



National  
Architectural  
Accrediting  
Board, Inc.

## ***2024 Visiting Team Report***

University of Illinois Chicago  
School of Architecture

**M.Arch.**

Track I: (pre-professional degree plus 64  
graduate credit hours)

Track II: (non-pre-professional degree plus  
100 graduate credit hours)

Continuing Accreditation  
February 25-28, 2024

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## I. Summary of Visit

### a. Acknowledgments and Observations

The team would like to acknowledge the work of all the faculty, staff, and students from the School of Architecture at UIC who assembled the Architectural Program Report (APR) self-assessment in advance of the continuing accreditation visit, collected work that was shared with the team digitally before arrival to UIC, and organized the well-appointed on-site team room. The team acknowledges the extra efforts that faculty took to provide syllabi, assignments, handouts, assessment documentation, and other course materials to support the case for meeting the NAAB's 2020 Conditions. The team appreciates the time and energy that staff spent to assist in compiling, writing, uploading, and organizing materials for the team's review. The team also acknowledges the generous hospitality shown to us during the site visit. In addition, the visiting team appreciates the time that students spent in providing their work for the team's review and their contributions to evaluations of courses here at UIC.

The visiting team would especially like to thank the administrators who supported the team's work. The guidance provided over the past few months by Florencia Rodriguez, Director of the School, was extensive and in-depth, as the team prepared for the site visit. Her further assistance during the visit, orchestrating answers to our inquiries, and providing additional supporting evidence is to be commended. We acknowledge the support of the Assistant Director of the Architecture program, Rodrigo Diaz-Tobin, whose guidance and attention to detail made the visit go smoothly. The team would also like to thank Provost Karen Colley and Dean Rebecca Rugg for taking the time to meet with the NAAB team to provide further context of the Master of Architecture program at the University of Illinois Chicago, and in the College of Art and Design.

The program at the University of Illinois Chicago is socially and economically diverse, a goal that NAAB requires and commends. Your students—about half of whom are Illinois residents and many from Chicago—are from a broad range of backgrounds and ethnic and racial identities, and a significant percentage are the first in their family to attend an institution of higher education, which is especially gratifying to observe. The faculty is also culturally rich and diverse, as is the staff. While many institutions strive for such diversity, your program has largely attained it, and you aspire to go further. The program is certainly well suited to be a proud part of a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Next, the team would like to share its observations about the culture of the UIC M.Arch. program. In the many meetings over the last three days with students, staff, and faculty, the team observed an open, welcoming, and inclusive community. Students are proud of their school; and many who might have attended other programs, selected UIC SoA for its healthy, supportive learning atmosphere, where each person is valued and heard, and faculty and staff are accessible and engaging. The Architecture faculty and leadership have created a culture of caring for architectural learning, each other, and their students.

As a team of architects, we must of course recognize the compelling mid-century modern architectural landmark in which the program resides. The architectural form is strong, recognizable, and character-defining to the UIC program. The nonlinear, geometric spaces mix the student body together in a large, spatially unique environment. Yet the strength of the architecture is also a challenge: its declining conditions, poor acoustics, and need for comfortable small group spaces will be included in our areas of concern.

Finally, the team would like to commend the emphasis on research and innovation in the M.Arch. program. The faculty engages the students in the exploration of ideas, form, and systems. High level thinking and analysis is encouraged and supported, as is befitting in an R1 University. The assembled publications we were shown are forward thinking and impressive. We applaud the

creation of the shared Open Archive as a new home for architectural materials, and to foster its mission of research and theory at UIC.

- b. Conditions with a Team Recommendation to the Board as Not Achieved
  - SC.4 Technical Knowledge
  - SC.5 Design Synthesis
  - SC.6 Building Integration
  - 5.2 Planning and Assessment
  - 5.6 Physical Resources

## II. Progress Since the Previous Site Visit

### **2009 Conditions Not Met**

**A.4. Technical Documentation:** Ability to make technically clear drawings, write outline specifications, and prepare models illustrating and identifying the assembly of materials, systems, and components appropriate for a building design.

**Previous Team Report (2015):** Evidence of the drawings and illustrations of this SPC was found throughout the curriculum, with special attention drawn to the Technology series (Arch 561, Arch 562, and Arch 563) and Arch 555: Design Development Studio. Evidence of an ability to write outline specifications, however, was lacking and only evidenced in a partial manner for the current semester.

**2021 IPR Board Review:** After reviewing the 5-year Interim Progress Report (IPR) submitted by the University of Illinois at Chicago, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) has concluded that the program has demonstrated satisfactory progress toward addressing deficiencies identified in the 2-Year Interim Progress Report.

**2024 Team Analysis:** This condition is now appraised under SC.4, Technical Knowledge. The Item SC.4 remains not met.

**A. 9. Historical Traditions and Global Culture:** Understanding of parallel and divergent canons and traditions of architecture, landscape and urban design including examples of indigenous, vernacular, local, regional, national settings from the Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern hemispheres in terms of their climatic, ecological, technological, socioeconomic, public health, and cultural factors.

**Previous Team Report (2015):** While the team was impressed by the strong History and Theory sequence of the program, minimal to no evidence of non-normative traditions (parallel and divergent canons and traditions) is evidenced. Arch 532 does investigate some non-traditional precedents, but even this material appears to be viewed from a western frame of reference.

**2021 IPR Board Review:** After reviewing the 5-year Interim Progress Report (IPR) submitted by the University of Illinois at Chicago, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) has concluded that the program has demonstrated satisfactory progress toward addressing deficiencies identified in the 2-Year Interim Progress Report.

**2024 Team Analysis:** The team has reviewed this condition in PC.4.

**B.6 Comprehensive Design:** Ability to produce a comprehensive architectural project that demonstrates each student's capacity to make design decisions across scales while integrating the following SPC:

A.2. Design Thinking Skills

- B.2. Accessibility
- A.4. Technical Documentation
- B.3. Sustainability
- A.5. Investigative Skills
- B.4. Site Design
- A.8. Ordering Systems
- B.7. Environmental Systems
- A.9. Historical Traditions and Global Culture
- B.9. Structural Systems
- B.5. Life Safety

**Previous Team Report (2015):** While the work in the team room clearly demonstrates student understanding of, and even skillful work with, the independent components of comprehensive design, the team did not find any projects that synthesized all of these SPCs within a single project. The team appreciates the introduction of the additional seminar, Arch 555: Design Development, which takes the project from Arch 554 (previously Arch 553) to develop and synthesize the comprehensive components, but we suspect that it will be another year before this combined course accomplishes this task (specs were only partly completed and were not yet convincing). While the team understands the value of assigning a small project for the comprehensive studio, and while we appreciate the studio's breadth from furniture to building, we question the ability of a single-house to cover all of these SPCs and wonder if a slight increase in scale to a tri- or quadra-plex would be a more suitable program for fulfilling this requirement.

**2021 IPR Board Review:** After reviewing the 5-year Interim Progress Report (IPR) submitted by the University of Illinois at Chicago, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) has concluded that the program has demonstrated satisfactory progress toward addressing deficiencies identified in the 2-Year Interim Progress Report.

**2024 Team Analysis:** This condition is now covered by SC.5 Design Synthesis and SC.6 Building Integration. The Items SC.5 and SC.6 remain not met.

**C.9. Community and Social Responsibility:** Understanding of the architect's responsibility to work in the public interest, to respect historic resources, and to improve the quality of life for local and global neighbors.

**Previous Team Report (2015):** The team observed that the program is committed to architecture's role and possible positive impact; however, the team found no specific evidence of this criterion in the team room within the identified courses—Arch 553: Architectural Design III and Arch 544: Professional Practice—or any other course.

**2021 IPR Board Review:** After reviewing the 5-year Interim Progress Report (IPR) submitted by the University of Illinois at Chicago, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) has concluded that the program has demonstrated satisfactory progress toward addressing deficiencies identified in the 2-Year Interim Progress Report.

**2024 Team Analysis:** Please refer to Shared Values: Leadership, Collaboration & Community Engagement.

### III. Program Changes

If the Accreditation Conditions have changed since the previous visit, a brief description of changes made to the program because of changes in the Conditions is required.

### 2024 Team Analysis:

The program was in the process of transitioning its curriculum review according to the 2020 Conditions when the pandemic and major administrative staff changes interrupted the effort. This has been restarted under the direction of the new director.

According to the APR, “Some of the changes implemented so far include: a re-designed permanent self-assessment plan consisting in a three-year cycle of yearly summits addressing each of the main areas of our curricula, the appointment of area coordinators, changes in the sequence of research seminars and studios of the third year. Details of these and other actions are found in section 5.2, Planning and Assessment.”

## IV. Compliance with the 2020 Conditions for Accreditation

### 1—Context and Mission *(Guidelines, p. 5)*

To help the NAAB and the visiting team understand the specific circumstances of the school, the program must describe the following:

- The institutional context and geographic setting (public or private, urban or rural, size, etc.), and how the program’s mission and culture influence its architecture pedagogy and impact its development. Programs that exist within a larger educational institution must also describe the mission of the college or university and how that shapes or influences the program.
- The program’s role in and relationship to its academic context and university community, including how the program benefits—and benefits from—its institutional setting and how the program as a unit and/or its individual faculty members participate in university-wide initiatives and the university’s academic plan. Also describe how the program, as a unit, develops multidisciplinary relationships and leverages unique opportunities in the institution and the community.
- The ways in which the program encourages students and faculty to learn both inside and outside the classroom through individual and collective opportunities (e.g., field trips, participation in professional societies and organizations, honor societies, and other program-specific or campus-wide and community-wide activities).

### Team Findings:

**Met**

#### Program Summary Statement of 1 – Context and Mission

“The University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) is one of the nation’s most ethnically and culturally rich college campuses in America. It is Chicago’s only public R1 university and second largest in the state. UIC is a leader in developing a new model of higher education that combines the benefits of its immediate context with world-class research, excellence in education, and affordability.

The School of Architecture is housed within the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts (CADA), a unique group of schools and affiliated units dedicated to investigating, creating, and interpreting our physical, social, and sensory environments. With programs led by faculty who lead their disciplines internationally.

In August 2022, the Argentinian architect and critic Florencia Rodriguez became director of the School of Architecture. In consonance with the School’s legacy of understanding architecture as a cultural practice, she brings a distinctively global, inclusive perspective and a commitment to reassert the school as one of the leading voices within architecture’s contemporary debates. During the last year, the school has been undergoing a process of assessment to update its vision and mission and reflect the complexity of our times and the

transforming role of responsible design. While we continue to work on that, a first round of changes are taking place. The guiding vision can be synthesized in three verbs: to challenge, to research, and to contribute.

Our commitment is to foster an engaged community of students and faculty who can bring empathetic intelligence, inventive energy, and eloquence to the transformation of our built environment.”

### **2024 Team Analysis:**

The visiting team observed that the larger student body at UIC is indeed culturally, socially, and economically diverse. In addition to being an R1 institution, University of Illinois Chicago has been deemed a Hispanic Serving Institution, providing eligibility for certain federal funding.

The College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts (CADA) is a dynamic department within the University, and the Architecture program—undergraduate and graduate—is the largest major within that program. Exciting new developments are taking place in CADA, with the establishment of a new cross disciplinary major—Computer Science & Design, blending Arts and Engineering. The new major attracted large numbers of students, and now there are two major renovation projects underway in adjacent underutilized buildings to provide space for those students. The School of Design shares the Arts & Architecture building with the School of Architecture, which allows for some intermingling of students and faculty, but not to a notable degree.

The visiting team observed extensive ideas, hires, and systems that Florencia Rodriguez, the new Director of the Architecture program, has introduced in her first one and a half years of leadership. While the team had no basis of comparison to previous leadership (the former director is now teaching faculty), Florencia has initiated many important directives, and she is highly respected and valued by students, staff, and faculty. Her background in research, theory, and publishing fits into the prior UIC culture, but under her leadership, she is augmenting that value and infusing it throughout the curriculum. Under her leadership, departmental assessment processes have been formally installed, and results were observed throughout the curriculum. The team was also introduced to the University system of curriculum advancement and assessment, which the department has utilized for program evaluation and continuous improvement.

The visiting team was delighted to observe the level of engagement, positive energy, and community pride in the UIC Master of Architecture program.

## **2—Shared Values of the Discipline and Profession** *(Guidelines, p. 6)*

The program must report on how it responds to the following values, all of which affect the education and development of architects. The response to each value must also identify how the program will continue to address these values as part of its long-range planning. These values are foundational, not exhaustive.

**Design:** Architects design better, safer, more equitable, resilient, and sustainable built environments. Design thinking and integrated design solutions are hallmarks of architecture education, the discipline, and the profession. *(p.7)*

**Environmental Stewardship and Professional Responsibility:** Architects are responsible for the impact of their work on the natural world and on public health, safety, and welfare. As professionals and designers of the built environment, we embrace these responsibilities and act ethically to accomplish them. *(p.7)*

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Architects commit to equity and inclusion in the environments we design, the policies we adopt, the words we speak, the actions we take, and the respectful learning, teaching, and working environments we create. Architects seek fairness, diversity, and

social justice in the profession and in society and support a range of pathways for students seeking access to an architecture education. (p.7)

**Knowledge and Innovation:** Architects create and disseminate knowledge focused on design and the built environment in response to ever-changing conditions. New knowledge advances architecture as a cultural force, drives innovation, and prompts the continuous improvement of the discipline. (p.8)

**Leadership, Collaboration, and Community Engagement:** Architects practice design as a collaborative, inclusive, creative, and empathetic enterprise with other disciplines, the communities we serve, and the clients for whom we work. (p.8)

**Lifelong Learning:** Architects value educational breadth and depth, including a thorough understanding of the discipline's body of knowledge, histories and theories, and architecture's role in cultural, social, environmental, economic, and built contexts. The practice of architecture demands lifelong learning, which is a shared responsibility between academic and practice settings. (p.8)

### Team Findings:

#### Met

#### 2024 Team Analysis:

**Design:** The APR and the course descriptions describe the curriculum sequence integrating design, theory, and technology studios and seminars illustrating design thinking and integrated design solutions as fundamental to the school's mission and values for architectural education. After last year's leadership transition at the school the program has identified a process to collectively work on a renewed mission statement and strategic plan combining the school's traditions and updates responding to present and future design philosophy of the profession. Evidence of achievement of this criterion was described in the APR, course syllabi, and discussions with administration and faculty at the site visit.

**Environmental Stewardship and Professional Responsibility:** According to the APR the school is committed to fostering ecological responsibility and has designed the curriculum to clearly address this value through an integrated interdisciplinary approach addressing environmental stewardship and professional responsibility. The design studio sequence, research seminars and professional practice courses provide students with a holistic understanding of the impact of architects work and their responsibilities as professionals and designers of the built environment and ethical protection of the public. This value is continuing to be addressed by the program's plan for two faculty searches by requiring demonstrated potential for investigating integrated technology research. Evidence of achievement of this criterion was described in the APR, course syllabi, and discussions with administration and faculty at the site visit.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** As highlighted in the APR, equity, diversity, and inclusion commitment are fundamental values of the program. It is apparent in the school environment, policies, curriculum, pedagogy, and the respectful learning environment in the school. Organizations and student chapters such as NOMAS, AIA and Arquitectos have a strong presence and help reinforce this value. In an effort to increase minority students and faculty representation Dean Rugg and a committee in 2022 signed a 3-year committed plan accordingly. This value is being addressed in the program's plan for two new faculty searches expecting to address any existing racial and gender imbalance. The team confirmed evidence provided in the APR, in discussions and observations with administration, faculty and students at the site visit.

**Knowledge and Innovation:** The school's new guiding mission is to "to challenge, to research, to contribute" emphasizing research and innovation to solutions in architecture and the built environment. Research seminars team with design studios produced in the final year are among



the many significant research outcomes of the program. In a relevant example of this outreach, the program is working toward establishing a structured publishing program to disseminate research findings on design innovations engaging the global architectural community. Since 2022 the school has hosted conferences highlighting faculty research on design utilizing student work from their courses. The team confirmed evidence provided in the APR, in discussions with administration, faculty and students at the site visit.

**Lifelong Learning:** The APR emphasizes the program's value of lifelong learning in the body of architectural knowledge through student, faculty, and public participation in a diverse array of discourse in the various arenas of architectural practice. The program embraces the concept of lifelong learning being a shared responsibility between academia and practice contributing to the ever-changing dynamics of architectural practice. Utilizing the diverse faculty and guest speakers to present to students an interdisciplinary exposure to architectural opportunities, the program is dedicated to empowering students to contribute meaningfully to the profession. The team confirmed evidence provided in the APR, in discussions with administration, faculty and students at the site visit.

### **3—Program and Student Criteria** *(Guidelines, p. 9)*

These criteria seek to evaluate the outcomes of architecture programs and student work within their unique institutional, regional, national, international, and professional contexts, while encouraging innovative approaches to architecture education and professional preparation.

#### **3.1 Program Criteria (PC)** *(Guidelines, p. 9)*

A program must demonstrate how its curriculum, structure, and other experiences address the following criteria.

**PC.1 Career Paths**—How the program ensures that students understand the paths to becoming licensed as an architect in the United States and the range of available career opportunities that utilize the discipline's skills and knowledge. *(p.9)*

#### **Team Findings:**

**Met**

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

According to the APR, the program addresses PC.1 primarily through its Arch 544 Professional Practice class. Supplementary coverage of this criterion includes required portfolios that each M.Arch. student creates and submits for evaluation and feedback. Students can attend optional presentations from visiting NCARB staff to understand the licensure process once a year. The We@UIC lectures presented by a variety of architects and designers expose students to the diversity of career paths in architecture. Professor Paul Preissner acts as the program's Architectural Licensing Advisor.

The program assesses its courses based on the number of students that earn a benchmark grade of C or higher. For Arch 544, all students met the benchmark in 2023. During the visit, the director shared that the curriculum committee recently conducted a review of Arch 544. As a result of the review, new lectures on the licensure pathway and the variety of career paths within architecture have been added in the current academic year.

The program has identified the portfolio review process as one of the student learning outcomes to be evaluated during the latest year-long cycle of university-wide academic program assessment. For the required portfolios, students receive both qualitative and quantitative feedback based on a rubric that each portfolio reviewer fills out. Students who receive a grade of 4/10 or lower are invited to resubmit their portfolios. Improvements to the portfolio review process have been identified in the academic program assessment report.

During the visit, students confirmed that they learn about pathways to licensure primarily through the NCARB presentation and informal conversations with professionals and faculty. A show of hands during the student meeting, which was attended by most of the student body, showed that most students plan on earning their license.

**PC.2 Design**—How the program instills in students the role of the design process in shaping the built environment and conveys the methods by which design processes integrate multiple factors, in different settings and scales of development, from buildings to cities. (p.9)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

Based on all provided documents, including assignments and lecture summaries, and information provided during the site visit, the four selected studios, Design I, II, III, & IV, cover this condition. They introduce program, site, typology, accessible design, and modes of living, across multiple design processes from different scales of development, and from buildings to cities.

Arch 551, Design I, is also part of the complete sequence, and introduces disciplinary considerations, such as organizing systems, precedent, as well as drawing methods, conventions, and purposes. From this lens, it appears the program is achieving a level of understanding of architectural design.

Current assessment plans rely on discussion, as part of a faculty walk-through held at the end of every academic year. A design summit is scheduled for 2024/2025 and improvement will be considered at that time. Initial review of the Assessment Report shows little evidence of assessment metrics, such as benchmarks and results.

However, the team was presented evidence for additional assessment during the site visit, from the Office of Academic Program Review and Assessment, which is a university wide institutional curriculum evaluation department. That department conducts yearly reviews of major courses. Their Institutional assessment of architectural design courses points to strong design pedagogy, demonstrating synthesis of theory, aesthetics, and technology techniques integrated into a set of design proposals assessed. Metrics are provided under 'results,' as well as discussion of learning assessment results. Areas of improvement related to student learning are identified, such as the need for more investment in the portfolio review process.

**PC.3 Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility**—How the program instills in students a holistic understanding of the dynamic between built and natural environments, enabling future architects to mitigate climate change responsibly by leveraging ecological, advanced building performance, adaptation, and resilience principles in their work and advocacy activities. (p.9)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

The APR states that the program curriculum sequence regarding Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility provides a holistic approach to students understanding the dynamic between built and natural environments. Arch 531, Architecture Theory and History, develops knowledge of the principles of environmentalism including passive design, sustainability, wellness, and the comprehension of the complexities of these relationships. Arch 563, Architectural Technology III, addresses climate change, building performance, adaptation, and resilience principles. These courses are supplemented by Arch 566 Research Seminar and Arch 567 Research Studio which are being used to increase ecological knowledge. Guest lecturers and a conference exploring

ecological issues and implications of data further enhance student experiences, knowledge, and responsibility.

The program assessment of student achievement and the learning outcomes of this criterion is primarily through reviews, end of the year walk-throughs, and a technology summit. Courses are evaluated against the NAAB criteria annually by the curriculum committee which recommends long range improvements. As a result of the summit, the program director and curriculum committee are currently rebuilding the curricular sequence placing ecological knowledge as a focal area for the programs teaching and research. The current response includes reconfiguring the research seminar and studio sequence Arch 566 and 567 to better address this criterion, climate change and performance metrics. The long-range plan is for ecological knowledge and responsibility to be placed at the center of the architectural program.

Evidence of achievement of this criterion was described in the APR and demonstrated primarily in course lecture summaries and syllabi in Courses Arch 531, Architecture Theory and History and Arch 563, Architectural Technology III, and further included in non- curricular activities such as lectures and conferences. The assessment process was described in the revised APR Assessment Tables, and the team further confirmed compliance through conversations with the administration, faculty, and students during the visit.

**PC.4 History and Theory**—How the program ensures that students understand the histories and theories of architecture and urbanism, framed by diverse social, cultural, economic, and political forces, nationally and globally. (p.9)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis**

The courses cited for this condition meet the requirement of teaching theories of architecture and urbanism. The framework for Arch 531 is broad ranging, with many different cultural precedents presented. Arch 532 presents contemporary architecture through the lens of labor. Student work evidence shows a depth of understanding of cultural, material, and environmental forces in the built environment and cities. Arch 585 studies the development of cities, primarily since the 19th century. One of the two options offered for Arch 586 is a comprehensive study of Arab cities over time, with a rich examination of that cultural history. Overall, the criteria, as supported by student learning outcomes, indicate that students understand the histories and theories of architecture and urbanism, in diverse contexts, nationally and globally.

Student learning outcomes are assessed through grading, papers, and class participation. A faculty summit meeting assessed the History and Theory curriculum, with meeting notes provided, indicating that high level assessment of this condition has been undertaken. All related courses have been reviewed in depth by the team of faculty during the summit, including collective discussions and multiple concluding recommendations.

During the site visit, the team was given evidence that the program met after the summit to discuss results and improvements and has implemented changes in the next semester.

**PC.5 Research and Innovation**—How the program prepares students to engage and participate in architectural research to test and evaluate innovations in the field. (p.9)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

## 2024 Team Analysis

Based on the provided class material, the M.Arch. program establishes a robust and complex set of skills to prepare students to participate in architectural research, both individually and collaboratively. The studio component reinforces the understanding level acquired during the seminar, by testing and evaluating architectural innovations, such as various prototypes based on the previous research. The Arch 566 seminar and the Arch 567 studio are described in the APR as a year-long research seminar plus studio sequence. As per the APR narrative, additional multiple required courses and studios, as well as electives, have significant architectural research and innovation focusses.

Across years, research produced in the program's seminars and studios has been presented in or contributed to work by faculty in important international exhibitions, that include Paul Andersen and Paul Preissner's American Framing, at the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale; Clare Lyster's contribution to the Irish Pavilion, also at the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale; David Brown's artistic direction of The Available City, the fourth edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, in 2021; and the conference America Deserta, organized by Francesco Marullo. Additional events are documented: 'FA 2023 Research Show-and-Tell Invitation' and the 'SP 2023 Open House Itinerary' that include one hour of Studio Presentations. The program director reported that a new magazine, *Pollen*, is to be published by the department, showcasing collaborative research between faculty and students.

The program also recognizes the launch of the Architecture and Design Open Archive this academic year, utilizing former administrative space to physically house a collection of publications and three dimensional work. A goal of this archive is to support research in the school. The Open Archive will include student published books created for the 3rd year research seminar and studio sequence.

Current assessment plans rely on discussion, as part of a faculty walk-through held at the end of every academic year. Following an end-of-year faculty walk-through and reviews last year, several committees held discussions on the topic of research. Meeting minutes were provided. The school's main endeavor is to further frame and define what the team collectively means by research. Open show-and-tells further expose faculty and students to the research seminars begun in Fall 2023.

The team was presented additional evidence during the site visit, as part of an institutional assessment process, that assessed Research at the program level. The report covers Areas of strength and Areas of improvement related to student learning. Metrics are provided under 'Results', as well as Actions to sustain or increase student learning in this area of study.

**PC.6 Leadership and Collaboration**—How the program ensures that students understand approaches to leadership in multidisciplinary teams, diverse stakeholder constituents, and dynamic physical and social contexts, and learn how to apply effective collaboration skills to solve complex problems. (p.9)

## Team Findings:

**Met**

## 2024 Team Analysis

The program addresses PC.6 through its technology class (Arch 564) and its professional practice class (Arch 544). In Arch 564, students paired up to role-play as various designers and consultants and visited construction sites to better understand the stakeholder relationships at play. In Arch 544, students learn about contractual relationships between owners, architects, and builders. Other courses cited as evidence for PC.6 include theory classes (Arch 585 and 586) and studio classes (Arch 554). In Arch 585 and 586, students are required to work collectively, in pairs or larger groups, on presentations and similar assignments. In Arch 554, students are expected to

integrate their understanding of dynamic physical and social contexts into designs for Chicago buildings. Outside the classroom, students practice leadership through groups like the Student Advisory Board, where student-elected peer representatives act as liaisons between students and school administration.

The director and faculty hold triennial summits to assess the technology and design courses. The meeting minutes provided from these summits describe planned improvements to these courses. The faculty and director also assess studio courses through yearly walkthroughs of the program's year-end showcase.

Further evidence of student collaboration was found during the site visit. All students in the final year of the M.Arch. participate in an Arch 566 research seminar, where they conduct both individual and collaborative research. The final deliverable for this seminar is a book of research findings, compiled collectively by the students. On-site review of studio work reveals that students are able to incorporate an active understanding of dynamic contexts and diverse user groups across a range of building scales and programs.

**PC.7 Learning and Teaching Culture**—How the program fosters and ensures a positive and respectful environment that encourages optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation among its faculty, students, administration, and staff. (p.9)

#### Team Findings:

**Met**

#### 2024 Team Analysis

The courses demonstrating PC.7 are Arch 551: Architectural Design I, and non-curricular activities: Pre-fall workshop, lectures and conferences, We@UIC event series, Portfolio Day, final reviews, Year End Show, and program course evaluations conducted by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. In the APR, the program states it fosters a positive and respectful environment for all faculty, students, administration, and staff, through a thoughtfully designed curriculum, curated public programming, focused extracurricular opportunities, and the recruitment of dedicated instructors.

The Pre-fall workshop, which starts two weeks prior to the beginning of the academic year, covers the fundamentals of architectural design, process, and communication through a set of six assignments. The syllabus lists two objectives, directly related to PC.7: 'Become familiar with and/or hone the architectural design process' and 'Develop a collaborative studio culture'. Per the APR, this is accomplished through exercises requiring students to work together as a single team, to work in small groups, and to design individual projects dependent on those of their neighbors (thus requiring communication and agreement). In a short time span, all students work with all others in some capacity. In addition to encouraging a cooperative and non-competitive studio culture, the workshop includes tutorials and exercises in architectural fundamentals, providing a running start into the Fall semester and helping to balance the differences in prior student experience and knowledge.

Subsequently, Arch 551, the first studio in the design curriculum, reinforces the attitudes formed in the workshop, as described in the Assessment Table.

The school maintains a graduate student handbook as the primary means of communicating its studio culture policy. Under 'School and Studio Culture' and 'Studio Living' the handbook clearly describes how the program regards the design studio as the central site for curricular synthesis, and as safe space for an appropriate culture of curiosity, rigor, enthusiasm, and ambition. It also clearly communicates expectations for students to understand the policies and requirements that govern their time there.

The School of Architecture has been assembling data on student experience through informal but regular means, with an open-door policy at the administrative level. Initial review of the Assessment Report shows evidence of assessment through course evaluations issued at the end of each semester. Multiple narratives are submitted under Benchmarks, pointing to how the program frames and plans to ensure success. Under Planned Improvements, actions also refer to improving the rates of responses for course evaluation and surveys.

At the site visit, our team found the culture of the program to be based on mutual respect and engaged participation. This positive environment exists at the student level, which was verified through meetings with the Student Advisory Board.

**PC.8 Social Equity and Inclusion**—How the program furthers and deepens students' understanding of diverse cultural and social contexts and helps them translate that understanding into built environments that equitably support and include people of different backgrounds, resources, and abilities. (p.9)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis**

PC.8 is addressed through studios (Arch 553/554), research seminars (Arch 567), and theory classes (Arch 531/532/586). Theory classes such as an elective in Arch 586, which focuses on case studies from Arab cultures, include extensive discussion on works outside the traditional Western architectural canon. Arch 567 sections examine communities around the Los Angeles River and the study of “everyday” buildings. In Arch 553 and 554, students are exposed to case studies from countries such as Japan and are expected to respond to the needs of Chicago’s diverse population in their work. Students explore diverse and changing contexts in a fall research seminar and are expected to respond to that in their designs in the corresponding spring studio. The team found a commitment to E.D.I. infused throughout the curriculum and the program’s identity as evidenced by lectures, conferences, and other program activities. In addition, the SAB and other student organizations are diverse and inclusive. Studio syllabi show that students are expected to create work sensitive to different contexts and groups, and there is extensive discussion of the city of Chicago as a learning laboratory.

Assessment tables describe triennial summits to evaluate theory/history courses. Minutes are provided, with suggestions for course improvements.

During the site visit, the team observed a consistent and ubiquitous dedication to social equity and inclusion, in the curriculum, student work, lectures and publications, and the “culture” of the program.

**3.2 Student Criteria (SC): Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes** (Guidelines, p. 10)

A program must demonstrate how it addresses the following criteria through program curricula and other experiences, with an emphasis on the articulation of learning objectives and assessment.

**SC.1 Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Built Environment**—How the program ensures that students understand the impact of the built environment on human health, safety, and welfare at multiple scales, from buildings to cities. (p.10)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

While the theory class Arch 585, Architecture Theory and History III provides students a framework for understanding health, safety and welfare in the built environment, the technology course sequence Arch 561; 562; 563, Architectural Technology I; II; III, provides the detail for understanding HSW with respect to building systems and codes in the built environment, from buildings to cities. Together these courses demonstrate compliance with this criterion. The program assessment of student achievement and the learning outcomes of this criterion is primarily through grading of student assignments with a benchmark of C or better by all students. The technology faculty and curriculum committee reviewed the curriculum at technology summits which happen periodically, and while only a few changes were implemented after that summit, later discussions recommended strengthening building performance competencies in the related curriculum. Currently the curriculum committee is addressing the issue.

Evidence of achievement of this criterion was described in the APR and demonstrated primarily in course syllabi and schedules in courses Arch 561, 562, 563, Architectural Technology I, II, III. and the team further confirmed compliance through conversations with the administration, faculty, and students during the visit.

**SC.2 Professional Practice**—How the program ensures that students understand professional ethics, the regulatory requirements, the fundamental business processes relevant to architecture practice in the United States, and the forces influencing change in these subjects. (p.10)

### Team Findings:

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

This criterion is addressed in full by the designated course, Arch 544, Professional Practice. The syllabus indicates an extensive list of student learning outcomes. Course lectures, references, and field trips address regulatory requirements, fundamental business processes relevant to architectural practice in the U.S., and forces of change in those subjects.

The APR stated that this course evaluates student learning of the stated outcomes by tests and papers. Currently, the course is being assessed by the Curriculum Committee, in conversation with the Director, the Architectural Licensing Advisor, and the Associate Director of Graduate Studies. Recommended improvements were incorporated into the course to strengthen its response to this criterion.

While on the site visit, the team saw that the program confirms the importance of professional practice throughout the curriculum. At the student meeting, a large majority of those present indicated their intentions to get licensed. The program also involves professionals from Chicago in the architecture program—lectures, visiting critics, and portfolio reviews. The program director voiced a desire to expand this connection, primarily through a revitalization of the alumni organization and other program outreach efforts.

**SC.3 Regulatory Context**—How the program ensures that students understand the fundamental principles of life safety, land use, and current laws and regulations that apply to buildings and sites in the United States, and the evaluative process architects use to comply with those laws and regulations as part of a project. (p.10)

### Team Findings:

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

The program identifies learning outcomes for SC.3 in Arch 562 Architectural Technology II. The APR as well as course syllabi serve as strong evidence that the class covers fundamental

principles of life safety, land use, and current laws and regulations that apply to buildings and sites in the United States. Lessons learned in Arch 562 are later applied in the studios Arch 553 and 554, where they are synthesized in design projects.

Student understanding is assessed via grading. A note below the assessment table of this SC, describes that The SoA has not historically set benchmarks for grades, although the general aim has been to see all students pass. Under Results, grades are shown for assignments related to all learning outcomes that describe SC.3, including for Arch 562.

Arch 562 is also reviewed and assessed at regular technology summits. The SP 2023 Technology Summit Minutes demonstrate a comprehensive coverage of regulatory context content, and robust discussion among faculty focused on class improvement. Based on the last summit, in Spring 2023, the director has requested a broader regulatory context and is working with the area coordinator and the curriculum committee to make sure this is established on a permanent basis.

The team confirmed compliance with this criterion on the site visit through conversations with the program director, who confirmed in a follow up meeting that improvements were made to the curriculum based on findings during the summit.

**SC.4 Technical Knowledge**—How the program ensures that students understand the established and emerging systems, technologies, and assemblies of building construction, and the methods and criteria architects use to assess those technologies against the design, economics, and performance objectives of projects. (p.10)

#### Team Findings:

Not Met

#### 2024 Team Analysis:

The program demonstrated through its technology and structural course sequence that students achieve an understanding of technical knowledge, including emerging systems, technologies, assemblies of building construction. However, methods and criteria architects use to assess those technologies against the design, economics, and performance objectives of projects was not apparent in the curriculum. The technology course sequence Arch 561, 562, 563; Architectural Technology I, II, III; and Arch 573 and Arch 574; Structures I and II focused on building and structural systems; however, no evidence was provided to demonstrate that course work includes methods and criteria architects use to assess those technologies against the design, economics, and performance objectives of projects.

The program assessment of student achievement and the learning outcomes of this criterion is primarily through grading of student assignments, reviews, and final exercises, with a benchmark of B or better by all students. The technology faculty and curriculum committee review the curriculum at technology summits which happen periodically. As a result of the summit held in 2023 it was suggested more emphasis needed to be placed on emerging systems and a metric of how systems and technologies are evaluated economically. As a result, a curricular area coordinator was appointed to address these items to ensure better alignment with the NAAB conditions and the changing context of architectural design.

The team confirmed an understanding of technical knowledge, including emerging systems, technologies, assemblies of building construction, through review of class syllabus and schedules, however methods and criteria architects use to assess those technologies against the design, economics, and performance objectives of projects was not apparent in the curriculum. Therefore, the criterion was not met.



**SC.5 Design Synthesis**—How the program ensures that students develop the ability to make design decisions within architectural projects while demonstrating synthesis of user requirements, regulatory requirements, site conditions, and accessible design, and consideration of the measurable environmental impacts of their design decisions. (p. 12)

**Team Findings:**

**Not Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

Three courses are put forward in the APR as meeting this condition, including the subcategories: Architectural Design II (Arch 553), Architectural Technology (Arch 563), and Architectural Design IV (Arch 554). While the Arch 553 syllabus indicates the learning goals are per NAAB Criteria, it is not stated nor shown that which current criteria are addressed. The four objectives that are presented in the APR as the objectives of all the courses that meet this condition “to develop the ability to prepare a comprehensive program” in three of the objectives, and then the last one states “to impart an understanding of how environmental factors are measured...” Further along in the narrative the mention is made that the Arch 552, the second design studio, conducts form and design studies (i.e. making design decisions). The team found that the aggregated learning objectives in these courses did not adequately impart to students at the ability level how to make design decisions within projects.

Student studio work is evaluated holistically by grading midterm and final work in Arch 552, 553, and 554. 100% of the students received a B or better. The studio work is also assessed each year at the faculty walk through at the end of spring semester. As a result of this evaluation last spring, the group recommended that the studios needed to better address environmental impact on architecture. The studio courses are scheduled to be reviewed for NAAB Conditions compliance at the Design Summit in 2024-2025.

Student work was posted in the team room and was reviewed by the team in detail. The team did not find in the student work adequate coverage of site conditions, regulatory requirements, accessible design, and measurable environmental impacts to demonstrate achievement at the ability level. While there was limited evidence of the treatment of the exterior site, no site design per se was found, such as grading, roadway and parking layouts, or material and plant selection. While some evidence was found in complying with building code requirements, the scale of the project was not adequate to indicate exit access layout, dimensions, fire ratings, etc. Accessible design was addressed. No “measurable environmental impacts” were found.

**SC.6 Building Integration**—How the program ensures that students develop the ability to make design decisions within architectural projects while demonstrating integration of building envelope systems and assemblies, structural systems, environmental control systems, life safety systems, and the measurable outcomes of building performance. (p. 12)

**Team Findings:**

**Not Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

Based on the provided documents, the program identifies the whole SC.6 description as one overarching learning outcome, as described in the Assessment Tables. This is to be demonstrated through a detailed building systems integration approach in studio Arch 555, but runs as a two required studios sequence, Arch 553 and Arch 555.

In the Arch 555 syllabus a series of NAAB 2020 learning outcomes are clearly identified, these being SC.3 (Regulatory Context), SC.4 (Technical Knowledge), followed by SC.6 (Building Integration). The combination of these three outcomes is clear, covering selected outcomes out of the three student criteria.

Per syllabus review, the complex understanding of multiple major building systems is well demonstrated via a final comprehensive drawing set plus digital model, but not covering all learning outcomes defining SC.6. There is no evidence for measurable outcomes of building performance at the ability level, and this was confirmed during the site visit.

Initial review of the Assessment Report shows no evidence of assessment metrics to the identified SC.6 assessment goal in the table, such as benchmarks, aggregated data, or results, and no evidence that each student learning outcome associated with this criterion is developed and assessed by the program on a recurring basis, with a summary of the modifications the program has made to its curricula and/or courses based on assessment results.

The Assessment Report identifies an additional assessment goal: 'Students will identify and apply various technological and structural systems to specific design proposals.' Here the program points to partial evidence of an assessment process for SC.6, as part of an Program Assessment annual survey (provided), where two to three learning outcomes are completed at the time.

For the above-mentioned learning outcome, a benchmark is identified as the completion of the material within the allocated time, and the results on improvements are based on observation, discussion and grading; the only assessment data metric provided is that 17 students were assessed, from which 14 have exceeded expectations.

Under Planned Improvements, the program mentions that all studio courses will be reviewed relative to current NAAB criteria at the design summit of 2024-2025.

Arch 563 is mentioned in the APR as evidence for SC.6 sub-component 'measurable outcomes of building performance', but no evidence is provided as evidence in the Digital Team Folder, nor the students' work displayed during the site visit. However, student work from Arch 563, was pinned-up under criterion SC.5, to cover measurable environmental impacts for the design decisions in that project, and further analysis of the content of that evidence did not show the required level of achievement to cover both Criteria, SC.5 and SC.6.

#### **4—Curricular Framework** *(Guidelines, p. 13)*

This condition addresses the institution's regional accreditation and the program's degree nomenclature, credit-hour and curricular requirements, and the process used to evaluate student preparatory work.

##### **4.1 Institutional Accreditation** *(Guidelines, p. 13)*

For the NAAB to accredit a professional degree program in architecture, the program must be, or be part of, an institution accredited by one of the following U.S. regional institutional accrediting agencies for higher education:

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

#### **Team Findings:**

**Met**

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

The program has shown evidence of regional accreditation awarded in 2017 from the Higher Learning Center (HLC), with a planned reaffirmation visit in 2027-28.

#### 4.2 Professional Degrees and Curriculum *(Guidelines, p. 13)*

The NAAB accredits professional degree programs with the following titles: the Bachelor of Architecture (B. Arch.), the Master of Architecture (M. Arch.), and the Doctor of Architecture (D. Arch.). The curricular requirements for awarding these degrees must include professional studies, general studies, and optional studies.

4.2.1 **Professional Studies.** Courses with architectural content required of all students in the NAAB-accredited program are the core of a professional degree program that leads to licensure. Knowledge from these courses is used to satisfy Condition 3—Program and Student Criteria. The degree program has the flexibility to add additional professional studies courses to address its mission or institutional context. In its documentation, the program must clearly indicate which professional courses are required for all students. *(p.13)*

4.2.2 **General Studies.** An important component of architecture education, general studies provide basic knowledge and methodologies of the humanities, fine arts, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Programs must document how students earning an accredited degree achieve a broad, interdisciplinary understanding of human knowledge.

In most cases, the general studies requirement can be satisfied by the general education program of an institution's baccalaureate degree. Graduate programs must describe and document the criteria and process used to evaluate applicants' prior academic experience relative to this requirement. Programs accepting transfers from other institutions must document the criteria and process used to ensure that the general education requirement was covered at another institution. *(p.14)*

4.2.3 **Optional Studies.** All professional degree programs must provide sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to allow students to develop additional expertise, either by taking additional courses offered in other academic units or departments, or by taking courses offered within the department offering the accredited program but outside the required professional studies curriculum. These courses may be configured in a variety of curricular structures, including elective offerings, concentrations, certificate programs, and minors. *(p.14)*

NAAB-accredited professional degree programs have the exclusive right to use the B. Arch., M. Arch., and/or D. Arch. titles, which are recognized by the public as accredited degrees and therefore may not be used by non-accredited programs.

The number of credit hours for each degree is outlined below. All accredited programs must conform to minimum credit-hour requirements established by the institution's regional accreditor.

4.2.4 **Bachelor of Architecture.** The B. Arch. degree consists of a minimum of 150 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, in academic coursework in general studies, professional studies, and optional studies, all of which are delivered or accounted for (either by transfer or articulation) by the institution that will grant the degree. Programs must document the required professional studies courses (course numbers, titles, and credits), the elective professional studies courses (course numbers, titles, and credits), the required number of credits for general studies and for optional studies, and the total number of credits for the degree.

4.2.5 **Master of Architecture.** The M. Arch. degree consists of a minimum of 168 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, of combined undergraduate coursework and a minimum of 30 semester credits of graduate coursework. Programs must document the required professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the elective professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the required number of credits for general studies and for optional studies, and the total number of credits for both the undergraduate and graduate degrees.

- 4.2.6 **Doctor of Architecture.** The D. Arch. degree consists of a minimum of 210 credits, or the quarter-hour equivalent, of combined undergraduate and graduate coursework. The D. Arch. requires a minimum of 90 graduate-level semester credit hours, or the graduate-level 135 quarter-hour equivalent, in academic coursework in professional studies and optional studies. Programs must document, for both undergraduate and graduate degrees, the required professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the elective professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the required number of credits for general studies and for optional studies, and the total number of credits for the degree.

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

The APR indicates that the M.Arch. program requires 100 credit hours of Technology (28), Design (36), Theory & History (20), and Electives (16). Prior to the graduate program, 68 hours of undergraduate General studies, including a yearlong survey course in art or architectural history and a mathematics course in Calculus. It was explained to the team during the site visit that requiring Calculus confirms that a student has also had geometry and algebra, which is directly required in architectural studies.

**4.3 Evaluation of Preparatory Education** (*Guidelines, p. 16*)

The NAAB recognizes that students transferring to an undergraduate accredited program or entering a graduate accredited program come from different types of programs and have different needs, aptitudes, and knowledge bases. In this condition, a program must demonstrate that it utilizes a thorough and equitable process to evaluate incoming students and that it documents the accreditation criteria it expects students to have met in their education experiences in non-accredited programs.

- 4.3.1 A program must document its process for evaluating a student's prior academic coursework related to satisfying NAAB accreditation criteria when it admits a student to the professional degree program.
- 4.3.2 In the event a program relies on the preparatory education experience to ensure that admitted students have met certain accreditation criteria, the program must demonstrate it has established standards for ensuring these accreditation criteria are met and for determining whether any gaps exist.
- 4.3.3 A program must demonstrate that it has clearly articulated the evaluation of baccalaureate-degree or associate-degree content in the admissions process, and that a candidate understands the evaluation process and its implications for the length of a professional degree program before accepting an offer of admission.

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

**4.3.1** The program documented its process for evaluating a student's prior academic coursework in the APR as part of its overall admissions procedures; however, students entering the 3-year M.Arch. program are not expected to have completed any of the NAAB criteria prior to entering the program. They are required to have taken art or architectural history and calculus as a prerequisite.

**4.3.2** Students admitted with advanced standing into the second year of the program are expected to have completed equivalent criteria to that covered in the first year of the M.Arch. program including substantial studio experience, equivalent to design studios Arch 551 and Arch 552.

**4.3.3** Students applying from non-accredited BS Arch programs have their transcripts reviewed by the Graduate Academic Advisor and Director of Graduate Studies and their portfolio reviewed by the School of Architecture admissions committee to identify equivalent advanced standing. This process is articulated on the School of Architecture website. The APR indicated that this advanced standing was granted to very few applicants and determined on an individual basis with the candidate's portfolio review having a significant role in the process.

The team met with the Graduate Academic Advisor and the Associate Director of Graduate Studies and reviewed the admissions and advising records and website as evidence of compliance with this criterion, and further confirmed these findings through requests for additional information and conversations with the administration during the visit.

## 5—Resources

### **Structure and Governance** *(Guidelines, p. 18)*

The program must describe the administrative and governance processes that provide for organizational continuity, clarity, and fairness and allow for improvement and change.

- 5.1.1 **Administrative Structure:** Describe the administrative structure and identify key personnel in the program and school, college, and institution.
- 5.1.2 **Governance:** Describe the role of faculty, staff, and students in both program and institutional governance structures and how these structures relate to the governance structures of the academic unit and the institution.

### **Team Findings:**

**Met**

### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**5.1.1** Per the APR and as shown in the bubble diagram chart (p.60), the School of Architecture is led by a director, currently Florencia Rodriguez, through a search conducted by the dean's office for a five-year renewable term. The School of Architecture is an academic unit of the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts at University of Illinois Chicago, led by Dean Rebecca Rugg.

The School of Architecture director is supported in the administration of academic programs by two associate directors, associate director of undergraduate studies (currently Assistant Professor Antonio Torres) and an associate director of graduate studies (currently Clinical Assistant Professor Sarah Blankenbaker, who is responsible for the MArch, the MS, the MAD-Crit, and also oversees the summer program for incoming graduate students).

Within the School of Architecture, an assistant director, currently Rodrigo Díaz-Tobin, provides support for administrative processes connected with human resources, faculty committees, and finances and ongoing office management processes.

Additionally, the school staff (in blue in the chart included in the APR) includes four positions exclusive to the School of Architecture. Yazmin Torres, Finance and Operation Manager; Natalie Wess, the Publicity and Promotion Associate, who supports events, communications, and specific activities related to recruiting; the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), Annemarie Poyo Furlong, providing academic counseling and coordination for current, prospective, and former graduate students in the school; and the Assistant Director of Events and Publications, currently Rodrigo Kommers-Wender.

**5.1.2** As noted in the APR, in the School of Architecture, the faculty is the sole legislative body of the school. For governance and voting privilege purposes, this legislative body includes all tenured, tenure-track, clinical, and visiting faculty members holding an appointment at 51 percent or more for the full academic year. The director of the school, Florencia Rodriguez, serves as the

school's chief executive officer and is also responsible for representing the needs and interests of the students and faculty to the college and the university at large. The Executive Committee is chaired by the director of the School of Architecture and represents the main advisory body to the director regarding financial priorities, ensures faculty input, and advises the dean regarding the director's annual reappointment.

A faculty senate at each campus of the university exercises legislative functions in matters of educational policy, such as requirements for admission to colleges and schools, requirements for degrees and certificates, and the academic calendar. Additionally, a 'Personnel Committee,' a 'Promotion and Tenure Committee,' and 'Ad Hoc Faculty Search Committees' ensure that faculty are represented at multiple institutional governance levels. One non-voting student is also usually invited to participate in the Ad Hoc Faculty Search Committees.

The student body is represented in the Student Advisory Board (SAB). The director of the school joins the meeting at least once a semester. Students use these opportunities to share concerns, propose ideas, expose needs, and promote student-led initiatives. The director conducts meetings with the M.Arch. student body as a whole at least once a year.

Evidence provided in the APR was confirmed during the site visit in meetings with the faculty, administration, and students.

## **5.2 Planning and Assessment** (*Guidelines, p. 18*)

The program must demonstrate that it has a planning process for continuous improvement that identifies:

- 5.2.1 The program's multiyear strategic objectives, including the requirement to meet the NAAB Conditions, as part of the larger institutional strategic planning and assessment efforts.
- 5.2.2 Key performance indicators used by the unit and the institution.
- 5.2.3 How well the program is progressing toward its mission and stated multiyear objectives.
- 5.2.4 Strengths, challenges, and opportunities faced by the program as it strives to continuously improve learning outcomes and opportunities.
- 5.2.5 Ongoing outside input from others, including practitioners.

The program must also demonstrate that it regularly uses the results of self-assessments to advise and encourage changes and adjustments that promote student and faculty success.

### **Team Findings:**

**Not Met**

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

It is reported in the APR that the program did not have a planning process in place for a number of reasons: there was no formal system in place upon the arrival of the current director, there was significant turnover in administrative staff, and the pandemic reduced capacity to undertake a rigorous overview of the program. Under the new director, this deficit is being addressed and progress has been made.

**5.2.1** The program director indicated that overall assessment of the M.Arch. program has been initiated after a lapse due to the leadership changes. After the first year of her tenure, "initial findings resulted in changes and adjustments targeting a selection of most pressing issues related to pedagogy or those that most acutely affected administrative or educational processes. This year, the school is initiating a collective and more detailed review and renewal of the school's mission and practices that is intended to unfold partially as part of the reflections prompted by the NAAB review and visit. [p. 65 APR]." The APR also states (p. 66), "A permanent self-assessment

plan is being redesigned.”

The College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts, in which the Architecture program is the largest department, is in the final stages of completing a Strategic Plan, 2024-2029. This plan “Championing Boundless Creativity,” was released in draft form to the team by the College dean, Dean Rebecca Rugg. It is a concise and well written planning document that states vision, mission, and values, and outlines strategic goals with specific subgoals. Many of those goals align with NAAB criteria, such as “broaden outreach and recruitment of diverse students,” “foster student holistic wellbeing, fulfillment, and resiliency,” and “deepen community engagement.” The College is in a growth phase, opening a new major in computational design, which gives credence to the long-term success of their 5 year Strategic Plan.

**5.2.2** Key performance indicators used by the program or the institution are limited, and not comprehensive. While increased diversity in the student body was stated as its primary goal in the APR, it does not comprise a fully functional set of key performance indicators. The team found evidence of progress in this criterion, but it is not fully complete at this time.

**5.2.3** The team found evidence of intention and progress in this criteria, but it is not achieved at this time. Progress toward its mission and multiyear objectives include changes made in the curriculum, staffing, and governance. However, given the lack of stated goals and key performance indicators, it is not possible to evaluate how well the program is progressing toward its mission and multi-year objectives. The program acknowledges that they “are in the process of establishing a new plan and updating our mission.”

**5.2.4** Strengths, challenges, and opportunities to continuously improve learning outcomes and opportunities are not specifically addressed in the APR, which is understandable given the short duration of a strategic planning effort in place. However, it is noted that the APR asserts the “uniqueness and strengths of our school rely on our exploratory design approach and the strong presence of theory and criticism in all programs. Beyond discussions in the curriculum committee, those areas’ production is permanently showcased, assessed, and discussed in reviews, lectures, conferences, and the everyday life and activities of the school.”

There is evidence that the institution has a more formal evaluation process in place for the program. The program does have a curriculum review process, as reflected in the Technology Summit and the History & Theory Summit, where specific course corrections and improvements are detailed. On site, the team was informed of multiple adjustments and changes to curricula in response to the summits. However, documentation of this process has yet to be formalized.

**5.2.5** Ongoing outside input from others, including practitioners, takes place at the school, through portfolio reviews, design critiques, visiting lectures, studio design problems in the community, and career fairs. It is a stated goal of the program director to expand their involvement in the vibrant city of Chicago, and that goal is also included in the CADA Strategic Plan.

### **5.3 Curricular Development** *(Guidelines, p. 19)*

The program must demonstrate a well-reasoned process for assessing its curriculum and making adjustments based on the outcome of the assessment. The program must identify:

- 5.3.1** The relationship between course assessment and curricular development, including NAAB program and student criteria.
- 5.3.2** The roles and responsibilities of the personnel and committees involved in setting curricular agendas and initiatives, including the curriculum committee, program coordinators, and department chairs or directors.

### **Team Findings:**

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

The program identified in the APR that the School of Architecture self-assessment plan is currently being redesigned but is based partially on a three-year cycle of yearly summits addressing the main curriculum areas.

**5.3.1** Faculty course syllabi are reviewed by the director before classes. Each summer the director has meetings with studio instructors to coordinate learning outcomes and ensures the program addresses year end show walkthrough assessment. Additionally, more recently there is a NAAB committee that is working to improve the response of the syllabi in addressing NAAB conditions. This assessment has led to the reformulation and change of the curriculum committee composition, replacing program coordinators by area coordinators and adding more elected faculty members to oversee the course assessment is integrated into the curriculum.

**5.3.2** The curriculum committee advises the director on curriculum and teaching. The associate directors coordinate the program while the responsibility for the school leadership is by the director. See 5.3.1 above for the process for curricular assessment. Additionally, committees are formed by the director as needed, examples include this year the NAAB committee and the search committee were formed.

The team verified and confirmed documentation evidence provided by the program in the APR through discussions with the director, associates, and faculty during the site visit.

### 5.4 Human Resources and Human Resource Development *(Guidelines, p. 19)*

The program must demonstrate that it has appropriate and adequately funded human resources to support student learning and achievement. Human resources include full- and part-time instructional faculty, administrative leadership, and technical, administrative, and other support staff. The program must:

- 5.4.1 Demonstrate that it balances the workloads of all faculty in a way that promotes student and faculty achievement.
- 5.4.2 Demonstrate that it has an Architect Licensing Advisor who is actively performing the duties defined in the NCARB position description. These duties include attending the biannual NCARB Licensing Advisor Summit and/or other training opportunities to stay up-to-date on the requirements for licensure and ensure that students have resources to make informed decisions on their path to licensure.
- 5.4.3 Demonstrate that faculty and staff have opportunities to pursue professional development that contributes to program improvement.
- 5.4.4 Describe the support services available to students in the program, including but not limited to academic and personal advising, mental well-being, career guidance, internship, and job placement.

### Team Findings:

Met

### 2024 Team Analysis:

The APR describes in detail the composition of and expectations for the faculty, most of whom also teach in the undergraduate program. In addition, administrative staff provide needed support for student learning and achievement. On-site observations and meeting with faculty, staff, and administrative personnel indicated that human resources for the program are adequate.

**5.4.1** According to the APR, faculty are expected to teach three to four classes per school year. Faculty who teach studios can expect 14 hours per week of total contact and preparation time. Seminar courses consist of 5.5 hours per week of total contact and prep time. After 8 years of service, faculty are eligible to apply for sabbatical leave to carry out research and creative work.



**5.4.2** The program's NCARB advisor is Professor Paul Preissner. This was confirmed by students during the site visit. According to the APR, Prof. Preissner attended the 2019 and 2023 NCARB summits.

**5.4.3** As described in the APR, faculty can apply to a number of university and program-level grants to advance their research, including the Dean's Research Prize and the Office of Vice Chancellor for Research Creative Activity Awards. This was confirmed by the provost during the site visit. The university also makes a list of external grants available to faculty. SoA faculty benefit from a number of Chicago community partnerships with the AIA, the Graham Foundation, and neighboring architecture schools including IIT and UIUC. Peer mentorship is also available to faculty. Conversations with staff reveal that they feel adequately supported by the program, and the new program leadership is taking steps to offer them more professional development opportunities post-pandemic.

**5.4.4** In the APR, Annemarie Poyo Furlong was identified as the main graduate student advisor. On the site visit, it was confirmed that Ms. Furlong holds regular advising appointments with students. The program director and faculty also make themselves available to students as needed. Students reported benefiting from these conversations.

The university protects the health of students by providing services through the UIC Counseling Center and UIC Wellness Center. Specialized services are offered through Student Legal Services and the Office of Access and Equity.

A number of UIC student organizations, including those serving Black/Asian/Hispanic students, provide community and help ensure belonging.

Career guidance and job placement is available through the university career center and the annual SoA career fair, which was attended by over twenty firms in 2023. Students report high levels of attendance at the fair. Many said they received career opportunities through connections facilitated by UIC and the SoA.

## **5.5 Social Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** *(Guidelines, p. 20)*

The program must demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion among current and prospective faculty, staff, and students. The program must:

- 5.5.1 Describe how this commitment is reflected in the distribution of its human, physical, and financial resources.
- 5.5.2 Describe its plan for maintaining or increasing the diversity of its faculty and staff since the last accreditation cycle, how it has implemented the plan, and what it intends to do during the next accreditation cycle. Also, compare the program's faculty and staff demographics with that of the program's students and other benchmarks the program deems relevant.
- 5.5.3 Describe its plan for maintaining or increasing the diversity of its students since the last accreditation cycle, how it has implemented the plan, and what it intends to do during the next accreditation cycle. Also, compare the program's student demographics with that of the institution and other benchmarks the program deems relevant.
- 5.5.4 Document what institutional, college, or program policies are in place to further Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA), as well as any other social equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives at the program, college, or institutional level.

### **Team Findings:**

**Met**

### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**5.5.1** In the APR, the program states they support diversity and inclusion “through a layered, multiyear approach, involving varying levels of appointments and durations.” The school introduces diverse educators as teaching staff, and “acts as a platform” for globally recognized diverse faculty and thinkers.

Three faculty members of the SoA are supported by the university’s Under-Represented Faculty Recruitment Program, which offers salary and research support to newly-recruited tenure-track faculty from underrepresented groups.

**5.5.2** The APR reports that since the last accreditation cycle, an increase in Latino representation among full-time faculty has occurred. The program understands that its student population is currently more diverse than its faculty population and has taken that into consideration for its two ongoing faculty searches. Since 2020, UIC has started a number of new programs aimed at increasing diversity among faculty university wide. The provost described these programs at length during the site visit. Notably, the “Bridge to Faculty” program recruits postdoctoral candidates from underrepresented backgrounds and helps them transition into full-time, tenure-track faculty roles.

**5.5.3** According to the APR, the program has experienced a “significant” decrease in minority representation since the last cycle. Currently, the majority (54%) of M.Arch. students are White. As noted during the site visit, the decrease in diversity is due partially to factors outside the program’s control, including difficulty in obtaining visas for admitted students from certain countries.

For the next accreditation cycle, the admissions and advising team shared the program’s plan to refocus on recruiting domestically by growing its relationship with HBCUs. The program is also working with corporate partners such as Hartshone and Plunkard and HOK to create fellowships for minority students. During the visit, it was noted that these fellowships have already benefited an initial cohort of UIC M.Arch. students. The program will continue to nominate students for university fellowships for underrepresented students through UIC’s Access to Excellence program, and help nominees prepare their applications.

**5.5.4** The APR states that the SoA conforms to the university wide EEO/AA policies in place. The UIC Office of Access and Equity handles issues related to discrimination and Title IX complaints. A variety of UIC offices provide services to students of specific backgrounds (Black, Hispanic, Asian, LGBTQ+, etc.) to ensure all groups are treated equitably.

The APR also refers to the UIC Disability Resource Center that oversees accommodation requests and resources. During the site visit, the graduate advisor mentioned that she helps M.Arch. students obtain accommodation letters as appropriate.

## **5.6 Physical Resources** *(Guidelines, p. 21)*

The program must describe its physical resources and demonstrate how they safely and equitably support the program’s pedagogical approach and student and faculty achievement. Physical resources include but are not limited to the following:

- 5.6.1 Space to support and encourage studio-based learning.
- 5.6.2 Space to support and encourage didactic and interactive learning, including lecture halls, seminar spaces, small group study rooms, labs, shops, and equipment.
- 5.6.3 Space to support and encourage the full range of faculty roles and responsibilities, including preparation for teaching, research, mentoring, and student advising.
- 5.6.4 Resources to support all learning formats and pedagogies in use by the program.

If the program’s pedagogy does not require some or all of the above physical resources, the program must describe the effect (if any) that online, off-site, or hybrid formats have on digital and physical resources.

## Team Findings:

Not Met

### 2024 Team Analysis:

**5.6.1** The School of Design and the School of architecture share a building designed by Walter Netsch 57 years ago, which includes studio space, labs, shops, faculty offices, administration offices, and space for lectures and exhibits. The immensely strong architectural form of this landmark mid-century modern building is both an asset and a liability: it is a nonlinear, experimental, yet overarching form which has the benefit of mixing the student body together in a large, spatially interesting environment. There is one large studio for the entire graduate program, large enough for all three years of students to have their own desk, with ancillary spaces off of it. It is flexible, and the togetherness or intimacy of having the entire program in one large studio is appreciated by the students and faculty. However, acoustics are difficult, and access to this top floor requires navigating through the building up many flights of stairs—which may be a challenge for students with limited mobility. The deferred maintenance of the aging building poses significant challenges to the studio environment through roof and skylight leaks and temperature and humidity control issues. Studio equipment and desks are outdated.

**5.6.2** Adjacent to the studios are classroom spaces with interactive technology, seminar and pin up niches; there are additional classrooms and lecture spaces across the campus available to the architecture program if needed. Other support spaces include an updated print lab, fab lab, and project lab with wood and metal working facilities which are heavily utilized by the students in the building as well. Students noted the lack of lounge space with appropriate furniture.

**5.6.3** All full-time faculty are assigned shared offices, with a maximum of four faculty per office. The majority of meetings between students and faculty take place in two conference rooms in the administrative office.

**5.6.4** The school has recently increased investments in technology to address its pedagogy objectives of utilizing digital formats. While the majority of the school's courses utilize the school's on-site facilities, online and hybrid formats are also used as a supplement.

The team confirmed evidence provided in the APR, during several tours of the facilities and in discussions with administration, faculty and students during the site visit. The team witnessed firsthand several of the building's significant challenges to the studio environment, especially deferred maintenance, acoustic distractions, outdated desks and lack of other furnishings.

### **5.7 Financial Resources** (*Guidelines, p. 21*)

The program must demonstrate that it has the appropriate institutional support and financial resources to support student learning and achievement during the next term of accreditation.

## Team Findings:

Met

### 2024 Team Analysis:

As noted in the APR, over the last four years, the program experienced rising institutional allocations that have continued to grow. Current state administrators are committed to funding public education, which has meant that the public funding of the program's budget has increased by over \$ 1 million over the last five years. Given that the total budget of the program is approximately 80% public funding, the overall prospect is strong.

The team confirmed on site that the dean and provost are taking part in a "Budget Model Redesign Initiative" which may, among other goals, balance university funding of the arts with that of science, given the greater expense of teaching art and architecture.

### 5.8 Information Resources (Guidelines, p. 22)

The program must demonstrate that all students, faculty, and staff have convenient and equitable access to architecture literature and information, as well as appropriate visual and digital resources that support professional education in architecture.

Further, the program must demonstrate that all students, faculty, and staff have access to architecture librarians and visual resource professionals who provide discipline-relevant information services that support teaching and research.

#### Team Findings:

**Met**

#### 2024 Team Analysis:

According to the APR, students access architectural literature through UIC's Daley Library, both online and in-person. The library provides access to 18,000 architecture books and over 600 architectural journals. Interlibrary loans are available, and students have access to special collections including rare maps and papers from the Mies Van Der Rohe archive. Teresa Moreno was identified as the architecture topic librarian. During the site visit, Ms. Moreno clarified that most library resources have been made available online, and that this is the primary mode of access for students. Ms. Moreno provides research support to students and faculty, and regularly gives classroom presentations to educate students on best practices.

The visiting team also toured the SoA's new Open Archive, a new resource center housed within the school. As stated in the APR, the Open Archive will supplement Daley Library's resources with additional rare and significant architectural books and journals. It will also house models and other artifacts related to the history of the SoA, making them available for student access.

## 6—Public Information

The NAAB expects accredited degree programs to provide information to the public about accreditation activities and the relationship between the program and the NAAB, admissions and advising, and career information, as well as accurate public information about accredited and non-accredited architecture programs. The NAAB expects programs to be transparent and accountable in the information provided to students, faculty, and the public. As a result, all NAAB-accredited programs are required to ensure that the following information is posted online and is easily available to the public.

### 6.1 Statement on NAAB-Accredited Degrees (Guidelines, p. 23)

All institutions offering a NAAB-accredited degree program or any candidacy program must include the *exact language* found in the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation, 2020 Edition*, Appendix 2, in catalogs and promotional media, including the program's website.

#### Team Findings:

**Met**

#### 2024 Team Analysis:

The team confirmed that the program provides this information on its website.

### 6.2 Access to NAAB Conditions and Procedures (Guidelines, p. 23)

The program must make the following documents available to all students, faculty, and the public, via the program's website:

- a) *Conditions for Accreditation, 2020 Edition*
- b) *Conditions for Accreditation* in effect at the time of the last visit (2009 or 2014, depending on the date of the last visit)
- c) *Procedures for Accreditation, 2020 Edition*

- d) *Procedures for Accreditation* in effect at the time of the last visit (2012 or 2015, depending on the date of the last visit)

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

The team confirmed that the program provides all NAAB Conditions and Procedures through links on its website to all documents.

**6.3 Access to Career Development Information** (*Guidelines, p. 23*)

The program must demonstrate that students and graduates have access to career development and placement services that help them develop, evaluate, and implement career, education, and employment plans.

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:**

In the APR, the program identifies the Career Fair and a career job placement platform hosted by the university as accessible resources for all students regarding career opportunities. The school's weekly newsletter regularly identifies opportunities for internships and scholarships. During the site visit meetings students, faculty and advisers confirmed that the program plays an active role in job placement for students for both summer employment and part time work up to 10 hours per week during the school year, in that way helping students develop, evaluate, and implement career employment plans. Graduates of the program are given access to career and professional development through access on the program's website *Career Services* and the *Weekly Newsletter*.

Evidence was confirmed through review of the web site and discussions with the advisor, faculty, and students.

**6.4 Public Access to Accreditation Reports and Related Documents** (*Guidelines, p. 23*)

To promote transparency in the process of accreditation in architecture education, the program must make the following documents available to all students, faculty, and the public, via the program's website:

- a) All Interim Progress Reports and narratives of Program Annual Reports submitted since the last team visit
- b) All NAAB responses to any Plan to Correct and any NAAB responses to the Program Annual Reports since the last team visit
- c) The most recent decision letter from the NAAB
- d) The Architecture Program Report submitted for the last visit
- e) The final edition of the most recent Visiting Team Report, including attachments and addenda
- f) The program's optional response to the Visiting Team Report
- g) Plan to Correct (if applicable)
- h) NCARB ARE pass rates
- i) Statements and/or policies on learning and teaching culture
- j) Statements and/or policies on diversity, equity, and inclusion

**Team Findings:**

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

The team confirmed that the program provides working links to these documents on its website.

### 6.5 Admissions and Advising *(Guidelines, p. 24)*

The program must publicly document all policies and procedures that govern the evaluation of applicants for admission to the accredited program. These procedures must include first-time, first-year students as well as transfers from within and outside the institution. This documentation must include the following:

- a) Application forms and instructions
- b) Admissions requirements; admissions-decisions procedures, including policies and processes for evaluation of transcripts and portfolios (when required); and decisions regarding remediation and advanced standing
- c) Forms and a description of the process for evaluating the content of a non-accredited degrees
- d) Requirements and forms for applying for financial aid and scholarships
- e) Explanation of how student diversity goals affect admission procedures

### Team Findings:

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

In the APR, the program provided working, publicly available links to all the required information. During the site visit, the team met with the Associate Director of Graduate Studies and reviewed the admissions and advising records and website as evidence of compliance with this criterion and further confirmed these findings through requests for additional information and conversations with the administration during the visit. The team also confirmed that the admissions process and decisions are made clear for all students, including those seeking advanced standing and international students.

Advising occurs on a regular basis, with rubrics made for each student. The graduate advisor meets frequently with students to review these rubrics. Faculty communicate with the graduate advisor if they have concerns that a specific student might not pass their class, and efforts are made to support the student to improve their learning outcomes.

### 6.6 Student Financial Information *(Guidelines, p. 24)*

- 6.6.1 The program must demonstrate that students have access to current resources and advice for making decisions about financial aid.
- 6.6.2 The program must demonstrate that students have access to an initial estimate for all tuition, fees, books, general supplies, and specialized materials that may be required during the full course of study for completing the NAAB-accredited degree program.

### Team Findings:

**Met**

### 2024 Team Analysis:

**6.6.1** The program provides access to resources, by maintaining a dedicated page with information for financial support for graduate students:  
<https://arch.uic.edu/graduate-financial-support>

The Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships provides additional information on financial aid: <https://financialaid.uic.edu/>

**6.6.2** The program lists estimated costs of attendance for the MArch degree on its website; this estimate is updated annually: <https://arch.uic.edu/cost-of-attendance>

The Cost of Attendance page also links to the University Registrar, the institutional source for this information. Faculty are required to include estimates of any course-specific costs on their syllabus: <https://arch.uic.edu/cost-of-attendance>

## **V. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. Team PC/SC Matrix**





## Appendix 2. The Visiting Team

### **Team Chair, Regulator Representative**

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## VI. Report Signatures

Respectfully Submitted,



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**Margo Jones, FAIA, NCARB**  
Team Chair



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**Steve Parker FAIA, LEED AP**  
Team Member



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**Daniela Deutsch**  
Team Member



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**Tiffany Chang, Assoc. AIA, NOMA**  
Team Member



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**John Enright, FAIA**  
Team Member