



Planning Accreditation Board Newsletter

Notice Regarding Upcoming Accreditation Standards Amendment

Early this year, PAB will begin the process to amend the PAB standards with the goal of refining and clarifying the language and expectations related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Substantive changes to the standards are not expected.

Recent Supreme Court decisions^[1] and the proliferation of State anti-DEI legislation prompted PAB to engage legal counsel in reviewing the 2022 Accreditation Standards. The current DEI language in the 2022 standards has created uncertainty for program administrators and site visit teams, such that the interpretation of the 2022 standards may run counter to PAB's expectations. PAB standards respect institutional autonomy as they relate to admission practices (e.g., criterion 2A. Student Quality) and DEI efforts "consistent with applicable law and institutional policy" (e.g., criteria 2B. Student Diversity & 3B. Faculty Diversity); however, PAB also recognizes the need for flexibility and clarification with regards to assessment of DEI related standards.

Accredited university planning programs educate and prepare students for a globally connected world and advance the practice of planning through a greater understanding of complex systems, practices and policies that may lead to inequities. PAB will continue to expect accredited programs to demonstrate a commitment to DEI; however, those strategies and efforts will vary by institution. While the current political climate, in some places, may present challenging circumstances, PAB encourages programs to engage in new or innovative strategies to address the ideas and intentions embedded in DEI concepts within their programs and the curriculum.

Further information on the [amendment process](#) will be provided in the coming month. PAB will host a town hall on February 9, 2024 to discuss the rationale and process for the upcoming amendment to the 2022 Accreditation Standards. If you would like to attend, please [register here](#). The first draft of the proposed PAB standards amendments will be released in April. There will be two 30-day public comment periods. All PAB stakeholders will be notified in advance.

[1] *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, no.-20-1199, and *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. University of North Carolina et. al*, No. 21-707

Chicago - Fall 2023 Board Meeting



Board Members (left): Lois Takahashi, Ph.D., Byron Nicholas, AICP, PP, Bonnie Johnson, Ph.D, FAICP, Bristol Ellington, AICP, ICMA-CM, Mitch Thrower, CPA, Weiping Wu, Ph.D., Linda Tatum, FAICP, & Dawn Terkla, Ed.D.

During the Board Meeting, the PAB granted accreditation to the following programs:

- **Alabama A&M University**
Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Planning
Master of Urban and Regional Planning
- **Arizona State University**
Master of Urban and Environmental Planning
- **Indiana University of Pennsylvania**
Bachelor of Science in Regional Planning
- **University of California Berkeley**
Master of City Planning
- **University of Louisville**
Master of Urban Planning
- **University of Colorado Denver**
Master of Urban and Regional Planning

For a summary of recent actions or additional details, visit the PAB website, specifically the [News](#) and [Accredited Planning Programs](#) directory.

Noteworthy Practices

Congratulations to the [University of California Berkeley](#) for recognition of their Noteworthy Practice in student diversity recruitment, and to the [University of Louisville](#) for recognition of their Land Use Planning Law syllabus.

Welcome New Board Members



Deborah Alaimo Lawlor, FAICP, PP

AICP Planning Practitioner appointee (2023-2026)

Debbie Alaimo Lawlor has over 40 years of experience specializing in land use and environmental planning. She is a Principal Associate and Regional Manager for Planning Services for Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc., a multi-discipline consulting firm serving public and private sector clients nationwide. She manages a team of planners specializing in master planning, redevelopment, zoning, affordable housing, resiliency planning, and community engagement. Debbie has a B.S. in Environmental Planning and Design and a M.A. in Geography, both from Rutgers University. [Read More](#)

Trey Mendez III, J.D.

APA Public Member appointee (2023-2026)

Trey Mendez is a lawyer, mediator and restaurateur. He was born and raised in Brownsville, Texas, and is a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law. Mendez was sworn into office as Mayor of Brownsville in July 2019 and ended his term in May 2023. Prior to becoming Mayor, he served 9 years as a Trustee for Texas Southmost College, the fastest growing community college in the State. [Read More](#)



Thank You Outgoing Board Members

PAB is grateful for the 6 years of service on the Board of Mitch Thrower, CPA (left) and Bristol Ellington, AICP, ICMA-CM (right) and their dedication to planning education.

New PAB Strategic Plan

The 2023-2028 PAB Strategic Plan explores new directions for PAB's services and its collaboration with allied planning organizations, while the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan focused on clarifying and embodying PAB's values in its operations. With participation of leadership from the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, PAB identified the following in its new strategic plan:

Themes

1. Raise awareness of the value of PAB accreditation and increase synergies with PAB's sponsoring organizations and accredited programs.
2. Rethink PAB's business model to provide more financial resilience and to better support programs.
3. Adapt PAB's operations to meet the expanded goals and to maintain progress on the last strategic plan.

View the [2023-2028 PAB Strategic Plan Executive Summary](#), available on the PAB website.



The spring AICP certification cycle will be here soon! APA will hold three 30-minute drop in sessions for any member or non-member to ask questions about [One Path to AICP](#). After reviewing the [materials](#) and [FAQs](#), please [register](#) and join APA staff for a Q&A on any (or all!) of the following dates:

- Monday, February 12, 2024 at 1:00pm CT
- Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 12:00pm CT

Also, each exam cycle, APA grants 50 [AICP Certification Diversity Scholarships](#). Applications will be accepted from January 8, 2024 until February 29, 2024. Questions? Please email the [AICP certification team](#).

Thank You Fall 2023 Site Visit Teams

With the assistance of 12 Site Visitors, 5 programs were reviewed at 4 institutions.

Site Visit Team Chairs

Clint Andrews, Ph.D., AICP
Eugenie Birch, Ph.D., FAICP
Steve Bourassa, Ph.D.
Ruth Steiner, Ph.D.

Site Visit Team Members

Ivonne Audirac, Ph.D.
Carol Barrett, FAICP
Deborah Lawlor, FAICP, PP
Jeffrey Levine, AICP
Marla Nelson, Ph.D., AICP
Henry Renski, Ph.D.
Carol Rhea, FAICP
Stacey Swearingen White, Ph.D.

Congratulations 2023 Outstanding Site Visitor Award Recipients

Brenda Case Scheer FAIA, FAICP (left) Professor Emeritus, University of Utah & Sue Schwartz, FAICP (right) Planning Director, City of Greensboro, NC and APA President.



Session: Skills for Future Planners

PAB sponsors a panel each year at both the APA and ACSP national conferences. At ACSP 2023, the session [Skills for Future Planners](#) was presented by PAB Site Visitors Michelle Thompson, Ph.D., GISP, Carissa Schively Slotterback Ph.D., FAICP, and Justin Hollander, Ph.D., FAICP.

Interested in serving on a panel? [Let us know!](#)