



## Inclusivity Into the Profession Task Force

Final Report to the Board of Directors | December 2022

Responding to the AIA Virginia 2020-22 and National AIA 2021-25 Strategic Plans, both of which call for greater justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession, AIA Virginia formed the Inclusivity Into the Profession Task Force in spring 2022. The charge of the task force was to investigate broadening pathways into the profession of architecture, particularly for traditionally underrepresented groups and individuals, in Virginia.

Launching its work in June 2022, the task force was comprised of diverse statewide representatives from both academia and practice:

Sean E. Reilly, AIA | Chair  
Carol Cash | K-12 Education  
Willie Cooper, AIA | Member At-large  
Phoebe Crisman, AIA | The University of Virginia  
Robert J. Dunay, FAIA | Virginia Tech  
Rebecca W. E. Edmunds, AIA | Member At-large  
Jori Erdman, AIA | James Madison University  
Ron Kloster | Hampton University  
Crystal Miller | Brightpoint Community College  
Gina A. Robinson, Assoc. AIA | Associate Member At-large  
Robert L. Easter, FAIA | *Ex Officio*  
Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA | Staff Liaison  
Joanna M. Dreiling | Staff Team Support

The task force commenced its efforts by researching existing pathways into architecture for high school students, college students, and early practitioners through an intensive set of targeted questions to specific audiences via video interviews conducted by the staff team. Attached, as appendices, are documents related to this process, which are for internal use only:

- Appendix A: Roster of Stakeholder Interviewees
- Appendix B: Interview Questions to be Asked
- Appendix C: Synopsis of Interviews

The stakeholder interviews yielded very informative insights relative to barriers and roadblocks along the pathway into architecture. Overarching themes from the interviews reveal that:

- Individuals are being exposed to the profession of architecture largely through family or classroom settings. Otherwise, awareness is minimal, at least until college.
- The pathway into the profession from college through retirement is expensive and acts as a deterrent for underrepresented individuals and communities (college, examination, pay scale, and membership dues).
- Passion for the profession is paramount when it comes to having members of the BIPOC community enter the profession given challenges other of accessibility, cost, and gatekeeping.
- Mentorship throughout the pipeline is pivotal to the success of under-represented individuals and groups within the profession, to ensure that they continue.
- The hierarchy and gatekeeping causes confusion and exclusivity on the progression into the profession.

- More education about alternative practice settings would likely encourage more individuals to pursue a career in architecture.
- A key to expanding the pipeline into the profession is creating even earlier exposure in things such as math or art classes in grade school.

Based on the full set of findings from the interviews, as well as from audits of existing related programming, the group divided into three work groups, focused on:

- K-12 Education
- Higher Education
- Practice

The group felt that many programs were already underway within the K-12 space through AIA Virginia, national AIA, and other organizations, and that AIA Virginia should leverage those to greater benefit. These resources are listed at the conclusion of the recommendations.

Similarly, AIA Virginia should optimize partnerships to strengthen relationships with academic institutions and advance more positive and constructive stronger studio culture experiences for students.

The largest suggested effort rests within the practice area. Firms and individuals should place much more emphasis on supporting pathways into the profession, particularly for BIPOC (“Black, indigenous, and people of color”) populations.

The task force felt it important to note that their charge was to focus on people of color. However, they believe that many of the recommendations and suggestions included within the report apply to all the individuals and entities who are traditionally underrepresented in the profession of architecture, including women. Additionally, numerous programs, projects, and initiatives are already in place at the local, state, and national levels that advance women within the profession.

The report and recommendations below provide a synopsis of potential initiatives, programs, and projects in K-12 education settings, institutions of higher learning, and traditional architecture firms to build on what is already underway and/or to advance new efforts in this space.

## K-12 RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Elementary/Middle Schools

*Objective 1: Encourage members to become involved in existing K-12 outreach programs.*

*Objective 2: Build on previous work conducted by the Virginia Center for Architecture, The Branch Museum of Architecture and Design, and the AIA Virginia Outreach Advisory Council to effect new programming within STEAM-related frameworks.*

1. **Launch a Speakers Bureau.** Develop and disseminate a list of companies and individuals, by region/location, with contact information to be considered for presentations and other appropriate involvement, which can be provided to Career and Technical Education (CTE) coordinators and school counseling directors in each school division.
2. **Provide Resource Information.** Contact CTE Coordinators and school counseling directors of each school division in Virginia to share the following resources as audited, collected, and documented by AIA National and AIA Virginia:
  - AIA Virginia “Ask an ACE” program: [www.aiava.org/ask-an-ace](http://www.aiava.org/ask-an-ace) (part of the Virginia Department of Education Work-based Learning Program)
  - AIA Virginia K-12 resources: [www.aiava.org/community/architecture-activities/](http://www.aiava.org/community/architecture-activities/)
  - National AIA: <https://www.aia.org/pages/6319595-aia-k-12-initiatives-connect>

### High Schools

*Objective 1: Facilitate participation in career day programs by architects and design professionals in high schools across the state.*

*Objective 2: Working with local AIA chapters, encourage AIA members throughout Virginia to become involved in existing K-12 outreach programs and/or create new programs.*

1. **Launch a Speakers Bureau.** Develop and disseminate a list of companies and individuals, by region/location, with contact information to be considered for presentations and other appropriate involvement, which can be provided to Career and Technical Education (CTE) coordinators and school counseling directors in each school division.
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  - AIA Virginia “Ask an ACE” program: [www.aiava.org/ask-an-ace](http://www.aiava.org/ask-an-ace) (part of the Virginia Department of Education Work-based Learning Program)
  - AIA Virginia K-12 resources: [www.aiava.org/community/architecture-activities/](http://www.aiava.org/community/architecture-activities/)
  - National AIA: <https://www.aia.org/pages/6319595-aia-k-12-initiatives-connect>

### HIGHER ED RECOMMENDATIONS:

*Objective 1: Revise existing eligibility requirements for AIA Virginia programs such as the AIA Virginia Prize and Emerging Leaders in Architecture to be more inclusive and accessible.*

*Objective 2: Inspire more students who are Virginia residents or graduating from Virginia schools to remain in the state upon graduation.*

#### SHORT TERM – 6-12 MONTHS

1. **Propose revisions to the eligibility for the Virginia Prize** to allow students in any architectural program, regardless of NAAB accreditation status, to participate in the program. Review program endowment prior to proposing change. Include faculty from all institutions on related committees.

*Current language from website (Virginia Prize): The AIA Virginia Prize is a design charrette that engages students at all of the accredited schools of architecture in Virginia. Conducted simultaneously at each institution, students are given the competition program Friday at 5 p.m. They work over the weekend to create a board presenting their design solution by 9 a.m. the following Monday. The competition is intended to promote collaboration between the profession, students and professors in Virginia.*

*Proposed revised language: The AIA Virginia Prize is a design charrette that engages students at all of ~~the accredited schools~~ and programs of architecture (as determined by the Board) in Virginia. Conducted simultaneously at each institution, students are given the competition program Friday at 5 p.m. They work over the weekend to create a board presenting their design solution by 9 a.m. the following Monday. The competition is intended to promote collaboration between the profession, students and professors in Virginia.*

2. **Propose revisions to the eligibility for the Emerging Leaders in Architecture (ELA) program** to allow students in any architectural program, regardless of NAAB accreditation status, to participate in the program.

*Current language from website (ELA Program): Student Nominees: Each Virginia Architecture School (UVA, VT, Hampton, WAAC, and JMU) may nominate one or more students for admission to the program. One participant will be selected from each school for a total of four. If interested, contact your department Chair/Dean.*

*Proposed revised language: Student Nominees: Each Virginia university Architecture School program (UVA, VT, Hampton, WAAC, and JMU) may nominate one or more students for admission to the program. One participant will be selected from each school for a total of four. If interested, contact your department Chair/Dean.*

MEDIUM TERM – 12-18 MONTHS

1. **Support the development of robust policies that protect student/employee rights** in the academic studio environment and in professional practice.
2. **Launch a scholarship program** from AIA Virginia to worthy BIPOC students in architecture and related programs across the state.

LONG TERM – 18-36 MONTHS

1. **Form a new higher education committee** that can make specific higher education related recommendations to the AIA Virginia Board of Directors. All schools and programs of architecture are eligible and invited to have representatives on the committee.

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**AIAVA and Graduates of Architecture Accredited State Universities**

AIA Virginia is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their value, and improving the quality of the built environment. In that effort, the organization collaborates with other agencies including the academic institutions of Virginia. Attracting new, young members to the organization, helping them toward licensure, and providing a rewarding path toward professional practice are important goals.

Presently, there is a gap in data regarding the relationship between graduates of Virginia university architecture programs and the registered and unregistered architects working in the state. An informal consensus reveals a belief that many of the graduates leave Virginia to practice elsewhere – a ‘brain drain’ that does not take advantage of significant educational investment. Universities have no persuasion over where graduates go as long as there is some affirmation of ‘gainful employment.’ However, other perceptions see many graduates from state universities populating local offices. An understanding of the situation through precise data would be helpful to determine if AIAVA needs to, or can, take any action:

1. Are our graduates leaving the state?
2. How many or what percentage?
3. If a significant number, what are the conditions, limitations, and opportunities contributing to this trajectory?
4. Is there a pattern of graduates leaving or staying in state over the past decade?
5. Would a breakdown, by degree and university, of architects presently working in the state be helpful?
6. Are there any resources, provided to firms that would help in attracting in state students?
7. Can the image of Architecture in Virginia as a technological, innovative, or entrepreneurial center attract more in state graduates?
8. Is there any role for AIAVA to play because of this demographic analysis?

**PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

*Objective 1: Encourage participation in existing mentorship programs for recent graduates, continually improving these programs to assure relevance.*

*Objective 2: Create a smoother transition from college to practice by developing and disseminating tools for firms to bolster professional practice on-boarding and orientation.*

#### SHORT TERM – 6-12 MONTHS

1. **Create a “Becoming an Architect” page** for AIAVA.ORG/VANOMA to guide graduates and inform them of the process.
  - **Example:** Become an [Architect | AIA Minnesota](#).
    - Before this website’s “Education Requirement” section, add language inviting those in non-accredited and technical programs to understand the process.
  - **Include:**
    - An onboarding guide for graduates/young professionals on hiring processes and questions to ask when interviewing regarding examination/licensure support.
    - Resources to make candidates well informed about path to licensure and selecting potential employers based on those requirements.
    - Outreach/access for existing programs:
      - AIA.org [Architecture Student Resources](#)
      - [AIAVA Emerging Professionals Roundtable](#)
      - AIAVA’s and local chapters’ Young Architects Forum
2. **Promote AIA Align Mentorship Program** for AIAVA/VANOMA (National Fellows/YAF program):
  - Make program accessible and visible on AIAVA/NOMAVA websites.
3. **Expand AIA Virginia Firm Roundtables** for large-, mid-size, and small firms: Expand roundtable participation to expose BIPOC recent graduates and emerging professionals to management, finance, and other aspects of running a practice.
  - Increase BIPOC practitioner roundtable participation; encourage firm leaders to bring younger staff.
4. **Elevate awareness of [VANOMA Member Spotlight YouTube channel](#).**
  - Link on AIAVA website. Videos currently highlight board members only, but shortly will add others who inspire passion for the profession.
  - Recruit BIPOC professionals to share their stories about entering the profession and path to licensure to inform graduates and young professionals.
  - AIAVA Newsletter: Make “Member Spotlight” a feature in the AIAVA newsletter with BIPOC focus on success stories.

#### MEDIUM TERM – 12-18 MONTHS

1. **Expand AIAVA’s Operation Reach, Retain, Develop.** Expand awareness and participation beyond students during graduating year.
  - Expand program to include more BIPOC graduates to provide continuing mentorship to retain diverse talent and support them on their path to licensure.
2. **Develop areas for future collaboration, cooperation, and sharing best practices.** Leverage strategic alliances with the AIA and related organizations to optimize service/support to BIPOC graduates.

3. **Eliminate ‘pay to play’ barrier for AIAVA and AIAVA/VANOMA events.** Promote a firm-funded \$0 attendance program for recent graduates.
4. **Advocate ‘bring a young person’ to ArchEx:** “JEDI won't happen without investment.”
  - Expand/encourage opportunities for recent graduates to attend events free of charge.
  - Incentivize bringing recent graduates to AIA events.

#### LONG TERM – 18-36 MONTHS

1. **Create mentorship opportunities for graduates just starting practice paired with young established professionals.**
  - Adopt AIA Chicago model: free, regular social hours for recent graduates with younger professionals.
  - Apply for College of Fellows Emerging Architects Component Grant for kick-start funding.
2. **Eliminate ‘pay to play’ barrier for AIAVA Emerging Leaders in Architecture Program to increase awareness of existing scholarships for BIPOC students:**
  - ELA nominees often self-select, and thus are already connected to the AIA. To encourage connections for those who do not yet have them, increase outreach/awareness on:
    - All five chapters’ ELA scholarships, making information readily available. Link information on scholarships [here](#) or in application.
    - Encourage applicants for the R. Corey Clayborne, FAIA ELA Scholarship.
    - Encourage applicants for the Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA Fellowship.
3. **Create an onboarding guide for firms,** so firms take the lead in discussions. Expand awareness of ways to support recent BIPOC graduates in their efforts to meet ARE and AXP requirements:
  - Create case studies of firm policies on mentorship/licensure support from the survey of selected firms of all sizes.
  - Check with the JEDI group on existing work and surveys.
4. **Develop a formal exam scholarship program through AIAVA/VANOMA** for firms unable to subsidize the licensure process. Establish a scholarship pool these firms can contribute to for BIPOC candidate exam costs.
  - AIAVA supports licensure through Amber Book, promotes local chapter study/educational events, and provides a state licensing NCARB advisor to all associate members.
5. **Advance knowledge of Alternative Practice Models:**
  - Research *Missing 32%* for ideas: More research required into the other career paths minority architects take on sites such as Rosa Sheng’s *Missing 32%*.
  - Expand information on alternative practices:
    - Expose graduates to all they can do with architecture degree.
    - Gather information on all a degree in architecture and licensure means beyond standard practice.
  - Use VANOMA Member Spotlight the spread awareness of alternative practices.

The Practice Work Group recommends AIAVA consider the IACS (Inform, Advise, Connect, and Support) concept as an umbrella framework for IIPTF programs. (VANOMA may adopt this soon as well.)

## RESOURCES:

### NATIONAL AIA and OTHER:

AIA K-12 Programs: <https://www.aia.org/pages/6319595-aia-k-12-initiatives-connect>

AIA Align Mentorship Program:

[https://issuu.com/youngarchitectsforum/docs/connection\\_q2\\_mentorship\\_citizen\\_architects\\_2021\\_/s/13697196](https://issuu.com/youngarchitectsforum/docs/connection_q2_mentorship_citizen_architects_2021_/s/13697196)

AIA Align Kick-off Resources: <file:///C:/Users/HDreiling/Downloads/ALIGN%20-%20kickoff%20icebreaker.pdf>

AIA Young Architect Resources: <https://www.aia.org/pages/6477382-young-architect-resources>

AIA Large Firm RoundTable ARE Scholarship: <https://architectsfoundation.org/our-impact/architecture-scholarships/aia-lfirt-are-scholarship/>

AIA Architecture Student Resources: <https://www.aia.org/resources/66476-students-aia-is-here-for-you>

AIA Guides for Equitable Practice: <https://www.aia.org/resources/6246433-guides-for-equitable-practice>

Architects Foundation: <https://architectsfoundation.org/our-impact/architecture-scholarships/>

NCARB Interested Students: <https://www.ncarb.org/blog/new-resources-k-12-students-interested-architecture>

ACSA Study Architecture: <https://studyarchitecture.com>

### AIA VIRGINIA and OTHER STATE:

K-12 resources: [www.aiava.org/community/architecture-activities/](http://www.aiava.org/community/architecture-activities/)

“Ask an ACE” program: [www.aiava.org/ask-an-ace](http://www.aiava.org/ask-an-ace)

Operation Reach, Retain, and Develop: <https://www.aiava.org/operation-reach-retain-and-develop/>

Emerging Leaders in Architecture Program: <https://www.aiava.org/professional-development/emerging-professionals/emerging-leaders-in-architecture/>

HCD, FAIA Fellowship: <https://www.aiava.org/honorsawards/helene-combs-dreiling-faia-fellowship/>

Emerging Professionals Roundtable: <https://www.aiava.org/emerging-professional-roundtable/>

Young Architects Forum: <https://www.aiava.org/community/young-architects-forum/>

VANOMA Member Spotlight: <https://www.vanoma.org/news/categories/member-spotlight>

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End Report | Appendices Follow

## Appendix A: Roster of Stakeholder Interviewees

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Group</b>
<b>Task Force Members</b>			
Crystal Miller	IIPTF Member	Working with AIAVA	Virginia-based 'expert'
Carol Cash	IIPTF Member	Working with AIAVA	Virginia-based 'expert'
<b>Students + Graduates</b>			
Brian Gore	Recent Graduate	Quinn Evans Architects	
Alonzo Colon	Student	Virginia Tech NOMAS	
Obi Okolo	Past Vice President - AIAS	DC Host - Creative Mornings	
Melanie Ray	Recent Graduate	NOMA Leader	
Naiya Green	High School Student	TBD	
Ziza Hernandez	High School Student	TBD	
<b>Invited Interviewees</b>			
Randy Steiner	Founder	Coalition of Community College Architecture Programs (CCCAP) – Maryland based	National 'expert'
Michael Wood	Executive Director	Association of Architecture Organizations (AAO) - Chicago	National 'expert'
Karen Newsome	Director of Individualized Student Services	Charter High School for Architecture and Design (CHAD) - Philadelphia	Virginia-based 'expert'
Evan Grummell	Head, Architecture Program	Kecoughtan High School, Governor's School for Art and Architecture – Hampton	Virginia-based 'expert'
Sergei Dolgalev	Department Head	Tidewater Community College Architecture/CADD - Virginia Beach	Virginia-based 'expert'
Joel Mieses	Acting President	VANOMA / NOMAS	Virginia-based 'expert'
Kimberly Yoho	Manager of K-12 Programs	American Institute of Architects (AIA)	National 'expert'
Kendall Nicholson	Director of Research	ACSA	National 'expert'

## Appendix B: Interview Questions to be Asked

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | Inclusivity Into the Profession Task Force

### To National Experts Audience:

1. Where do you think people/students first learn about the profession of architecture, and how do they learn about it?
  2. Are there personal and/emotional challenges to making one's way through the education and licensure process? If so, please explain.
  3. Does your institution encounter negative or positive impressions of the profession? If so, please cite specifics.
  4. What would your institution (*whatever entity the question goes to*) like to gain or learn from, understand, and/or collaborate on with AIAVA and its members to bring together all educators and students under the "bigger tent" of architecture?
  5. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?
  6. What data are we not collecting that would indicate trends in minority/gender participation in architecture?
  7. Is there anything we did not ask that you would like to share?
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### To Virginia Experts Audience:

1. Where do you think people/students first learn about the profession of architecture, and how do they learn about it?
  2. Are there personal and/emotional challenges to making one's way through the education and licensure process? If so, please explain.
  3. Does your institution encounter negative or positive impressions of AIA as a professional organization? If so, please cite examples.
  4. What would your institution (*whatever entity the question goes to*) like to gain or learn from, understand, and/or collaborate on with AIAVA and its members to bring together all educators and students under the "bigger tent" of architecture?
  5. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?
  6. What data are we not collecting that would indicate trends in minority/gender participation in architecture?
  7. Is there anything we did not ask that you would like to share?
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### To High School Students:

1. When did you first look at buildings and say to yourself "I can do that"?
2. Do you encounter negative or positive impressions of the profession? If so, please cite specifics. What interests you about architecture?
3. How do you feel about the fact that most people working in the field of architecture are white and male?
4. How do you see work? Is it mainly a means of making money or is doing something you love equally important?
5. Do you see architecture as a secure career path for women/minorities?

6. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?
7. Is there anything we did not ask that you would like to share?

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**To College Students:**

1. Do you encounter negative or positive impressions of the profession? If so, please cite specifics.
2. What influences transformed your interest in architecture into pursuing it as a career?
3. Do you believe all roles in architecture are open to minorities and women?
4. Is architecture school harder than you expected? What is hard about it?
5. How much did wanting to be on the front lines of fighting global climate change figure into your decision to become an architect?
6. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?
7. Is there anything we did not ask you would like to share?

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**To Professionals:**

1. Do you feel like you get equal access to mentoring and opportunities in the office and feel supported by your firm in your path to licensure?
2. What was different about the reality of a career in architecture than your expectations?
3. Is the environment for women/minorities getting better or getting worse in the profession?
4. Is there anything you have learned that you wish you had known when deciding to enter the profession? Would it have changed your decision?
5. Did you find it hard to maintain your passion for architecture? Why?
6. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?
7. Is there anything we did not ask that you would like to share?

## Appendix C: Synopsis of Interviews



## Inclusivity Into the Profession Task Force Stakeholder Interviews Synopsis

The AIA Virginia Inclusivity Into the Profession Task Force undertook a series of interviews with targeted, key stakeholders in the K-12 education space at the national, state, and local levels as identified by the task force. This report synthesizes key themes from the research as well as individual responses from the 15 individuals to each set of stakeholder questions based on audience:

- National experts
- Virginia experts
- High school students
- College students
- Practicing professionals

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### Overarching Themes from Interviews:

- Individuals are being exposed to the profession of architecture largely through family or classroom settings. Otherwise, awareness is minimal, at least until college.
- The pathway into the profession from college through retirement is expensive and acts as a deterrent for underrepresented individuals and communities (college, examination, pay scale, and membership dues).
- Passion for the profession is paramount when it comes to having members of the BIPOC community enter the profession given challenges other of accessibility, cost, and gatekeeping.
- Mentorship throughout the pipeline is pivotal to the success of under-represented individuals and groups within the profession, to ensure that they continue.
- The hierarchy and gatekeeping causes confusion and exclusivity on the progression into the profession.
- More education about alternative practice settings would likely encourage more individuals to pursue a career in architecture.
- A key to expanding the pipeline into the profession is creating even earlier exposure in things such as math or art classes in grade school.

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NOTE: Responses to interview questions conveyed below are based on direct notes taken from 30-minute sessions with each person in the stakeholder pool. While not a full transcript of the conversation, the notes capture the general theme, key content, and overall voice of each interview. In particular, the notes have not been 'scrubbed' for content or voice, but are original to the speaker.

**Questions to the 'National Experts' audience:**

- 1. *Where do you think people/students first learn about the profession of architecture, and how do they learn about it?***
  - a. Within the curriculum itself, students in the state of Virginia typically learn about architecture somewhere between sixth and eighth grade, within a geometry class or sometimes even later in twelfth grade, going to a career fair. This is an improvement from previous when one of the interviewees was not exposed to architecture until college and took an urban planning class.
  - b. If it is not discussed within the curriculum, it is not exposed at all and rarely discussed. People sometimes hear it referenced in the media, which leads to a romantic notion of the profession. For those design inclined or have a true calling in architecture, they usually get there by being steered by a parent in some fashion. Someone within their family that exposed them through their own profession or it is nurtured through outside means. There is an intrinsic alignment towards design that draws them towards the profession. People are more often already oriented towards it as a career versus someone shifting from liberal arts.
  - c. Many people when they meet an architect, they think the person owns the building and they do not know what architects do. It is really not the case that people care too much about architecture. She blames us as professionals. It does not share much and it is egotistical when it does. She often said "going to an architect is like going to a milliner. That is how personal designing a house is."
  
- 2. *Are there personal and/emotional challenges to making one's way through the education and licensure process? If so, please explain.***
  - a. Most of it comes down to the resource challenges. The cost, time and sense of competition for pursuing licensure makes it a long and expensive slog. It is somewhat elitist. For underrepresented people, it is not as attractive. If you are new, there are a ton of challenges. The paths are pretty dense because there are so many. For being a doctor, there is only one way in. To be an architect, there are ten ways in. It is so long that you need a lot of family and financial support. It depends on where the person ends up how supported they are in licensure - some cultures do not pay or encourage the path.
  - b. Most people if they drop out of the profession, they will in the first few years. You really have to push through those years. It extends the timeline if you are not prepared properly and it can be discouraging. Those that are in positive situations that can be nurtured usually have an easier go of it. Doing the job, pursuing licensure and then truly experiencing life can become a lot. They really do not learn the business of architecture and that it is important. For women, they chose a path to be both a parent and a professional so then they are not in as much of a leadership role or taking alternative careers.
  - c. One of the challenges is being strong enough to accept criticism whether it is constructive or not. We hear about crit culture. It is taking creativity and putting it through the lens of whether it stands the test. It is a tough professional pursuit because there must be a willingness to accept the fact that is endless lifetime learning. As architects, there is a huge piece about staying current. It is a lifelong commitment.
  - d. Representation: NOMA is so tight knit because it is the only place you can go and find people who have had a similar experience.
  - e. Every chapter needs to recognize these opportunities and understand the unique challenges. It could be applicable across the network. The effort is commended to look at diversity in the profession.
  
- 3. *Does your institution encounter negative or positive impressions of the profession? If so, please cite specifics.***

- a. PWIs are not as connected to the BIPOC experiences. Harvard is investing money to explore their slavery past.
- b. For ACSA, it is more about being a diverse ecosystem of ideas and recognizing that the programs are nothing like each other and that is good.
- c. People are usually delighted that they are meeting an architect. Architects really are not bored. We keep loving what we are doing.
- d. Working at and with architecture organizations, this organization is working with the most engaged of the profession. It is only part of the profession and not an accurate representation. They are dealing with their own design services and not about the greater profession. Those who are involved and are more engaged are not diverse enough. It is not a profession that most people are getting rich at doing so it has challenges there. Architecture has its own work cut out for it.
- e. AIA National is overly cautious about the impression they are displaying and conveying that this is a professional service that people want to hire. On the flip side, the education of the public continues to open the pipeline, to pursue people coming into the profession and then handling their problems once they are in the profession. It is a challenge to focus on the pipeline and maintain culture at the same time. The profession wants to have more architects. What are we really telling about the profession? Telling the story of what architects do and what we can do better and empower the architect to work in these roles. Tell the story publicly.
- f. The study of bias: a woman in the profession will have a different experience than a white male, across professions. Some of this work comes down to calling attention to it to create a better firm culture and improving the experience. It comes down to the practice of architecture, firm leadership, and retention.

**4. *What would your institution (whatever entity the question goes to) like to gain or learn from, understand, and/or collaborate on with AIAVA and its members to bring together all educators and students under the “bigger tent” of architecture?***

- a. AIAVA needs to push to actually make the tent bigger. It might be a goal but is it really happening? It comes down to thinking about all of the programs that funnel into the architecture ecosystem and gathering information for that.
- b. The college where she worked was delighted when she became active in the AIA. They did not have any idea of what architects do or AIA but they loved having someone in their college going. They would have been delighted to have us all in the same tent.
- c. Many students come to take a specialty in community college. They enjoy the fact that there was an architecture program.

**5. *What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?***

- a. Something major AIA VA could do is bring clarity to what the options are within the pipeline and connect the dots better for people. One thing we know is that people are embracing multiple paths and people who are looking for low cost. They are more likely to find them at the state level. There is a pretty good toolkit to support students. There is something to be said for trying to coordinate.
- b. Start creating outreach to specific high schools. Maybe encouraging students and continuing to convey the value of architecture. How do we bring those back and start conversations to keep them informed? Maybe if they had a fellowship or competitive program to do some collective design work? Good architecture education is inconsistent. It is the Wild West in that way. Uniformity does not exist until the college level. Nothing stopping it and nothing compelling it.

- i. An idea is having mentors go in and talk about what architects do. At elementary school, having the mentors give a presentation of what the architect does. It would be a win/win - making a presentation to commercial clients - the people working in the building and educating the younger general public on architecture.
  - ii. Have awards for students in community college and maybe even high school students. And celebrate them!
  - c. There is strength in numbers in terms of getting them through licensure.
  - d. In the vein of scholarships, the equality versus equity conversation needs to be on the table. Review policy, hold better boundaries and communicate clearer.
  - e. Open the doors to the community college of Virginia to the college level. Students are repeatedly denied credits transferring from CC to the schools in the state. The people going from community college to college are truly coming from a different place than other people in the program.
- 6. *What data are we not collecting that would indicate trends in minority/gender participation in architecture?***
- a. It would be figuring out who is leaving. It is hard to gather and it is a huge indicator. Gauging when they graduate, interest in licensure, where they go after graduation and how long they practice if they do.
  - b. Paying attention to the community college. 34% in community college identified as minority who want to go into architecture. The question again of opening the door.
  - c. There tends to be little known about students until they get into a program. It is hard to understand how much of the community you are missing because you are talking to the ones you have. What does the true funnel look like?
  - d. A lot of times we are not clear about what it is we want. You have to do the scope breakdown. Understand the approach to data and how we can utilize the information and what data comes to benefit the end user and to the profession itself. They are distinct from a business standpoint and that could be a point to be more transparent about.
  - e. Being clear about the continued professional needs. Looking at the learning needs at unique stages and customizing offers to that. How can we take this one further?

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**Questions to the 'Virginia Experts' audience:**

- 1. *Where do you think people/students first learn about the profession of architecture, and how do they learn about it?***
- a. It depends. Most learn about it from being exposed through a family member or through a specialized class. Quite often, it is something someone has to seek out. Being a minority and underrepresented, they do not know many architects in pop culture as they might in some other professions.
  - b. Elementary kids think it is just about skyscrapers. It is much bigger than that. Playgrounds are architecture. Exposing them to opportunities and educating them on architecture as early as possible to explore something and knowing they can switch if they do not like it. A lot of kids do not know they have the skills unless they are actually exposed. They are curious about it and want to explore.
  - c. The career days help although they are not doing them as a result of COVID-19. It is surprising how many in the younger general public do not know about architecture. Once someone knows they are interested, they likely take it upon themselves. It is important that students know early on that architecture is known as a part of their options.

**2. Are there personal and/emotional challenges to making one's way through the education and licensure process?**

*If so, please explain.*

- a. A key challenge is understanding the process. It is important the students have industry potential and opportunities for exposure. Things like interns and people to help guide them and/or a mentor to help you with the process would be amazing because you almost need more mentoring than typical, especially those less exposed.
- b. The whole process is very expensive. It is very expensive to go through the program, as are the exams. Smaller firms do not help you pay for it. After licensing, the dues come so there seems to always be another layer of "shelling out money every year for people to hold records in a room." What it costs versus what you get paid once you are out in the field is highly disproportionate because architects get paid less than the engineers even. If you are not committed to doing it because you love it, you are going to find something else to do.
- c. Education was not that difficult as long as one can put up with the crit culture. Students take it very personally. If you have what it takes to take the criticism and work the long hours, then you will be fine. If you love architecture, you will love it. The job may not care about you getting licensed. You have to ask that in the interview because some firms want you to come in and work. Firms could do a better job supporting the exams.
- d. VANOMA is doing Zoom classes to go over certain exams although they have pretty low attendance. Sometimes people do not want to show up and get free help and it does not make sense.

**3. Does your institution encounter negative or positive impressions of AIA as a professional organization? If so, please cite examples.**

- a. Simply just an existence of. What she likes is what architects do when they work with people in education, you get the architects educating on the building and also taking their input. But if the educators had had training, there would not be nearly as much education when they are working with them.
- b. An interviewee's experience was that smaller firms did not encourage the AIA as much as the bigger firms.
- c. Without AIA, VANOMA would not exist. They have been a constant supporter, financially and with the other resources. Corey connected all of these people to their organization. They are doing an amicable job for being a pillar for the profession.

**4. What would your institution (whatever entity the question goes to) like to gain or learn from, understand, and/or collaborate on with AIAVA and its members to bring together all educators and students under the "bigger tent" of architecture?**

- a. Design in general should be taught younger. Guidance and making sure they are teaching relevant practices and opportunities to solve challenges that are truly being experienced. Being able to make underserved populations aware of what architecture is and the surrounding industries.
- b. More exposure at the high school level. There were lots of things open but also unknown that they existed. They make a big difference.
- c. The question came up of why there are accredited and non-accredited universities and the hierarchy of it when they prepare people the same way. That separation needs to be more clear or maybe there does not need to be that separation.
- d. It would be easier if clients knew even something to expect. Educate the general public so they demand better of everything.
- e. He thinks working together and getting to students earlier and mentoring. If a kid could not come to the camp, how do we get them involved? AIA has much more resources than VANOMA. Painting a picture of

what the profession and day to day is going to be. Mentoring, scholarships and getting to them earlier. Programs that they want to foster and partner with AIA and their resources.

**5. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?**

- a. Connect with the schools. That is where it begins before the scholarships. There needs to be more awareness at the high school level. If you can share the architecture and AIA video to the geometry class for instance. Expose people to things like more information throughout the process and provide mentoring to those who are underrepresented in one way or another - poverty or ethnicity.
  - i. Definitely need to champion getting to the seniors early. Increase the pool before increasing the number in the profession. Kids are not exposed to it. The kids want to be athletes. What are your other interests beyond that? Exposure to different professions and they can be exposed and make the decision. The pool will naturally increase. There are way more females and we have to grow the pool. Focus on the youths.
  - ii. If she were talking to architecture schools, how many are doing architecture camps for children and young adults? That is a way that AIA can assist in that.
- b. It is so expensive. In addition to tuition, room and board, they are spending money on art supplies consistently. AIA could help structure things to lessen the financial burden of it.
  - i. UVA is working on a program to be able to offset that cost for students.
- c. Offer more webinars and resources for licensure. The people who show up deserve the attention even more. Mentorship or guest speakers programs too. Someone in the industry for them to reach out to.
- d. Two year program on the community college level to come into the third year of another school that they have partnered with which would give greater flexibility to not be full time.

**6. What data are we not collecting that would indicate trends in minority/gender participation in architecture?**

- a. Many students taking the community college route opt that direction because when they get out of high school, they have to help take care of their family. They cannot just go to school and be full time college students. That hits minorities more. They are forced to grow up a bit faster and the profession does not lend itself to that.
- b. Going back to the K through 12, making sure schools in the state have the resources for their students to make an informed decision that there are quality options right here.

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**Questions to High School Students:**

**1. When did you first look at buildings and say to yourself "I can do that"?**

- a. Her intro to buildings started with Legos when she was young. She started doing the architecture Legos. She really loved it and paid more attention to buildings. She realized that she wanted to start building homes and then her parents conveyed she can do this professionally. She took an architecture class and fell in love and since, has been gaining the skills on her own because her high school does not offer a drafting class.

**2. Do you encounter negative or positive impressions of the profession? If so, please cite specifics. What interests you about architecture?**

- a. Negatives: heard a lot about how it is mostly an industry run by white men. When first looking, she would not see a lot of herself. There are not a lot of women, unequal pay and late nights studying too.

- b. Positives: She finds architecture to be so much fun and you can use your creativity however you like to create whatever you want. She found people to look up to and watch other women of color in architecture.
  - 3. How do you feel about the fact that most people working in the field of architecture are white and male?**
    - a. She finds it a little discouraging but not much. Her school currently is dominated by it. She joined NOMA for this. Because she does not see herself in these spaces, this is even more of a reason to do it, to help others see they can do it too.
  - 4. How do you see work? Is it mainly a means of making money or is doing something you love equally important?**
    - a. Doing something you love is more important. She is lucky because it is not a horribly paying field. She would still pursue it because she is so interested in it.
  - 5. Do you see architecture as a secure career path for women/minorities?**
    - a. It seems mostly secure. It is still male dominated but she has not seen much about people getting mistreated. It is important to find people who look like you so you can have that safe space.
  - 6. What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?**
    - a. She has heard from friends that they are discouraged. A class, workshop or something that shares information of minorities in the field. Sharing info in that light to encourage people to take a chance on it.
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#### Questions to College Students:

- 1. When did you first look at buildings and say to yourself “I can do that”?**
    - a. He started at a young age. His parents helped build the house he lived in so it was always in the back of his mind. He took a field trip to the National Building Museum in elementary school that also inspired his passion for architecture.
  - 2. Do you encounter negative or positive impressions of the profession? If so, please cite specifics. What interests you about architecture?**
    - a. He is interested in the passion for creating positive change, shown through putting his values and beliefs by sharing them with the world this way. His impressions are more on him finding what he does and does not like. He has become very ambitious with architecture.
  - 3. What influences transformed your interest in architecture into pursuing it as a career?**
    - a. Technology and social justice. The tech comes down to futuristic things and you see how this relates with architecture. Within social justice, it is a real concern and there also means there is a lot of space for him to have an impact.
  - 4. Is architecture school harder than you expected? What is hard about it?**
    - a. It is different than he expected. What he did not know is that architecture teaches you how to think - how he thinks has changed immensely and exponentially. The power of the idea and how that creates spaces, changes our perception and realities of how to live.
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5. ***How much did wanting to be on the front lines of fighting global climate change figure into your decision to become an architect?***
    - a. It was different than when he started. It was more of a center focus. The question he began to ask was: to what extent can we keep carrying these things out until it does not become architecture anymore? For sustainability as a concept, we simply cannot keep building buildings at this rate. It is a very big dilemma in how he is seeing it now.
  
  6. ***What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?***
    - a. It is very challenging as both a member, a student and a mentor for high school students. In school, he has been much busier. It is harder for him to get engaged in mentorship. It comes in investment in numbers. It is a full cycle of a problem that cannot be solved with one group or one entity. The industry itself is a self-perpetuating cycle. Each one relies on the other to make change and it is not the most feasible thing sometimes.
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#### Questions to Practicing Professionals:

1. ***Do you feel like you get equal access to mentoring and opportunities in the office and feel supported by your firm in your path to licensure?***
  - a. Her firm has brought on a number of employees with the intention to be more diverse, which expanded the pool. Not everyone comes into the comfort level to feel like they are entitled to those opportunities and that level of support. She was the first black woman hired in her firm in a long time. She has the mentality of being intentional about choosing a firm that was allowing for the level of support she was looking for, i.e. getting exams paid for.
  - b. His firm did not want the cost to be a reason not to take it. The firm supports them with materials.
  - c. He does not know if it was resources or culture. Everyone was nice enough but there is very much a mentality of you struggle like the way I struggled and the struggle is what makes it worth it. Once he expressed that he was not sure of licensure, they wrote it off. The mentorship he did experience, which was the other side of the coin, was this pressure specifically from black architects to “not squander the path of those before you by not getting your license.”
  - d. Getting the degree in architecture is what he credits it with where he is today. When you map it out, you will not make your return on investment. It is too much and that is okay for some.
  
2. ***What was different about the reality of a career in architecture than your expectations?***
  - a. In school, the projects are about community and doing well in the community. There is a long concept of development and history and that is why people fall in love with architecture school. It is very much a challenge because the office environment is vastly different from what school prepares you for. If you go the typical route, you will not get the same experience as in school.
  - b. Taking business classes is necessary yet so unrealistic for architects wanting to do that. It is very backwards. What we pay for education is not what you end up doing when you graduate.
  - c. There are a great number of gatekeepers at every stage. In university, there is an expectation of understanding the older architects to put in the effort. For black students, it is more than just passion. It is another creative avenue and career too. It seems like someone is always holding court somewhere.
  - d. It is a lot more boring than it is cracked up to be. Architecture education prepares you to solve very complex systems. When you become a professional and you are staring that one system for years, it gets

old. You move through a ton of problem solving in education and get through to your career and then lose it because you are not using it. The profession is divorced from that day to day. Part of the bad conditions of the investment is that you do not know that you will not get what it is you originally desired.

**3. *Is the environment for women/minorities getting better or getting worse in the profession?***

- a. It is getting better and yet different for both groups. There are a lot of women and minorities in school and transitioning into the workplace. It is great. The industry recognizes their value in the profession. There is still work to be done. Definitely getting better for women and her theory is that people are just more comfortable addressing gender issues. It can be reconciled easier and it has been happening for so long.
- b. Within minorities, it is newer in people's awareness and there is trauma associated with it. People are uncomfortable addressing those issues in practice. The invitation to come into the conversation and the question is who is going to walk in the room to have it.

**4. *Is there anything you have learned that you wish you had known when deciding to enter the profession? Would it have changed your decision?***

- a. The cost of everything is a big hindrance to a lot of minorities. There needs to be a better understanding of how expensive it truly is and how hard it is to get scholarships for architecture specifically. As well as a better understanding of the path to architecture. Financially, it is not a smart decision to take the traditional path and the alternative paths are not as discussed.
- b. He was prepared mentally to go into the profession and he knew he would have to fight through. The hours, the documentation, the career building, it is all behind a paywall. Could some of those be eliminated? Even ELA is \$1000. Is that necessary? Having that big of a cost does not sense.
- c. Having those architectural conversations going through school and there was a certain aspect of understanding the language already coming into school.
- d. Architecture education is a reflection of like eight percent of your whole career. The day to day reality looks different than in school.
- e. The debt to income ratio does not make sense in terms of the realistic picture of earning potential at an average firm. Not to mention, there is still no data to show what the financial incentive for getting a license was.

**5. *Did you find it hard to maintain your passion for architecture? Why?***

- a. She does not think she finds it harder than any other worker in another industry. There are good days and bad days. The challenge of being a black woman in architecture is that passion is more of a personal struggle. Seldom, would you be attacked for your human-hood. Those harder days may be associated because of who you are and micro-aggression.
- b. What helps is that during 2020, the aspect of empowerment came up. If your job is not serving you well, why are you here? He made the decision because he is passionate about the profession and he went to find a firm that believes what he believes in.
- c. He did not because he realized the versatility of his skillset. He always understood architecture as more than buildings. It is a micro city. The built environment is so much more than what happens in firms. When you are talking about buildings, there is the whole system talking.

**6. *What could AIAVA do beyond scholarships and training to help students make their way through the education and licensure process?***

- a. The high school engagement is a huge item. It does not have to be as extensive as something like a Project Pipeline that NOMA does. Architecture firms could do career days and continue to go out and be a presence so students can go do their research. Basically, being out there as a resource.
- b. From what she experienced in high school, pretty negative things her dad said. There is a level of better marketing and education so that when they do get to school, they come in with a leg up. Different ways to get students more involved. The number of high schoolers who want to network and find a mentor is growing. People can be afraid of mentorship and it is really not being so afraid. As simple as check in makes a huge difference in their education.
- c. The paywall is the biggest thing. It costs so much money to go to conferences, pay for exams and things like that. The money should be going towards supplies, materials and technology. There is so much to buy going into school that is not going to be as accessible to minorities. Software is often on a year subscription. Someone will tap out to even be in school and that is the biggest thing. Material specific scholarships would go a long way.
- d. The licensure process will change as a byproduct of what he is about to say: AIAVA and architecture should make a conscious effort to grow the tent. There are so many people like him - love the built environment, have their experience with the career and leave. There is a huge missed opportunity for the organization as a whole. Opening it up to those whose voices could speak into what they do with knowledge and passion and equal investment because we are people in the public sphere. Every speaker is not an architect. Why do we not do that within our community? Maybe the diversity is expanded in a different way. He never understands why they think they will gain more by squeezing the tent. Huge insecurity, large ego. It is kind of a silly thing.
- e. AIA can provide EDI services at the local level so firms that do not have capacity in their overhead for directors of diversity could leverage that. Most upper management does not know how to interact with people when they do not look like them. Active training and working on it could improve the team.
- f. AIA needs to think about its attraction to minorities. For instance, AIA Richmond is meeting at breweries, which is another predominantly white male industry. Have you asked what the minorities want to do? What activities can be done that feel more inclusive? We are still at 2% and why because the activities are not more inclusive and accessible. It is like a marketing campaign is started without anything in the campaign. Minorities have to feel wanted.
- g. What is considered a minority firm is not as inclusive as it sounds. Men are putting their wives names to make it a woman owned firm.
- h. It is not a question of why do you want us. Taking the profession to a better place or representation. The question of them staying and thriving. What is causing that problem? Why are they not feeling they can start businesses? Can AIA assist in that? We need minorities in every level of firms and more women running firms.
- i. Curriculum development: Requirement that people take a foundational studio class no matter their major since it is baseline going to shift your view of problem solving.
- j. Can we have less scarcity in the profession?
- k. Incentivize being an associate member for those who have left the profession "they would do it."