

NO SPECS!

by Ralph Liebing, RA, CSI
Cincinnati, OH

The following was recently posted on www.4specs.com:

"The NAAB is the governing body for colleges and universities and developed required curricula for architectural programs. The link below will take you to the current draft. Note that there is ABSOLUTELY ZERO mention of specifications in section A.4, which seems to me a complete and egregious oversight. If you feel so compelled, it would be good for all the spec writers to send in comments about this and ask that "specifications" be added in A.4."

Link to original document: <http://www.naab.org/news/view.aspx?newsID=25>

This cannot be allowed to stand!!!!

This, friends and colleagues, needs to be challenged, strongly, in mass, and with strongest terms to overturn it and to correct the impending travesty! As specifications writers--and we must forget our varied backgrounds and professional status, since we are all "specifications people"—we must take a stand on this issue.

We need to create an e-mail blizzard in the office of the NAAB! I urge every specifications writer (consultants and in-house) to respond; every chapter as a unit; and every region at its top level--and indeed CSI nationally. This is an issue to come out strongly on as it also regards "emerging professionals" and cries out to be addressed, now, strongly and pointedly.

We can no longer merely waive the issue off when we all work with or for architects and will do so in the future. To have this gross void in requirements in academic work undercuts the people involved and their profession as well as ours. The lack of any mention is virtually license to prohibit any mention or discussion of specifications in the schools---an absolutely intolerable situation.

Along with our fervent, super-imperative urgings and letters, we need a national mass mailing to all architects, to all specification writers to have their response; we need ads, editorials, web site articles, and every outlet available to confront and resolve this issue properly! We need to "pound on" this under the June deadline.

To have architecture students remain ignorant of 1/3 of their required documentation is unthinkable! Their ability in working drawings is bad enough at this point (no formal instruction and a very distorted approach via CAD and BIM instruction) but to not mention the third contract document is ill-advised at best. In fact, truth be told, the phrase "contract documents" appears nowhere in this document, which certainly is a myopic gaff when everything else in this set of requirements have some input to, or important place in those very documents. NAAB really needs to come to grips with the reality of education for the profession. There are enough extraneous factors influencing and undercutting architectural training that a firm and well-conceived criteria is necessary for a stronger professional founding.

Although NAAB is under the strong influence of NCARB and AIA (they are all co-located) the Board needs to observe the underlying information and knowledge the students need to carry them into their careers. The terms used in this document are weak enough without leaving important items completely out of consideration. This should not be shuttled off to the IDP, where results are quite suspect and marginal. Mere mention and some orientation regarding specifications can/must be part the academic sequence--perhaps emphasized in at least one student project.

This also holds true to codes and regulations. But these are at least noted in Section B.5 of the new NAAB document. AIA and ICC now have a joint study which includes the synopsis for a code course at the academic level. Hopefully light will shine on this, but here too an enlightened perspective is required-- codes are important but specifications are at least equally important, but not mentioned.

Please, we urge you in the strongest of terms, respond soon, and strongly, stridently; urge others to do so, and support higher level responses to the point of a crusade to draw the line—enough is enough!