustainability in a direct and meaningful way for all students. It was also clear from discussions about this course that the quality of the offering was related to the ability of one faculty member to deliver the course. Future success of the course may rely on finding a suitable replacement for that instructor upon his retirement.

4.2 Components: Knowledge, Skills and Values

The SCARP degree program has relatively few required courses for all students—a core curriculum. It does have a set of four required dimensions of planning – each includes a set of courses from which students must pick one. The remaining requirements for the degree are elective courses, both within and outside SCARP. To determine whether the content areas noted below were covered for all students, we had to check the content of the courses across the dimensions to ensure that each topical area was covered in at least one core course or was covered by all options in a particular dimension. This was the only way we could ensure that a particular student received exposure to these knowledge, skills, and values components. This complex set of interlaced curriculum requirements also begs the question whether student time- to-completion is affected by the ability (or inability) to register for all courses desired or needed by an individual student to meet the requirements. We also heard some evidence that desired courses are sometimes scheduled concurrently making it impossible to attend both.

4.2.1 Human Settlement

- 4.2.1(a) Social Sciences
- 4.2.1(b) Environmental Sciences
- 4.2.1(d) Legal Studies

4.2.2 History and Contemporary Planning Practice

- 4.2.2(a) Purpose and Meaning of Planning
- 4.2.2(b) History of Urban Planning
- 4.2.2(c) Economic, Social and Political Institutions

The two versions of the curriculum matrix presented in the Self-Study Report show dramatic differences in the coverage of this topic across courses from one year to the next. While we regard this criterion as met, we are concerned about the seeming instability of course content from one year to another.

- 4.2.2(d) Methods and Tools
- 4.2.2(e) Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans
- 4.2.2(g) Equity and Social Justice
- 4.2.2(h) Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment

4.2.3 Practice of Planning

- 4.2.3(a) Problem Solving Skills
- 4.2.3(b) Research Skills
- 4.2.3(c) Written, Oral and Graphic Communication Skills
- 4.2.3(d) Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills

Our review of the content of courses and the interviews we conducted on-site indicate that students are receiving a level of exposure to this material intended to

provide for numerical literacy. We believe that this criterion requests a level of proficiency higher than literacy, perhaps competence in application. We hope that SCARP would re-evaluate its desire to provide literacy in lieu of competence in the use of quantitative tools to analyze problems and possible solutions.

- 4.2.3(e) Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation
- 4.2.3(f) Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects
- 4.2.3(g) Anticipation of Future Changes
- 4.2.3(i) Working with Diverse Communities
- 4.2.4 Values and Ethics
 - 4.2.4(a) Discriminating Among Competing Goals
 - 4.2.4(b) Forms of Decision Making
 - 4.2.4(c) Social, Historical and Ecological Legacies

4.2.5 Specializations (Optional) NOT APPLICABLE

SCARP does not officially require a student to declare an area of concentration or specialty for the completion of the degree. Further, SCARP states that its degree program is a generalist degree, that allows students to explore a particular area in greater depth, if s/he chooses. We found this argument credible and confirmed in practice. However, we found ourselves confused by references in the Self-Study Report to “areas of concentration” (and in on-site conversations to “streams”) that appear to double as specialties. We found that these areas of concentration are used in marketing, recruitment, and admissions decisions for incoming students, as a means of “leveling” the burden on the faculty and curriculum imposed by the incoming class, but without further meaning after recruitment. Further, we heard that students were confused over whether they should specialize and, if so, how to do so.

5. Faculty Resources and Composition

5.1 Customary Expectations

5.2 Qualifications

Guideline: 5.2.1 Educational Diversity

Guideline: 5.2.2 Educational and Professional Attainment

Guideline: 5.2.3 Practitioners

Guideline: 5.2.4 Adjuncts, Lecturers and Guest Speakers

Guideline: 5.2.5 Planning Predominance

5.3 Faculty Recruitment and Composition

5.4 Continuing Academic and Professional Development

5.5 Size

Guideline: One Degree: Minimum of Five FTEs

Guideline: Two Degrees: Minimum of Seven FTEs NOT APPLICABLE

5.7 Student/Faculty Ratio

Guideline: Graduate Program: 10:1 students/faculty

Guideline: Undergraduate Program: 15:1 students/faculty NOT APPLICABLE

6. Teaching, Advising and Student Services

6.1 Teaching Quality

6.2 Faculty Qualifications

Guideline: Continuing Association

Guideline: Core Curriculum Teaching

6.3 Specializations (Optional) NOT APPLICABLE

6.5 Advising

6.6 Placement

6.7 Financial Aid

We found the amount of student aid to be more than adequate for the number of students enrolled in the program. Students felt, however, that too many financial resources were invested in a few students and thought the resources should be more broadly distributed across more students.

7. Research and Scholarly Activities

7.1 Policy

Guideline: Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Practices and Mission

Guideline: Instructional Load, Release Time and Leave Opportunities

For both of these guidelines, we found that the program could be clearer in indicating to new faculty what practices are used in tenure reviews (including annual reviews or informal counseling) and in opportunities for leaves (including parental leaves, family medical leaves, etc.).

7.2 Quality

Guideline: 7.2.1 Link with Teaching

Guideline: 7.2.2 Link to Practice

Guideline: 7.2.3 Dissemination

8. Public and Professional Service

8.1 Policy

8.2 Quality

Guideline: 8.2.1 Link with Teaching

Guideline: 8.2.2 Link to Profsnl. and Scholarly Communities

8.3 Continuing Education

9. Students

9.1 Quality

9.2 Admission Standards

Guideline: Previous Performance, etc.

9.3 Size

9.4 Recruitment and Composition

10. Institutional Resources

10.1 Library and Information Services

10.2 Physical Facilities

Current physical facilities are barely adequate for the program at its current size. We further believe that the program is constrained in future growth by its facilities, including dedicated classroom space that provides for pin-up areas, drawings, and term-long use of archival information. If larger space for classroom, computer laboratory, and studio areas were available, we believe the program could increase its enrollments, without sacrificing quality of incoming students. Studio space, dedicated lab spaces for course instruction, and accessible space to students with disabilities would all be critical to improving the facilities for the program and for the quality of instruction.

10.4 Financial Resources

Guideline: External Resources

Guideline: Contact with Alumni

SCARP routinely communicates with external constituents and alumni through its newsletter and email announcements. As SCARP undertakes efforts, in conjunction with the university, to raise funds to build a new building, much more routine contact with alumni and program friends will be needed to build support for the new building.

11. Administrative and Fair Practices

- 11.1 Student and Faculty Grievance Procedures
- 11.2 Non-discrimination
- 11.3 Inclusivity
- 11.4 Accurate and Comprehensive Information
- 11.5 Confidentiality of Student Records
- 11.6 On-going Monitoring and Evaluation

Part III. C. 2 Criteria and Guidelines

Partially Met

The criteria and guidelines listed below were determined to have been “partially-met” based on evidence provided in the Self-Study Report and corroborated during our visit, or through information obtained on site during our interviews and review of student work.

1.9 Educational Outcomes

In the Self-Study Report, the program attempted to develop the framework proposed in the PAB guidance on outcomes assessment. We found this table, prepared by SCARP, to be a modest attempt at understanding whether and how much the students in the program achieved any of the three educational goals set out in section 1.1. These three important goals, established by the program, should be the focus of the program’s efforts toward assessing its outcomes. We encourage them to continue to collect formal exit survey information and make it available for analysis and discussion among the faculty. Further, the program may want to pursue alumni surveys and employer surveys to determine the extent to which their graduates work well with diverse communities and possess important technical and personal competencies.

4.2.1(c) Design Arts

Our review of the Self-Study Report curriculum matrix indicates to us that not all students would necessarily have had sufficient exposure to the design arts. Courses covering this material, as evidenced in the curriculum matrix, fall into the “Physical Planning and Urban Development” dimension of the required portion of the curriculum. Students must take at least one course in this dimension, but it is possible for a student to miss coverage of this material by picking a different course in this dimension that does not cover design arts.

4.2.2(f) Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans

Based on interviews conducted on site with employers and alumni, there is not sufficient coverage of this aspect of the curriculum in the SCARP program. Specifically, we heard concerns over the lack of coverage of practical tools for plan implementation, especially

those related to local government regulation and ordinances.

4.2.3(h) Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans

Based on interviews conducted on site with employers and alumni, we heard that students were leaving the SCARP program knowing what “can’t be done” in terms of adoption and implementation of plans, but lack the techniques to know “how to get things done.”

Engaging some of the practitioner faculty members in more lively discussions in the classroom about what has been successful is important to building the confidence of students in this important set of skills for their careers.

5.6 Concentration of Resources

As indicated in the Self-Study Report on page 74 and confirmed during our Site Visit, we found that many of the current faculty listed as members of the SCARP faculty have joint appointments in other units on campus (e.g., Women’s Studies; Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability; Public Health; and the doctoral program in SCARP). As best we can determine from the data and explanations provided, only four of the current twelve faculty members have 100% of their appointment devoted to the master’s degree program in SCARP. In addition, faculty can routinely “buy out” of their courses with research funding. This lack of faculty concentration in the master’s program raises two significant concerns. First, while this level of joint appointment is not, by itself, a problem, we found that it seemed to dilute the amount of time the permanent faculty spend in the classroom teaching students in the masters program. For example, in the past year, only ½ of the 40 classroom-based courses were taught by members of the permanent faculty – the other half were taught by adjuncts. Second, can there be sufficient cohesion in the curriculum, and oversight and control of the course offerings, when adjuncts are teaching fully 50% of the course offerings, and do not have the benefit of significant interaction and involvement in curricular discussions?

The final issue related to faculty resources concerns the upcoming transitions in faculty staffing. Some of the most influential and internationally-renowned faculty are likely to be retiring from the university within the next accreditation cycle. The program has undertaken little, if any, rigorous discussions about succession planning, specifically the maintenance of the program mission and vision with a faculty that, intellectually, is less firmly rooted in sustainability throughout its rising middle and junior ranks. These discussions could also include possible priorities for filling out single-faculty concentrations with second hires, or potential changes in the program’s lineup of concentrations..

6.4 Course Scheduling

Guideline: Regularity of Offerings

With the heavy reliance on adjuncts, the absence of faculty due to sabbaticals and research leaves, and the large number of course offerings (over 40 per year), students expressed serious concerns about courses being offered at the same time or courses not being offered on a routine basis.

10.3 Computer Capabilities

We found the computer capabilities available to the SCARP program on-site to be severely lacking. Several computer labs had hardware that was five or more years old and some software was only available in faculty member’s research labs, meaning that students would

have to gain access to the limited number of computers with appropriate software only when the faculty member was available to open their labs. Students reported problems with software availability and reliability of computer technologies. Finally, only one data projector is available in SCARP dedicated space for students to prepare and practice presentations. Offsetting this, the program mentioned that students are requested to purchase their own computers for their use. Several students expressed the concern that, although this was common and a reasonable suggestion, the software availability and cost was of more concern to them.

Part III. C. 3 Criteria and Guidelines

Not Met

NONE

Part IV. Strengths of the Program

The SCARP Program has several key strengths. First, and most notably from the perspective of an accreditation review, the program has a clear, succinct, and ambitious mission and vision. It calls for the education of planners who promote ecologically sustainable social and economic development through democratization. The program routinely conducts SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses to determine how best it can position itself internally and externally to achieve this goal and the related objectives.

The program enjoys strong support from many internal constituencies. Within the University, the President, Provost, and Principal (“dean” of the college of interdisciplinary studies) uniformly praise the program for its innovation, outreach to the region, and its approach to strategic planning. Throughout the rest of campus, the program has capitalized on opportunities to work with other units in effective ways and has contributed to the campus community through research, teaching, service, and outreach activities. One measure of the campus-based collaboration is the large number of faculty in SCARP who have joint appointments with other units of campus (6 or 7 of the 11 or 12 faculty members, depending on the year).

The students are active, engaged, articulate, and assertive. Many of them arrive for their graduate studies with significant planning work experience. They demand and maintain strong connections to the practicing planning community in the region. They are readily employable both while in school and upon graduation and, according to employers, are able to learn on the job – an important lifelong skill.

Many of the faculty of SCARP are intellectual leaders in our field. Many also enjoy a long history at UBC. They are very productive in terms of publications and research activities, are well-connected on campus and throughout the region, and continue to maintain close connections to practice through a generous consulting policy that allows faculty up to 52 days per year to engage in professional practice. Finally, the continuing appointment of a Distinguished Practice Professor, a practitioner in residence, confirms the program’s commitment to incorporating practice into the program.

The University is located in a vibrant urban community and region noted for innovation in community planning, urban design, and policy; a community that also offers many opportunities for student participation in planning practice and exposure to practitioners. The Vancouver planning practice community also includes a large number of SCARP and/or UBC alumni that retain a strong interest in and contact with the program, providing a large group of practitioners that are willing to assist in the delivery of the curriculum of the program.

Part V. Recommendations for Improvement

A. Partially Met/Not Met Criteria

1.9 Educational Outcomes

The modest attempt at outcomes assessment in the Self-Study Report suggests that the program is interested in defining and measuring outcomes. We encourage the program to make a more sustained effort, involving faculty, staff, and students, in defining and assessing its learning outcomes more clearly, coherently, and comprehensively. This may occur both at the course-level, and at the program level. We encourage continuing collection of exit survey information for analysis and discussion among the faculty. Further, the program may want to conduct alumni surveys and employer surveys to determine the extent to which their graduates work well with diverse communities and possess important technical and personal competencies (key objectives identified by the program).

4.2.1(c) Design Arts

While the design arts are covered well in a few courses, these courses are not taken by every student in the program. We encourage the program to consider either requiring one of these physical planning or urban design courses for all students or moving some of the design arts content into a required course.

4.2.2(f) Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans

This area of the curriculum is taught primarily by adjunct faculty members. Unfortunately, not all students avail themselves of these courses. This area of content is significant enough that the program should consider review of these courses to ensure that material is being covered thoroughly enough and then determine how a larger number of students would be exposed to this course content. One solution could involve a new or reconstituted required course.

4.2.3(h) Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans

The SCARP program has an impressive cadre of adjunct faculty who can provide real-world examples of techniques for the adoption and implementation of plans. The program should explore alternative ways by which some of these practitioners could be engaged in the classroom in discussions about what has been successful in implementing plans. These discussions about what has worked and what can be done are important for students to see models of success, not just models of failure. The core required course mentioned above or a specific “nuts and bolts” course unit could also address this concern.

5.6 Concentration of Resources

As indicated in the Self-Study Report on page 74 and confirmed during our site visit, we found that many of the current faculty listed as members of the SCARP faculty have joint appointments in other units on campus (e.g., women’s studies; institute for resources, environment and sustainability; public health; and the doctoral program in SCARP). As best we can determine from the data and explanations provided, only four of the current twelve faculty members have 100% of their appointment devoted to the master’s degree program in SCARP. In addition, the extensive use of adjunct faculty has allowed nearly all of the faculty the luxury of reductions in teaching assignments while still permitting the program to offer a full range of elective courses and coverage of some of the core curriculum (issues related to

the wide-ranging and sometimes sporadically offered set of courses are discussed elsewhere in this report).

This lack of faculty concentration in the master's program raises two significant concerns in our minds. First, while this level of joint appointment is not, by itself, a problem, we found that it seemed to dilute the amount of time the permanent faculty spend in the classroom teaching students in the masters program. For example, in the past year, only ½ of the 40 classroom-based courses were taught by members of the permanent faculty – the other half were taught by adjuncts. Second, can there be sufficient cohesion in the curriculum, and oversight and control of the course offerings, when adjuncts are teaching fully 50% of the course offerings, and do not have the benefit of significant interaction and involvement in curricular discussions? We believe the program can and should undertake a serious review (conducted by all faculty and organized by the chair or a committee) of the cohesion of the curriculum. This review could include such topics as course coverage during research or sabbatical leaves, content areas for required courses, consistency of course topical areas from year-to-year and as instructors change, etc.

We also found similar concerns as those raised in the previous Site Visit concerning the lack of depth of faculty in some of the areas of concentration. The previous team referred to this as the “One-Person” scenario. We quote from the previous report.

The One-Person scenario is dangerous because students cannot rely on having the experience they came for if the one faculty member they wanted to study with is suddenly bought out on a major grant, is only on campus for one year out of the student's two, or suddenly leaves to go to another university.

The final issue related to faculty resources concerns the upcoming transitions in staffing. Some of the most influential and internationally-renowned faculty are likely to be retiring from the university within the next accreditation cycle. The program has undertaken little, if any, rigorous discussions about succession planning, faculty replacement strategies, and maintenance of the program mission and vision with a future faculty who would be less intellectually rooted in sustainability. This proactive planning for future staffing could help secure a smooth and intentional transition without serious impacts on key elements of the mission of the program. These discussions should also include the opportunities to fill a second faculty position for single faculty concentrations, or about potential elimination or creation of new concentrations to pursue more fully the program's mission and vision.

6.4 Course Scheduling

Guideline: Regularity of Offerings

The program pays particular attention to balancing the interests and potential curriculum demands of the entering class by recruiting students into four dimensions that appear to be used to spread the load amongst faculty and curriculum. After that, less attention appears to be paid to whether these carefully balanced entering classes then actually proceed through a balanced curriculum. Careful attention to course scheduling, including perhaps students participating in class scheduling exercises or preparing draft schedules for student review and comment, could help alleviate the course conflict issue. The program could also prepare a listing of courses expected to be offered over the two year time period when a student is enrolled. This would help students plan their upcoming schedules with more accurate

information, rather than simply relying on past course offerings predicting future offerings.

10.3 Computer Capabilities

Hardware needs updating; more software needs to be available to students for their coursework, particularly in statistical analysis, GIS, and urban design; and collaborative work spaces with computer technology available at that site would improve students' ability to conduct and present their analyses in a professional manner. Perhaps, since many/most students arrive on campus with personally owned computers, the program could provide site or joint licensing of some of the more costly software for use by students on their computers while enrolled in the program.

B. Other Areas of Enhancement

The current curriculum of the SCARP program indicates a large and diverse array of courses. For example, we counted 40 courses offered in AY08-09 with an enrollment of 88 students. There are many benefits to this wide-ranging set of courses. It is, in part, a response to student demands and interests, suggesting that students are able to get instruction in a wide variety of topics, both traditional and innovative. Second, it is a mechanism to engage willing practitioners in classroom instruction. There are, however, some concerns with this strategy of course offerings. The large number of course offerings combined with a very limited number of required courses (and the changing set of required courses over the past three years) leads us to wonder about curricular cohesion. For example, it is possible that with so many courses taught, key topics may be missed by some students. This may be a more profound issue when one considers that the course content in some courses changes from year to year, course offerings change each year, and faculty do not know what's taught in each other's courses. This last issue is due in part to the heavy reliance on adjuncts who are not present on campus to discuss their courses with the permanent faculty; nor does there appear to be a way in which all of the permanent faculty are engaged in discussions of course content.

We applaud the recent formation of the Teaching and Learning Committee and see it a first step to review course content and the overall structure, function, and flow of the curriculum. However, we worry that this effort will be delegated to the members of the committee and not become a task for the entire permanent faculty. We encourage a conversation across all the permanent faculty and we also suggest that the program think creatively of a way to effectively engage the large number of adjunct faculty in curricular conversations.

As stated earlier in this report, SCARP makes extensive use of non-faculty lecturers in delivering instruction. Within the past two years, roughly half of SCARP courses were taught by lecturers, a proportion that far exceeds the norm for peer institutions. That SCARP can do so is in part a function of financial support from an independent endowment. Nonetheless, the unusually high degree of reliance on lecturers creates programmatic vulnerabilities. The vulnerabilities are two. First, a large and shifting pool of contingent instructors always raises the challenge of consistency and quality control, with implications for curricular ownership. The Site Visit Team met a panel of loyal, well integrated, and highly qualified lecturers, each with long SCARP histories. Nonetheless, a comparison against the total roster suggests that we interviewed a self-selected subgroup. The program should consider how the integration of its more numerous, more recent lecturers might also be systematically nurtured. Second, the unusually extensive use of non-faculty lecturers raises a question of opportunity

costs. The allocation of resources toward lecturer lines has clearly contributed to faculty research productivity. Nonetheless, in view of other programmatic needs (student support, instructional facilities, and computing hardware and licensing, for example), we wonder whether SCARP might benefit from strategic reconsideration of alternative resource deployment.

Another area of concern for the team during our visit was the length of time for degree completion. The program indicates it is a two-year program, but students have routinely been taking 2.5 to 3 years to complete their degree. This is in part a function of students becoming employed prior to graduation and then stretching out their thesis or project activity over several semesters. But, we believe this is also due to the degree requirements and organization of the curriculum. Many other accredited programs require a more extensive set of core courses within their curricula; and many programs require only 48 to 52 credit hours for completion of the degree. SCARP requires only five core courses plus a capstone requirement, and requires 60 credit hours for the degree. This would seem to require (and justify) that a program with only 12 permanent faculty would have to engage a large complement of adjunct and lecturer faculty to provide the breadth of course electives students would need to meet the 60 hour requirement.

The current facilities available to the SCARP program are barely adequate and constrain both the quality of instruction and the size of the student body. If the program is successful in relocating into a new building with better computer labs and more collaborative work spaces, we believe there is capacity within the teaching corps of the program to deepen the already commendable instructional quality and to expand the size of the master's program.

Finally, while we applaud the program's ongoing SWOT analyses and the clear articulation of goals and objectives, we encourage the program and the faculty to take this planning into the next stage. What actions are needed to fulfill the goals and objectives, over what specific timeframe, and who will be responsible for making those activities happen and who else will be involved. This level of detail will help the program keep moving forward, rather than simply revisiting goals and objectives each time a SWOT analysis is performed.

Part VI. Addenda

A. Student Composition Data: *NOTE: This is a Canadian program, so a different format for these data is used.*

Students in the Program Ethnic Descent	Enrolment Status and Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Canadian (Including Permanent Residents)			
- African/Black	1	1	2
- Chinese		2	2
- European/White	18	30	48
- Filipino	1		1
- Japanese		1	1
- Latin American	1		1
- Middle Eastern/North African/Arab	2		2
- South Asian	1	2	3
- Southeast Asian		2	2
Foreign	11	15	26
Total	35	53	88
<i>2 Canadians listed 2 ethnicities</i>			

B. Faculty Composition Data: *NOTE: The data in the chart below are the Site Visit Teams' best estimate of the breakdown between full-time in the planning unit and part-time in the planning unit. We did not attempt to determine ethnicity or racial background of the faculty. These data were not provided in this format in the Self-Study Report, nor were they prepared for us upon request after the Site Visit.*

FACULTY IN THE PROGRAM 2009-10	TEACHING STATUS AND GENDER							Total
	Full-Time in Planning Unit*		Part-Time in Planning Unit**		Adjunct			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Total	3	1	5	3	15	5		
Total	3	1	5	3	15	5	32	

**These include: Senbel, Dorcey, Stevens, and Gurstein*

***These include: Angeles, Chang, Frank, Hutton, Leaf, McDaniels, Rees, Sandercock.*

C. AICP Membership

Because this program is located in Canada, both AICP and CIP membership data is included.

	AICP	CIP*
Full-Time Faculty	1	3 **
Part-Time Faculty		1
Adjunct Faculty	1	9 ***
Total	2	13

*Canadian Institute of Planners Membership

**In addition, 1 faculty member is a provisional member

***In addition, 1 adjunct faculty member is a provisional member

Teaching FTEs: Four 3-credit courses equals 1 FTE (One of these courses constitutes final Project/Thesis supervision), so typical classroom instruction load is three 3-credit courses.

	Faculty	Teaching FTE	
1	Angeles	0.50	
2	Chang	0.75	
3	Dorcey	1.00	
4	Frank	0.00	Sabbatical 2008-09 (0.50 Teaching FTE)
5	Fryer	0.50	
6	Gurstein	0.25	Three course releases(1.00 Teaching FTE)
7	Hutton	0.75	One course release (1.00 Teaching FTE)
8	Leaf	0.75	One course buy-out (1.00 Teaching FTE)
9	McDaniels	0.50	
10	Rees	0.00	Sabbatical 2008-09 (1.00 Teaching FTE)
11	Sandercock	0.75	One course buy-out (1.00 Teaching FTE)
12	Senbel	1.00	
	Sub-total FTE	6.75	

	Adjuncts/ Lecturers & Emeritus	
1	Larry Beasley	0.25
2	Peter Boothroyd	0.25
3	Wally Braul	0.08
4	Margaret Eberle	0.17
5	Nathan Edelson	0.12
6	Jon Frantz	0.25
7	John Friedmann	0.50
8	Michael Gordon	0.25
9	William Gushue	0.25
10	Chris Harker	0.25
11	Meidad Kissinger	0.25
12	Todd Litman	0.42
13	Ann McAfee	0.25
14	Norma-Jean McLaren	0.12
15	Wendy Mendes	0.25
16	Jon O'Riordan	0.25
17	Teresa Poppelwell	0.08
18	Ren Thomas	0.12
19	William Trousdale	0.25
20	Eric Vance	0.25
21	James White	0.12
22	Jay Wollenberg	0.25
23	Ray Young	0.25
	Sub-total FTE	5.23
	Total FTE	11.98

E. Student/Teaching Faculty Ratio

Part-time Student FTE, including calculation (if applicable): *Not applicable*
 Student/Teaching Ratio, including calculation: $88/11.98 = 7.35$