



National Associates Committee

Fostering IDP to Encourage Frequent & Accurate Reporting

February 22, 2007

Introduction

“There are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still.”

-Franklin D. Roosevelt

Representing the Associate members of the Institute, the AIA National Associates Committee (NAC) believes the Intern Development Program (IDP) is cumbersome and inefficient in the way it is started, submitted, and evaluated. With the yearly loss of 3 ½ to 4% architects to either retirement or death compared to 1 ½ to 2% of newly licensed architects entering the profession annually, it is important to establish an efficacious system to accomplish licensure. The program is comprised of four main roles, the intern, the supervisor, the mentor, and the system administrator. Currently, the obligation to complete a valid and effective IDP is left solely to the intern. The NAC sees the need to hold each role accountable for their responsibilities to ensure the program is executed to its fullest potential. Without measurable improvement of the existing system, one can expect the total number of licensed architects to continue to further decline over time.

The Intern

Role:

An individual with the goal of licensure.

Responsibility:

“Maintain a continuous record of training and supplementary education activities during your participation in IDP.”¹

Recommendations:

- Develop a full understanding of IDP and its requirements.
- Actively seek out a mentor that will provide guidance and encourage professional growth.
- All training units may not be possible to obtain through one employer. Seek out creative opportunities to gain more difficult training units, and be willing to change employers.
- Initiate IDP and follow through until licensure.
- Submit training units at logical times based on your current employment and projects' schedules, this may be by phase, training area completed, or based on a performance review schedule.
- Utilize current online resources to their fullest capacity: ArchCareers.org for professional guidance and information and the Emerging Professionals Companion for supplementary training units.

The Mentor

Role:

“A registered architect, preferably outside of your firm, with whom you meet periodically to review your training progress and discuss your career objectives.”¹

Responsibility:

“Meet once every four months with the intern to review training progress and sign the intern's IDP training report; suggesting additional training and supplementary education activities; provide guidance to enhance the intern's professional growth; and conferring, if needed, with the intern's supervisor.”¹

Recommendations:

- Create an online tool that focuses on mentoring. Develop a set of best practices that highlight the development and maintenance of an effective mentoring relationship.
- Add a section to the training unit report to capture the mentor's name, email address and license number.
- Utilize captured mentor email addresses to send regular emails that focus on maintaining a strong, effective relationship with an intern.
- Establish an online mentor matching program that would aid interns in finding a mentor that shares common ideals and interests.

The Supervisor

Role:

“The individual within the firm or organization, who supervises you on a daily basis, regularly assesses the quality of your work and periodically certifies your documentation of training activity.”¹

Responsibility:

“Provide reasonable opportunities for the intern to gain adequate experience in each IDP training area; meeting regularly with the intern to review progress and verify the intern’s training report; encouraging the intern to participate in seminars and utilize other supplementary education resources; and conferring, if needed, with the intern’s mentor.”¹

Recommendations:

- Train and educate supervisors through online seminars, emails, a handbook, and local presentations about the Intern Development Program.
- Provide a venue for Supervisor training at the AIA National Convention and AIA Grassroots Leadership Conference by the system administrator.
- Be held accountable for withholding required signatures from interns to complete training unit reports.
- Facilitate an atmosphere that encourages licensure.

The System Administrator

Role:

Provide a program that is geared toward professional development to “acquire and reinforce the discipline, integrity, judgment, skills, knowledge, and quest for learning that must serve the registered architect for a lifetime.”¹

Responsibility:

In a timely fashion, maintain and validate training records submitted by interns seeking to become licensed architects.

Recommendations:

- Create an electronic system that allows for the submission of training units online and is capable of drawing attention to errors.
- Create an electronic application to establish a Council Record online.
- Align weekly billable hours tracking with training areas and develop software that can track them simultaneously.
- Require the role of the mentor and supervisor be filled by separate individuals. The mentor should not be employed by the same company as the intern.

Conclusion

There are many reasons why there is inconsistency and irregular reporting of IDP training submissions. By formally training supervisors and mentors and creating an online electronic submission process, IDP becomes more manageable and less of a mystery by those who have not had to experience it. The NAC believes that these recommendations, if implemented, will result in more frequent and accurate training unit reports.

Sources:

1. National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. *2006-2007 IDP Guidelines*. 2006.
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