Date: August 30, 2021

To: E. Goetz, Chair of PAB Standards Revision Taskforce and member, PAB

From: Ivis Garcia Zambrana, POCIG Co-Chair Fernando Burga, POCIG Co-Chair

April Jackson, POCIG Secretary-Treasurer

Re: Update on Accreditation Standards Revisions

Dear Ed Goetz,

Thank you for responding to the letter that the Planners of Interest Group (POCIG) provided in February of 2021. We also thank the PAB Standards Revision Taskforce for considering our input for potential revisions in the accreditation standard revisions process. We understand that some of the issues that we raised go beyond PAB Accreditation Standards, still we hope that our recommendations encourage dialogue among the Task Force and ACSP members more generally. All that said, thank you for referring our comments to the appropriate bodies (e.g., the full PAB board, ACSP Taskforce on Antiracism, ACSP-PAB Advisory Committee, AICP, etc.). In addition, we are particularly glad to hear that many of our comments will be incorporated into the SSRM (e.g., elevating community engagement, changes to the curriculum, the provision of scholarships, mentorship, professional engagement, promotion, and tenure, etc.). Below we respond to some of your comments:

1. **Definition of diversity.**We are glad to see an updated definition of diversity. We understand that it is impossible to create a definition that includes every single type of diversity. However, we encourage the Taskforce to consider other suggestions that arose during the public comment period. For example, some definitions we have included in previous POCIG articles and reports that include other types of diversity not listed in the revised definition: mental or health status, familial status, culture, ways of thinking, interests, viewpoints, backgrounds, etc. As the above definition suggests, it is essential to acknowledge that diversity is more extensive and includes many non-apparent characteristics. The definition right now shows that personal forms of identity can be both visible and invisible. For example, visible differences are our most apparent forms of diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, age, gender). Some have started to recognize that visible diversity is often associated with discrimination. This is an important distinction because, historically, visible diversity has been the most marginalized in the United States. It is important to consider this right now because as these conversations move forward, many underrepresented racial and ethnic or gender identity groups, among others might start making demands for prioritizing visible forms of diversity. This more nuanced conversations perhaps could be added in the SSRM. We are also supportive of elevating racial equity in schools’ strategic plans.

1. **Climate of inclusiveness.**We are glad to see this added languagein where schools are required to document their effort to foster a more inclusive environment. Based on our experience of doing reports on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), we might note that the voices of students from diverse backgrounds often tend to get lost in aggregated data. We recommend conducting quantitative and qualitative studies where the various forms of diversity (e.g., students of color, foreign born students, and students who belong to other visible identity groups) are compared to the majority group to reveal areas in which students might feel discrimination, bias, discomfort, and alienation in their educational experiences inside and outside of the classroom. POCIG has created surveys, interview guides, and other documents that planning schools could use to measure their effectiveness. We would be happy to support these efforts. Overall, we are very glad that the PAB has incorporated monitoring diversity, equity, and inclusion goals as part of the strategic plan.

1. **Supporting success.**Based on our experience, programs will need support in how to support students and faculty effectively, as many institutions might not be aware of best practices and strategies they can utilize We recommend creating a working document with such strategies where this work is documented and shared with programs, and also mentioned in the SSRM. We offered some of the strategies we are aware of, but more extensive work should be done to document what is effective and has achieved measurable outcomes (e.g. increased diversity, tenure and promotion). Perhaps, this is something that the full PAB board and ACSP might collaborate on
2. **Implicit bias, microaggression’s, and cultural competency/humility.** In Standard 3G: Professional Development, implicit bias is mentioned. We suggest including microaggressions and cultural competency/humility as examples too.

1. **Individual Programs are to identify in their plans what metrics they are using.**We still promote recruiting students and faculty from diverse backgrounds that represent the diversity of the geographical region where the school is located. Although it is fine that the PAB asks each school to identify their own diversity goals, language could be added about doing this based on where they are located to represent the community at large. This is important because research shows that students who graduate locally appeal to local employers. In addition, many graduates choose to stay in the state where they conducted their studies. About 40% of graduates who went to state schools stayed within 50 miles of the university, but on average, they stayed within 300 miles—working in the general region.[[1]](#footnote-1) These are issues that could be discussed in the SSRM.

Again, we appreciate your detailed response letter. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to see how the ideas outlined in our previous letter might be implemented collectively by PAB, ACSP, and APA.

Best,

Ivis Garcia Zambrana, POCIG Co-Chair

Fernando Burga, POCIG Co-Chair

April Jackson, POCIG Secretary-Treasurer

1. Sentz, R., M. Metsker, P. Linares, and R. Clemans. 2018. “How Your School Affects Where You Live.” *Emsi* (blog). 2018. https://www.us.ccb/how-your-school-affects-where-you-live/. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)