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■ Research Committee

➤ Report: Phase 1

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September 14, 2021

CACB Research Initiatives: Report (Phase 1)

Anne Bordeleau, on behalf of the CACB Research Committee

In 2017, the CACB Research Initiatives Task Force was established to explore the development of research within CACB-CCCA in order to both support and promote the CACB-CCCA's mandate. This task force has now become one of the regular committees of CACB, with the mandate to oversee research initiatives, develop research questions and plans to fund and undertake a research program, and report annually to the Board on progress. In 2018, CACB committed \$7,500 towards a MITACS grant application entitled "Canadian Architectural Education, Accreditation, and Certification trends in a Changing Environment," successfully leveraging the \$7,500 to obtain matching funds that were then put towards conducting research for six months, with Anne Bordeleau as lead academic supervisor, working in collaboration with CACB and a graduate researcher at the School of Architecture of the University of Waterloo, Jessica Hanzelkova.

Report on MITACS CACB and University of Waterloo Research Internship (2019):

The first phase of the research initiative has been to gather, compile, and organize data provided by the CACB. This created a solid base for future phases of research to engage more directly with the status of architectural education and the profession of architecture in a Canadian context. The data examined was both quantitative and qualitative, with the bulk of the statistical data coming from Annual Reports (ARs), and the more qualitative data coming from the Architectural Program Reports (APRs) and Visiting Team Reports (VTRs). All three data sets (ARs, APRs, and VTRs) are documents required and collected by the CACB as part of the accreditation process. The focus on these documents helped assess the kind of information collected to date, providing some information on the status of each accredited school, and allowing for cross-referencing of the data, something which had not been done previously.

Some topics explored in the first phase of the project were shifts in application data, degrees awarded, gender balance, and enrollment from undergraduate through graduate studies. We also tracked Student Performance Criteria (SPCs) to look at shifts in those criteria, but also mapping the most and least failed SPCs. We were already able to make a number of preliminary observations for this, and have identified a number of areas worth studying further. Some of these areas include the ambition to bring an equity lens to the consideration of faculty compliment, curriculum and other programmatic requirements, while other areas of further study pertain to the closer analysis of evaluation and success in specific student performance criteria.

Summary of first phase of research and preliminary findings:

The research stemmed from broad overarching questions about architectural education in changing academic and social-cultural environment. Looking at Schools of Architecture as both professional schools and academic units, the aim was to establish some benchmarks and identify trends through the reports gathered and produced by the CACB.

This first phase of the research was useful in advancing our understanding of certain trends, but also in assessing the reliability of the data gathered and its potential usefulness. In relation to the latter, while the CACB reports are generally reliable sources of data, the researchers noted several shortcomings:

1. Data for the period 1999 to 2005 is especially difficult to interpret due to the transition at many schools from B.Arch. to M.Arch. programs over this period (data from before 1999 was not available).
2. Data contained in Annual Reports and APRs is self-reported. As a result, differences in interpretation or use of terms from school to school can result in incommensurable data. The diversity of program and administrative unit structures across the country adds to this problem.
3. Format and terminology in ARs have varied over the years, resulting in data that may not be commensurable from year to year.

Nevertheless, the data gathered still reveals some clear trends. Namely, with respect to applications, total applicants to pre- professional programs appear consistent, while applicants to M.Arch. degrees have been consistently expanding since 2000.