February 1, 2024

National Architectural Accrediting Board
Accreditation Team
107 S. West St. Suite 707
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Accreditation Team,

Once again, we appreciate all the work that the visiting team put into the review of our program, as well as the incorporation of our *errors of fact* into the final version of the Visiting Team Report (VTR) report. At this time, we would also like to update the board on items that may have been overlooked or misunderstood by the team and recent developments we've engaged in to address the three *not met* items, PC.8., SC.1., and section 5.2.

PC.8 Social Equity and Inclusion
In our matrix, we identified BSD322: Sustainable Community Planning and Design and BSD482: Professional Practice as the courses intended to meet this criterion.

In the PC.8 paragraph, the team mentions that only the abstract was provided for BSD322, however, all course materials were provided for the class. The team may have overlooked the materials contained in the shared folders as their VTR matrix doesn't include any checked boxes for the multiple PCs and SCs that we indicated were addressed in BSD322.

There was confusion in the initial VTR document between course numbers BSD332 and BSD322 in the Leadership and Collaboration section (prior to corrections for *errors of fact*), perhaps this same confusion carried over into this section as well. We believe that the team found this item unmet partially due to not seeing the correct class materials.

As BSD322 is a community planning course that explores development of accessibility, visitability, sustainability, identification of place and inclusiveness ranging from single-family dwellings to multiuse planning and development at the commercial building, neighborhood, and city planning levels, we believe that this course addresses many aspects of PC.8.

Likewise, although BSD482: Professional Practice has not been taught yet, social equity and inclusion will be integral throughout the course from multiple perspectives including firm management and legal issues to Women and Minority-owned Businesses, etc.

As we consider actions to further meet this requirement, we will examine both the matrix and our courses to provide further evidence. For instance, in the future we may include additional coursework, such as our global experience courses GLB 210 and 270 and/or later studio courses, in the matrix to provide additional support for this initiative. We will also review the Required Student Outcomes (RSOs) of our identified PC.8 courses to ensure that social equity and inclusion is explicitly woven into and a measurable outcome of these courses.

SC.1 Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Built Environment
In the comments for this section, although we used both ACH141: Building Codes and Accessibility and BSD322: Sustainable Community Planning and Design as evidence, the team only wrote about ACH141, saying that it introduced HSW concepts but did not show an understanding of them. Unfortunately, as noted in the earlier PC.8 section, the material for BSD322 appears not to have been reviewed for this section.

As we consider corrective actions, in addition to making our support materials more specific, we may add additional courses to the matrix. This may include studio classes that already require code evaluation for projects (i.e. appropriate fixture counts, exiting, exit widths). We will also consider adding a specific RSO in one or more of the later studio courses.

5.2 Planning and Assessment
In the team's description of this as "not demonstrated" it appears that the largest concern is our assessment process and how it demonstrates a continuous cycle of improvement. Currently, Penn College requires all courses to be assessed at least every five years. Additionally, all courses listed in PC and SC sections in our matrix will be assessed at least every two years due to the accreditation cycle. In our system, any RSO that does not meet the benchmark must be re-evaluated the next time the course is offered. This process is based on the Penn College Course Level Assessment Template that faculty fill out to complete a course assessment (see Ex. 1).

As shown in the steps of the Template, the previous assessment is used as a basis for updating the current course performance based on each separate RSO using direct data from student coursework. Thus, both the architecture department and the college are committed to continuous improvement through assessment.

To correct any issues with the department's assessment process, the architecture department completed an individualized Assessment Workshop on January 30, 2024, and is participating in another session at the end of the semester. The college is providing further assessment training during an Assessment Day on May 8, 2024.

Following these workshops, the architecture department will develop a clear document for the cycle of assessment for all courses. Faculty will also individually develop benchmarks for each RSO (previously we have had a department benchmark that everyone used for all RSOs). Architecture faculty will include suggestions for improving the course/RSO performance in #11 even if all RSOs met benchmarks. The Architecture Department Head will also attend the February 2024 NAAB assessment course to gain insight into NAAB assessment expectations. In addition, we are now in the process of determining the best approach to integrating NAAB's objectives directly into our department and B.Arch program's objectives.
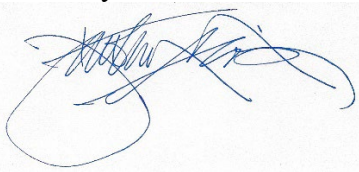
EX. 1.: The Assessment Form Directions

RSO TEMPLATE DIRECTIONS:

1. List course title, course number and section(s), and semester/year (Fall 2022).
2. List department or program that houses the course.
3. List previous course code (if applicable).
4. Name of the faculty member(s) responsible for completing the assessment.
5. Faculty should confirm that the RSOs on the course abstracts match their course syllabus. Current course abstracts are located on the Academic Affairs site on the portal. The RSOs are the outcomes that must be evaluated at the course level.
6. Faculty should affirm that RSOs are appropriate for the course (100 vs. 200 vs. 300 vs. 400), foster a cohesive learning experience, and remain relevant and current based on industry/discipline practices. If revisions are necessary, they should be summarized for the reader.
7. Provide the semester and year when the course was last assessed.
8. Follow-up—Describe any actions taken after the completion of the previous cycle and give a brief description of how you used previous RSO assessment results to improve student learning.
9. RSO Assessment Summary Table
    a. First Column - Faculty will write out the RSOs.
    b. Second Column - Assessment Methods are the tools or instruments used to gauge progress toward achieving the required student outcomes. For reliable assessment results, a combination of direct assessment methods (e.g. scoring rubrics, embedded assignments) and indirect assessment methods (e.g. surveys, interviews) is recommended. Chapter VI in the Plan & Process explains the course-level assessment process in more detail. Multiple sections of a course are encouraged to have at least one common assessment tool for consistent and accountable results. Examples for each include:
    Direct assessments – quiz/exam questions, rubric scores, writing assignments, homework questions, final exam questions, etc.
    Indirect assessments – student self-assessments, final course grades, surveys
    c. Third Column - Expected Level of Achievement (ELA) - What level of student performance will be accepted as evidence of successful achievement of the RSO? Faculty set the benchmark (ELA) - for example, 80% of the students will earn a 75% or higher on assignment (provide name/description of assignment).
    d. Fourth Column - Previous Cycle Results. This will allow faculty to identify possible trends in student performance and identify issues with instructions and student learning. Present the results in the following format 9/10 (90%). That is, 9 out of 10 or 90% of students met the Expected Level of Achievement (ELA). Include the academic year when assessment was completed (AY).
    e. Fifth Column - Results of this cycle's assessment. Present the results in the following format 9/10 (90%). Again, it is the number and percentage of students who met the ELA.
10. Analysis of Results – Interpret what the assessment results indicate about student learning in the class. How did any changes that were previously made impact results? Were they successful? Do course instructional strategies need to be modified to improve student achievement of the RSO? In the analysis, be specific about which RSO is being addressed.
11. Action(s) to be Taken - Faculty should check all that apply and include a detailed statement to explain the steps that will be taken as a result of the assessment. If a change is indicated, the actions should be implemented within the 5-year cycle and reassessed for effectiveness within the next 2 years.
12. Faculty should consider the budgetary implications for any proposed actions.
13. Faculty should estimate the time frame for completion of the action steps along with person(s) responsible for ensuring that follow up is completed.
14. Submit completed templates to the Program Director, Department Head, or Lead Faculty member.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the items marked as not met.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Gerring
Architecture Department Head