

Interim Progress Report
Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc)
Department of Academic Affairs

B.Arch [172 credit hours] **[changed to: 166 credit hours as of AY19-20]**

M.Arch 1 [undergraduate degree plus 111 credits]

M.Arch 2 [undergraduate degree plus 78 credits]

Year of the previous visit: 2018

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I. Progress in Addressing Not-Met Conditions and Student Performance Criteria

a. Progress in Addressing Not-Met Conditions

SCI-Arc, 2021 Response: N/A

b. Progress in Addressing Not-Met Student Performance Criteria

A.1 Professional Communication Skills

2018 Visiting Team Assessment: Evidence of student achievement in written communication skills was provided in the team room and was labeled as 'low pass' and 'high pass' for the B.Arch, M.Arch 1, and M.Arch 2 degree programs. However, evidence provided for 'low pass' work, which represents the minimal baseline of competency, did not support students' "ability" to write effectively in either the B.Arch and M.Arch 1 programs. Evidence at the minimally prescribed level was found in the M.Arch 2 degree program. As described in the VTR and as witnessed during the site visit, the representation-centric curriculum, intensive making/iterative processes, and intensive exposure to desk crits and critiques (one-on-one and formal, large-scale reviews) foster ability in verbal communication skills to effectively explain complex design matter. Required writing ability by B.Arch and M.Arch 1 students will benefit from the recently implemented Writing Lab to strengthen critical writing and editing skills.

SCI-Arc, 2021 Response:

B.Arch degree: In order to actively address the Not-Met Conditions and Student Performance Criteria: A.1 Professional Communication Skills from the 2018 visiting team assessment, we have undertaken the following measures in the undergraduate program:

1. We have re-vamped the Liberal Arts content and sequence across all years to focus on writing. We were aware of this deficiency in advance of the assessment, and were already assessing at the time of the visit. Our Liberal Arts Coordinator, the notable philosopher Graham Harman, began observation of classes and writing outcomes in 2018. Through a thorough assessment of the program, with input by all Liberal Arts faculty and the Chair, was undertaken, resulting in a set of values and goals for increasing students' abilities to write and express their ideas.
2. A second writing class was added as part of the roll-out of the revised Liberal Arts curriculum in fall 2021. Students are now required to take **LA 8011: Forms of Writing I** and **LA 8111: Forms of Writing II** in their first year of study. In addition, to allow for more one-on-one feedback of students' writing, we doubled the faculty in those two classes. **[Attachment 1_B.Arch Syllabus_LA 8011: Forms of Writing I]**
3. All Liberal Arts core classes now have writing requirements, including a midterm paper that is edited based on faculty comments to produce a longer, well-edited final paper.
4. The Liberal Arts and History + Theory programs are both gearing up to do double-marking of sample student papers beginning in 2022, in order to better gauge student writing outcomes as we roll in these changes. The purpose is to get more faculty feedback and open a larger discussion among Liberal Arts and History + Theory faculty, identify trends, and propose methods of improvement.
5. We have made significant changes to our History + Theory (HT) core curriculum sequence to build writing skills as students advance. These changes were made in response to observed weaknesses in ability to read and describe works of art and architecture, in a committee of History + Theory faculty, our HT Coordinator Marrikka Trotter, PhD, and the Undergraduate Program Chair. Improvements made are as follows:

- a. **HT 2012: History of Architecture I:** This course now includes ekphrastic descriptive writing with a focus on precision, brevity, and directness; iterative writing and editing assignments along with live, in-class writing workshops. [Revised syllabus available spring 2022.]
- b. **HT 2024: History of Architecture II:** This course now includes the above, plus research and writing with sources, with a focus on scrupulous and active engagement with texts, using scholarly material with integrity and creativity, and building persuasive arguments. **[Attachment 2_B.Arch Syllabus_HT 2024: History of Architecture II]**
- c. **HT 2025: History of Architecture III:** Above, plus engagement with landmark works of architectural theory and criticism, and physical buildings encountered via field work (as opposed to studied via images) with an emphasis on balancing critical thinking with appreciation. [Revised syllabus available spring 2022.]

M.Arch degrees: In order to actively address the Not-Met Conditions and Student Performance Criteria: A.1 Professional Communication Skills from the 2018 visiting team assessment, during the past three years the M.Arch 1 program has undertaken a series of evaluations, committee meetings, and policy/resource implementations in order make sure that communication skills would be supported through the HT SCI-Arc curriculum. While the visit team assessment has been a decisive factor to motivate the school, communication skills have been identified as an area needing improvement during our yearly faculty retreat. In response to that, SCI-Arc's Graduate and Undergraduate Chairs, HT and Liberal Arts coordinators, along with the Vice Director took a series of steps that resulted in:

1. We have changed our History + Theory core curriculum sequence deliverables to build writing skills as students advance:
 - a. **HT2100: Introduction to Contemporary Architecture:** Focus on active, engaged reading with an emphasis on identifying positions, tracing intellectual influences and sources, and recognizing argumentation strategies and other writing tactics. Students produce short, informed, clear, well-edited written commentary. **[Attachment 3_M.Arch 1 Syllabus_HT 2100: Introduction to Contemporary Architecture]**
 - b. **HT 2101: History of Architecture and Urbanism I:** Ekphrastic descriptive writing with a focus on precision, brevity, and directness; iterative writing and editing assignments along with live, in-class writing workshops. [Revised syllabus available spring 2022.]
 - c. **HT 2120: History of Architecture and Urbanism II:** Above, plus research and writing with sources, with a focus on scrupulous and active engagement with texts, using scholarly material with integrity and creativity, and building persuasive arguments. **[Attachment 4_M.Arch 1 Syllabus_HT 2021: History of Architecture and Urbanism II]**
 - d. **HT 2121: History of Architecture III:** Above, plus engagement with landmark works of architectural theory and criticism, and physical buildings encountered via field work (as opposed to studied via images) with an emphasis on balancing critical thinking with appreciation. [Revised syllabus available spring 2022.]

2. We have added required student blogs for all core history courses, creating additional opportunities for students to practice writing and giving peer feedback in a supervised and constructive academic environment.

Institutional Initiatives:

Turnitin: SCI-Arc has recently acquired and adopted [Turnitin](#) plagiarism software to utilize across all programs to curb a documented rise in plagiarism at the school. Alongside that, we have now defined specific and clear internal procedures for its use and appropriateness, and we have instituted teaching students (especially our international students) at the beginning of the year what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and what good practices are. Finally, SCI-Arc has put in place a clear, fair, and strict procedure for dealing with students who are caught plagiarizing, to dissuade them from academic dishonesty in the future. This has had an immediate effect, with a noticeable drop in plagiarism cases since the software was implemented.

Teaching Fellows: SCI-Arc has established a teaching fellowship program for all core History + Theory seminar courses. The program offers qualified PhD students/candidates the opportunity to work alongside full-time History + Theory faculty at SCI-Arc to support instruction of the seminar and to offer more robust feedback and writing assistance to our students. In addition, we have added discussion sections for all core History + Theory seminar courses to create additional time for students to practice supervised live debate and allocate scheduled periods during class for writing exercises and workshops.

II. Changes or Planned Changes in the Program

Please report such changes as the following: faculty retirement/succession planning; administration changes (dean, department chair, provost); changes in enrollment (increases, decreases, new external pressures); new opportunities for collaboration; changes in financial resources (increases, decreases, external pressures); significant changes in educational approach or philosophy; changes in physical resources (e.g., deferred maintenance, new building planned, cancellation of plans for new building).

SCI-Arc, 2021 Response:

COVID Response/Transition to Remote Learning: In March 2020, SCI-Arc had to instantly react and adjust to the dramatic effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on higher education and the world. We had to quickly transition from an in-person, studio-based academic model in spring 2020, to an all-remote learning model through 2021, and now to a current hybrid instruction model this fall, to our planning for spring 2022 to resume all in-person teaching. **Successful enrollment management** has been critical as we responded to this crisis, especially for a school as small as SCI-Arc. SCI-Arc generally has a target of 500 students each academic year. During the pandemic, SCI-Arc's enrollment has fluctuated from an enrollment of 491 full-time students in 2019-2020, down to 472 students in 2020-2021, up to an estimated 511 students in the current 2021-2022 academic year.

Like most schools, for the past two years students, faculty, administration, and staff have had to adjust teaching and learning styles, learn new technologies, manage delicate staffing and financial challenges, upgrade resources, and learn the new complexities of a healthy live/work balance, all while continuing to offer access to a quality education and ensure the integrity of each degree. During this challenge, we worked to ensure that student learning was not compromised, and to incorporate innovative distance learning practices that would remain useful as a supplement to normal in-person teaching practices as the pandemic eases. One of our first decisions was to **lower the student to faculty teaching ratios for design studios** from 15 to one pre-pandemic to 10 to one in

order to allow for more direct attention for students in studio. This of course came with the need to increase faculty which raised the projection of faculty salaries in the annual budget. We have **invested in internet-based platforms including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Miro** to allow students to instantaneously communicate with each other and with their professors, to access course materials far more easily than was previously possible, to be able to see live translations of faculty and student presentations into a variety of languages (very useful for our international student body), and to move seamlessly between a teleconferencing discussion class format and a live, collaborative textual, visual, and video-enabled workspace. To support the hybrid instruction model, we also created indoor (15 total) and outdoor (16 total) **small group meeting pods** located throughout the SCI-Arc building and parking lot. All meeting pods are connected to Wi-Fi while the indoor pods are equipped with monitors, cameras, and computers with up-to-date software.

Practices and the use of technology, like those just mentioned, are now commonplace across the faculty to help deliver curricular content, collaborate with the students, and review student work.

Equity and Inclusion: While SCI-Arc as always celebrated our multiethnic, multinational student population and is dedicated to their protection from racist and xenophobic policies and behaviors, amid the recent global calls for racial justice, and in conjunction with a public health crisis which disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, we have redoubled our efforts to [promote equity and pursue inclusion](#) for those most underrepresented in architecture.

We have created new staff positions, including a [Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) and a [Community Engagement Coordinator](#), who are responsible for identifying and evaluating all opportunities for improvement regarding ethical and equitable practices. SCI-Arc's **Equity and Inclusion Committee** is comprised of staff, faculty, and student representatives who work to promote equity, inclusion, and belonging for the SCI-Arc community. The committee meets regularly to reflect on areas in need of improvement, share best practices, and facilitate the implementation of policies and programs that promote an equitable, accessible, and inclusive educational environment.

We will **promote inclusive recruitment for all faculty and staff positions** that gives weight to and supports applicants from underrepresented groups in terms of race, ability, socioeconomic class, and gender identity. In the recent years, we made a series of **new faculty hires** ([William Virgil](#), [Natou Fall](#), [Kordae Henry](#), [Jennifer Chen](#), [Soomeen Hahm](#)) to pursue more balance regarding gender, race, and sexual orientation throughout all academic degree programs. We also hired new Liberal Arts faculty member **Thabasile Griffin, PhD** in the summer of 2021 to teach new course **Race in America**, now required for first-year B.Arch students. We are still working toward increasing gender balance in our ranks; this is something we will continue to correct in a concerted way over the coming years.

We now require **anti-racism education and training** for all faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees. We will pursue a five-year **diversity goal** to achieve and maintain student, faculty, staff, and board representation that more closely reflects the racial and cultural diversity of Los Angeles. We have begun process to identify and implement robust curriculum changes to our academic programs (described below) to prioritize an inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy. In 2020-2021, SCI-Arc introduced the availability of **Equity and Inclusion scholarships**. These scholarships offer full tuition for selected local students who come from backgrounds that are marginalized in the field of architecture. This scholarship hopes to begin to bridge the gaps and broach the barriers to entry that create such a quantifiable lack of representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color within SCI-Arc's student population and architecture at large. In addition,

SCI-Arc has **partnered with the Southern California Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (SoCalNOMA)** to create a full-tuition scholarship for its undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs, with priority given to Los Angeles high schoolers, to facilitate impact among the community of Southern California.

New Postgraduate Program (MS in Synthetic Landscapes): Launching in the 2020-2021 academic year, the Master of Science in Synthetic Landscapes is a new one-year, three-semester postgraduate program at SCI-Arc focused on advancing knowledge and developing expertise in the emerging topics of landscape architecture. The program examines how artificial and natural systems can come together to form new synthetic relationships during a difficult era of climate change and pursues new forms of engagement and innovative models of landscape practice. In contrast to traditional landscape design programs that focus on the stewardship of nature and traditional western cultural values associated with picturesque or sublime images of nature, this program emphasizes a global perspective where the coevolution of natural and artificial systems is shaping an ever more synthetic world.

STEM Designation (CIP Code): In 2018, the CIP codes for SCI-Arc's B.Arch, M.Arch, and MS postgraduate degree programs were designated as official STEM degree programs through the Department of Education, SEVP, and USCIS. This new designation will allow international students who graduate from these degree programs to be eligible to extend their F-1 Visas for a maximum of 36 months.

Building Improvements: In fall 2021, we completed a **full renovation of all seminar classrooms** at SCI-Arc. All classrooms have been completely renovated with improved lighting, acoustics, flooring, HVAC improvements, and new furniture. We also dramatically expanded the video, audio, and other technical capacities of our classrooms with the latest technology to provide an integrated experience for audio conferencing, wireless screen sharing, and video collaboration. The classrooms now have speaker tracking cameras and speakers to accommodate a true virtual room. The rooms are also equipped with an 86" interactive touch monitor, a high-resolution projector, and a large projection screen.

Also in 2021, SCI-Arc completed a new **Robot Annex**—a temporary 35'x50' tent structure—to house a new grant-funded IRB 6700 Robot. The Robot Annex is fully equipped as a space for work and research with a wide range of applications, a significant compressed air system to allow a variety of end of arm tools, including hands-on collaboration, and on-site construction. This addition will enable explorations outside of the traditional digital production.

Faculty Coordinators: Since the 2018 NAAB visit, SCI-Arc has made changes with several of our [academic curriculum coordinators](#). Specifically, in 2019-2020 Graham Harman was appointed Liberal Arts Coordinator; in 2020-2021 William Virgil was appointed coordinator of the Making+Meaning summer program; in 2021-2022 Anna Neimark was named Visual Studies Coordinator, Jackilin Bloom was named Graduate Thesis Coordinator, Maxi Spina was named Undergraduate Thesis Coordinator, and Angelica Lorenzi was named coordinator of the Design Immersion Days (DID) summer program.

Wellness Services and Programming: Over the last few years, SCI-Arc has made it a priority to develop improved resources and programming aimed at supporting students' mental health and overall wellness. A **Student Services Specialist** staff position was created to act as an advocate for both the student and SCI-Arc. The position serves as liaison between students and the Student Union, staff, faculty, and administration; provides referral services for students; assesses and coordinates student wellness,

support services, and career development programs; and improves upon existing programs and processes in a changing environment. A new Student Services budget was created and funds made available to support this new position in providing support resources and creative programming to the students at SCI-Arc. In 2018, the school developed a partnership with the **Downtown Mind Wellness (DMW)** organization in downtown Los Angeles to offer mental health support services to SCI-Arc students. DMW is a group of psychologists, therapists, nurse practitioners, and behavioral intervention specialists with experience offering mental health support to college-aged individuals. Through this partnership, SCI-Arc now makes available an **onsite therapist** twice a week to students on an appointment or walk-in basis. For students in need of long-term counseling, DMW is in network for students on SCI-Arc student health care plan, making for a smoother transition from emergency care to long-term treatment. SCI-Arc also brings in representatives from DMW to offer **training to faculty and staff** on how to identify and support students who may be struggling or in need of support. In addition, SCI-Arc has provided funds for select student services staff to attend conferences offered by NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) towards learning new strategies to support student life at SCI-Arc.

Other highlights of SCI-Arc improved wellness program include **annual resource updates** for all programming and recommended support services (onsite and local offsite) for students in need; **free yoga classes** offered each week and funded by the SCI-Arc Student Union; and a monthly **poster campaign** placed around the building which provides education and support for topics such as boosting self-esteem, stress management, social wellness, and self-care.

Advancement and Sponsored Research: SCI-Arc has continued to invest in the growth of its institutional advancement initiatives and infrastructure to support fundraising objectives. In 2019, the hiring of Kate O’Neal as SCI-Arc’s **new [Chief Advancement Officer](#)**, along with the restructuring of the Advancement Office has produced a demonstrated increase in contributed revenue and provided momentum for SCI-Arc’s long-term fundraising strategy. Included in this strategy is the focus on sponsored research grants which began in 2018 and has resulted in a two-year **grant from the W. M. Keck Foundation** to launch a new research program, Urban Pasts and Futures Lab, which will offer new courses, sponsored research, and opportunities for students to work on research projects, publications, and public events. Additionally, with support from **Ahmanson Foundation** and **Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**, SCI-Arc is advancing its technological capacity with a new robot annex—SCI-Arc’s largest high-capacity robot will be housed in a new facility in the parking lot. The robot annex will allow faculty research and experimentation with AI for commercial applications.

B.Arch Degree Changes: In addition to the changes in Liberal Arts, History + Theory, and our writing curriculum that spans between them (listed above), the undergraduate program has undertaken other significant changes as well. We have doubled down on our dual focus of design expertise combined with a liberal arts education. This, in a time when many undergraduate programs are switching to a more “trade school” approach, centered on professional practice and licensure. While we uphold these values in our program, and graduate very skilled and sought-after students, we think that it is crucial to teach ethics, communication, and an understanding of history in this time of disinformation, political extremism, and social awakening. We are confident that this approach is needed in architectural education, especially at the undergraduate level, which we believe should be a holistic college education and not a training environment. Our Undergraduate Program Chair, Tom Wiscombe, AIA continues to increase SCI-Arc’s profile as a provocative, intellectual, engaging space for young leaders in architecture. Our focus on communication, rhetoric, and defending ideas is what makes SCI-Arc’s approach unique. The **Undergraduate Curriculum Committee** meets regularly to discuss and refine this mission in the context of fast-changing contemporary discourse

about social issues, diversity, equity, and empowerment, reviewing syllabi and students' work to identify areas for improvement.

This push for increased **equity and inclusion** is a school-wide effort and goes far beyond such changes in hiring practices. The content of B.Arch studios and seminars has been thoroughly vetted for colonial and Eurocentric points of view, and through the goals of an anti-racist pedagogy. We are proud to have been able to make such quick changes in our program, made possible due to our size and nimble administration. These changes have been brought for discussion at all-school town hall meetings, student union events, curriculum committee meetings, and SCI-Arc's annual retreat, with administration and faculty working toward the common goal of improving our curriculum by expanding its histories, heroes, and points of view, engaging a much wider audience than ever before.

Another major change in our curriculum is toward what we call planetary energy, promoting exploration of new approaches to sustainable thinking, green energy, and how these issues can be integrated into architectural thinking and design. Through design studios and applied studies seminars, SCI-Arc is creating a learning environment focused on how architecture can be fundamentally transformed by engaging issues of planetary energy, sustainability, and net zero building. Recent studios have taken this on including second-year studio, which investigates the relationship between landscape and built form, and fourth-year studio is considering giant solar arrays in combination with housing projects, as a new net-positive building typology for Los Angeles. This swerve is not unfamiliar for us at SCI-Arc—founder Ray Kappe, FAIA had similar visions in the early 1970s, some of which is only now becoming feasible with today's technological advancements. We look forward to developing further curricular adaptations in this direction through our curriculum committee including Applied Studies Coordinator, Herwig Baumgartner, AIA, Chair Tom Wiscombe, AIA, and other Applied Studies faculty. Our goal is for SCI-Arc to become an experimental and provocative voice in this arena that can attract the interest of city leaders in LA and beyond.

A minor change we have undertaken in the B.Arch degree program was to reduce the number of units required to graduate, to both bring our units in line with peer institutions, and also address student concerns in our rigorous third year. Previously, our number of units was 172, higher than average, and it was reduced to 166. This change was undertaken after identifying student stress and inability to complete all of their work in third year in interviews with student representatives by the B.Arch. Chair. The concerns were reviewed by the B.Arch Curriculum Committee, who identified that the Visual Studies and History Theory courses in that year were partially redundant, and could therefore be removed from the curriculum without affecting curricular goals and NAAB requirements. It is anticipated that this will be a great relief for students in this demanding year, which focuses on comprehensive building design. This change was approved by our Vice Director and implemented in 2019-2020 and is slated to roll in over the next few years.

Finally, in terms of our enrollment and student body makeup in the undergraduate program, we have begun focusing on the recruitment of transfer students over the past two years. There are two reasons for this: one, it enables us to diversify our student body by engaging more local community college students, many of whom are historically underrepresented in architecture; and two, it is a financial necessity as first-year numbers have begun to slow due to larger societal shifts such as the reduction in high school graduates in the US in general. Our transfer program was formerly used to backfill second and third years, after natural attrition associated with the intensity of architectural education. Today, we take approximately 30 transfer students every year into second and third years. These students yield far better during the admissions process and they fare

well at SCI-Arc. We plan to continue reaching out to an ever-broader range of community colleges around the state and the west in the coming years.

M.Arch Degree Changes: In addition to the changes in History + Theory listed, both graduate programs have undertaken few significant changes to refine their position in relationship to equity and inclusion.

The graduate program has promoted a collective effort to review studio and seminar syllabi and students' work to identify areas for improvement. Social issues, diversity, equity, along student and faculty empowerment have been at the center of the curricular changes for both M.Arch 1 and M.Arch 2 in 2020 and 2021. The graduate curriculum at large has been analyzed, and each core faculty has participated in the writing of an equity and inclusion pedagogical document that collected the curricular changes for all core classes. The mission behind the changes was to combine SCI-Arc core disciplinary competencies, while drastically expanding the reach of our expertise, archives, and outreach, and to align the curriculum with the school-wide commitment to social justice and anti-racism in the ways we teach, interact with each other, and train a new generation of architects for the future of the profession.

In the upcoming years, the graduate program is planning to strengthen its offerings of knowledge and design strategy on **sustainability, green energy, ecology, and building resilience**. This planned change will take place in both design studios and applied studies seminars, targeting the knowledge of cutting-edge technology along with embracing a new way of designing for our complex global environment.

In 2020-2021, the position for the **Graduate Thesis Coordinator** has been doubled into two positions in order to front the increasing needs of contact time of the students during the lockdown period. This change offered a dual stewardship in the field of design and History + Theory curriculum. The graduate thesis program has formalized two pedagogical trajectories leading the students to a successful and fulfilling final graduate thesis in fall 2021. In 2021-2022, as the need of online contact time decreased with the return to in-person teaching, the position for the **Graduate Thesis Coordinator** returned to being covered by one person.

III. Summary of Preparations for Adapting to [2020 NAAB Conditions](#)

Please provide a brief description of actions taken or plans for adapting your curriculum/ classes to engage the 2020 Conditions.

SCI-Arc, 2021 Response:

Shared Values

We acknowledge the changes from the previous 2014 NAAB conditions regarding the Defining Perspectives towards the 2020 NAAB conditions of Shared Values. While there are some overlapping similarities, we note the additional shared values of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Knowledge and Innovation, and Lifelong Learning. Below is a review of SCI-Arc's progress regarding the 2020 NAAB conditions for Shared Values. These topics are discussed at the yearly academic retreats, and in the school's longer-term strategic planning initiatives.

Design: Design is at the heart of the SCI-Arc curriculum, and design studios in all programs are tailored to providing young architects by graduation with the skills necessary to engage in design activity that is a multi-stage process involving complex problems that have the power to provide cultural value towards an improved future.

The design studio curriculum is differentiated for the specific student body of each program whether the five-year B.Arch undergraduate program, three-and-half-year M.Arch 1 graduate program, or two-and-half-year M.Arch 2 program.

All three design studio curricula progress from basic design problems toward increasing complexity. The core design studios of B.Arch from first to fourth year, the first and second years of the M.Arch 1 program, and the first year of the M.Arch 2 program are all staged to incrementally increase the challenges of building type, scale of project, program, and design complexity. Students build on the skills learned from each core studio, applying the knowledge gained in seminars, and integrating this knowledge into their projects. Throughout the core design studios, students learn the importance of different design strategies, how to consider options, evaluate various decisions, perform rigorous research, apply technical expertise, and most importantly demonstrate in tangible terms through drawings, models, and various media how to frame an architectural argument and position. Multiple formal juries and informal pin-ups with SCI-Arc faculty and outside experts give students the opportunity to present and test their design strategies as they progress in each semester.

After the core design studios, students in all three programs are mixed in their final year before thesis and are given the opportunity to choose through a lottery system their vertical design studios and instructors, usually from 10-12 different options. This gives the students the ability to focus on their individual interests by allowing them to choose to work with a diverse array of senior and invited faculty on a variety of architectural projects. The vertical studios serve as a bridge to their final thesis project, where students are expected to define their own project. Prior to the thesis design studio semester, the thesis research seminar in all programs involves rigorous research including; design methodology, precedents, site, and theoretical positions that help to frame their individual arguments and positions.

Environmental Stewardship and Professional Responsibility: SCI-Arc educates young architects to understand and take responsibility towards stewardship of the environment. Throughout the curriculum, environmental considerations are embedded in design studios and seminars. Particularly in the advanced Applied Studies courses, students learn the importance of understanding natural conditions, sustainable practices, and how to implement these considerations into an architectural project in their design studios.

Core courses include; (B.Arch) AS3020 and AS3031: Environmental Systems I and II; (M.Arch 1) AS3121 and AS3124: Environmental Systems; (M.Arch 2) AS3201 Advanced Building Systems. These seminar courses form the backbone of students learning of the importance of climate, geography, sustainability, energy, and the responsibilities architects have towards the environment. The combined courses of the Integrative Studios (B.Arch: DS1031 and AS3040) / (M. Arch 1: DS1120 and AS3122) / (M.Arch 2: DS1200 and AS3222), in particular focus on students demonstrating how buildings can better respond to the environment. In the Design Development seminars, highly technical and focused workshops on solar design and envelope design serve to demonstrate to the students how their studio projects can serve as positive responses to the environment. These address thermal comfort parameters, air quality, energy, climate data, and include state-of-the-art digital software to simulate performance and optimize positive environmental outcomes.

In the following courses; (B.Arch) AS3050: 5A Professional Practice, (M.Arch 1) AS3130: 3GA Practice Environments, and (M.Arch 2) AS3230 3GBX Practice Environments—the instructor lectures on the NCARB Rules of Conduct and the AIA Code of Ethics, assigns readings, and presents examples discussing the ethical roles of professional responsibility.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: An equitable, diverse, and inclusive SCI-Arc community has always been a goal of the institute. Under Director/CEO Hernán Díaz Alonso, the first Hispanic/Latino director in SCI-Arc's history, this goal has grown into a mission in order to improve diversity within the faculty, students, and Board of Trustees. SCI-Arc continues to

work to create a learning environment where different design backgrounds, teaching pedagogies, politics, ideas, people, genders, races, and cultures are welcomed and encouraged—and provide a valuable addition to the learning culture of the SCI-Arc community.

For more recent information regarding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, please see “Section II. Changes or Planned Changes in the Program” of this document under “Equity and Inclusion.”

Knowledge and Innovation: SCI-Arc has always valued knowledge and innovation as the very mission of the institute has been to teach architects to engage, speculate, and innovate; to take the lead in reimagining the limits of architecture. Our students and faculty critically examine the rich possibilities of the built environment. From design and materials to culture and experience, SCI-Arc asks questions regarding new theoretical constructs and designed realities to constitute possible futures. We contribute an imaginative, rigorous, and forward-thinking approach to help shape the future of the architectural profession.

SCI-Arc was founded on the notion of a school driven by an expansive studio culture. For all those at SCI-Arc, this entails a commitment to open exploration and questioning about architecture and urban issues played out in the context of a design studio environment. From the outset, studio culture at the school resisted institutional, hierarchical models, but rather invested in those that foster genuine exploration, experimentation, and evolving dialogues. The student work in all design studios at SCI-Arc are where the combined knowledge of the curriculum results in applied building designs that leverage innovation towards contributions to the discipline.

Leadership, Collaboration, and Community Engagement: SCI-Arc prides itself on developing young leaders in the profession and we work to foster opportunities for leadership throughout the student experience. We also believe that the education of young architects must involve a deep understanding of the collaborative skills necessary for students to navigate the complexity of the built environment, and that leadership is a form of teamwork.

Students work in teams at multiple points in the core curriculum of all three accredited programs, including design studios; DS1030: 3A Studio: Assemblies I; DS1031: 3B Studio: Assemblies II, DS1120: 2GA Comprehensive Design Studio; DS1200: 2GAX Computational Design Studio I; and the Design Development seminars AS3040: Design Development (B.Arch); AS3122: Design Development and Documentation (M.Arch 1); and AS3222: Design Development and Documentation (M.Arch 2). The collaborative nature of architectural design is reinforced as students learn the skills necessary to navigate complex architectural problems and the diverse world of practice in a team environment. Outside experts in various fields are invited to lecture, serve on juries, and review student work, demonstrating to students the inherent diversity of expertise that is needed in architecture, and how to navigate complex decisions. The Professional Practice seminars of AS3050: Professional Practice (B.Arch), AS3130: Practice Environments (M.Arch 1); and AS3230: Practice Environments (M.Arch 2), further ensure students learn the complexity of teamwork in the professional realm, involving contracts, project delivery methods, and the broad range of stakeholders involved.

STUN, the SCI-Arc Student Union, is the official voice of the student body, holding elections each fall for representatives of each program and year level. STUN serves as a forum for developing student leaders, acts to bring important issues to the administration, and elects the student representative to the SCI-Arc Board of Trustees. This position helps inform the administration and Board of Trustees on student issues and involves the students in the administrative activities of the school. Each year, SCI-Arc recognizes student leadership at graduation with the SCI-Arc Service Award, and the Alpha Rho Chi Medal, which

“encourages student leadership.” STUN members also attend and participate on the Academic Council Committee, actively discussing issues with faculty and administration.

Qualifying graduate students serve as teaching assistants in many courses, a system that allows the best student leaders to actively engage in the curriculum. Many of these students will pursue teaching careers in their future, and the TA positions give them opportunities to collaborate with faculty, learn how teaching is a team approach, and prepare them as future leaders in education.

Every student at SCI-Arc in the accredited programs is required to do a final thesis project, a project of their own making involving intensive research. As part of the thesis program, whether in the spring term for the B.Arch program, or the beginning of fall in the M.Arch 1 and M.Arch 2 programs, students present their projects to the younger students before final reviews and those students are encouraged to help the thesis students on their projects during the final week. This fosters the ability for students nearing graduation to learn how to inspire others and learn to manage a team of assistants. The students who help thesis students are given an opportunity to see how they may approach their own thesis in the future and learn from the experience in a collaborative manner.

Since moving to the Santa Fe Building in the Arts District of Los Angeles in 2001, SCI-Arc has been actively involved in the surrounding community. On an administrative level, the school participates in local community groups including the Arts District Business Improvement District (BID), and the Los Angeles River Artists and Business Association (LARABA). SCI-Arc’s Board of Trustees is made up of many individuals with strong ties to downtown Los Angeles and the local Arts District. The school consistently hosts outside groups that use the Keck Auditorium as forums for community engagement such as; LAAIA and National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), as well as meetings for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), and Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LA DOT) on planning and public forums regarding local improvement projects. All of these events are open to faculty and students to attend and serve to directly connect the student body with the community and engender them as active participants.

The Outreach Coordinator at SCI-Arc is responsible for outreach to local organizations that are interested in architectural education at the K-12 level. Collaborations include inviting and hosting Los Angeles Unified School District teachers and students at SCI-Arc and collaborating with the Inner-City Arts through SCI-Arc’s Pop-Arc program to develop their architectural curriculum. These programs involved both SCI-Arc students and faculty and served to better strengthen SCI-Arc’s connections to the local K-12 community, and as an avenue towards diversity outreach. In 2021 the new staff position of Community Engagement Coordinator was created to help support and continue SCI-Arc’s relationship with local community of Los Angeles at all levels.

SCI-Arc students are active participants in the local Los Angeles Arts District. Each year, the SCI-Arc Student Union (STUN) organizes a drive to donate lunches and personal hygiene kits to the homeless in the Arts District and Skid Row communities and donates food during Thanksgiving. STUN also has a Community Outreach Committee to further develop aid programs and ties to the local community.

Various design studio projects focus on the importance of community as it pertains to social issues. All SCI-Arc design studio reviews are open to the public, and the annual Spring Show, Undergraduate Thesis, and Graduate Thesis reviews are well attended by the local community. The SCI-Arc series of masterclasses and public lectures also serve as a forum for students to be exposed to social issues from a variety of viewpoints.

Lifelong Learning: SCI-Arc's academic programs foster the school's open-ended spirit of inquiry as well as respond to shifts in society, technology, and culture with a constantly evolving learning environment where faculty and students work together to advance to the next generation of the architectural discipline. All of the professionally accredited programs embody the notion of a broad and deep understanding of the discipline. From Design Studio, Applied Studies, Liberal Arts, History + Theory, and Visual Studies coursework, students are immersed in the idea that architecture plays an active role in all aspects of cultural production. The programs are led by a faculty of practitioners and scholars who are actively engaged in contemporary architectural discourse and production worldwide, working in fields ranging from design and engineering to visual studies and liberal arts.

While our students and faculty critically examine the rich possibilities of the built environment, they also understand that in an everchanging field, learning is a lifelong commitment for the practice of architecture. This involves embracing the connections between the profession and the academy along with SCI-Arc's strong relationship with the alumni community of the institute. Many public events—including lectures, reviews, gallery openings, film screenings, and symposia are open to the public and well attended by professionals and alumni in the field. The very open and public nature of SCI-Arc itself supports and demonstrates the idea that lifelong learning can be shared and engendered beyond a student's limited time at the school.

B.Arch Degree: In the undergraduate program, we spent the 2020-21 academic year discussing the repercussions of the new NAAB 2020 Conditions, wanting to make proper assessment before launching abrupt curricular changes. This work was undertaken by the curriculum committee, in NAAB meetings which included SCI-Arc Vice Director John Enright, FAIA, Assessment Coordinator Erik Ghenoiu, PhD, Chief Administrative Officer/Accreditation Liaison Officer, Paul Holliday, and the Undergraduate Program Chair. Several administrators also attended a NAAB conference to learn how our peer institutions approached conversion to NAAB 2020. It was also addressed in a committee, composed of the undergraduate chair, and the Applied Studies and History + Theory coordinators, where the NAAB criteria are primarily concerned. Additionally, an ad hoc committee was formed among Design Studio coordinators for the 2021-22 academic year alongside the undergraduate chair, by which specific changes to the design curriculum were debated. Through a shared document, currently under construction, we have sought to weave together both the NAAB 2020 Conditions and many of the curricular changes noted in the previous section.

That work has resulted in a revised distribution of NAAB program and student criteria across the undergraduate curriculum. The initial spreadsheet is attached here, and it is currently being rolled out during this academic year (2021-22):

B.Arch updated 2020 NAAB Matrix:
****SCI-Arc response to Shared Values described above.**

B.ARCH PROGRAM AND STUDENT CRITERIA MATRIX V.1/ TW/ 210819

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5		Non-Curricular Act	
	Fall		Spring		Fall		Spring		Fall		Spring		Fall		Sp					
	DS 1010	1A Studio: Objects I			DS 1020	2A Studio: Worlds I			DS 1030	3A Studio: Assemblies I			DS 1040	4A Studio: Positions			HT 2050	Thesis Research		
	LA 8070	Intro to Design Cultures			HT 2024	History of Architecture II			LA 80XX	Core Seminar II: 20th Century			AS 3021	Environmental Systems I			AS 3050	Professional Practice		
	LA 8071	Forms of Writing I			LA 8076	Art History II			AS 3023	Technics			AS 3040	Design Development			LA 80XX	Core Seminar IV: Ancient Era		
	LA 8072	Introduction to Film			AS 3021	Structures I			DS 1031	3B Studio: Assemblies II			LA 8022	Contemporary Civilization			LA 80XX	Core Seminar V: Ancient Era		
	LA 80XX	Race in America			VS 4020	Visual Studies II			LA 80XX	Core Seminar III: Modern Era			LA 80XX	Construction Documents (AFP)			VS 4071	Visual Studies I		
	DS 1011	1B Studio: Objects II			DS 1021	2B Studio: Objects II			AS 3020	Structures II			HT 2035	Rhetoric I: Contemp. Discourse			DS 1051	Thesis Studio		
	LA 8014	Art History I			HT 2025	History of Architecture III			VS 4071	Visual Studies III										
	LA 80XX	Forms of Writing II			LA 80XX	Core Seminar I: Contemporary														
	VS 4071	Visual Studies I			VS 4071	Visual Studies I														
	DS 1020	2A Studio: Worlds I			DS 1030	3A Studio: Assemblies I			DS 1030	3A Studio: Assemblies I			DS 1040	4A Studio: Positions			HT 2050	Thesis Research		
	HT 2024	History of Architecture II			HT 2024	History of Architecture II			LA 80XX	Core Seminar II: 20th Century			AS 3021	Environmental Systems I			AS 3050	Professional Practice		
	LA 8076	Art History II			LA 8076	Art History II			AS 3023	Technics			AS 3040	Design Development			LA 80XX	Core Seminar IV: Ancient Era		
	AS 3021	Structures I			AS 3021	Structures I			DS 1031	3B Studio: Assemblies II			LA 8022	Contemporary Civilization			LA 80XX	Core Seminar V: Ancient Era		
	VS 4020	Visual Studies II			VS 4020	Visual Studies II			LA 80XX	Core Seminar III: Modern Era			LA 80XX	Construction Documents (AFP)			VS 4071	Visual Studies I		
	DS 1021	2B Studio: Objects II			DS 1021	2B Studio: Objects II			AS 3020	Structures II			HT 2035	Rhetoric I: Contemp. Discourse			DS 1051	Thesis Studio		
	HT 2025	History of Architecture III			HT 2025	History of Architecture III														
	LA 80XX	Core Seminar I: Contemporary			LA 80XX	Core Seminar I: Contemporary														
	AS 3020	Structures II			AS 3020	Structures II														
	VS 4071	Visual Studies III			VS 4071	Visual Studies III														
	DS 1030	3A Studio: Assemblies I			DS 1030	3A Studio: Assemblies I			DS 1030	3A Studio: Assemblies I			DS 1040	4A Studio: Positions			HT 2050	Thesis Research		
	LA 80XX	Core Seminar II: 20th Century			LA 80XX	Core Seminar II: 20th Century			LA 80XX	Core Seminar II: 20th Century			AS 3021	Environmental Systems I			AS 3050	Professional Practice		
	AS 3023	Technics			AS 3023	Technics			AS 3023	Technics			AS 3040	Design Development			LA 80XX	Core Seminar IV: Ancient Era		
	DS 1031	3B Studio: Assemblies II			DS 1031	3B Studio: Assemblies II			DS 1031	3B Studio: Assemblies II			LA 8022	Contemporary Civilization			LA 80XX	Core Seminar V: Ancient Era		
	LA 80XX	Core Seminar III: Modern Era			LA 80XX	Core Seminar III: Modern Era			LA 80XX	Core Seminar III: Modern Era			LA 80XX	Construction Documents (AFP)			VS 4071	Visual Studies I		
	AS 3020	Environmental Systems I			AS 3020	Environmental Systems I			AS 3020	Environmental Systems I			HT 2035	Rhetoric I: Contemp. Discourse			DS 1051	Thesis Studio		
	DS 1040	4A Studio: Positions			DS 1040	4A Studio: Positions			DS 1040	4A Studio: Positions										
	AS 3021	Environmental Systems I			AS 3021	Environmental Systems I			AS 3021	Environmental Systems I										
	AS 3040	Design Development			AS 3040	Design Development			AS 3040	Design Development										
	LA 8022	Contemporary Civilization			LA 8022	Contemporary Civilization			LA 8022	Contemporary Civilization										
	LA 80XX	Core Seminar IV: Ancient Era			LA 80XX	Core Seminar IV: Ancient Era			LA 80XX	Core Seminar IV: Ancient Era										
	HT 2035	Rhetoric I: Contemp. Discourse			HT 2035	Rhetoric I: Contemp. Discourse			HT 2035	Rhetoric I: Contemp. Discourse										
	HT 2050	Thesis Research			HT 2050	Thesis Research			HT 2050	Thesis Research										
	AS 3050	Professional Practice			AS 3050	Professional Practice			AS 3050	Professional Practice										
	LA 80XX	Core Seminar V: Ancient Era			LA 80XX	Core Seminar V: Ancient Era			LA 80XX	Core Seminar V: Ancient Era										
	DS 1051	Thesis Studio			DS 1051	Thesis Studio			DS 1051	Thesis Studio										
	Beecham				Beecham				Beecham											
	STUN Meetings and Events				STUN Meetings and Events				STUN Meetings and Events											
	Student Mentoring Program				Student Mentoring Program				Student Mentoring Program											
	Symposium: Events: BLM/BLA: Queer Query				Symposium: Events: BLM/BLA: Queer Query				Symposium: Events: BLM/BLA: Queer Query											

Our strategy for converting to NAAB 2020 was to spread the Program Criteria across all five years, concentrating the Student Criteria and the “Ability” criteria in the third and fourth year. This mirrors our distribution of NAAB 2014 SPCs in terms of building students up to the final core studio in the fall of fourth year, and then allowing more freedom thereafter in vertical studios and thesis. This system has worked well in the past—at the last team visit we had only one “not-met” and several commendations. With that said, we very much appreciate the shift in values contained in the 2020 conditions, noting that they mesh well with our own desires for curricular development. Among these are a renewed focus on equity and inclusion, sustainability, and professional practice.

We are using this academic year to test and evaluate our shifts to accommodate the NAAB 202 Conditions and will assess in summer 2022 at our annual school-wide retreat, as well as in curriculum committee meetings including the Applied Studies and History + Theory coordinators. We anticipate minor changes at that time to correctly locate the PCs and SCs, so that they resonate well with the other values and requirements of each studio and seminar. Our goal is to finalize our distribution of PCs and SCs in the 2022-23 academic year, with enough time to let it run and assess for two years before the visiting team reconvenes at SCI-Arc in 2026.

M.Arch Response: The preparation for adapting to 2020 NAAB conditions at SCI-Arc has involved the Vice Director John Enright, Assessment Coordinator Erik Ghenoiu, Chief Administrative Officer/Accreditation Liaison Officer Paul Holliday, along with the undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees and program chairs. During 2021, several members of SCI-Arc’s administration attended a series of online workshops to become familiar with the 2020 NAAB conditions.

In particular, the process of adaptation of the graduate program curricula to the 2020 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation started during fall 2020 with two curricular committee meetings. The graduate curricular committees are comprised of HT, Applied Studies, Visual Studies, core Design Studio, and thesis coordinators, as well as the Graduate Programs Chair. This committee meets twice a semester. During these initial meetings, the graduate program committee members read the 2020 NAAB shared values and the 2020 updated PC and SP. The committee evaluated these conditions for accreditation holistically relative to curricular and extracurricular offerings. The committee identified how the M.Arch 1 and M.Arch 2 program already addressed these values as part of its long-range planning and current curriculum. The committees also identified as areas that needed improvement: Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility, Social Equity and Inclusion, and how to better evaluate the student experience relative to the extracurricular offerings.

In spring 2021, the Graduate Programs Chair in collaboration with the History + Theory and Applied Studies coordinators drafted an updated SP and PC matrix/chart meeting the new 2020 NAAB conditions for accreditation. The matrix has been distributed to all core faculty to implement in their fall 2021 syllabi.

M.Arch 1 updated 2020 NAAB Matrix

****SCI-Arc response to Shared Values described above.**

	Year 1						Year 2						Year 3			Non-Curricular Activity										
	DS 1100	HT 2100	AS 3100	AS 3101	VS 4100	VS 4101	DS 1120	HT 2120	AS 3124	VS 4120	DS 1121	HT 2121	AS 3122	VS 4121	AS 3130	HT XXXX	AS 3140	HT 2410	DS 1420	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name
Shared Values	1GA: Fundamental Design Studio I Intro to Contemp. Arch. Materials and Tectonics Structures I Visual Studies I						2GA: Comprehensive Design Studio Hist. of Arch. And Urbanism II Environmental Systems Visual Studies III						Practice Environments Contemporary Arch. Discourse Adv. Proj. Delivery/Const. Docs Thesis Research Graduate Thesis													
Design																										
Env. Stewardship & Professional Respon.																										
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion																										
Knowledge & Innovation																										
Leadership, Collab. & Community Engmt.																										
Lifelong Learning																										
Program Criteria																										
PC.1 Career Paths																										
PC.2 Design																										
PC.3 Ecological Know. & Respon.																										
PC.4 History & Theory																										
PC.5 Research & Innovation																										
PC.6 Leadership & Collaboration																										
PC.7 Learning & Teaching Culture																										
PC.8 Social Equity & Inclusion																										
Student Criteria																										
SC.1 HSW in the Built Environ.																										
SC.2 Professional Practice																										
SC.3 Regulatory Context																										
SC.4 Technical Knowledge																										
SC.5 Design Synthesis																										
SC.6 Building Integration																										

M.Arch 2 updated 2020 NAAB Matrix:
****SCI-Arc response to Shared Values described above.**

	Preparatory Education	BA/BS COURSES						Year 1						Year 2			Non-Curricular Activity																			
		Fall			Spring			Fall			Spring			Fall	Spring	Su																				
		Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Course #	Course Title	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name	Activity Name											
Shared Values																																				
Design																																				
Env. Stewardship & Professional Respon.																																				
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion																																				
Knowledge & Innovation																																				
Leadership, Collab. & Community Engmt.																																				
Lifelong Learning																																				
Program Criteria																																				
PC.1 Career Paths																																				
PC.2 Design																																				
PC.3 Ecological Know. & Respon.																																				
PC.4 History & Theory																																				
PC.5 Research & Innovation																																				
PC.6 Leadership & Collaboration																																				
PC.7 Learning & Teaching Culture																																				
PC.8 Social Equity & Inclusion																																				
Student Criteria																																				
SC.1 HSW in the Built Environ.																																				
SC.2 Professional Practice																																				
SC.3 Regulatory Context																																				
SC.4 Technical Knowledge																																				
SC.5 Design Synthesis																																				
SC.6 Building Integration																																				

As of today, all core fall seminars and studios have implemented the new criteria into their syllabi. As evidence, please refer to course syllabi examples listed below (and included in Appendix):

The plan is to complete the implementation by the end of Spring 2022. Particular attention has been given to the assignment of PC3, PC8 and how these contents could be strengthened in various areas of the core programs.

After this first phase, the plan is to evaluate the evidence relative to the curricular changes during the recurring yearly graduate faculty retreat in summer 2022. This first assessment will be summarized and used as a point of departure for discussion during the fall 2022 curricular meetings. During these meetings, the committee members in collaboration with the Graduate Programs Chair will propose modifications to be made to its curricula/matrix based on findings from this first assessment cycle. The goal is to finalize SCI-Arc distribution of PCs and SCs in the upcoming academic year, with enough time to let it run and assess for two years before the visiting team reconvenes at SCI-Arc in 2026.

IV. Appendix (include revised curricula, syllabi, and one-page CVs or bios of new administrators and faculty members; syllabi should reference which NAAB SPC a course addresses)

SCI-Arc, 2021 Update: Click here to enter text.

Revised SPC Charts (2020 Conditions): Included within the report.

Bios of new faculty members: Included in report as hyperlinks

Bios of new administrators: Included in report as hyperlinks

Syllabus Samples: (in reference to unmet SPC – A.1 Communication Skills)

B.Arch degree

Attachment 1_B.Arch Syllabus_LA 8011: Forms of Writing I

Attachment 2_B.Arch Syllabus_HT 2024: History of Architecture II

M.Arch 1 degree

Attachment 3_M.Arch 1 Syllabus_HT 2100: Introduction to Contemporary Architecture

Attachment 4_M.Arch 1 Syllabus_HT 2021: History of Architecture and Urbanism II