

TO: NAAB Board of Directors

FROM: Ryan Misner, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture & Interior Design, Samford University

DATE: February 1, 2023

SUBJECT: Visiting Team Report Response

The Samford University Department of Architecture & Interior Design is pleased with our Initial Candidacy Visit and thanks the visiting team for their time and effort in compiling a thorough report of their program assessment. We understand that initial accreditation is a process and agree with most of their conclusions. However, we would also like to provide an additional response to several of the items the visiting team noted. These responses are primarily for further clarity to the NAAB Board of Directors or are a request for more information regarding the assessment.

Responses as follows:

4.1 Institutional Accreditation – This condition was designated as *Not Yet Met* by the visiting team; the report states, “The APR-C Appendix D provides evidence of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) effective until 2027.”

Our program requests guidance on further information that can or should be provided to achieve this condition as *Met*.

4.3 Evaluation of Preparatory Education – This condition was designated as *Not Yet Met* by the visiting team. The report states for all three sub-conditions that the process for this is described in the APR-C (4.3.1 pp 27-28; 4.3.2 pp. 28; 4.3.3 pp. 28-29).

The APR-C, pp. 28, notes “the program does not intend to admit any students into only the 5th year Master of Architecture portion of the program until after the program has received its initial NAAB Accreditation.”

Based on this, sub-conditions 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 will not be able to be met prior to initial accreditation because they will not be options for potential students. This decision was made early in the development of our program based on the recommendation and guidance of NAAB staff.

As noted in the VTR, for sub-condition 4.3.3, “The length of the M.Arch professional program and admissions criteria is described in the APR-C pp. 28-29. The program relies on the institution admission process.”

Our program requests guidance on further information that can or should be provided to achieve this condition as *Met* for both 4.3.1 – 4.3.2 and 4.3.3.

5.1 Structure & Governance – This condition was designated as *In Progress* by the visiting team. The report states where evidence is found in the APR-C and highlights several of its the primary points.

The administrative structure and governance of the University and the School of the Arts are established and outlined within the APR-C (pp. 30-34). These will likely not change; any future changes that may occur are currently unknown or beyond the program’s control.

Our program requests guidance on further information – beyond the updating of positions filled, new positions, etc. – that can or should be provided to achieve this condition as *Demonstrated*.

5.5 Social Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – This condition was designated as *Not Demonstrated* by the visiting team; the report states, “The APR-C pp. 42-44 (*should be 48-50*) describes resources available at the institutional level. The program indicated in meetings that there are plans to further develop resources to meet this criterion.”

Our program understands that all sub-conditions, 5.5.1 thru 5.5.5, must be achieved to fully meet this criterion. Our program also understands that several of the sub-conditions do require additional efforts to have an impact at the program level and not just the institutional level, primarily sub-conditions 5.5.2 and 5.5.3. However, our program requests further information on the sub-conditions that were not demonstrated to help better achieve and demonstrate this condition in the future.

6.4 Public Access to Accreditation Reports and Related Documents – This condition was designated as *Not Met* by the visiting team. The reports states that items (a-h) are not yet available to the program and are not posted; for (i) the program states a policy on learning and teaching culture and will post that in Fall 2022; for (j) a diversity statement is to be posted by summer of 2022.

In the time the APR-C (pp. 56) was initially submitted in spring 2022 and the Initial Candidacy Visit in fall 2022, several updates to these criteria were made:

- a. APR-C stated “N/A” and this is still true
- b. APR-C stated “N/A” and this is still true
- c. APR-C stated “to be posted summer 2022” – this was done and can be found [HERE](#) under the Accreditation Tab
- d. APR-C stated “to be posted summer 2022” – this was done and can be found [HERE](#) under the Accreditation Tab
- e. APR-C stated “N/A” and this is still true
- f. APR-C stated “N/A” and this is still true
- g. APR-C stated “N/A” and this is still true
- h. APR-C stated “N/A” and this is still true
- i. APR-C stated “to be developed with/by students in Fall 2022 and then posted” – a Studio Culture Policy is being developed primarily by students from both the architecture and interior design programs, along with faculty input and guidance, but this effort is taking the entire academic year and will be posted at the end of the current spring 2023 semester
- j. APR-C stated “to be posted summer 2022” – statements and policies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion were not posted in summer 2022 because their development became part of the Studio Culture Policy development currently in process. While this is still true, additional department diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives or considerations will also be posted this current spring 2023 semester to support students already enrolled in the program

6.5 Admissions and Advising – This condition was designated as *Not Yet Met* by the visiting team and the report states that for items a-d, “the forms are not yet available.”

Our assumption is this assessment designation is because the NAAB accredited degree will be the 1-year M.Arch portion of the entire degree track. If this is an accurate assumption, then the necessary forms for the graduate portion of the degree track will be made available likely in Summer or Fall 2024. Cohort 1 of the program are currently in the second year and will be entering their graduate year in Fall 2025.

However, we would like to note the APR-C pp. 57 does provide the publicly available forms for items a, d, and e, at the undergraduate level and the program is designed for (most) students to matriculate directly into the graduate portion, as described throughout Condition 4 of the APR-C pp. 23-29.

Additionally, items b and c of Condition 6.5 are not applicable at this time for the same reasons as 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 above.

Our program requests guidance on the assumption above and/or what further information can or should be provided to achieve this condition as *Met*.

Thank you again to the Visiting Team, NAAB staff, and the NAAB Board of Directors for your guidance and assessments in the development of our new Architecture program. We welcome any feedback on the items above and look forward to the continuation of this process.