



Commitment to Transformation of Accreditation in Professional Architectural Education

November 1, 2016

The National Architectural Accrediting Board's® (NAAB) vision statement asserts its role in enhancing the value, relevance and, and effectiveness of the architectural profession by establishing educational quality assurance standards that are open to diverse approaches by our schools.

One of the fundamental tenets of accreditation is the importance of self-assessment and a commitment to continuous improvement. The NAAB, through its own assessment processes, seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of the accreditation process. Underlying this effort is a larger and continual goal of making accreditation less costly to institutions with accredited programs.

Through an end-to-end review of the process, with attention to key areas like team training and expanding the use of digital team rooms, we hope to identify ways that we can streamline the process without compromising the NAAB's core mission.

As a result of strategic planning and assessment initiatives launched in 2015 and 2016, the NAAB has identified ways to facilitate accreditation while still maintaining the rigor expected by the public, the programs, the profession, and the U.S. registration boards, while also sustaining a quality assurance system that meets international guidelines of good practice.

In addition to a new strategic planning effort, the NAAB also initiated the following projects:

- Accreditation Process Review Task Force
- Business Process Evaluation
- Digital Accreditation Advisory Task Force
- Candidacy Advisory Task Force

These ongoing initiatives will lead to procedural changes that seek to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity for programs and teams, reduce travel costs, and demonstrate the NAAB's commitment to continuous improvement. In 2017 and 2018, the NAAB will test several of these; the results from the first round of pilot visits are expected in July 2017. The pilots will be run again during the 2018 visit cycle. The success of these efforts will depend on both the NAAB's enhanced services and support, but also on the willingness of programs to experiment with the process and to provide objective feedback. We are grateful to the programs who have participated in pilot studies using shorter visits and/or smaller teams during the past two visit cycles.

In 2013 the NAAB board approved the transitions from the NAAB six-year terms to eight-year terms of accreditation in order to reduce the costs to the schools. Because of this change, there will be no visits for continuing accreditation scheduled for 2019 or 2020. In addition to managing visits related to candidacy and initial accreditation, the NAAB will use this period to plan and implement the 2019 Accreditation Review Conference that will lead the *2020 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation*. In addition, we intend to "re-tool" all NAAB systems for accreditation management, volunteer management, data collection, and training to create a 21st century model of accreditation.

While it is not yet possible to quantitatively project the results of the studies that will be undertaken in 2017 and 2018, the NAAB remains committed to continuous improvement. The next eighteen months will be crucial not only for improving the quality and efficiency of the NAAB's services but also in determining the scope and scale of potential change enacted following the 2019 Accreditation Review Conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith A. Kinnard', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Judith A. Kinnard, FAIA
President