

■ Keshika De Saram

Candidate for 2017-2018
AIAS President

Letter of Intent

Resume

College of Design Letter of Support

School of Architecture Letter of Support

Responses to Candidate Questionnaire

Statement on AIAS Policy on Intern Compensation

Statement on AIAS Elections Code of Ethics

Contact Information Sheet

Candidate Flyer



Keshika De Saram

1701 Elm St SE #104
Minneapolis, MN 55414

701-799-0273
keshika.desaram@gmail.com

20 November 2016

Danielle Mitchell, Assoc. AIA
Elections Chair
1735 New York Ave
Washington, DC 20006

Danielle,

The American Institute of Architecture Students has been a life-changing experience for countless students across the nation. It has been building friendships, empowering leaders, and driving change in our profession.

It is in this spirit that I intend to run for president.

The membership of the AIAS is a rich mix of every walk of life. We are a diverse organization, not just in gender, race, sexual orientation, but also in the places we grew up in, the economic backgrounds we come from, and the everyday experiences that are a part of our individual lives. This diversity is celebrated in every large AIAS gathering.

Unfortunately, our architecture profession has continued to stay less diverse than the AIAS membership, for decades. People who continue to pursue and earn licensure after their time as students have continued to be mostly male and mostly white.

The AIAS can do more to encourage more of its members to stay in architecture and change the demographics of the profession. This is not to discredit all that has already been done. I am running for president because I want engage the AIAS to work with our members and the collateral organizations to encourage more of our membership to pursue licensure.

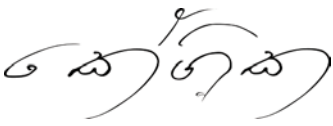
See the following pages for my candidacy submission materials.

I am really excited to see you at FORUM in Boston and to be there when you bring to a close your many years of direct service to this organization.

Thank you.

Best,

Keshika De Saram



Keshika De Saram

1701 Elm St SE #104
Minneapolis, MN 55414

701-799-0273
keshika.desaram@gmail.com

Seeking to run for AIAS President, where I can work with our members and partners to enrich the AIAS together

Achievements

**National Graduate Student
Research Honor Award**
American Institute of
Architecture Students, 2016



Celebrates design research analyzing the urban fabric and community resources of Cambridge, MN and promoting the value of design in rural communities.

**Student Design and Scholarship
Excellence Award**
College of Design, University of
Minnesota, 2014

Recognizes exceptional student work from the school year, including leadership and collaboration.

**Pickard Chilton Fellowship in
Architecture**
School of Architecture, University of
Minnesota, 2014

Recognizes excellence among incoming graduate students in the School of Architecture.

**National AIAS Honor Award:
Outstanding
Freedom by Design Program**
American Institute of
Architecture Students, 2013



Celebrates dedication to improving the lives of those without the freedom of mobility within their homes or communities
My leadership of the program, as co-director, contributed to the winning of this award

Architecture Engagement

**AIA Minnesota Housing Advocacy
Committee, 2016**

Organize, promote, and deliver programs addressing housing issues in Minnesota

NAAB Accreditation Teams, 2015-2016
Served on NAAB Teams to Rice University and Catholic University

AIAS, 2012-present

Served in numerous board positions at the University of Minnesota chapter and national committees and taskforces

Education

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Master of Architecture, College of Design, anticipated 2017

Bachelor of Design in Architecture, College of Design, 2014

Leadership Minor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, 2014

Experience

Architectural Designer/Licensure Candidate

DJR Architecture,
Minneapolis, MN 2016

- + Work collaboratively with licensed architects and peers
- + Develop presentation graphics, digital models, and construction documents

Community Research Assistant

Center for Changing Landscapes/Center for Urban and Regional Affairs,
University of Minnesota *Cambridge, MN 2015*

- + Won the national AIAS Graduate Research Honor Award, nominated by Tom Fisher
- + Developed a comprehensive site analysis and background report for the city of Cambridge to receive design services from the AIA Minnesota Design Team (MDT)
- + Fostered a greater sense of community ownership in the MDT process
- + Pushed for a higher design standard by creating a strong background of research

Public-Interest Design Graduate Assistant

Metropolitan Design Center,
University of Minnesota *Minneapolis, MN 2015-2016*

- + Engage key leaders and influencers in the affordable housing field to address the issue of homelessness in the Twin Cities
- + Provide resources and communication to the public and the university community on news in social-impact design around the world

Community Resilience Research Assistant

Center for Sustainable Building Research,
University of Minnesota, *Brainerd, MN 2015*

- + Designed an educational, deep-winter greenhouse and community garden to foster food access and healthy lifestyles
- + Communicated with clients working with at-risk youth and young adults
- + Conducted site analyses, background research, and participated in client meetings

Co-director, AIAS Freedom by Design

American Institute of Architecture Students, *Minneapolis, MN 2012-2014*

- + Won the national AIAS Honor Award in 2013, during my leadership of the program
- + Coordinated design students and volunteers to improve the lives of disabled individuals in the community through design-and-build projects
- + Planned programs, builds, charrettes, and fundraisers to ensure program growth
- + Promoted the value of design knowledge to positively impact people's lives

Co-Coordinator, First-Year Leadership Institute

University of Minnesota, *Minneapolis, MN 2013-2014*

- + Developed and delivered programming that engage participants' self-discovery and personal growth
- + Recruited and selected a diverse group of participants and their mentors

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

College of Design

*32 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55108
Office: 612-626-9068
Fax: 612-625-1922
www.design.umn.edu*

Danielle Mitchell, Assoc AIA
AIAS Elections Chair
1735 New York Avenue
Washington DC 20006

November 16, 2016

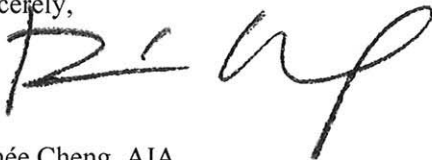
Dear Ms Mitchell,

I am writing in support of Keshika De Saram as a candidate for AIAS President. I have known Keshika since he was an undergraduate student and have followed his work with interest during his graduate career. Over the past six years, I have been extremely impressed with his passion for the profession and his leadership capacity.

AIAS at the University of Minnesota has a wonderful culture of engagement and inclusive dialogue as well as a long history of AIAS national leadership. Among the many Minnesota student leaders I've known, Keshika's contribution stands out as unique. He has an extraordinary ability to empower groups of students and faculty to get things done. His form of leadership is open and collaborative, allowing others to have ownership while keeping energy focused. For the national recognition for our chapter and our Freedom by Design award, a great deal of credit should be given to Keshika. The ability to inspire others is not commonplace and he has demonstrated his natural ability as well as his desire to grow and develop at a national leadership level. His individual capacity for research and engagement is remarkable for one so early in his career. He has channeled his deep commitment to public interest design as a Public Interest Design Graduate Student, pioneering the role of a graduate student engaging community leaders and connecting to peer students on campus. For his work with the Minnesota Design Center, he was recognized for a national award, making strong research contributions as a key member of the design team.

AIAS MN, our school, and our college have greatly benefited from Keshika's work. AIAS national has much to gain if he is elected president. I recommend him without reservation.

Sincerely,



Renée Cheng, AIA
Professor, School of Architecture
Associate Dean for Research and Engagement, College of Design, University of Minnesota
Past AIA Minnesota President (2009)

17 November 2016

Danielle Mitchell, Assoc AIA
Elections Chair
1735 New York Avenue,
Washington DC 20006

Dear Danielle Mitchell:

As Head of the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota, I am pleased to write this letter of support for Keshika De Saram for the position of President of AIAS. I have known Keshika since he began in our Bachelor Design of Architecture program and have tracked his successful progression through our Master of Architecture program.

First, I would like to reflect, qualitatively, on Keshika and his strengths. Keshika is a natural leader and a consummate professional. He is a very even-tempered person who is serious when he needs to be, but can often times be seen with a bright smile on his face. I always look forward to my interactions with him. Keshika is highly involved with activities in the school, and, as such, has established himself over his time at the University of Minnesota, as leader among his peers. He is a strong advocate for the rights of students and serves as an invaluable liaison between our faculty and students. Additionally, Keshika is just a good person. He is very well-liked in the school and known by all as a trusted colleague. In terms of personality and temperament, you would be hard pressed to find a better AIAS President.

Quantitatively, Keshika's case somehow gets even stronger. He has amassed a long list of accolades and accomplishments, which you can clearly review on his resume. Just to highlight a few, he won the National Graduate Student Research Honor Award from the American Institute of Architecture Students in 2016, the Student Design and Scholarship Excellence Award from the College of Design in 2014, and the Pickard Chilton Fellowship in Architecture from School of Architecture in 2014. All of these are awarded through a highly competitive process and demonstrate the quality of Keshika's scholarship at the University of Minnesota.

Keshika's service accomplishments are equally impressive. He served as the Co-Director of the AIAS Freedom by Design organization from 2012 to 2014, on NAAB Accreditation Teams from 2015 to

2016, and on the AIA Minnesota Housing Advocacy Committee in 2016, among many other activities and committees. All of this is to say that Keshika is extremely dedicated to being a good citizen of the architecture community, both here in our school and nationally. His level of dedication is of the highest level I have ever witnessed in one of our students.

Finally, I will close by saying that when Keshika told me he was planning to run for President of AIAS National, I was not shocked in the slightest. It made perfect sense. It is a logical progression in his career and he is incredibly well-suited to it. He would be a difference-maker and an active, level-headed leader in this capacity. I recommend him for this position without any reservations whatsoever. Please contact me should you have any questions or if you would like me to comment further on Keshika.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Swackhamer', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marc Swackhamer

Associate Professor and Department Head

College of Design

University of Minnesota

612-626-0105

swack@umn.edu

ELECTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Describe your origin story as a student leader. What prompted you to get involved? What advice would you give others who have yet to realize their potential for leadership?

My growth as a student leader has been an incredible change over a short period of time. When I began my undergraduate program at the University of Minnesota, I saw myself as floating. I didn't feel grounded to a single place, culture, or way of life. It was a very lonely feeling. I had grown up in three different countries, each with a very distinct culture. When I began studying at Minnesota, I gave myself very little self-love. Over the next few years, this changed.

When I took up a leadership role on campus as an Orientation Leader in 2012, I promised myself that I would build my own confidence and be an active participant in the culture I was living in. That year I ran to be AIAS Freedom by Design director and won. Over the next few months, I attended my first AIAS Grassroots Conference in DC and FORUM in Savannah, Georgia.

I quickly learned through being involved that I matter. Through leading Freedom by Design, I learned that when I step up to make a change, others will join in to be a part of that change. Through attending national conferences, I learned that there is a large and diverse community of people around me who all care about each other.

There are many things that happened over the past few years that have helped me see my own worth and grow as a leader. But being involved in the AIAS has been the single biggest driver for that growth. It seems natural then that I should give back through leadership to empower others in AIAS.

Every student who attends their first ever AIAS meeting, Freedom by Design build, or conference should know that this is a place of growth, connectedness, and self-love. AIAS friendships are deep and the memories made are long lasting.

2. In recent years, the AIAS has increased its efforts in advocacy for architecture students on issues including but not limited to student loan debt, studio culture, intern development, leadership, technology, and diversity. What one issue do you personally find the most important? How would you make progress on this issue as an elected leader on the AIAS National Board of Directors?

One of the most important aspects of the AIAS is its advocacy. Seeing that one's voice matters is a major driver for new students to become members. The AIAS needs to continue to advance essential programs, like the National Design Services Act and the push for better studio culture.

What the AIAS needs to explore is how to get more of its diverse membership to pursue licensure after graduation. The architecture profession continues to be white and male dominated. The AIAS, on the other hand, is incredibly diverse. Our membership is a rich mix of every walk of life. We are rich in gender, race, sexual orientation, as well as in the places we grew up in, the economic backgrounds we come from, and the everyday experiences that are a part of our lives.

As an advocacy organization, we can push for resources and support that encourages more of our membership to pursue licensure. This needs to happen at both the chapter level through our grassroots leaders and at the national level.

3. The AIAS has over 160 chapters across the U.S. and around the world, ranging in size from just a few students to hundreds. How would you use your position on the Board to better connect and engage our geographically and culturally diverse membership? What resources would you propose to better serve Chapter leaders seeking to grow their chapters and connect to other students around the world?

The national officers should continue to visit chapters and talk with members. It matters that members at each chapter see that the national officers are accessible to them. Each member needs to see that we represent his or her voice, not just the voices that reach Washington DC.

The AIAS has made great strides in reaching students outside the United States. The international push has given us several chapters abroad. However, those across the Atlantic may find it difficult to attend our events in the US. We see the strength of the AIAS in every FORUM and Quad conference. We should create opportunities for students east of the Atlantic to have their own regional conferences and experience the power of connecting with people across a continent.

4. Describe one area in which you see an untapped opportunity for the AIAS to engage in a new way. Either with other organizations, with school faculty and administrators, with the profession, with the international design community, or any other audience or venue.

In a handful of chapters, AIAS members are serving as NCARB Student Licensing Advisors for their schools. This is a great resource for their peers as they seek licensure.

But not enough chapters are taking advantage of this opportunity. In fact, student attendance at NCARB conferences is very low, despite their efforts to get more students involved. Each chapter can increase its leverage as an advocacy group when they have a Student Licensing Advisor. The chapter becomes an essential source of licensure information.

It should be the AIAS national office's responsibility to encourage each chapter with a NAAB-accredited degree to have a Student Licensing Advisor. It would strengthen the AIAS's relationship with NCARB, while making sure we provide more value to our members. For each advisor, we would be providing one of the strongest ways to connect with the profession.



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS
1735 New York Ave., Washington, DC 20006
202.808.0075 | aias.org

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS POLICY ON COMPENSATION FOR INTERNS

In July 1993, the AIAS Board of Directors adopted a "Public Policy on Uncompensated Interns." The policy has been subsequently reviewed and reaffirmed by the Board and reads as follows:

The AIAS maintains that employers must properly compensate all employees. Compensation must be in compliance with the regulations for the jurisdiction in which they are working.

In 2010, AIAS crafted a public statement on intern compensation in conjunction with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture and the American Institute of Architects, which reads as follows:

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, the American Institute of Architects, and the American Institute of Architecture Students recognize that architects are bound by law and ethics to pay interns, and strongly advocate for the appropriate compensation of architectural students and interns. Because of current economic transformations, some architects have both solicited and accepted the services and labor of interns without pay. We strongly urge architectural firms and other for-profit employers to respect the law and comply with the ethical standards of our profession, and we strongly encourage interns to refuse to accept employment without pay, and to notify the Department of Labor in cases where employers propose such an arrangement. For more information on labor laws and professional ethics, please see the AIA Code of Ethics and the U.S. Labor Department standards under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The ACSA, AIA, and AIAS further support architects, students, and recent graduate doing pro-bono work. We recognize the distinction between unpaid work for profit-making employers, and unpaid work for non-profit organizations, communities in need, and volunteer activities, which allows participants to determine their own hours and degree of involvement. The AIA has established guidelines for service that are provided on a Pro Bono basis. They can be found under the member section of the AIA website.

POLICY ON COMPENSATION FOR INTERNS AFFIRMATION

As a way of confirming that the AIAS is not promoting or being promoted by architects employing unpaid interns, we ask that each participant in an official AIAS function review and sign the following statement. We appreciate your participation in our event and thank you for your support of our position against unpaid internships. This position is supported as well by the Board of Directors of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Name: KESHIKA DE SARAM

I do hereby affirm that I understand and support the AIAS policy on the compensation for interns. If I employee interns, I further affirm that I do not use unpaid architectural interns in my professional practice when applicable by federal wage and hour laws.

Signature: 

Date: 20 NOVEMBER 2016



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS ELECTIONS CODE OF ETHICS

Elections are a critical step by which the American Institute of Architecture Students is governed. Annual elections, as outlined in the Bylaws and the Rules of the Board, ensure that the membership of the organization participates in the selection of the best candidates to serve on the national Board of Directors.

Individuals elected to the Board of Directors represent the membership and ensure the continued success of the organization. Therefore, participants who are involved in the elections process, including candidates, Board members and elections committee members, are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and good judgment.

Confidentiality is required of all participants in the elections process. Participants should not discuss details of the elections process to the general membership before, during or after FORUM. Elections information that is considered public knowledge, and therefore can be shared with the membership, occurs during the General Business Sessions and at the General Assemblies.

Campaigning is strictly prohibited prior to FORUM. Conversation between chapters regarding candidates should not take place. Campaigning will only begin at the first General Assembly of FORUM.

Campaigning during FORUM shall be professional. Candidates and candidate support groups should be respectful in their campaigning efforts. Disrespectful campaigning will be a violation of the Elections Code of Ethics, and will be grounds for immediate review by the Elections Committee.

Campaigning materials should follow the Election Guidelines, and should be distributed in appropriate venues only. Appropriate venues include FORUM General Business Sessions, General Assemblies, and Quad Breakouts.

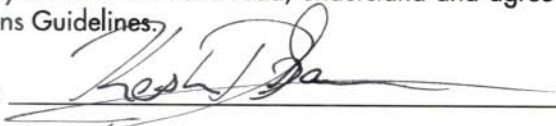
As leaders of this organization, and future leaders of this profession, we must uphold the highest ethical practice. Questionable behavior during elections will not be tolerated. Any concerns should be immediately raised with the Elections Chair.

ELECTIONS CODE OF ETHICS AFFIRMATION

To promote the highest level of professionalism during elections, we ask that each participant in the elections process review and sign the following statement. We appreciate your participation and thank you for your support and dedication to the organization.

Name: KESHKA DE SARAN

I do hereby affirm that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the AIAS Elections Code of Ethics and the Elections Guidelines.

Signature: 

Date: 20 NOVEMBER 2016

Please submit this form with your confirmation for participation.



**AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS
CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION FORM**

Candidate contact information will only be used by the Elections Committee to communicate elections-related information. If provided, social media handles will be shared when candidates are posted publicly on AIAS website and social media.

Name (as preferred): _____ Keshika De Saram

Chapter: _____ University of Minnesota

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): _____ Several past positions

Email Address: _____ keshika.desaram@gmail.com

Mobile Phone Number: _____ 701.799.0273

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

- Facebook: _____ Keshika De Saram
- Twitter: @ _____
- Instagram: _____ @keshsnaps
- Other: _____



Keshika De Saram
for 2017-18 AIAS President