

# PAB Site Visitor Training

**Planning Accreditation Board**  
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**ACSP Conference – Buffalo**

1

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# Introductions

- Name
- University/Organization
- Where located

# Outline for Today

- Role of Site Visitors
- Outcomes Assessment
- Making Judgments on Standards
- Skills and Dispositions of Site Visitors



# Site Visitor Training

Module A:  
Accreditation  
Purpose and  
Process

Module B:  
PAB  
Accreditation  
Standards

Today:

- Outcomes Assessment Basics
- Making Judgments on Standards
- Skills and Dispositions of Site Visitors

## Purpose of Today's Session

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You are **knowledgeable** when you go on Site Visits (new standards, outcomes assessment)

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You can make and defend your **assessments** of compliance with criteria

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You are **prepared** for some of the challenges during Site Visits

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You **create a community** of Visitors for support, PAB staff for questions, and colleagues for conversation

## Role of Site Visitors



# How do you accomplish these roles?

Interviews with key individuals and groups

- Program Administrator, Dean, Provost, faculty, staff
- Students, alumni, employers, local APA leadership
- Probing
- Corroborating information

# How do you accomplish these roles?

Observations on site  
of facilities,  
relationships among  
people

Identify  
issues/concerns/are  
as for improvement

Recognize strengths  
of Program

Behave with  
integrity; collaborate  
with team members;  
be fair, objective,  
and consistent



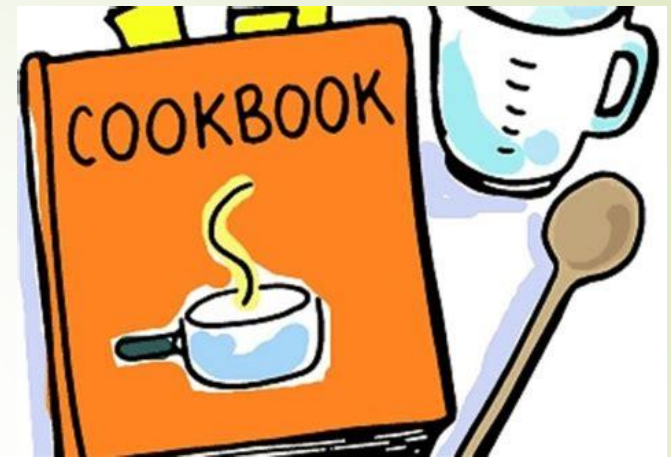
# Outcomes Assessment

# What is “Outcomes Assessment?”

- What outcomes are you intending to achieve?
- What opportunities/constraints might you have?
- How do you achieve your outcomes?
- What did you achieve?
- What could you do better?

# An Analogy...

11



Gourmet Meal

# What is “Outcomes Assessment?”

- What outcomes are you intending to achieve? [Meal]
- What opportunities/constraints might you have? [Ingredients, time, etc.]
- How do you achieve your outcomes? [Recipe]
- What did you achieve? [Flavor, quality, etc.]
- What could you do better? [Different recipe; follow recipe; better ingredients]

# What is “Outcomes Assessment?”

- What outcomes are you intending to achieve? [Student Learning Outcomes]
- What opportunities/constraints might you have? [Faculty, space, resources, teaching abilities, quality of students, etc.]
- How do you achieve your outcomes? [Curriculum, faculty expertise, teaching effectiveness, etc.]
- What did you achieve? [Student learning, achievement, career success]
- What could you do better? [Revise courses, curricular adjustments, better activities for students, etc.]

# Outcomes Assessment in Accreditation

Two sets of assessments

- Students learning what they will need for planning practice?  
**Compliance with PAB Standards?**
- Strategic Planning? **Program Improving?**



# Why assess program improvement and student learning outcomes?

- Monitor the progress of **programs** in meeting their strategic goals (productivity, quality, contribution to profession and knowledge, service to community, etc.)
- Identify the **learning of students** (knowledge, skills, experience, predispositions/values, etc.)
- Make continuous **adjustments and improvements** to both

# Site Visitor Roles and Responsibilities (1)

- Understand distinction between program improvement/ strategic planning and student learning outcomes in Standard 1
- Evaluate efficacy of program goals and learning outcomes in the context of the program's mission



## Site Visitor Roles and Responsibilities (2)

- Examine outcomes identified (realistic, mission-based, address PAB criteria)
- Review *assessment plans* for program goals and student learning outcomes (measures, data, analysis, feedback – what, how, when)
- Examine ways to *measure outcomes* (improvement and learning)
- Identify how the program has *used OR intends to use results*

# Strategic Planning and Program Improvement

**Standards 1.A; 1.B; 1.C; 1.E**

## PAB Standard 1: **Strategic Planning and Progress**

- A. Prior Strategic Plan and Accreditation Review
- B. Current Strategic Plan
- C. Programmatic Assessment
- D. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
- E. Strategic Issues for the Next 5-7 years
- F. Public Information



## Plan and Improve

### Past Strategic Plan and Accreditation Review

- Issues → Priorities → Action → Assess → Progress

### Current Strategic Plan

- Goals and Measurable Outcomes
- Participatory

### Programmatic Assessment

- Work Plan and Assessment Activities
- Benchmarks → Timeframe → Actions → Assess → Revise

Strategic Issues in Next 5-7 Years

# Program Strategic Plan

1

## Program **mission**

- What the program's purpose and reason for being...

2

## Program's **vision**

- Aspirational statement about future of program and graduates...

3

## Program **goals and objectives**

- Measurable
- Work plan

## Program Mission -- **typically**

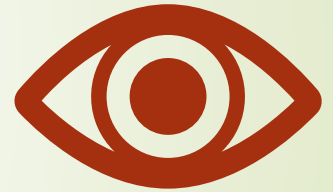
**Teaching** to achieve student learning and success  
(we'll come back to this)

**Research/Outreach** to inform practice or advance knowledge or understand planning issues better or help students learning research skills

**Service/Engagement** to contribute to communities or provide opportunities to students for community engagement

Given vision, mission, context, resources, distinctive characteristics...

- What are the program's future goals (strategic, necessary, and aspirational)
- What are the plans to achieve them?
  - Outcomes/objectives
  - Performance indicators/measures
  - Benchmarks
  - Timeframe
  - Personnel and resources



# Program Goals – Example

## Increase Student Enrollment

- **Current:** 20 students enrolled
- **Aspirational:** 40 in 10 years
- **Realistic:** 30 in 5 years  
(planning/action horizon)



# Measurable Objectives

Plan with logic:

- Increase number of targeted applications from own institution (applicants → students)
- Expand market area for recruitment (applicants → students)
- Improve retention (Factors affecting retention: Student preparation, financial considerations, fit, culture, etc.)

# Plan and Improve

- What are the **benchmarks** for **measurable objectives**?
  - Objective 1: **Double** number of **applicants** from own institution for Fall 2019 entering class
  - Objective 2: Establish **working relationships** in **two** new recruitment areas by Spring, 2020
  - Objective 3: Improve **year-to-year retention rates** for 1<sup>st</sup>→2<sup>nd</sup> Year by **5%** by Fall 2020 census

# Outcomes Assessment

What are the methods for **evaluating progress** and **making improvements** to your plan

- What evidence do you have to assess the achievement of those goals?
- What are your results?
- Interpret and act – Success? Progress? Revise? Rethink?

# Outcomes that MUST be Reported

- Graduate Satisfaction
- Graduate Service to Community and Profession
- Student Retention and Graduation Rates
- Graduate Employment
- Graduate Certification Rates
- Strategic Planning-Related Measures

# Update Strategic Plan

What is the **process** by which the strategic plan is revised, refreshed, and disseminated

- New plan in response to poor performance
- Revised plan due to changed circumstances (internal or external)
- Define frequency, approach, responsibility

# Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

**Standard 1.D.**

# Student Learning Outcome Definition and Assessment

- Central to our task as educators
- Changes way we think
  - Student learning is the **Focus**
  - Curriculum, faculty quality, student quality are **Means to the End**



# Student Learning Outcomes

**Definition:** Student learning outcomes clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education.

- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment



# Student Learning Outcomes

**Practitioners:** Think about some of your best entry-level planners

**Educators:** Think about some of your best students over the years

**What did they know?**

**What could they do?**

**What values (professional, personal) and dispositions did they exhibit?**

## Student Learning Outcomes for Planning Programs (typically)

Knowledge

Skills

Values/Ethics

Competencies or experience doing

# What influences program-level student learning outcomes?

Program/University  
mission or vision

What graduates are  
expected to do and  
where

Current needs and  
future expectations  
for professional  
practice and  
competence

PAB definitions in  
Standard 4

# Student Learning Outcomes

How do programs plan to achieve those student learning outcomes?

- Course content and syllabi and assignments
- Faculty expertise and qualifications
- Student quality and ability
- Student activities during program
- Curriculum content and structure

All are “inputs” designed to achieve a set of student learning “outcomes”

# Student Learning Outcomes

- Curriculum, courses, activities provide the **opportunity** to learn....
- But must **demonstrate** that **students** actually **learned**

# Required Elements in a Student Learning Assessment Plan

Four things

1. Set of **program-level student learning outcomes** and levels of performance
2. **Curriculum map** that links course-level learning outcomes to program-level outcomes

# Required Elements in a Student Learning Assessment Plan

Four things

3. Identification of **measures/evidence** to be collected and how
4. Schedule for **collecting evidence and using the results** to improve student learning

# Required Elements in a Student Learning Assessment Plan

Four things

1. Set of **program-level student learning outcomes** and levels of performance
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# Student Learning Outcomes

Specific items that the program expects students to develop, learn, or master during their degree completion process

- knowledge,
- practical skills,
- areas of professional development,
- attitudes,
- higher-order thinking skills, etc.

# Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes

- What do you want students to know at the end of the program

AND

- What do you want students to be able to do at the end of the program?

# Three Major Characteristics

They specify an action:

- ➡ by the students that is **observable**
- ➡ by the students that is **measurable**
- ➡ that is done by the **students** (rather than the faculty member)

# Format of a Student Learning Outcome

***Students*** who have completed this program, will ***{action verb} {something}***

***Bloom's Verbs***

# Student Learning Outcomes

- Defined for Courses in Curriculum (Course-Level)
- **Defined for Overall Program (Program-Level)**

# Student Learning Outcomes

- No set number
- Typically 5-7, often with 2-5 subparts
- Examples to follow

# SLO Examples

- Develop and refine **individual and professional practices** that support a lifelong career in planning and advocacy
- Apply lessons from **planning history and theory** to the current conditions and challenges of diverse urban settings
- Construct, articulate, and defend a **community-based process of advocacy and change** to achieve a more just, equitable, and sustainable community



# Required Elements in a Student Learning Assessment Plan

Four things

1. Set of **program-level student learning outcomes** and levels of performance
2. **Curriculum map** that links course-level learning outcomes to program-level outcomes

# Curriculum Mapping

- Links course-level learning outcomes to program-level learning outcomes
- Identifies where learning outcomes are expected
- Shows you strategies for in-course learning assessment of program-level outcomes

[illegible]

# Curriculum Map

Curriculum Map		Course Number and Title	CREP 501 Principles and Practices of City & Regional Planning	CREP 510 City and Regional Planning Studio I	CREP 512 Urban Economics for Planning	CREP 513 History of City & Regional Planning	CREP 520 City & Regional Planning Studio II	CREP 521 Computer and Data Applications for Planners	CREP 522 Land Development Law	CREP 523 Quantitative Analysis and Methods for Planners	CREP 792 Thesis Research & Professional Report Preparation	CREP 794 Professional Project in City and Regional Planning
Program-Level Student Learning Outcome												
2 Apply general planning knowledge of law, economics, demographics, and structure of cities, in the creation and development of plans for sustainable, prosperous, just, and resilient communities and cities across the world.												
a) Locate, read and comprehend academic and professional planning literature and engage in debate about the issues they raise			X		X A		X				X	X A
b) Write an effective analytical academic literature review that demonstrates students' mastery of the field			X		X A						X	X A
c) Apply social, environmental, economic sustainability concepts in the development of plans				X	X A		X A					X A

# Required Elements in a Student Learning Assessment Plan

Four things

3. Identification of **measures/evidence** to be collected and how
4. Schedule for **collecting evidence and using the results** to improve student learning

# Measuring Student Learning Outcomes

- Measures of learning
- Applied to student work
- Other PAB criteria require an alumni survey (satisfaction with program, employment after graduation, service to profession and community) – Not direct measures of student learning

# Two categories of measures

## 1. Direct (most valid)

- Rubrics applied to project or paper (portfolios of student work, capstone projects)
- Field supervisor ratings and employer ratings (If ratings address knowledge, skills, and values)
- Tests/Test items (correct items, scores and pass rates on licensure exams)



# Two categories of measures

## 2. Indirect (and flawed)

- Course grades (do not distinguish which knowledge, skills, values areas achieved)
- Honors, awards, scholarships (uncertainty in criteria applied)
- Surveys (measure opinions and satisfaction)
- Student self-ratings (lack objectivity)
- Alumni satisfaction with learning (satisfaction is often subjective)

# Required Elements in a Student Learning Assessment Plan

Four things

3. Identification of **measures/evidence** to be collected and how
4. Schedule for **collecting evidence and using the results** to improve student learning

# Measuring Student Learning Outcomes

Valid measures and benchmarks of level of performance



Schedule and method – whom? how often? how many?



Summary of results and discussion



Action required

# Student Learning Outcomes

## Work of Site Visitors

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Are learning outcomes  
**defined**? Appropriate  
to Program? Mission?

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How are outcomes  
**measured**?  
Appropriate? Valid?

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# Student Learning Outcomes

## Work of Site Visitors

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Is there an **assessment plan**?

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Is there a feedback loop and **improvement** included? Celebrate? Revise? Rethink?

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## In Review... *Site Visitors will...*

- Distinguish between:
  - Program Improvement Goals and Outcome Measures
  - Student Learning Outcomes and Measures
- Defend the need for defining and measuring outcomes
- Apply critical eye to ongoing use of assessment results in improvement

# Questions and Discussion

# Break

62

**Return at 1:45**

**Complete first section of evaluation form, please**



# Making Judgments on Standards

# Process of Making Judgments

## Read Self-Study Report

- Evidence
- Concerns

## Preliminary Assessment

- Substantial Compliance vs. Unmet
- Partially met – room for significant improvement

# Process of Making Judgments

## Work Done on Site

- Corroborate evidence
- Questions? Of Whom?

## Think about Exit Interviews and SV Report

- Strengths, Concerns, Recommendations
- How to phrase?

# Case Studies on Standards

Work at Tables or As a Group

# Standard 1: Strategic Planning and Progress

Work at tables

## Questions for Discussion

- Preliminary assessment?
- Evidence?
- Questions of whom?
- Exit interview?

# Standard 1: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Work Together

Questions for Discussion

- Preliminary assessment?
- Evidence?
- Questions of whom?
- Exit interview?

## Standard 2: Student Diversity

Work at Tables

Questions for Discussion

- Preliminary assessment?
- Evidence?
- Questions of whom?
- Exit interview?

## Standard 3: Faculty Size

Work Together

Questions for Discussion

- Preliminary assessment?
- Evidence?
- Questions of whom?
- Exit interview?



## Standard 4: Curriculum and Instruction Reviewing Curriculum

- Knowledge, Skills, Values
  - Student learning outcomes defined (may not be identical to PAB Criteria, but should have a “cross-walk” between SLOs and Criteria
  - Review of Syllabi – topical areas covered; readings;
  - Corroborate with Questions of Instructors, Students

## Standard 4: Areas of Specialization

Work at Tables

Questions for Discussion

- Preliminary assessment?
- Evidence?
- Questions of whom?
- Exit interview?

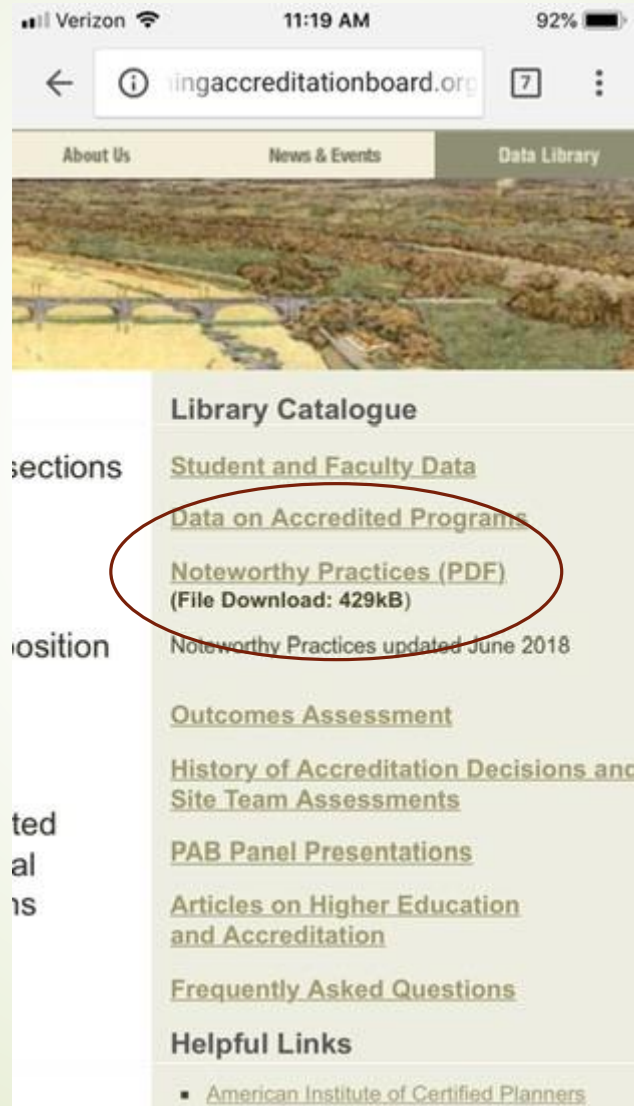
# Standard 5: Governance

Work at Tables

Questions for Discussion

- Preliminary assessment?
- Evidence?
- Questions of whom?
- Exit interview?

# Additional Resources



# Break

**Write Down Questions on Index Cards**

**Evaluation Form Section, please!!!**

**Return at 4:00 pm**

# Site Visitor Skills and Dispositions

# Skills and Disposition

- Group Functioning
  - Operate as a Team
  - Division of Labor
- Preparing for the Visit
  - Knowledge
  - Attitude
- Skills
- Team Member Expectations

# Operate as a Team

- ✓ Respectful, collegial
- ✓ All with equal voice in decisions and in production of report
- ✓ Team Chair in charge unless not performing
- ✓ Individual strengths used to group good – diplomat, interrogator, analytical, verbal, affable, stern, etc.



# Division of Labor

- Preparation for Site Visit
  - Individual Preferences and Expertise on Standards
- On Site
  - Chair – introductions and background
  - Lead interviewer, prober, notetaker
  - Rotate or Based on Standards
- Report Writing
  - Sections to Write
  - Deadlines

# Preparing for Site Visit

- Knowledge
  - Standards and Criteria – Review
  - Read and study Self Study
  - Make preliminary assessments on all standards (use the Compliance Checklist)



# Preparing for Site Visit

- Attitude
  - Strict compliance versus substantial compliance
  - Compare to their mission, not yours
  - Reference what you know
  - Identify what you don't know
- Pre-Visit Conference Call



# Preparing for Site Visit

- Pre-Visit Conference Call
  - Preliminary assessments shared
  - Evidence and openness to have mind changed
  - Questions identified? Of whom?



# Examples of Team Functioning

- No plan 😞
- Team divides up standards and someone takes the lead on everything related to that standard 😐
- Team divides up standards with a lead and second for each 😊

# Site Visitor Skills

- Interviewing
- Interpersonal communications
- Self-expression
- Dealing with attitudinal challenges

## Site Visitor Skills

- Note-taking
- Accurate recall
- Maintaining objectivity
- Deductive reasoning and logical analysis
- Writing

# Team Expectations

- ✓ Preparation – evidence, questions
- ✓ Unbiased, objective, open, and free from personal biases or preferences
- ✓ Confidentiality of school information and team deliberations



# Team Expectations

- ✓ Complete work on time
- ✓ Raise questions, debate, “let go” when needed
- ✓ On time
- ✓ Participate actively in team meetings

# Additional Resources

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## Site Visitors

**VOLUNTEER TO BE A PAB SITE VISITOR!**

*Why you ask?*

-  Experience the peer-review process first hand
-  Support and Contribute to the education of future planners
-  Network with new colleagues
- Travel to universities across the country
- Gather new ideas, emerging trends and share best practices

[Become a PAB Site Visitor](#)

### Documents for Site Visitors

[Site Visit Manual \(PDF\)](#)

A separate version of this manual is available for Program Administrators.

[Site Visit Report Template \(WORD\) For 2017 Standards](#)

[Interview Book](#)

This book was created to assist Site Visit Team members with sample questions for the various individuals and groups they will meet during the Site Visit.

[Conflict of Interest Form \(WORD\)](#)

[Expense Reimbursement Form \(EXCEL\)](#)

[Site Visit Team Member Evaluation Online Survey](#)

# Case Studies about Site Visits

# Sticky Situations During a Site Visit

1. “Dissent among faculty”
2. “Site visitor behaving badly”
3. “It’s a small world”

91

# Rapid Fire Round

**Site Visit Situations**

# “Dissent Among the Team”

Conference Call before Visit



What Do You Do?

# “Dissent Among the Team”

Conference Call before Visit



- Evidence?
- Rationale for interpretation?
- Questions to ask during visit to clarify?

# “Students Raise Thorny Issues”

## Meeting with masters students

1. “Rigor of the program is too low”
2. “Office hours are consistently not held by two or three faculty”
3. An “extremely effective” untenured faculty member just announced in class that she had not been recommended for tenure.



# “Students Raise Thorny Issues”

- What should the SVT team do?
- Who should do it?
- What should s/he say for each of the issues raised?

## “Students Raise Thorny Issues” – Part 2

- One of the team members keeps returning to the issue of the tenure case with the students
  - “rile up” the students
- What should the SVT chair and third team member do/say during the interview with students?

# “Schedule goes bad”

- Early meeting on Monday goes long
- What does the team do?

## “Faculty Airing Dirty Laundry”

- One faculty member spends her entire time during her interview with the team discussing her grievances with the Program Administrator.
  - She seems rational and not crazy
  - Her concerns could be legitimate
- What does the team do?

# “Disinterested Administrator”

- Meeting with Provost
  - Not prepared for your visit
  - Distracted during interview
  - What does the team do?

# Review of Today's Material

- Outcomes Assessment Basics
  - Program Improvement Plan and Progress
  - Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Making Judgments on Standards
  - Process
  - Case Studies
- Site Visitor Skills and Dispositions
  - Group functioning, team expectations, follow through
  - Case studies of site visit issues



# Additional Resources

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**Sections**

- [Student and Faculty Data](#)
- [Data on Accredited Programs](#)
- [Noteworthy Practices \(PDF\)](#)  
(File Download: 429kB)
- [Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [History of Accreditation Decisions and Site Team Assessments](#)
- [PAB Panel Presentations](#)
- [Articles on Higher Education and Accreditation](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

**Helpful Links**

- [American Institute of Certified Planners](#)

# Questions and Discussion

## Thank you!

102

**Please complete evaluation form**  
**Give to Jesmarie, Jaclyn**

**More questions or to follow up:**  
**[ckcontant@gmail.com](mailto:ckcontant@gmail.com)**