

'The Intern Trap' Revisited



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BY THOMAS FISHER, ASSOC. AIA
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In 1994, I wrote an article for *Progressive Architecture*, entitled “The Intern Trap,” that focused on the problem of well-known firms either not paying their interns or using sleights-of-hand, such as calling their interns “consultants,” to avoid paying health benefits or withholding taxes. The American Institute of Architects and The American Institute of Architecture Students responded with policies that strongly discouraged members and firms from engaging in such activities, and that—plus the very real criminal penalties that come with violations of labor or tax laws in many instances—seems to have greatly reduced the incidence of such behavior.

That does not mean that architecture interns have no more challenges, however. As the research and commentary in this issue of *AIA / J* show, interns often remain underutilized, overlooked, poorly paid, and pigeonholed in many firms. Surveys conducted by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, the AIA National Associates Committee, and ArchVoices reveal the extent to which interns have limited exposure to many aspects of architecture practice, receive relatively little mentoring within firms, remain at the bottom of the office pay scale, and struggle against being labeled the “CAD jockey.”

There are signs of hope. The profession has begun to recognize firms that treat their interns well, one of which is profiled on page 13 in this issue. And two Internship Summits, reported on here, drew attention to the very real problems the newest members of our profession face.

The problems of interns demand our attention, since the challenges they face are precisely the ones the profession faces as a whole. In not valuing the knowledge of interns, we learn to devalue our knowledge as architects. In not mentoring our interns, we learn to expect little collegiality from our colleagues. In not paying interns better, we learn to accept inadequate compensation ourselves. When we exploit others, we leave ourselves open to exploitation.

How we treat the most vulnerable members of our profession determines how we will be treated by clients and communities, consultants and contractors. If we are to change the conditions of architecture practice, then it begins right here—with interns. ■

Fisher is guest editor of this edition of AIA | J, The AIA Journal of Architecture.

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Designing Our Way to a Preferred Future

BY NORMAN L. KOONCE, FAIA,
AIA Executive Vice President and CEO



“Architects and architecture educators, as well as the organizations that represent them, ought to be among the most vocal and knowledgeable leaders in preserving and beautifying a world whose resources are in jeopardy.”

—DR. ERNEST BOYER

Dr. Boyer’s challenge is no less powerful today than when these words were first written. If he were here among us, I have no doubt he would urge us to help each other to do our best on behalf of the talented young men and women who look to us today to lead the profession to a better tomorrow. We cannot and must not do less.



In our quest to be wise and enlightened guides to the young men and women who are the profession’s future, we spend many hours and often great passion on the subject of architecture education and entry into the profession. The time and passion are well spent. And the issues we debate are well worth our most careful thought.

Many of these issues were defined in 1996 in *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice*. Known as the “Boyer Report,” this insightful study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching under Dr. Ernest Boyer as principal investigator, with Lee Mitgang, eschewed specific recommendations. Instead, the authors framed issues for debate, believing that our profession’s intelligence and skills would lead us to design our preferred future.

Ten years ago, I managed that study for the five collateral architectural organizations. Many discussions of issues with Boyer and Mitgang revealed what were, for them, three key discoveries:

1. Architects are passionate about employing their gift of design to make better places for every event in people’s lives, a gift that deserves great public appreciation.
2. Architects do not consistently respect recent professional degree graduates in architecture. Rather, their worth is questioned until they become qualified to practice. Dr. Boyer urged that

we facilitate a more respectful transition between education and practice.

3. The architecture design studio, model for professional education, often fails to nurture valuable traits.

Dr. Boyer believed the problems include:

- There are too few opportunities to learn the essential art and practice of collaboration.
- The criticism process tempts students to hide behind jargon as they defend their designs. This habit, he believed, is carried into practice, encouraging an almost incomprehensible “architalk,” rather than a “language of engagement,” distinguished by clear communication with our partners, clients, and public.
- Few architecture students are involved in campus leadership, disadvantaging them in later years to be effective community leaders.
- Students spend inordinate time, often days without sleeping, to refine their design presentations. Without understanding the value of time, students enter the workplace with a mindset that tends to diminish their value and their compensation.

Dr. Boyer believed these unintended negative consequences of the studio process could be overcome in the academy. Fostering a spirit of collaboration, emphasizing clear communication, encouraging involvement in campus life, and insisting on working

within a more realistic time frame could be achieved without a radical assault on time-honored curricula.

But what is the preferred future we seek? The Boyer Report has brought people together in diverse venues to debate that question. Emerging from the debates and summits has been one notable conceptual diagram of what we may want to become. It was developed through the lens of the Collateral Internship Management Group representing the five collateral organizations. They studied the report, conducted a summit with interns, assembled educators, and debated the report and its findings. Out of their work have emerged nine recommendations. (See p. 4.)

The CIMG report is conceptual. It does not define architecture education and internship as we now know them. But if we agree that improvements are needed, in the academy and across the board between and among all collateral organizations, we should arrive together at a plan of action.

Reaching accord at the conceptual stage of design is essential to design excellence. We now have a conceptual model for our future. If we agree that this is what we want to become, we are surely bright and dedicated enough to design a path to take us to where we need to be. If the model is not what we want, we must come up with an alternative. The wrong choice would be to stick with the status quo. ■

Architectural Internship: A Chronology

[1857] The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is founded.

[1897] Illinois becomes the first state to regulate the practice of architecture.

[1919] The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) is founded.

[1940] National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is founded.

[1956] The organization that would become the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) is founded.

[1962] A standardized national registration examination is developed by the NCARB.

[1969] NCARB establishes the title “intern architect” and development of an internship program.

[1976] The Intern-Architect Development Program (IDP) is implemented as a pilot program in Colorado, Texas, and New Jersey.

[1978] Mississippi is the first state to formally require IDP training for initial registration.

[1993] The AIAS chapter presidents pass a resolution regarding intern exploitation and compensation. They encourage the ACSA, AIA, and NCARB to do the same.

[1994] The AIA Board of Directors votes to support the AIAS resolution on intern compensation.

“The Intern Trap: How the Profession Exploits Its Young,” by Thomas Fisher, is published in the July *Progressive Architecture*.

[1996] IDP training becomes a requirement for NCARB certification.

Building Community: A New Future for Architectural Education and Practice, by the late Dr. Ernest Boyer and Dr. Lee Mitgang, is published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The last paper-based version of the ARE is administered during the week of June 17-20.

[1997] The first computerized ARE is offered on February 27.

[1999] The *1999 AIA National Survey on Internship* is published.

The Collateral Summit on Architectural Internship is held in Shaker Village, Ky., April 12-14.

Shortly after the Summit, the first e-mail of what would later become known as ArchVoices is sent out to a handful of young professionals across the country.

[2000] For the first time, the *2000-02 AIA Firm Survey* includes an employment category for “nonregistered architects.” Nonregistered architects account for 17 percent of all staff at architecture firms nationwide.

The AIA National Intern/Associates Committee formally becomes a body of elected Associate AIA members called the AIA National Associates Committee.

[2001] The Collateral Internship Task Force Final Report from the 1999 Collateral Summit is published, and the Collateral Internship Management Group (CIMG) is created to follow up on the CITF recommendations.

The Texas Board of Architects and Engineers allows interns to begin taking the ARE six months after graduation from a professional degree program.

[2002] AIA National Convention delegates pass a bylaws amendment to add an Associate Member representative as a voting member of the AIA Executive Committee, commencing December 2004.

ArchVoices launches the first Web site dedicated to uniting information on architecture internship.

The 2002 National Summit on Architectural Internship, organized by ArchVoices and hosted by the College of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma, is held. A Web site is created to generate dialogue and archive ideas.

[2003] In March, the *2003 Internship and Career Survey* is launched jointly by the AIA and ArchVoices.

In June, the CIMG Final Report is presented to the presidents of the ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, and NCARB.

The second issue of the *AIA / J* addresses internship. ■

This timeline, compiled by ArchVoices, documents the formation of the regulatory organizations; institution of state IDP/training requirements; committees, meetings, and conferences; and significant articles, publications, and reports related to architecture internship.

An unabridged version of the chronology is available at www.archvoices.org/aiaj.

The 1999 Internship Summit

BY JOHN McRAE, FAIA

During April 10-12, 1999, in Shaker Village, Ky., 66 representatives of the five U.S. collateral architectural organizations, young architects, interns, and architecture professionals in Canada and Mexico convened to discuss the state of the transition from architecture education to practice in the first Summit on Architectural Internship. John McRae, FAIA, now practicing in Baltimore, reports on what has proven to be a pivotal event in defining and shaping internship.

The 1999 Internship Summit grew out of a converging set of factors and, as such, provided an opportunity for the collaterals to have a dialogue on a critically important topic long overdue for candid discussion and positive change. The Boyer-Mitgang Report of 1996 and the then-upcoming 20-year anniversary of the IDP contributed to bringing internship to the forefront of a receptive leadership in the collaterals. The summit, in fact, was fully sponsored and represented by all collaterals. There was passion; there were struggles; and, in the end, there was consensus



PHOTOS © ALBERT VECERNA/ESTO

on a number of key issues regarding the future of architectural internship.

Extensive surveys by both the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and The American

Institute of Architects in the months prior to the summit provided important fodder for the summit discussions. There were, however, no clear indicators from the data. Many interns expressed satisfaction, to an extent, but they wanted more—more diverse experiences, more and better mentoring, more respect for the value they bring, more links between their education and practice, and more opportunities for professional growth.

The Summit participants “pulled the engine” on the 20-year-old IDP and found that although it addressed certain aspects, the program was not adequately serving the full complement of intern needs. Summit participants fleshed out concerns (“burning issues”), developed three Ideal Internship Models, and arrived at a consensus on nine recommendations for the future (see above). These were later expanded upon by the Collateral Internship Task

2001 Collateral Internship Task Force Recommendations

1. Accessibility into the profession should be broadened.
2. Practice should be integrated into education.
3. Education should be integrated into practice.
4. Every candidate for registration should have a professional degree from a NAAB/CACB-accredited program or its equivalent.
5. Alternative paths for obtaining professional experience leading to registration should be accepted.
6. Examination should be permitted on graduation.
7. Continuous learning and mentorship are fundamental to the profession.
8. National and international reciprocity should be strengthened.
9. Architecture graduates should be recognized for their knowledge and abilities.

Force, which was formed as a result of the summit. Every one of the recommendations had, at its heart, the importance of building a seamless transition between education and practice.

It is difficult to measure the value of the 1999 Internship Summit. The profession has so far to go in developing a valued culture of internship that small successes are often overlooked. To this end, the participants in the 2002 summit took a few minutes to brainstorm a list of value added activities/changes since the 1999 summit. The list was quite long, but so was the subsequent list of needs yet to be fulfilled.

Cultural change, as we know, often comes slowly. However, as Malcolm Gladwell explains in *The Tipping Point*, perhaps there is a shift under way, which, at a certain moment, will “tip” in favor of the powerful value that we know can be gained from a truly healthy culture of internship. ■

The 2002 Internship Summit

BY LAURA LEE, AIA

The 2002 Internship Summit took its cue from goals already identified by its 1999 predecessor. After inviting open participation on the Web, the group held a meeting at the University of Oklahoma, October 3-6, of 55 participants, five of whom were selected by popular vote, with the rest chosen by task force. Laura Lee, AIA, associate professor at the Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture, served as co-chair with John Cary Jr., Assoc. AIA, of the 2002 Internship Summit, and provides this synopsis.

In the 2002 Internship Summit, the organizers asked three questions via their Web sites:

1. Can we identify a shared value that should guide ongoing changes to architectural internship and education?
2. Why is this value important?
3. What is one specific change or initiative that would exemplify this value?

Summit participants convened with the conviction that shared values are necessary to shift the culture of internship from a “program” to a truly comprehensive professional development experience. Of those

individuals present at the summit, interns spoke most passionately on behalf of some 35,000 peers nationally by redefining their core needs: leadership, mentorship, diversity, clarity, responsibility, and respect.

Summit participants, including students, interns, educators, young professionals, senior practitioners, and allied professionals, responded to the need for broad-based support for internship through effective communication and dissemination of collective initiatives. The 1999 summit achieved a united collateral front and proposed ideal internship models characterized by continuity, diversity, flexibility, and clarity. Through engagement and collaboration, the 2002 summit reinvigorated the momentum and set forth goals to formulate specific benchmarks for successful implementation of each of the nine Collateral Internship Task Force (CITF) recommendations.

The participants aimed at developing meaningful connections for internship with respect to the ever-shifting political, social, and economic conditions of practice. We

examined other professional models; explored leading academic-, practice-, and state-board-based programs; assessed alternative paths within architecture; and compared the criteria for evaluating education (NAAB), internship (the IDP), and examination (the ARE). We identified a series of quantitative metrics to measure the current status and future progress of internship towards a structure based on learning and competency. Participants also affirmed the need for the profession to ensure contemporary relevance of internship through periodic comprehensive review of the criteria and procedures—internship requires validation at least every three years.

The profession knows that we must work together to understand the acuity of the problems and exigency of moving forward in an intelligent and unified way. Internship in the twenty-first century demands the interaction of not only the collateral organizations, but also every stakeholder in the process. Integrated internship will only evolve from holistic, organic, and synthetic models of experience—beyond just beginning a career to providing a foundation for life-long learning. It is the ethical imperative of the academy and the profession to prepare aspiring professionals to make contributions in the world as well as establish and maintain channels of mutual influence. As conduits for the exchange of knowledge and innovation, interns are the life blood and the future of the profession. ■

The objectives of the 2002 summit were to:

1. Formulate specific benchmarks for successful implementation of each of the nine Collateral Internship Task Force (CITF) recommendations
2. Explore and discuss existing academic-, practice-, and state-board-based models for implementation in other jurisdictions
3. Institute methods to communicate and expand the ongoing national dialogue regarding architectural internship.

To read more about the 2002 summit, visit www.internshipsummit.org.

To read the just released Collateral Internship Management Group Report, visit www.aia.org/idp/CIMGfinal.pdf.

The five collateral organizations are:

- Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
- The American Institute of Architects
- American Institute of Architecture Students
- National Architectural Accrediting Board
- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

A representative from the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students also attended the 2002 Internship Summit.

Beyond the Data: Comments From the 2003 Internship and Career Survey

BY VICKY L. BODDIE, ASSOC. AIA, Project Manager, Studio Five Architects, Minneapolis

To understand today's emerging architects better, the AIA National Associates Committee teamed up with ArchVoices on the 2003 Internship and Career Survey. Readex administered the Web-based survey in March and April 2003, inviting 23,606 individuals to respond, of whom approximately 40 percent were AIA Associate members, 35 percent ArchVoices subscribers, and 25 percent AIA members registered within the last five years.

Of the 4,525 responses that were at least 90 percent complete, 1,000 were randomly chosen for processing and tabulation, subject to a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent. Of these, 986 chose to add freeform comments. It was the drama and urgency of these 986 free-response comments that caught my attention. While not part of the highly valuable data that form the basis of the statistical survey analysis, these comments paint an equally important picture of the process we call internship.

The comments fell into the following areas:

- 35 percent related to the Architect Registration Examination, Intern Development Program, National Council of Architecture Registration Boards, and licensing
- 31 percent related to The American Institute of Architects, the future of the profession, education, and mentoring

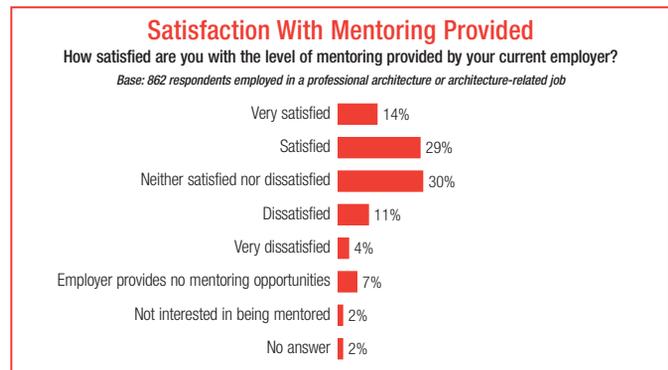
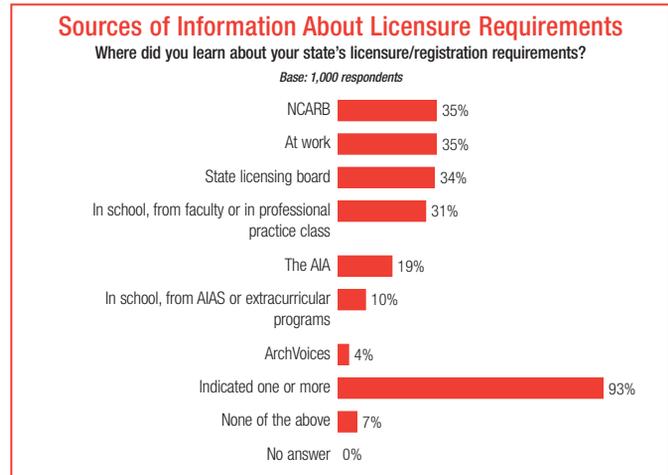
- 12 percent related to compensation, alternate careers, and career changes
- 12 percent related to the survey itself
- 10 percent were simply stories or unrelated comments.

Of those who commented, 61 percent were AIA Associate members, 21 percent were AIA members, 67 percent intended to become registered, 22 percent already were registered, 40 percent had completed IDP, and 22 percent were enrolled in IDP. It is clear that these respondents were personally and profoundly affected by IDP, the ARE, licensure issues, and NCARB's governance of those issues.

Much misinformation

The individuals who commented rarely complimented the current systems for internship, examination, or licensure. The comments also revealed a lot of misinformation and lack of communication and feedback about the specifics of the licensure process. Students don't seem to be getting the correct information about IDP, the ARE, and how to get licensed in their state. And once architecture graduates leave school, they find even less information and guidance.

Statistical data from the survey support this conclusion, as 71 percent of the survey respondents reported zero contact with their state IDP coordinator, 77 percent reported zero contact with their IDP educator coordinator, and 29 percent reported having trouble



contacting NCARB. The glass is perhaps half full, however, as resources do exist out there somewhere—they just may be under-funded or underutilized. The AIA National Associates Committee itself fared poorly in this category, as just 28 percent of Associate AIA members indicated that they had any communication with the NAC.

Licensing concerns

The most troubling stories came from international architects and students who must complete the Educational Evaluation Services for Architects process—a bureau-

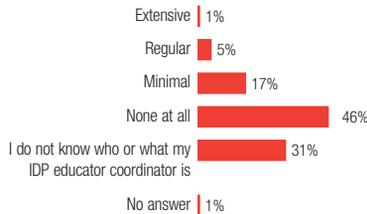
cratic, expensive, and, some respondents opined, arbitrary procedure administered through the National Architectural Accrediting Board to evaluate their education. NCARB is currently developing a "Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect" program that may address some of these issues in the future. Still, the same issues surrounding communication of new programs and opportunities must be resolved for these programs to be effective.

Many individual survey comments indicated that "getting licensed" is not encouraged

Contact With IDP Educator Coordinator

What level of contact did (do) you have with your IDP educator coordinator while in school?

Base: 1,000 respondents



at their firms. These comments are cause for concern, particularly when one considers that interns are also indicating few resources outside their firms to learn about the specifics of IDP and the ARE. It is also worth noting that 79 percent said that a primary reason for taking the ARE was fulfillment of a personal goal, while just 12 percent overall indicat-

ed that employer pressure was a factor.

Additionally, many comments focused on the delay in getting ARE test results. When someone takes the Graduate Record Examinations at a testing center, he or she leaves the building with a preliminary score. This seems to be a reasonable goal for the administration of the

ARE and would further take advantage of the computerized format. Such a change would also increase the amount of information and feedback for emerging professionals charting a course through internship.

Hope for the future

A number of respondents simply thanked us for the survey and sincerely hoped it would be a source for change and improvement in the system. They seemed anxious to share their experiences in the hope that the results would affect and inform decisions at the national level. Initiatives that give interns a voice, like this survey and the AIA National Associates Committee itself, can help us identify what is meaningful and challenging about the existing process, as

well as what is frustrating and redundant.

In the end, we need more and better communication and knowledge-sharing throughout the profession at all levels. Information exists and is occasionally published in various manuals or Web sites, but that does not mean it is being communicated effectively. Communication requires both talking and listening. We need a stronger, more effective voice from interns themselves, both within the AIA and without, and we also need people willing to hear that voice and respond. ■

Vicky Boddie served as cochair of the 2003 Intern and Career Survey Task Force. See intern comments, next page.

TECH TALK

Survey Points Up Motivations, Frustrations About Taking the ARE

Technology was supposed to make the Architectural Registration Exam (ARE) easier to take. But after it was computerized, the number of takers has reportedly dropped. Did the technological innovation backfire? No, the reasons are more involved, suggests the 2003 Internship and Career Survey, which indicates that 74 percent of interns “intend to get licensed/registered as an architect.”

The majority of respondents (57 percent) who had taken or planned to take the Architectural Registration Examination (ARE) said their motivation was a “personal goal and fulfillment.” For persons who indicated that they did not plan to take the ARE or hadn’t yet taken any division, “not yet eligible” was the lead reason (50 percent), indicating that those persons are still on a licensure track. Some frustration shows in the 13 percent who claimed there was “no time to prepare,” the 7 percent who responded “paperwork and/or scheduling hassles,” and the 5 percent who cited “cost.” Only 1 percent indicated that they wouldn’t take the exam because of its difficulty. The second most common incentive for taking the ARE was “career enhancement,” although only 18 percent chose that survey option.

Perhaps more telling to the current slump in licensure rates are the answers to the question: If you do not intend to get licensed/registered as an architect, why not? Simple pragmatics dominated. (Note: Respondents could give more than one answer.) “Current position does not require licensure,” came ahead of “I do not plan to seek a position that requires licensure,” 52 percent to 44 percent. “Not worth the time or effort,” rounded out the dominant top three with 38 percent. Monetary concerns ranked fairly high: “exam is too expensive,” 13 percent, “annual license renewal fees are too expensive,” 10 percent. -DG ■

The 2003 Internship and Career Survey indicates that 74 percent of interns “intend to get licensed/registered as an architect.”

Interns' Voices

Vicky L. Boddie, Assoc. AIA, compiled these comments from among 986 free responses to the 2003 Internship and Career Survey (see preceding page).

“Enough with the grousing. Be in charge of your job activities, your IDP requirements, communicate with your boss when you fall behind—and take the tests already!”

“Architects should look more closely to how engineers go through their licensing process: They take the Engineer In Training (EIT) exam right after graduation; after passing this exam, they must practice for four years under a licensed PE; then they take their Professional Engineer exam. The cost for these two exams is minimal in comparison to the ARE.” (White female, 25-34, MArch, completed IDP, Pa.)

“I have the equivalent of a master of architecture from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, [but] NCARB has been requiring that I spend all kinds of money just to be equal to a student just graduated from a bachelor program in the USA.” (Hispanic male, 35-44, MArch, Assoc. AIA, Tenn.)

“NCARB and IDP exclude people from professional practice by narrowing the path to licensure. Licensure should be an option for anyone willing to do good work.” (White male, 35-44, pre-professional undergrad, Assoc. AIA, Nev.)

“My employer already trusts me with all the responsibilities of a registered architect and pays me well. There has not been a good enough reason for me to want to go through the paperwork nightmare of the IDP program.” (White male, 25-34, BArch, Assoc. AIA, IDP intern, Ohio)

“I have found that the ARE is painfully tedious to apply for and take, with paperwork that passes through numerous institutions and people. It took me over a year to complete the paperwork and receive my authorization to test. The fact that we don’t receive our scores for up to eight weeks at times seems ridiculous in this technologically advanced time we live. When we do receive our scores, we have no idea how well we passed or failed, and without knowing what the answers are to the questions, we have no way of learning from the experience.” (White female, 25-34, MArch, Assoc. AIA, completed IDP, Tex.)

“I’ve never had much of a problem with contacting NCARB; getting a response is a different story.” (White male, 35-44, BArch, MArch, AIA, completed IDP, Wis.)

“I am strongly opposed to allowing the ARE to be taken right out of school. It will cheapen the value of licensure.” (White male, 25-34, BArch, MArch candidate, Assoc. AIA, completed IDP, Md.)

“By the time I receive the professional degree, I will have worked full time for over six years but will have to document an additional two years before I can sit for the exam! Give people like me a chance to take it when we think we are ready.” (White female, 25-34, MArch candidate, Assoc. AIA, IDP intern, Ark.)

“Enough with the grousing. Be in charge of your job activities, your IDP requirements; communicate with your boss when you fall behind and take the tests already!” (White female, 25-34, BArch, AIA, completed IDP, Md.) ■



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The AIA's Emerging Professionals

BY SUZANNA WIGHT, ASSOC. AIA, AIA Emerging Professionals Director

Within the AIA, two groups represent emerging professionals in architecture. The National Associates Committee (NAC) comprises members of the Institute who are either mainstream interns on the path to licensure or non-licensed alternative career professionals. The Young Architects Forum (YAF) consists of AIA members who have been licensed 10 years or less. Both groups, divided only by the exam, have a national presence and a local impact through programming within components.

AIA / J asked each group's leaders to comment on the present state of internship, the importance of the ARE, and their professional development. Summations of these conversations provide a real-world assessment of current realities

National Associates Committee

www.aia.org/nac

The vision of the NAC states: "By promoting excellence; providing information and leadership; fostering inclusiveness; and encouraging individual, community, and professional development, the NAC will integrate the growing Associates community of the profession into a strong voice within the Institute."

"Rather than a focus on internship, I would emphasize one of professional development—a process that begins in school and ends with retirement since learning should be, and is, a lifelong endeavor."

— SHANNON KRAUS, AIA, 2003 Associate Director

Associates believe that the entire architecture community has a responsibility to contribute to the development of an emerging professional. Too many practitioners complain that recent graduates are not prepared for the workplace, and yet they shirk their professional commitment to mentor their interns. For Associates, internship and IDP is related directly to the exam and licensure. Although it can be argued that IDP should provide structure and opportunity for many interns, the expense and paperwork deters many from participating in the program as intended, and those people, in the end, do not reap the benefit of a well-rounded, monitored internship. Non-licensed professionals see the

ARE as just one milestone in their careers.

They feel that it will not have a significant effect on their career path within their firm and fear that they will be forced to change jobs in order to reap any benefits (e.g., compensation, status, and increased responsibilities) from the new license.

Young Architects Forum

www.aia.org/yaf

Throughout its history, the YAF has had three overriding goals: mentorship, leadership, and fellowship. The YAF Advisory Committee is specifically charged with carrying out national-level YAF programs and serving as liaison with other AIA committees and allied organizations.

In looking back on their internship experience, members of the YAF did not feel that the internships prepared them to sit for the exam. Additional study time was needed to review academic subjects such as equations and formulas for structural systems that are not commonly used in practice.

Overall, recently licensed architects feel that licensure has played a key role in their career advancement. They note that the license provides them the freedom to consider alternative careers and ways of applying their skills in meaningful ways outside of traditional practice. After licensure, young architects believe that they need to go outside of their firm to continue a structured professional development and career guidance, which the AIA provides well for them.

Leaders of the Young Architects Forum offer their best advice to students and interns: Get licensed as soon as possible. ■



PHOTOS © ALBERT VECERKA/ESTO

"The exam might just be another test—and not incredibly practical—but it shows a commitment and tenacity that I think is important for young professionals serious about their careers."

— CAROLYN JONES, AIA,
YAF Communications Advisor

Grading the Intern Development Program

BY BETH A. QUINN, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Montana State University

This article was based on an article titled, “Building a Profession: A Sociological Analysis of the Intern Development Program,” which appeared in the May 2003 issue of the Journal of Architecture Education.

The Intern Development Program has become synonymous with architecture internship in the U.S. and its territories. Unfortunately, the accomplishments of IDP are unclear, and the role of internship in the profession continues to be vexed by contradiction and shortfall. Recently, research was commissioned by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), the organization with administrative control of IDP. Two groups of interns were surveyed: interns currently enrolled in IDP, and those in unstructured (non-IDP) internships in California and New York (“current interns”). A second survey targeted individuals who had

already completed an internship of either type (“former interns”).

When interns were asked to rate the quality of their internship, more than half (58 percent) said it was “good” or “exceptional” (see Table 1). When asked how much they were learning from their current employer, three out of four felt they were learning “quite a bit” or “a great deal.” Given the program’s goals, IDP interns should evidence higher satisfaction ratings and higher rates of learning. The surveys show no statistically significant differences between IDP interns and those in unstructured programs or former interns on either question.

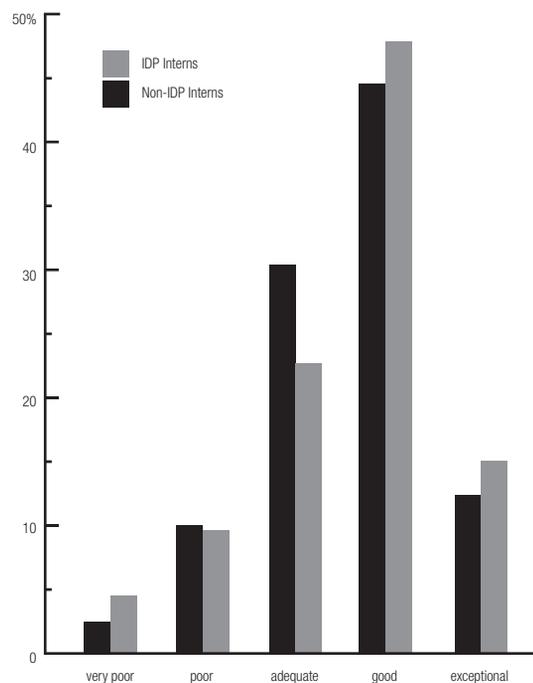
Should we not question the success of an educational program in which 43 percent of the participants feel their experience is “adequate” at best and “very poor” at worst, and one out of four feel they are learning little to nothing?

Interns also were asked to rate how easy or difficult it was to get experience in each area of practice. Not surprisingly, both types of interns reported little difficulty getting experience in construction documents. In contrast, bidding and contract negotiation, building cost analysis, and programming were areas in which it was most likely to be reported as somewhat difficult or difficult to gain experience. The responses of former interns mirrored those of current interns.

A larger percentage of former IDP interns reported competence than did non-IDP interns. The gaps between the two groups range from 10 to 23 percent. In all, statistically significant differences were noted for 18 skills and abilities, and respondents who completed IDP consistently reported higher levels of perceived competence.

Current and former interns were also asked to list the three best and three worst aspects of their internship. Interestingly, the resulting lists (see Table 2) are remarkably similar. Whereas some interns laud the diverse experience they are getting, another group complains about a lack of diversity. Some are receiving quality mentoring, while others find a lack of

Table 1. Interns Rate the Quality of Their Internships



mentoring to be one of the worst things about their internship. Some interns praise IDP for its structure, and others find it burdensome.

In general, IDP interns seem to be having a slightly better time of it. Even so, there is more variation within the groups than differences between them. In other words, the variety in the quality of internship among interns is striking, but the type of internship program fails to explain most of the difference.

This raises a very important question. If the quality of internship is primarily firm-dependent, and we find few differences between IDP and non-IDP interns, can the profession sustain an argument for legally mandating IDP?

Table 2. The “Best” and “Worst” Things About Internship

Current Interns
BEST
Diverse experience
Great employer/mentor
Structure
Honing technical skills
WORST
Lack of diverse experience
Lack of mentoring
NCARB regs/paperwork
Low pay
Former Interns
BEST
Diverse experience
Great employer/mentor
Continued learning
“Real” experience
WORST
Lack of diverse experience
Lack of mentoring
NCARB regs/paperwork
Low pay

A Modest Proposal

What can be done about internship? I propose some solutions, grounding them in the stated goals of internship, in the research we’ve conducted, and in the structural constraints facing the profession.

1. Redesigned training units system: First, the training unit distribution scheme must be redesigned to acknowledge the unique contribution to training and assessment that internship makes. Rather than designing internship to be a comprehensive overview of architecture practice, the profession needs to consider the set of skills and abilities that are best learned, honed, and tested during internship. The complementary relationship between internship and formal education must be delineated and strengthened.

2. Recommended, not mandatory programs: Second, I suggest that the fulfillment of any system of experience be recommended rather than mandatory. The profession should return to a required unstructured internship while continuing to articulate a set of suggested training experiences. One obvious advantage is that the administrative task of recording interns’ hours is eliminated. As the previous analyses have shown, the potential disadvantages are negligible.

I am not suggesting that the profession abandon its goal of providing quality internship. Rather, I suggest that



PHOTOS © ALBERT VECERKA/ESTO

this goal is better served by altering the target. It is clear that the best predictor of a good internship is the firm at which the intern is employed. It seems reasonable then that internship may best be improved by focusing on interns’ employers. The AIA and NCARB should develop continuing-education programs to encourage the development of mentoring skills and the creation of internship programs within firms. Also, a voluntary professional credentialing process recognizing those individuals and firms that excel at internship training should be established.

3. A sixth collateral: Finally, I suggest that the profession support the creation of a “sixth collateral” to serve the interest of interns. It is clear that the professional organizations as currently constituted cannot effectively

represent the interests of interns. The sixth collateral would provide a way for interns’ concerns to be given voice and, if effectively constituted and supported, could apply pressure to the profession to remedy them. When asked about this in the survey, almost three-fourths of interns thought that such an organization would improve the quality of internship. This sixth collateral, bolstered by current NCARB staff and reallocated IDP funds, could go further in improving internship than any training unit distribution form or heavy-handed attempts to regulate interns. □

Clientside: First Contact

“Our firm deals almost exclusively in technical consulting matters; as such, clients tend to want one person at a meeting who has ‘all the answers.’”

— JESSE D. HORVATH, AIA, Horvath Reich CDC, Inc., Chicago

Some firms prefer that only principals interact with clients, while others involve everyone on a project team from the very beginning, including their most junior staff members. In response to an e-mail questionnaire, 46 firm principals from around the country shared their firms’ perspectives, as well as their personal experiences.

1. As a policy, does your firm allow interns to work directly with clients?

Always: 10
Sometimes: 36
Never: 0

2. As a policy, does your firm allow early-career architects to work directly with clients?

Always: 15
Sometimes: 30
Never: 1

3. If always or sometimes, at what point?

At time of hire: 25
Upon completion of internship: 7
Within 3-5 years of full employment: 9
After 5+ years of full employment: 1
No answer: 4

4. If always or sometimes, what is the primary reason for allowing interns and/or early-career architects such contact?

Streamlines communications: 12
Allows for maximum problem-solving input: 4
Clients prefer it: 0
Builds experience: 23
No answer: 1

Other:

- All of the above.
- Interns need to learn how to work with clients.
- Confidence in their ability to handle it.
- Provides the client with multiple points of contact within the firm.
- It’s unfair and stupid not to make them part of the team.
- To keep the project team directly informed of client’s expectations.

5. What is the primary reason for not allowing early client contact?

Prefer centralized point of contact: 2
Clients don’t want to deal with them: 1
Lack of experience could compromise firm reputation: 1

Takes them away from critical tasks: 0
No answer: 41

Other:

- If the intern does not possess the necessary interpersonal skills.

6. How many years have you been a licensed architect?

1-5: 0
6-10: 3
11-15: 6
15+: 37

7. In your career, when did you begin to have regular client contact?

At time of hire: 23.
Upon completion of internship: 8
Within 3-5 years of full employment: 9
After 5+ years of full employment: 6

Additional comments (excerpts):

“If the intern can develop a specialty that fits in our project delivery process, the clients accept the intern as an expert.”

— J. BRYAN JONES, AIA, Jones Pierce Inc., Atlanta

“Watching the principal or project manager handle a meeting is a valuable asset in professional growth.”

—JOHN E. DAVIDSON, AIA, Davidson Design Group, Lenexa, Kan.

“Allowing our interns and early-career architects to work directly with clients builds experience and streamlines communications as well as allows for maximum problem-solving input.”

—KEN NOVAK, AIA, Group Novak LLC, Baton Rouge, La.

“It is very important for young architects to have access to clients so they understand real world issues vs. architectural school scenarios.”

—PETER O’CONNOR, AIA, O’Connor Kriegh Architects, Bainbridge Island, Wash.

For full and additional comments, visit www.aia.org/aiaj.

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What do you think?

Send your comments regarding AIA | J to Tpoltrack@aia.org.

JH+P's Intern Development Program Helps Train and Retain Employees

The interns and associates of James, Harwick + Partners have worked hard together for more than a decade to build their intern-development program. The Dallas-based firm's efforts have paid off in an IDP curriculum that now includes comprehensive training, continuing education, mentorship, and other incentives for interns to pursue licensure—plus the 2003 IDP Outstanding Firm Award.

The firm is motivated to create such learning experiences for its interns both to train its employees properly and as a business decision to retain them, firm principal J. Mark Wolf, AIA, says. The wide-reaching program also instills the importance of licensure early in JH+P employees' careers.

Structured program

Specifically, JH+P's program offers a structured mentoring system in which interns pair with mentors. The program also provides cross-disciplinary mentorship and learning, including IDP study groups, Architectural Registration Examination test-taking strategy sessions, and weekly project design pin-ups. The firm also sponsors guest speakers and two-hour lunchtime supplementary education programs that cover topics including industry conferences, best prac-

JH+P certainly invests heavily in its nearly 20 interns and, by doing so, they hope that they are giving interns the training and skills they will need to thrive in practice.

tices from the field, code-related issues, and green building and sustainable design. In addition, all architecture staff must attend regular seminars on specific practice and design topics such as project management, production, and office standards. These programs give the interns credit for IDP topics on which the firm does not focus in its everyday practice.

JH+P also provides material resources—including no-interest technology loans, travel and study reimbursement, time off to study and take the

ARE, and one-time reimbursement for each section of the registration exam—as well as encouragement of community-building and volunteer activities. Students keep their own records, and their progress is evaluated during semi-annual reviews.

Whereas many interns initiate IDPs for their own benefit, it was the principals of JH+P who instituted their education program, particularly after finding that colleges often did a poor job of acquainting students with the IDP and the ARE. JH+P's nomination for IDP Firm of the Year came from Melissa Joesoef, an intern in the firm's program. In her nomination letter, she writes, "JH+P's commitment to excellence is so apparent in the way that training and sharing of knowledge seems second nature to everyone in the firm, regardless of his/her years in practice or position."

Rewarding challenges

Despite their success, JH+P faces challenges in administering their IDP. Wolf says motivating the interns to pursue licensure can be difficult because it seems that fewer young practitioners want to make a professional commitment to becoming registered. In addition, Wolf says, because the time limit for taking the ARE is very broad, it doesn't have the same pressure as when he and his classmates sat for the exam. Like other firms, JH+P works hard to ensure that their interns get experience in areas in which the firm does not ordinarily practice. For JH+P, this might mean that the firm will bring interns into the field to expose them to construction management.

"We are especially gratified that the nomination was initiated by our intern staff," Wolf says. "We recognize that an investment in IDP is fundamental to maintaining a long-term commitment to continuing education in general."

JH+P certainly invests heavily in its nearly 20 interns and, by doing so, they hope that they are giving interns the training and skills they will need to thrive in practice. ■



The wide-reaching program also instills the importance of licensure early in JH+P employees' careers.

RESOURCES

Options From the Institute

Below are brief descriptions of current and future AIA programs and events geared toward emerging professionals. Full details can be found on the corresponding URLs.

National Associates Committee

nac-q: The committee's quarterly publication. www.aia.org/nacq/nacqarchive.asp.

NAC Service Awards

Program: This program recognizes outstanding accomplishments by Associate members, as well as firms and registered architects who have

contributed significantly to the development of Associate members. www.aia.org/nac/pastwinners.asp.

NAC Survey Task Force:

In 2003, the National Associates Committee, in conjunction with ArchVoices (www.archvoices.org), launched the 2003 Internship and Career Survey. Read more about the 2003

Internship and Career Survey. www.aia.org/nac/2003survey.asp

NAC Outreach Committee National Community Service Initiative:

The NAC encourages Associate members to participate in community-service initiatives. To get involved, contact your Regional Associates Director, www.aia.org/nac/naccontacts.asp. Read about last year's featured

Associate community-service programs, www.aia.org/nac/community.asp.

Project—Diversity

Committee: Launched in 2003, this committee's goals include encouraging participation and interaction among underrepresented groups and the Associate membership, the Institute, and the profession. www.aia.org/nac/naccontacts.asp.

A Local Look at Resources for Emerging Architects

AIA Columbus

Associates in the AIA Columbus chapter organized and executed a high-school design program bringing together Ohio State University AIAS members, Associate members, and AIA members to work with high school students on a design charrette over three days. The experience of learning about architecture was enhanced greatly by drawing, model building, and presentation. Contact Michelle Murnane; phone, 614-461-9500; e-mail, mmurnane@karlsberger.com.

AIA Eastern Oklahoma

Using the facilities at the University of Oklahoma's Urban Design Studio in Tulsa, the AIA Associate members organized Neighbor-for-Neighbor, Inc., an all-day charrette to assist Circle Housing, an affiliate of Neighbor-for-Neighbor, in providing designs for affordable housing for moderate- to low-income residents. Contact Mark D. Wittig, Assoc. AIA; phone, 918-743-2628; e-mail, markw@octoberstudio.com.

AIA Houston

The Intern Advocate Group (IAG) supports local interns by focusing on their relationships with mentors and supervisors. The development of an "IDP Binder" served as the launching point for tangible tools from this group. After compiling a tremendous amount of information about the relationships between interns and their mentors and supervisors, the resulting binder was condensed into a user-friendly format, "The Navigator." Contact Jason Puchot, Assoc. AIA; phone, 713-426-7475; e-mail, jasonp@kirksey.com

AIA Northern Virginia

The Kitten McD. Herlong Memorial Award honors the design work of Associate members. Entire buildings or even an element of a building can be submitted, as long as the primary designer is an Associate member. Contact

Executive Director Debbie Burns; phone, 703-549-9747; Web, www.aianova.org. (Pictured is this year's award-winning layout for the Solar Decathlon Village on the National Mall, by Daryl P. Wells, Assoc. AIA.)



AIA Southern New York

In its Architectural Awareness Program each fall, architects work with middle-school classes to make students more aware of architecture and what architects do. Volunteers go into classrooms and help teachers and students with design projects they have selected. Call Charlie Woodcock, AIA Southern New York president, 607-358-1015.

AIA Staten Island

The chapter has encouraged younger members to be involved with its Design Awards program as a method of discussing design on Staten Island. It has also produced three journals documenting each of the programs. Visit www.aiasiny.org. ■

Outstanding Local Associates Programming: Annually, the NAC awards its Chapter of the Year Award-Associate Level to recognize those who advance local and regional excellence. Full text, including all 12 highlighted programs to date. www.aia.org/nac.

Young Architects Forum

YCF/YAF Working

Weekend: This joint venture of the Associated General Contractor's of America's (AGC), Young Contractors Forum (YCF), and the AIA Young Architects Forum (YAF) will bring together both groups in two days of education seminars, construction tours, and fellowship. The groups will convene in Memphis November 14 and 15, 2003. www.aia.org/yaf.

2004 YAF Leadership

Conference: The YAF will host a leadership conference bringing together the newest members of diverse professions that directly influence the built environment. www.aia.org/yaf.

The YAF Connection: The bi-monthly newsletter of the YAF reaches about 6,000 members with each issue. www.aia.org/yaf/yafconnection.

YAF Leadership Awards: Annually, the YAF confers national leadership awards that recognize outstanding contributions and progress towards the forum's goals. The awards are presented at the YAF reception at the AIA convention each spring. www.aia.org/yaf/leadershipawards.asp.

Mentoring Guide: The Young Architects Forum has a complete online mentoring guide for use by both mentors and protégés. www.aia.org/yaf/yafmentoring.asp

Steps to Starting a New Local Young Architects

Forum Group: Start your own! See www.aia.org/yaf/startyaf.asp.

Internship Tools

IDP Outstanding Firm

Award Program: This recognizes firms for exemplary commitment and contributions to the professional development of interns. www.aia.org/idp/idpoutstandingfirm.asp.

Internship Best Practices:

Collection of Best Practices materials from winners of the IDP Outstanding Firm Award are posted at www.aia.org/idp.

Supplementary Education

Handbook: The AIA in conjunction with NCARB is shepherding a complete revision to the 1992 edition of this internship tool. www.aia.org/idp/supped.asp.

IDP Coordinator program:

This program, supported by the AIA and NCARB, provides volunteer IDP experts at the state AIA level. www.aia.org/idp/idpresources.asp.

ARE study aids: For a listing of the most popular study aids for ARE preparation and a list of AIA components that offer prep classes, www.aia.org/idp/are.asp. ■



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More Resources

306090: *The Journal of Emergent Architecture & Design* is edited by young architecture professionals and published by Princeton Architectural Press. www.306090.org

Archinect aims to make architecture more connected and open-minded by bringing together designers from around the world to introduce new ideas from all disciplines. Archinect was founded by architecture interns. www.archinect.com

ArchRecord2 is a print and Web-based section of *Architectural Record* magazine dedicated to the work and writing of young architects. www.archrecord2.com

ArchVoices is an independent, nonprofit organization and think tank on architectural education and internship, founded by architecture interns. www.archvoices.org

Death by Architecture is a warehouse site for design competitions. www.dba.org

The **Intern Development Program** is a multi-year registration requirement utilized in most states that is based on time spent doing a series of prescribed tasks. www.ncarb.org/idp

Ten Verses is dedicated to promoting intellectually engaged criticism of visual art and architecture by encouraging new voices. www.tenverses.org.

For more resources, visit www.aia.org/aiaj. ■

AIA | J

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Believe in the Future

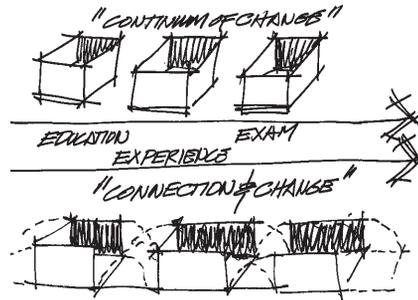
BY JOHN CARY, JR., ASSOC. AIA, AND CASIUS PEALER, Cofounders, ArchVoices

Internship isn't just for interns. Internship is where new energy and ideas are infused into the profession. It's also where individuals learn values and practices that will shape how they behave as leaders of their own firms. That energy, and those ideas and values, will determine the possible futures for the profession.

Size matters. In the future, the profession will be either larger or smaller. The AIA would not be more prestigious, effective, or relevant if there were fewer members, and neither would the profession as a whole. Our goal should be to have more energy and more ideas—to make the profession larger, not smaller—yet we readily accept that roughly half of our schools' graduates never get licensed. This is not a failure of education, but of the profession.

Our values also matter. Architecture education is already preparing young professionals for expanded roles, and established architects are redefining themselves after the fact. The profession's future depends on what happens in the middle. The 2002 AIA Firm Survey and current market research show that, even in traditional firms, there are now more unlicensed architecture professionals than registered architects. If it were a few people not making the cut, it would be their problem; but when the licensure is not accessible or meaningful to almost half of the architects working in traditional firms, it's a crisis for all of us.

It matters, as well, that we ask the right questions to find the right solutions. What if the profession could be twice the size it is today, without adding a single new architecture firm? What if we could track what happens to most of our graduates and why? What if we encouraged architects to work throughout the building industry and in government, non-profit organizations, politics,



"Continuum of Change" sketch by Wayne Drummond, FAIA. October 3, 2002: Day 1 of the 2002 National Internship Summit.

and academia? What if we simplified the over-designed requirements for joining the profession? What if we had a professional development program that was individually tailored and focused on outcomes? What if young architects had a tool with which to measure and assess their progress objectively? What if we could make a few bold changes, rather than lots of incremental ones?

What the future holds

The unique value to society of design education must be recognized and embraced by the profession it embodies. Those graduates who now ostensibly leave the profession should instead be seen as ambassadors for the profession as they

demonstrate the broad applicability of a studio-based spatial design education. We believe that in the future, the Intern Development Program (IDP) must become a true Professional Development Program. Currently, there are four different programs with four completely different sets of requirements—NAAB accreditation, IDP, the ARE, and AIA Continuing Education System—all trying to arrive at the same thing: professional competence. For the process of lifelong education to be seamless, the requirements of each step must logically relate.

And we believe that in the future, the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) must be accessible concurrent with internship. This is something the profession can actively pursue immediately and that is already happening in a few states.

As an experienced professional, you can make a difference personally by sitting down with a diverse local group of young people and just asking questions. And you can contribute to the national dialogue through AIA/J by sending comments and questions to tpoltrack@aia.org, which the AIA will post at www.aia.org/aiaj.

The questions we choose to ask will define the future of the profession. Believe in the future. ■

ArchVoices (www.archvoices.org) is a nonprofit think tank on architecture education and internship.