

Part I: Planning Accreditation Board Undergraduate Self-Study Report

Institutional and Degree Information

Institution Information

Institution: [Appalachian State University](#)
College or School: [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
Department: [Geography and Planning](#)
Program: [Planning](#)
Self-Study Report Date: June 30, 2025

Degree Information

Degree Title: [Bachelor of Science in Community and Regional Planning](#)
Name of Planning Program or Unit: [Planning Program](#)
Number of Credits Required for Graduation: [120](#)

Calendar System: [Semester](#) / ~~Quarter~~

Institutional Structure:

Provide a brief description of the institutional structure. The organizational chart should be provided in Appendix IIC. Other Evidence.

The Planning Program is housed together with Geography degrees in one unified department—one of 17 departments within the College of Arts and Sciences. The University has five undergraduate Colleges (Arts and Sciences, Fine and Applied Arts, Health Sciences, Education, and Business), Honors College, a Music School, and a Graduate School. Two charts in Evidence (Part IIC, pp. 2-3) show the organizational structure of Appalachian State University, and where the applicant Program and Department are located within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Other Degrees:

Provide a brief description of any other degrees (e.g., undergraduate, master's, PhD, joint degrees, etc.) offered by the unit which the Program resides and indicate if they are accredited.

In addition to the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning, the Department of Geography and Planning offers the following undergraduate degrees:

- [B.A. Geography](#)
- [B.S. General Geography](#)
- [B.S. Geography with GIS concentration](#)
- [Masters of Geography \(thesis and non-thesis tracks\), general, or concentration in Climate Change, GIScience, or Planning: <https://geo.appstate.edu/graduate-students/academics>](#)
- [Minors: Geography; Community and Regional Planning](#)

The Department offers Honors (<https://geo.appstate.edu/undergraduate-students/academics>). All degree programs offered by Appalachian State University are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC: <https://sacscoc.org/>).

Non-Degree Programs:

Provide a brief description of any non-degree programs, such as certificates, etc., offered by the unit in which the Program resides and indicate if they are accredited.

The Department of Geography and Planning offers an undergraduate GIS certificate (<https://geo.appstate.edu/undergraduate-students/academics>), and graduate certificates in Climate Change, GI Science, and Planning (<https://geo.appstate.edu/graduate-students/academics>).

Program History:

Provide a concise summary of the Program's development from inception to the present, highlighting the changes and constant features that have driven the Program (including academic and administrative evolutions, milestones, etc.). Also indicate the dates and purposes of any non-accreditation related Site Visits within the last five years.

The Community and Regional Planning Program at Appalachian State University (ASU) is part of the Department of Geography and Planning (<https://geo.appstate.edu/academics>), which “promotes the understanding of the spatial dimensions of human behavior within the physical and cultural systems of the earth, and the role of planning in achieving improvement in those systems. The department offers degrees in geography and in community and regional planning.”

The Department, one of 17 in the College of Arts and Sciences, has been awarding degrees in Community and Regional Planning (“Planning”) since 1976, with 118 Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees earned **since 2011**. The graduate Geography Master of Arts program has a Planning concentration and offers a Planning certificate; these are not discussed further in this self-study report (SSR), because the Department is seeking accreditation only for the undergraduate B.S. in Planning. The Bachelor of Science in Community and Regional Planning focuses on preparing students to become practicing planners upon graduation, describing planning to prospective students (<https://www.appstate.edu/academics/majors/id/community-regional-planning>) as a dynamic profession that helps “create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live and helps communities envision their future.” The focus on preparing practitioners is evident in the curriculum—in applied problem-solving and community-engaged projects; in advising—both academic and professional; and in extra-curriculars—a student planning club, visiting practitioners, support for presenting and publishing work, and more.

The geographer (Dr. Neal Lineback) who assumed the position of Department chair in 1986, a decade after the first Community and Regional Planning degrees were awarded, came from another institution that also combined Geography and Planning in one department, with a certified planner managing the latter; he continued to champion an integrated department at Appalachian State where students and faculty from the two programs forged strong relationships internally and with community partners. In a personal communication in December 2023, Lineback said “The joint-program philosophy within ASU’s Geography and Planning curricula has been enormously successful [...] The two disciplines have in common the overlapping sub-philosophies and techniques around spatial analysis (mapping, aerial and

satellite imaging, and GIS). The integration of the two disciplines has resulted in numerous students graduating with dual majors and accepting planning jobs across the state.”

In the early years of the Planning program, there was one full-time tenured faculty member and an adjunct instructor. A 1990s expansion, overseen by then-chair Dr. Michael Mayfield, saw an additional tenure-track position, with an adjunct appointment a few years later converted to tenure-track. The Department chair who followed Mayfield (Dr. James Young) describes the early 2000s as a period of both disruption (displacement and scattering during a renovation of the Department’s home in Rankin Science West) and of growth and renewal when the department returned to “greatly improved classrooms, research space, and offices, including a dedicated studio area for the Planning program.” The early 2000s also saw budget cuts and stagnant faculty and staff salaries statewide, even as the University of North Carolina system was called upon to increase enrollment, driving the university to search for programs suited to expanded course offerings. Says Young: “At the time, there was an identified need for more professional planners in the region and across the state.” Appalachian State’s Department of Geography and Planning coordinated with UNC-Asheville to offer an extension program in Asheville, which the Department was able to “leverage into a full-time planning faculty position to cover classes in Asheville and Boone (increasing the full-time planning positions to four).” Although the geography M.A. with Planning concentration was the identified specific need, the expansion supported the Community and Regional Planning program as a whole. Since the extension program was discontinued after several cohorts for lack of resources and administrative support, the number of faculty teaching *primarily* Planning has settled (for now) at three; most Geography faculty in the Department teach courses that are either required of all Planning majors, or taken by many Planning students and counting toward the degree (e.g., Geospatial Data and Technology, advanced GIS, Global Health and Diseases, Political Geography, and more).

The Department of Geography and Planning at Appalachian State University has an outsized impact on the campus and students. Our faculty, staff, and students frequently appear in news stories about grants, awards, presentations, and community engagement. In the nearly half-century since the Department has been awarding degrees in Community and Regional Planning, the chairs (including recent chair Dr. Kathleen Schroeder and current chair Dr. Saskia van de Gevel) have worked extremely well with deans and other administrative leaders, and effectively communicated the exceptional value the two programs offer in education, research, and community service. The Department also has benefited from a modest (in size) but effective and professional staff, including administrative and laboratory managers. We are known on this campus as an unusually collegial and productive unit, and in the community as a department committed to service and public engagement. A constituent member of the University of North Carolina system, Appalachian State has been among the fastest-growing campuses in recent decades, with attendant shifts in focus and rearrangement of the organizational structure. The Planning Program underwent three rounds of campus-level review between 2009 and 2017, each resulting in a reaffirmation of the Program’s vitality, productivity, and relevance to the university’s mission.

Student Data

Institution Census Date [January 27, 2025](#)

Table 1. Student Enrollment Data

This table should include admissions data for the past 7 academic years. Include the most recent data available.

Academic Year *		2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
# Applications Reviewed		47						
# Applicants Admitted		N/A: The Program and Department do not control admission for undergraduate majors						
# New Students Admitted who Enrolled	Full-time	17	11	9	8	11	22	21
	Part-time	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
# Total Students Enrolled	Full-time	31	32	27	18	25	35	35
	Part-time	2	2	3	2	2	1	0

Table 2. Student Composition

This table includes the demographic data on the Program's student body for the most recent academic year. Updated data for the current academic year should be provided to the Site Visit Team during the Site Visit, if relevant.

Table 2.1 Race: US Citizen and Permanent Residents Only	Student Enrollment Status and Gender						
	Full-time			Part-time			Total
	Male	Female	Non-Binary	Male	Female	Non-Binary	
Asian							
Black or African American							
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander							
Native North American / Indigenous							
White	21	10					31
Some Other Race Alone							
Two or More Races	2						2
Unknown	2						2
Total US Citizen/Permanent Residents Only	25	10					35

Table 2.2 Student Ethnicity

Ethnicity does not replace Race as a separate category. Ethnicity supplements Race data.

Table 2.2 Ethnicity: US Citizen and Permanent Residents Only	Full-time			Part-time			Total
	Male	Female	Non-Binary	Male	Female	Non-Binary	
Hispanic or Latino	3	1					4
Not Hispanic or Latino	22	9					31

Table 2.3 Student Composition International

International enrollment status and gender.

Table 2.3 International Enrollment Status & Gender	Full-time			Part-time			Total
	Male	Female	Non-Binary	Male	Female	Non-Binary	
International Students							
Total Students	25	10					35

Table 3. Student Retention Rates

Provide retention data for the past 7 academic years. Include the most recent data available.

Academic Year		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Retention Rate	Full-time	82	100	33	75	82	100	Pending
	Part-time	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	47	4722	Pending

Table 4. Graduation Rates – Full-time

This table should include graduation data for the past 7 academic years, presented by cohort of new students enrolled. Include the most recent data available. Updated data should be made available to the Site Visit Team during the Site Visit.

Academic Year	# New Full-time Students Admitted Who Enrolled	Graduation Rate 4-year (%)	Graduation Rate 5-year (%)	Graduation Rate 6-year (%)
2018-19	17	47	47	47
2019-20	11	73	73	73
2020-21	9	44	44	
2021-22	8	38		
2022-23	11			
2023-24	22			
2024-25	21			

Part-Time Students

Do you have part-time students? **Yes** / ~~No~~ (If yes, complete table 4.1)

Table 4.1 Graduation Rates – Part-time

This table should include graduation data for the past 7 academic years, presented by cohort of new students enrolled. Include the most recent data available. Updated data should be made available to the Site Visit Team during the Site Visit.

Academic Year	# New Part-time Students Admitted Who Enrolled	Graduation Rate 4-year (%)	Graduation Rate 5-year (%)	Graduation Rate 6-year (%)
2018-19	1	100	100	100
2019-20	0	0	0	0
2020-21	0	0	0	
2021-22	0	0		
2022-23	1			
2023-24	0			
2024-25	0			

Table 5. Number of Degrees Awarded

Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
---------------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Degrees Awarded	10	5	10	5	9	6	11
-----------------	----	---	----	---	---	---	----

Table 6. Student Employment Data

Provide employment data for the past 5 academic years by graduate cohort. The employment rate includes all graduates, regardless of part-time and full-time enrollment status, in part-time and full-time planning or planning-related jobs.

Graduation Years Ending (Month/Year)		May 2020	May 2021	May 2022	May 2023	May 2024
Graduates employed within 1 year of graduation in a professional planning or planning-related job	Number	4	1	1	0	1
	Percent	100	100	100	0	100
Graduates who pursue further education within 1 year of graduation	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	Percent	0	0	0	0	0
Graduates not employed in planning or related jobs or unemployed within 1 year of graduation	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	Percent	0	0	0	0	0
Graduates with unknown employment status	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	Percent	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Number	4	1	1	0	0
	Percent	100	100	100	0	100
Footnote (if applicable) These data come from a 2023 survey of all graduates, done by the College of Arts and Sciences, and repeated in May 2025 with 2024 graduates of the Planning B.S. We had low response, including no responses from 2023 graduates. The Planning Program has now developed a protocol to track and survey graduates going forward; we anticipate more complete data in future years. Note for Table 5: Three current seniors have completed all coursework, and are cleared for graduation in August 2025 after conclusion of internships for course credit; these 3, combined with 8 May graduates, will bring the 2025 graduating class to 11						

Table 7. AICP Exam Data

Bachelor's program graduates who take the exam within 5 years of graduation

Provide AICP exam data for the past 5 years. Include the most recent data available.

Graduation Years Ending (Month/Year)	May 2016	May 2017	May 2018	May 2019	May 2020
# who take exam	2	0	1	1	0
% of takers who pass the exam	100	100	100	100	100
Footnote (if applicable) AICP completion reported here captures examinees who report Appalachian as their academic institution for the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning. In this same period, AICP reports 7 graduates of our master's program sitting for the exam, with 6 passing.					

Faculty Data

Faculty Type

For PAB accreditation purposes, faculty are defined as follows: **Full-time in Planning Unit** are tenured, tenure track, and non-tenure track faculty hired with multi-year contracts. Graduate teaching assistants are excluded. Full-time in Planning Unit faculty are employed full-time by the University with a primary appointment in the planning unit. **Part-time in Planning Unit** are tenured, tenure track and contract faculty from other academic departments in the University who teach: graduate core courses required for the planning degree; courses in other departments required for planning specializations; and/or courses in other departments taken as an elective by a critical mass of planning students. Graduate teaching assistants are excluded. **Adjunct** and other instructional faculty are not employed full-time by the University, who teach specific courses on a course-by-course basis.

Based on the definition above, select the faculty types that teach in the planning program:

x Full-time in Planning Unit x Part-time in Planning Unit x Adjunct

Table 8. Faculty Composition

Provide demographic data on the Program's faculty.

Table note: T/TT = Tenured/Tenure Track; M = Male; F = Female; NB = Non-binary

Table 8.1 Race: US Citizens & Permanent Residents Only	Full-time in Planning Unit						Part-time in Planning Unit						Adjunct			Total
	T/TT			Contract			T/TT			Contract						
	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	
Asian	1															1
Black or African American																
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander																
Native No American / Indigenous																
White		1					4	4		4	2		2	1		18
Some Other Race Alone																
Two or More Race			1													1
Unknown																
Total US Citizens/Permanent Resident	1	1	1				4	4		4	2		2	1		20

Table 8.2 Faculty Ethnicity

Ethnicity does not replace Race as a separate category. Ethnicity data supplements Race data.

Table 8.2 Ethnicity: US Citizens and Permanent Residents Only	Full-time in Planning Unit						Part-time in Planning Unit						Adjunct			Total
	T/TT			Contract			T/TT			Contract						
	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	
Hispanic or Latino																
Not Hispanic or Latino	1	1	1				4	4		4	2		2	1		20

Table 8.3 Faculty Composition International

Table 8.3 International Status and Gender	Full-time in Planning Unit						Part-time in Planning Unit						Adjunct			Total
	T/TT			Contract			T/TT			Contract						
	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	M	F	NB	
International Faculty							2	2								4
Total Faculty	1	1	1				6	6		4	2		2	1		24

Table 9. Faculty AICP Membership

Provide the number of teaching faculty in the Program who are members of AICP (including FAICP).

Full-time in Planning Unit	2
Part-time in Planning Unit	0
Adjunct	2
Total AICP Faculty	4

Table 10. Faculty Listing

Table 10.1 Full-time in Planning Unit (Tenured/Tenure Track and Contract)

NAME	RANK/ TENURE	YEAR APPOINTED	DEGREE(S)	YEAR AWARDED	DEGREE FIELD(S)	DEGREE GRANTING UNIVERSITY(IES)	% of Time to Program* 2024- 2025	% of Time to Program* 2023- 2024
Full-time in Planning Unit (Tenured/Tenure Track and Contract)								
Quattro	Assistant Professor, tenure track	2023	PhD AM MS BS	2023 2014 2013 2012	City & Regional Planning City & Regional Planning Student Affairs Admin Science Education	University of Pennsylvania University of Pennsylvania Binghamton University SUNY Oswego	75 teaching 15 research 10 service	75 teaching 15 research 10 service
Shay	Associate Professor, tenured	2015	PhD MLS MA BS	2007 2001 1986	City & Regional Planning Information Science Russian studies Biology	UNC—Chapel Hill UNC—Chapel Hill University of Washington So. Oregon University	75 teaching 15 research 10 service	75 teaching 15 research 10 service
Thapa	Assistant Professor, tenure track	2022	PhD MPP BS BS	2018 2009 2006 2003	Geography Public Policy Environmental Science Environmental Science	University of Arizona University of Maryland McNeese State Uni St Xavier College, Nepal	50 teaching 10 research 7 service	50 teaching 10 research 7 service

Table 10.2 Part-time in Planning Unit (Tenured/Tenure Track and Contract)

NAME	RANK/ TENURE	YEAR APPOINTED	DEGREE(S)	YEAR AWARDED	DEGREE FIELD(S)	DEGREE GRANTING UNIVERSITY(IES)	% of Time to Program* 2024- 2025	% of Time to Program* 2023- 2024
Part-time in Planning Unit (Tenured/Tenure Track and Contract) <i>Some GHY faculty teach courses required for PLN; all teach courses that count for PLN</i>								
Brown	Professor, tenured	2002	PhD MA AB	2001 1990 1987	Geography Geography Geography	Louisiana State University Appalachian State University University of Georgia	25 teaching 0 research 0 service	25 teaching 0 research 0 service
Colby*	Professor		PhD MA BS	1995 1989 1981	Geography Geography Geography	U Colorado-Boulder U Colorado-Boulder University of Florida	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
De Graauw**	Assistant professor, tenure track	2025	PhD MS BA	2019 2012 2010	Geography Earth & Quaternary Sci Geography	West Virginia University Indiana State University Kennesaw St. University	N/A Starting fall 2025	N/A Starting fall 2025
Dempsey	Associate professor, tenured	2015	PhD PhD PhD	2011 2006 2003	Geography Geography Spanish/European Stud	U Wisconsin—Madison U Wisconsin—Madison U Wisconsin—Madison	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
Kelley	Instructor	2021	PhD MA BS	2014 2008	Climate, Earth, Enviro Climate and Society Construction Sci & Mgmt	Columbia University Columbia University Clemson University	25 teaching 0 research 30service	25 teaching 0research 0 service
Martin	Professor, tenured	2014	PhD MS BS	2014 2005 2002	Geography Geospatial Science Biology (Ecology)	U Tennessee—Knoxville Missouri State University Lake Superior St. University	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
Mayfield	Instructor	2004	MA BA	2001 1999	Geography Geography	Appalachian State University Appalachian State University	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
O'Neill	Instructor	2021	MA BS	2021 2019	Geography Geography, CIS cert	Appalachian State University Appalachian State University	50 teaching 10 research 0 service	50 teaching 10 research 0 service
Platt	Lab manager, instructor	2022	MS BS	2022 2021	Geography Geography	Appalachian State University Appalachian State University	50 teaching 10 research 5 service	50 teaching 10 research 5 service
Ryan	Instructor	2023	MA BA	2023 2018	Geography Geography	Appalachian State University University of Vermont	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
Schroeder	Professor, tenured	1995	PhD MA BA	1995 1990 1986	Geography Geography Economics	University of Minnesota University of Texas-Austin University of Texas-Austin	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service

Shu	Assistant Professor, tenure track	2019	PhD MS BS	2019 2013 2010	Geography/GIScience Geography Geography	University of Cincinnati E China Normal University E China Normal University	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
Sugg J	Associate Professor, tenured	2017	PhD MA BA	2017 2013 2008	Geography Geography Geography	UNC—Chapel Hill Appalachian State University Appalachian State University	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
Sugg M	Associate Professor, tenured	2015	PhD MA BS	2015 2011 2008	Geography Geography Biology	UNC—Chapel Hill UNC—Chapel Hill UNC—Chapel Hill	10 teaching 10 research 5 service	10 teaching 10 research 5 service
Van de Gevel	Chair and Professor, tenured	2008	PhD MS BS	2008 2002 2000	Geography Forest Ecology Forest Science	U Tennessee-Knoxville Southern Illinois University Pennsylvania State Uni	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	25 teaching 5 research 3 service
Wang	Assistant professor, tenure track	2024	PhD BS	2019 2015	Geography GIS	University of Connecticut Nanjing University, China	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	N/A Started fall 2024
Warner**	Assistant professor, tenure track	2025	PhD MA BA	2021 2014 2010	Geography/Anthro Anthropology Anthropology	Louisiana State University Louisiana State University Louisiana State University	N/A Starting fall 2025	N/A Starting fall 2025
Yao	Assistant professor, tenure track	2024	PhD MS BS	2020 2014 2011	Geography Geography and GIS Geographic Info Sys	University of Cincinnati Guangzhou Inst Geochem Shandong Normal U China	25 teaching 5 research 3 service	N/A Started fall 2024

Table 10.3 Adjunct

NAME	RANK/ TENURE	YEAR APPOINTED	DEGREE(S)	YEAR AWARDED	DEGREE FIELD(S)	DEGREE GRANTING UNIVERSITY(IES)	% of Time to Program* 2024- 2025	% of Time to Program* 2023- 2024
Adjunct								
Pipes	College of Business	2024	MA BA	2007 2001	Latin American Studies Spanish	University of Kansas Appalachian State University	12.5%	N/A Starting 2025
Sharp	Appalachian Energy Ctr	2022	Ph expect. MPA	2025 2004	Planning MPA	University of Texas-Arlington University of North Texas	12.5%	12.5%
Spond	Instructor, Park Service liaison	2012	PhD MA BS	2011 2007 2003	Geography Geography History	U Tennessee—Knoxville University of Arkansas University of Arkansas	12.5%	12.5%
Tippett	Western Piedmont COG	2021	BS	1976	Geography & Planning	Appalachian State University	Currently inactive	Currently inactive

Footnote for Table 10. Faculty Listing (if applicable)

*Phased retirement

**New in 2025

Faculty who retired in 2024 are not represented in Table 11, but provided teaching services for Planning students. Their effort roughly offsets the predicted effort for new incoming faculty.

Program's definition/formula for a full-time teaching load

Please provide the Program's definition/formula for a full-time teaching load:

The default annual teaching load, as specified in the Appalachian State University faculty handbook (<https://facultyhandbook.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/faculty-handbook-20230927a.pdf>), is 24 credits hours (4/4, unless there are summer or 4-credit courses).

For faculty hired with a research agenda, the teaching load is reduced to 3/3; further reduction in teaching load may be awarded for special circumstances (course release relating to grant-writing or grant awards, or for other special duties). The relevant passage (p. 4 of faculty handbook) is: *"2.6 Faculty Professional Workload. The professional workload for faculty members shall include teaching, research/creative activity and service to the department/program, college, University and/or the community. Teaching and instruction are the primary mission of the University and*

therefore teaching shall serve as the first component of determining faculty workload expectations. In accordance with UNC Policy Manual, Policy 400.3.4, the standard teaching load for all full-time faculty members shall be 24 credit hours (or equivalent contact hours) per academic year, along with routinely expected faculty duties such as advising, committee work, and professional development. Faculty members holding additional responsibilities for research/creative activities and service as identified in their annual work plans may have their teaching workload adjusted on a commensurate basis.”

Table 11. Teaching Faculty FTE

Table 11.1 Full-time in Planning Unit (Tenured/Tenure Track and Contract)

FACULTY MEMBER NAME	TEACHING FTE
Full-time in Planning Unit (T/TT and Contract)	
Quattro	.75
Shay	.75
Thapa	.50
Total FTE (full-time in the program)	2.0

Table 11.2 Part-time in Planning Unit (Tenured/Tenure Track and Contract)

FACULTY MEMBER NAME	TEACHING FTE
Part-time in Planning Unit (T/TT and Contract)	
Brown	.10
Colby*	.25
Dempsey	.25
De Graauw**	.25
Kelley	.25
Martin	.25
Mayfield	.10
O'Neill	.25
Platt	.50
Ryan	.10
Schroeder	.25
Shu	.25
Sugg J	.25
Sugg M	.10
Van de Gevel	.25
Warner**	.10
Wang	.25
Yao	.25
Total FTE (part-time in the program)	4.0

Table 11.3 Adjunct

FACULTY MEMBER NAME	TEACHING FTE
Adjunct	
Pipes*	.125
Sharp	.25

Spond	.125
Tippett – currently inactive	
Total FTE (fadjunct)	.5
TOTAL TEACHING FTEs	~6.50

Total FTE

The Total Teaching FTE for the Program is the sum of teaching FTE for all faculty members listed above.

6.5

Footnote for Table 11. Teaching FTE (if applicable):

Teaching Faculty FTE: Data and estimates are for the 2024-2025 academic year. Two Planning faculty members (Quattro and Shay) are full-time in Planning (1 FTE each), while the third (Thapa) covers some Geography courses, as reflected in an estimated FTE of .67. Since the teaching load for tenured and tenure-track is 18 rather than 24 credits annually, the faculty assigned full-time to the program are designated here as .75 teaching FTE, and the primary appointment who is designated as two-thirds (67%) in Table 10 (Thapa) as .50 teaching FTE. These teaching FTEs align with the percentage of effort devoted to teaching in Table 11. For Geography faculty, all listed under 'Part-time in the Planning unit,' the estimated FTE reflects courses they teach that are either required by or counted toward the Planning degree. For example, consider a tenured or tenure-track Geography faculty member who teaches the normal load of six courses a year: two courses that are required for or frequently taken by Planning students, and four with less relevance for or enrollment by Planning students. This Geography faculty member could be seen as contributing one-third of their teaching effort (.75FTE), or .25FTE, to the Planning Program (noting that Geography and Planning majors are both co-enrolled in many courses with both GHY and PLN prefixes). Alternatively, one who teaches four courses in a year with heavy Planning enrollment could be considered to contribute two-thirds of their teaching FTE of .75 to Planning, or .50 of total effort. Adjuncts teaching one Planning course in a given semester as assessed at a 25% for a semester (or 12.5% for a full year), given the teaching load of eight courses annually for full-time lecturers.

Student/Teaching Faculty Ratio

Part-time Students FTE

Part-time Student FTE, including calculation (if applicable):

If the Program has part-time students, provide the formula used to calculate part-time students FTE. If the Program does not track part-time students by credit hours, then use the following formula to calculate part-time students FTE: (part-time students) (0.5).

In the last complete academic year, the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning had 35 full-time and 0 part-time students enrolled, for a student FTE of 35.

Student/Teaching Faculty Ratio

Student/Teaching Faculty Ratio, including calculation: Divide the total number of students in the Program (total full-time + FTE part-time students), by the Total Teaching FTE.

For 2023-24, the faculty FTE based on contributions to the Planning Program (teaching courses required for or counting toward the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning) was an estimated 6.5, including the faculty with primary appointments in the Planning Program. The resulting student/teaching faculty ratio of 5.4 is inflated by the intertwined class enrollments and distribution of teaching duties for the Department of Geography and Planning. That is, while Geography faculty teach courses with Planning majors, the Planning faculty also teach courses with Geography majors.

Curriculum Listing

Programs on a semester calendar system should complete the first two semester tables only. Programs on a quarter calendar system should complete the last two quarter tables only.

Table 12.1 Courses Required of All Students (Semester)

List courses offered by the Program during the two most recent academic years with the faculty name and appointment level using the formatting key below. If an undergraduate and graduate course are combined, please check the “Combined Course” checkbox.

Distinguish among the appointment status of the faculty with the following text effects:

Normal text = Full-time in Planning Unit

One asterisk * after name = Part-time in Planning Unit

Two asterisks ** after name = Adjunct

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE*	Combined course?	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	FALL 2024	SPRING 2025
COURSES REQUIRED OF ALL COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING STUDENTS					
GHY 1010: Global Environmental Systems	N	Mayfield* O'Neill* Ryan*	Mayfield* Ryan*	Martin* O'Neill*	Martin*
GHY 1020: Exploring People and Places Globally	N	Mayfield* Schroeder	Mayfield* Schroeder*	Mayfield* Schroeder*	Mayfield*
GHY 1040: Human Geography and Social Justice	N	Dempsey* Ryan*	Dempsey* Ryan*	Dempsey* Pipes**	Dempsey*
GHY 2310: Cartographic Design and Analysis	N	J Sugg*	J Sugg*	J Sugg*	J Sugg*
PLN 2812: Geospatial Technology in Changing World	N	Platt*	Platt*	Platt* Wang*	Platt* Wang*
GHY/PLN 3800: Quantitative Methods	N	Kelley*	Kelley*	Kelley*	Faculty leave; sub STT 2860
GHY 3812: Geographic Information System	N	O'Neill*	O'Neill*	Colby* O'Neill*	O'Neill*
PLN 2410: Town, City and Regional Planning	N	Quattro Sharp	Quattro Shay	Sharp** Shay	Shay Thapa
PLN 3432: Planning Techniques	N	--	Quattro	--	Sharp**
PLN 3730: Land, Property, and Law	N	Quattro	--	Quattro	--
PLN 4700: Planning Studio	N	--	Quattro	Thapa	Shay
PLN 4830: Professional Development in GHY & PLN	N	Van de Gevel*	van de Gevel*	van de Gevel*	van de Gevel*

12.2 Elective Course (Semester)

List courses offered by the Program during the two most recent academic years with the faculty name and appointment level using the formatting key below. If an undergraduate and graduate course are combined, please check the “Combined Course” checkbox.

Distinguish among the appointment status of the faculty with the following text effects:

Normal text = Full-time in Planning Unit

One asterisk * after name = Part-time in Planning Unit

Two asterisks ** after name = Adjunct

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE*	Combined course?	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	FALL 2024	SPRING 2025
ELECTIVE COURSES (Included in required choice sets for the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning)					
PLN 4030/5030: Planning for Climate Resilience	Y	Thapa	--	Thapa	--
PLN 4240/5240: Sustainable Transportation Planning	Y	--	Shay	--	Shay
PLN 4450/5450: Planning for Sustainable Urban Systems	Y	Quattro	--	Shay	--
PLN 4460/5460: Environmental Planning and Policy	Y	--	Thapa		Thapa
PLN 4535/5535: Impacts of Property Law	Y	--	--	Quattro – new course	--
PLN (3040) 5470: Community Development	Y	--	Shay	--	--
PLN 4900: Planning Internship	Y	Shay, Shu*	Shay	Shay	Shay

Footnote for Semester Curriculum Listing:

Fall 2023: Shay on sabbatical. Spring 2025: Quattro on leave

Table 12.1 reports undergraduate courses required for Planning majors (including choice sets). Note: This table does not show the many other Geography courses that count as electives toward the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning.

Other Learning Activities:

Learning activities are non-course events (e.g., brown bag lecture series with practitioners) used by some programs to deliver the PAB curriculum components. If necessary, in order to demonstrate delivery of required curriculum components, list and describe other learning activities in this section.

The Department has various paths to enrich the learning environment for students and faculty.

- Thursday afternoon speaker series with several guests each term, covering a variety of topics in Geography and Planning. Heavily attended by faculty, graduate students, undergraduates
- Occasional large-audience major speakers for afternoon or evening events, drawing from beyond our department. Examples: Protect Our Winters CEO Mario Molina; National Geographic CEO (<https://theappalachianonline.com/national-geographic-ceo-speaks-on-scientific-storytelling-science-alone-is-not-enough/>); National Geographic Expedition member Dawa Yangzum Sherpa (<https://cas.appstate.edu/news/reaching-new-heights-nepali-sherpa-woman-k2-everest-and-beyond>)
- Informal events such as panels of practitioners or community partners, often hosted by the Student Planners Association (SPA) and Appalachian Geographic Society (AGS)
- Field trips, workshops, and service days, often run through the SPA and AGS. Recent examples include a drone workshop with faculty member and hikes and clean-up crewing.

Preconditions to Accreditation

All programs applying for accreditation review must meet five preconditions. Programs must demonstrate in their Self-Study Reports that they meet the preconditions of accreditation at each accreditation review. The existence of a campus-based program which meets all preconditions is a prerequisite for an application from a program delivered via distance education. For accreditation purposes, programs are evaluated in the same way regardless of locations or modalities of delivery. As PAB is desirous of promoting innovation and experimentation in planning education, programs which do not meet the preconditions in a strictly literal sense, but which meet the spirit of these provisions, may petition PAB for special consideration. Such petitions and Self-Study Reports must provide evidence that the Program meets the spirit of the preconditions.

1. Program Graduates

Programs shall have granted the degree for which accreditation is sought to at least 25 students.

Community and Regional Planning degrees were first awarded in 1976. Since 2011, the Program has awarded 118 B.S. degrees in Community and Regional Planning.

2. Accreditation Status of the Institution

The Program's parent institution shall be accredited by an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or by its successor organization.

Appalachian State University holds multiple accreditations from CHEA, as described on the university website at: <https://www.chea.org/appalachian-state-university>.

3. Program and Degree Titles

Formal titles of programs and degrees shall contain the word "planning."

The degree for which the Department is seeking PAB accreditation is the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning. The home unit is the Department of Geography and Planning. Note: At this time, we are seeking accreditation for the undergraduate Community and Regional Planning degree only.

4. Length of Program

Undergraduate degree programs shall require a minimum of four academic years of full-time study or the equivalent. For students for whom the graduate degree constitutes the first professional degree in planning, a minimum of two academic years of full-time study or the equivalent in planning is required.

Undergraduate degrees (B.S.) in Community and Regional Planning require 120 credits, typically completed in four years of full-time study.

Guideline: Fast-tracking

Programs that combine undergraduate education with a graduate degree in planning in a total of less than six academic years or the equivalent shall meet the criteria of an accredited graduate degree.

Does your program have fast-tracking? Yes / No (if yes, provide detail below)

Guideline: Fast-tracking Detail

Provide evidence that demonstrates the fast-track students receive an equivalent education as the 2-year graduate students.

Graduate degrees (for which the Program is not currently seeking PAB accreditation) are 2-year programs. Accelerated admissions ('4&1') students complete the B.S. plus Master of Arts degree in no less than five years. We recruit for the 4&1 program from among our strongest students in the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning, as well as other related programs.

Guideline: Dual Degrees

Programs may allow a degree in planning to be earned simultaneously with a degree in another field, in less time than required to earn each degree separately. All criteria of an accredited graduate degree in planning must be met and the electives allowed to meet requirements of the other degree must be appropriate as electives for a planning degree.

Does your program allow for dual degrees? Yes / No (if yes, provide detail below)

Guideline: Dual Degree Detail

Provide evidence that demonstrates the dual degree students receive an equivalent education as the 2-year graduate students.

Note: Because we are seeking accreditation for our undergraduate B.S., guidelines on dual graduate degrees do not apply. But we offer the following points about the B.S.: Undergraduate students majoring in Community and Regional Planning frequently earn another undergraduate degree (B.S., B.A.) or credential (most often, GIS Certificate) simultaneously. With in-house academic advising, where each student in the Program meets with a Planning faculty advisor at least once each semester (often more) before registration, we carefully sequence course scheduling and advise double-majoring undergraduate students to select courses that apply to both degrees.

All Planning and Geography faculty carry an advising load; all Planning students are advised by a Planning faculty member or the Department chair. Graduate dual-enlisted programs exist, but are not reported here, as the Planning Program is not currently seeking PAB accreditation for the graduate program.

5. Primary Focus

The degree Program's primary focus shall be that of preparing students to become practitioners in the planning profession.

The undergraduate Planning degree is focused on preparing students to become practicing planners upon graduation. The Department's page devoted to the B.S. degree in Community and Regional Planning (<https://www.appstate.edu/academics/majors/id/community-regional-planning>) describes planning as a dynamic profession that helps "create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live and helps communities envision their future."

The focus on preparing practitioners is evident in the curriculum's focus on applied problem-solving and community-engaged projects; in advising—both academic and professional; and in extra-curriculars such as the student planning club, visiting guest practitioners, support for presenting and publishing work, and more.

A distinctive requirement of our Department and Planning Program is a capstone course that guides each student to create a portfolio in both online and print formats, with a GIS story map

and key elements representing the student's body of work completed during the program of study for the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning. This collection includes research and classroom products, accomplishments as part of internships and service, and their articulated academic and professional goals. The process of developing a formal portfolio is a reflective and empowering process for seniors, and useful for them in job searches and graduate school applications; these also support student recruiting to our Program. To our knowledge, this required course is unique in the state. This is described in greater detail on p. [72] of this SSR, with links to several notable examples from recent graduates.

Standard 1: Strategic Planning and Progress

Provide a response and/or evidence that demonstrates compliance for each standard and each criterion. Narrative entered under the preamble to a Standard should pertain broadly to the standard and should not be repeated under specific criteria.

1. Strategic Planning and Progress

The Program or the Department in which it resides shall strive for self-improvement using an intentional process of goal articulation, planning, outcomes assessment, reflection, and improvement.

Standard 1 Response:

The Planning Program initiated a process in early 2023 to draft, discuss, and revise our strategic plan. In the process, we strengthened our collective vision for the Planning Program and our commitment to its elements, including a formal annual review and more frequent discussion of the strategic plan and its components. Later in 2023, we sought input from stakeholders and collaborators to inform a revised plan in 2024, by collecting data from several sources and incorporating responses into our strategic planning (discussed in the SSR narrative and reported in Evidence, Part IIC). These sources include:

1. Community partners—informal interviews, initiated with an email inviting either phone chats or emailed responses to a short list of questions
2. Alumni—online survey, to provide data for SSR questions and solicit open text responses
3. Current students—online survey of students currently enrolled in Planning courses in our department, and a listening session with the Student Planners Association (SPA) to share the draft strategic plan and solicit the input of these particularly engaged Planning students.
4. Faculty—meetings of our Planning faculty members to discuss strategic planning and curriculum needs; online surveys of Department faculty to complete SSR Table 8.

The results from those efforts to collect data from students and community partners are reported below in 1B (Programmatic Assessment) and in Standard 2 (Students) of the SSR, with the survey and interview instruments and raw data included in Part IIC (pp. 20-57).

The following pages describe the Community and Regional Planning Program at Appalachian State University, with a strategic plan to articulate goals, assess outcomes, reflect on the Program and our progress over time, and improve the process and outcomes. The strategic plan expresses an ongoing process of self-reflection and improvement, supported by the Department of Geography and Planning (“Department”), within which the Community and Regional Planning Program (“Program”) is housed. The Geography and Planning programs of study are compatible and mutually supportive: All Geography students take at least one Planning course—and many take additional Planning courses; all Planning students take at least six Geography courses, including spatial, quantitative, and portfolio (capstone) courses to prepare them for the planning profession and equip them with market-ready skills. The B.S. in Community and Regional Planning is a good candidate for accreditation because of the focus on a curriculum that delivers knowledge and skills appropriate for entry-level planners. Other planning content is delivered through other degrees in the Department for which we are not

seeking accreditation at this time: an undergraduate Planning minor (5-course sequence, compatible with many degrees such as Geography, Construction Management and Building Sciences, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment, Public Administration), and the Planning concentration in the Geography M.A. degree, which prepares graduates for entry into the job market (often at a Planner II level, if they gain substantive applied experience during the program) or for additional graduate studies.

The strategic plan presented in sections in the following pages (as well as *en toto* in Part IIC, pp. 4-8) was developed over 2023-24 as a group effort involving the Planning faculty and Department chair—a natural development arising from growing enrollment and new faculty appointments, as well as a timely process aligned with our goal to seek PAB accreditation. We shared this with the full Department faculty (Planning as well as Geography) in early 2024 at a Department retreat, which are held periodically to sharpen our priorities and firm up strategic planning for the programs housed within our Department. We convened our Planning Program oversight committee in summer 2024 and again in 2025, to review our strategic plan and curriculum and how they articulate with Department structure and goals. The agendas for those meetings are presented in Part IIC, p. 8.

1.A. Strategic Plan

The Program shall have a strategic plan for achieving its goals and objectives – either as a free-standing plan or part of a broader departmental strategic plan – and must be able to demonstrate progress towards goal attainment. Programs must document active engagement in plan development by faculty, students, alumni, practitioners and any other key stakeholders the Program deems important to the process. Practitioners and other key stakeholders may include a broad spectrum of professionals who can be resources for the Program during plan development and implementation. The strategic plan shall include the Program’s definition of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice, and goals and measurable objectives aimed at achieving them. The strategic plan must include the following elements:

Criterion 1A Response:

The strategic plan, a living document reflecting an intentional process of ongoing reflection and improvement, guides how our Program educates young planners and prepares them for a range of professional roles in our region, the state of North Carolina, and beyond. The plan articulates our approach to guiding faculty in curriculum development and applied research; supporting enrolled students in their academic journey; and recruiting new students to our Planning Program. The Planning faculty revisits and revises the strategic plan annually, at a minimum, with input from the department chair as well as Geography faculty whose teaching and research interests intersect with the Planning curriculum (e.g., GIS, quantitative methods). Consistent with the mission statement (below), the strategic plan provides a firm but adaptable foundation to support the Program in meeting current needs and anticipating and preparing for emerging needs for academic and practical training of future planners.

Our Program attracts a mix of students that includes lifelong residents of western North Carolina as well as those from across the state and beyond. We serve recent high school graduates as well as non-traditional students such as military and veteran, second-career and career reentry, community college transfers, and international. Many of our graduates remain

in western North Carolina—often in smaller communities, although some end up in larger cities across the state or nation or in international postings.

We provide a strong foundation in the theory, history, and principles of modern U.S. urban planning, along with coursework that addresses small-town and rural regional planning practice. Our students work with community partners on locally meaningful projects, applying their spatial and technical skills while gaining experience interacting with stakeholders, and developing the critical functional skills of communication and collaboration. We frequently host our graduates—after they become working professionals—as guest speakers or panelists, and benefit from internship opportunities and mentoring offered by our own graduates as well as other practitioners.

The Department of Geography and Planning offers an academic home to faculty, staff, and students from various communities, recognizing that diversity extends beyond race, ethnicity, sex, and gender to other dimensions, including age, nationality and language, education and income, physical and cognitive traits, and more. As a constituent member of the University of North Carolina System, Appalachian State is bound by—and upholds—UNC Policy 300.8.5.J, which states: “The University shall continue to ensure that diverse persons of any background, from North Carolina and beyond, are invited, included, and treated equally. Diversity means the ways in which individuals vary, including, but not limited to, backgrounds, beliefs, viewpoints, abilities, cultures, and traditions that distinguish one individual from another.” This is consonant with the planning profession’s focus on understanding and supporting complex and changing communities, and expressed in our syllabi and student learning objectives, detailed in the pages below. In our classrooms, Community and Regional Planning faculty and students engage in deep and often challenging exploration of values, and successes and failures, in effective inclusive planning practices.

1.A.1. Mission Statement

The Program or the Department in which it resides shall have a clear and concise mission statement that expresses its core values and fundamental purpose and role in training professional planners.

Criterion 1A1 Response:

The Planning Program prepares students for professional careers in planning, empowering them to create tangible change and improve communities by promoting fairness, livability, sustainability, prosperity, and shared well-being. The program provides a strong foundation in planning theory and history while equipping students with the analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills essential for engaging with the public and the profession. Graduates of the B.S. in Planning are prepared to enter the workforce or pursue advanced degrees in planning or related fields.

Our Program is aligned with Appalachian’s mission (<https://www.appstate.edu/about/mission-values/>) as a public institution that “honors our founding commitment to educational access and excellence and our rural mountain heritage through teaching, research and service” and “shapes students into globally minded, responsible members of society who engage with and

actively contribute to their communities.” It also reflects the profession’s expectations for entry-level planners at regional, state, and national levels while addressing students’ desire for both a broad understanding of planning and the specialized skills needed for success.

Commitment to Relevance and Professional Engagement

To ensure our curriculum remains current and relevant, we maintain active dialogue with alumni, planning professionals, and academics. As part of this Self- Study Report, we conducted interviews with community partners in late 2023; we have summarized findings in Section 2 of this SSR, and have provided full data in Evidence (Part IIC, pp. 49–56).

In the classroom, we integrate materials from practitioners and organizations in public, private and civil society sectors (e.g., American Planning Association, American Association of Retired Persons, Centers for Disease Control, Project for Public Spaces) to cover key debates and emerging issues in the field. We also invite program alumni working as planners to participate in classroom sessions and contribute to assignments and projects.

Beyond coursework, we encourage student engagement in professional networks by supporting participation in conferences hosted by, for example, APA, APA-NC, Transportation Research Board, and North Carolina Association of MPOs. These events provide our students with the opportunity to gain firsthand exposure to the field and build valuable professional connections.

1.A.2. Program Vision

The Program or the Department in which it resides shall have a clear and aspirational long-term vision for change resulting from the Program’s work.

Criterion 1A2 Response:

Our Program aspires to build on its growing enrollment and rising profile on our campus, and to expand its curriculum and faculty, in order to serve as a regional center of inquiry and training that connects to the worldwide community of planning professionals. We will continue to provide both an academic foundation and the applied skills students need to join the ranks of professional planners, while seeking new tools and skills to work into our curriculum and deeper collaborations with community partners and other stakeholders. Stronger and broader professional networks will allow us to position our Program as an authoritative source of reliable actionable guidance on planning questions for communities, and a source of practice-ready graduates. We also will continue to demonstrate the value of the Planning minor and double-majoring to students from the many other departments on our campus who take our introductory courses and who may interact with planners and local and regional government in their professional lives. We are aligned with our university’s vision to strengthen its role as a premier public institution (<https://www.appstate.edu/about/mission-values/>), “empowering learners through innovative academic programs accompanied by experiences that take place beyond the classroom, access and excellence in all our activities, and the cultivation of scholarship, engagement and creativity.”

1.A.3. Program Goals and Measurable Objectives

The Program's strategic plan shall identify goals and measurable objectives that advance the Program's mission and vision. The goals shall identify the Program's future aspirations in the context of its mission and that of the University, and shall aim toward excellence beyond that which may already exist. These should include strategic issues for the next 5-7 years and goals. Goals shall reflect the Program's intent to achieve and maintain diversity, as defined by the Program, in its student body and faculty, and to incorporate into the curriculum the knowledge and skills needed to serve a diverse society.

Criterion 1A3 Response:

What do we want our Program to do for our students—and for our community, region, and state? Appalachian State University's Planning B.S. degree is well-known in the region, and to a lesser degree across the state. There is room for our Program to strengthen its reputation as a leader in training planners for our region and develop a state and national reputation. We describe, below, near-term goals and measurable objectives that are either in progress or consensus goals that we are preparing to implement; following those are longer-term goals for where we see the Program growing in the future, with the B.S. as our primary degree.

Short/mid-term goals for the Planning Program include the following:

Review courses regularly to keep content relevant and accurate; align the curriculum with regional, state, and national standards

- Increase Student Planners Association membership and activities
- Increase enrollment in American Planning Association student membership
- Increase student and faculty representation on Town and County boards and commissions
- Train more students with high-demand planning skills and tools (e.g., Sketchup, Excel)
- Develop new planning courses—rural/mountain, international, recreation/tourism, methods

Recruit new students to the Program

- Develop modules in Gen Ed courses (PLN 2100, PLN 2410, PLN 3730) that connect with non-majors and highlight relevance for their interests and professional goals
- Invite alumni and other professionals as mentors, panelists, and research partners
- Incorporate materials that represent people who are diverse across multiple measures
- Show Planning graduates on Department alumni map: <https://geo.appstate.edu/alumni>
- Showcase achievements, activities, and awards of Planning faculty members

Increase professional opportunities (students and faculty)

- Formalize our mentoring program, drawing on our network of alumni and partners, as well as the APA-NC Education and Outreach Committee
- Build student involvement in APA, APA-NC, NCAMPO, TRB; support travel to annual meetings
- Increase faculty participation in conferences, e.g., ACSP, APA, APA-NC, NCAMPO, TRB

Longer-term (5-7 years) goals are, necessarily, looser and aspirational

Respond to changing needs

- Identify emerging focus areas, and the skills, knowledge, and habits expected of new planners
- Maintain and expand ties with alumni interested in serving as mentors, intern hosts, speakers

- Maintain and expand ties with partners—planning departments, chambers of commerce, civil and private sectors; provide service through course projects, theses

Build the program with steady but targeted efforts, and seek institutional commitment from Dean, Provost, and Chancellor, supported by the Department Chair

- Use professors of the practice and adjuncts, for their rich expertise and timely content
- Add new faculty, as enrollment and resources allow
- Continue successful collaborations with community partners, and seek out new ones
- Expand cross-campus projects (e.g., with Public Health, Social Work, Public Admin, Business)
- Expand support for student research and travel

1.A.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Program, or the Department in which it resides, shall have a clearly defined approach, methodology, and indicators for measuring the Program's success in achieving the goals articulated in its strategic plan. The Program shall document how it tracks and assesses the results of the interventions and strategies.

Criterion 1A4 Response:

The Department in which the Program is housed (Geography and Planning) has an established framework for monitoring and measuring progress toward goals, supported by university services for data collection, storage, and analysis.

Internal to the department: To monitor and assess Planning Program goals (as articulated in the strategic plan, discussed above and reported in Part IIC, pp. 4-8), the Planning faculty hold an annual review session; in addition, goals and achievements are shared at monthly faculty meetings when there is news to report, and more frequently conveyed to the Department chair. Finally, a Planning Program oversight committee meets semi-annually, comprising tenured/tenure track Planning faculty (Quattro, Shay, and Thapa), the Department lab manager (Platt), three Geography faculty who teach courses required or frequently taken by Planning majors (Dempsey, Schroeder, and J Sugg), and officers of the Student Planning Association. This committee reviews and reports on the Program's stated goals, with status updates and recommendations, to the Department chair. The goals articulated in the strategic plan are, for the most part, measurable, particularly for the short/mid-range goals, e.g., course enrollment, new courses and modules, community partnerships and professional association memberships, and professional activity such as publications and conference presentations.

External to the department: Appalachian State University's IRAP (Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning) office oversees data and performance metrics. The Xitracs reporting tool (<https://irap.appstate.edu/frequently-asked-questions-general-assessment/what-xitracs>) stores and manages data used for regional accreditation (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges—SACSCOC) as well as accreditation for specific disciplines. It also generates reports to support departments in reporting, tracking, and improving learning goals and student outcomes. The three most recent Xitracs reports (starting fall 2020) assess two or three courses (from introductory to advanced and applied), changing each year, and

highlights their performance and consistency with learning goals (see pp. 9-17 in Part IIC). In addition, the Xitracs program provides rubrics for evaluating strategic planning and student learning outcomes (pp. 18-19 in Part IIC). In the most recent year for which complete Xitracs reporting is available, the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning (2021-22) scored 2.7 out of 3—the target score for all Departments or Programs.

1.B. Programmatic Assessment

Performance indicators and their results shall be reported at each accreditation review in the areas listed below, in addition to those that are contained within the Program's strategic plan.

Criterion 1B Response:

For this initial accreditation SSR, we report performance indicators and results for graduates' self-reported satisfaction and service to community and profession, as well as student retention and graduation, employment, and AICP certification.

In late 2023 and early 2024, the Department and Program surveyed all graduates of the Planning B.S. back to 1976, with a date field that allows us to identify specific time ranges to assess satisfaction with how the Program prepared graduates for their current employment, and to address other questions in the SSR. The survey asked graduates to describe their contributions to their communities and the profession; it also solicited comments about the most (and least) valuable courses, assignments, and activities, as well as recommendations for stronger professional preparation.

Because the Department does not have access to contact information for graduates, the survey required assistance from the Alumni Association of Appalachian State University and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) communications director. The Alumni Association identified graduates from university records, and delivered email addresses to the CAS communications director, who developed the survey instrument with questions we supplied. The survey was delivered by a recruiting email with a survey link, which took respondents to a GoogleForm interface that first explained the value of PAB accreditation and the purpose of the survey, then delivered a survey of 12 questions with categorical (e.g., degree earned), ordinal (Likert scale) and nominal (text) responses. Because the survey was anonymous, we included at the end—along with our thanks—an email link to the Planning Program director to share comments or ask for more information. All responses were logged in the GoogleForm environment, then deidentified before being delivered to us as both figures and a spreadsheet for our analysis, stored on the password-protected computer of the Program director. The survey instrument and raw data are included in Part IIC (pp. 20-31); the results are summarized in the pages that follow here. Note: because we do not have access to the contact list, including the total number of graduates, we can report 46 responses—but not the response rate. The Program director did not file with the Institutional Review Board, because of several factors that would categorize it as 'not human-subject research': We did not receive nor handle any personal identifying information; the data provided were anonymous and represent minimal risk; and the data are not being used to produce generalizable knowledge for publication, but rather serve only to support this SSR.

1.B.1. Graduate Satisfaction

The Program shall survey its graduates and document the percentage of respondents who, 2 to 5 years after graduation, report being satisfied or highly satisfied with how the Program prepared them for their current employment.

Criterion 1B1 Response:

The survey, which used a 4-point Likert scale (from 1—highly dissatisfied to 4—highly satisfied) to assess satisfaction with preparation for employment as a planning practitioner, yielded 46 responses from graduates of the Planning Program dating back to 1978.

Looking at the entire time range during which our Program has awarded Planning B.S. degrees provides more data than the 3-year span reported in the next paragraph. Of the 46 respondents, the survey found 18 (39%) and 24 (52%) were somewhat satisfied and highly satisfied with their professional preparation, respectively, while 6% (two respondents, both graduating before the year 2000) were somewhat dissatisfied and one respondent (a 1987 graduate with the minor in Planning rather than the B.S.) very dissatisfied.

For the 3-year span of 2018-2021 graduates (who are between two and five years past graduation), a low response yielded a sample too small (six responses) to analyze in great depth, precluding a discussion of how representative the sample is. All six respondents (four B.S. graduates and two who earned the minor) in that timespan reported being employed full-time within one year of graduating; two reported being ‘somewhat satisfied’ and four reported being ‘very satisfied’ with how our Planning Program prepared them for employment. They described the most useful elements of their training as “GIS courses, practical techniques course,” planning studio and other hands-on applied courses, and “an activity of looking through and interpreting an ordinance and understanding the difference between planning board vs board of adjustment.” They also cited internships, coursework on local government, experience with grant-writing and case studies, and exercises relating to real-world scenarios and providing familiarity with professional certifications as valuable. Note: The survey was targeted at graduates with the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning and not sent out to the many hundreds of students who have earned the minor; however, some of the responses came from graduates with the minor—possibly because their classification changed between declaring and graduating. We retain them for discussion purposes, distinguishing them from the B.S. holders.

The courses and focus areas most frequently cited as valuable for future professional work were from the Geography curriculum (GIS, statistics and quantitative analysis, and cartography—albeit with several dissenters on that last count), and Planning courses such as land use planning, transportation planning, housing and real estate, zoning and land use law, and planning tools and techniques. Internships were called out as particularly useful preparation, as were hands-on community-engaged projects, group facilitation training, public speaking, and grant-writing. Several suggested one or more courses from Public Administration as useful foundational courses for Planners. Theory and cartography got votes for both most and least useful. Courses on permitting, site plan review, public speaking, public administration

basics—and a heavy dose of realistic applied training—were reported by some respondents as lacking, suggesting the curriculum would benefit from more attention to these.

These data, with responses from graduates as early as 1978, suggest positive outcomes in terms of both employment and attitudes toward the respondents' academic preparation. The text responses provided both assurances that the Program is sound and aligned with the needs of employers and aspiring planners, and useful and actionable suggestions for improvements.

A respondent who was 'highly satisfied' with the Program also provided positive and useful details about the value of applied and community-engaged experiences:

"All of my classes in the planning program at Appalachian prepared me for a successful career. I would say that the most helpful was the hands-on learning that took place. The High Country area was almost like a laboratory for us to learn the profession. We participated in the development of a Comprehensive Plan for Ashe County and a parking study for downtown Boone. Both of those projects required the students to engage with the community and participate in public meetings."

Several noted the value of PAB accreditation, such as this respondent:

"I believe achieving accreditation is a very important step for department of Geo/Planning. As the Planning Director of a larger governmental entity, I faced some pushback from employees in the department when considering applicants from non-accredited programs (all of my planners graduated from PAB accredited programs; in NC the undergraduate program at East Carolina was accredited while the program at App State was not). Our HR folks viewed the BS in Community and Regional Planning as a professional degree program (such as nursing, social work etc.) and not having PAB accreditation was an issue. Getting PAB accreditation will eliminate this issue."

On the question of what planners of the future need by way of knowledge, skills, and professional habits, common response were

- Public administration—budgeting, project management, personnel
- Data and GIS
- Legal—zoning, permitting, development review, code enforcement, and
- Communication—public engagement, group facilitation, negotiation

1.B.2. Graduate Service to Community and Profession

The Program shall provide evidence of graduates' contributions to meeting community needs and to providing service to the planning profession. Evidence for these shall be obtained between 2 and 5 years after graduation.

Criterion 1B2 Response:

As noted above, the small sample of respondents who graduated in the 2018-2021 timespan preclude analysis of that small set, so we use here the full sample of respondents, going back to 1978 graduates. Of the 46 responses to the survey (with nominal data captured as responses typed into a text box, and with examples of professional contributions included as prompts), all

but two respondents (both who earned the Planning minor but not the B.S.) reported contributing to either the community or profession in some way; 33 (72%) reported contributions in both sectors (profession and community). The sample includes students who graduated during the pandemic, when conditions for academic completion as well as new employment onboarding were shifting, evolving, and for some graduates daunting and challenging.

On the question “Does your current position involve service to the planning profession?” Of 46 respondents, 34 (84%) described a range of activities that contribute to the profession—often built into the job itself, while 12 (26%) answered a flat ‘no.’ Several describe contributions to the public sector outside of their professional positions, such as serving on boards or commissions, or relevant to university teaching (e.g., a public health professor with planning education).

That question has some overlap and complementarity with the following question: “Does your current position involve service to meet community needs?” This question generated some interesting references to how their professional work naturally is community-serving and intertwined with other processes. One small-town administrator responded: “Everything I do is to meet community needs. This involves land use planning, transportation, recreation as well as many other administrative functions.” A senior planner stated: “That is what Planning is all about. Planning for the current and future needs of the community.” Others referenced community needs relating to protecting property rights, public health, housing, broadband access, and transportation. Several people identified themselves as retired but still involved in community service, drawing on their expertise as planners. There were three respondents with no involvement in meeting the community needs.

The survey shows graduates of the Planning B.S. report being actively engaged in community and professional service. Moreover, their comments on the myriad ways they contribute provide both assurances that the Planning Program has a history of preparing graduates for professional service, and insightful comments on how we can better align curriculum and academic exercises to support this important part of being a professional planner.

1.B.3. Student Retention and Graduation Rates

The Program shall report student retention and graduation rates (including number of degrees awarded each year) relative to the program enrollment and to targets set by the program.

Criterion 1B3 Response:

The Program response should supplement table 3. Student Retention Rate, table 4. Graduation Rates and table 5. Number of Degrees Awarded found in the Student Data section.

Student retention and graduation are reported for 2018-2025, using data provided by the university’s Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP) office. The figures for the period of 2018-2024 show generally strong retention until a dip in the first full pandemic year (2020-2021), then recovery since that disruption. The graduation numbers reported here are those students who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Community and Regional Planning

within four, five and six years of entering. These numbers reflect the many students who transfer into our department from elsewhere on campus partway through their undergraduate programs, and those who add the Planning degree as a second major. Note that our currently growing enrollment creates a lag in graduation rates.

Student Retention, Undergraduate Graduation, and Number of Degrees Awarded: These data, which were provided by Appalachian State University's Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP) office, apply to the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning B.S. (degree 218A).

1.B.4. Graduate Employment

The Program shall document the percentage of all graduates who are employed within one year of graduation in professional planning, planning-related or other positions, and the definitions thereof.
Criterion 1B4 Response:

The Program response should supplement table 6. Student Employment Data found in the Student Data section.

The Program reported the percentage of students graduating with a bachelor's degree in Community and Regional Planning who were employed within one year in a planning-related position, for students who graduated in the period 2019-2023. The totals include full- and part-time positions. The self-reported data were collected by the survey of graduates described in section IB (Programmatic Assessment), with survey instrument and raw data reported in Part IIC, pp. 20-31. Because we did not have access to sociodemographic data on the graduates we surveyed, we cannot comment on whether the 46 graduates who responded to the survey comprise a sample that is representative of all students who completed the degree. Survey-takers responded to the following question: "Were you employed in a planning-related position (full- or part-time) within one year of graduating with your major or minor in Community and Regional Planning?" Categorical responses were: Yes—fulltime, Yes—part-time, No—not employed in a Planning-related position, Other.

As noted above, the December 2023 survey of graduates of the Planning B.S. yielded too few responses (six) in the 2018-2021 timeframe to support sound analysis. Because the Department does not have access to contact information for graduates, the survey had to be administered by the communications director of the College of Arts and Sciences (a graduate of both our undergraduate honors and graduate programs), using contact information provided by the Alumni Association; data were delivered to us as deidentified responses, with a graduation-year field that made it possible to sort by year. Because data from our most recent graduates are limited, we use the full sample from all responders, with graduates as early as 1978.

Student Employment: Data are very limited for graduates in the specified time range, and we did not get a census (responses from all graduates). See, below, details on our survey of graduates in Community and Regional Planning at Appalachian State over a 45-year period.

The survey administered to graduates of our Planning B.S. in November-December 2023 did not yield sufficient responses for robust analysis. Specifically, only six responses in this range came

in (four who graduated in 2020, and one each in 2021 and 2022); all report full-time planning-related employment within a year of graduation. Because the Department does not have access to contact information for graduates, we used Alumni Association staff and contact lists to administer a survey, managed by the communications director for the College of Arts and Sciences, who delivered to us deidentified data in a spreadsheet; see Part IIC, pp. 20-31, for the instrument and raw data.

In the absence of a complete census on graduates in the 2020-2024 timespan (Table 6), we report on a survey deployed through the College of Arts and Sciences (described in Section 1B—Programmatic Assessment). Of the 46 respondents to the survey of Planning graduates, 14 had earned the Planning minor, and 31 the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning (with one respondent who earned a Building Science degree). Of the 14 who minored in Planning, half were not employed in a planning position within one year of graduating, while six were employed and one continued on at Appalachian State in the Master of Public Administration program. The ‘no—not employed in a planning-related position’ response for half of those earning the Planning minor compares to only three people (10%) among the 31 respondents who earned the Planning B.S. responding ‘no’ and another three (10%) reporting part-time planning-related work; the remainder were employed full-time in planning within a year of graduating (23 graduates, or 74%) or continued on to graduate school (2 people, or 6%).

1.B.5. Graduate Certification Exam Pass Rate

The Program shall document the percentage, based on the number who take the AICP exam, of master’s graduates who pass the AICP exam within 3 years of graduation, and/or the percentage of bachelor’s graduates who pass the AICP exam within 5 years of graduation. If the Program believes that alternative credentials are meaningful to its goals and objectives, the Program may supplement its AICP data with these metrics.

Criterion 1B5 Response:

The Program response should supplement table 7. AICP Exam Data found in the Student Data section.

The survey described at the top of section 1B (Programmatic Assessment) and shown in Part IIC (pp. 20-31) included a question about AICP certification. Combined with the year of graduation reported in the survey, we determined the percentage of graduates of the undergraduate Planning program (the only degree for which we currently are seeking PAB accreditation with this SSR) who have achieved AICP status within 5 years of graduation—but only for the small number of graduates who responded to the survey. In addition, we asked respondents about any other certifications they had acquired (e.g., CZO).

Of 46 survey respondents, with graduates as far back as 1978, 12 (26%) report successful AICP certification. In addition, 15 respondents (35%) reported other planning-relevant certification, including several who earned more than one. The most common credentials in this sample are Certified Zoning Officer (7) and Certified Floodplain Manager (3). Other credentials reported include CAMA Local Permit Officer, GISP, Municipal Administration, North Carolina Housing Code Official, North Carolina and South Carolina Economic Development Associations, and Project Management Institute.

*Note: Data for AICP completion reported here capture any examinees who report Appalachian State as their academic institution for the B.S. degree in Community and Regional Planning. (In this same period, AICP reports 7 graduates of our master's program sitting for the exam, and 6 passing.) We discuss in the SSR (Table 7) and Part IIC responses to a question in our 2023 alumni survey about AICP completion as well as other credentials. In the last year, we have established a clear protocol to track and report on our graduates, and are confident our reporting on AICP, as well as employment and other post-graduation activities, will be more complete in future years.

1.B.6. Strategic Plan

The Program shall document any other outcomes identified in its strategic plan, the degree to which the goals and measurable objectives articulated in the plan have been met, and any barriers to meeting the goals and measurable objectives, and how the Program proposes to address barriers.

Criterion 1B6 Response:

The strategic plan (discussed in section 1A above, and in Part IIC (pp. 4-8) was first drafted in 2023, then revisited and revised in 2024 and 2025. This SSR, developed as we resolved to seek accreditation after confirming that we meet prerequisites, is a first-time process (rather than a re-accreditation exercise) that has proven to be a useful exercise for our Program. As we move forward with the PAB review process, we will continue to review and refine the strategic plan, including measurable objectives and student performance evaluation, and report progress toward the goals articulated there. Examples of progress on goals include:

- Develop new planning courses—rural/mountain, international, recreation/tourism, methods: Three new courses rolled out in 2024-25: PLN 2100 and PLN 4535/5535; a new course in rural and mountain regional planning is under development for fall 2026; new modules have been developed within existing courses, including international content (in PLN 2410); a special topics summer study abroad course proposed for 2026 in Scotland will explore planning, rural and mountain community development, tourism and recreation economies.
- Invite alumni and other professionals as mentors, panelists, and research partners: Guests include dozens of speakers in 2023-25 in our classrooms from private, public, and non-profit sectors, including North Carolina planners from over a dozen North Carolina cities; a data analyst from Urban3 (Asheville NC); and a private sector design consultant from Charlotte. Internship and research projects provided experience and wages for dozens of students.
- Build student and faculty professional development: Three advanced students were funded to attend the 2025 National Planning Conference (NPC) in Denver. Planning faculty attended AICP and NPC, the American Association of Geographers and Water Seoul International Conferences, and many campus research symposia and events.

The Xitracs monitoring and assessment program, described in Section 4 (Monitoring and Evaluation), supports tracking and assessment of an academic unit's strategic plan. With our first formal strategic plan in place in 2023 (building on earlier internal program reviews), the Xitracs monitoring system provides a structure to monitor progress toward stated goals, and a rubric for self-assessment.

Recognizing the limitations of data collection to support our initial SSR, we have developed a process to better assess our graduates' professional development, within the rules of student confidentiality, with a walk-out survey of graduating students and follow-up communications with recent graduates. This involves creating and maintaining a list of graduates (December, May and August for a given academic cycle) from CASSH (College Advising and Support Services Hub) and contacting these students upon graduation to 1) request their post-Appalachian State email addresses, and 2) return a year later to ask the same questions used in our survey of graduates described in section 1B, and subsections 1B1-1B6. This captures data such as post-graduation employment in planning-relevant fields and AICP certifications, as well as views on the value of the training they received in our Program and suggestions for improvement. This protocol provided fresh data in May 2025.

1.C. Accreditation Review

The Program shall demonstrate progress since the last accreditation review in meeting accreditation standards assessed as partially-met or unmet at the last review.

Criterion 1C Response:

Not relevant to the applicant Program, which is in its first accreditation cycle.

1.D. Public Information

The Program shall routinely provide reliable information to the public on its performance at least annually. Such information shall appear in easily accessible locations including program websites. In addition to the following information, programs are encouraged to showcase student achievement, however it may be determined.

- 1) Student Achievement: student achievement as determined by the program;
- 2) Cost: the cost (tuition and fees) for a full-time student for one academic year;
- 3) Retention and Graduation: student retention and graduation rates, including the number of degrees awarded each year, the percentage of first-year students who return in the 2nd year for graduate students and/or the percentage of students enrolled one year after declaring their major for undergraduate students, and the percentage of master's students graduating within 4 years, and/or the percentage of bachelor's students graduating within 6 years;
- 4) AICP Pass Rate: the percentage, based on the number who take it, of master's graduates who pass the AICP exam within 3 years of graduation, and/or the bachelor's graduates who pass the AICP exam within 5 years of graduation; and
- 5) Employment: the employment rate of all graduates in professional planning, planning-related or other positions within 1 year of graduation.

Criterion 1D Response:

Our program's public information, shown below, is posted at:

https://geo.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/pab_public_information.pdf

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Appalachian State University's B.S. in Community and Regional Planning is a candidate for accreditation by the Planning Accreditation Board (<https://www.planningaccreditationboard.org/>). The following information is posted here in accordance with PAB requirements.

Student Achievement

Students who graduate with the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning at Appalachian State University gain a mastery of the foundation of planning—history, theory, and tools of the profession; specialized knowledge in areas of professional practice; and applied skills from collaborative client-facing studios. In the past five years, our students have partnered with organizations and agencies in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, generating a wide range of products. Examples include memos to support and later document community charrettes in small North Carolina towns (partnering with a non-profit collaborative of design and construction professionals), data collection and interpretation of housing conditions and challenges for a newly formed housing council, and 'existing conditions' summaries for a municipal planning department, among others. The students demonstrate their competency with the planning process, data analytical skills, and professionalism and communication through the successful completion of these projects.

All students in the B.S. Planning program complete a senior capstone, where they create a polished portfolio—in both electronic and print formats—to showcase their acquired skills and knowledge.

In addition to the studio and capstone that all undergraduate Planning students complete, many have been tapped as research assistants for projects funded by external (e.g., North Carolina Department of Transportation) and internal sources, gaining valuable experience in research design, data collection and analysis, and presentation.

Our students graduate ready to identify opportunities and secure employment, and to interact effectively and productively with planning professionals, community stakeholders in public and private sectors, and the general public.

2023-2024 Tuition and Fees

In State Residents, per full-time academic year	\$21,348
Out of State Residents, per full-time academic year	\$32,555

Student Retention Rate

Percentage of students who began studies in fall 2022 and continued into fall 2023	82%
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Student Graduation Rate

Percentage of students graduating within 4 years, entering class of 2019	73%
Percentage of students graduating within 6 years, entering class of 2017 (accredited undergrad)	n/a

Number of Degrees Awarded

Number of degrees awarded for 2022-2023 Academic Year	9
-------------------------------------------------------	---

AICP Pass Rate

Percentage of master's graduates taking AICP exam within 3 years who pass, class of 2020	n/a*
Percentage of bachelor's graduates taking AICP exam within 5 years who passed, class of 2018	n/a*

*B.S. in Community and Regional Planning is not yet accredited—but is a candidate:

<https://www.planningaccreditationboard.org/accredited-programs/candidacy-programs/>

Standard 2: Students

2. Students

The Program shall attract a sufficient number of well-qualified students from diverse backgrounds and shall adequately prepare, support, and advise these students to pursue and contribute successfully to the field of urban and regional planning. Accordingly, the Program shall demonstrate that its students upon graduation possess the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to secure professional employment, to perform effectively as planners, and to participate meaningfully in the planning profession. Among the foremost responsibilities of the Program are to reject discrimination - within the Program itself - and to advance diversity and a culture of inclusion and equity among the students, particularly with regard to racial and ethnic groups historically underrepresented in the profession.

Standard 2 Response:

In addition to identifying and recruiting engaged students who display interest and potential as future planners, the Program actively seeks to attract students from varied backgrounds. This is discussed in greater detail in 2B—Student diversity.

Pathways into the Planning Program

Many students discover the Planning Program through General Education courses that are also required for Geography, Community and Regional Planning, Construction Management, and Building Sciences majors. Two key introductory courses—**PLN 2410** (Town, City, and Regional Planning) and **PLN 3730** (Land, Property, and Law)—are designed for students with no prior exposure to planning. These courses attract students interested in how cities function by offering a candid exploration of the profession's history—its successes, failures, and ongoing challenges. By examining how planners identify and address community problems, students gain insight into the complexities of planning and real-world impact of its tools and techniques.

These courses often spark interest in planning as an academic discipline, appealing to students drawn to topics such as urban design, policy and governance, and community-led change. **PLN 3432** (Planning Tools and Techniques) builds on this foundation by introducing key skills for aspiring planners. The program also encourages students with overlapping interests to pursue a double major in Public Administration, Construction Management, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Technology and Built Environment, Public Health, Public History, and other fields.

Preparing Students for Professional Practice

Faculty, who remain active in the profession, integrate legal content, planning tools, and real-world applications into their teaching. Applied coursework—including internships, studios, and research—provides students with hands-on experience and valuable professional connections.

Recognizing the importance of technical skills, the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning requires a quantitative methods course and three spatial analysis courses:

- **GHY 2310:** Cartographic Design and Analysis
- **GHY 2812:** Geospatial Technology in a Changing World
- **GHY 3812:** Geographic Information Systems

Many Planning students also pursue a GIS certificate, which requires two additional advanced GIS courses. Additionally, Planning majors frequently complement their studies with a second major or minor in Geography, Sustainable Development, or Public Management, further expanding their expertise and career opportunities. Beyond the introductory course **PLN 2410** (Town, City and Regional Planning), the foundational courses **PLN 3432** (Planning Techniques) and **PLN 3730** (Land, Property, and Law), and the required spatial and quantitative courses all Planning students take, advanced and specialty courses (4000-level) round out the formal program of study.

2.A. Student Quality

The Program shall admit students whose educational attainment, previous academic performance, work experience, aptitude, maturity, motivation, life experiences, and/or hardships overcome indicate the potential for success in their studies and in professional practice. Toward that end, the Program shall establish admission standards, when applicable, that reflect the institution's policies and the Program's goals, and the Program, when applicable, shall apply those standards fairly and consistently. The Program shall document its admission standards and the extent to which its current students meet or exceed those standards.

Criterion 2A Response:

Student Quality and Admission

The B.S. in Planning is an open-admission program; students declare the major after completing at least 30 credit hours (typically two semesters), maintaining a minimum 2.0 GPA, and completing RC 1000: Expository Writing. To graduate, students must complete all program requirements, maintain a 2.0 GPA, and complete applied coursework such as Planning Studio and an internship (see Program of Study in Part IIC, p. 62).

Student Recruitment and Advising

Because planning is not widely recognized as a career path, most students encounter the field for the first time in **PLN 2410** (Town, City, and Regional Planning) or **PLN 3730** (Land, Property, and Law)—courses required for Planning majors and other programs. The program actively identifies and recruits students who demonstrate aptitude, motivation, and curiosity about the field, often encouraging those who excel in **PLN 2410** to consider the major. Faculty strive to create an inclusive and welcoming environment, ensuring that students new to the discipline feel supported in their exploration of planning as a career. While most students are recruited into our program after arriving at Appalachian, we gain some majors from Open House events and scholarship programs, as well as from visits to high schools or community engagement.

Academic Support and Progression

While the program does not control student enrollment, active advising helps guide interested students toward sound academic decisions. Faculty advisors assess new majors' interests, strengths, and any gaps in preparation (e.g., GIS or quantitative analysis coursework) to support their academic progression. As a regional public institution serving a diverse student body, the program accommodates a broad range of students while providing mentorship and guidance toward successful job placement.

Many Planning students excel academically, securing university awards, professional internships, and research assistantships; some publish undergraduate research, and pursue graduate studies in planning and related fields.

2.B. Student Diversity

Diversity is an inclusive concept which encompasses, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sex, sexual orientation, ability, educational attainment, first-generation status, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs, and veteran status. The Program shall develop a holistic strategy that addresses the following elements:

Criterion 2B Response:

The Program uses a holistic approach to promoting diversity, recognizing that diversity is not limited to race and ethnicity, sex and gender, but also extends to age, beliefs, income, physical and cognitive differences, language and nationality, military and veteran status, and education (including community college transfer, first generation, and non-traditional status), among other individual characteristics.

The student composition reported in Table 2 (in Student Data) comes from Appalachian State University's office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP) rather than from data collected by the Department from our students.

While past steps to holistically promote student diversity have been effective, as borne out in our student body and faculty composition, we do not have any formal program currently in place, consistent with standards across our state system of public universities.

2.B.1. Recruitment

Consistent with applicable law and institutional policy, the Program shall establish strategic goals that demonstrate an active commitment to attracting a diverse student population. Programs must report how they are arriving at their program's diversity goals and determining what student populations, if any, are underrepresented in their Program. The Program shall collect and analyze data on student demographics to inform and enhance its efforts to identify effective and appropriate methodologies for achieving diversity in its student body. Furthermore, the Program shall establish assessment mechanisms for each of its strategic goals that are focused on achieving diversity. Because diversity is not a static concept, and because all planning programs should seek to improve the diversity of the graduates entering the profession, the Program shall provide evidence of activities and programs intended to assist in achieving student diversity along with specific diversity-related strategic goals that have been met.

Sub-Criterion 2B1 Response:

The Program seeks student enrollment in the major that reflects both state and national realities, and characteristics of the rural mountain region within which the University is set. The University's student body is a mix of western North Carolina natives, state residents from the coast and piedmont, and a small number of students from other states and nations. Students come from households that vary in income and educational background.

In its 2022-27 Strategic Plan (<https://www.appstate.edu/about/strategic-plan/>), Appalachian State committed to promoting student success, including identifying and removing barriers, and “Providing resources to the entire campus community that help infuse a culture of freedom of expression, academic freedom, nondiscrimination, institutional neutrality, and student success.” We note that it can be difficult to set and meet concrete criteria for diverse enrollment because

- Our Department does not control admission, but rather accepts qualified students who declare the majors, and
- Diversity is a fluid concept that manifests and resonates variously with different people

However, we have the advantage of working in a discipline that both values and promotes freedom of thought and participation, and has a history replete with instructive stories, including failure in some cases to promote access and opportunity or to protect vulnerable or marginalized populations. Rooted in a profession that explicitly values diversity in our professional ranks, our Planning faculty strive to employ course materials that represent many different communities and individual characteristics; we pursue community-engaged projects and research questions that expose our students to a range of experiences, conditions, and ideas. The planning profession—and the academic training it requires—naturally weave a holistic view of communities throughout the curriculum and the work in which most new practitioners are engaged. We use our larger introductory (**PLN 2410**) and core competency courses (**PLN 3432** and **PLN 3730**) to demonstrate the value and relevance of the planning profession with students from other majors, highlighting complementary and overlapping areas of influence and professional practice. We focus heavily on how planners of the past and of today encounter and incorporate into our curriculum concepts of strong, lively, thriving communities—and highlight other professions that planning touches, with room for any interested young professional to find a career that feeds their professional and personal goals.

We are heartened by the variety of students (and their interests and talents) that we observe in our classrooms, labs, and social spaces. Our Department and Planning Program can justifiably take pride in supporting many non-traditional students, including active military and veteran, first-generation college, returning students, working parents, neurodivergent, and more. Our institution welcomes many students from rural regions, as well as from North Carolina’s major cities. We have had several community-college transfer students from modest circumstances find us in time to formulate a career plan, graduate with our Planning B.S. with marketable skills and knowledge, and then move quickly up the career ladder.

As part of our recruiting and student support efforts, we share our student learning outcomes in our student-facing web materials at <https://geo.appstate.edu/undergraduate-students/academics/bachelor-science-community-regional-planning>:

By earning the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning at App State, you will gain

- A grounding in geographic principles—location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region

- Spatial and quantitative skills—cartography, GIS and storymapping, statistics and big data
- A strong foundation in planning theory, history, urban spatial structure, and ethics and equity
- Core competency in planning practice—law, planning tools & techniques, public engagement
- Specialized knowledge aligned with your interests and goals—transportation, urban systems, community and economic development, and climate-ready communities
- Applied and collaborative experience that generates tangible products—in the professional development capstone and studio, as well as internships or research experience

After earning the B.S., what next? Enter the planning workforce, seek an advanced degree, or apply your skills, knowledge, and passion in a service organization

Where might you work? Almost anywhere—from rural and small-town settings, to cities of all sizes, to metropolitan regions or states. Planners are found working in all sectors: public (government agencies from local to national), private (consulting, engineering, design, and development firms), and non-profit (research, advocacy)

What roles do planners play?

Analyst: collect and interpret data—qualitative, quantitative, spatial

Policy developer: Link analysis with community needs and goals to generate appropriate policy

Community facilitator: Convene stakeholder and resident groups to develop vision and goals

Project manager: Identify, organize, track people, resources, and action items to meet goals

Advocates: Planners adhere to a professional code of ethics that espouses a public service ethos, with particular attention paid to underrepresented or marginalized populations

Communicator: **Cutting across all other roles**—planners communicate with all parties within a community, in written, spoken, and visual formats

2.B.2. Climate of inclusiveness

The Program shall report on actions being taken to promote a culture of inclusiveness within the Program, including but not limited to support of student groups, promotion of community events, curricular elements, and faculty involvement.

Sub-Criterion 2B2 Response:

The Planning Program fosters inclusivity through its curriculum, research, student engagement, and faculty support

- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Course materials and assignments integrate themes of inclusivity and tolerance, explicitly addressed in **PLN 2410**, **PLN 4030**, and **PLN 4460**. While faculty-led research often is dictated by funding opportunities, student-directed projects—such as planning studios and independent research—frequently focus on building healthy, equitable communities. Guest speakers, faculty presentations, and student club activities further reinforce these values.
- **Student Engagement:** The program actively supports the Student Planners Association (SPA) by providing resources, faculty mentorship, and events that explore the complex history of the planning profession and engage with current challenges and debates.
- **Research and Community Impact:** Research projects benefit from the diverse perspectives of students and frequently examine issues central to strong communities, including transportation, housing, food security, public health, and civic participation.

- Faculty and Student Support – Faculty are encouraged to participate in campus training on student support services, conflict resolution, and open-door policies for students in distress. Additionally, the program connects students with essential resources, including food and clothing assistance, health and wellness services, and other support programs.

Through these efforts, the Planning Program cultivates an environment where all students feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute to inclusive and resilient communities.

2.B.3. Student support

The Program shall report on actions being taken to support and retain students from underrepresented groups, including but not limited to mentorship and internship programs, financial assistance and fellowship programs, professional development programs and career services, and initiatives to support engagement in the profession.

Sub-Criterion 2B3 Response:

As a small department, we build strong relationships with our students, allowing us to gauge their interest in serving as program ambassadors or sharing their educational experiences. Some students eagerly take on this role, while others prefer not to.

Notable examples include high-achieving students who excel in Planning and actively promote the program. One international student, for instance, completed three internships with the Institute for Transportation Research and Education at North Carolina State University and one with Prince George's County, MD, while earning multiple awards (APA-NC's Marvin Collins Award, Departmental honors, and the ASU Local Government Alumni Association merit scholarship). They also engaged in leadership roles through International Appalachian and the College of Arts and Sciences Corps. Other exceptional students have helped introduce prospective students to the relevance and career potential of Planning, particularly for those unfamiliar with the field. Graduates from underrepresented backgrounds also maintain strong ties to the department, serving as examples of successful career pathways.

Financial and Professional Support: We actively support students in applying for internal scholarships through the [Appalachian Scholarship Application Portal \(ASAP\)](#) and for external funding. Faculty provide mentorship and recommendation letters to help students secure grants, scholarships, and professional opportunities.

The Planning Program is committed to attracting and retaining students from varied backgrounds by offering scholarships, internships, and professional development opportunities. Supporting students from underrepresented groups can be complex, as individual identities and needs are not always visible, and some students may not wish to be identified based on a perceived trait. Our approach is to:

- Communicate our commitment to diversity and the value of an inclusive profession
- Publicize resources and opportunities so that students can access them as they see fit
- Encourage ongoing dialogue to ensure students feel supported throughout their academic journeys

Through these efforts, we ensure that all students—regardless of background—have the resources, support, and encouragement to succeed in Planning and beyond.

2.C. Student Advising, Services, and Support

The Program shall provide students with competent academic advising, progress appraisal, and career guidance, as well as access within the institution to any personal counseling that students might need. Furthermore, the Program or its institution shall provide students with career services that assist students in securing suitable internships and jobs. The Program shall also support its students by providing them with financial aid opportunities that are sufficient in number and amount to achieve the Program's strategic goals for a well-qualified and diverse student body. The Program shall publish its criteria for the allocation of such financial aid.

Criterion 2C Response:

Students in our Program benefit from a nest of support and services that increase the likelihood that they will succeed in their academic and professional careers.

Academic advising is done in-house, with required one-on-one advising sessions in the weeks before registration. Departmental faculty advising is supported by College-level advisors who track logistics and details, and a robust online platform that shows both faculty advisor and students their progress through their academic program of study, course sequencing and prerequisites, grades and credits, missing courses, expected graduation, and more. Faculty enter detailed notes after each session (and between sessions). College of Arts and Sciences academic advisors review notes and follow up with students and their faculty advisors; they also review student records two semesters before expected graduation and communicate with students about any missing courses or critical deadlines.

Career advising is offered by both the department and the university (see Career Development Center: <https://careers.appstate.edu/>). Our Program maintains a list of internship and job openings (posted on our webpages), and a network of employers across the state. We invite professional planners to campus for panels on professional preparation and job-seeking, hold writing workshops for resumes and letters, and use our professional networks to connect students with potential opportunities. In addition to providing a steady slate of guest speakers in our classrooms (discussed in Sections 2B2, 2D, 3D, 4E, and 5C), the APA-NC Outreach and Education committee supports our program with mentoring and networking opportunities. As described in Section 1.B.6, we have instituted a protocol for better tracking our graduates and assessing their professional development (including AICP certification), using a walk-out survey of graduates that asks the same questions used in our first comprehensive survey (described in Section 1B and subsections 1B1-1B6) and requests post-graduation contact information. Our strategic plan (Section 1A3) includes several goals relating to professional development for our students.

Personal support is provided informally, when students seek us out, then typically referred out to a network of several different university programs devoted to meeting students' needs for personal health and wellness support. Faculty are reminded regularly of resources to which to

direct students, for various types and severity of need. Targeted training to support students is available to faculty.

Financial support, beyond that available from the University's financial aid office, involves referrals of students on to sources of aid outside the Department and, within the Department, to opportunities to engage in paid research on an hourly basis or grant-supported positions for a semester or academic year, as well as Department and University scholarships (promoted to our students in emails and posters, and described here: <https://geo.appstate.edu/scholarships>). For example, the current Planning Program director recently supported several undergraduates (and graduate students) with outside funding from two North Carolina Department of Transportation grants; five undergraduates on an internal summer grant for Covid19-related research on greenway use; and an exceptional senior on a summer Undergraduate Research Assistantship and a fall University Research Council grant (earning internship credit) to assist on research in Western North Carolina and the Scottish Highlands. Grants and scholarships vary in award criteria: need, academic achievement, or existing skills and knowledge. Finally, Program faculty actively pursue internship opportunities for rising juniors and seniors through professional networks and serve as academic mentors to students who secure internships.

2.D. Student Engagement in the Profession

The Program shall provide opportunities for student engagement in the profession, including but not limited to participation in a planning student organization affiliated with the Program, in the local chapter of the American Planning Association (APA), in professional mentoring programs, in other professional societies and activities, and in work, internships, community-based planning activities, or project experiences that develop their skills as planners. The Program shall also promote socialization into the planning profession by encouraging students to attend APA's conferences and other events in which students might interact with professional planners from a variety of backgrounds.

Criterion 2D Response:

Professional Exposure and Student Involvement

Students in Community and Regional Planning benefit from early professional engagement through coursework, internships, and networking opportunities. The Student Planners Association (SPA) offers:

- Professional panels with practicing planners
- Resume and cover letter workshops
- Field trips and campus service projects
- Financial support for attending the annual APA-NC conference
- Encouragement to submit coursework or independent research for presentation at APA-NC

The Program also connects students with American Planning Association (APA) student memberships, helping them establish early professional networks.

Hands-On Community Partnerships

The Program partners with local and regional groups to offer real-world experiences, such as

- Construction Professionals Network Institute (CPNI): Seniors and graduate students in **PLN 5470** (Community Development) contribute to CPNI's town visioning workshops by
 - Collecting and analyzing data for a pre-workshop memo and slidedeck

- Participating in a two-day charrette
- Compiling a post-workshop report with recommendations and resources
- Watauga Housing Forum (2022): Graduate students supported four public meetings on housing availability, accessibility, and solutions by
 - Collecting and curating data
 - Designing visual materials ("data placemats") for Forum meals, now used for reference
 - Establishing internship and classroom project opportunities with Forum organizers
- Regional transit apprenticeships supporting Title VI plans, ridership surveys, route mapping
- GIS mapping for youth and family services, now used in fieldwork and classes
- Housing authority internships supporting public relations, website development, grant-writing
- Town of Boone Planning and Inspections Department partnerships on multiple projects, where students contribute to data collection, reporting, and planning recommendations

Professional Network and Guest Speakers

The Program has built a network of planning professionals, including

- Mentors for students
- Internship and apprenticeship hosts
- Guest speakers (early-career planners and seasoned experts), including planners and experts from public health, social work, business, and public administration. The North Carolina APA Education & Outreach Committee has been instrumental in connecting speakers with classes
 - In our introductory course (PLN 2410), guest speakers provide a broad overview of Planning, especially for students from other majors, e.g., construction management, building sciences
 - In advanced courses, professionals offer real-world insights and networking opportunities
 - The Program aims to expand this collaboration into a formal mentoring and networking program

Strategic Planning and Community Collaboration

During the 2023 strategic planning process, the Program gathered feedback from community partners to refine its long-term vision. Interviewed partners included

- Regional transit directors
- Nonprofit design/build organizations
- Urban and regional planning departments
- Housing authorities
- Youth and family service nonprofits

Key takeaways

- Internships and class projects are the most common engagement forms
- Most partnerships remain active, with opportunities for re-engagement
- Students make valuable contributions to data collection, spatial analysis, public engagement

Internships—Many internships have resulted in full-time employment

- AppalCART (regional transit authority) has hired apprentices as permanent staff
- CPNI (design/build nonprofit) employed a student for additional town workshops
- A youth services intern transitioned to an AppalCART apprenticeship, then to Town planner
- A regional housing authority intern was hired permanently

- Institute for Transportation Research and Education (NC State University) employed multiple students, with some securing full-time regional planning roles

Key Skills and Qualities Employers Seek in Young Planners

Technical Skills

- GIS and spatial analysis (noted as both essential and often in short supply)
- Data analysis and research (evaluating and applying datasets to planning solutions)
- Zoning and site plan review knowledge
- Graphic design and presentation skills
- Professional writing skills including staff reports and policy memos

Professional Qualities

- Problem-solving mindset and ability to collaborate
- Strong communication and analytical skills
- Patience, thoughtfulness, and open-mindedness
- Enthusiasm for community-building and organizational missions
- Understanding of social structures and systems

Through hands-on learning, professional mentorship, and strategic partnerships, the Community and Regional Planning Program ensures students graduate with practical experience and strong professional networks, preparing them for meaningful careers in Planning.

Standard 3: Faculty

3. Faculty

The Program shall employ a sufficient number of qualified, productive, and engaged faculty members to permit the achievement of program goals and objectives. Among the foremost responsibilities of the Program are to reject discrimination - within the Program itself - and to advance diversity and a culture of inclusion among the faculty, particularly with regard to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

Standard 3 Response:

Faculty Composition: The current Planning Program faculty include three **full-time faculty with primary appointments** in the Planning unit (although their courses will also have Geography majors, and students from other departments); of these three, two are tenure-track (Quattro and Thapa), and one is tenured (Shay). Although our dedicated Planning faculty is small, it varies along several dimensions—personal traits, areas of expertise, professional and disciplinary training. The Department, with an additional 12 tenured or tenure-track faculty and six instructors, is also diverse in ethnicity and national origin, age and gender, and professional training, as well as other measures. With additional tenured-track faculty lines expected in the coming years (because of both pending retirements and growing enrollment), we anticipate continued commitment in faculty searches that enrich our Program over various measures.

3.A. Faculty Quality

The fulltime and adjunct faculty of the Program shall have educational and professional backgrounds, a relevant mix of credentials (i.e., accredited degrees in planning, significant experience in planning, PhDs in planning, degrees and experience in related fields, and AICP membership), be qualified to serve the Program's mission and capable of executing the Program's goals and objectives, particularly as they pertain to teaching, research, and service.

Criterion 3A Response:

The Program has sufficient faculty capacity to cover all current courses, and to add several new courses over the coming years (see short-term goals in the Strategic Plan (Section 1A of this SSR, and Part IIC). The dedicated Planning faculty currently includes one tenured and two tenure-track members, all holding PhDs in Planning or closely related fields. The Planning Program director (Shay) has held AICP certification since 2011, while the other full-time faculty member in Planning (Quattro) gained AICP status in 2024. In addition, a new faculty member hired in fall 2024 (Yao) has extensive planning-relevant experience in transportation analytics, in addition to deep spatial expertise, which already is informing new Planning curriculum and attracting strong students. All Planning faculty have research and teaching experience in Planning; two have extensive experience in Planning practice and community service. e.g., zoning official, Planning Commission chair, grant review, and journal review.

All Planning students take at least six courses (e.g., global environmental systems, human geography, cartography, GIS, quantitative methods, professional portfolio—capstone) taught by Geography faculty who have deep experience in teaching, research, and service. The 12 tenured/tenure-track Geography faculty and six instructors all teach courses that are either

required of Planning majors, or that can count toward the Planning degree, giving our students experience in valuable professional skills such as spatial analysis, field work, and more.

Of three recent Planning adjuncts, one is a full-time Appalachian State University employee and doctoral candidate (ABD at University of Texas-Arlington; AICP) with extensive professional experience as a planner, who teaches sections of our introductory course **PLN 2410** as well as **PLN 3432**; one is a senior planning practitioner with over three decades of municipal and regional experience, who taught our Planning Techniques course (**PLN 3432**); and one is an established transportation professional who taught our Transportation Planning course (**PLN 4240**) just as he was finishing his PhD at UNC—Chapel Hill. We are actively pursuing new adjuncts—practicing planners with teaching experience.

3.B. Faculty Diversity

Diversity is an inclusive concept which encompasses, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sex, sexual orientation, ability, educational attainment, first-generation status, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs, and veteran status. The Program shall develop a holistic strategy that addresses the following elements:

Criterion 3B Response:

The Program seeks diversity of faculty (across multiple dimensions), a climate of inclusiveness, and strong support for faculty over the course of their careers. Because the university-collected data for faculty composition does not include the breakdown requested by PAB, we surveyed the faculty anonymously for race, ethnicity, citizenship, and gender. In addition to 22 currently active faculty, we include two faculty members incoming in fall 2025 (also listed in Table 11). Four tenured Geography faculty members (who taught courses required for or taken by Planning students) retired in 2023-2025; they are not included in this revised (from 2024) table, although several appear in Table 12 as active instructors in courses in the 2023-2025 span.

3.B.1. Recruitment

Consistent with applicable law and institutional policy, the Program shall establish strategic goals that demonstrate an active commitment to attracting a diverse faculty. The Program shall collect and analyze data on faculty demographics in order to inform and enhance its efforts to identify effective and appropriate methodologies for achieving diversity among its faculty. Furthermore, the Program shall establish assessment mechanisms for each of its strategic goals that are focused on achieving diversity. Because diversity is not a static concept, and because all faculty representation within each planning program should seek to contribute to the diversity of the learning environment and improve the diversity of graduates entering the profession, the Program shall provide evidence of activities and programs intended to assist in achieving faculty diversity along with specific diversity-related strategic goals that have been met.

Sub-Criterion 3B1 Response:

Our faculty searches and hiring decisions are done explicitly on the basis of qualification and potential for strong teaching, research, and service in our collegial Department, while inviting thoughtful discussion about the value of varied frameworks and expertise in teaching and research. With that guiding principle of educational excellence, our two most recent Planning faculty hires increased diversity within our ranks in terms of ethnicity, national origin, and—

importantly—professional expertise to expand our coverage. Beliefs (spiritual, political, cultural) and status (e.g., immigration, veteran) are not part of recruitment, interviewing, or decision-making. Note that our state prohibits requiring DEI statements in faculty searches. Table 8 in the SSR reports the composition of the Planning faculty.

3.B.2. Climate of inclusiveness

Program shall report on actions being taken to promote a culture of inclusiveness within the Program

Sub-Criterion 3B2 Response:

The Program is part of a very collegial Department that regularly discusses the value of a culture of welcoming openness and of continual striving to maintain that culture. Our hallways and classrooms celebrate student and faculty accomplishments with research posters, and announce social functions, as well as open-to-all academic events such as thesis defenses, internship presentations, or visiting speakers. Our student reading room is heavily used—tables for group work and more comfortable furniture for lounging, and a free-to-all and easy-to-access food-plus pantry. The student clubs (currently a combined Geography and Planning model) take field trips, participate in service events, and host professional training, with support from the Geography and Planning faculty and staff.

The Department had a designated Inclusive Excellence (IE) representative who reported back to faculty meetings regularly, sharing materials and leading discussions. In recent years, several faculty members rotated in, including the current Planning Program director, who developed a slidedeck on diversity and inclusivity after participating in a Columbia University MOOC. The University-wide IE program is not currently active across the state University system.

3.B.3. Faculty support

The Program shall report on actions being taken to support and retain faculty from underrepresented groups. This includes, but is not limited to mentorship programs, support for research and teaching initiatives, and professional development opportunities. The Program should report data on promotion, and initiatives to support engagement in the profession.

Sub-Criterion 3B3 Response:

Efforts to retain faculty—once hired—are a given in our department, because of the Departmental investment and commitment that new faculty represent. While our recent hires (two in Planning, and others earlier as well as incoming in Geography) have increased diversity in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and expertise, these hires were deemed successes because in each case, the clear top choice—by faculty consensus—was hired for the position. (Note that DEI statements are no longer allowed by our state for faculty searches.) Once hired, faculty are nurtured and supported with a strong process of 3rd-year review, which serves as a dry run for tenure review. The Department chair advises on a smooth path to promotion, including teaching load, service activities, and research and publishing; the chair also deals with salary questions, bias concerns, and fair distribution of service responsibilities across the department. Beyond formal support from the chair, all Department faculty support junior colleagues in myriad ways, and celebrate accomplishments, milestones, and promotions.

3.C. Faculty Size

The faculty shall be of a sufficient size to accomplish the Program's mission and goals, administer the Program, and teach the curriculum. The Program shall have no greater than a 15/1 ratio of undergraduate student FTE to instructional faculty FTE, and a 10/1 ratio of graduate student FTE to instructional faculty FTE.

Criterion 3C Response:

The Program response should supplement table 11. Teaching Faculty FTE found in Faculty Data section.

Faculty Composition: The current Planning Program faculty include three full-time faculty with primary appointments in the Planning unit (although their courses will also have Geography majors, and students from other departments); of these three, two are tenure-track (Quattro and Thapa), and one is tenured (Shay). In addition, because students majoring in Community and Regional Planning take at least six required Geography courses as well as Geography electives (most commonly GIS for certificates, but a variety of other Geography courses as well), Planning students receive instruction from many of the twelve tenured/tenure-track Geography faculty (with two additional incoming for fall 2025) and six Department instructors, who serve as **part-time** in the Planning Program and **full-time** in the Department. The Geography faculty, particularly those who teach courses required of all Planning majors, are core to the Planning program, instilling professional knowledge and developing skills in quantitative methods, GIS and other spatial analysis, and some specialized planning-relevant content. Several of our Geography faculty members conduct research in planning areas, e.g., GIS certificate director Dr. Yao, who uses large transportation data sets to study school travel, childcare, retail, jobs/housing balance, commuting patterns, and more.

Students enrolled in the Community and Regional Planning major become most familiar with the tenured/tenure-track Planning faculty, as well as Geography faculty who teach foundational Geography courses, GIS, and quantitative methods. They may encounter an adjunct or two, who in recent years have included a very experienced practitioner (35 years in municipal and regional planning, AICP) and an experienced urban planner (AICP; finishing a Planning PhD and working fulltime at the university's Energy Center). Adjuncts are included in academic planning, and we share resources freely and discuss goals for the curriculum. Students majoring in Community and Regional Planning get their academic advising and mentoring from the full-time Planning faculty, who also advise the student club, write letters of recommendation, and otherwise provide direct and personal support to students.

At our teaching-focused institution, faculty workloads reflect a balance of teaching, research, and service. Tenured and tenure-track faculty have an 18-credit annual teaching load (three courses per semester), comprising 75% of their professional effort. Full-time lecturers teach 24 credits. Since faculty integrate research and service into their teaching—especially in upper-level courses—the reported .75 FTE for teaching includes embedded research and service.

Faculty Contributions to the Planning Unit

Full-time Planning Faculty: Quattro and Shay devote 100% of their time to Planning. Thapa, whose primary appointment is in Planning, contributes approximately 67%, with teaching responsibilities spanning both Planning and Geography courses. See Table 10.1.

Geography Faculty: Geography faculty, categorized as part-time in Planning (Table 10.2), are counted based on the Planning-related courses they teach. Effort is calculated using the same 75% teaching allocation for tenured and tenure-track. To simplify reporting, their research and service contributions are not included, although their courses benefit from these activities.

- A Geography faculty member teaching six courses annually, with two heavily enrolled by or required for Planning students, is reported as contributing .25 total FTE to Planning (i.e., one-third of their .75 FTE devoted to teaching)
- One teaching four relevant courses is reported as contributing .50 FTE (two-thirds of teaching FTE)

Adjunct Faculty: Adjuncts teaching one Planning course per semester contribute 12.5% of a full-year effort, based on a full-time lecturer's eight-course load. This structure ensures that faculty contributions to the Planning Program are measured consistently while recognizing the interdisciplinary nature of their work. See Table 10.3.

3.D. Engagement with Students

The faculty shall be engaged with students beyond the classroom as mentors, advisors, and/or committee members or committee chairs on thesis, reports and dissertations. Faculty shall provide career advice and assist in job placement in ways that coordinate with the efforts of staff and academic professionals.

Criterion 3D Response:

Faculty in the Program, as well as the Department within which it is housed, actively support students outside the classroom. We advise student clubs, support their searches for internships and jobs, write letters of support—then ask them to stay in contact and consider coming back to serve as mentors or guest speakers once they are out in the workforce. Academic advising is done by faculty (with support from College of Arts and Sciences advisors, who track dates and details), so we are involved in their academic planning as soon as they declare the major. We encourage strong students to do honors theses or apply to our graduate program, then serve on their thesis committees. When funding allows, we hire them as student research assistants to get them out into the field and interacting with others in the profession. Planning faculty serve as chairs or committee members on honors theses, academic advisors on internships, and guides for exceptional undergraduates through the process of submitting papers for review and publication. We encourage our students to apply for student-reserved seats on Town of Boone boards and commissions; since the Program director joined the Planning Commission in 2016 (chair since 2018), three of our own students and many students from other departments (who have taken Planning courses) have served as Planning Commissioners. Students interested in aspects of the planning profession outside of our typical curriculum are supported by independent study programs or research partnerships with Planning faculty. Recent examples of faculty-mentored study include a comparative study of planning in the Scottish Highlands

and Western North Carolina, assisting the Watauga Housing Forum and Council, a study of connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) and vulnerable road users (funded by North Carolina Department of Transportation), and a survey of young people's views of CAVs.

The Department and the Planning Program have formal and informal channels for maintaining ties with our graduates. The former includes a semi-annual newsletter (see a Planning-heavy issue in Part IIC, pp. 70-72), with news of current students, faculty, and staff as well as alumni and emeriti, highlights of research and community engagement, and events such as guest speakers, workshops, and symposia. These are shared widely with a list of current students, graduates and emeriti, friends of the Department and Program, and others. Hard copies appear in our hallways, and past issues are archived: <https://geo.appstate.edu/alumni/newsletter-archive>. The fall 2022 issue highlighted two Planning faculty members, as well as Planning research and theses:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mmSyC7COzl3OafOBXH1UyyUCqIQgBVdN/view>. The summer 2023 issue introduced our newest Planning faculty member:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16ZSXXuPiyGKQMGVWNTZmRglTbt8BI5VX/view>, while the summer 2025 issue reported on PAB candidacy and other Planning Program news:

https://geo.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/ghypln_newsletter_summer25.pdf.

Informally, we maintain contact with our graduates: exchanging emails; receiving professional and personal updates; writing letters of recommendations for jobs, grant proposals, or graduate school applications; and inviting them to join class sessions or serve as internship hosts or project mentors. The Department laboratory manager also promotes communication, posting jobs and reporting on graduates' geographic location and professional highlights. The Planning Program initiated a new protocol in early 2025 to capture names of all graduating students and request personal (non-University) contact information, then follow up one year later with our now-standard survey that asks, among other things, questions (relevant to this SSR) on employment, certification, and more.

3.E. Research, Scholarship and Other Creative Activity

Faculty teaching and administrative assignments provide for engagement in research, scholarship, and/or outreach reflective of the stage of their careers, the mission of the Program, and expectations of the University. Faculty creative activities should undergo peer review appropriate to the scholarly or practice orientation of the work, including, but not limited to, appropriate journals or other publication outlets, conferences, or other venues allowing dissemination of the work.

Criterion 3E Response:

Although our institution prioritizes undergraduate teaching, all faculty are expected to engage in ongoing research and creative activity and seek dissemination of academic products through channels appropriate to the discipline, as well as participate in and present at professional conferences. We also serve as reviewers on a variety of journals and grant review boards. As detailed in Tables 13 and 14, the full-time Planning faculty have published 33 peer-reviewed papers and 7 reports in the last seven years, with 38 conference presentations.

The two most recently hired Planning faculty members (Quattro and Thapa) are relatively early in their careers, with multiple publications in preparation. The publications illustrate the range of expertise and interests of our faculty, as well as collaborations with other scholars across our campus and beyond. The Program and Department use standard metrics for output (journal articles, books and chapters, conference presentations), but also look more closely at activities such as community-engaged projects, students mentored to publication, and service to campus and community. All our faculty produce publications that far exceed the nominal targets at the time of hiring (two products every three years). Table 13 reports faculty scholarship activity in the timespan of 2017-2025.

Table 13. 7-YEAR SUMMARY OF FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

The data in the table 7-year Summary of Faculty Scholarship should be aggregated from the summary faculty CVs in Part IIA of the SSR. The narrative should include expectations for research and scholarship and the impact of the research and publications listed below

Faculty Name	Job Title	Number of books Authored or Edited	Number of Refereed Journal Articles	Number of Book Chapters Authored	Number of Extramural Exhibitions	Number of Extramural Awards and Honors	Number of Reports and Monographs	Number of External Contracts and Grants	Dollar Amount of External Contracts and Grants (rounded)	Number of Extramural Presentations at Conferences
Full-time in Planning Unit (T/TT and Contract)										
Quattro	Assistant Professor		4		8	2	4	1	\$6,000	12
Shay	Associate Professor		14	1			3	13	\$230,000	18
Thapa	Assistant Professor		15	1				4	\$155,000	8
Part-time in Planning Unit (T/TT and Contract)										
Brown	Professor				1					1
Colby*	Professor		8	1		1		10	\$59,000	15
De Graauw**	Assistant Professor		4					6	\$49,000	4
Dempsey	Associate Professor	3	14	8		4	1	12	\$216,000	8
Kelley	Instructor		9			2		1	\$26,000	8
Martin	Associate Professor		12	1		2	4	8	\$490,000	23
Mayfield	Instructor									
O'Neill	Instructor									
Platt	Lab manager/instructor		3		5					12
Ryan	Instructor		23		1	7		5	\$62,000	10
Schroeder	Professor		5	3		1		2	\$524,000	7
Shu	Associate Professor		26					8	~\$1.2 mil	8
Sugg (J)	Associate Professor		6			1		6	\$42,000	4
Sugg (M)	Associate Professor		80+	1		3		15+	~\$7 mil	50
Van de Gevel	Professor, chair		12	1		5	2	7	\$530,000	9
Wang	Assistant Professor		16					1		10
Warner**	Assistant Professor		5	4		1		5	\$420,000	27
Yao	Assistant Professor		6					8	\$255,000	6
Adjunct										
Pipes	Instructor, Geography	1								2

Sharp	Instructor, Planning					2	7			3
Spond	Instructor, Geography		1						\$159,000	1
*Phased retirement **New in fall 2025										

3.F. Professional Involvement, Community Outreach, and Civic Engagement

Faculty demonstrate involvement in the profession through participation in national organizations and/or participation in local, state, regional, and national professional conferences, workshops and other sponsored activities including activities of professional planning organizations. They shall demonstrate community outreach through continuous engagement in activities leading to the advancement of the profession, the University, and progress toward meeting the needs of the broader society.

Criterion 3F Response:

Faculty in the Planning Program are active in the community and in the profession, collectively holding membership in professional organizations such as American Association of Geographers (AAG), American Planning Association (APA), Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), Urban Affairs Association (UAA), Urban Land Institute (ULI), and the Society for American City and Regional Planning History (SACRPH). Recent conferences where they have presented their work include Transportation Research Board, North Carolina Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Active Living Conference, Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, American Planning Association—North Carolina, American Association of Geographers, and Seoul Urban Policy International Conference; they have presented findings on justice and zoning reform at annual conferences for ACSP, APA, and SACRPH.

The most senior of the Planning faculty (Shay) has maintained AICP certification since 2011, through conference attendance, publishing, and workshops. The Planning faculty members serve (or have served) as appointed planning officials: Shay as member (2016-2018) and Chair (2018-2023) of the Town of Boone Planning Commission; Thapa as a member (since 2023) of the Town of Boone Sustainability Committee; and Quattro previously as a Zoning Board Member in Yeadon (PA) and Director of City Planning and Development for San Antonio City Council District 1 (TX), and currently on the Watauga County Housing Council (NC). The Program and the Department count conference presentations and other professional engagement in promotion and tenure decisions; they also value faculty involvement in community-engaged projects and student-mentoring that produce student-authored products, as well as events and appearances to translate research for public consumption.

The professional service and engagement for the Geography faculty, who are part-time in the Planning Program by virtue of teaching courses that are either required for or applied to the Planning major, includes service with—and awards and grants from—institutions such as the American Association of Geographers (AAG), Southeastern Division of AAG, NASA, National Geographic, and more. These are reported in the Department newsletters (as described in this SSR, section 3D). Professional involvement for faculty listed below covers the period 2017-2024.

Table 14. 7-YEAR SUMMARY OF FACULTY PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The data in the table 7-year Summary of Faculty Professional Involvement should be aggregated from the summary faculty CVs in Part IIA of the SSR.

Faculty Name	Job Title	Number of Plans, Design, Policy Reports Submitted to External Clients	Number of Extramural Presentations to Agencies, Firms, Universities, Other Clients	Number of Offices Held; Leadership Positions in Professional Associations and Learned Societies	Number of Offices Held; Memberships on Government or Corporate Boards and Commissions	Number of Editorships and Memberships on Editorial Boards
Full-time in Planning Unit (T/TT and Contract)						
Quattro	Assistant Professor	20	8		4	
Shay	Associate Professor	2			1	
Thapa	Assistant Professor			1	1	
Part-time in Planning Unit (T/TT and Contract)						
Brown	Professor					
Colby*	Professor					
De Graauw**	Assistant Professor		3			
Dempsey	Associate Professor	1		6		3
Kelley	Instructor	1		2	1	1
Martin	Associate Professor		4	2		
Mayfield	Instructor					
O'Neill	Instructor					
Platt	Instructor	3	1			
Ryan	Instructor		2			
Schroeder	Professor	3		2		
Shu	Assistant Professor					
Sugg J	Associate Professor		3			2
Sugg M	Associate Professor		15	1		2
Van de Gevel	Professor and chair			1	4	1
Wang	Assistant Professor					
Warner**	Assistant Professor			2	1	
Yao	Assistant Professor					
Adjunct						
Pipes	Instructor					
Sharp	Instructor	7	15	5	3	
Spond	Instructor					
*Phased retirement						
**New in fall 2025						

3.G. Professional Development

Faculty shall be provided opportunities to continue to develop themselves professionally. Work assignments and other development opportunities shall be such that skills in teaching, research, leadership, professional practice and other creative activities are sufficiently maintained and developed.

Adequate resources shall be available to support faculty professional development, including training with respect to institution policies, student needs, the use of appropriate instructional technology, and topics such as implicit bias. Faculty, especially those from underrepresented groups, should also be provided with opportunities to be mentored throughout their career.

Criterion 3G Response:

Although our University's primary mission as a teaching institution translates to faculty devoting the largest share of their time to course development and teaching-related activities, research and service to the profession and the community are considered essential components of strong and effective pedagogy. Our Department culture and leadership support professional development in a variety of ways. For pre-tenure faculty, committee assignments and non-teaching duties are limited to those that will best position an assistant professor for promotion and tenure, while associate professors are encouraged to connect teaching to research and professional opportunities for students and faculty alike. Service to the profession by faculty members is recognized and encouraged—both to maintain strong links across faculty activities, and to give students a view into the profession for which they are preparing.

Departmental support

The Program, and the Department within which it is housed, supports professional development and values faculty accomplishments beyond the classroom. The Department chair and the College Dean encourage faculty to take advantage of on- and off-campus workshops and symposia to hone and share creative and scholarly products, and to build cross-campus and extended professional communities. Pre-tenure faculty are counseled on the best mix of committee and service work in addition to teaching, to avoid losing focus during the important years before tenure review. Tenured faculty likewise are supported in a balanced professional agenda of teaching, research, and community and professional service, with consideration for fair distribution of Department and university committees as well as extramural service and scholarship. Teaching assignments and opportunities for additional paid teaching are discussed and managed for both equity among faculty and best service to students.

On-campus resources for professional development

The Department chair promotes participation in professional development, by protecting faculty time, seeking fair distribution of responsibilities, and publicizing faculty accomplishments through newsletters and emails. On-campus workshops and programs often are compensated. Examples of professional development opportunities the Planning faculty have tapped include paid summer institutes on course redesign, stipend-earning course adaptation for hybrid/online formats, university-funded projects with community partners on communicating public health and planning concepts, funding for community resilience curriculum and demonstrations using Lego blocks, travel funds and course coverage for professional conferences (including student presenters), and course releases to develop new curriculum and write grant proposals, among others. Coursework includes simulated and real-world planning practice supporting the work of our community partners. Writing done in Planning coursework uses formats compatible with the discipline (e.g., policy reports, memos, staff reports, etc.), to provide exposure and practice in the skills the profession is seeking.

Research support

Offices and research centers across campus actively support research for individual faculty and teams. For example, RIEEE (Research Institute for Environment, Energy, and Economics) regularly conducts workshops and events to foster interdisciplinary collaborations and provides grant-writing guidance and research support; CVs in Part IIA show multiple RIEEE grants over the past decade to Planning faculty. Full-time tenure-track faculty joining the department receive start-up funds and additional university support for publication and grant-writing. Both of the full-time (100%) Planning faculty members (Quattro and Shay) received Summer Research Awards from the College of Arts and Sciences, to support early-career (first or second year) research. Our Planning faculty also have won multiple competitive GRAM (Graduate Research and Mentoring) awards, which recruit exceptional graduate students with higher stipends and enriched programming (thesis research support, 3-Minute Thesis, networking events) while providing dedicated research assistance for faculty. Other programs support faculty and student research, e.g., Undergraduate Research Assistantship (which Shay used to hire a talented senior as a research assistant for sabbatical study), SAFE (Student and Faculty Excellence) Fund, and SWAG (Summer Write a Grant) awards. All faculty in our department get graduate student assistance each semester, with the freedom to work with students on the best balance of teaching and research. Travel is supported by an annual Department travel budget for each faculty member, as well as other travel support from the University Research Council and Office of International Programs (OIP), both of which supported Shay's sabbatical travel. The OIP and Office of Student Research also support students whose work is selected for presentation at conferences with travel funds.

Beyond funding, the IT staff at Appalachian, which includes dedicated Departmental staff as well as campus-wide support and specialized services for specific technology (hardware and software), provides additional computational resources for research. For example, they are providing faculty with computing space in the university's High-performance Computing Cluster. The Office of Research and Innovation (<https://research.appstate.edu/>) offers a suite of services, from consulting on finding funding sources and writing and submitting grant proposals, to research design and project management and more.

Mentoring support

Appalachian's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for Student Success (CETLSS) conducts Peer Mentoring Circles, whose main purpose is to "provide support for faculty and staff at all career levels at App State" (<https://cetlss.appstate.edu/career-support-mentoring/peer-mentoring-circlesalter>). The CETLSS office also provides mentoring (<https://cetlss.appstate.edu/career-engagement-mentoring>) for early- and mid-career faculty as well as for VITAL (visiting, instructor, temporary, adjunct, lecturer) members of the teaching corps, and one-on-one support for other needs (<https://cetlss.appstate.edu/consults-support>). The university has now added Academic Impressions, a suite of programs and tools to support faculty and staff in an array of professional endeavors: <https://www.academicimpressions.com/>. Other support for faculty includes Health Promotion for Faculty and Staff (<https://ihhs.appstate.edu/services-faculty-staff/health-promotion>) and counseling (<https://ihhs.appstate.edu/clinical-services/counseling-faculty-and-staff-cfs>).

Standard 4: Curriculum and Instruction

4. Curriculum and Instruction

Planners are committed to serve the public interest, infusing the values of equity and sustainability into their knowledge and skills as they envision the future and lead in decision-making that affects people and places. They understand the dynamics of cities, suburbs, regions, and the theory and practice of planning. They attend to the diversity of individual and community values. They develop and implement ethical plans, policies and processes. The minimum curriculum criteria below reflect these educational goals. Programs are expected to be innovative and to experiment in developing curricular approaches that achieve the objectives of this standard.

The curriculum should demonstrate consistency and coherence in meeting the Program's mission, goals, and objectives. While an accredited degree program must meet basic minimal performance criteria, PAB recognizes that programs may have different profiles with varying emphases. The Program being reviewed must demonstrate how its curricular content matches the profile emphasized in its overall mission.

Consistent with the Program's mission and strategic plan, course content and co-curricular activities should seek to broaden understanding of historical and contemporary factors across the full range of practice settings from local to global in which planners work, including demographic, environmental, institutional and political variation, and to promote awareness of and respect for differing beliefs, values and expectations of populations served by the profession.

The Program shall provide a curriculum and offer instruction to assure achievement of the knowledge, skills, and values that qualify graduates of accredited degree programs to enter diverse planning practice settings. Programs may do so using such established and familiar learning activities as courses and internships, and other program innovations that prove effective in meeting the criteria.

An accredited degree program must ensure that each graduate demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for competent professional planning in diverse occupational and institutional settings. The criteria below provide a framework for judging the scope and quality of minimum educational outcomes.

Standard 4 Response:

The planning profession uses knowledge, skills, and values to lead on decision-making that serves people and improve places. The faculty believe our Planning Program should reflect the profession's goals and values and should innovate and experiment in developing curriculum to advance the profession, while incorporating content that is specific, meaningful, and useful to the local context. The curriculum must prepare students to practice in varied and complex communities and pursue fair and effective planning practices. While striving to keep up with and incorporate innovation in the discipline, we seek to equip students with the established knowledge, skills, and values that will make them valuable assets in the communities where they choose to practice their profession and promote their personal and professional satisfaction as working planners.

*The Program should demonstrate how it organizes and combines the various courses to meet its educational goals. Course prefixes and numbers of courses required of all students should appear in **boldface** so that it is not necessary to state that they are required.*

4.A. Guiding Values

The Program shall address in its strategic plan its commitment to fundamental ethical and normative principles and ensure that these principles are embedded in a range of required courses, specifically:

Criterion 4A Response:

The sections below detail how the Program's strategic plan commits to three broad guiding values of the discipline, which are incorporated into the curriculum for the B.S.-Community and Regional Planning.

4.A.1. Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion

Key issues of equity, diversity, and social justice, including planners' role in expanding choice and opportunity for all persons; planning for the needs of disadvantaged groups; reducing inequities through critical examination of past and current systems; and promoting racial and economic equity.

Sub-Criterion 4A1 Response:

In all core courses, faculty seek to create an environment of belonging and justice. Course readings include a diversity of authors, diverse speakers from different backgrounds, and case examples spanning broad perspectives. Students are encouraged to challenge narratives, analyze historic and contemporary planning practice, and project how they as future professionals will embrace these principles.

4.A.2. Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice

Environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable communities, reducing impacts of climate change, and creating equitable and climate-adapted futures.

Sub-Criterion 4A2 Response:

This principle is a core feature of our department. We are leaders in the University's Quality Enhancement Plan focusing on integrating climate resiliency and sustainable practices in teaching and learning. A majority of our course offerings are formally designated as climate studies courses and eligible for the university's interdisciplinary Climate Studies attribute. Elective courses in our department dive deep into climate justice while the core courses consider material through this lens.

4.A.3. Professional Ethics and Responsibility

Key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision-making, research, and client representation (including the provisions of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and APA's Ethical Principles in Planning).

Sub-Criterion 4A3 Response:

Students in our program are exposed to APA professional ethics and responsibilities beginning with the first core course **PLN 2410**. Discussions on ethics and responsibility continue in **PLN 3730** with legal focus and expand in **PLN 3432** and **4700** as students navigate and practice

applying these principles to para-professional work. The capstone course PLN 4830 is a professional skills course reinforcing these principles.

4.B. Required Knowledge and Skills of the Profession

The Program shall offer a curriculum that teaches students the essential knowledge and skills central to the planning profession. These required components will be taught in such a manner that it is possible to demonstrate that every graduate has studied them. Ordinarily, this means that they are included in courses required of all students, although other approaches are possible. Programs are encouraged to keep their curriculum in tune with emerging trends in the profession and engaged with contemporary issues. Specifically:

Criterion 4B Response:

The Program provides a grounding in the essential knowledge and skills required of planning professionals, delivered in a concise set of required courses. Courses required for Planning majors are shown below, with codes for PAB standards listed for each. In addition, Planning students take other electives from Community and Regional Planning, Geography, and other departments, e.g., Public Administration, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment, and more.

Required Courses	PAB Required Standards Achieved in Courses required for Planning majors
GHY 1010: Global Environment Systems	<p>PHT: <i>The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>how the history of planning has advanced and hindered opportunities for particular peoples, places and communities</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis</i></p> <p>URD: <i>Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development</i></p> <p>URD: <i>relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being;</i></p> <p>URD: <i>planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts</i></p> <p>URD: <i>how the movement of people, products, and ideas has affected cities and regions</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>written, oral, and graphic communication</i></p>
GHY 1012: Global Change of the Biosphere	<p>PHT: <i>the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis</i></p> <p>URD: <i>Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development</i></p> <p>URD: <i>relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being;</i></p> <p>URD: <i>planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts</i></p> <p>AST: <i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>written, oral, and graphic communication</i></p>

GHY 1020 or 1040 (Justice courses)	<p>PPE: <i>methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis</i></p>
GHY 2310: Cartographic Design and Analysis	<p>AST: <i>quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p> <p>AST: <i>methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i></p> <p>AST: <i>basic understanding of data analytics and urban technology</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>written, oral, and graphic communication</i></p>
PLN 2410: Town City and Regional Planning	<p>PHT: <i>The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>conceptual models about what planning is and how it works</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>how the history of planning has advanced and hindered opportunities for particular peoples, places and communities</i></p> <p>URD: <i>Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development</i></p> <p>URD: <i>relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being;</i></p> <p>URD: <i>how the movement of people, products, and ideas has affected cities and regions</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future</i></p>
PLN 2812: Geospatial Technology in a changing world	<p>PHT: <i>how the history of planning has advanced and hindered opportunities for particular peoples, places and communities</i></p> <p>AST: <i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i></p> <p>AST: <i>quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p> <p>AST: <i>methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i></p> <p>AST: <i>basic understanding of data analytics and urban technology</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>written, oral, and graphic communication</i></p>
PLN 3432: Planning tools and techniques	<p>PHT: <i>The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>conceptual models about what planning is and how it works</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future</i></p> <p>PHT: <i>the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis</i></p>

	<p>URD: <i>Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making;</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>plan creation and implementation</i></p> <p>AST: <i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i></p> <p>AST: <i>quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>professional leadership in the planning context</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>written, oral, and graphic communication</i></p>
<p>PLN 3730: Land, Property, and Law</p>	<p>PHT: <i>how the history of planning has advanced and hindered opportunities for particular peoples, places and communities</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>plan creation and implementation</i></p> <p>AST: <i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i></p> <p>PCL: <i>Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields</i></p>
<p>PLN 3800: Introduction to Quantitative Methods</p>	<p>AST: <i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i></p> <p>AST: <i>quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p> <p>AST: <i>methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i></p> <p>AST: <i>basic understanding of data analytics and urban technology</i></p>
<p>GHY 3812: Geographic Information Systems (GIS)</p>	<p>PHT: <i>The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations</i></p> <p>AST: <i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i></p> <p>AST: <i>quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p> <p>AST: <i>methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i></p> <p>AST: <i>basic understanding of data analytics and urban technology</i></p>
<p>PLN 4700: Planning Studio</p>	<p>PHT: <i>expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts</i></p> <p>PLI: <i>legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally</i></p> <p>URD: <i>Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement</i></p> <p>PPE: <i>plan creation and implementation</i></p> <p>AST: <i>quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p>

	<i>AST: methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i>
	<i>AST: basic understanding of data analytics and urban technology</i>
	<i>PCL: Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields</i>
	<i>PCL: professional leadership in the planning context</i>
	<i>PCL: written, oral, and graphic communication</i>
PLN 4830:	<i>AST: methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i>
Professional	<i>PCL: Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields</i>
Development in	<i>PCL: professional leadership in the planning context</i>
Planning	<i>PCL: written, oral, and graphic communication</i>

4.B.1. General Planning Knowledge in Global Context

The comprehension, representation, and use of ideas and information in the planning field, in the U.S. (or Canada) and internationally including appropriate perspectives from history, social sciences, design, and other allied fields.

Sub-Criterion 4B1 Response:

The tables below describe PAB standards, learning outcomes, and assessments, by area of general planning knowledge. Measurement of student learning outcomes is discussed in greater detail in 4D.

4.B.1.a. Planning History and Theory

The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has advanced and hindered the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works; past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future; the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis.

Sub-Criterion 4B1a Response:

Planning History and Theory (PHT)

PAB Required Standard	Course and Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations</i>	<p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems</p> <p>PLN 2410: Recognize and describe the major historical patterns of urban and regional development and their expression in modern American communities</p> <p>PLN 2410: Identify and explain the significance of the major milestones in the history of planning</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 2 and homework assignments</p> <p>PLN 2410: Quizzes on planning history -> final exam questions on history and evolution of planning</p> <p>PLN 3432: Draft planning documents used in the profession including comprehensive planning chapters, policy memos, staff reports, and a grant proposal</p>

	<p>PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community</p> <p>GHY 3812: Utilize GIS tools to observe past and present trends in planning, while projecting models into the future</p>	<p>GHY 3812: 9 GIS labs and final project</p>
<p><i>How the history of planning has advanced and hindered opportunities for particular peoples, places and communities</i></p>	<p>GHY 1010: apply ethical concepts or perspectives to examine social questions related to sustainability using supporting evidence</p> <p>PLN 2410: Recognize and reflect on how city planning shaped their own communities and cities</p> <p>PLN 2410: Identify and explain the significance of the major milestones in the history of planning</p> <p>PLN 2812: Discuss ethical concerns regarding the use of geospatial tools</p> <p>PLN 3730: Reflect on the impact of landmark cases in Planning law</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 2 and homework assignments</p> <p>PLN 2410: Access assessment where students evaluate the built environment of our community for physical and economic accessibility</p> <p>PLN 2812: Lab exercises, practical projects, unit tests, final exam</p> <p>PLN 3730: Student reflections on historic court cases with equity implications and their impacts on particular groups</p>
<p><i>Expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts</i></p>	<p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to connect seemingly disparate and progressively complex topics to explain natural processes that connect humans with the environment around them</p> <p>PLN 2410: Describe major theories of planning and their differences, similarities, strengths, and weaknesses</p> <p>PLN 3432: Read, understand, and critique planning documents like comprehensive plans and land development ordinances</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 4700: Collaborate with community partners to create context-sensitive planning solutions to localized issues</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 2 and homework assignments</p> <p>PLN 2410: Cumulative class assignments responding to core planning theories, quizzes on principles of core planning theories</p> <p>PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances, THEN drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)</p>

		PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners
<i>Conceptual models about what planning is and how it works</i>	<p>PLN 3432: Think critically and creatively to apply strategic problem-solving to complex planning issues</p> <p>PLN 3432: Read, understand, and critique planning documents like comprehensive plans and land development ordinances</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p>	PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances, THEN drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)
<i>Past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future</i>	<p>PLN 2410: respond to historic planning events and models, including the contexts in which they occurred and how they might be adapted for the future</p> <p>PLN 3432: Think critically and creatively to apply strategic problem-solving to complex planning issues</p>	<p>PLN 2410: Course quizzes 1-5, midterm, and classwork cumulative assignments</p> <p>PLN 3432: drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners); practice AICP examination questions on history and planning scenarios</p>
<i>The role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis</i>	<p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to connect seemingly disparate and progressively complex topics to explain natural processes that connect humans with the environment around them.</p> <p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems.</p> <p>GHY 1010: evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability.</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 1, Final exam, and homework assignments</p> <p>GHY 1012: Exams 1, 2, 3, 10 lab assignments, and chapter quizzes</p> <p>PLN 3432: resource management and environmental planning activities, fieldwork assessing the impacts of the built environment on ecological environment factors like heat, air quality, and pollution</p>

	<p>GHY 1012: Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment</p> <p>GHY 1012: Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability</p> <p>PLN 3432: practice implementing planning tools to address contemporary concerns of cities including resiliency planning, transportation sustainability, and economic stability</p>	
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

4.B.1.b. Planning Law and Institutions

Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally.

Sub-Criterion 4B1b Response:

Planning Law and Institutions (PLI)

PAB Required Standard	Course and Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes</i>	PLN 2410: Introductory understanding of core planning concepts and tools	PLN 2410: Quizzes, midterms, and final exams; practice exercises in class modelling planning tools and skills
	PLN 3730: Recognize & describe land-use regulations	PLN 3730: In-class activities, weekly response papers, midterm exam, final exam, and redevelopment simulation activity on existing planning legal structures and tools
	PLN 3730: the legal rights and privileges associated with private property	
	PLN 3730: Identify and explain implications of land development on planning goals (sustainability, economics, urban design)	
	PLN 3730: Recognize and discuss current and emerging trends in land-use regulations and case law	PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances
<i>Mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making;</i>	PLN 3730: Students will be able to defend the importance of upholding the constitutional rights of the 1 st , 4 th , 5 th , 8 th , and 14 th amendments in local procedures implementing regulatory law.	PLN 3730: Students draft a reflection paper after observing real public hearing recordings discussing how existing procedures supported or did not support constitutional rights for the different participants.
	PLN 3730: Identify and explain implications of land development on planning goals (sustainability,	

	economics, urban design)	PLN 3432: drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)
	PLN 3730: Recognize and discuss current and emerging trends in land-use regulations and case law	
	PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community	
<i>Legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally</i>	PLN 3730: the legal rights and privileges associated with private property	PLN 3730: In-class activities, weekly response papers, midterm exam, final exam, and redevelopment simulation activity on existing planning legal structures and tools
	PLN 3730: research, read, and understand documents used in property law including planning documents, property deeds, case briefs, staff reports, court opinions, etc.	
	PLN 3730: Initiate land development applications (rezoning, building permits, etc.) for business or residential uses	PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances
	PLN 3432: Read, understand, and critique planning documents like comprehensive plans and land development ordinances	PLN 4700: Creating policy and planning documents in collaboration with community partners
	PLN 4700: Consider contextual factors when creating planning documents	

4.B.1.c. Urban and Regional Development

Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development; relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts; interactions – flows of people, materials, ideas, and cultures – across world regions.

Sub-Criterion 4B1c Response:

Urban and Regional Development (URD)

PAB Required Standard	Course and Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development</i>	<p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems.</p> <p>GHY 1012: Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 2, Final exam, and homework assignments</p> <p>GHY 1012: Exams 1, 2, 3, 10 lab assignments, and chapter quizzes</p>

	<p>PLN 2410: Recognize and critically discuss the major challenges facing cities and regions, the ways they are framed by various stakeholders and professional players, and proposed solutions</p> <p>PLN 3432: Think critically and creatively to apply strategic problem-solving to complex planning issues</p> <p>PLN 4700: Consider contextual factors when creating planning documents</p>	<p>PLN 2410: drafting of a policy memo defending their proposals for site redevelopments</p> <p>PLN 3432: drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creating policy and planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p>
<p><i>Relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts</i></p>	<p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to connect seemingly disparate and progressively complex topics to explain natural processes that connect humans with the environment around them.</p> <p>GHY 1010: apply ethical concepts or perspectives to examine social questions related to sustainability using supporting evidence.</p> <p>GHY 1010: evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability.</p> <p>GHY 1012: Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment</p> <p>GHY 1012: Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability</p> <p>PLN 2410: Recognize and reflect on how city planning shaped their own communities and cities</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 1, Final exam, and homework assignments</p> <p>GHY 1012: Exams 1, 2, 3, 10 lab assignments, and chapter quizzes</p> <p>PLN 2410: Quizzes on sustainability and climate weeks, site redesign projects</p>
<p><i>How the movement of people, products, and ideas has affected cities and regions</i></p>	<p>GHY 1010: demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems.</p>	<p>GHY 1010: Exam 2, Final exam, and homework assignments</p> <p>GHY 1012: Exams 1, 2, 3, 10 lab assignments, and chapter quizzes</p>

	<p>GHY 1012: Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment</p> <p>PLN 2410: Recognize and critically discuss the major challenges facing cities and regions, the ways they are framed by various stakeholders and professional players, proposed solutions</p>	<p>PLN 2410: Apply planning concepts to understanding wicked problems through cumulative classwork assignments</p>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4.B.2. Skills and Tools for Planning Practice

The use and application of knowledge to perform tasks required in the practice of planning.

Sub-Criterion 4B2 Response:

The tables below describe PAB standards, learning outcomes, and assessments, by area of skills and tools used in planning practice.

4.B.2.a. Planning Process and Engagement

Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future.

Sub-Criterion 4B2a Response:

Planning Process and Engagement (PPE)

PAB Required Standard	Course and Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement</i>	<p>PLN 2410: Converse in the language of planning, and gain familiarity with tools and their application</p> <p>PLN 3432: Read, understand, and critique planning documents like comprehensive plans and land development ordinances</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community</p> <p>PLN 3432: Communicate effectively with clearly expressed positions for real-world audiences on planning topics and concerns</p>	<p>PLN 2410: cumulative homework assignments and responding to quiz/exam questions; poster project that includes a policy memo defending their redesign</p> <p>PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances, THEN drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in</p>

	<p>PLN 4700: Communicate effectively with professionals (community partners) and community members to both collect and convey planning information</p>	<p>collaboration with community partners</p>
<p><i>Plan creation and implementation</i></p>	<p>PLN 2410: Critique existing planning documents on their structure and content</p> <p>PLN 3730: research, read, and understand documents used in property law including planning documents, property deeds, case briefs, staff reports, court opinions, etc.</p> <p>PLN 3432: Read, understand, and critique planning documents like comprehensive plans and land development ordinances</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community</p> <p>PLN 3432: Communicate effectively with clearly expressed positions for real-world audiences on planning topics and concerns</p> <p>PLN 4700: Synthesize assessment and recommendations into a comprehensive planning document</p>	<p>PLN 2410: cumulative homework assignments and responding to quiz/exam questions; poster project redesigning based on future land use needs that includes a policy memo defending their redesign</p> <p>PLN 3730: identify supporting text in planning documents during simulation, respond to exam questions on the purpose and legal importance of having planning documents (what must they have, etc.)</p> <p>PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances, THEN drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p>
<p><i>Methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future</i></p>	<p>PLN 2410: Recognize and critically discuss the major challenges facing cities and regions, the ways they are framed by various stakeholders and professional players, and proposed solutions</p> <p>PLN 3730: research, read, and understand documents used in property law including planning documents, property deeds, case briefs, staff reports, court opinions, etc.</p>	<p>PLN 2410: cumulative homework assignments and responding to quiz/exam questions; poster project redesigning based on future land use needs that includes a policy memo defending their redesign</p>

		PLN 3730: Simulation activity where students practice redeveloping parcels through the city's codes and procedures
--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4.B.2.b. Analytical Skills and Tools

Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting; methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization; data analytics and urban technology.

Sub-Criterion 4B2b Response:

Analytical Skills and Tools (AST)

PAB Required Standard	Course and Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research</i>	<p>GHY 1012: Successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions</p> <p>GHY 2310: develop a basic knowledge of cartographic communication theory, map use, data selection and manipulation, and map design.</p> <p>PLN 2410: Recognize and reflect on how city planning shaped their own communities and cities</p> <p>PLN 2812: Describe the three primary geospatial technologies, how they work, and how they're used.</p> <p>PLN 2812: Analyze and Visualize geospatial data using a variety of geospatial software.</p> <p>PLN 3730: research, read, and understand documents used in property law including planning documents, property deeds, case briefs, staff reports, court opinions, etc.</p> <p>PLN 3432: Think critically and creatively to apply strategic problem-solving to complex planning issues</p>	<p>GHY 1012: Exams 1, 2, 3, 10 lab assignments, and chapter quizzes</p> <p>GHY 2310: Weekly map exercises culminating in mapping portfolio</p> <p>PLN 2410: Access assessment where students evaluate the built environment of our community for physical and economic accessibility, Review of a comprehensive plan document including annotated critiques</p> <p>PLN 2812: Lab exercises, practical projects, unit tests, final exam</p> <p>PLN 3730: weekly case responses where students must read case briefs and associated documents then draft a response based on planning law principles and procedures</p>

	<p>PLN 3432: Read, understand, and critique planning documents like comprehensive plans and land development ordinances</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 3800: Demonstrate a basic understanding of descriptive statistics</p> <p>PLN 3800: Demonstrate the ability to apply and interpret inferential statistical techniques</p> <p>GHY 3812: develop a lens through which students view the world and problems facing them, with a focus on spatial analysis.</p>	<p>PLN 3432: Critiques of comprehensive planning documents, staff report examples, and two local zoning ordinances, THEN drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)</p> <p>PLN 3800: Exams 1 and 2, Final exam, 10 laboratory assignments</p> <p>GHY 3812: 9 GIS lab assignments</p>
<p><i>Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting</i></p>	<p>PLN 2812: Describe the three primary geospatial technologies, how they work, and how they're used.</p> <p>PLN 2812: Explain what geospatial data is and why it is important</p> <p>PLN 2812: Analyze and Visualize geospatial data using a variety of geospatial software.</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 3800: Demonstrate a basic understanding of descriptive statistics</p> <p>PLN 3800: Differentiate between parametric and nonparametric testing procedures</p> <p>PLN 3800: Demonstrate ability to apply and interpret inferential statistical techniques</p> <p>GHY 3812: initiating, completing and presenting basic and mid-level GIS/Spatial operations.</p>	<p>PLN 2812: Lab exercises, practical projects, unit tests, final exam</p> <p>PLN 3432: drafting of mock planning documents (comprehensive plans, grant proposal, and staff reports in collaboration with community partners)</p> <p>PLN 3800: Exams 1 and 2, Final exam, 10 laboratory assignments</p> <p>GHY 3812: 9 GIS lab assignments, final exam and midterm</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p>

	PLN 4700: Conduct thorough, location-specific analysis using primary and secondary data	
<i>Methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization</i>	<p>GHY 2310: develop a basic knowledge of cartographic communication theory, map use, data selection and manipulation, and map design.</p> <p>GHY 2310: create and assemble a digital portfolio of original thematic maps</p> <p>PLN 2812: Identify various sources of geospatial data and how to obtain data from these sources.</p> <p>PLN 2812: Analyze and Visualize geospatial data using a variety of geospatial software.</p> <p>PLN 3800: Demonstrate a basic understanding of the R statistical computing environment.</p> <p>GHY 3812: initiating, completing and presenting basic and mid-level GIS/Spatial operations.</p> <p>PLN 4700: Conduct thorough, location-specific analysis using primary and secondary data</p> <p>PLN 4830: Develop professional materials using mapping technology to convey a story</p>	<p>GHY 2310: Weekly map exercises culminating in mapping portfolio</p> <p>PLN 2812: Lab exercises, practical projects, unit tests, final exam</p> <p>PLN 3800: Exams 1 and 2, Final exam, 10 laboratory assignments</p> <p>GHY 3812: 9 GIS lab assignments, final exam and midterm</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p> <p>PLN 4830: GIS Story map of personal websites</p>
<i>Basic understanding of data analytics and urban technology</i>	<p>GHY 2310: obtain a basic level of proficiency with Adobe Illustrator for map design</p> <p>PLN 2812: Propose ways in which geospatial tools can be applied to problem-solving scenarios in a variety of disciplines.</p> <p>PLN 2812: Troubleshoot issues with geospatial technologies.</p> <p>PLN 3800: Describe and utilize correlation analysis, and basic regression analysis.</p> <p>PLN 3800: Demonstrate a basic understanding of the R statistical computing environment.</p>	<p>GHY 2310: Weekly map exercises culminating in mapping portfolio</p> <p>PLN 2812: Lab exercises, practical projects, unit tests, final exam</p> <p>PLN 3800: Exams 1 and 2, Final exam, 10 laboratory assignments</p> <p>GHY 3812: 9 GIS lab assignments, skill quizzes, final exam and midterm</p>

	<p>GHY 3812: initiating, completing and presenting basic and mid-level GIS/Spatial operations.</p> <p>PLN 4700: Practically apply planning skills to identify, assess, address planning concerns</p>	<p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4.B.2.c. Professional, Communication, and Leadership Skills

Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication.

Sub-Criterion 4B2c Response:

Professional, Communication, and Leadership Skills (PCL)

PAB Required Standard	Course and Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields</i>	<p>GHY 1012: Collaborate effectively with others in shared processes of inquiry and problem-solving</p> <p>PLN 3730: Initiate land development applications (rezoning, building permits, etc.) for business or residential uses</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community</p> <p>PLN 3432: Communicate effectively with clearly expressed positions for real-world audiences on planning topics and concerns</p> <p>PLN 4700: Practically apply planning skills that identify, assess, and convey planning concerns</p> <p>PLN 4830: Refine your understanding of the fields of geography and planning, and your chosen place within the discipline</p>	<p>GHY 1012: Collaboration on weekly lab assignments and class activities</p> <p>PLN 3730: Simulation activity where students practice redeveloping parcels through the city's codes and procedures</p> <p>PLN 3432: Final exam project, grant proposal with a community partner (group project); Team discussions on AICP practice scenario questions</p> <p>PLN 4700: semester studio project with community partners</p> <p>PLN 4830: Informational Interview with community partner</p>
<i>Professional leadership in the planning context</i>	<p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p>	<p>PLN 3432: Students lead a mock community workshop for PLN 2410 students regarding a simulated development</p>

	<p>PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community</p> <p>PLN 3432: Communicate effectively with clearly expressed positions for real-world audiences on planning topics and concerns</p> <p>PLN 4700: Practically apply planning skills to develop strategic, context-specific recommendations</p> <p>PLN 4830: Assemble materials that will help you achieve professional goals (i.e., a resume, cover letter, and professional portfolio)</p>	<p>proposal (street revitalization, neighborhood amenity proposal, etc.); Creation of grant proposals in collaboration with community partners to support their work</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p> <p>PLN 4830: professional portfolios conveying their personal skill set and value relating to professional work in planning</p>
<i>Written, oral, and graphic communication</i>	<p>GHY 1010: communicate effectively and draw sound conclusions and rationale based on relevant scientific, historic, and cultural information</p> <p>GHY 1012: Articulate and comprehend effectively, using verbal or non-verbal communication suitable to topic, purpose, and audience</p> <p>GHY 2310: create and assemble a digital portfolio of original thematic maps</p> <p>PLN 2410: Converse in the language of planning, and gain familiarity with tools and their application</p> <p>PLN 2812: Communicate geospatial information to people with varying understanding of geospatial concepts.</p> <p>PLN 3432: Research and manipulate a broad array of primary and secondary data from credible sources in order to synthesize the findings for planning documents</p> <p>PLN 3432: Develop language and protocols to effectively work with officials, planning staff, and the broader community</p>	<p>GHY 1010: homework assignments</p> <p>GHY 1012: Written responses to lab assignments and exam questions</p> <p>PLN 2410: Written response to accessibility of their communities, posters conveying a site re-design with accompanying policy memo defending their proposal</p> <p>GHY 2310: Reflective essay accompanying portfolio of maps</p> <p>PLN 2812: Lab exercises, practical projects, unit tests, final exam</p> <p>PLN 3432: Students lead a mock community workshop for PLN 2410 students regarding a simulated development proposal (street revitalization, neighborhood amenity proposal, etc.); Creation of grant proposals in collaboration</p>

	<p>PLN 3432: Communicate effectively with clearly expressed positions for real-world audiences on planning topics and concerns</p> <p>PLN 4700: Practically apply planning skills that identify, assess, and convey planning concerns</p> <p>PLN 4830: Identify and articulate your professional goals (next 3-5 years)</p>	<p>with community partners to support their work; draft staff reports following fieldwork assessments in areas of land use planning, transportation planning, and environmental planning</p> <p>PLN 4700: Creation of planning reports, maps, and draft planning documents in collaboration with community partners</p> <p>PLN 4830: Creating your E-portfolio/website and Mock Interview assignments</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4.C. Electives

Beyond the required courses in the curriculum, Programs shall offer additional courses to provide both greater depth and breadth of material. The curriculum shall contain elective opportunities for students to gain exposure to a range of planning domains, other professions, and emerging trends and issues. Programs have the option of grouping elective courses together to create areas of specialization that provide students with a concentrated mastery of a specific planning domain.

Criterion 4C Response:

Beyond the required Planning courses discussed above (**PLN 2410, 3432, 3730, 4700, and 4830**) and required Geography courses (**GHY 1010, 1020/1040, 2310, 2812, 3800, 3812**), our Program has two kinds of electives: pairs or triplets from which students must choose one to meet a specific theme (e.g., climate, choosing either **PLN 4030—Planning for Climate Resilience** OR **PLN 4460—Environmental Planning and Policy**), and more freeform electives where students are required to take a given number of Planning or Geography courses (or acceptable substitutions) above a given level (2000). These choices include 1) one ‘integrative learning experience’ course, chosen from among Geography or Planning courses relating to national parks, food justice, global health, political geography, and community development; and 2) one sustainability course—either **PLN 4240—Sustainable Transportation Planning** or **PLN 4450—Planning for Sustainable Systems**.

In addition, students take three other Geography courses, and nine other Planning or related courses. Electives are drawn primarily from Geography and Planning courses (all taught by Department faculty); most of those taken in other departments are taught by faculty who are familiar with our Department, and with whom we have a cordial working relationship that includes efforts to assure student success when taking courses from other departments. Most Planning majors earn a GIS certificate (a four-course sequence); many also minor in Sustainable Development, Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment, or others. Heavily subscribed courses, particularly those taken by both Geography and Planning majors, are offered fall and spring semesters, and often in summer; other courses are offered at least yearly. Academic

advising for Planning majors, done in-house by faculty, alerts students to course sequencing and frequency, to assure students get the coursework they need without extra semesters.

4.D. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Program, or the Department in which it resides, shall have a clearly defined approach, methodology, and indicators for measuring student learning outcomes and competencies for the expected knowledge, skills, and guiding values that students are expected to acquire. Evidence should connect materials covered in the core curriculum to the learning outcomes sought and achieved for students.

Criterion 4D Response:

We describe in the tables above (4B) how each required course aligns with required SLOs with corresponding assessments. For example, as the introductory required course, **PLN 2410** introduces sustainability as the current dominant—if not universal—planning paradigm, and weaves equity and social justice throughout the semester, using a variety of media (textbook, videos, exercises, and atlases). Students are asked about these values in assessments (quizzes and exams), and class exercises, such as Opportunity Atlas (<https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>) or discussions about public attitudes and local government actions relating to unhoused populations, aggressive panhandling, or hostile design in public spaces. Professional ethics have a dedicated unit in **PLN 2410** and are also raised in other relevant courses. Environmental courses, e.g., **PLN 4460** (Environmental Planning and Policy) and **PLN 4030** (Planning for Climate Resilience), naturally have more content related to climate and environment, but still incorporate values relating to equity and justice, and to ethics.

Assignments in upper-level Planning courses call for students to consider these same guiding values, such as a writing assignment relating to cities that have successfully moved toward sustainability in **PLN 4450** (Planning for Sustainable Systems), and mobility equity assessments in **PLN 4240** (Sustainable Transportation Planning). Students demonstrate their understanding of these values in quizzes and exams, and their mastery and application of them in written and visual assignments. Applied courses in the senior year accelerate and formalize the transition from study to practice: the required Planning Studio builds communication, collaborative, and public engagement skills that also involve research design and data collection and analysis, while independent study and internships give students individual experience in research and practice that can be transferred to professional and academic pursuits.

A distinctive requirement of our Department and Planning Program is the capstone course **PLN 4830** (Professional Development in Planning), in which students make a website with a GIS storymap, among other products. Students develop a portfolio in both online and print formats and include key elements—their own research and classroom products, descriptions of their accomplishments and service on campus and in the community, and their articulated personal and professional goals. To our knowledge, *this required course is unique* in the state. Several notable examples from recent graduates are found at these public links:

- Cherubala: <https://ncherubala.wixsite.com/planner-malikia>
- Reed-Kelley: <https://reedkellyrm.wixsite.com/portfolio>
- Werner: <https://wernerpn.wixsite.com/patrickwerner>

Because much of the Program curriculum focuses on collaborating with real-world partners and tackling applied projects, the usefulness of students' class products is pivotal. Faculty in the department assess the quality of student work based on its level of professionalism and readiness for sharing with industry or community partners. Faculty ask: Could this be used as-is by a planning professional or community agency? What changes or improvements are necessary before this could be an acceptable and useful professional product?

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are listed in the syllabus of each course and refreshed each semester. In the aggregate, these SLOs provide a set of learning goals that can be distilled into several major types of knowledge and skill-building:

- A foundation of geographic principles—physical, human, and social
- Spatial and quantitative skills, including mapping and cartography, GIS, and statistics
- A foundation in planning theory, history, and basic principles
- Core competency in the practice of planning—land use law, planning techniques and tools
- Advanced / specialized courses, e.g., transportation, urban systems, community development, environmental policy and planning, climate-ready communities
- Applied and collaborative coursework generating tangible products—professional development capstone, studios, internships, research

Course components and student learning outcomes

Listed below (and in Part IIC, p. 68) are key features of all courses required for the B.S. in Community and Regional Planning, including those in choice sets where at least one course is required. This list excludes required courses that have GHY prefixes (cross-listed as PLN) with heavy enrollment by Geography majors.

PLN course	Includes applied assignment, project, assessment?	Involves a community partner?	Linked with other PLN courses?	Generates product for internal or external events?	Final evaluation mechanism
2410	Yes—field observation exercises, policy memo writing	Sometimes, e.g., community engaged research, products for city or county	Sometimes, e.g., piloting research instruments, inter-class workshopping	Yes, e.g., posters, survey summaries, and policy memos	Exam
3432	Yes—team projects using tools from planning practice	Yes, e.g., Town of Boone, Watauga or other counties, Housing Council	Yes, particularly planning studio (4700) and intro course (2410)	Yes, e.g., draft staff reports, observational reports, work-shop facilitation	Grant proposal, project, comprehensive planning element
3730	Yes—reflection on public meetings, land development simulation	No	Sometimes	No	Exam
4030	Yes – applied class projects on climate resilience planning	Sometimes, e.g., non-profit clients for climate-related projects		Yes, reports	Exam, report

4240	Yes—field exercises on trails, transit, streets, intersections	Sometimes, e.g., transit/street audits	Sometimes, e.g., piloting field instruments	Not to date—but there is potential for the future	Exam
4450	Urban systems field work, e.g., energy, water, waste, food	Sometimes, e.g., reports for county officials	Sometimes, e.g., bike/ped audits coordinated w/4240	Sometimes, e.g., posters and reports for external clients	Project or Report
4460	Yes – memo on applied environmental policy topic	Sometimes, e.g. student work with non-profits		Yes, posters for ASU Research Event	Exam, research poster, policy memo
4700	Yes—semester-long team R&D project	Yes—client-serving; generate scope of work, deliverables	Often, e.g., piloting instruments or presenting findings	Yes, poster, memos, reports, and workshop facilitation	Project or report; slide-decks; datasets
4900	Yes—individual internship	Yes—private, public, or non-profit sector hosts	N/A	Sometimes—depending on nature of host institution	Host evaluation; student report
5470	Yes—field exercises, data collection, charrettes	Yes—community-serving team project with non-profit	Sometimes, e.g., sharing group project from previous years	Yes—memos, slide-decks, reports for community events	Exam

Through serial completion of required courses, students gain a deeper understanding of how theoretical, methodological, and practical knowledge apply to the planning profession, and develop analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills in transportation, environmental, community development, and other areas of planning. Our classes build on one another—not only by relying on the foundation of knowledge and skills in lower-level courses to develop the content in more advanced or specialized courses, but also by having students visit other classes to share their projects, or to pilot and critique instruments developed for data collection and other research endeavors. This interaction may occur with different classes in the same semester, or involve students in the same course taken in sequential semesters. An example of students in different courses interacting in the same semester is students in the Planning Studio (**PLN 4700**), engaged in developing and deploying a survey or focus group instrument, who pilot a draft instrument in **PLN 2410** (Town, City, and Regional Planning) or in a specialized course such as **PLN 4240** (Transportation Planning), then revise the instrument before deploying it. The products of that semester’s Planning Studio then may become part of a multi-semester linked effort, with other students picking up the project. A spring 2025 grant from QEP Pathways to Resilience supported travel to the National Planning Conference in Denver by three advanced students, who are preparing a slidedeck to share in a variety of classrooms in fall 2025.

Linking courses with community partners aligns with national educational trends, as municipal jurisdictions across the nation are reaching a nexus requiring innovative solutions to address increasing crises in housing, transportation, climate resilience, social justice, and social services.

Watauga County and the Town of Boone are among those encountering the burden of multi-faceted and complex issues requiring modern solutions. Current burdens on these jurisdictions exceed existing staff capacity. Our applied approach to curriculum creates an opportunity for inter-disciplinary research with practical applications for our students. In 2024, our undergraduate students, under the leadership of Planning faculty, investigated 11 planning areas within the context of Watauga County to produce implementable policy recommendations supporting the work of our community partners. For each target area, students conducted spatial analyses and surveys/interviews, and analyzed partner data using methods that reflect best practices in City Planning. Student products included policy reports, policy memos, and a final full-scale existing conditions report for use by the Town of Boone Planning Department, Watauga County Housing Council, and Town of Boone Human Relations Commission.

Using the PAB curriculum map template, we summarize below (and in Part IIC, p. 69, full-scale) how Planning courses (required or in choice sets) meet goals for the knowledge and skills that are essential for young planners. We exclude here required Geography courses, for the sake of clarity, but note that those classes equip student with a foundation in geographic principles, spatial and quantitative skills, and communication and collaboration experience.

VERSION 2 CURRICULUM MAP

Curriculum Map Courses Required of All Students	PUN 2410—Town, City, and Regional Planning	PUN 3432—Planning Tools and Techniques	PUN 3730—Land, Property, and Law	PUN 4030—Planning for Climate Resilience	PUN 4240—Sustainable Transportation Planning	PUN 4450—Planning for Sustainable Systems	PUN 4460—Environmental Policy and Planning	PUN 4700—Planning Studio	PUN 4830—Professional Development in Planning	PUN 5470—Community & Economic Development
A. Guiding Values										
1) <i>Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion</i> : key issues of equity, diversity, and social justice, including planners' role in expanding choice and opportunity for all persons; planning for the needs of disadvantaged groups; reducing inequities through critical examination of past and current systems; and promoting racial and economic equity.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2) <i>Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice</i> : environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable communities, reducing impacts of climate change, and creating equitable and climate-adapted futures.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3) <i>Professional Ethics and Responsibility</i> : key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision-making, research, and client representation (including the provisions of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and APA's Ethical Principles in Planning).	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓

B. Required Knowledge and Skills of the Profession										
B1. General Planning Knowledge in Global Context										
a) <i>Planning History</i> : The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has advanced and hindered the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works; past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future; the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis.	✓	✓	✓				✓			
b) <i>Planning Law and Institutions</i> : Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally.	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
c) <i>Urban and Regional Development</i> : Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development; relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts; interactions – flows of people, materials, ideas, cultures – across world regions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B2. Skills and Tools for Planning Practice										
a) <i>Planning Process and Engagement</i> : Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future.	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
b) <i>Analytical Skills and Tools</i> : Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting; methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization; data analytics and urban technology.		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
c) <i>Professional, Communication, and Leadership Skills</i> : Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication.		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Competencies via electives										
<i>Asset mapping and SWOT analysis</i>									✓	✓
<i>Climate policy assessment, GHG accounting</i>				✓			✓	✓		
<i>Environmental permits</i>								✓		
<i>Economic development</i>							✓			✓
<i>Transportation planning field tools</i>					✓	✓		✓		

Measuring Student Learning

The Program assesses knowledge and skill acquisition with variety of measures—direct and indirect. For foundational knowledge, direct measures include intake/exit questions for the introductory course **PLN 2410** (Town, City and Regional Planning) and the core courses on Land, Property and Law (**PLN 3730**) and Planning Techniques (**PLN 3432**). For example:

PLN 2410 intake—required but ungraded questions (short essay), week 1

- What do planners do?
- How does planning affect the lives of residents?

PLN 2410 exit: intake questions are repeated as final exam short essays (a paragraph) and graded for planning-aware language about planning practice, tools, and impacts on communities, with students providing specific examples from the semester.

Other direct assessments of student knowledge come from tests and from scores on text and visual products such as written assignments (e.g., position papers, mental mapping using *Lynch's Elements of the City*, checklists or frameworks from organizations such as Congress for

the New Urbanism, Project for Public Spaces, or Center for Neighborhood Technology), and products such as photo-essays, sketches, slidedecks, and posters.

Examples from our foundation courses: Students in **PLN 3432** (Planning Techniques) complete three quizzes on core planning terminology, history, and theory early in the semester to gauge their understanding of important planning concepts. They complete in-class assessments that mirror practical ministerial land use decisions and infrastructure assessments. The major assignments of the semester also mirror practice, including drafting a Staff Report and a Comprehensive Planning Element (group assignment). Students in **PLN 3730** (Land, Property, and Law), in addition to midterm and final exam assessments to gauge their understanding of key planning law concepts, complete ‘exit’ exercises during most class periods, testing their understanding of core land use vocabulary, legal concepts, and limitations. For example, the class session introducing regulatory takings concludes with the students voting on whether or not a brief scenario (based on case law) is a regulatory taking. They each answer, explain why/why not, and then the class concludes with a brief discussion of their responses and the correct answer based on court opinion.

The acquisition and development of skills is assessed directly with grades and scores, e.g., in required GIS and mapping courses and advanced courses that use field tools, or that apply professional planning tools to redesign, recommend, or engage and communicate with community partners or the public. For example, field exercises in **PLN 4240**—Sustainable Transportation Planning assess bicycle/pedestrian conditions, transit service and stop/shelter quality, or performance of multi-modal intersections or trail systems. At the end of the semester, students in **PLN 4240** redesign a street cross-section using an off-the-shelf tool (e.g., StreetMix or ReStreet), and justify the design and features by drawing on their knowledge of land use and transportation planning and policy, multi-modal infrastructure, transit and non-motorized modes, travel behavior, equity considerations, emerging shared mobility models, and more. The spring 2025 **PLN 4240/5240** class conducted an onboard rider intercept survey for our regional transit system (AppalCART) and delivered to the transit director a memo with methods and preliminary findings as well as a slidedeck.

Finally, other direct measures of knowledge and skill acquisition come from evaluations from internship or research mentors for advanced students engaged in applied work. Students in the Planning Studio (**PLN 4700**) complete a reflection about working with/for clients and as part of a team on an applied R&D project. After graduation, AICP, CZO, and other certifications provide additional direct evidence of achievement (reported in Table 7, and Part IIC, p. 30).

Indirect measures for our students throughout their academic programs take the form of course grades, as well as honors, awards and scholarships. Exceptional undergraduates are co-authors on conference presentations and publications. Cumulatively, at the end of their programs, we can assess their accomplishments from GPAs (total and major), as well as from student self-assessments—collected with an exit survey of graduating seniors, to assess their preparation for employment in terms of knowledge, skills, and ethics and aspirations of the public-serving planning profession.

As part of our self-study (described in Part IIC starting on p. 20), where we surveyed Planning graduates and community partners, we also queried current students. This involved both online surveys of students enrolled in Planning courses, and a formal session (focus group) with the Student Planners Association (SPA) to share the draft SSR and solicit the input of these particularly engaged Planning students. The instruments and data (anonymous survey responses of students in current Planning courses, and a transcript of a meeting with SPA students) are found in Part IIC, on pp. 32-37 and pp. 38-48, respectively, and summarized here.

The SPA members reported a variety of reasons for enrolling in the Planning B.S., including long-standing interest in transit, housing, and other planning topics. Several noted that our state's flagship university (UNC—Chapel Hill) does not have the undergraduate planning degree they were seeking, leaving them to choose between East Carolina (a PAB-accredited undergraduate program) and the mountain setting of Appalachian State University. One came for Geography, then found the introductory Planning course (required of all Geography majors) intriguing, particularly after doing a GIS internship. Asked where they hope to end up and what they hope to do after graduation, students provided a variety of responses, such as managing a transit agency, planning bike/ped transportation, promoting walkable neighborhoods, planning for equity, community-based planning, and more.

Students weighed in on what they think works well in our curriculum—and what is missing or needs improvement. The environmental planning and climate planning courses are dense, and address environmental and climate impacts as well as the logistics of developing comprehensive or environmental plans. A division into several courses might make this focus area more manageable. There was high interest in bringing in more practitioner adjuncts—with high praise for the practitioner who taught **PLN 3432** for two years (AICP, with 30+ years of experience). Students also would like to see more on economics—both economic base analysis (covered in **PLN 3432**) and community economics, as well as more engineering and design content. More training in public-facing engagement would be beneficial. These Student Planners Association members affirmed that the Program should continue to provide a comprehensive foundation in planning, because students don't know where they'll end up, and want to maintain their options. Finally, the SPA students called for better advertising of the Planning degree, including on our website.

The most clearcut positive reviews went to the introductory course **PLN 2410** (Town, City, and Regional Planning), and the two core competency courses, **PLN 3432** (Planning Techniques) and **PLN 3730** (Land, Property, and Law). Two of these three required courses for Planning majors (**PLN 2410** and **3730**) are also General Education courses open to any undergraduate student on campus and serve as major recruiters for the Community and Regional Planning major. The timely relevant content of these courses was noted as important—connecting with the lives and interests of all students (not only Planning majors). Students called **PLN 3730** (Land, Property, and Law) excellent—and not enough, requesting a second course.

In November 2023, we invited students enrolled in fall 2023 Planning courses (**PLN 2410, 3730, 4450, and 4030**) to provide feedback in an online survey (Part IIC, pp. 32-37). The small sample of 28 responses represents about 14% of enrolled undergraduates in a semester with fewer Planning courses than normal (one faculty member on sabbatical, another on reduced teaching load). The survey of students currently enrolled in Planning courses produced generally positive comments and actionable criticisms. The survey asked about majors (and the Planning minor), whether the course was a first Planning course for the respondents and whether required for their majors, what they like most and least about the courses, and (for Planning majors) what courses, skills and activities they think are most useful in preparing them for employment. Most responses (nearly 4 in 5) were from students enrolled in the introductory course, **PLN 2410** (Town, City, and Regional Planning), with smaller shares in **PLN 3730** (Land, Property and Law) and urban systems **PLN 4450** (Planning for Sustainable Systems). Key findings include:

- First Planning course: 86%
- Planning, Geography, GIS major—21%; Construction, Architecture, Building Science—57%
- Course required for major: 46%

Asked about what students most liked about their Planning course, common answers were ‘fun’ and ‘interesting,’ as well as exposure to a new way to look at cities and communities, and information that is relevant for their majors or professional plans. Criticisms included the large classes (making discussion difficult), heavy reading and work load, and some dense material. Students (whether Planning or from other majors, such as Construction Management) generally see the content as useful and relevant to their chosen careers. Two quotes stand out as pointers to potentially fruitful recruiting for majors, and suggest we should branch out across campus and focus on reaching students earlier:

“This is an amazing course, and if I had stumbled onto it before SD [Sustainable Development], then I definitely would’ve done PLN as a major”

“I recommend this for anyone in the applied and public history concentration. [...] The ability to understand the built environment and the role of local government in that process adds another layer of understanding in local history.”

4.E. Instructional Delivery and Scheduling

Courses shall be taught by qualified faculty. In general, most required courses will be taught by fulltime planning faculty. Courses shall be offered in formats and times to assure appropriate student access to them and timely completion of program requirements.

Criterion 4E Response:

Required Planning courses taken by Community and Regional Planning majors are taught almost exclusively by full-time faculty members in our Department. The course of study includes six Geography courses, all taught by full-time faculty with PhDs—the exception being the introductory spatial analysis course (**GHY/PLN 2812**), which may be taught by a full-time Department instructor with a graduate degree in geography and GIS expertise. Planning majors also take four required Planning courses (**PLN 2410, PLN 3432, PLN 3730**, and the Planning

Studio **PLN 4700**), usually taught by Planning faculty (full-time tenured/tenure track with PhDs); in 2021 and 2022, the Planning Techniques course (**PLN 3432**) was taught by an adjunct instructor (AICP) with over 30 years of varied and senior planning experience—and an early student in our Planning Program. Beyond the required six Geography courses (including GIS and quantitative analysis) and four required Planning courses, Planning majors take three additional Geography courses and nine other Planning courses, most taught by full-time Department faculty with PhDs and tenure (or tenure-track). Some Planning electives may be met with courses from other Departments (usually Public Administration, Sustainable Development, or Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment); most of these are taught by PhD-holding full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty in those departments, with the exception of some Technology courses taught by experts with Masters degrees and extensive applied experience. Many of our Planning courses incorporate projects and guest speakers from the practice, who share knowledge and insights with students; however, the full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty retain control of the courses, in content, activities, and assessments. The Program of Study for Community and Regional Planning is shown in Part IIC, p. 62-63.

Planning faculty have applied experience—explicitly in practice (such as legal and zoning research and service as a City Council director for the seventh largest city in the United States, Zoning Board Member in a Pennsylvania town, chair of the local Planning Commission), planning research consultant for land development law firms, and in community-engaged research and practice in our home community of Boone, as well as other North Carolina towns and counties (particularly those that fall within our seven-county High Country Council of Governments). Planning faculty also are active in publishing, presenting, and reviewing scholarly work, and in translating research for the public. For example, the current Planning Program director and a health geographer from the Department joined with a public health scholar to hire an exceptional undergraduate student, who used her spatial and quantitative skills to map social determinants of health in several novel formats, which were incorporated into a public health campaign on health risks of climate change. That same student continued in the Department for a graduate degree and published a paper from her thesis.

Course sequencing supports the most common course of study, where students declare the Community and Regional Planning major during their sophomore years. For students who join the major later, or whose study is interrupted by study abroad or other academic requirements, faculty (supported by the chair) may substitute or waive requirements, or offer independent or small-group courses, to meet graduation requirements and provide students with a pathway that provides the core academic requirements and positions them to pursue employment or graduate studies upon graduation. For example, **PLN 2410** is offered fall, spring, and summer, so that potential students can get a look at the major at any time; this General Education course enrolls over 300 students annually and serves as the first point of recruiting for future majors. The core courses **PLN 3730** and **PLN 3432** currently are offered fall and spring semesters, respectively, although enrollment in some years has prompted the Program to offer them both semesters; faculty advising guides students to pick up these two courses as soon as possible after they declare the major. All other Planning electives are offered once annually (either fall or spring), and scheduled carefully, with consideration for other required courses to

minimize schedule conflicts. The required Geography courses (including GIS, quantitative analysis, and portfolio) are offered both fall and spring, with registration priority tied to class status (seniors first, then juniors, etc.). Geography electives are offered either annually or both semesters. For students with complex registrations (study abroad, double majors, change of major, minors) who are seeking to graduate without undue delay, summers are often used for credit-earning internships, independent study, and a few high-enrollment Geography courses.

4.F. Facilities

Students, faculty and staff shall have access to sufficient physical resources and facilities to achieve the Program's mission and objectives. This includes facilities for instruction, student work, and offices.

Criterion 4F Response:

The Program is housed within the Department of Geography and Planning, which occupies two floors of a building in the heart of campus: <https://geo.appstate.edu/facilities-equipment>. The facilities include classrooms (conference rooms, classrooms for 30-50 students, and a lecture hall with 130 seats), offices for faculty and staff as well as adjuncts and graduate students, laboratories (GIS, Global Change, Tree Ring, Cartography, Image Processing), and meeting spaces (student reading room and library, faculty/staff lounge). Software is available for all needs of Geography and Planning students, and can be configured to be accessed securely and remotely. The Department spotlights faculty and student work and community service throughout the facilities, in display cases and hanging posters, which support a lively positive academic environment of inquiry, leaning, and sharing.

4.G. Information and Technology

Students, faculty and staff shall have access to sufficient information systems and technology, and technical support, technical equipment and training thereon to achieve the Program's mission and objectives. Information and technology include, but are not limited to, maintained computer hardware, software and access, and library resources and collections.

Criterion 4G Response:

The Program is well supported with computer labs, a wide variety of software (with requests for new software quickly filled), and support for students and faculty. The Department has a full-time laboratory manager (a graduate of our Geography and GIS graduate programs), who manages hardware and software needs, trouble-shoots technology problems, and teaches introductory spatial techniques (prerequisite to the formal GIS course) to Planning and Geography students; the lab manager also is active in the profession, with journal articles and conference presentations. Beyond the Department, the College provides excellent technical and technology support, with a designated expert for our Department and additional backup. The IT team provides continuing and one-off training and support for teaching and research platforms and responds quickly to questions from individuals. We also have excellent support from Belk Library (<https://library.appstate.edu/hours-locations/belk>), ranging from classroom instruction for students, personalized assistance on research tools for faculty, and delivery to faculty mailboxes of any requested library materials.

Standard 5: Governance

5. Governance

The Program shall make administrative decisions through a governance process that exhibits a high degree of transparency, inclusiveness, and autonomy. The Program shall be located within an identifiable and distinct academic unit, such as a department or school of planning, and the Program's faculty shall be clearly identifiable as such. The Program shall involve faculty and students, as appropriate, in administrative decisions that affect them and shall demonstrate that those decisions serve to implement the Program's strategic plan.

Standard 5 Response:

The Program and the Department within which it is housed are proud of a collegial and supportive culture, with faculty involved in shared decision-making, led by a chair who supports the faculty and the mission of the Department. University and College actions affecting the Department are shared openly through Department communications. Faculty meetings are run according to the rules of the Faculty Handbook (<https://facultyhandbook.appstate.edu/>); meeting agendas are provided before meetings, and minutes posted, then approved at subsequent meetings. The Program faculty are identified as such in Department web pages. The Planning Program director is the Department's representative to the university's Faculty Senate and reports back on the key points of each Faculty Senate meeting; in addition, the faculty member (Shay) also serves on a Faculty Senate committee devoted to campus planning and on a parking sub-committee.

5.A. Program Autonomy

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

Criterion 5A Response:

As is common at our institution and in the College of Arts and Sciences, our Department maintains a policy of admitting to the program any undergraduate who declares the major after completing 30 credit hours (including a writing course—RC 1000) and has a GPA of at least 2.0. Housed within the Department of Geography and Planning, the Program has been awarding degrees in Community and Regional Planning since 1976. With a combined total of 15 tenured/tenure-track faculty and six instructors, the three primary-appointment Planning faculty represent ~15% of the Department. The two programs within the Department (Planning and Geography) have courses that are designated GHY or PLN, with a few that carry both labels (spatial analysis, GIS, quantitative methods, and portfolio/capstone). Most courses (GHY and PLN) are taught by faculty of the respective discipline, with some overlap; for example, one Planning faculty member teaches occasional GIS and physical geography courses, and Geography faculty teach courses in quantitative methods and GIS taken by Community and Regional Planning students.

While the course requirements for majors in the two programs are clearly delineated (<https://geo.appstate.edu/undergraduate-students/academics>), the two programs share facilities, resources, and processes for shared decision-making and promotion and tenure. The Planning faculty included students in the development of the Self-Study Report and will keep them updated on milestones and decisions.

The Planning Program director, a tenured Associate Professor (going up for promotion to Full in fall 2025), works closely with other Planning faculty and with the Department chair, as more informally with the larger Departmental faculty (12 tenured/tenure-track Geography professors and six contract lecturers and instructors). Decisions about new or revised curriculum, scheduling and advising, course substitutions, and student support are made within the Planning Program, consulting with the Department chair as needed. The program of study for Community and Regional Planning majors has been substantially streamlined in recent years, and allows us to recruit students into the major and support double-majoring and minors, as well as credentials such as the GIS certificate. The Planning faculty take turns covering the introductory required course **PLN 2410**, and the Planning Studio (**PLN 4700**), which rotates among faculty depending on timely active research projects. Other PLN courses have a Planning professor with primary responsibility and control, with another who can provide backup as needed (in cases of leave, sabbatical, reassigned time, etc.). For example, Quattro leads on **PLN 3432** and **3730**; Shay is responsible for **PLN 4240** and **4450**; and Thapa manages **PLN 4030** and **4460**. (Each also covers graduate courses in the rotation for Planning tracks of the MA in Geography.) Faculty are free to propose and design new—or revised—curriculum, within the limits of what the Department can support. Drs. Quattro and Thapa designed a new course launching fall 2025: PLN 2100 (Healthy and Just Cities); Quattro also developed and taught in fall 2024 a new advanced undergraduate law course cross-listed with graduate students, called Impacts of Property Law (PLN 4535/5535). Shay is developing a new course focused on rural and mountain regional planning, for fall 2026. We have the freedom (teaching schedules permitting) to develop specialized courses for advanced students, using special topics course numbers; in addition, we frequently direct advanced students in independent study, directed readings, or research projects, with customized course registration.

5.B. Program Leadership

The administrator of the degree Program shall be a faculty member whose leadership and management skills, combined with education and experience in planning, enables the Program to achieve its goals and objectives. Typically, this administrator will be a tenured faculty member with an academic rank of associate professor or higher.

Criterion 5B Response:

The Planning Program director is an associate professor who joined the Program in 2015 and has taught most of the courses in the Planning curriculum. The director has been deeply involved in developing the strategic plan for the Program, and in initiatives to recruit majors, increase community engagement, and collaborate with other scholars across the campus and beyond. The director served on the Boone Planning Commission 2016-2023, and as chair 2018-2023 (see CV for Shay in Evidence, Part IVC), stepping off the Commission in order to take a

sabbatical semester. The Planning Program director came to Appalachian from a non-tenure-track teaching and research position at another university (UNC-Chapel Hill) with responsibility for dozens of environmental and sustainability capstone projects (semester-long team R&D projects for on- and off-campus clients), and is committed to increasing the applied learning offerings of the Planning Program, benefitting from our increasingly diverse faculty (in terms of subject expertise) and strong and growing ties with community partners. Situated in a region that offers many opportunities for level I and II planners, we are well-positioned to turn out young planners with the skills, knowledge, and professional habits to ensure their success.

Two recently hired tenure-track Assistant Professors (Quattro and Thapa) have quickly taken on leadership roles in the Department, university, community, and the profession since joining the Program. Dr. Thapa is a member of the Sustainability Committee with the Town of Boone. Dr. Quattro is a member of the Watauga County Housing Council (non-profit) and a member of the university leadership board for Queer and Trans Faculty and Staff (QTSAF), and collaborated with another faculty member (in another department) to create an App State-supported organization supporting early-career parents in the community. Both also served on faculty search committees in their first year in the Department, as well as supporting other Department initiatives beyond normal job responsibilities.

5.C. Communication

The Program shall use a variety of media to provide effective two-way communication with current and prospective students, faculty, alumni, employers, professional associations, practitioners, and other stakeholders about the Program's goals and objectives and about its progress toward achieving them. The administrator of the Program shall be regularly accessible to these stakeholders, providing them with suitable opportunities for interaction.

Criterion 5C Response:

The Program maintains active communication with current and prospective students through Departmental emails and bulletins, as well as through regular interaction in classes, office hours, and academic advising. The Department's online newsletter, circulated to all faculty, students, and alumni, features faculty news, departmental events, and alumni activities (see section 3D for links to issues; a recent issue highlighting Planning is in Part IIC, pp. 70-72).

We recruit prospective students through General Education courses, university open house and accepted-student events, conference participation, and community-engaged projects and events. We bring guest speakers to campus for large public talks (using our lecture hall for 130 seats, with even larger facilities available elsewhere on campus) as well as Department speaker series and talks in individual classes. The Planning faculty, supported by the Department chair, often fields inquiries by email, phone, or in-person visits from prospective students and interested community volunteers. We use online tools (e.g., Department FB, NCPlan listserv) to post—or seek—internship opportunities or highlight accomplishments. Note that one short-term goal listed in the strategic plan is a stronger and more navigable web presence.

5.D. Faculty and Student Participation

The Program shall provide fulltime and adjunct faculty, individual students and student organizations with opportunities to participate fully and meaningfully in administrative decisions that affect them.

Criterion 5D Response:

Our Department culture is welcoming and open to all who want to join in the academic endeavor and connect planning across campus and into the community. Adjuncts contribute to curriculum development and strategic planning. Faculty advisors to the student clubs (Student Planners Association and Appalachian Geographical Society) serve as advisors and connectors—asking students what they need and want, and identifying community partners and professional planners to join in on events or in classes.

Departmental meetings are attended by full-time faculty (tenured and tenure-track as well as instructors). Minutes are circulated to all the faculty members before meetings. The departmental decisions are made in a democratic manner through voting (where applicable) and consensus. All meeting decisions are recorded and circulated to all faculty after the meeting. Adjuncts have full access to both Planning Program faculty and the Departmental chair, for regular discussions—both formal and impromptu. Wherever possible, new adjuncts are offered a commitment of at least two semesters, recognizing that new course preparation and start-up planning is time-consuming, and that a second opportunity to teach often is more rewarding and less stressful than the first instance. Students likewise have access to faculty and the Department chair; meetings may be scheduled formally, but also often occur spontaneously as the need arises. The Planning Program faculty are involved with the Student Planners Association, often attending meetings and helping secure resources (supplies, speakers, etc.). We also have a culture of classroom visits, for example, by the Department chair to promote our degree programs and the opportunities available to students; this often features a visit to the websites of graduates or current advanced students, sharing research projects, internships, campus and community service, and more.

5.E. Promotion and Tenure

The Program shall publish policies and procedures for making decisions about the promotion and tenure of faculty. The Program shall provide support, including mentorship opportunities, for all faculty at the Assistant and Associate Professor (or equivalent) levels. The Program shall demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that women, racial and ethnic minorities, and members of underrepresented groups in academia have access to the mentoring, tools, and other support they need to advance professionally.

Criterion 5E Response:

The Program and Department have published guidance on promotion and tenure (https://geo.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/ghypln_pt_doc_revised_feb_22_2024.pdf) that is consistent with Appalachian State faculty handbook (<https://facultyhandbook.appstate.edu/>) and the University of North Carolina system mission. The Department chair and all tenured faculty collectively serve as mentors to pre-tenure faculty; the chair supports pre-tenure faculty with guidance about priorities, Department and university service, and pathways to successful promotion. In addition to required annual faculty reviews, our Program and Department have a robust and comprehensive third-year review process that prepares pre-tenure faculty for

tenure review. Although past faculty searches have included DEI statements as part of an effort to attract applicants from underrepresented groups, those are no longer part of faculty searches, by state-wide directive. At the same time, our promotion and tenure process—and Department culture—encourages and promotes success of all pre-tenure faculty, who are recruited for their professional accomplishments and potential as well as the professional and disciplinary diversity they offer our Program. Since the Planning Program director arrived in 2015, all promotions sought in the Department have succeeded. Specifically, pre-tenure faculty that have been promoted and tenured include the Planning Program director in 2020 and six Geography assistant professors; three associate professors have been promoted to full. Currently, four full-time faculty (including two in Planning) are on the tenure track, with the expectation that their promotion and tenure will similarly succeed. Two new Geography faculty have been hired as Assistant Professors for fall 2025, with expertise and research interests that will appeal to some of our Planning majors.

Examples of Departmental support for success includes start-up funds and resources for new faculty, teaching assignments that protect first-year tenure-track faculty from excessive new course preps, course releases for grant-writing or other temporary claims on time, and other considerations. The university fosters new and established faculty with support for summer grant-writing and creative work, travel support from several sources (Department, Dean's Office, Office of International Education and Development), research assistantships (assigning high-performing undergraduates and graduate students to faculty research), publishing support, and paid professional development such as workshops and course (re)design institutes.

5.F. Grievance Procedures

In accordance with relevant university guidelines, the Program shall publish policies and procedures for resolving student and faculty grievances, and shall appropriately disseminate such policies and procedures to students and faculty. The Program shall maintain records to document the number and kinds of grievances it has received and the manner in which it has resolved those grievances.

Criterion 5F Response:

The Program and Department are bound by the university's student grievance policy: <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources-forms/student-grievance-and-appeal-policies-and-procedures>. Faculty grievances are addressed by committees in the Faculty Senate: <https://facsen.appstate.edu/faculty-and-university-committees>. It also is discussed in the Faculty Handbook, with references back to the Faculty Senate, Section 4.11.7: <https://facultyhandbook.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/faculty-handbook-20230927a.pdf>.

5.G. Online Integrity

In accordance with relevant university guidelines, the Program shall have in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in an online course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The Program makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures.

Criterion 5G Response:

The Program and the Department promote online safety and security with several processes. For online or hybrid courses, online components are covered by protections in place that control access to online course sites, which protect students and faculty from security threats while ensuring integrity of the coursework and assessments, including proof of identity and completion. These processes are posted as part of the online course sites and explained to students in class sessions (or on course announcement boards for asynchronous classes). Beyond course web sites, online security is enhanced with required two-factor authentication, and frequent required upgrades on operating systems and replacement of old computers. Appalachian's ITS Office of Information Security (<https://security.appstate.edu/>) offers extensive support services relating to security across devices, safe teleworking and file sharing and storage, data governance, and threat tracking and reporting.