



Planning Accreditation Board Newsletter

Accreditation Demystified: Separating Fact from Fiction

Q: What's the difference between program assessment and student learning outcomes assessment?

A: **Program Assessment** is focused **broadly** on **evaluating the entire planning program** to determine how well the program is doing. It is directly related to the [PAB Accreditation Standards and Criteria](#), 1.B. Strategic Plan.

Hint - it will make the whole accreditation process and writing your plan easier if you tie your Strategic Plan to PAB criteria and then add in your own specific priorities.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) is focused **narrowly on student learning**, specifically on the knowledge, skills and values gained by students in alignment with Program's own Strategic Plan and criteria, 4.A. Guiding Values & 4.B. Required Knowledge and Skills of the Profession.

Program Outcomes	Student Learning Outcomes
Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Curriculum (i.e., courses offered, pedagogy)• Faculty (i.e., expertise; teaching skills)• Course evaluations• Retention and Graduation Rates• Student and Alumni Satisfaction• Employment rates• Services to the Profession• Inputs into learning (extent to which students completed learning activities)• Impacts of learning (employment contributions and influence in the field)	Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students - What students do (i.e., assignments, tests, capstone projects)• Learning – What do we want them to know and to do by the end of the program• Outcomes – What they have internalized and can apply in practice

Q: Why can't I use graduation rates, alumni surveys and job placement data for my student learning outcomes assessment?

A: Graduation rates and job placement data are good measures of overall student success (graduation, employment) but not for measuring specific PAB knowledge and skills. Those measures are hitting the target (so to speak) but it is hard to pinpoint exactly which PAB knowledge and skills they are measuring. Student or alumni surveys are referred to as **indirect measures** because they may provide evidence of **what students think** they have learned **or how they feel** about their learning experience. Those are valuable “indirect measures”. Put those sorts of measures to good use meeting criteria 1.B. Programmatic Assessment and 1.D. Public Information.

In contrast, **direct measures of student learning** are tools or methods that **demonstrate** student knowledge, skills or abilities in tangible ways. Direct measures may include independent assessments of culminating projects (which may include multiple PAB knowledge and skills) or assignment grades for tasks aligned with specific accreditation criteria, and/or other ways of assessment. Use these for meeting criteria 4.D. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. With direct measures it is easier for Programs to continue doing what is working and improve what is not.

Got questions about accreditation? Heard something that doesn't quite add up? We're here to set the record straight! Submit your questions, and we'll debunk myths, clarify misconceptions, and provide facts you need. Your question might be featured in the PAB newsletter and on the PAB website.

Share your questions with us [here](#).

2024 PAB Annual Report

Aggregate data from the 2024 PAB Annual Report on faculty and students in 79 graduate and 16 undergraduate accredited planning programs at 83 North American universities is now available on the PAB website.

New report data this year includes:

- Mean, Median, & Mode: Students in PAB-Accredited Programs
- Mean, Median, & Mode: Faculty in PAB-Accredited Programs

Did you know?

Student and Faculty Composition Data, 2013 to 2024, is also available on the PAB website under [Student and Faculty Data](#).

The Annual Report Online Database ([AROD](#)) allows users to utilize search filters such as program type, region, state, and report year to conduct cumulative analysis on Student Data, Faculty Data, AICP Data, and/or Student/Faculty Ratio Data to gain valuable insights.

Noteworthy Practices

Congratulations to the following programs recently recognized by the Board for their actions taken toward meeting the PAB standards.

- University of Missouri - Kansas City
- University of Puerto Rico
- The University of Texas at San Antonio
- The University of Texas at Austin

PAB showcases a collection of notable actions programs have taken toward meeting the standards. If you haven't checked out this valuable resource, it is available [here on the PAB website](#).

Congratulations Recipients of the 2025 Outstanding Site Visitor Award



Jonathan Levine, Ph.D.

Professor
University of Michigan



Karin Morris, AICP

Director of Community Planning
Delaware Valley Regional Planning
Commission

PAB recognizes two Site Visitors annually, one educator and one practitioner, for their outstanding contributions to the PAB's mission of ensuring the high quality of planning education for future urban planners.

[Click here to learn more and view previous award recipients](#)

Thank You Spring 2025 Site Visit Teams

With the assistance of 15 Site Visitors, 6 programs were reviewed at 5 institutions.
Interested in becoming a Site Visitor? [Learn more](#)

Site Visit Team Chairs

Arnab Chakraborty, Ph.D., AICP
Jonathan Levine, Ph.D.
Stephanie Rolley, FASLA, FCELA, PLA,
AICP

Site Visit Team Members

Renia Ehrenfeucht, Ph.D.
Susan Harden, FAICP, LEED AP, CNU-A
David Kinsey, Ph.D., FAICP, PP
Mary Kopaskie-Brown, AICP
Jonathan Martin, Ph.D., AICP

Xinhao Wang, Ph.D., AICP
Curt Winkle, Ph.D.

Karin Morris, AICP
Henry Renski, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Tyler, Ph.D., FAICP
Shannon Van-Zandt, Ph.D.
Bev Wilson, Ph.D.



PAB Board Member News

[AICP President's Award Recipient](#)

Congratulations to Deborah Lawlor, FAICP,
recipient of the 2024 AICP President's Award.

We are proud to have her as a member
of the PAB Board.



Summary of Recent Actions Spring 2025 Board Meeting in Denver

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

- **Tufts University**
Master of Arts in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning
Master of Science in Environmental Policy and Planning
- **The Ohio State University**
Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning
Master of City and Regional Planning
- **University of Central Florida**
Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning
- **University of Nebraska-Lincoln**
Master of Community and Regional Planning
- **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**
Master of Urban Planning

Candidacy status granted effective January 1, 2026 to the following programs:

- **California State University, Northridge**
Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies and Planning
Master of Urban Planning

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



Important Dates

- **June 16, 2025:** [Self-Study Reports due](#)
- **July 1, 2025:** [Progress Reports due](#)
- **September 15, 2025:** [Self-Study Reports due](#)
- **September - November 2025:** [Fall Site Visits](#)

News From Our Partners

Prepare now! It's never too early to start preparing for the AICP exam.

The next opportunity to take the exam will be in November, with registration opening in October. APA offers a wealth of [exam prep resources](#) and encourages those taking the exam to begin planning their study schedule now.



AICP Practitioner Site Visitor Application Deadline: August 4, 2025

Please email applications and supporting materials in PDF format to Diane Landahl, Certification Manager for Professional Practice, at dlandahl@planning.org. [Learn more.](#)



Congratulations to all the graduating students! On behalf of APA, we're proud of your achievements and excited to see the positive impact you'll make in the field.

Summer Reading

- [nexus](#) - APA's new monthly newsletter delivering the latest policy updates, planning strategies, and expert insights to help planners stay informed.
 - [2025 Trend Report](#) - An in-depth report highlighting emerging trends that will shape the future of communities and planning practices.
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ACSP2025 **Minneapolis** Annual Conference

October 23-25 ~ Hilton Minneapolis

- AUGUST 1: ACSP2025 Registration Opens
- AUGUST 31: Early Bird Registration Deadline
- SEPTEMBER 23: Presenter Registration Deadline



ACSP

Connecting educators,
researchers and students

Visit [ACSP.org](https://www.acsp.org) to Register!

Planning Accreditation Board

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PAB sends periodic updates and newsletters to program administrators, Site Visitors, and others interested in the planning profession.

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