



AIPS Advising Travel Final Report

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AIPS Travel Grantee Information

Name:

Hasan-Uddin Khan

Affiliate Institution in U.S.:

Roger Williams University

Institution in Pakistan Working With:

COMSATS: Islamabad & Lahore

Program Advising For (If applicable):

Architecture & Design faculties

Key Outcomes (List 2-3 key outcomes received by the Pakistan university of this advisory meeting. Outcomes may also be addressed in number 1 above, but should be listed here as well.)

1. **Review of 3, 4, 5, year curriculum and courses for design studios**
2. **Recommendations for the future/new curriculum**
3. **Organization and Next Steps**

Deliverables (Provide bulleted list below of deliverables from this advisory meeting, if applicable. Please include items such as lectures given, reports given, etc.):

- **Report to COMSATS - attached**
- **Public lecture to Institute of architects, Pakistan - Lahore chapter**

**REPORT TO American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS) & COMSATS
RE: COMSATS, LAHORE, WORKSHOP**

Hasan-Uddin Khan
8th February 2015

Workshop Title: Integrated Design Studio Approach for the 3rd, 4th & 5th Year Design Studios
Dates: 4th January—9th January, 2015

Workshop Objective

To improve quality of studio offerings and pedagogy in the Departments of Architecture, COMSATS, Institute of Technology, Lahore and Islamabad.

Agenda

The workshop is part of an ongoing plan for the B.Arch Program – faculty and curriculum development. The workshop is one in a series to review improved courses, which have been amended, consistent with the recommendations made to COMSATS in August 2014 by the External Advisory Board (EAB) in a previously submitted report. A short one-day meeting was held in Islamabad in December 2014 conducted by EAB member Jawaid Haider and some of the COMSATS faculty.

The program is envisaged for minimum of three years, with initial development of COMSATS Departments, and a conference after two years on Architecture Education. The next workshop is envisaged to focus on teacher training in the summer of 2015.

NOTE: This record of the workshop is not comprehensive but covers the points thought to be most relevant by the author. It is expected that these notes will be supplemented by minutes and notes prepared by the COMSATS faculty.

Professor Hasan-Uddin Khan's Visit

AIPS provided the air ticket and an honorarium for the workshop visit. Professor Khan's five-day visit was intensive. He conducted the workshop and delivered a public lecture. The workshop focused on the advanced studios (3rd, 4th, and 5th year) and thesis with a review of the course offerings. The emphasis was on the integrated approach within the studio learning experience which remains central to the program as it coordinates with history, theory, materials, technology, structures, professional practice, and environment courses, delivered in lecture and seminar formats. A detailed schedule follows as **Appendix A.**

It should be noted that due to disruptions and attack on an educational institution, all schools and universities in Pakistan have been closed, and some four weeks of the semester lost. But because there were no classes during the workshop, faculty was able to attend on a full time basis.

Participants

The participants were the faculty for B.Arch. Program of the Departments of Architecture and Design from both the Lahore and Islamabad campuses. Twelve faculty members from Lahore and five members from Islamabad attended the sessions, in addition to the new Dean of the schools, the Chairpersons, and the Senior Advisor. The list of participants is included as **Appendix B.**

Of those present, five faculty members from Islamabad and four from Lahore have been designated as the development and coordinating group to revise the curriculum in conjunction with their colleagues – more about this later.

The Workshop

H. Khan arrived a day late due to fog delay in Abu Dhabi. After a briefing meeting with Senior Advisor, Yasmin Cheema, he went to the COMSATS campus where he was staying at the Foreign Faculty Guest House. The meetings commenced on the next day. It was agreed that due to the circumstances the workshop would be conducted over the whole day instead of the 2/3 day envisaged in the original plan.

The following is a summary of the daily meetings, listing some of the major issues raised. It is expected that a more detailed list will be prepared and coordinated by the two faculties before the summer.

Monday, January 5th

General Introduction

The morning was spent in introductions of the faculty and the EAB Report as over half the individuals present had not participated in the summer 2014 meetings. The latter part of the morning was devoted to reactions by the faculty on the 2014 EAB Report, as no official communication had been received by the EAB to date.

There have been no curricular changes implemented since the EAB Report but some work has commenced in changing the courses, both in Islamabad and in Lahore (See Appendix C), with some attempt at communicating between the two campuses. (However, this remains a problem if the curriculum is to be viewed as a coordinated effort.) There have been no changes to the Islamabad studio courses and some revisions have been made to them in Lahore.

The EAB had recommended a structural change to the curriculum as follows:

Year 1 & 2 Foundation

Year 3 & 4 Intermediate

Year 5 Advanced / Thesis

The change has been accepted by COMSATS and will form the basis of the revised curriculum, although some members of the faculty (especially in Islamabad) are not as supportive as they might be.

The two faculties presented an overview of their individual programs. The Islamabad group characterized their input in terms of “streams” (four instead of the three in the EAB Report) and each course as “modules”. The Lahore group retained the EAB presented outline.

A general comment raised by both faculties was the weakness of student writing skills (a common complaint in most architecture programs both in Asia and the USA). A second ingredient missing from the pedagogy is the lack of critical thinking by the students. How one instills these remains a problem. Both these issues were raised by the EAB August report.

Tuesday, January 6th

Third Year

As noted earlier, the focus of the workshop was on the design studios and their relationship to other courses. The studio courses were presented in detail and discussed.

Several issues were raised by the two faculties:

There was attention paid to sites and buildings and the making of architecture.

There was a greater emphasis on process but some skills remained lacking, e.g. diagramming.

The question of when urban and theoretical issues should be addressed was discussed.

The importance of “critical thinking” was stressed but there was some uncertainty as to how this should be introduced and evaluated – perhaps in the second year.

How one deals with knowing what has been really taught in the 2nd year needs to be verified – “often we don’t know what it is that our students know”. Thus the relationship between the second and third years needs to be clearly articulated.

In the same manner, what is expected from third year by the fourth year also needs to be clear.

Wednesday, January 7th

The morning was devoted to a recap of the third year program and discussion. This was followed by a review of the fourth year studios.

Fourth Year

There are some differences in the nature of projects and knowledge development in the two campuses, which need to be resolved. It would be advantageous if both programs had similar goals for their fourth year studio offerings. For example, the question of covering certain building types, essentially emanating from a couple of decades ago should be reconsidered within the curriculum.

The Lahore program fourth year first semester concentrates on city level issues and the provision of sustainable solutions. The project scale is increased as is its complexity. In the second semester the studio project is conceived as a comprehensive project, which includes the careful consideration of contexts and technologies.

The studio is a 9-credit course. Lahore has proposed a 6-credit studio in the fourth year. This is to be implemented in the Fall 2015 semester, but how this relates to studios in Islamabad needs to be decided.

In Islamabad the fourth year looks at sustainability in a “Green Studio”. The studio covers residential building and also a multi-storey building. In the second semester the studio looks at more complex and larger building types such as a Hotel and Resort.

The modes of delivery, especially the use of art/design faculty in the Islamabad studios, which in itself is a valid notion, does not appear to be working well and needs to be reviewed – more about this later.

Some thoughts on the fourth year curriculum

Perhaps the 4th year experience should concentrate on design within an urban framework, where both building design and urban design issues would be undertaken.

As per the previous EAB Report the question of low income housing / slums / informal settlements was raised as being of great relevance to Pakistan. The relationship to theory courses needs to be established, including attention to environmental ethics.

Perhaps the sustainability studio could be changed to the 6-credit studio and shifted to the fifth year. (It was also generally felt by the faculty that issues relating to sustainability needed to be introduced consistently within one of the 2nd year studios.)

The scope of the Comprehensive Studio needs to be more carefully defined.

By the time students enter the fourth year they should know “about making architecture and the basic skills needed for design”. However, this is not always the case as the year objectives are not consistent and often the prerogative of individual teacher, and students have gaps in their knowledge.

It was agreed by the entire faculty present that in the fourth year there should be place for at least one elective. (Currently there are no electives offered.)

Thursday, January 8th

As per the second day the morning was used to recap the discussions and issues raised by the fourth year curriculum. The afternoon was used to discuss the fifth year studios, thesis, and courses.

The fifth year studios have different foci in Islamabad and in Lahore. Islamabad deals with urban interventions whilst the other with sustainability and “green” and vertical urban design. . The issue of fifth-year studio subjects will be reviewed by COMSATS faculty to obtain some sense of parity and coordination. Other related courses, e.g. urban history, will also be considered. The possibility of a 6 credit studio for the first semester of the fifth year will be implemented in Lahore: it would be appropriate to do this also in Islamabad.

The Thesis Prep course occurs in the first semester followed by the Design Thesis Studio in the last semester. Students are expected to pre-select their thesis topics at the end of their fourth year, produce a “research report” during thesis prep and follow this with the design project. This does not seem to be consistently implemented and the process needs to be reviewed.

How thesis is taught and who teaches it needs to be rationalized.

There is no earlier research methods course, which would benefit the students. Again, the schedule should allow for an elective course which might feed into the thesis project but could be independent of it as well.

Friday, January 9th

Concluding Session

The day summarized the concerns voiced in the curriculum and steps to be taken were outlined.

The two faculties summarized their approaches and concerns and changes envisaged based on the weeks’ discussions. These will be articulated by the two schools in their own separate report. However, there needs to be much greater coordination / conversation between the Islamabad and Lahore schools.

The notes below outline my own reading of the situation and suggestions for consideration by the schools.

The 2 + 2 + 1 year conceptual year sequence was endorsed by all. It will be the guiding principle for the organization of the curriculum revision.

Teaching

History courses are taught chronologically. It is probably appropriate to have broad survey courses in the first year, but that from then onwards the courses could be “issue based”.

The writing courses (offered from outside the architecture/ design programs) could be reconsidered and perhaps an additional critical writing course added.

There should be greater emphasis on Asia for precedents and issues as they are relevant to the situation in Pakistan.

Integration / Courses

There is a pressing need to review and integrate technology and history courses into the curriculum. This should start from the first year onwards. For example, notions of sustainability (climate, technology, social, etc.) could be introduced starting in the second year, followed by a fourth year studio concentration.

The following areas should be covered in the curriculum (in studios and courses):

- Urban situations
- Low income housing (an ethical and practical requirement in Pakistan)
- High-rise buildings
- Consideration of site as being integral from the second year onwards
- Possibly consideration of historic area projects / adaptive reuse

There should be space for at least two electives in the last two years, based on faculty expertise and interests.

Studio sequences

Year 1 – Studios 1 & 2 (not discussed)

Year 2 – Studios 3 & 4 (not discussed)

Year 3 – Studios 5 & 6

An alternative model for the first and second semester studios was also discussed, where the first and second semester studios could be broken down from a 9 credit course to a 6 + 3 credit model, which would clearly articulate the design problems to be tackled.

Year 4 – Studios 6 & 7

Would tackle urban issues and also require a Comprehensive Studio, which would “free up” the thesis studio itself.

Year 5 – “Mini” Studio of 6 credits in the first semester

Thesis Prep of 3 credits and a Thesis of 12 credits

In general, studio could be reconceived away from being building typology and scale based to thematic and problem based studios.

Both faculties noted the importance of Design-Build Studios, which would bring a practical aspect to the program. The actuality of these needs to be worked out with the administration.

Development / Assessment

A number of specific objectives need to be articulated and assessed. There include:

What issues does architecture in general and architecture education in particular need to address?

Outcomes and objectives need to be expressed for the following

For each course (already under way)

For each year
For the five years

A Mission statement for COMSATS architecture and design would be useful.

The creation of a Master Bibliography for all courses year by year would reveal overlaps, sequences, and omissions in the curriculum. (It would also act as a check list for library acquisitions.)

A document on Studio Culture should be developed. (H. Khan will circulate in the near future a sample document, considered as a model in the USA, developed by Roger Williams University.)

Next Steps

The Dean of the School, Ejaz Malik, will formalize the Committees that will conduct and formulate the revised curriculum. He will institute a process in which the Lahore and Islamabad faculty committees will first meet with their own colleagues and then with each other in three or more meetings before the summer EAB proposed workshops.

I suggest the following timetable for COMSATS reports (to be confirmed by COMSATS):

- March 2015 – Circulate COMSATS minutes and presentations made at the January meeting,
- April – Revised curriculum report finalized and circulated to EAB,
Establish schedule for summer 2015 EAB meeting after checking Ramzan/Eid schedule
- May – Reactions from EAB to COMSATS,
- Early June – Summer EAB meeting (possibly in Abbotabad)

A short meeting was held with Dr. Bodla of COMSATS Lahore to update him on the situation to date. He expressed the need for the new curriculum to begin implementation in the Fall of 2015. This is achievable if the work can be carried out as envisaged by COMSATS.

It is expected that a workshop involving the EAB would be held in/ around June 2015. This will briefly review the new curriculum over a two day period but concentrate on teaching and delivery systems for the revised courses – a teachers training workshop.

As a suggestion a mode of operation could be as follows: two or three members of the EAB would be present for the first two days, then all members would meet on the next two days, and other members run the last two days of sessions. This needs to be worked out with EAB members' and COMSATS schedules.

Note

The broad aim of the exercise is to cultivate critical and analytical thinking in students for architecture design process and practice. The five days of meetings were intense, with members of both faculties present. (Some faculty had not been present at the summer 2014 meeting and others from that meeting were not present on this occasion.) There is a need for continuity in the planning process.

The author of this report, EAB member Hasan-Uddin Khan, thanks the organizers for facilitating the workshop, with special thanks to the perseverance of the senior advisor, Yasmin Cheema. The support of Dr. M. Bodla, Chief Executive of COMSATS Lahore, Dean Ejaz Malik and, former Dean, Zain ul Abidin, Tarek Sandhu, Acting Head of Department in Lahore, is also much appreciated. Lastly and importantly, my thanks to AIPS for its financial and intellectual support.

APPENDIX A**Workshop Program / Schedule (as realized)**

Date	Day	Activity	Participants	Time
3 Jan	Saturday	Arrival 7pm (Delayed due to fog in Abu Dhabi)		
4 Jan	Sunday	H. Khan Arrival in Lahore Meeting with Senior Advisor	Yasmin Cheema / H Khan	6 pm
5 Jan	Monday	Introductory Session, General Discussion on September 2014 EAB Report	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, studio and course faculty	9.30 am-1.30 pm
		Lunch		1.30 pm -2-30 pm
		General Discussion on EAB Report	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	2-30 pm – 4.30 pm
6 Jan	Tuesday	Presentations on EAB Report by faculty from Islamabad & Lahore Campuses.	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	9:30 am -11:30 am
		Workshop 3 rd year Design Studio	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	11:30 am -1:30 pm
		Lunch		1.30 pm -2-30 pm
		Workshop 3 rd year Design Studio	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	2-30 pm -4.30 pm
7 Jan	Wednesday	Workshop 4 th year Design Studio	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	9:30 am – 1:30 pm
		Lunch		1.30 pm -2-30 pm
		Workshop 4 th year Design Studio	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	2-30 pm -4.30 pm
8 Jan	Thursday	Workshop 5 th year Design Studio & Thesis	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	9:30 am -1:30 pm
		Lunch		1.00 am -2-30 pm
		Workshop 5 th year Design Studio & Thesis	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	2-30 pm -4.30 pm
9 Jan	Friday	Concluding Remarks and Discussions	Advisor, Dean, Chairman, HOD, all studio and taught courses faculty	9:30 am -12:30 pm
		Lunch & Juma Break		12.30 pm -2-30 pm

		H. Khan: Public Lecture at Alhamra Hall 3 Topic: On new architecture in Asia	Open to public, In Collaboration with Institute of Architects Pakistan (IAP) Lahore Chapter	3.30 pm – 4.45pm
		Tea		5 pm -6 pm
		H. Khan departure		9 pm

APPENDIX B

Workshop Participants

Administration

Ejaz Malik, Dean, COMSATS, Architecture and Design

Yasmin Cheema, Adviser Architecture

Zainul Abidin, Former Dean

Tarek Sandhu, Acting Head of Department, Architecture and Design, Lahore

Uzma Zain, Acting Head of Department, Architecture and Design, Islamabad

Lahore Faculty

Nabah Ali

Jasim Azhar

Ibrahim Dil

Sadia Farooq

Hiba Hashmi

Sharia Hosseini

Siraj Mahmood

Amina Majeed

Amna Naveed

Arsalan Rafique

Islamabad Faculty

Sannah Ejaz

Asmin Hameed

Amna Hashmi

Uzma Kabir