March 27, 2020

Dear Program Administrators,

COVID-19 has sent our world into a tailspin. We are living under conditions of unprecedented uncertainty. While we are all struggling to maintain a sense of normalcy in our work, we want to reassure you that the PAB recognizes the need for flexibility and patience.

Toward this goal, please note the following:

(1) As conveyed in a previous communication, programs are encouraged to move forward with the directives of their institutions and commonsense solutions regarding course delivery methods, performance evaluations and administration. Filing a Substantive change form with the PAB is not required with regards to any temporary measures taken in response to COVID-19. However, we recommend documenting all actions taken and provide this information in your 2020 annual report (due January 31, 2021). By then, we may have a better sense of whether changes are temporary or permanent.

(2) The PAB spring meeting and (re)accreditation reviews meetings scheduled for April 26 - 27 in Houston will occur virtually. Although this creates challenges with the different time zones and technology needs, we appreciate the support and cooperation we’ve received from participants thus far.

(3) Due to COVID-19 pandemic, two spring Site Visits were canceled and will be rescheduled for fall 2020. We anticipate 18 site visits for 2020 - 21 and another 18 in 2021 - 22. These are historic maximal loads for our staff of two, volunteer board of eight and volunteer peer reviewers (Site Visitors).

At this time, we are proceeding with the 2020 - 21 Program Review schedule as initially scheduled. A minor revision has been made to the timelines: Self-Study Reports are now due on June 30, 2020 for those programs with fall Site Visits, and on September 15, 2020 for those programs with spring Site Visits. Any challenges faced in accessing appropriate data, input or feedback should be acknowledged by the Program in its Self-Study Report, with the understanding that deficiencies may be rectified by the time of the Site Visit. We also recognize that fall Site Visits may encounter delays but these issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. We appreciate the time and effort that programs have invested in scheduling the fall Site Visits, and would like to avoid changes at this time, if possible.
The PAB will monitor conditions carefully, and reassess on a monthly basis (or more frequently, as needed.) If necessary, we will, of course, consider alternative actions should conditions require. At this point, our primary concern is supporting programs in their efforts to maintain excellence in planning education and training, and providing students assurance of quality that accreditation signifies.

Sincerely,

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