

AIA Atlanta Mentoring Program

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SUMMARY

The AIA Atlanta Mentoring Program is an association of architect mentors who voluntarily meet with interested architecture and design students to share real-world experiences and life lessons, develop friendships, and offer guidance as the students prepare for a career in the design professions.

THE PROGRAM

The Mentoring Program identifies students and mentors with like interests and brings them together in a student-mentor relationship.

Both students and mentors complete a survey, and those responses are used during the matching process. Bill Abballe, AIA, Chair of the AIA Atlanta Mentoring Program, personally matches students with mentors.

The target audience is college juniors and seniors, though no one is excluded. There is no cost, no college credit, no mandatory assignments, and no promise of a job. It is not a substitute for or a competitor with IDP.

AIA Atlanta is partnering with the Georgia Institute of Technology and Southern Polytechnic State University to provide this unique opportunity to students.

Mentors and students meet at times and places convenient to them. There are no rules, no minimum requirements, no grades, and no time limits. The relationship is completely up to the

mentor and student. The meetings may be in person or they may be virtual via the computer. The type and frequency of contact is up to the mentor and student to decide. Twice each year, mentors and students are asked to evaluate how the mentor relationship is proceeding and to offer suggestions for the future. Bill Abballe reviews the evaluations himself.

RESULTS

When the AIA Atlanta Mentoring Program began during the 2005-2006 academic year, 92 students participated, all from the Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU). Student participation remained steady into the program's third year, with 93 students split between SPSU and Georgia Tech.

About 45 mentors from the AIA Atlanta Chapter have participated each year, keeping the mentor-student ratio at 1:2.

The AIA Atlanta Mentoring Program is an opportunity for practicing architects to help and guide future architects, and to pass on valuable life lessons that students can use. For students, this is a chance to take a glimpse into the world beyond graduation and potentially develop a long-lasting relationship with a fellow practitioner.

LESSONS LEARNED

Bill Abballe, AIA, stresses an active recruiting method. While emails and announcements in the local newsletter helped to recruit some mentors, the best results came when announcements were made

at all of the chapter meetings and events; they also reached out to groups like the National Organization of Minority Architects and Women in Architecture.

In an effort to recruit students, the AIA Atlanta Mentoring Program reaches out to local AIAS chapters and encourages them to make this mentoring initiative one of their programs. The Mentoring Program hosts a kick-off meeting at the beginning of the year with 7 or 8 mentors. Group mentoring is set up during the meeting.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

[ARE Success Teams](#)

[Keeping Interns on the Path to Licensure:](#)

[Successful ARE Programs](#)

For More Information on This Topic

<http://www.aiaatlanta.org/members/index.cfm?menuval=members&Fuseaction=Mentoring>

Feedback

The AIA welcomes member feedback on Best Practice articles. To provide feedback on this article, please contact diversity@aia.org.

Keywords

- AIA Components
- Associations
- Diversity
- IDP
- Mentoring

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.