

June 26, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITING BOARD

FROM: DAVID HINSON, FAIA
DIRECTOR

BEN LEE, FAIA
DIRECTOR

ELLEN S. CATHEY, AIA
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Eligibility for Candidacy – Wenzhou-Kean University

On November 27, 2018, the Wenzhou-Kean University School of Architecture filed a completed application for candidacy for an accredited Master of Architecture. This application was filed under the terms of the *2015 NAAB Procedures for Accreditation*, Section 4.

The next step is to determine whether the proposed degree program is eligible for candidacy. Because Wenzhou-Kean University is a branch campus of Kean University, an eligibility visit was required. The visit was conducted on May 6-7, 2019 by David Hinson and Ben Lee. The application was reviewed by a panel consisting of Mr. Hinson, Mr. Lee, and the associate director.

The purpose of the eligibility visit is three-fold:

- To review the *Conditions* and *Procedures* with the proposed program's administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
- To confirm the institutional commitment to the implementation of the *Plan for Achieving Initial Accreditation*.
- To review the physical, financial, human, and information resources committed to the program.

Upon completing the visit, the reviewer is required to submit a memorandum to the NAAB Directors addressing four areas:

1. A review of the resources committed to the program.
2. Commitment of the institution to implementation of the *Plan for Achieving Initial Accreditation*.
3. Assessment of the readiness of the program to complete a visit for initial candidacy.
4. Recommendation to the NAAB Board to accept or not accept the program as eligible for initial candidacy. The recommendation will also identify the length of time that should elapse before scheduling the initial candidacy visit.



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General Information

1. Kean University is the third largest public university in New Jersey with an English-speaking campus in Wenzhou, China. The main campus is located within the geographical boundaries of the New York City metropolitan area. The 200-acre campus has a student population of approximately 15,000. The stated mission of the University is to distinguish Kean as supportive of women, minorities and culturally diverse students “including students from academically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with special needs, and adults returning or entering higher education.”

In 2015, Kean University created the Michael Graves College, which consists of two schools: The Robert Busch School of Design (Graphic Design, Interactive/Advertising Design, Interior Design, and Industrial Design), and the School of Public Architecture. The School of Public Architecture is home to a 4-year Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies degree program and a 2-year Master of Architecture degree program. Students were admitted to the undergraduate program in the fall of 2015. This program was approved for Eligibility by the NAAB in 2017, and successfully completed its Continuing Candidacy review in the fall of 2018. It is anticipated that the first class to graduate in the M. Arch program in Kean, N.J. will be the spring of 2021.

In 2008, Kean University signed an agreement with the Governor of Zhejiang Province in China, Xi Jinping (now President of China) to establish Wenzhou Kean University (WKU). Wenzhou Kean University is located in the Ouhai district of Wenzhou, a city with a metropolitan population of 8 million. The campus is new, built on 500 acres of formerly agricultural land.

Six years ago the academic programs, including programs such as Law and Business started at WKU: Kean University provides these programs and hires the faculty, and administers all programmatic content and structure. The provincial and municipal governments provide the campus, funding support, and administration. All instruction is in English, and WKU's programs are accredited through Kean's U.S.-based regional accrediting agency (Middle States.) Presently there are 2200 students on the Wenzhou campus, and this population will grow by 500-700 annually until it reaches an enrollment of 10,000 students.

A 4-year BFA program in Graphic Design began on the WKU campus in 2014, and a BA in Architectural Studies began in 2017. Interior Design and Product Design will begin in fall 2019. The academic goals for all programs taught at WKU are the same as those of the programs offered in the USA: to have students develop a deep understanding of architecture's and design's specific roles in shaping the environment and culture from a detailed observation and analysis of the environment around them, and engage a wider public audience for better design.

Mirroring the structure of the program offered in New Jersey, the WKU program follows the 4+2 model for a professional degree in Architecture: a 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree in Architectural Studies, followed by a 2-year professional Master of Architecture degree. It consists of 196 total credit hours, of which 139-141 are elements of the professional curriculum. It allows 18 credit hours for minors or concentrations within the discipline. 55 credit hours are at the graduate level. Kean requires 35 credit hours of general studies courses as a component of the baccalaureate degree.

Kean is committed to the administration of a single, interchangeable M.Arch program at two campuses. President Dr. Dawood Farahi and Dean David Mohny FAIA, both

see this as an opportunity to create a “global university.” The School of Public Architecture plans to use curricular development across two continents as a means to address environmental challenges and cultural difference through profound learning experiences.

A second cohort of 30 students joined the initial class of 20 students in the Architectural Studies program in fall 2018. The program currently has a total of 47 enrolled students. The program is currently supported by two full-time faculty and a team of three adjunct instructors. A third full-time faculty member will join the WKU program in fall 2019. Student enrollment is projected to increase by 30 students per year, reaching an enrollment of 195 students in 2023. Details regarding resources supporting the program will be covered below.

2. Review of Resources Committed to the Program

Human Resources

Administration and Faculty: Oversight for the M.Arch degree at both campus sites will be provided by David Mohny, FAIA, Dean of MGC's School of Public Architecture. Dean Mohny reports to the directly to the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs at Kean University. Dean Mohny is assisted by an Associate Dean, a Managing Director for the college, and program assistants at each campus. Vincent Peu Duvallon serves as Program Coordinator for the architecture program at WKU. Both the Dean and the Associate Dean travel regularly to Wenzhou. Each visit is typically 10-14 days in length. There are weekly video calls between program directors on both campuses, and joint video faculty meetings monthly.

In addition to serving as Program Coordinator, Professor Duvallon teaches design studio, courses in architecture and urbanism, and visualization. Prof. Duvallon is a Registered Architect in France and has twelve years of combined experience in practice and education. Prof. Duvallon is on a tenure-track appointment. In addition to these responsibilities, he directs the WK-Labs Design Think Tank, a WKU-hosted urban design and campus planning center.

Spencer Steenblik serves as a full-time instructor in the architecture program, teaching design studio and lecture courses. Prof. Steenblik also serves as Assistant Director of the WK-Labs Design Think Tank. Prof. Steenblik has a combined seven years of teaching and practice experience, including one year on the Kean USA campus.

Duvallon and Steenblik will be joined by Prof. Linnea Moore in fall 2019. Prof. Moore has been teaching in the architecture program at Kean USA this past year. While Dean Mohny currently serves as the AXP Licensing Advisor for the WKU program, the team was informed that Prof. Moore would assume this role beginning next fall.

The program will also continue to be supported by a team of adjuncts including architects, landscape architects, and planners affiliated with the WKU planning and design department.

In a transition that began this past academic year, WKU faculty are employees of the local institution (not Kean USA.) Full-time faculty have access to on-campus faculty housing. Faculty promotion and tenure is based on a combination of scholarship and community and design portfolios. Performance reviews and P&T reviews are

managed via the Kean USA system. There is some internal funding and some stipends for research and training.

As is typical of new programs, the existing full-time faculty bear a significant additional burden related to the establishment of both a new curriculum and the development of administrative structures. In this instance, the faculty is also carries the additional tasks of monitoring the design and construction of a new facility. The Visiting Team was assured by the senior leadership at the WKU campus and by Dean Mohny that the administration recognizes this burden and is taking steps to manage it. The program faculty reported that they feel well-supported by the institution.

As a program committed to providing a learning experience comparable to that delivered on the Kean USA campus, WKU also faces the challenge of recruiting and retaining faculty who are familiar with the discipline of architecture as practiced in the U.S. This challenge was discussed in interviews with both program faculty and senior WKU administrators. All spoke candidly about their understanding of this challenge and the steps they are taking to address it. One key obstacle are the constraints (a requirement from the Kean USA system) limiting most full-time faculty appointments to one-year contracts. The program was successful in securing a two-year appointment for Prof. Steenblik, but future flexibility regarding multi-year appointments is unclear. Faculty recruitment and retention will be a critical factor in the architecture program's future development.

Financial Resources

Financial support for Wenzhou Kean University is provided through a combination of student tuition and support from the municipal and provincial governments. The university administration advised that WKU does not expect to be fully tuition-supported until it reaches an enrollment of 7,000 – 8,000 students. As the institution's stature rises (based on rising enrollment, the Gao Kao scores of students selecting WKU, and other metrics) the university will become eligible for subsidies from the national government. In meetings with the Chair of the WKU Board of Directors, Frank Wang; Dr. Li Wang, Chancellor of WKU, and Sailing Lin, Chief Financial Officer of WKU; the Eligibility Review Team was assured that financial support for the institution, campus construction, and the development of the architecture program was secure.

Dean Mohny reported that all annual operating budgets and faculty position budgets have been funded as he's requested. The Eligibility Application included detailed year-to-year projections for operational and faculty salary support. The Eligibility Review Team was assured by senior WKU officials that these funds will be provided as student enrollment in the program grows.

As perhaps the most visible sign of the institution's financial commitment, a new twenty-two million dollar (\$US 22,000,000) building designed to house the design programs of the institution is under construction at the center of campus (more on this facility in the next section.)

Physical Resources

Wenzhou Kean University is located in the Ouhai district of Wenzhou, a city with a metropolitan population of 8 million. The campus is new, built on 500 acres of formerly agricultural land. Construction of the campus began in 20xx. At this point over 1.5 million square feet of academic building, dormitories (all students live on

campus,) dining facilities, faculty housing, and associated infrastructure have been completed, and another 1 million square feet in under construction or in the planning/design phase.

At present, the two cohorts of students enrolled in the architecture program are taught in classrooms within the General Education Hall (GEH) building. The studios (two at present) are taught in dedicated spaces, and each student has an assigned desk. Offices for full-time faculty (shared) and the program administrative staff are also located in General Education Hall building. The program also has space for workshops, small lectures, and a “maker space” located in the Canteen #2 building. Large lecture halls are available in adjacent academic buildings when needed. Faculty offices (shared), and administrative staff workspace are also located in the GEH building.

As noted above, a new 150,000 square foot, \$22 million (US) facility, Ge He Kai Hall (named for a \$10 million dollar donor,) is under construction. The building is expected to be complete in early 2020, and it will house the architecture and design programs along with computer sciences. Ge He Kai hall will include studios, classrooms, a large lecture hall, shop facilities, and offices for faculty and staff. The building is the centerpiece of the campus. When complete (projected for early 2020,) it will be an outstanding home for the program.



Ge He Kai Hall – Main Façade



Ge He Kai Hall – Rear Façade



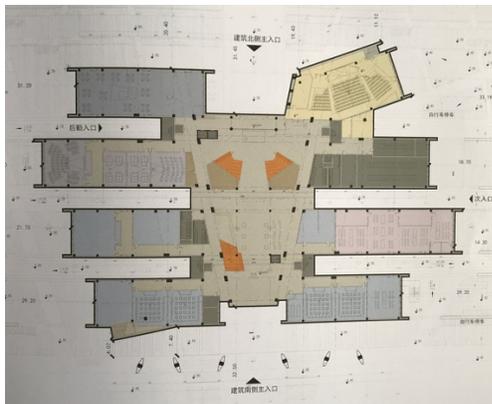
Ge He Kai Hall – West Façade (May 6, 2019)



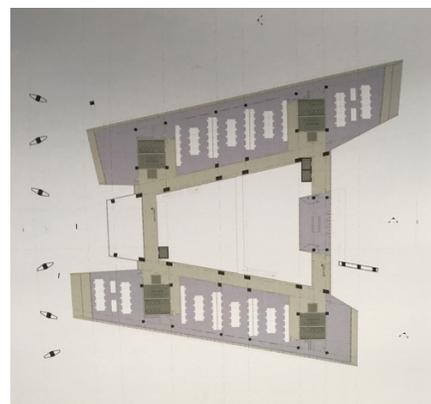
Ge He Kai Hall – Main Atrium



Atrium (May 6, 2019)



Ge He Kai Hall – Main Level Plan



Ge He Kai – Studio Level Plan



Ge He Kai – Studio Space (May 6, 2019)



Ge He Kai – View from the West (May 6, 2019)

Information Resources

The development of adequate information resources needed to support the program is a work in progress. WKU has prioritized access to digital resources (over book acquisition.) The faculty and students have open access to the internet inside the campus (not the norm inside China). WKU has committed funds (\$7,500/year) to building a book collection over time, and is utilizing donated periodical collections as a means of jump starting this collection. The new building contains space for a dedicated design library, and the new central campus library building is planned for a site adjacent to Ge He Kai Hall. The Eligibility Review Team met with representatives of the university library and discussed the information resource needs of an architecture program.

3. Commitment of the Institution to the Implementation of the *Plan for Achieving Initial Accreditation*

The Eligibility Review Team met with all the senior leadership on the WKU campus, including Mr. Frank Wang, Chairman of the Board of Directors; Dr. Li Wang, Chancellor, Dr. Tony Zheng, Vice Chancellor, Dr. ShuLi Xu, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and the directors of Human Resources, Campus Planning, the Chief Financial Officer, the Library Director; and was assured by all of the institution's commitment to supporting the scale and quality of the program described in the Eligibility Report. The team also met with the faculty, including the two full-time faculty-Vincent Duvallo and Spencer Steenblik, two of the adjunct faculty, and Ms. Samantha Wang, the lead administrative staff for the program. Based on these discussions, the Eligibility Review Team is confident that the financial and physical resource plans are being implemented as described in the report.

While the majority of WKU students are drawn from Zhejiang Province, the university is now able to recruit students from 15 of China's provinces (and is working to expand that to include the whole country). Students are admitted to the university (and consequently to the architecture program) via two pathways: the traditional national college admissions test (the Gao Kao) and a process described as the "three-in-one" system that blends the Gao Kao score and a faculty-administered aptitude test. Seven (7) of the 30 admitted students in the 2018 entering class came through the 3-in-1 system, and the balance were "matched" with WKU via the traditional Gao Kao system.

Before taking the Gao Kao, students list their preferred universities. In order to secure enrollment from the highest-scoring band of students, WKU must raise awareness of the institution among prospective high school students. Consequently, all administrators and faculty are involved in visiting high schools and other recruitment-focused activities. The program of architecture has successfully filled its second class, and the program is confident that it will be able to hit its target enrollment numbers in the coming years.

The program is building ties to the local community in several ways, including via engagement with the neighborhoods adjacent to campus as part of the WKU Design Think Tank work, and by nurturing support from public and private sector leaders in the local design and development community.

Tuition at WKU is \$9,750 (US) per year. In comparison, average fees for English-taught degrees in China range from \$2,200 to \$4,500 per year, and tuition at other American and British institutions with China campuses ranges from \$8,000 (US) to \$15,000 (US) per year. Modest scholarship resources are available to support students in the program, including one 10,000 RMB (\$1,460) scholarship per cohort, and five additional scholarships ranging from \$300 to \$700.

4. Readiness of the Program to Complete a Visit for Initial Candidacy

The program prepared a mock team room with student work and course materials for review by the Eligibility Review Team, and the team provided the faculty with feedback on the presentation of material vis-à-vis the process used by Visiting Teams in reviewing materials during a candidacy visit. Should an Initial Candidacy visit occur within the next academic year, the Visiting Team should be able to review work from all classes and studios associated with the first two years of the program (and perhaps some from the first term of year 3).

The architecture program at WKU aspires to conduct an Initial Candidacy visit in the fall of 2019. This presents an aggressive timeline, given the deadlines associated with the development of the APR 180 days before the visit, but it is one the Eligibility Review Team believes the program can meet. The recent successful Initial Candidacy review by the Union, NJ based program will be a valuable template for the WKU program to follow. The WKU program hopes to be in position to complete an Initial Accreditation visit in the fall of 2023 (the fall after its first graduating class.) This would be two years after the IA visit at the Union campus.

5. Recommendations:

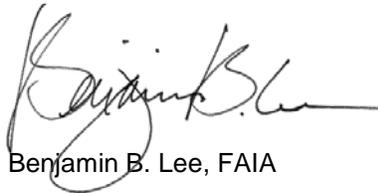
The reviewers recommend, under the terms of the *2015 NAAB Procedures for Accreditation*, Section 4,

- a. Wenzhou-Kean University School of Architecture, Master of Architecture (pre-professional degree plus 55 graduate credits) is accepted as eligible for candidacy for accreditation.
- b. A visit for initial candidacy is to be added to the schedule for visits to be completed in 2019.

Respectfully submitted,



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Benjamin B. Lee, FAIA



Ellen Cathey, AIA