



# Accreditation: Prepare Now, Relax Later

An Orientation for Program Administrators & Faculty

# Planning Accreditation Board

Mission:

*To promote excellence among planning programs and to ensure high quality education for future urban planners.*



ACSP

- Educator
- Educator
- Educator
- Higher Education Administrator



- Practitioner
- Practitioner
- Practitioner



- Public Member

# Accreditation 101

*“Collegial process of self-review and peer review for improvement of academic quality and public accountability of institutions and programs”*

*From: Council for Higher Education Accreditation*

## Value of Accreditation

- Quality Assurance – Validation to Public
- Quality Improvement
- Knowledge Sharing
- Opportunity to Educate Senior Administrators
- Recruitment – Students and Employers

# CHEA Recognition

## Value for PAB

- Opportunity for a comprehensive self-assessment and external review of accreditation processes against specific standards
- Affirmation to the public that PAB has standards that:
  - ✓ Advance academic quality in higher education
  - ✓ Ensure accountability through consistent, clear and coherent communication to the public and the higher education community
  - ✓ Encourage programs to plan for purposeful change and needed improvement.
  - ✓ Employ appropriate and fair procedures in decision making
  - ✓ Demonstrate ongoing review of accreditation practices
- Closely monitors federal activities re: higher education

# The PAB Accreditation Process

**Self-Study  
Report**

**Site Visit**

**Site Visit  
Report**

**PAB  
Accreditation  
Review**

# Step one:

## Self-Study Report (SSR)

### Main Self Study Report

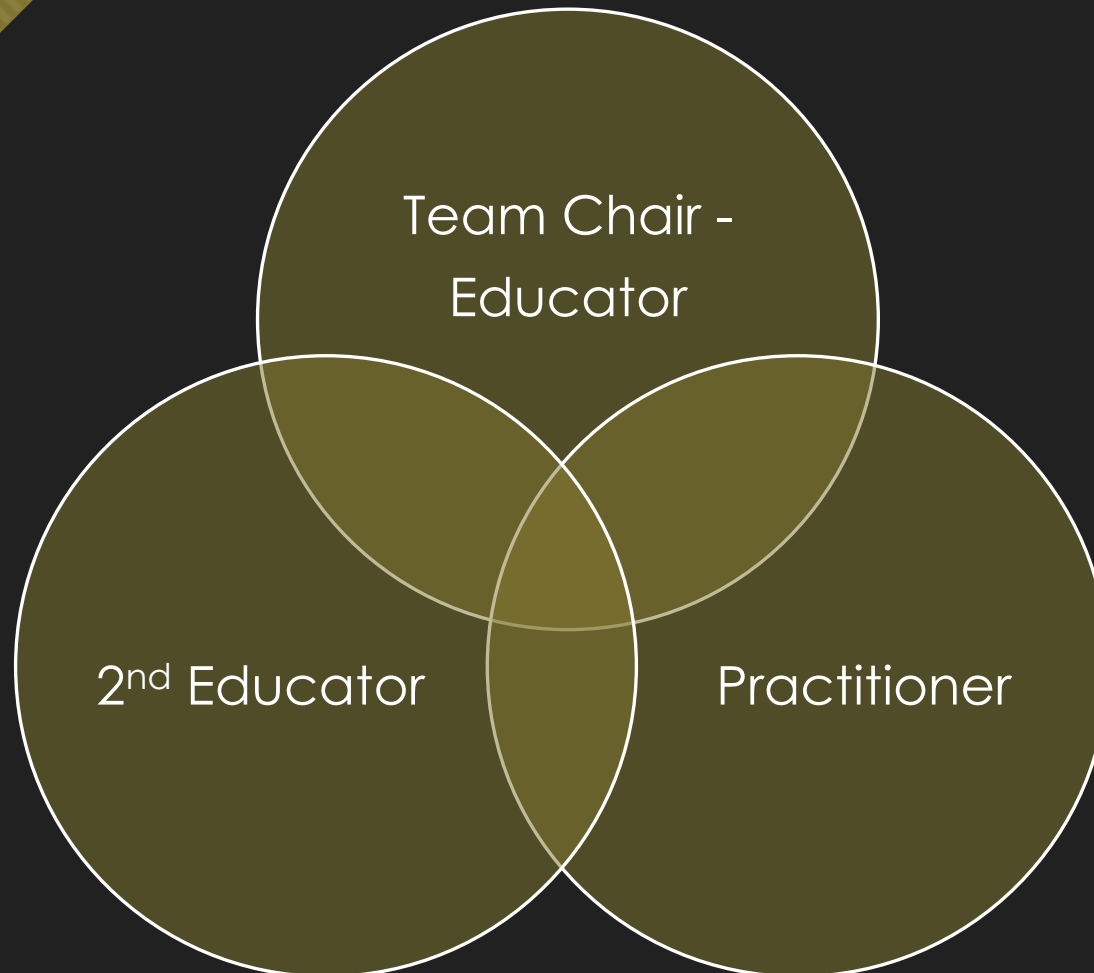
- Program history
- Student and faculty background data/tables
- Faculty listings
- Preconditions to Accreditation
- Standards 1 - 5

### SSR Appendices

- A – Faculty summary CVs
- B – Syllabi
- C – Other Evidence/Documentation

***The burden is on the Program to document compliance.***

# Step Two: Site Visit (SV)



# Step Three:

## Site Visit Report (SVR)

### Sections:

- Program Overview and Progress
- Assessment and Recommendations
  - Met, Partially-Met, or Unmet
- Program Strengths
- Furthering Excellence



Program Comments to Report: Draft & Final



# Step Four:

## PAB Review and Decision

- Fall SV → Spring Review and vice versa
- 2 PAB readers → comprehensive summary
- 1 Hour: Board discussion; Q&A w/SVT Chair; Q&A w/Program Administrator; Board discussion and vote
- Possible Terms:
  - Years: 0, 2(Probation), 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7
  - Discretionary Progress Report if  $\geq 3$  years
  - History on PAB website





# **STRIVING FOR EFFECTIVE ACCREDITATION REVIEW WITHOUT STRAIN OR PAIN**

# Words of Wisdom

- *Don't Aim to Ace the Test*
- *Deadlines are Closer than You Think*
- *Don't be a Lone Wolf*



# Developing An Effective Internal Self-Study Preparation Process

- Build redundancy into self-study writing process
  - rotate sections among team members if possible
- Edit to ensure a consistent voice and style.
  - Would a technical editor help make the document more readable?
- Plan for at least a year long process

# Your SSR Preparation Process

- Y-1: assemble your strategic plan, curriculum map and outcomes assessment data; assess what, if anything is missing; and set a timeline to fill the gaps; then fill them.
- M-6: Divide sections among your faculty/staff/student leaders for discussion draft; enlist help to compile c.v.'s and syllabi.
- M-4: Review what you and your faculty have drafted; edit; discuss; share with faculty, students, alumni and administration (others?). Assemble other appendices.
- M-2: Compile first full draft; discuss key points with key administrative officers.

# Your SSR Preparation Process

- D-30: proposed final goes to dean, provost, president for signatures.
- D-Day: submit **draft SSR** to PAB
  - June 15 for Fall Site Visit dates
  - September 15 for Spring Site Visit dates

*Relax for a while!*



# Signature Page

## PART I – SIGNATURES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

These signatures attest to the validity of the application and to the institution's support for the accreditation of the planning Program. *Original signature pages will go to PAB when the SSR is final.*

### 1. PLANNING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

Mailing

Date:

Address:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. PERSON PREPARING APPLICATION (if different from above)

Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

Mailing

Date:

Address:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. DEAN OR OTHER HIGHER ADMINISTRATOR

Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

Mailing

Date:

Address:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. INSTITUTION'S CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

Mailing

Date:

Address:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. INSTITUTION'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

Mailing

Date:

Address:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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### PLANNING STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Organization Name:

Student Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

### LOCAL APA CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVE

Chapter Name:

Name:

Phone:

Title:

Email:

# Questions about the SSR?



# THE SITE VISIT



# Site Visit: Why?

- Demonstrate accuracy of SSR
- Fill in gaps that may remain from the SSR
- Build bridges and cement relationships with constituencies (showcase your program to broader community)
- Capture attention of your faculty to issues
- Build awareness among your administration
- Build agreement on the way forward

# Site Visit Preparation

- Y-1.5: Set dates with PAB and your administration.
  - **Schedule entrance and exit meetings with upper administration and dean.**
  - Notify Program faculty to hold dates.
- M-6: Hold date notices to employers, alumni, APA Chapter reps, key campus participants.
- **M-4: Invite and confirm key participants**
  - Provide access to SSR as appropriate
  - Discuss SV with student leadership and/or student body, faculty, staff
  - Book SV hotel and other travel accommodations

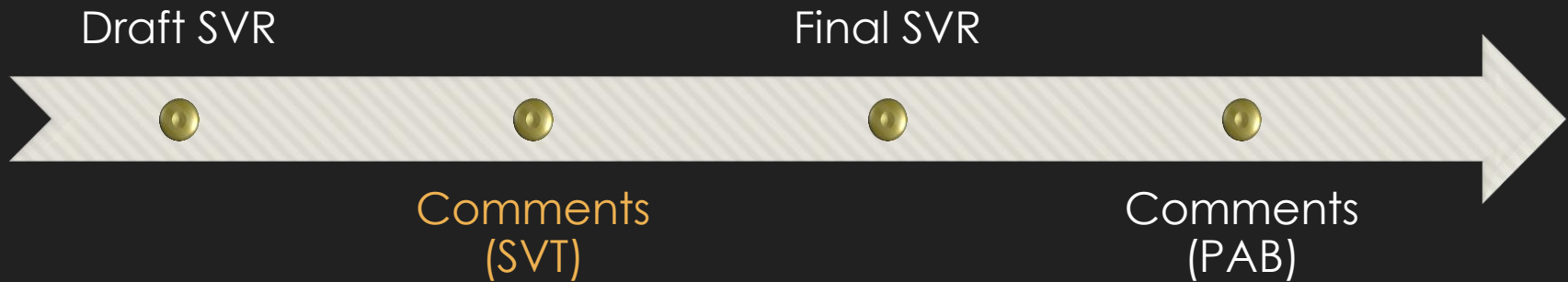
# Site Visit Preparation

- D-45: Draft SV schedule to PAB staff for review
- D-30: Revised draft SV schedule to PAB staff.
  - All participants lined up.
  - Hospitality arrangements made.
  - Program faculty and staff discuss process and objectives.
  - Brief students about process and their role.

# During Site Visit

- SVs need functional and comfortable work space, including at hotel.
- A capable staff member should be available to the site visitors at all times.
- You should keep your calendar clear and make time for the site visitors whenever they need you.
  - Anticipate that they will ask you for new data
  - Correct errors but do not argue about judgments
  - Engage conversations about furthering excellence

# Site Visit Report



- Comments to Site Visit Team only
- Seek input and direction from faculty and administration
- Correct errors, inaccuracies or misinterpretations
- No new information

- These comments go to Board and Site Visit Team
- Limited to inaccuracies regarding assessment
- Focus is on the evidence available at the time of the visit

# Post Site Visit Report

- Optional Report
- Opportunity to submit additional, updated evidence of compliance that was not part of SSR
- Typically, due approximately 3 weeks before the meeting with PAB

# Accreditation Review Meeting

- Brief your dean and seek their counsel
  - also campus accreditation officer; others?
- Prepare, prepare, prepare!
  - You have only 15 minutes: speak efficiently
  - Those you speak with will have 10 SVRs in their short term memory, not only yours
  - Your opportunity for open comments will be very short; most of the time will be Q&A
  - Rehearse answers for each of the PM and UM criteria
  - Rehearse what has changed since the SV for each concern and each suggestion



# Decision

- Share outcome with all stakeholders and others, as appropriate
- Use as a moment for publicity and to thank members of your community
- Follow up immediately with faculty, staff and administration to set course for effective future changes

# Beginning the Next Round

- Activate your internal work plan to address items that need changes
- Follow up with campus offices for items that require their action
- Set course to modify your strategic plan
- Review your process of learning outcomes assessment

# Questions / Discussion

# PAB Resources

PAB Website: [www.planningaccreditationboard.org](http://www.planningaccreditationboard.org)

- Noteworthy Practices
- Self-Study Report Manual
- Accreditation Standards Training Modules
- History of Accreditation Decisions and Site Visit Team Assessments
- SSR & Site Visit Preparation Checklists

## PAB Staff

- SSR Share List
- Questions/Concerns