



Date: 29 April 2021

Memorandum to the NAAB International Committee

From: Miguel Rodriguez, FAIA
Donna Dunay, FAIA

Subject: Visit One for NAAB International Certification
College of Engineering and Architecture, Al-Yamamah University,
Bachelor of Architecture (5 years, 160 credits)

On 04 January 2021, the College of Engineering and Architecture at Al-Yamamah University submitted an application in support of its intention to seek NAAB International Certification for its Bachelor of Architecture degree. The application was filed under the terms of the 2019 *Procedures for NAAB International Certification*.

Miguel Rodriguez and Donna Dunay conducted visit one on 30-31 March 2021. The purpose of visit one is threefold:

- To review the *Conditions and Procedures for NAAB International Certification* with program administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
- To confirm the program's commitment to achieving the ICert designation.
- To review the physical, financial, human, and information resources committed to the program.

Upon completion of the visit, the review team is required to submit a memorandum to the NAAB's International Committee addressing the following four areas:

1. A review of the resources committed to the program.
2. Commitment of the institution to the plan for achieving NAAB International Certification.
3. Assessment of the program's readiness for visit two (candidacy).
4. Recommendation to the International Committee on whether and when to schedule visit two, as well as whether a program representative should complete any specific training or other activity.

1. Overview of Program

The Al Yamamah University is a relatively young institution, established as a college in 2001, with the goal of providing a distinctive and modern Saudi educational institution for both undergraduate and post-graduate education. Opening its doors to male students in 2004 and to female students in 2006, the Al Yamamah College was elevated, by royal decree to university status. Realizing the role that the English language plays in the world of modern business, the university offers all programs in English.

The College of Engineering and Architecture was established in 2013. Architecture and Interior Architecture was the first department in the college, opening its doors to students in 2014 in a co-educational model, for both male and female students. The program's mission is to provide a high-quality education that improves the built environment in the country while respecting the Saudi nation's special values and traditions, consistent with the overall institution's mission to provide academic and professional training of the highest standard, imparting a life-long dedication to learning and self-development.

In meetings with the university president and other administrators, the importance and key role that the Architecture Department plays within the larger institution is clearly noted as is their aspirations for the program to continue to grow and excel, not just within the university but within the Saudi nation.

Our virtual visit was well planned by the program. We found that all participants were engaged, understood the benefits and process of International Certification and were excited to take part in the process.

2. Review of Resources Committed to the Program

a. Physical Resources

The university's men's campus consists of a Central Administration Building, the Grand Auditorium, Main Library, Student Lounge, Sports Club including indoor courts for various sports, and including a vast outdoor sports field and a mosque. The ground floor of the library building provides restaurants, cafes, and student lounge spaces. The women's campus provides equivalent facilities to that of the men's and occupies the other half of the overall site, with the Tuwaiq building, which houses the College of Architecture and Engineering, between them and providing a common edge.

The program shares the three-story Tuwaiq building with the Engineering Department. The building provides co-ed facilities with studios located on the third floor, shared classrooms on the second floor, and offices and support facilities, including meeting rooms and lecture halls on the ground floor. The architecture program has exclusive use of the third floor studios and gallery, as well as computer labs located on the second floor and the offices on the ground floor. All classrooms and the lecture spaces are shared. Studio and classroom spaces are divided by glazed partitions in order to provide co-educational learning spaces while keeping with local customs.

Opened in 2019, the spaces are modern, well-furnished, and intended to be the centerpiece for the University's ambition to enhance the teaching and learning experiences through design and providing an attractive learning environment.

Computer labs provide a total of 74 stations for use by the architecture students and are augmented by additional study and research computer workstations housed in the library.

b. Financial Resources

The Department of Architecture relies on support from the College of Architecture and Engineering, through a budgeting process similar to most universities. Allocations are made by the dean on an annual basis, resulting from meetings with department chairs. The department operated with an approximate annual revenue of \$2,425,272 in 2019 and \$1,939,310 in 2018; figures for 2020 were not available in time for inclusion in the Institutional Overview or at the time of the visit. Enrollment is stable and growing moderately. The program continues to build its enrollment numbers through outreach initiatives at the middle and high school levels. Generally speaking, the college reports a strong financial position, working from a balanced budget. More complete information is found in the Institutional Overview, which the team found to be complete and clear.

c. Human Resources

As stated in the Institutional Overview, since 2014 "the University has supported the architecture program's continuous plans for improving its human resources."

Currently the program maintains a 1:12 student to faculty ratio with 16/17 faculty including the program chair. The program's diversity is represented by faculty from five countries. Going forward, the program is in pursuit of greater diversity in cultural and educational backgrounds.

The university provides orientation sessions on "teaching strategies and methods" for new faculty, and programs devoted to faculty success are available in the Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC).

Going forward, the program needs to present opportunities for faculty support for continued development and success in their fields including release time and travel support along with equitable workloads that support individual growth. This includes staff support for the program.

In addition, the program must describe the support services available to students in the program, including but not limited to academic and personal advising, career guidance, and internship or job placement.

The PSER prepared for visit two should include a description of the institution's policies and procedures relative to social equity or diversity initiatives, as well as the school's policy regarding human resource initiatives, and finally, a description of the policies, procedures, and criteria for faculty appointment, promotion, and when applicable, tenure.

d. Information Resources

The library at Al Yamamah University "holds 173 titles of architectural print books in 328 copies in English language. The library provides a total of 56 titles of architectural print books in 103 copies in Arabic language. For digital resources, the university is currently providing two databases for digital journals and books. The databases are provided through the Saudi Digital library from which the university is using ProQuest for e-journals and Sage for E-books. To enhance information resources for the architectural program, the college is planning to increase the number of architectural print books to 2000 by the next three years, and purchase more databases including Wiley, EBSCO, Springer, and Taylor and Francis known to have large range and variety of architectural E-books, E-references, and E-journals."

3. Commitment of the Institution to the Plan for Achieving International Certification

The Institution, College and Department are strongly committed to their Plan for Achieving International Certification and are eager to continue on the proposed path. During our visit, we undertook conversations with them regarding the need for more complete ICert APRs, some of which are noted in sections above. The program's principals are understanding of the process and seem well versed in the requirements, nevertheless, the team engaged in fruitful conversations with all stakeholders, sharing information and answering questions related to the process.

The team felt that schedule may be a bit too aggressive, not because the program is not understanding or unable to fulfill requirements, but rather because, given its youth, the program still has a small number of graduates. The concern was discussed with principals of the program, including their ability to moderately extend the current timeline, if they feel it is needed. That said, the team notes the enthusiasm of the program and is not overly concerned with the current timeline.

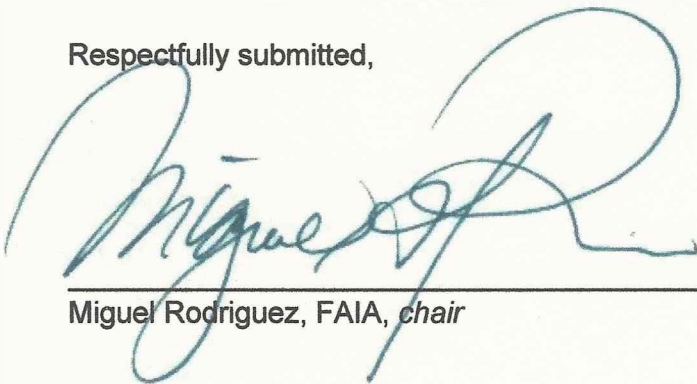
4. Readiness of the Program to Complete Visit Two (Candidacy)

The program is poised to move forward with Visit Two in accordance with the current schedule, with a full understanding of what needs to be presented at the next interval. They did not express any hesitancy at all, and the team feels that they are prepared to move forward.

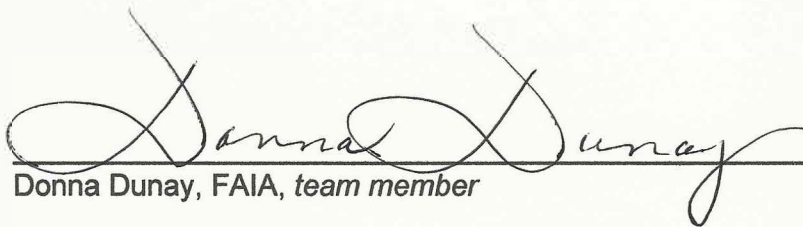
Team Recommendation

The team recommends to the NAAB Board that Visit Two be scheduled in the Fall of 2022, according to the Program's Plan for Achieving International Certification.

Respectfully submitted,



Miguel Rodriguez, FAIA, *chair*



Donna Dunay, FAIA, *team member*