



American Planning Association

Creating Great Communities for All



July 13, 2024

Weiping Wu, Ph.D.
President
Planning Accreditation Board
2334 W. Lawrence Avenue
Suite 209
Chicago, IL 60625

Dear Weiping,

On behalf of the American Planning Association (APA) and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), we thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the first draft of proposed amendments to the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) standards. We have shared this opportunity with our membership and anticipate that you will receive comments from individual members and elected leaders.

As an organization, we generally support the proposed changes. However, we believe it would be beneficial to provide additional insight into the risks that the PAB aims to mitigate. This would help us better understand the rationale behind the substantive changes to the expectations of accredited university planning programs in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Here are a few specific instances where supplemental information would be helpful:

- In Section 1.A.3), what is the rationale for deleting the phrase, "...and to incorporate into the curriculum the knowledge and skills needed to serve a diverse society."? This language could be seen as addressing content critical to emerging planners.
- In Section 2.B.1), what is the rationale for deleting the detail that follows the introductory phrase, "Consistent with applicable law and institutional policy..."? Why would this not sufficiently qualify the text that follows? The same question applies to the deleted language in Section 3.B.1)
- In Section 3.B.3), what is the rationale for deleting the entire text, rather than appropriately qualifying it?

Additionally, we think it would be helpful for the Board to address its approach to preventing regression in the progress that programs have made, are making, and will continue to make in advancing the appreciation, understanding, and application of diversity, equity, and inclusion in planning practice.

Our organization's values, priorities, strategies, programming, and day-to-day behaviors are grounded in the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We recognize our past and present shortcomings as a profession and organization and are committed to developing and implementing better practices throughout our organization and, by extension, the planning profession.

We rely on accredited planning programs to instill these principles and practices in future professionals, who will bear the significant responsibility of serving diverse communities. Specifically, we expect that those who bring accredited degrees to the AICP process will have a solid educational background in equity, diversity, and inclusion to successfully navigate the path to certification.

Chicago Office
205 N. Michigan Avenue
Suite 1200
Chicago, IL 60601-5927
p: 312.431.9100

planning.org

APA President
Angela D. Brooks, FAICP

Chief Executive Officer
Joel Albizo, FASAE, CAE



Finally, we appreciate the complex dynamics at play and greatly value the PAB's thoughtful work to uphold the high quality of accreditation standards in a challenging and uncertain environment. Please let us know if we can assist in any way as you move through the formal approval process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Angela D. Brooks'.

Angela Brooks, FAICP
President
American Planning Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Wolf'.

Karen Wolf, FAICP
President
American Institute for Certified Planners

