

Keeping Interns on the Path to Licensure: Successful ARE Programs

Contributed by the AIA Knowledge Resources staff

February 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

Megan Masterson, Assoc AIA, from AIA Kansas City; Micah Smith, AIA, from AIA Central Coast Chapter; and Ha Pham, Assoc. AIA, from AIA Southwest Washington presented their respective components' programs for associate members at the 2008 Grassroots Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., in February 2008.

BACKGROUND

Firm owners and leaders see a decline in the number of interns who follow through with licensure and wonder who will lead their firms in 20 years. No single reason explains the decline in licensed professionals, but anecdotal evidence points to a number of factors. These include the high cost of the tests and study materials, lack of camaraderie among those working toward licensure, limited firm support, limited financial or professional gain in the years immediately after licensure, and the open test time, which obviates any sense of urgency about completing all parts of the exam.

Many AIA components and firms have developed programs to nurture emerging professionals in the licensure process. The three components whose programs are profiled here each received AIA Emerging Professional Component Grants for 2007 to continue or start new programs for this important segment of the profession.

AIA KC

AIA Kansas City (AIAKC) created a leadership forum to support associate members as they proceed through the IDP and ARE processes. The component maintains a library of hard-copy study materials that members can check out. As well, it offers study sessions with licensed architect instructors. According to the AIAKC Web site, these sessions are "usually held on Saturday mornings at a variety of locations and are free for all AIA members and cost \$20 for non-members." The component also organizes happy hours for emerging professionals to offer younger members an opportunity to network.



Licensure workshop at AIAKC. Image Credit: AIAKC.

The AIAKC Young Architects Forum has a program titled "Monsters of Design," which features lectures, networking events, and competitions.

In 2007 AIA Kansas City launched a program titled Intern Friendly Firm "to recognize member firms that support and encourage architectural interns to complete IDP and pass the ARE. The program has two goals—to provide a resource for emerging professionals and students, and to encourage firms to participate more actively in internship. Each of the firms recognized is listed on the component's Web site.

AIA CENTRAL COAST CHAPTER

The AIA Central Coast Chapter (AIACCC) is an unstaffed component with 12 associate members and 80 architect members. Through its efforts, the component hopes to provide support to members actively seeking licensure and tangible benefits to associate members, as well as to increase the value AIA and Assoc. AIA members receive from their membership. AIACCC has created a resource library of Kaplan study materials for the ARE 3.0 and 4.0 tests and NCARB study materials for the use of associate members. To increase circulation, the component opens the library to non-members, as well. Books can be checked out for two-month periods.

The component also offers IDP workshops and help preparing for the California Supplemental Exam.

AIA SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

The AIA Southwest Washington Component has created a program titled the Emerging Leaders Group (ELG). ELG has 30 intern architect members, who participate in social events, volunteer opportunities, networking events, architectural tours, high school mentorship, and a Google forum for open conversation. The program also includes biweekly lectures on IDP topics and monthly study sessions for the ARE.

The program strives to deliver relevant, timely material for interns proceeding through the IDP and ARE processes. The component surveys members regularly to see if the program's content meets their needs. Surveys also gauge the success of each program to determine if the content needs realignment.

WHAT CAN YOUR FIRM DO TO SUPPORT INTERNS?

1. Learn about the new testing structure.
2. Develop an IDP support program.
3. Help fund interns participation in the IDP and ARE programs, by purchasing study resources, offering reimbursement for tests, and providing time off to take tests.
4. Create lunch-and-learn sessions on topics relevant to the IDP and the ARE.

WHAT CAN YOUR COMPONENT DO TO SUPPORT INTERNS?

1. Purchase study materials.
2. Organize study sessions and workshops.
3. Develop events to promote camaraderie among those preparing for the ARE.
4. Survey AIA associate members for program suggestions to meet their needs.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

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

- 22.02.02 ARE Success Teams
- 22.06.04 The Pillars Leadership Program of AIA Kansas City
- 22.05.02 Preparation for the Architecture Registration Exam

Feedback

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

Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Design associations
- American Institute of Architects
- AIA local components
- ARE
- IDP
- Emerging professionals