LAAB COVID-19 Response

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) is closely monitoring the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential implications on landscape architecture program accreditation. LAAB recognizes that these are unprecedented times that require flexibility to allow programs to deliver their educational content as best they can – without jeopardizing their accreditation. LAAB understands institutions and their programs are taking actions to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their students, faculty, and staff.

We understand that most institutions are requiring students and faculty to leave campus and courses be taught remotely for the remainder of the semester. Additionally, we understand some institutions are allowing course grading to be changed to Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Programs should follow their institution’s directives and make decisions that are best for them. Any alternate program delivery methods enacted for this emergency circumstance will not require substantive change approvals or negatively impact accreditation. LAAB encourages programs to clearly communicate all of these changes to students and fairly and consistently apply any new grading criteria to all students. It is worth noting that in 2018, LAAB reviewed and revised its current standards specifically regarding online delivery methods and concluded that all standards need to be met regardless of the delivery method.

LAAB leadership is continuing to meet regularly with staff and make determinations of any adjustments to operations. The following adjustments have already been made or are being considered at this time:

- To keep our programs and ROVE members safe, the LAAB is postponing the remaining Spring 2020 accreditation visits until the fall, contingent on the developments in the COVID-19 situation, with no impact to program accreditation. We will continue to communicate with programs any adjustments made to postponed visits.
- Fall 2020 accreditation visits will remain scheduled as is. As we approach the SER due date, staff will work with program chairs to determine if an alternate due date or rescheduling is necessary.
- The LAAB 2020 Annual Report due date of August 1 will remain scheduled as is, contingent on the developments in the COVID-19 situation. We will continue to communicate with programs any adjustments that may need to be made regarding the due date.
- The LAAB Accreditation Standards revision process will remain on schedule. A second comment period is scheduled for April 15 through May 31. The Board anticipates reviewing and approving the final revisions at its Summer 2020 Board Meeting. The revised standards are expected to be published January 2021.

While programs are not required to receive substantive change approvals for alternate delivery methods at this time, we are asking programs to track changes and adjustments being made to be submitted as part of the 2020 Annual Report. LAAB would like to collect this information and any best practices that come from these transitions to online delivery in order to better understand and create guidelines for future reference. Additionally, while these temporary adjustments are acceptable for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year, LAAB will re-evaluate this process in the upcoming months in order to inform programs of any required reporting or substantive change approvals.

LAAB staff is still available during regular office hours to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Please contact Kristopher Pritchard at 202-216-2359 or kpritchard@asla.org.