ARCHITECTURE: SERIOUS SCIENCE BY SERIOUS PEOPLE

BY FRANK VAN DER HOEVEN – DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAired BY PETER RUSSELL, DEAN AT RWTH AACHEN, ASSESSED THE RESEARCH OF THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE IN NOVEMBER 2010.

The final report on the committee’s findings is in! Altogether the Faculty of Architecture and the two OTB research groups made a very good impression on the committee. The scores of the research groups were significantly higher than those during the previous assessment in 2003.

The 2010 committee concluded: “The TU Delft enjoys a ‘Level One’ acceptance worldwide as one of the leading institutions for architectural education and research.” “The output of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment is phenomenal”.

The review marks an important step in the development of the Faculty of Architecture. Design-oriented research is no longer a hobby. It has established itself as a serious science conducted by serious and committed people in an organisation that has the energy and the potential to become a world leader in its field.

Publishing in peer-reviewed journals is a pre-requisite to move on

However, the committee also expressed some words of caution regarding its output: “When that is qualified to be the scientific output, that is, the peer reviewed articles and journals, then the productivity of the members of the faculty range from good to okay.” Clearly the committee expects the faculty to do better when it comes to publishing in international scientific peer-reviewed journals, but still: “The committee was impressed with the overall commitment to peer-reviewed articles and even in questioning with ‘underperforming groups’, was assured that this is indeed relevant to the stature of the group and of the faculty as a whole.”

The need for a stable research environment

The committee had some clear words of advice regarding the frequent rearrangements that took place between 2003 and 2009: “Rearranging the research groups is perhaps necessary every five to ten years. However, it seems that the researchers at the TU Delft have been doing nothing else over the past six years. Given that and the fire, it is astounding to which levels of output the members of the faculty have shown to be capable of. If the rearrangement were to stop, imagine the potential output of researchers in a stable environment. It is the recommendation of the committee to do just that.”

The full report can be downloaded from: bk.tudelft.nl/researchassessment

Scorecard research groups

| Architecture (including DSD) | 4 4 5 3 |
| Design & History (RMIT & IHAAU) | 4 3 4 3 |
| Green Building Innovation | 4 4 5 4 |
| Computation & Performance | 4 3 4 4 |
| Urbanism | 4 3 5 4 |
| Innovations for the Management of the Built Environment | 4 3 4 5 |
| Housing Quality | 4 5 3 5 |
| Geo-information and Land Development | 5 5 5 4 |

Q = Quality; P = Productivity; R = Relevance; V = Viability
5 = Excellent; 4 = Very good; 3 = Good; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory

Committee composition

Chair:
Peter Russell, Dean at RWTH Aachen.

Members:
John Worthington, Sheffield; Rachelle Alterman, Technion; Dirk Donath, Weimar; Per Heiselberg, Aalborg; Dinar Camotim, Lisbon; Pieter Uyttenhove, Gent; Michael Hebbert, Manchester; Nicholas Bullock, Cambridge. Secretary: Frank Zuiddam, Technopolis|Group.