

November 29, 2022

Robert C. Robbins, Ph.D.  
President  
University of Arizona  
1200 E. University Boulevard  
Tucson, Arizona 85721

Dear President Robbins:

On behalf of the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), I am pleased to inform you that the Board acted at its November 4 – 5, 2022 meeting to accredit the *Master of Science in Urban Planning* degree at the University of Arizona for a seven-year term, effective January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2029. As the Program has an exemplary record, the accreditation period granted is the longest term possible under current PAB rules. A certificate designating this accreditation term will be mailed under separate cover.

This accreditation term carries a condition that the Program submit a Progress Report on July 1, 2025 detailing updated information on the areas of accreditation outlined below.

Given this action, the Program will be scheduled for its next accreditation review during the 2028 - 2029 academic year; the Self-Study Report will be due in 2028. PAB reserves the right to change this to an earlier time as a result of new or additional information, changes in the activities of the Program, or changes needed in the accreditation review schedule. The Program will be notified of any change in advance of the time of the next review.

In its report the Site Visit Team noted many areas of excellence; the Program should be proud of its accomplishments. More specifically, the Site Visit Team found: a strong connection to professional practice, especially in the Tucson region; a notable affiliation with the real estate and sustainable built environment programs; and, a highly productive and research-oriented faculty.

In its 2025 Progress Report, the Program should provide clear evidence of compliance with the following standards and criteria. While the criteria below are from the 2017 Standards, the Program should address the concerns cited below and demonstrate compliance with the 2022 Accreditation Standards.

**Standard 1 / Strategic Planning and Progress**

**Criterion 1A / Prior Strategic Plan and Accreditation Review**

**“The Program should be engaged in continuous improvement based on ongoing planning activities, and responses to prior accreditation reviews. The Program shall demonstrate progress since the last accreditation review in meeting the goals and objectives articulated in the strategic plan in place at the prior accreditation review, and document progress towards compliance in meeting accreditation standards assessed as partially-met or unmet at the last Site Visit.”**

The Site Visit Team assessed the criterion as partially-met, citing little progress on criteria cited at the last accreditation review, specifically with regard to faculty diversity and program autonomy.



Planning  
Accreditation  
Board

The Board concurs with this assessment. The Board acknowledges the Program has made efforts to address these issues. In its Progress Report, the Program should demonstrate evidence on progress made towards compliance in meeting the accreditation standards cited.

### **Standard 3 / Faculty**

#### **Criterion 3B / Faculty Diversity**

**“Consistent with applicable law and institutional policy, the Program shall establish strategic goals that demonstrate an active commitment to attracting and retaining a diverse faculty and are informed by the characteristics of the populations that the Program’s graduates generally serve. The Program shall collect and analyze data on faculty demographics in order to inform and enhance its efforts to identify effective and appropriate methodologies for achieving diversity among its faculty. Furthermore, the Program shall establish assessment mechanisms for each of its strategic goals that are focused on achieving diversity. Because diversity is not a static concept, and because all faculty representation within each planning program should seek to contribute to the diversity of the learning environment and improve the diversity of graduates entering the profession, the Program shall provide evidence of continuous improvement in achieving its diversity-related strategic goals.”**

The Site Visit Team assessed the criterion as partially-met. The Program demonstrated commitment to increasing the diversity of the faculty, however, little evidence was provided in terms of retention of diverse faculty.

The Board concurs with this assessment. The Board acknowledges the progress made in gender diversity. In its Progress Report, the Program should provide evidence of continued efforts to diversify its faculty and progress in achieving its diversity-related strategic goals.

### **Standard 5 / Governance**

#### **Criterion 5A / Program Autonomy**

**“In accordance with customary university procedures, the planning program will normally be headed by its own administrator, who will report directly to a dean or an equivalent academic official faculty. The Program shall have responsibility for the design of its curriculum and shall have an independent voice in the appointment, promotion, tenure, and evaluation of its faculty, and the admission and evaluation of its students. The planning faculty and students shall be involved in the development of the Program’s Self-Study Report and shall be made aware of the content of all submissions by the Program to PAB as well as reports and decisions by PAB concerning the Program.”**

The Site Visit Team assessed the criterion as partially-met, citing the Program Chair’s limited authority in faculty appointment and evaluations.

The Board concurs with this assessment. In its Progress Report, the Program should provide evidence that the Program has sufficient autonomy as required by the criterion.

Based on the meeting with the Program representatives and evidence provided in its Post Site Visit Report, the Board assessed the following criterion as met: **5B / Program Leadership**

If an accredited program undergoes a substantive change, it is obligated to provide written notification thereof to PAB. Substantive changes are defined in the PAB Policies and Procedures Manual, are typically reported via the Annual Report, and include, but are not limited to: a new degree offering, a significant change in curriculum requirements, credit hours, and/or the method of delivery of courses; a

significant change in enrollment or faculty count or demographics; or the appointment of a program administrator who does not have an educational background or substantial experience in planning. The Board may, at its discretion, request additional information. If PAB determines that a program may no longer be in substantial compliance with any accreditation standard, it may initiate an interim review to re-consider the Program's accreditation status. Additional information about substantive changes is available on our website ([www.planningaccreditationboard.org](http://www.planningaccreditationboard.org)).

**In accordance with the recognition standards of the Council for Higher Education (CHEA) and PAB policy, PAB is required to inform the public of the reason(s) for the accrediting organization's accreditation actions in a timely and readily accessible manner, including the institutional or program comments, if any. This means that the information found in the enclosed document will be posted to the PAB website 60 days from the date of the board meeting (January 4, 2023). Please review this material as it will be publicly posted.** The Program has the opportunity to provide brief comments related to the information posted on the PAB website and these comments will be posted to the site along with PAB's determination. If the Program finds the information misleading or incorrect as it relates to the accreditation action, the Program should notify PAB's Executive Director within 14 days of receipt of this letter so that, if necessary, the matter may be resolved by PAB before the 60-day review period expires.

PAB appreciates the commitment and dedication to quality planning education demonstrated by your participation in the accreditation process. If you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact PAB Executive Director Jesmarie Johnson.

Sincerely,



Bristol Ellington, AICP  
PAB Chair  
Deputy City Manager / Chief Operating Officer  
City of Henderson  
240 Water Street  
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Copies:

Liesl Folks, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
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Arlie Adkins, Ph.D., MSUP Program Chair

Enclosure: Public Information – Accreditation Actions

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION – ACCREDITATION ACTIONS**

The following information will be posted to the PAB website on the “All Accredited Programs” page.

### **University of Arizona**

Last Accreditation Cycle: 2020 - 2021

Next Accreditation Cycle: 2028 - 2029

Progress Report: July 1, 2025

#### **Summary of Recent Actions**

Program granted 7-year accreditation

PAB accreditation indicates that the Program has undergone an external review and substantially meets the PAB standards and criteria. Programs granted accreditation demonstrated conformity with PAB Standards after a thorough review from the Board. PAB bases its decisions on the overall quality of the program, its performance relative to its mission and strategic plan, and its performance relative to PAB’s five standards, which encompass a total of 29 criteria and 18 curriculum sub-criteria. When PAB determines that a Program does not fully meet a criterion or curriculum sub-criterion, the Program is encouraged to take steps to improve in that area and provide information to PAB on its efforts, either during the next accreditation review or in an interim progress report.

The Planning Accreditation Board has required the Program to address issues in the following areas:

Criterion 1A / Prior Strategic Plan and Accreditation Review determined to be partially-met. The Program has made insufficient progress on their strategic goals since the previous accreditation review.

Criterion 3B / Faculty Diversity determined to be partially-met. The Program should continue to work on improving the diversity of its core faculty.

Criterion 5A / Program Autonomy was determined to be partially-met. The Program lacks sufficient autonomy.

This information is a summary only. Please consult the school directly for in-depth information regarding programs, course offerings, and compliance with PAB standards. Programs should also be consulted directly for additional information on issues and areas of improvement identified during an accreditation review, and the actions that the school is taking to address these areas. If the Program has provided a response to any of the issues cited above, please see below for a link to the response.

Program Response \_\_\_\_\_ [Link]