

## AIA Seattle Diversity Roundtable

Revised October 2008

---

*The AIA collects and disseminates Best Practices as a service to AIA members without endorsement or recommendation. Appropriate use of the information provided is the responsibility of the reader.*

---

### **SUMMARY**

The AIA Seattle Diversity Roundtable is a group that attracts, retains and empowers individuals of underrepresented backgrounds in the profession of architecture through scholarship, community service and activism. They embrace and celebrate diversity in all its facets and strive to provide even – greater opportunities for a diversity of individuals to “become registered architects, take advantage of leadership opportunities and influence our practices and our professional lives.”

### **PROGRAMS & EVENTS**

The Diversity Roundtable has established two funds: the AIA Seattle Marga Rose Hancock Diversity Scholarship and the Denice Johnson Hunt K-12 Internship.

Administered by the University of Washington, the AIA Seattle Marga Rose Hancock Diversity Scholarship annually supports one minority student demonstrating economic need. A UW faculty committee reviews applications and selects a qualifying student to receive scholarship support.

The Denice Johnson Hunt K-12 Internship provides support to deserving students from the University of Washington College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) and the Center for Environment, Education and Design Studies (CEEDS) at the College to carry out independent learning plans that increase awareness of architecture and urban design among children attending public schools. Students can carry out their learning plans over any period of time during the academic year, and they

may combine their project with other course work, such as a thesis or an independent study.

The Diversity Roundtable has provided approximately \$19,800 to 13 recipients of their Marga Rose Hancock Diversity Scholarship since 2000, and approximately \$12,800 to six recipients of the Denice Hunt K-12 Internship since 2001.

The group’s signature event is usually a design charette that focuses on a community design problem or a Solstice event that highlights minority architects in the Seattle area. Both events are open to the community.

The Diversity Roundtable partnered with the Seattle chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) on this year’s event, Solstice 2008: Celebrating Diversity in Architecture, which featured a tour of the Wing Luke Asian Museum in the 1910-era East Kong Yick Building in the Chinatown portion of the International District; a tour of the Northwest African-American Museum, which celebrated its grand opening in March of 2008; and a reception for the recipients of the AIA Seattle Marga Rose Hancock Diversity Scholarship and the Denice Johnson Hunt K-12 Internship.

In addition to these events, members of the Diversity Roundtable organize book talks, attend career days, and act as hosts to high school students who shadow them for a period of time - some Seattle high schools have made shadowing a graduation requirement, undertaken as part of Occupational Education courses.

## RESULTS

The Seattle Diversity Roundtable stands out in its approach to not only involve architect members in their activities, but members of the community as well. In taking architecture to the community through their Solstice events, design charettes, and K-12 involvement, the Roundtable participants better inform their neighbors of the role of the architect and introduce youth to the possibility of architecture as a career.

Their partnership with the Seattle chapter of the National Organization on Minority Architects (NOMA) helps to build ties between the two groups and clears the path for increased dialogue and joint ventures.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Mario Campos, AIA, Chair of the AIA Seattle Diversity Roundtable for the past four years, suggests establishing subcommittees to implement various programs and events, which helps balance the work load and empower the group. He also recommends giving committee members the opportunity to suggest and plan events that fall within their interests.

The Diversity Roundtable reaches out to its state component for help with marketing, promotion, and printing needs. This interaction has not only provided logistical support; it also gives the group a larger pool from which to find more committee members, as the committee “can’t just be minority architects,” says Campos.

## RESOURCES

### For More Information on This Topic

[http://www.aiaseattle.org/committee\\_diversityRT.htm](http://www.aiaseattle.org/committee_diversityRT.htm)

[http://www.aiaseattle.org/archive\\_honors\\_aiaseattle\\_scholarship.htm](http://www.aiaseattle.org/archive_honors_aiaseattle_scholarship.htm)

### Feedback

The AIA welcomes member feedback on Best Practice articles. To provide feedback on this article, please contact [diversity@aia.org](mailto:diversity@aia.org).

### Keywords

- AIA Components
- Associations
- Diversity
- K-12 Education
- Scholarships

This Best Practice was developed in concert with the AIA’s Diversity initiative. Any questions or comments about the content herein can be sent to [diversity@aia.org](mailto:diversity@aia.org).