



February 20, 2014

2013–2014 Board of Directors

President

Norman R. Millar, AIA
Woodbury University

Vice President

Hsinming Fung
SCI-Arc

Past President

Donna V. Robertson, FAIA
Illinois Institute of Technology

Secretary

Lisa Tilder, AIA
Ohio State University

Treasurer

Jori Erdman
Louisiana State University

East Central Director

Mo Zell
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Northeast Director

Glenn Wiggins, PhD
Wentworth Institute of Technology

Mid-Atlantic Director

David W. Hinson, FAIA
Auburn University

Gulf Director

Corey Saft, AIA
University of Louisiana - Lafayette

West Director

Ryan Smith
University of Utah

West Central Director

Shannon Criss, RA
University of Kansas

Canadian Director

Leslie Van Duzer
University of British Columbia

Student Director

Jennifer Taylor
American Institute of
Architecture Students

Public Director

Andrew L. Dannenberg, MD, MPH
University of Washington

Executive Director

Michael J. Monti, PhD

To: Shannon Kraus, FAIA, President-Elect, National Architectural Accrediting Board

From: Norman Millar, AIA, President

Re: Report on Procedures for Accreditation

The ACSA welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the 2015 NAAB Procedures for Accreditation. The following recommendations are among those identified through member feedback in the weeks leading up to NAAB's February 20 deadline, through the ACSA's preparations for the 2013 Accreditation Review Conference, and past discussions within the membership and ACSA board about the Procedures.

Consistent with our report for the 2013 Accreditation Review Conference, our recommendations reflect an abiding interest in streamlining and simplifying the Conditions and Procedures, while continuing a high level of expectation for program engagement with the realities of professional practice. NAAB's Procedures already support a process that emphasizes demonstration of outcomes, and we think that further refinement can allow programs flexibility for well-planned experimentation and clarity of expectation.

Recommendations

1. Cut the duration of visits by one day (a) by making digital course notebooks available to the teams prior to the visit and (b) by distributing advance work across team members who can then report any concerns that the team can focus on when on site.

Program responses to Part One, Part Two: Section 4, and Part Three of the 2014 Conditions for Accreditation are largely informational and could be reviewed in advance. Similarly, the content formerly contained in the "Policy Review" Condition that was moved from the 2014 draft Conditions to the supplemental material could be subject to advance review.

**Association of Collegiate
Schools of Architecture**

1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: 202.785.2324
Fax: 202.628.0448
www.acsa-arch.org

2. Consider new models for the composition of visiting teams. Having two educators for each visiting team (instead of just on two-degree visits) will facilitate better informational transfer from school to team. Having an architecture program administrator participate in candidacy visits will also provide stronger feedback on programs starting up.

Reasons for changing visiting team composition:

- a. The balance of educators to practitioners on visiting teams does not match peer professions, including landscape architecture, interior design, engineering, and planning, as well as other architectural validation processes, such as RIBA.¹
- b. Visiting teams do not have to reflect the composition of the NAAB board of directors. Collaterals support NAAB’s mission best by nominating visiting team members with appropriate interest and expertise in professional architectural education.
- c. Team members do not represent the views of the collateral that nominated them. Experience as an educator, student, or practitioner is most relevant, as are demographic and other considerations.

3. Allow programs more input on visiting team members. This can be done by working further in advance to identify team members. It can also be done without focusing on team member names by letting the program identify optimal team member backgrounds that match the program’s mission and focus. A database of information on visiting team member backgrounds will help better identify matches, regardless of the potential visitors’ names.

4. Work with ACSA to develop an online resource on team room preparation.

5. Remove the section titled “a.Optional: Contact with Graduates and Local Practitioners.” Although some schools believe this is a useful opportunity for teams to understand their context, the fact that it is optional introduces variability in team experiences. Some programs have reported concerns about team chairs who have

¹ Peer profession’s visiting team composition:

- Landscape architecture: 1 educator, 1 program administrator, 1 practitioner
- Interior design: each team has 3 members, at least one educator and one practitioner
- Planning: 2 educators and 1 practitioner
- Law (typical): 2-3 faculty members, 1 program administrator, 1 librarian, 1 practitioner
- RIBA validation board (typical): 2 educators, 2 practitioners, in varying roles, plus 1 professional from a related or relevant discipline, 1 student, 1 regional representative normally nominated by the school, and a an RIBA staff member or RIBA nomination serving as secretary

wanted these events to happen. The latitude with which teams can access resources such as optional receptions should give pause for concern about how optional these events are.

6. Revisit the role of non-voting members.

(a) Streamline the process by which non-voting members are selected.

Currently there are multiple steps between the school, the team chair, and the executive director that could be reduced.

(b) Revise the Procedures so that NAAB recommends non-voting members in rare cases only.

- (i) schools may find it difficult to decline such a request from NAAB;
- (ii) these members may be completely unfamiliar with North American education or with various institutional contexts and their presence could significantly change the culture of the visit;
- (iii) this may set a precedent of numerous requests for non-voting participation and become a burden on schools as a whole.

For this reason, we suggest NAAB connect potential non-voting members to programs and leave the decision to the schools themselves.

7. ACSA wishes to reiterate our concern about the removal of the regional accreditation Condition. The NAAB Procedures differentiate substantial equivalency from accreditation, and we support continuing this distinction.