



Planning Accreditation Board Newsletter

Message from PAB Chair Juan (Trey) Mendez III, J.D.



Dear Planning Community:

Warm Greetings from South Texas! It is my honor to serve as the Chair of the Planning Accreditation Board and APA Public Member Appointee for this coming term.

While I am relatively new to the planning world, I will be celebrating my 20th year of practicing law in 2025, and most recently served as the Mayor of Brownsville, Texas from 2019-2023. I also served as the Historic Preservation and Design Review Board Chair at the city of Brownsville for several years, and as Trustee at Texas Southmost College for 9 years. I trust that my background and experience will serve our board well going into what may be an eventful year.

As many of you know, the PAB spent much of 2024 amending its Standards to better define the goals and expectations placed upon programs of higher learning, while also taking into account the expected challenges to certain core values shared by much of our community at both a state and national level. I wanted to personally thank everyone who provided valuable feedback and input through comments, as well as those who attended our session at the ACSP Conference on November 8, 2024. We feel that the amendments provide much needed flexibility for departments to instill core planning concepts to their students while being sensitive to trending political measures taking place around the country. The PAB supports diversity, equity and inclusion and has proactively worked to protect its value to our community. More information on the standards amendment will be shared in February.

Congratulations to the incoming presidents of APA, AICP and the ACSP. I look forward to continuing to build upon several collaborative efforts this past year and welcome the opportunity to engage in conversations that will streamline the work, success, and membership value of all entities. In the coming months, I look forward to meeting more of our membership at the spring and fall conferences.

Summary of Recent Actions

Fall 2024 Board Meeting in Seattle



Board Members (left to right): Linda Tatum, FAICP, Deb Lawlor, FAICP, PP, Bonnie Johnson, Ph.D., FAICP, Dawn Terkla, Ed.D; Trey Mendez, JD, Lois Takahashi, Ph.D., Weiping Wu, Ph.D., Byron Nicholas, AICP, PP.

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

- **Clemson University**
Master in City and Regional Planning
- **The University of Texas at Austin**
Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning
- **The University of Texas at San Antonio**
Master of Community and Regional Planning
- **University of Missouri - Kansas City**
Bachelor of Arts in Urban Planning and Design
- **University of Puerto Rico**
Master in Planning

Candidacy status granted to the following program effective January 1, 2025:

- **Appalachian State University**
Bachelor of Science in Community and Regional Planning

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

Thank You

Thank you to Byron Nicholas, AICP, PP, for your three years of service (2021-2024) on the board as the Young Planner Appointee and your role as Vice-Chair (2022-2024). We appreciate your dedication to planning education and practice.





Welcome New Board Member

Rachael Thompson Panik, Ph.D., AICP
AICP Young Planner appointee (2024-2027)
President's Postdoctoral Fellow
Georgia Institute of Technology

Rachael holds degrees in transportation engineering and planning from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (BS), Clemson University (MCRP) and Georgia Tech (Ph.D.). Before pursuing her Ph.D., she worked as a transportation planning consultant and planned safe infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians across the southeast.

[Read More](#)

Exploring Urban Planning Data: Insights from APA, ACSP, and PAB



At the 2024 ACSP Annual Conference, a data sharing session was hosted by the American Planning Association (APA), Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), and the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). This session marked the first joint data presentation between the APA, ACSP, and PAB, bringing together valuable insights from all three organizations and setting the foundation for continued collaboration and sharing of joint data in the future.

- APA presented analyzed membership trends and characteristics across its members (including student and faculty members), AICP members, and AICP exam takers. "A key takeaway from presenting alongside ACSP and PAB and comparing datasets was the realization of significant gaps in our understanding of the planning profession. Despite the wealth of data collected, there remain unanswered questions about the pathways into the profession, the diversity of career experiences, and the evolving needs of planners in different contexts. Addressing these gaps is critical to fostering a more inclusive, resilient, and forward-thinking profession, enabling planners to create great communities for all and adapt to future challenges." *Sagar Shah, Ph.D., AICP (above)*

- ACSP focused on the spatial distribution of member schools and their full-time faculty, the number of programs by state, minority-serving institutions, trends in the number of papers presented in planning research tracks, and the STEM classification of programs.
- PAB presented on data collected from the annual reports of accredited planning programs. This included the spatial distribution of programs and their student enrollments, the demographic composition of students from 2014 to 2023, the percentage of graduates employed in planning-related jobs within a year of graduation, and the number of faculty with AICP certification.

This session will be held again at the [ACSP Administrators Conference](#) from 9:45am - 11:15am on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at the Hilton Garden Inn Denver Union Station.

Program Administrators Did You Know?

AICP Certification Exam Content Areas

Student performance on each AICP Certification Exam Content Area is provided in the exam list. Review student scores in columns I-Q against the average number of questions per content area to see how your program's curriculum prepares its students in Research and Assessment Methods, Fundamental Planning Knowledge, Communication and Interaction, Plan and Policy Development, Plan Implementation, Administration and Management, Leadership, Areas of Practice, & AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

New PAB Guidance - Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

PAB recently developed guidance to provide additional clarification on the expectations related to criterion 4D. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. This resource, [available on the PAB website](#), will ensure consistency of review and assessment among Site Visit Team members, and board members.

News From Our Partners



The Administrators Conference is a pivotal bi-annual event bringing together academic leaders from urban and regional planning departments and programs. This gathering provides an essential platform for addressing strategic issues in urban planning education, fostering innovation, and enhancing community engagement. Through sessions and discussions, the conference delves into pressing topics in higher education and urban planning programs, including curriculum innovation, internationalization, enrollment trends and strategies, equity and diversity, sexual misconduct prevention, and collaboration with professional associations. These discussions equip academic leaders with tools and insights to navigate the evolving landscape of urban planning education.

A highlight of the conference is the exclusive networking dinner for Deans, fostering meaningful connections and dialogue among senior academic leaders. Additionally, the Chairs and Directors Academy offers targeted programming designed to support those new to administrative roles or those needing additional support, and providing a tailored foundation for effective leadership. The Administrators Conference is committed to advancing urban planning education and academic leadership that shape's the future of the discipline. For more info visit: <https://www.acsp.org/page/AdminConf>

Upcoming Projects



APA is actively working on two projects, Future Planners Project and the Planning Sector Data Project, to improve our understanding of the profession. The first project involves a survey to collect data on compensation, benefits, and workplace characteristics across the planning profession, offering insights into who planners are, where they work, and how much they earn. We encourage your participation in the survey and request that you share it with your alumni networks. The second project focuses on gathering secondary data to identify trends and gaps related to enrollment, completion, attrition, and post-completion employment in planning programs. Your support is crucial here as well—please share any program data on these topics. You will receive communication about these projects through APA, ACSP, PAB, or potentially multiple channels. Your input is invaluable and will help us better understand our profession.

New Year, New You, New AICP Exam Prep Materials

Beginning in 2025, APA has some updated [exam prep materials](#). Check out the new recordings and slides (under Tip #3).



AICP Office Hours

The Spring 2025 AICP certification cycle will be here soon! Information about the One Path process, deadlines, and exam prep materials can be found on the APA [website](#). After reviewing the [materials](#) and [FAQs](#), please register and join APA staff for a Q&A on any (or both!) of the following dates. Each session will last 60 minutes.

- Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 12:00-1:00pm CT (Register [HERE](#))
- Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:00-2:00pm CT (Register [HERE](#))

Office hours are open to members and nonmembers. Questions? Please email AICP@planning.org.

AICP Certification Diversity scholarship

Interested in an [AICP Certification Diversity Scholarship](#) for the May 2025 AICP exam or the June 2025 Experience Assessment? The window to apply for the AICP Certification Diversity Scholarship will in January 2025, and continue through February 2025. Recipients will be notified in early March.

Questions? Email AICP@planning.org.

Thank You Fall 2024 Site Visit Teams

With the assistance of 15 Site Visitors, 7 programs were reviewed at 5 institutions.

Interested in becoming a Site Visitor? [Learn more](#)

Site Visit Team Chairs

Zenia Kotval, Ph.D., FAICP
Siddhartha Sen, Ph.D.
Carissa Slotterback, Ph.D., FAICP
Eric Strauss, Ph.D., AICP
Niraj Verma, Ph.D.

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George McGregor, AICP
Stephen Ramos, D.Des.
Jeffrey Taebel, FAICP
David Wade, AICP, CUD
Charlie Warnken, Ph.D., AICP

Help Shape Our Next Issue

Your feedback matters! What would you like to see in our next newsletter?
Share ideas, topics, or improvements you'd like to see with us [here](#).



Important Dates

- **January 31, 2025**
Annual Report and Public Information due
- **March 27-28, 2025**
[ACSP Administrator's Conference](#)
- **March 29-30, 2025**
PAB Spring Meeting at the [APA National Conference](#)
- **March 30, 2025**
Site Visitor Training in Denver 12:00pm - 3:00pm

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.