

# National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc.

4 February 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITING BOARD

FROM: Miguel Rodriguez, FAIA



RE: Substantial Equivalency Visit One: University San Pablo—CEU, Degree in Architecture (*Grado en Arquitectura*)

On June 25, 2012, The University San Pablo filed a completed application for Substantial Equivalency of their Degree in Architecture, Program 2010. This application was filed under the terms of the *2012 NAAB Conditions for Substantial Equivalency*. That application was accepted in full and a determination made to proceed with scheduling Visit One. The visit was conducted on November 22–23, 2012, by Miguel A. Rodriguez FAIA.

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The purpose of visit one is to:

- Explain the *NAAB Conditions for Substantial Equivalency* and the *NAAB Procedures for Substantial Equivalency*,
- To confirm the standing of the school in the local community, and
- To see the physical arrangements for the program and for any visiting team.

Upon completing the visit, the reviewer is required to submit a memorandum to the NAAB Directors that documents his/her observations and conclusions. The report must include the following:

1. A review of the resources committed to the program.
2. Commitment of the institution to achieving the designation.
3. Assessment of the readiness of the program to complete Visit Two.
4. Recommendation to the NAAB Board to schedule Visit Two. The recommendation may also identify the length of time that should elapse before scheduling Visit Two and whether a representative from the program should complete any specific training or other learning experiences.

## General Information

The University San Pablo - Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEU) is a private, non-profit educational institution with a history that dates back to 1933 when it became the first non-profit, private university of the democratic period by the Royal Decree on the creation and recognition of Universities and University Centers. CEU has been engaged in the education and licensing of architects since 1966.

The school was first officially recognized by the Spanish Ministry of Education as a private educational center in 1945 under the auspices of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. In 1966, the Centro de Estudios de Arquitectura (Center for the Study of Architecture) began educating architects under the auspices of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) (*Polytechnic University of Madrid*). Finally, in 2001 the Escuela Politécnica Superior (EPS) (*Institute of Technology*) was formed and began offering the Official Diploma of Architect.

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Today the EPS has a prestigious faculty with well established professional and academic careers, offering well recognized teaching quality and research. The University San Pablo-CEU offers state of the art resources and spaces adapted to the new educational European requirements, as well as the option to join in professional practices in Spain and abroad. It also offers the unique opportunity to study in Bilingual Programs - English and Spanish; providing students with degrees that facilitate international academic and professional careers.

University San Pablo-CEU belongs to an extensive international network with numerous exchange agreements signed with prestigious international universities.

### Training and Licensing Spanish Architects

While the education (curriculum) of architects in Spain is similar to that of the US and compares favorably with it, there are a few key differences that are important to note as they will provide valuable background to the Board in making its decision and to teams conducting subsequent visits.

A unique aspect of the licensing of architects in Spain, unlike anywhere else, is that the University is empowered by the State to confer the license to practice architecture together with the degree in Architecture. An architectural graduate in Spain can, and usually does, enter practice on the very next business day with the only additional requirement being that they sign in with their local 'colegio' which is, in essence, the governing body over the profession.

To ensure minimum competencies, specific requirements and performance criteria are established legislatively and each university granting degrees in architecture must then craft an academic 'Plan,' or curriculum, which responds to those requirements and must be submitted for approval of the "Consejo de Universidades (*University Council*), the highest advisory body of the Ministry of Education. Like all legislative procedures, these requirements are subject to change from time to time and these changes explain the existence of more than one academic 'Plan' at the university with students enrolled in one or the other, both moving through the curriculum simultaneously.

Similar to our accreditation system, the approved plans are reviewed after 2 years and must be recertified after 6 years. This process is the Spanish method most similar to accreditation (although it is not called that). It differs from ours only in that the academic 'plan' must be approved by the University Council prior to the degree being initially offered, and that the legislative requirements are focused solely on the minimum student competencies for practice (*or performance criteria*).

From my review of these variations, it is clear that differences from plan to plan are minor, no different than the customary adjustments that a U.S. accredited program might make in response to commentary from a visiting team or to changes in our Conditions of Accreditation. Graduates with degrees issued under the different plans currently in effect, will still perform to equal minimum competencies and a strong case can be made that a designation of Substantial Equivalency for the requested 'plan' should also extend to students of the other current academic plans.

Another somewhat unique aspect of the Spanish system is the 'Proyecto Fin de Carrera' (PFC) (*Final Thesis Project*). This 'thesis' styled project is an individual exercise required of every graduating student. It consists of a comprehensive

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professional project, including detailed resolution of all aspects from design through construction detailing and building systems design. Taken after completion of their 5<sup>th</sup> year, the project is typically completed in 6-9 months, though in some cases students may take longer. It is a core subject with a workload of 30 hours. Students have access to faculty advisors from all areas. Passing the PFC is a requirement to obtain their architectural degree and professional license.

The result of this system of education is a well-defined, somewhat rigid, curriculum that prepares graduates for practice and ensures not only a minimum level of competency but also consistency of results.

### **1. A REVIEW OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTED TO THE PROGRAM**

#### **History**

**(see part one of the substantial equivalency application)**

#### **Mission and Vision**

**(see part one of the substantial equivalency application)**

#### **Degrees**

The University San Pablo-CEU currently has students enrolled in two programs of study, the Program-2001 (non Bologna) "Título Oficial de Arquitecto" (*Official Title of Architect*) and Program-2010 (Bologna) "Título de Graduado o Graduada en Arquitectura" (*Degree in Architecture*). The former is being displaced by the latter and it is estimated that the last students in the Program-2001 will graduate by 2016.

This application requests the designation of Substantial Equivalency for the 2010 Program – Grado en Arquitectura (Degree in Architecture).

#### **Administration**

The EPS consists of two Divisions, including Architecture and Building Engineering which grants degrees in Architecture, Building Engineering and Civil Engineering and is directed by Federico de Isidro Gordejuela. Within this division there are two departments: Theory and Design in Architecture and Urban Studies and Building Technologies, each with its own Coordinator and the school administration also includes a Bilingual programs coordinator, Belen Hermida.

At the Institute level, both divisions rely on shared administrative services provided by several departments; including Professional and Career Development, Registrar, International Relations, the Library, the I+D (*Investigation and Development*) Management Office and the Quality Department. The two latter departments provide essential planning, research, self-investigation and quality assurance which are on-going functions at all levels and for all divisions and departments, all are heads by Vice-Rectors of the Institute.

During this visit several meetings were held with several of the Vice-Rectors, particularly in the areas of International Relations and Investigations and Development. Like their Division counterparts, both Vice-Rectors understand the

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importance of Substantial Equivalency to the Institute and fully support the process of achieving the designation.

### **Faculty**

The architecture faculty is robust, consisting of 123 members with a significant majority of licensed architects. Other members of the faculty hold degrees in engineering, history, mathematics and physics and share in the teaching of building engineering courses, electives and general education requirements. All of them are dedicated to their work, their profession and their students. Many of them also maintain private practices although at present, the economic climate in Spain has significantly softened, if not eliminated, practice opportunities.

During meetings with members of the faculty, we discussed the Substantial Equivalency process as well as the advantages to their graduates. All of them clearly understand the benefits, are enthusiastic about the process and look forward to their participation in future visits.

### **Physical Resources**

The EPS is housed at the University's Montepincipe Campus located in suburban Madrid approximately a 30 minute drive from the city's downtown. The Division of Architecture and Building Engineering's facilities are all located within the same building which provides modern and ample facilities including a couple of large halls, several lecture rooms, workshops, research and materials lab, computer rooms and various other facilities including a dedicated space used by 'final year students' working to complete their PFC. In addition to the teaching spaces above, there are 4 areas reserved for independent use by students, exhibition space, 'seminar' rooms used for group tutoring and 26 individual offices used for one on one tutoring (faculty/student).

### **Financial Resources**

Financial information was not included in the Program Overview document submitted by University San Pablo-CEU and it is important that this be added to the APR in preparation for subsequent visits. There was no indication during my visit that the availability of financial resources or the financial commitment to the advancement of the program is in any way deficient.

### **Human Resources**

Specific human resources information was not included in the Program Overview document submitted by University San Pablo-CEU. No information was provided concerning faculty advancement and/or enrichment opportunities nor on staff available to support faculty and students.

As noted above, the program enjoys a robust faculty with a significant number of registered architects. Faculty/student ratios are good and in addition, the program of instruction relies on a significant amount of one-on-one 'tutoring' time between faculty and students. During our visit, we met with several members of the faculty all of which exhibited a true sense of belonging, excitement about the school and about their students. We also witnessed the availability of staff and there was no indication of any shortfalls that might affect the effectiveness of the program.

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That said, it is important that the APR for subsequent visits provides more than just the ratios included on this Program Overview. That document must clearly describe faculty advancement and development opportunities as well as provide a description and number of the support staff that enables the operation of the program.

### **Information Resources**

An architectural library is housed on the lower level of the building, is fully staffed and remains open during all school operating hours. The library has a robust collection that includes periodicals and other resources available to all students, faculty and staff. It is well equipped and is continuing to develop its digital resources. Among the library facilities, are included several fully equipped study rooms which are available, first come-first served to students and/or faculty for individual or group study. These rooms have digital displays and are fully integrated to the school's digital network.

The library also provides research support for faculty and has two meeting rooms reserved for faculty use in conducting their research activities. These rooms include 'lockers' of sorts that faculty can use to store materials while they are in use so that it is not necessary to move materials back and forth during the progress of their work.

In addition to library resources at the EPS campus, both students and faculty have access to the entire resources of the University San Pablo-CEU libraries at other campuses through the full library catalog which is also available online.

Although the vast majority, if not all, of the student body utilizes personal laptop computers in their study, several classrooms are computer equipped, this in addition to designated CAD/computer labs and also a 'free access,' student run computer room that provides additional workstations as well as printers, plotters, scanners for easy access by all students. All workstations within this room are provided with all typical software needed for drawings, modeling, image manipulation, etc. In addition to all of this, the building is fully Wi-Fi capable and students are seen to congregate in self-identified groups around common areas to work in groups at different times during the day.

## **2. COMMITMENT OF THE INSTITUTION TO ACHIEVING THE DESIGNATION**

The University San Pablo-CEU is an internationally focused institute of higher learning within the European Community that understands the need to prepare its students to live, work and compete in the global community. As such, the administration strongly supports the growing internationalization of their school and of its programs, including architecture. The already existing Bilingual Program of Study, Joint Studios, Summer University and Erasmus agreements are clear evidence of their successes to date. These programs are also seen as vehicles to promote the international exposure of their faculty and students. Already an international institution in many ways, the process of Substantial Equivalency is seen as a key element of its continued growth as a global institution.

During my visit to CEU, I met with key individuals representing university and program administration as well as faculty. From those meetings and especially considering how informed all of them are about the SE process already, it is apparent that all are clearly committed to achieving Substantial Equivalency.

### **3. ASSESSMENT OF THE READINESS OF THE PROGRAM TO COMPLETE VISIT TWO**

Although at the time of my visit the EPS has been in existence for only twelve years, the Universidad San Pablo is a century old institution of higher learning that has been educating architects for almost 5 decades. The visiting team conducting a second visit in fall of 2013 will experience a well developed program that is excited about the opportunity of achieving Substantial Equivalency. The team room is likely to be filled with the excellent work of students at various levels of their academic careers that, I expect will present a picture of excellence in architectural education.

#### **Acknowledgments**

The author would like to thank University leadership, current faculty and students, and particularly Director Federico de Isidro Gordejuela and his team of capable colleagues for their preparation and eagerness to engage in a constructive and informative dialogue as well as their hospitality; all making for an effective and very enjoyable visit.

As a personal note, I would like to also express my gratitude to Luis Alvarez-Sanchez, Julio Merion-Garcia and Arq. Garcia-Badell of the Agencia de Calidad, Acreditación y Prospectiva de las Universidades de Madrid (ACAP) not only for their gracious hospitality but also for their coordination of these visits and of my stay in Madrid.

#### **Key Administrators and Faculty**

##### **Federico de Isidro Gordejuela**

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#### **Attachment**

- Visit One Schedule

# NAAB Substantial Equivalency Visits # 1

## Universidad San Pablo CEU

### Tentative Schedule for Miguel Angel Rodríguez

#### Arrival

WEDNESDAY 21 November 2012

Time	Event	Remarks
09:15 – 10:130	Arrive Madrid Barajas Airport – transfer to hotel	
12:30 – 14:30	Informal lunch with ACAP to meet and review program for the multiple visits	<i>Review of process of the meetings and goals of the visit with ACAP (Luis, Julio, others?)</i>

THURSDAY 22 November 2012

Time	Event	Participation & Remarks
08:00 – 08:30	Breakfast at hotel with Luis Sanchez & Julio Merino	
08:30 – 09:00	Transfer from hotel to CEU with Julio Merino	
09:00 – 09:30 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Introductory meeting with Director Arch. Federico de Isidro Gordejuela	<i>Introduction and overview of goals of the visit NAAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida</i>
09:30 – 10:00 <i>despacho dirección</i>	Meeting with Chief Academic Officer – David Santos Mejía, Director EPS	<i>NAAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida</i>
10:00 – 11:30 <i>Aula 1.6.6</i>  <i>(coffee break in room)</i>	Presentations on the University and School of Architecture - History and Mission of the Institution and Academic Unit (mission, vision, goals, social resources, community services and financial resources)	<i>NAAAB, ACAP (Merino + García-Badell) Alberto Díaz-Romeral, José Luis Piñar David Santos (hasta las 10:30) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida Covadonga Lorenzo, Mayka García Concepción Pérez Gutiérrez</i>
11:30 – 13:00 <i>tour</i>	Explanation of study program exhibition hall + PFC	<i>NAAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida Covadonga Lorenzo</i>
13:00 – 15:00 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Welcome lunch with select Faculty leaders (8)	<i>NAAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida Covadonga Lorenzo, Eduardo de la Peña, Fernando del Ama</i>
15:00 – 17:00 <i>tour</i>	Tour of University facilities designated for the program including library	<i>NAAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida Covadonga Lorenzo</i>
End day one		

*\*18:30 Meeting in Madrid in LASEDE with José Antonio Granero (Dean, Architects' Association of Madrid COAM) + Carlos Lahoz (instructor Urbanism CEU, Director MadridThinkTank MTT)*

FRIDAY 23 November 2012

Time	Event	Participation & Remarks
08:00 – 08:30	Breakfast at hotel with Luis Sanchez & Julio Merino	
08:30 – 09:00	Transfer between hotel and University	<i>taxi to CEU? (to be confirmed)</i>
09:00 – 09:15 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Review of progress to date with Director Federico de Isidro Gordejuela	<i>Address any unanswered items from prior day's activities. NAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida</i>
09:15 – 10:00 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Meeting with faculty & staff	<i>Provide overview of process, what they can expect and describe their role. NAAB, ACAP (García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida Covadonga Lorenzo Faculty - Aitor Goitia, Teresa Franchini, Eduardo de la Peña, Alejandro Gómez, Fernando del Ama, Félix Hernando. Biblioteca - Iciar Muñoz Secretaría - Santiago Pariente COIE - Rocío Carvajal Quality - Montse Cabello OTRI - Miguel Pascual</i>
10:00 – 10:30 <i>despacho dirección</i>	Meeting with Rector Juan Carlos Domínguez Nafría	<i>Introduce process, explain nature of visit &amp; address any questions</i>
10:30 – 11:00 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Meeting with student leaders	<i>Provide overview of process, what they can expect and describe their role. NAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida Covadonga Lorenzo. Students: Ana Mombiedro, Sebastián Bayo, María Fdez Hdez, Marta Leboreiro, Enrique Sánchez, Giovanni Vimercati, Guillermo de la Parra, Ana Copa, Carlota Sáenz de Tejada, Guillermo Fernández Villar</i>
11:00 – 13:00 <i>tour</i>	Observe classes and studios in session	<i>11:00 A.2.6.1 P7 11:15 L 2.5.1 DIB (coffee break in cafeteria) 12:00 FORM ANALYSIS 12:30 STRUCTURES</i>
13:00 – 14:30 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Lunch with alumni (optional) – local architects (12-14)	<i>NAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida, Covadonga Lorenzo, Concepción Pérez Gutiérrez, Mayka García, Mauricio Bertet, Pablo Campos, Mariano Molina, Adam Bresnick. Sandra Herrera, David Mayo</i>
14:30 – 16:00 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Review of NAAB Conditions and Procedures with Director and key faculty leaders	<i>NAAB, ACAP (Merino+García-Badell) David Santos, Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida, Covadonga Lorenzo, Eduardo de la Peña, Fernando del Ama, Concepción Pérez Gutiérrez</i>
16:00 – 17:00 <i>sala de juntas</i>	Closing session with Dean and Academic Director (Unit Heads-optional)	<i>NAAB, ACAP (Sánchez+Merino+García-Badell) David Santos, Federico de Isidro, Belén Hermida, Covadonga Lorenzo, Eduardo de la Peña, Fernando del Ama, Concepción Pérez Gutiérrez</i>
End of CEU Visit #1		