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The American Institute of Architects

# **Summary and Review 2005 Demographic Diversity Audit Report**

December 2005

## **BACKGROUND**

On June 12, 2004, delegates to The American Institute of Architects National Convention approved Resolution 04-02, "To Strengthen the Demographic Diversity of the Design Profession." This resolution called for the Institute, among other things, to "collaborate with related architectural organizations and support research initiatives and ongoing data collection that will lead the profession to a better understanding of who enters and succeeds in the profession and why."

In response to the resolution, the AIA national component, working with representatives of the collateral organizations and the AIA Diversity Committee, developed an action plan to implement the research called for in the resolution.

The results of that research, undertaken by Holland & Knight, LLP, a law firm with extensive practice in corporate diversity counseling and research were presented in the final report on October 18, 2005. Under the agreement with Holland & Knight, this project was divided into four phases.

### **Phase I: Survey and analysis of existing demographic data on the profession.**

In Phase I, Holland & Knight collected and assessed existing research and demographic data on the architecture profession. They performed an exhaustive literature search, and conducted interviews with representatives from the AIA, the four collateral organizations, and other relevant stakeholder organizations to determine what demographic information, if any, they collected or maintained.

### **Phase II: Findings and Analysis of Independent Research on the Demographics of the Profession.**

In this phase, Holland & Knight collected and analyzed baseline diversity data using the results of a 37-question, web-based survey, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. The early results of this survey were shared with the AIA Board of Directors in May 2005; a complete review of this data was presented in the August 15 interim report. In addition, they provided a series of programmatic recommendations in response to the results of the research.

### **Phase III: Proposed Data Collection Systems and Processes for Prospectively Tracking the Diversity of the Profession.**

Holland & Knight reviewed demographic data collection systems in comparative professions: law, medicine, and engineering and made a series of recommendations for instituting a comprehensive system for tracking data in the architecture profession over time.

### **Phase IV: Perform an Environmental Scan.**

Holland & Knight completed research on best practices in architecture and other professions for expanding diversity and inclusion and also identified the social, economic, cultural and other socio-economic trends that may have an impact on the

diversity findings and recommendations made in earlier reports and assessments. The results of this analysis were presented in the final report on October 18, 2005.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINAL REPORT**

#### **Phase I:**

Although there is great interest in and support for collecting and maintaining accurate demographic data on the architecture profession, there is no *comprehensive* (emphasis added) demographic data on the profession in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and age, and no information on sexual orientation and disability that is maintained by any of the collateral organizations, or any other source that Holland & Knight surveyed, except to the extent the Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics data purports to be reflective and comprehensive of the architecture profession. Additionally, a lot of the existing demographic data is unreliable and/or unverifiable.

The AIA collects, manages, and stores basic professional and demographic data on architects, interns, and other non-licensed architecture professionals. The AIA's membership includes approximately half (52,000) of all registered architects in the United States, and the AIA collects and maintains demographic information on most of them. As of December 2004, the AIA maintained race/ethnicity information on 75% of its architect members, and continually collects data on the remaining 25%. Of its architect members, approximately 2% are Hispanic/Latino, 3% are Asian, and 1% are Black. The AIA currently maintains gender information on appropriately 95% of its members. As of December 2004, approximately 12% of all of the AIA's architect members were female. The AIA does not collect information on disability or sexual orientation.

According to the United States Census 2000 Special Tabulation, there are 192,860 architects in the United States. Of that number, 20.3% are women, 2.7% are Black, 5.6% are Hispanic, 6.3% are Asian, and .3% are American Indian.

The major limitation to the value of the data collected by the Census Bureau is that the Census Bureau relies on *self-identification* (emphasis added) in determining whether a person is an architect, and given the 192,860 figure compared to NCARB's 2004 figure of roughly 101,179 architects, the Census numbers are grossly inflated. The inflated numbers are likely due to unregistered and unlicensed design professionals referring to themselves as architects.

There has been some discussion about the availability of data from the collateral organizations, especially the apparent lack of information provided by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards during the audit phase of the project. NACRB has said repeatedly that it does not collect or maintain demographic data on its registrants on the advice of counsel. This is a policy decision of long standing and is documented in interim reports from Holland & Knight. In addition, many states are precluded by state law from requiring applicants to provide demographic data. Thus, it is not possible to collect the information from the state licensing boards either.

The National Architectural Accreditation Board requires that all 114 accredited architecture schools report aggregate demographic data on their student population, including gender, race/ethnicity, part-time/full-time status, graduation rates, total degrees awarded, number of applicants, number of applicants accepted, and enrollment targets. However, according to the NAAB Executive Director, the demographic data the NAAB receives from the schools may be unreliable. This is largely due to two factors. First there are differences in the way each institution counts its architecture students (e.g., one institution may count only those admitted to the B.Arch program after the junior year, while another may count all students enrolled in the major). Second, the NAAB reportedly relies on two designated contacts at each school to provide the demographic information and sometimes the demographic information comes not from the Dean, Provost, or Admissions office, but from the "best guess" of the NAAB's contacts. The NAAB has deemed the information it collects so unreliable that in 2004 it did not analyze or report on the data it received from the schools.

Nonetheless, the information collected by the NAAB is the most comprehensive data available about the demographics of architecture students and faculty. According to the 2004 data collected by the NAAB, which is not comprehensive because several schools did not provide demographic information, there were 33,869 full and part-time students in the 5-year and 4-year pre-professional bachelor programs.

In addition to the work completed by Holland & Knight, the AIA conducted several other studies in 2004 and 2005. Although not included in the results of the Phase I audit, this research includes information that will be used to inform diversity initiatives in 2006 and 2007.

- The 2005 Internship and Career Survey further explores specific issues relating to internship and the internship experience and includes data on IDP record holders in addition to AIA Associate members.
- The 2004 Non-member Survey includes demographic data as well as data on how non-members relate to the profession.
- The AIA is conducting a member census in late 2005 that will add to the data already collected on members.
- The research being conducted in response to the resolution approved at the 2005 AIA National Convention regarding licensure will add to our understanding of how that process affects diversity.
- Finally, AIA staff is reviewing data available from the U.S. Department of Education to further inform our collective understanding of the undergraduate population.

In 2006, staff at the AIA national component will begin comparing data from various sources and identifying whether and where additional information may be needed.

## **Phase II:**

### **Analysis of Survey Results**

The web-based survey was launched on April 8, 2005 and held open until July 19. Both demographically diverse and homogeneous focus groups were conducted at the AIA National Convention in Las Vegas, as well as in Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. Fifty-five (55) one-on-one interviews were conducted with a broad demographic cross-section of architecture students and professionals, both traditional and non-traditional.

Holland & Knight identified certain limitations in the data collected in Phase II. These are confined to the quantitative data collected in the web-based survey. Holland & Knight believes that despite these data limitations, the overall findings and conclusions that are contained in the report provide valuable insight into the demographics of the architecture profession on a scale not previously available, as well as the reasons underlying the demographics of the profession.

In addition, where certain demographic groups appear to be over-represented in the survey responses, relative to the demographic distribution of AIA members or the Census data, Holland & Knight have made an effort to explain the differences. For example, in their analysis of the responses to Question 1, “the relatively higher percentage of Black and American Indian respondents (versus architects in the 2000 Census) is likely attributable to the direct solicitation of Black and American Indian architects, designers, and students to participate in the web-based survey through organizations like NOMA, OBD, NOMAS, and AICAE<sup>1</sup>.”

Finally, concerns have been raised that the 10,279 individuals who completed the survey, and whose results are tabulated in this report, may not be representative of the AIA membership. It is important to remember that the survey was open to anyone affiliated with the architecture profession and not exclusively to AIA members. In order to establish a comparative sample, the AIA has initiated a supplemental research project, with an independent provider, to conduct a random, telephone survey of 1,000 AIA members. This research will use the same 37-question survey used in the web-based survey evaluated by Holland & Knight. The results will be presented in early 2006.

### **Highlights from the Results of the Research**

The report addresses all of the questions in the survey. For purposes of illustration into the methodology for reporting the data, only a few of the questions are highlighted here.

**Race/Ethnicity of Respondents:** The survey respondents were slightly more demographically diverse in certain respects and slightly less so in others than the available data on the architecture profession. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents identified as White, 5% each identified as Black, Hispanic, and Asian, 4% identified as

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<sup>1</sup> National Organization of Minority Architects; Organization of Black Designers; National Organization of Minority Architecture Students; and American Indian Council of Architects and Engineers.

Other, and .45% identified as American Indian, versus the demographics of the profession based on 2000 Census data, which are 85.1% White, 2.7% Black, 5.6% Hispanic, 6.3% Asian, and .3% American Indian.

**Age of Respondents:** Overall, nearly a third of survey respondents (64%) were between the ages of 36 and 65. Twenty percent (20%) of survey respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35, 10% of survey respondents were 25 or under, and only 5% of survey respondents were over the age of 65. However, the relative demographic distribution of respondents within these age groups is quite interesting. White respondents had a higher representation rate between the ages of 36 and 65 (67% vs. 64% overall) and those over the age of 65 (7% vs. 5% overall) than the minority groups. However, White respondents had a lower representation rate between the ages of 26 and 35 (18% vs. 20% overall) and those ages 25 and under (9% vs. 10% overall) than the minority groups. American Indians were significantly overrepresented among survey respondents over the age of 65 at twice the overall rate (10% vs. 5% overall).

**AIA Membership:** Overall, 78% of survey respondents were members of AIA. Of that number, 58% were Architect members, 16% were Associate members, 3% were Emeritus members, and less than .5% were Allied and Honorary members combined. Of the 22% of survey respondents who were not members of the AIA, 33% were students or retired, 17% were interns, and 9% were not practicing architects.

There were notable differences in the rates of AIA membership between the various racial/ethnic groups and across gender. Thirty-five percent of Blacks, 30% of Hispanics, 32% of Asians, 38% of American Indians, and 39% of Others were not members of the AIA.

**State of Practice:** Based on the number of respondents, the states with the highest overall representation of practicing architects were California (12%), Texas (8%), the D.C. metropolitan area (encompassing the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia) (8%), New York (7%), Illinois (5%), and Massachusetts (5%). This geographic distribution is consistent with the geographic distribution of architects generally according to the 2003 NCARB Survey of Registered Architects. It also corresponds to the AIA Regional Director Apportionment made in August 2004. Beyond these general geographic distributions, it is not surprising that there are also high concentrations of minorities within these states, all of which have significant urban areas.

**Highest degree attained.** The vast majority of respondents had either a B. Arch. (45%) or M. Arch. (36%). Only 5% of respondents had an accredited pre-professional architecture degree as their highest degree attained and 4% had a graduate degree in another field of study.

Female respondents (42%) were most likely to hold a M. Arch. as their highest degree attained, while male respondents (48%) were most likely to hold only a B. Arch.

**Time to Complete IDP:** In terms of the amount of time it took respondents to complete the IDP, overall more than two thirds of respondents (67%) completed the IDP in 4 years or less.

Male and female respondents had roughly equivalent IDP completion rates in 3 years (28% males vs. 29% females) and more than 6 years (9% males vs. 10% females). However, nearly twice as many males completed the IDP in less than three years than females (20% vs. 11%) and slightly more females than males completed the IDP in 4-6 years (46% females vs. 38% males).

**Licensure/Registration:** Overall, nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) were licensed/registered.<sup>2</sup> Of those survey respondents who were not licensed/registered (36%), 84% said they intended to seek licensure/registration. However, whereas 69% of White respondents were licensed/registered, only 45% – 48% of respondents of every other racial/ethnic group were licensed/registered, with no appreciable difference among the various racial/ethnic groups.

There was also a significant difference in the licensure/registration rates among male and female respondents. Although 73% of male respondents were licensed/registered, only 45% of female respondents were licensed/registered.

**Primary Reason for Not Practicing:** Over one third of overall respondents (35%) not practicing or not intending to practice architecture as a career identified "other" as their primary reason for not practicing. The second most commonly cited reason for not practicing was "professional dissatisfaction" (20%), comprised of "lack of job satisfaction" and "erosion of the architect's role in the building industry," followed closely by "compensation" (18%).

Across gender there were two significant differences in the response rate to this question. Nearly twice as many male respondents rated "compensation" as their primary reason for not practicing as female respondents (21% versus 11%). Conversely, female respondents rated "personal/family circumstances" and "inflexible hours" as their primary reason for not practicing at a rate nearly three times the rate of male respondents (19% versus 7%).

**Current/Anticipated Career Path.** Overall, 77% of respondents identified their current or anticipated career path as "traditional architecture." Another 10% of respondents identified their current or anticipated career path as "non-traditional architecture," which was defined as not-for-profit architecture organizations, associations, facilities management, and consulting. The remaining respondents were split between "non-architecture related careers" (4%), "academia/teaching" (4%), "allied fields" (3%), defined as including interior, industrial, or graphic design, and "construction/engineering" (2%). The most commonly cited "non-architecture related careers" were real estate and development. Only .3% of respondents identified as "landscape architects."

#### Highlights from Focus Groups and Interviews

Holland & Knight conducted a total of 23 focus groups and 55 one-on-one interviews with a broad and diverse cross-section of students, interns, practicing architects, and non-traditional architecture professionals. The focus group and interview participants were each asked a standard series of questions designed to elicit qualitative discussion on the

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<sup>2</sup> Licensed or registered in the survey and in this report refers only to those persons licensed or registered in the U.S., any U.S. territory, or Canada.

issues of demographic representation and distribution within the architecture profession, and the reasons underlying that representation and distribution.

The responses to the questions from both focus group and interview participants form the basis for the qualitative analysis in the report. The discussion points are grouped into seven broad categories as follows:

1. Under-representation of women and minorities within the profession;
2. Importance of diversity to the architecture profession;
3. Insufficient role models in the profession for women and minorities;
4. Barriers to diversity in the architecture educational experience;
5. Inequality of opportunity in professional practice;
6. Attrition of women and minorities; and
7. Barriers to licensure/registration & declining interest in the pursuit of traditional architecture careers.

### **Programmatic Recommendations**

In addition to soliciting participants' opinions on issues of diversity within the architecture profession, Holland & Knight also solicited their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions on how to improve and sustain diversity within the profession. In the report, they provide a representative sample of the types of recommendations that were offered. The recommendations are compiled into three broad categories:

1. Expanding the path to practice;
2. Improving licensure rates and reducing attrition; and
3. Ensuring equal opportunities in the profession.

Within each category are 4-8 specific recommendations addressing K-12 initiatives, emerging professionals, AIA leadership, architecture school faculties, scholarships, and increasing the visibility of the work of architects from underrepresented groups, among others.

While several of these recommendations fall within the purview of ACSA, NAAB, and NCARB, many others are already being addressed by the 2006-2007 AIA Strategic Plan and 2006 Operating Plan for the AIA National Component.

### **Phase III:**

#### **Data Collection Over Time**

For benchmarking purposes, Holland & Knight researched the legal, medical and engineering professions and analyzed the various points at which demographic data is collected, how the data is collected, and how it is used. These three disciplines were chosen because, like architecture, they involve years of specialized professional training culminating in licensing exams prior to practicing in the field.

Although NCARB contains the most comprehensive data on the architecture profession (*i.e.*, license and IDP certificate holders), it does not collect or maintain demographic

information on its registrants. It has been suggested that NCARB collect demographic information because it is the gatekeeper of the profession. However, Holland & Knight's research suggests that, in general, licensing bodies such as NCARB do not collect, maintain or publish demographic information, especially race/ethnicity information. Generally, such information is collected by voluntary professional associations and membership organizations, such as the AIA, the American Bar Association, or the American Medical Association. Given NCARB's standing policy on this issue and that state boards are precluded from requiring applications or candidates to provide demographic information, as well as the lack of precedent in other professions for a licensing body to collect such data, Holland & Knight does not propose that NCARB collect demographic data on the architecture profession.

Instead, working from the models suggested by these other professions; Holland & Knight proposes the following:

#### Data Collection on Students in Accredited Programs

First, that NAAB require the schools, as a condition for renewing their accreditation annually, to provide NAAB with reliable and verifiable information, similar to the information the schools currently maintain and provide to the U.S. Department of Education each year. It is recommended that NAAB implement mandatory reporting and quality control measures whereby data reports submitted to NAAB as part of the annual accreditation process must be approved (signified by seal or signature) by the office of the Registrar for the submitting college/university. NAAB should then analyze the aggregate data received, prepare statistical reports, and make the information available to the AIA and the general public by posting it on their website. In tracking both students and faculty, NAAB should use the standard racial and ethnic categories used by the Census Bureau.

Additionally, Holland & Knight proposes that the level of detail of the information collected and analyzed by NAAB increase over the next five years.

These recommendations are under review by the NAAB staff and volunteer leadership.

#### Data Collection on Interns and Architects

Holland & Knight goes on to recommend that the AIA aggressively continue to collect demographic data on its existing members, as well as on the intern population. The demographic information on AIA members should be collected more aggressively during annual membership renewals and through periodic surveys of the membership. The AIA should also work closely with its state and local components, which have more regular contact with local members, to collect demographic data. Finally, the AIA should more aggressively use its non-member survey to collect demographic information on non-members.

By continuing to aggressively increase its membership, aggressively register interns through the *Emerging Professional's Companion*, and utilize the student information collected by NAAB, within the next 10 years, the AIA should have a reasonably detailed

picture of the demographics of the architecture profession that it can use to create programs and better allocate resources.

#### **PHASE IV – ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

There are many factors that will influence the architecture profession over the next 20 years. Many of which, especially integrated practice, the nature of internship, compensation trends, and the economic trends tracked by other organizations have been discussed by the AIA Board of Directors. In the final section of the report, Holland & Knight has provided their observations. These are not comprehensive, however, they provide an overview of some of the most pressing and pervasive issues the architecture profession is likely to face in the coming two decades. They are grouped into seven categories: technology, the expanding role of non-architects in design and construction, social/political trends, licensing trends<sup>3</sup>, demographic trends, economic outlook, and compensation trends. It is important to note that much of what Holland & Knight observes is already on the minds of many. Rather than suggesting a lack of sufficient research on the part of Holland & Knight, this more likely signals that these trends are more pervasive, and likely to have greater significance than originally expected. It will be important to continue to support research and data collection over time in order to continually update the Institute's understanding of the issues affecting future professionals.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The AIA Diversity Committee is in the process of carefully reviewing the final report and will continue to advise AIA national component staff on the development of next steps. Staff at the AIA national component have also reviewed it and evaluated the strategic implications for programs and initiatives under their purview. As appropriate these have been incorporated into the 2006 Operating Plan (see below).

In addition, staff at the AIA national component has begun working with NAAB and the other collaterals to discuss the feasibility of the data collection methods proposed by Holland & Knight, as well as possible implementation strategies.

At the Five Presidents Council meeting in late October, the executives of the five collateral organizations agreed to work together to identify a framework for data collection that involved all organizations; each collecting that information of greatest relevance to the mission of the organization and to the development of a comprehensive system for reviewing and evaluating data over time.

The 2006 Operating Plan for the AIA National Component's Alliances Team includes program and project plans related to diversity:

- Establishing a compendium of best practices from state, local, and regional components' programs designed to expand the diversity of the profession and the AIA membership;

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<sup>3</sup> The licensure and registration trends cited in this report are currently the subject of a study by the AIA undertaken in response to Convention Resolution 05-01.

- Making additional adjustments, as needed, to existing programs at the AIA National Convention, K-12 education, architecture education, mentorship, and emerging professionals in order to address a number of the issues identified in the Demographic Data Audit Final Report<sup>4</sup>;
- Working with the collateral organizations to develop and implement a comprehensive data collection and analysis system to continually track the diversity of the professional over time.
- Developing and disseminating a “workshop in a box” program on the results of the data audit for use by components.
- Establish a digital archive of work and other materials by architects from underrepresented groups. This will be undertaken in collaboration with Knowledge Resources and the eKnowledge initiative.
- Completing a comparative analysis of the Demographic Data Audit results, the 2005 Internship and Career Survey, the AIA Member Census, the 2004 Non-member Survey, the 2006 Firm Survey, and other data available from the U.S. Department of Education.

### **CONCLUSION**

The 2005 Demographic Data Audit was a significant first step. The audit and research together affirmed with fact what many believed through anecdote and perception. The report further affirms that the barriers to diversity within the profession are remarkably similar to those identified as barriers to the growth of the profession in general.

There is little disagreement across the profession of the value of diversity and to need to encourage and develop individuals from under represented groups as architects and as leaders. The vision of those who initially proposed and endorsed Convention Resolution 04-02 can only be achieved through systemic, persistent, long-term efforts. Continuing to diversify the profession will require cultural transformation across the continuum of architecture education, internship, licensure/ registration, practice and professional development. Transformation on this scale takes five to seven years. Holland & Knight has suggested that it will take at least ten years just to develop the comprehensive data set suggested by the original resolution.

The Institute is committed to moving forward with initiatives to support and encourage individuals from under-represented to join the profession and continuing to educate clients – current and potential – of the value diverse perspectives and experience bring to their projects.

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<sup>4</sup> These recommendations will be reviewed by the AIA Alliances Team during their January 2006 planning meeting and integrated into those program areas under their purview.