

Austin Peterson, AIAS

Architecture Student & Designer

They / Them / Theirs
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Pet01018@umn.edu
612.760.2841

11-11-2019

Amelia Rosen, AIAS, Assoc. AIA, Past President

Dear Amelia Rosen,

My name is Austin Peterson and I am beyond excited to have the opportunity to express my intent in declaring my candidacy for the position of Midwest Quadrant Director at the American Institute of Architecture Students National Level.

There are many important skills that a Midwest Quadrant Director must possess. I believe that I embody these skills through my organization, time-management, speaking abilities, and my outspoken nature. The first skill I would like to highlight is my uncanny ability to manage time and to organize myself in light of a stressful situation. Being an architecture student there has consistently been a need to develop the ability to manage time, although, I have found that I am exceptionally great in this skill. There have been multiple times where I have been in a position where it was required of me to reevaluate the time that I spent on tasks and other responsibilities. I needed to reorganize my priorities in order to accomplish my goals. Should I receive the Midwest Quadrant Director position I would organize myself in such a way where I would be able to shift my priorities to adjust to new situations as they were presented before me in a timely way.

The next skill I wish to highlight is my ability to reach out and connect with anyone. I am an introvert at heart but through my ability to articulate myself and communicate in a fluent way I have found myself connecting with new people constantly. I have also had a consistent urge to find a new perspective in someone else's life that I could then bring to my own. As a result, I have seen this skill grow in me, especially as I have engaged with the American Institute of Architecture Students in the position of chapter president. I am always one of the first people to reach out and connect with the new members of the chapter. An important role of the Midwest Quadrant Director is to be an accessible face that highlights our membership and all that the AIAS can accomplish. As Midwest Quadrant Director I would continue to grow my skills in communication and would make myself available to all members in the Midwest Quadrant.

The final skill I would like to highlight is centered around my strong ethics and ability to be outspoken about important issues to those around me. The Midwest Quadrant Director must be able to speak up when their membership is not being represented in discussions. I believe I can do this as I have already fought for multiple issues within the school for my chapter. Taking information from the members I represent and working to make change is something I love to do. As Midwest Quadrant Director I would be sure all membership is heard from and I will work to represent everyone.

Overall, I believe that my organization, time-management, communication skills, and outspoken nature best prepare me for the position of Midwest Quadrant Director. I hope to hear from you soon as to whether my candidacy is accepted and I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to run for this position within the American Institute of Architecture Students.

Sincerely,


Austin Peterson, AIAS

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OBJECTIVE

To encourage and empower my peers within the American Institute of Architecture Students and beyond, in order to create change for the better in the fields of architecture and design.

EDUCATION

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities - Bachelor of Science in Architecture

2017 - PRESENT, EXPECTED COMPLETION SPRING 2021, MINNEAPOLIS

Currently a junior in the College of Design's architecture program, exploring spatial adjacencies and relationships to equity within the Minneapolis area.

- Minors in Fine Arts and Interdisciplinary Design
- Current GPA: 3.533 / 4.000

AIAS

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Chapter President

2019 - PRESENT, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES

- Worked with board to rewrite chapter bylaws to encourage a more inclusive and transparent environment for the chapter
- Promoted the value of the mission statement and worked with Vice President to delegate tasks and create events in order to promote excellence within our architecture education
- Represented members of the chapter and communicated with the School of Architecture and AIA components in order to promote health and wellness within both the professional and educational cultures of architecture

Chapter Secretary

2018 - 2019, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES

- Organized and prepared for FORUM Seattle, set up and ran meetings and worked with Treasurer to find funding for the conference, sending nine people
- Took detailed notes and helped to maintain decorum within board meetings
- Set up "Action Item" system with prompts for each board member to complete prior to a discussed due date

Freedom By Design - Chapter Treasurer

2018 - 2019, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES

- Created and followed through with a year-long budget for Karner Blue, musical playground
- Promoted the value of Freedom by Design amongst peers and helped to create an inclusive environment, welcoming the chapters first affiliate members to the group.

BOARD / COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE

AIAS National Ethics Committee

2019 - PRESENT, Member

- Committee is charged with reconsidering and updating the AIAS Code of Ethics to be of optimal use to the organization
- Researched and identified potential precedents in Code of Ethics draft, helped to define what a code of ethics means to the organization

Architecture and Wellness Steering Committee

2019 - PRESENT, Member

- Working within the committee to create a plan for recommended actions to improve the School of Architecture's Studio Culture Policy
- Helped in the creation of "Wellness Days" to bring discussion surrounding wellness to students

AIA Minnesota Board

2019 - PRESENT, AIAS Student Representative

- Represented AIAS members voice in discussion at AIA Minnesota Board Meetings
- Worked to provide volunteer opportunities to students and helped to create a presence at the AIA Minnesota conference on architecture for the School of Architecture and the University of Minnesota AIAS Chapter.

AIA St. Paul Board

2018 - 2019, AIAS Student Representative

- Advertised AIA St. Paul events to membership and acted as first contact for their board
- Maintained a positive relationship with the group and helped coordinate funding for lodging for the Grassroots Leadership conference

14 Nov 2019

TO: Amelia Rosen, AIAS, Assoc. AIA, Past President

This letter is in strong support of Austin Peterson's candidacy for Midwest Quadrant Director.

Austin currently serves as our AIAS Chapter President. I have known him since I joined the faculty at the University of Minnesota in the fall of 2018. In my own role as a new member of the faculty, and in my capacity as faculty advisor to AIAS, I quickly came to depend on Austin for his guidance, assistance, and support. He is a friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable student, with a strong level of commitment and dedication to AIAS.

Austin sees it as critical to create and sustain AIAS as a collaborative, interdisciplinary group, operating in the context of the School of Architecture as well as the multidisciplinary College of Design. He has sought transparency in the group's operations and has worked to build connections with professionals inside and outside of the field of architectural design. In pursuit of this agenda, Austin was instrumental in the continuing development of our AIAS chapter bylaws and in the creation of our chapter mission statement. Significantly, he continues to work in support of connections to the newly established professional Architecture degree program at Dunwoody Institute, a local institution, working in collaboration with Dunwoody AIAS to plan and co-host events.

Austin's experience in leadership roles will serve him well in the position of Quad Director. As a high school student, he served as a leader in the Link Crew program, working to guide, lead, and mentor eighth- and ninth-grade students into high school life. He sees this role as formative with respect to his position on leadership, in that he came to understand and appreciate the importance of leaders learning from the people they aim to guide. As a high school senior, he took on a leadership role in the employ of Presbyterian Homes and Services, in which he gained valuable and relevant experience training new employees and managing groups. The position provided Austin with ample experience communicating and delegating responsibility, and he gained his colleagues' respect in the process.

Austin is convinced that his previous leadership roles will help him support his peers and their chapters as they work to achieve goals and define the architectural profession in new ways. I am confident in his abilities to listen, learn, and lead.

Sincerely,



Mike Christenson, AIA
Professor of Architecture and Director of Graduate Studies
School of Architecture, College of Design
University of Minnesota

Megan Gahlman
gahlm002@umn.edu
920-366-2688

November 11, 2019

Dear Amelia Rosen,

It is my pleasure to recommend Austin Peterson for the position of AIAS Midwest Quad Director for the upcoming 2019 elections. I have known Austin for the past three years as not only a friend and peer but also as a strong leader amongst their classmates. Through these three years of working closely with Austin, I have seen their skills grow, develop and mold into the leader they are today from an AIAS Member in 2017 to the current University of Minnesota's AIAS Chapter President. This could only have been achieved through Austin's hard work and an immense amount of dedication to AIAS and his classmates.

Austin contains the qualities necessary to become Midwest Quad Director and I am honestly not quite sure where to start with this long list of admirable characteristics. One, they are exceptional at time management. If there is anyone who has cracked the code to time management in Architecture School, it is Austin. Two, as having been along this AIAS journey with Austin, I am a first-hand witness to their ability to take organized and detailed meeting minutes which they have had tons of practice with as the AIAS Secretary in 2018-2019. Three, their ability to gain trust, communicate with diverse members and be inclusive to everyone was essential to Austin's success in life and in AIAS. Four, I have never seen a more passionate and dedicated leader than Austin. For example, Austin will always go out of their way to introduce themselves in person to new members, invite them to all our upcoming events and encourage them to join AIAS. We have gained a large number of members this year just by Austin's caring personality and willingness to meet and talk with everyone.

Five, the main reason Austin should be the next Midwest Quad Director comes down this: Simply being a genuine person. People trust Austin because they are personable, they listen, and the decisions Austin makes on a daily basis are always fair and just. This is a quality I highly look up to in Midwest Quad Directors. I have no doubt that Austin can do this job not only flawlessly but create a more united, inclusive, fun, energetic, and passionate Midwest Quad.

I for one am excited to see where Austin's future takes him and AIAS should be, too.

Sincerely,

Megan Gahlman
AIAS Vice President

Austin Peterson, AIAS

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Elections Questionnaire Answers

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 interest in leadership within the AIAS was prompted in the Spring of 2018. This was the semester after FORUM at Austin, Texas. I was only a freshman in university and I was welcomed into this amazing group of students who were all just like me. What was even better was the fact that after the conference, we didn't go back to pretending we didn't know each other. I was still friends with everyone who had gone on the trip and it finally felt like I belonged to a community of like minded people. The feeling of belonging prompted me to apply for a leadership position in the AIAS as the Chapter Secretary. I knew that if I wanted to learn the most I could about the organization and the profession of architecture I would need to be further involved and learn as much as I could from the people around me. If I had to give any advice to potential leaders I would have to say that the AIAS is a place for all students regardless of background to be pushed to succeed in their definition of success. If you want to be a leader within the organization I know that you will get the opportunities and skill sets required to do so. In that case just do it, you have nothing to lose by applying and you have everything to lose by not applying. I have a purpose within the architecture profession because of my leadership in the AIAS, I know that you will gain that too.

2. Describe your leadership style. Explain how previous experiences working with teams have helped you discover your leadership style.

My leadership style is a combination of multiple events and experiences in my life. From a young age I was expected to watch over my two younger siblings, they have constantly been a driving force in my life. As their older sibling I was always the one leading the way and helping them to achieve what they wanted. This experience helped me to form leadership, first within the household, and second within my schooling. When I was in eighth grade I applied to be a Courage retreat leader, this position was an inflection point for me. I was expected to lead a group of sixth graders through a seminar on Courage. Not only did I learn some leadership skills and how to work with younger students but I also received a new perspective on the Courage retreat and other retreats in general. I saw them as valuable and took the time in my leadership position to also learn about myself. Moving ahead in highschool I decided to become a Link Crew leader. This was a position from eleventh through twelfth grade. As a Link Crew Leader I was given a group of younger students who were just entering high school, we were given prompts and activities to do with the students that would teach them about the resources available in high school and how to become the best version of themselves. In this position I really began to know what leadership meant. I found that it was okay to be wrong, to learn from my mistakes, and to treat everyone on an equal playing field. I also learned how to lead with a great group of my peers. Through this program I also began to learn the value of mentorship. I began to look up to teachers with a newfound respect. This experience gave me a sense of purpose within the larger high school and community context and prompted me to take these ideals into my workplace. From tenth grade through freshman year of university I worked at an elderly home as a server. In twelfth grade I was promoted to a lead server. This was a big deal because at the time I had just turned eighteen and around me there were many older workers who had been there longer than me. This experience was one of the toughest ones I had gone through as I needed to gain the trust and understanding of the employees who worked under me. I took the leadership skills and my developing style to a new level as I took on a mentor at the home and began to learn by watching.

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Elections Questionnaire Answers

I wanted to be successful in my new position and it was only possible because of my previous experiences. I learned that I needed to be patient and to continue working just as hard as I had been, if not harder with this new position. I recognized that in order to gain respect I needed to respect and hear from everyone's perspective. Taking this position into university and freshman year I began to become the person people trusted. I was open about my mistakes and freshman year allowed me to truly begin exploring my own self and the overall styles I had developed. After I was elected to become the Secretary for the University of Minnesota's chapter of the AIAS I was able to further recognize my abilities to organize, take detailed notes, and delegate. While I was in this position I also took on the position of Treasurer for Freedom by Design. My second year in university became a very active one in which I fully recognized the importance of everyone's contributions to make a whole. These positions prompted my style in such major ways that I decided to apply for the position of President at the chapter level. This was something I would have never seen myself doing had I not taken those crucial first steps in my early life. As president I have learned so much in delegation of tasks and speaking with school based entities and professionals. Most importantly I began learning about the people I was working with, what they need and how I can help them get to where they want to go. As Midwest Quadrant Director I would take all of these previous experiences and work to better the Midwest and the AIAS in as many ways as possible.

3. In recent years, the AIAS has increased its efforts in advocacy for architecture students on issues including but not limited to health and wellness, equity, student loan debt, learning and teaching culture, practice experience, leadership, and technology. 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?

As the Midwest Quadrant Director one of my biggest priorities would be to advance a culture of Health and Wellness within the Midwest Quad and the AIAS national organization. Throughout this past year I have been working with our School of Architecture's administration and other student leaders within the school to promote a culture of health and wellness and to create a change to our schools learning and teaching culture policies. This has been primarily through research and investigation into the schools practices in the past. As we progressed through this process we also found the need to include the voice of the larger student body. We created four conversation dates that occurred during studio times, two in the fall and two in the spring. These conversations were meant to get information about how students were feeling in the school and to get possible recommendations to fix the issues posed on each date. As the Midwest Quadrant Director I would work with students at chapters in order to begin these conversations at their own schools. This process would begin to prompt a grassroots movement that would hopefully begin to shift all schools learning and teaching culture policies. There was also a fabulous movement in the Midwest Quadrant this past year to promote health and wellness for an entire week. I would work to continue these crucial conversations as the Midwest Quadrant Director and build on the success of Erin Conti in this new role.

4. The AIAS has over 250 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?

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Elections Questionnaire Answers

As Midwest Quadrant Director it would be my job to ensure that all members have an equal chance to get involved with the organization. I would do this through providing as many opportunities for chapters and their general members to reach out to me personally. I will make myself a visible resource for people to ask questions and get my opinion on issues. In my experience the most important thing that a chapter can do is to listen. A chapter needs to have good ears in order to understand what their membership wants. As Quadrant Director I would propose the creation of new resources that explain best practices when engaging with cultures that may be different from your own. This could become simplified graphics which with one view and explain more of the complexities of dealing with diversity. As a chapter becomes more diverse there are more opportunities for change in a major way.

5. Describe how you intend to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of your chosen position on the Board. Elaborate on your intended communication/action plan and the primary goals you have for your one-year term.

There are many important roles that the Midwest Quadrant Director must fulfill. The main roles I see in the Quadrant Director are being a face of support for all of the chapters of the region. In order to accomplish this I will take notes from Erin Conti, the current Midwest Quadrant Director. Erin has taken communication to new levels this year and I see this as a major resource for general members and chapter boards. Her initiatives in taking Midwest Quadrant work to instagram stories to show off the values of the AIAS, her constant connection to Slack and the the general opening of conversation to all in the Midwest Quadrant has greatly increased communication. In addition to Slack and Instagram I plan to be available for full board conference meetings within the Midwest Quadrant. This could be for something as simple as wanting me to sit in on a board meeting at a chapter or for something more serious like event planning and coordination between chapters. I see this as a necessary addition to the already amazing communication happening in the chapter. Another major role of the Midwest Quadrant Director is creating goals for the entire Midwest Quadrant to accomplish. In my term I would like to bridge the divide between the collateral organizations and local chapters. At the University of Minnesota we have some great connections with our AIA and NCARB collaterals. I see this as a major resource for connecting general members to the professional world. I also see the Midwest Quadrant as a catalyst for action, our Quadrant is active and outspoken. I would use this energy to encourage change across the nation.

6. 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

I see an untapped opportunity within the AIAS to engage with other design based organizations. When looking at architecture as a profession there is consistent engagement with other entities which inform design. These entities range from engineers, interior designers, landscape architects, and other designers in general. I believe that the organization has a lot to gain by connecting students with these other professions sooner rather than later. Architecture cannot stand by itself, it depends on these other professions and communication in order to be what it is. As the Midwest Quadrant Director I will work to bridge this divide in both the local communities of the Midwest and nationally as a national board member. Without connections we cannot create the beautiful projects we hope to see in the world.

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: Austin Peterson

I do hereby affirm that I understand and support the AIAS policy on the compensation for interns. If I employ 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: Austin Peterson

Date: 11/15/2019



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 and Board 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 Past President.

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 Past President.

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: Austin Peterson

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: Austin Peterson

Date: 11/15/2014

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 Past President 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): Austin Peterson

Chapter: University of Minnesota

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): President

Email Address: Pet01018@umn.edu

Mobile Phone Number: 612-760-2841

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

- ☐ Facebook: _____
- ☐ Twitter: @ _____
- ☐ Instagram: Austome01
- ☐ Other: _____