I. Introduction: While higher education is comforted by its historic role of teaching eternal values, with the knowledge and skill to put these values into action, architecture as a discipline is experiencing dramatic changes that fundamentally affect our current work at the academy. These changes provide some context for what is a reasonably modest Academic Plan during 2004-2009.

It is, of course, important for the College of Architecture to be a partner in the increasingly research-driven perception of UNC Charlotte. Two fundamental objectives will embrace the planning goals contained herein:

- Education is much more than a classroom activity. One of our primary challenges is to enable as many different types of learning as possible, supporting faculty interested in creative and unique learning strategies and situations – sometimes situations of risk – and ultimately empowering students through these experiences. The College often defines architecture in terms of “social capital,” “urbanism,” and “outreach/engagement,” and intentionally points to the very diverse conditions of architecture today that challenge us to maintain strength in both undergraduate and graduate programs.

- The College of Architecture must balance the need to be known for something and attract a very diverse, dynamic, energetic, and challenging student body and faculty. Our aspirations for increasing our national profile, expanding our community-based programs, designing a better environment, and moving architecture into the mainstream of this university and community depend – first and foremost – on our ability to attract good folks.

We do not teach – nor do many professionals practice – architecture as a return to Classical traditions; much has happened through social evolution, technological progress, and artistic sophistication to look backwards too long. The following context affects the changes proposed in this plan.

*Globalization* has affected the practice of architecture. We no longer work in our “home” communities and thus understand the places we create with intimacy. Universal solutions do not work when your project location is constantly changing, whether this implies weather, culture, demographics, or resource availability. Architects must learn to process information differently and test solutions locally. These skills involve increasing sophistication with communication, technology, human resources, and traditions. Statistically, there are far more non-Western cities being produced, albeit looking more Western in impression. Architects – and clients – are more insecure about what the meaning of their work is beyond image (a subject I will address later).

*Resources* are increasingly the focus of regional dispute. American consumption of energy through inefficient building practices has put a spotlight on architectural education. Sustainable building will increasingly demand new designs, renewable energy sources, and recycled materials. Some educational institutions now demand buildings to last 100 years and then have 80% of them recyclable. All of these concerns will dramatically affect what we teach and how we develop new skills.
Market economies are now seen as major architectural issues. It is difficult for me to say at times (especially in light of my definition of architecture as community development) but economies have shifted the focus of our initiatives and innovations from the public to the private. As an educational institution we can not be effective to define our work as it was over the past 150 years, to see architectural “goodness” in terms of public works, monuments, and urban realms. There are just too many good examples of how public responsibility – especially in America – has been replaced by private, profit-driven initiatives that has changed our perception of the city as free to something that sooner or later we will have to pay for. As core values are taught through educational experience, we cannot afford to hide from this shift and make our professional colleagues "reveal this hard truth."

People’s workplaces and homes are increasingly different than the “typical” and certainly no longer dominated by the image of an “American Dream.” Technology has affected all of us permanently, our relationships are no longer typified by simplicity, and our neighbors are not like us.

Thus, the more "normative" aspects of the College of Architecture Academic Plan must be stable, while the viability of architectural education will be dependent, in large part, on our response to these changes.

II. Mission/Vision: Thus, the mission and vision of the College of Architecture intends to respond to these conditions and be realistic. It would be too simplistic to state that we “educate future architects.” To design is to be aware of the future. To be a professional means to understand meaning. Thus, to be a design professional implies a responsibility to understand the potential of the environment to affect positive change in people’s

Architectural education is based in the responsible engagement between the physical world and human/natural resources using diverse strategies in both science and design professions.

• The CoA seeks to shape future leaders and extend public knowledge about the significant relations between the built environment and quality of life in a global context, which begins with the opening of your eyes and seeing the world.

• The CoA seeks to foster creative, contemporary practices in architecture that demonstrate confidence in the future and opportunity for individual initiative. We are committed to pushing the creative envelope and demonstrate the importance of conceptual skills and alternative thinking.

• The CoA seeks to establish a reputation for diverse programs of community engagement that are action-oriented.
III. **Assumptions/Values:**

The College of Architecture 2004-2009 Academic Plan is based on:

- Increased visibility and participation in **interdisciplinary and collaborative educational initiatives** on- and off-campus is a primary value. It highlights the importance of visual literacy and collaborative design/development practices prevalent in the profession and community today. Collaborations are worthy when they promote study of “the gap,” whereby conflict, contradiction, questions, and sometimes confusion encourages new thinking, experiential learning opportunities, applied skill, and visible results.

- The **CoA student population** will continue to grow to approximately 350 students through increased enrollment in research, international exchanges and community-based programs.

- Advanced skill in **digital media** – descriptive and speculative visualization – will be increasingly required within the architectural profession.

- The CoA will maintain a core value in **material** (tectonic and building science) **knowledge** and **manipulative** (constructed) **skills**.

- The CoA should strive to gain a leadership role in **building and community sustainability design and planning**.

- The CoA will undertake an **organizational restructuring** in the next two years (the first since 1978) to reflect its expanded activities in research and community engagement.

IV. **Overview:**

The goal is to provide – through research, creative practice and engaged leadership – catalysts for design ideas and design issues to be seen, discussed, and reflected in built work.

To accomplish this goal, the College of Architecture (CoA) currently offers a Bachelor of Arts (in Architecture) (4 year), and three professional, fully-accredited degree programs: Bachelor of Architecture (5 year), Master of Architecture I (3+ year), and Master of Architecture II (2 year).

The CoA directly contributes to four university **themes**:

- **Theme A: Liberal Education**
  This theme is supported through a broad range of courses that teach visual literacy alongside traditional liberal arts subjects (English, Math, Physics). Additionally, this theme will be developed in two, specific “General Education” courses offered to the university in architectural history and visual thinking. The college continues to participate in courses for Fifth Year students that focus on “Ideas and Concepts” (i.e., Contemporary Art History and Aesthetics). The college maintains the goal to participate in the MA in Public History (Historic Preservation Studies).

- **Theme B: Urban and Regional Development**
  This theme is supported through formal course and degree program collaborations (MA in Geography/Community Planning) and through interdisciplinary relationships based on project scope and urgency. Externally funded studies and professional advocacy projects (i.e., NEA/Mayor’s Institute on City Design-South, and Department of Housing and Urban Development “Community SUPPORT Project” (with psychology)) presents the opportunity to connect various “community development” initiatives with the Metropolitan Studies Group (MSG).

- **Theme C: Business and Finance**
  This theme is supported through the formal course collaboration with the Belk College of Business Administration – Real Estate Concentration.
Likewise, the CoA will pursue program involvement with construction industries in material and construction technologies.

- **Theme F: International Understanding and Involvement**
  This theme is supported by studying the extension of the successful Summer Design/Field Study Programs (Italy & Spain) along with exchange programs into more diverse curricular-based initiatives. The primary goal of these initiatives is to cultivate international programs that are more diverse geographically and focus on the leadership development of participating students. Secondly, these initiatives should be valued – and supported – based on the opportunity to make visible changes in student design and research work. Programs to be pursued include: endowed travel opportunities for both students and faculty, regular participation in international summer building workshops, student attendance at international seminars and symposium, required international curricular components (including formal connections with International Studies), faculty exchange in design education and parallel "urban and regional development" programs (as described in above theme).

V. **Goals:**

For the College of Architecture to continue to be a vital part of both the campus and community's development, the following goals will guide our work:

- The CoA must evaluate and redesign its "capacity development" and infrastructure relative to resources, faculty development, student advising and career services, information technology, professional educational services and creative design education. The implications of this goal will profoundly affect our ability to be effective in balancing educational and research ambitions. This capacity affects our ability to announce and celebrate our accomplishments and thus to announce and celebrate the impact of UNC Charlotte!

- Our capacity will determine how to implement our focus on two primary issues during the 2004-2009 planning period: a research agenda and community/professional engagement. It will become increasingly important for the CoA to clearly define how research and engagement affect public policy and the environment, especially at this moment of transitional economics.

- To support our research initiatives, three areas of concentration have been initiated in the CoA 2001-2002 (post-accreditation) curricular revisions:
  1. Design, Theory, and Practice (the craft of building/thinking);
  2. Urbanism (defining an urban agenda); and,
  3. Building Technology (designing the use of limited resources).

- To support CoA community/professional engangement, faculty and students have developed the following collaborative relations:
  - University Honors Programs
  - MA in Geography (Community Planning Track)
  - MBA (Real Estate Concentration)
  - MA in Public History (Historic Preservation)
  - Ph.D. in Infrastructure and Environmental Systems (including collaboration with the "Global Institute for Energy and Environmental Systems)
  - Community Development Academy (primarily through a co-directive position with the “Community SUPPORT Project”)

Four primary "stretch goals" exist for the CoA:

- **Develop “post-professional” educational options** within our current Master of Architecture degree options. Enrollment as a “post-professional”
student implies holding a “first professional” (usually a five-year, B.Architecture) degree as the point of entry to graduate education with the intent to develop an independent, research-based program of study. Initially, research competency would be in two areas: urban design (practice-based and theoretical) and architectural technology (primarily in building performance, envelope design, and material studies) with the Department of Civil Engineering. These students would contribute to faculty research and public knowledge of the value of architectural services.

- **Extend/expand “Charlotte Community Design Studio” (CCDS)** through applied research and educational initiatives locally, statewide, and regionally. Build formal relationships, interdisciplinary research initiatives, and public programs with the Community Development Academy and Metropolitan Studies Group. By 2009, explore the organization of the CCDS as a formal center connected to the Metropolitan Studies Group. These activities would dramatically contribute to providing new educational opportunities and public knowledge of community design issues.

- **Initiate** proposal to design and build a Digital Visualization Center on for the university (potentially as part of the CITI campus) to provide research and educational opportunities that include: architectural modeling and animation, GIS systems interface with 3-D modeling, dynamic structural and construction technology modeling and testing, and illustration/graphic design capability. This proposal would create a center for digital media studies to support the goal of increased visual literacy and interdisciplinary collaboration, in addition to research, educational opportunities and public knowledge goals.

- **Create a Professional Development / Summer Design School** to integrate professional knowledge (project design, management, experimental techniques and intellectual agendas) with campus programs. The goal is to consolidate offerings in public knowledge about architecture and related disciplines and to use architecture as a catalyst to understand social capital, community development, and design professions.