MEMO

TO: Professor Todd McNerney, Speaker of the Faculty

FROM: Agnes Ayme-Southgate, Chair of Academic Planning Committee

CC: Mary Ann Blitt, Paul Collins, Heath Hoffmann, Mutindi Ndunda, Robert Pitts, Kay Smith, Conseula Francis, Brian McGee

DATE: March 30, 2016

RE: New Graduate Program Proposal for Community Planning, Policy and Design

After several meetings including one with the two faculty proposers, Dr. Richard Gilmore and Dr. Nathaniel Walker, the Academic Planning Committee (hereafter referred to as “the Committee”) voted on March 22, 2016, in support of the proposal for a new interdisciplinary program in Community Planning, Policy, and Design. (referred thereafter as CPAD).

The Committee in its decision considered the uniqueness of the program, the strength/weakness of the curricular design, as well as its fit within the School of Arts strategic plans, as well as the College mission and goals.

The uniqueness of the proposed CPAD program rests with its hybrid approach as students are being trained from both the humanistic traditional design education and from the Modernist pedagogies, design methods, and aesthetics point of view. The committee all agree that very few programs, and none in the State of South Carolina utilize this hybrid approach and that the CPAD program would be attractive to a category of students who might not be attracted by an entirely traditional or entirely modernist curricula. The two program proposers also attested that this approach was well received when presented to practicing professionals in the community.

The design of the program as a cohort model was felt as a weakness as it removes the flexibility for students to enter the program in either Fall or Spring semester. The committee felt that this model could be reconsidered once the program as run for 2-3 years. The reasoning behind the cohort model is to create a sense of “team” amongst the students as they progress through the curriculum. Even though this is a theoretically wonderful idea, practically it may take a toll in
terms of student registration and ability to complete the program in a timely fashion.

The strongest argument for the support of the program came from its complementarity with some of the College already existing programs (e.g. Historical Preservation, Urban studies) and the historical surrounding offered by the Charleston area, i.e. taking advantage of “Charleston as a place.”. The program addresses all five Goals delineated in the College’s current Strategic Plan, as highlighted in the proposers’ cover letter.

Many committee members had questions on the financial costs of the program, but decided to relay these issues to the budget committee after the assurance from the Provost that the program budget would be carefully scrutinized and remodeled even after and if it is approved by the Senate and before making its way to the Board of Trustees and the CHE for consideration.

The committee feels that the CPAD program has the possibility of becoming a “flagship” program and bringing the College national and international recognition. It will need strong support from both the School of the Arts and the College to achieve this goal.