Council for Interior Design Accreditation Progress Report
Professional Level Program

Woodbury University
Interior Architecture Program
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Architecture

Next site visit: Spring 2011
Standards: Professional 2002

Report Submitted by:

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Section II. Recommendations for Improvement

Standard 4. Students understand and apply the knowledge, skills, processes, and theories of interior design.

Student work MUST demonstrate competent design development skills in:

k) selection of interior finishes and materials.

Students selected interior finishes in Materials and Finishes (IA 256) as part of the schematic design phase of a project, but did not document or justify the selection of interior finishes and materials, including textile products. In Senior Project (IA 483), performance criteria were discussed in written project requirements provided by the instructor, but student project notebooks and finish boards remained at the schematic level. Student presentations and interviews indicated students’ ability to articulate some application criteria, but student work did not demonstrate competence.

Recommendation for improvement: Strengthen the development and documentation of the selection of interior finishes and materials.

Response:

This requirement is most addressed in the following courses:

**IA 106 – Design Studio 2**
Since this course utilizes existing canonical modernist and contemporary homes, students write a brief (100-300 words) paper (that could be incorporated into the final boards) explaining why they think the designers used specific materials. This discussion ties back the students’ understanding of the conceptual parameters of the project with the selection of materials and color palettes. All materials do not have to be discussed; only those that are pertinent to the conceptual understanding of the project.

**IA 256 – Material and Furnishings**
When students select materials for their projects in IA 256, the selection is accompanied by a written description (brief 100-300 words) on how this particular material responds to the conceptual development of their project. Though this description is not typically a part of professional material specifications, the students provide room on their developed spec sheets to incorporate this information.

**IA 257 Detail Design**
Since the projects in the class are inherently linked to choice and tectonic qualities of materials, the students develop a brief written analysis discussing the conceptual issues for these material choices.
**IA 282 Design Studio 4**  
This is the first studio where students develop an entire project. They use this project to illustrate their capacity to enter the upper division studios. One of the competencies we ask for is the selection and use of materials. This studio includes not only materials in their final presentations, but also a written analysis outlining their material direction during the schematic design phase.

**IA 265 IA History 2**  
As part of research for this course, students develop an understanding of how the use of materials affected modernist design. Similar and even in conjunction with IA 106 Design Studio 2, students can articulate how the materials of a given project reinforced the conceptualization of the project. At least one short essay focuses specifically on this topic. In addition field trips and quizzes require that students discuss the material qualities of the projects visited.

**IA 363 Design Studio 5 Dwelling and Culture, IA 381 Community and Typologies, IA 280 Design Studio 7: Narration and Media** includes a part of the schematic design assignment that specifically asks how the selection of materials will further the conceptual development of the student’s projects.

m) ...detailed and developed furniture selection.

The only course where furniture specifications could be found was Materials and Finishes (IA 256). This was a sophomore level course. Evidence of progression of learning related to furniture selection was weak in subsequent courses.

As a way of conceptualizing the selection of furniture in a framework that embraces the topics the studio courses address, it is viewed in two different ways. The first is a more art historical perspective in which the appropriation of objects becomes part of a more critical discourse within the work itself. Another is to view the selection of furniture from a more anthropological perspective in which the use of cultural artifacts and tools helps articulate specific ideas about the examined culture.

The program tries to broaden the understanding of specifications beyond the professional realm. Specifying is similar to citing a reference for a research paper. Students write about their furniture selections from a critical perspective and then include the “citation”. The courses mentioned above that address material issues mentioned in the last section also address furniture selection.
Student work SHOULD demonstrate design development skills, including:

v) ...graphic identification, such as signage.

Examples of exterior signage from Design Studio 4: Retail (IA 282) were completed in conjunction with graphic design students. Graphic design students developed the signage package for the interior design student’s concepts. Signage was applied to design solutions for the exterior of project models and indicated in exterior elevations, but interior signage was not included in enough projects to satisfy the indicator. Student interviews indicated that signage is not a component of many projects. The FIDER team did not observe any other means of graphic identification.

Recommendation for improvement: Strengthen design development skills in integrating graphic identification into interior solutions.

Response:

This requirement is most appropriately addressed in the following courses:

IA 256 – Material and Furnishings
Have one guest presenter from a signage company. Sue Vessella, chair of graphic design, who has an expertise in environmental graphics – comes in and talks about the principles of environmental signage. In the students’ projects, they include one section of the specifications that deals with signage. They also provide a written analysis on how they would incorporate the signage into their project.

IA 282 – Design Studio 4 – Branding and Identity
Since this studio is ostensibly about identity, the students introduce an identity package – including strategies for way finding and signage into their final project. The requirements for this course should build on their knowledge gained in IA 256 taken two semesters before. The students put together an 8.5x11 package expressing the way-finding strategies in written form with examples of the signage design.

IA 480 – Design Studio 7 – Narration and Media
This is the final studio that incorporates a requirement to develop graphic identification into the package. Since this project deals with public spaces and meaning derived through narratives, application of an environmental graphics package should be part of the final requirement. The final boards should have one section designated specifically for the signage design and a written analysis tying back the graphics package to the narrative.
Standard 6. Students design within the context of building systems. Students use appropriate materials and products.

i) Student work MUST demonstrate that materials and products are appropriately selected and applied on the basis of their properties and performance criteria.

Although student interviews confirmed awareness of the subject of performance standards, student work did not consistently demonstrate that materials and products are appropriately selected and applied on the basis of their properties and performance criteria.

Unlike the previous request for learning experiences that address material and furniture selection, this guideline is placed in Standard 6. Standard 6 addresses technical aspects of the program. The following courses address technical concerns more thoroughly.

IA 256 Materials and Furnishings
Every student project should include within the specification sheets a brief written description on the performance criteria for the selected materials and furnishings.

IA 257 Tectonics 2: Detail Design
Because the projects in this class are relatively small in scope, the selection of materials is a more limited palette. For every material selected in this course, students will write about the performance criteria of the selected material and why that criterion makes the material selection appropriate.

IA 258 Building systems and codes:
For the building system journal, an additional section on material identification and material performance criteria will be added to the assignment.

IA 454 Construction Documents
For the finish plan in this course, students are to submit a written paper. For every material selected in this project and listed on the finish schedule, students will be expected to write about the performance criteria of the selected material and why that criterion makes the material selection appropriate.

IA 483 Senior Project
Senior project is the one studio where the level of detail warrants the consideration of building systems. Students are required to incorporate schematic diagrams illustrating the relationship between the building systems and the final design solutions. They are also required to develop material schedules for the final presentation in which students identify the performative characteristics of final material selections.