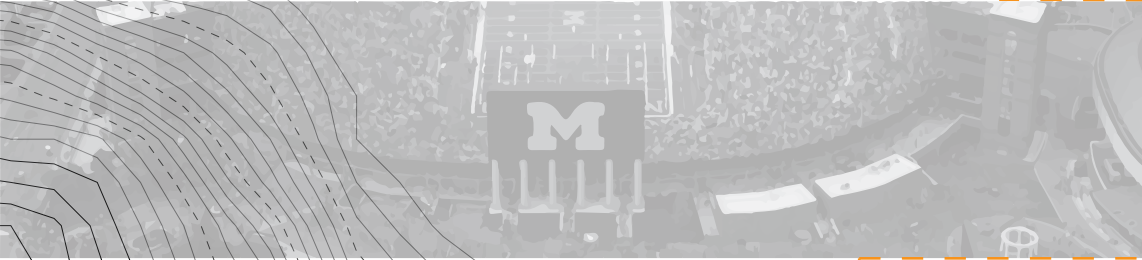


Tala Dababna

⊕ ann arbor, michigan



⊕ big house, michigan



⊕ petra, jordan



**'25-'26 AIAS National
Presidency Candidacy Packet**

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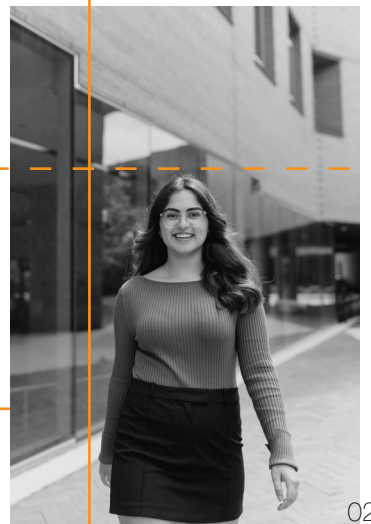
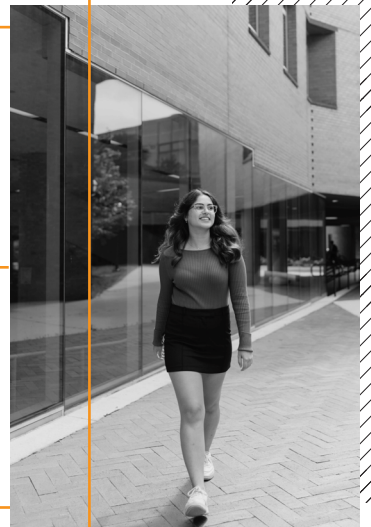
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Colt Brock, AIAS, NOMA, Assoc. AIA, Past President
American Institute of Architecture Students
1735 New York Avenue, NW Washington D.C., 20006

December 6th, 2024

Dear Past President Colt,

I am writing this letter with deep gratitude and excitement, reflecting on a journey I never imagined possible. The past six years have been transformative in ways I couldn't anticipate, and I am eager for what lies ahead. Through all of these experiences, there's one quote that I lived by: "It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you are not" - Denis Waitley.

Six years ago, I moved to the US for high school. I faced the challenge of adapting to an unfamiliar environment. The subsequent isolation brought by the pandemic made it even harder to find my place. By the time I began college at the University of Michigan, feeling out of place had become my norm—until my mom encouraged me to reach out to the architecture freshman group chat I had created over the summer. That small nudge opened the door to something unimaginable.

I began to bond with others and experience the richness of a diverse community filled with unique perspectives. Whenever I felt lost or unsure, I gravitated toward the architecture building, where I found people who shared my passions. Still, I noticed something missing. Despite the immense talent and potential around me, people weren't connecting with each other. I saw an opportunity to bring these voices together, to build a community where collaboration and growth thrive.

Starting our AIAS chapter has been both a challenge and one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Recently, I spoke with my advisor, Mireille Roddier, about how profoundly AIAS has shaped me. Things I never imagined myself doing—like confidently addressing people about issues, starting initiatives, or reaching out to help others—have become second nature. While I initially saw college as purely academic, this journey has taught me that **the most meaningful growth often comes from community-driven initiatives.**

Over the past year, the co-founders, now my best friends, and I have seen our chapter grow from 5 to 120 members—a number we never thought possible. **Yet, it's not the numbers that matter most. What truly inspires me is witnessing how this organization has impacted our members' confidence, ways of thinking, education, and career paths.** The community built itself because of the availability of this platform, where people started helping each other, organizing workshops, and forming friendships. Watching everyone achieve their potential makes every late night and moment of hard work worth it.

Creating this organization has allowed me to learn from others, share knowledge, and create lasting memories. It's shown me the value of even the smallest moments—how a conversation, a meeting, or an act of encouragement can transform someone's path. AIAS has become a space for collective passion and support, a place where collaboration and learning connect us to something greater. **This is the type of community I hope to continue fostering—one that supports, uplifts, and grows together.**

I am running for AIAS National President because **I believe in the power of our community to drive meaningful change.** Recently, I've been inspired by conversations with high schoolers, aspiring architects, and newcomers to the field who are brimming with hope and ambition. Their creativity and determination remind me of my own journey—stepping into the profession with big dreams, only to face moments of doubt and disillusionment. I want to help our generation gain the skills, connections, and confidence to overcome these challenges. Together, we can build a network that not only supports us but also enables us to shape the future of our field for the greater good.

My journey reflects the sacrifices and dreams of my parents, who immigrated to the U.S. with the hope of building a better future for my brother and me. Their unwavering support and determination have inspired me to lead and create spaces where others can feel empowered and encouraged, and I will never break that promise to them.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I am excited to work alongside this incredible organization and team of leaders to contribute to its vision for the future.

Warmly,



Tala Dababna

Tala Dababna

Reach me :)

tdababna@umich.edu

(734)686-1727

Ann Arbor, MI, USA

AXP progress

925 hours

Project Development &

Documentation (754)

Project Planning and Design (104)

Project Management (26)

Practice Management (24)

Construction & Evaluation (17)

Skills

Fabrication

3D Printing, Laser-cutting,
ZUND-cutting, woodworking

Architectural

Revit, Rhino, AutoCad, ArchGIS

Graphic

Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign

Languages

English (Native)

Arabic (Native)

French (DELF A2)

Conferences

FORUM ('24)

Grassroots ('24)

Alpha Rho Chi Convention ('23)

Awards

University of Michigan,

University Honors (2)

Washtenaw Community College,

High Honors (5)

SmithGroup,

Undergraduate Scholarship

Michigan Architectural

Foundation,

Richard M. and Sidney K.

Robinson Scholarship

University of Michigan,

Hemshell Scholarship

MI Gov, Michigan Competitive

Scholarship

Education

University of Michigan, Bachelor of Science in Architecture (2022 - Present)

Washtenaw Community College, Associate Degree in General Studies (2019 - 2022)

Experience

AIAS University of Michigan, Co-Founder & Co-President

(May 2023 - Present)

- Established a chapter along with 5 E-Board Members that now has 120 members and 7 committees.
- Focused on promoting the organization through campaigns and secured annual funding of \$15,000 by obtaining direct sponsorship from the university.
- The chapter focuses on offering multiple opportunities that focus on the professional development of architecture students. Some of these opportunities include firm visits, guest speakers, mock interviews, and social events.
- Oversaw the events planning committee and managed the "Architea" committee (a podcast led by members), that both included 14 members

University of Michigan, Peer Mentor

(Aug 2023 - Present)

- Mentored seven students bi-weekly, assisting with individual needs such as college transition and internship applications.
- Directed the Community Engagement Committee, organizing activities to support mentee well-being.

Taubman Architecture Ball, Internal Organizer

(Feb 2024 - Present)

- Planned an annual ball for 300+ students, featuring installation art and student-led initiatives.
- Facilitated communication between the administration and the planning team, delegating tasks and ensured the team stayed on track.

University of Michigan, Research Assistant

(Jul 2024 -Present)

- Analyzed career paths of fellows from Taubman College and developed graphics and strategies to promote the fellowship program for its 40th anniversary.

SmithGroup, Architecture Intern

(May 2024-Jul 2024)

- Developed diagrams illustrating the construction of a curved main atrium with a curtain wall and tiling for the new VA facility in El Paso.
- Prepared LEED documentation for multiple projects, ensuring compliance with relevant standards.
- Participated in weekly internal and external meetings with construction companies to facilitate project progress.

HopkinsBurns, Architecture Intern + Admin Assistant

(Feb 2023-Aug 2023)

- Contributed to client meetings and collaborated with the AEC team to develop design solutions.
- Conducted ADA research, site research, zoning studies, including site visits at Michigan State University's Campbell Hall.
- Produced construction drawings using Revit and AutoCAD for a wide range of projects, including sections, details, annotations, and notes for MSU Campbell Hall, Redeemer Church, The Grand Hotel, and Meadowbrook Hall .
- Supported daily office operations, managed archives and coordinated schedules.

Alpha Rho Chi, Outreach & Marketing Chair

(Sep 2022 - Dec 2023)

- Organized multiple events per semester ranging from local firm visits around the local Metro Detroit area, graduate info sessions featuring admission officers from multiple Ivy leagues, and other professional development events.
- Led fraternity marketing efforts, managing multiple social media platforms and creating content.

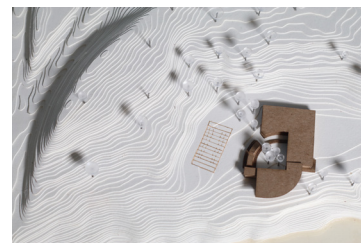
Central Student Government, Taubman Student Representative

(Nov 2022- May 2023)

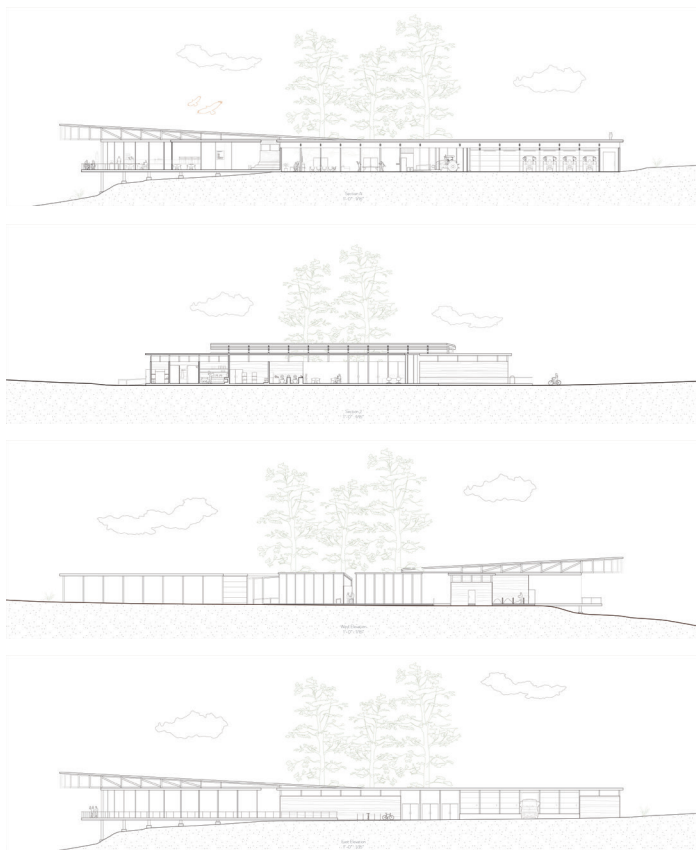
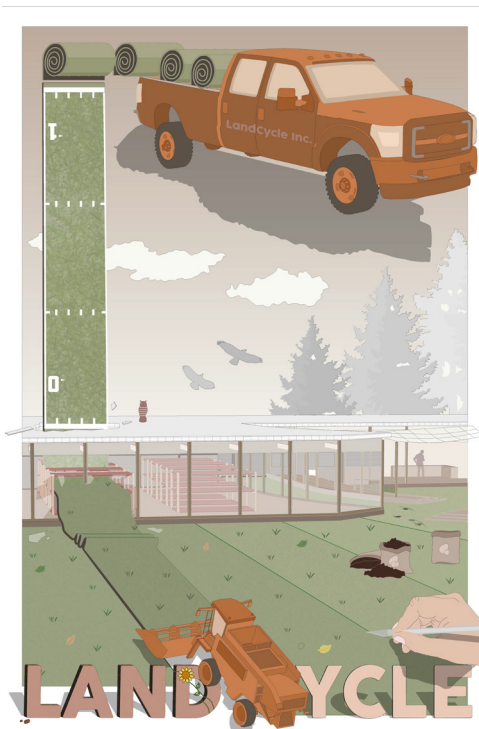
- Served as an advocate for the student body on the university's student government, promoting Taubman College's interests.

LANDCYCLE

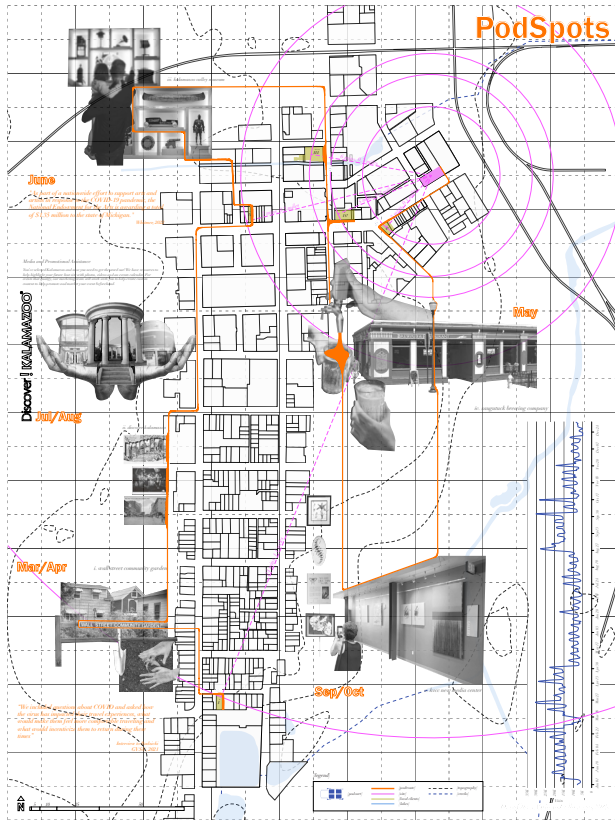
Exploring the site, Landcycle was inspired by its natural surroundings - the chickens, soil types, and trees that form a cohesive ecosystem. Landcycle attempts to integrate seamlessly into the existing environment, reflecting humanity's efforts to preserve and nurture nature. While humans may perceive this as caretaking, it can also be considered as disturbance by nature itself, causing a dynamic tension. This tension is shown in the form and operations of the project. For example, in the space you will witness a sod harvester extracting grass from the soil, disrupting natural habitats, but simultaneously employees producing fertilizer to nourish the ecosystem and sustain the resident chickens.



Similar to the cyclical process of land growth (from the (un)loading dock to the grass fields and back to the unloading dock), the building is structured into three interconnected zones that leak into each other similar to the care-taking process. The zones are employee zone, client zone, and public zones that aren't exactly secured by physical boundaries but by the activities performed and by whom they are performed. Most openings that connect spaces together are strategically positioned based on the interrelationship of these spaces together. For instance, the machine garage is open to the greenhouse, loading and unloading dock, and the fields, fostering a cohesive flow between spaces. The curved platforms serve as transitional spaces that connect all zones together forming a central courtyard accessible to all, where visitors are introduced to the mascot, the chickens. LandCycle creates an experiential journey that harmonizes human intervention with nature while acknowledging the inherent tensions and contradictions.

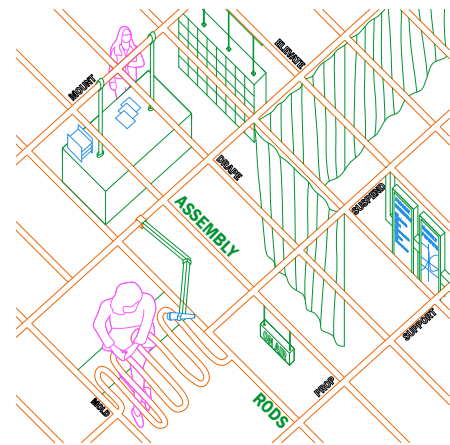
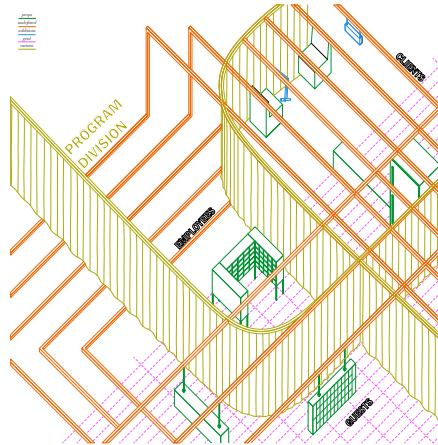


Post Office +

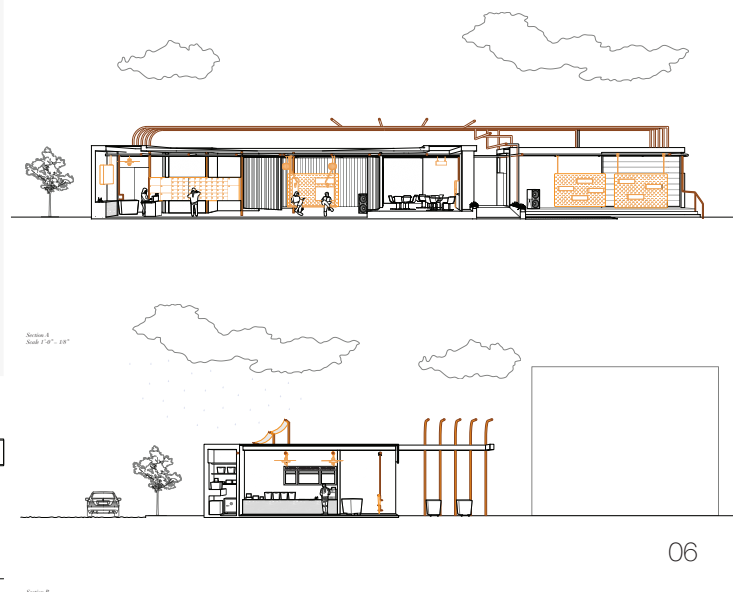
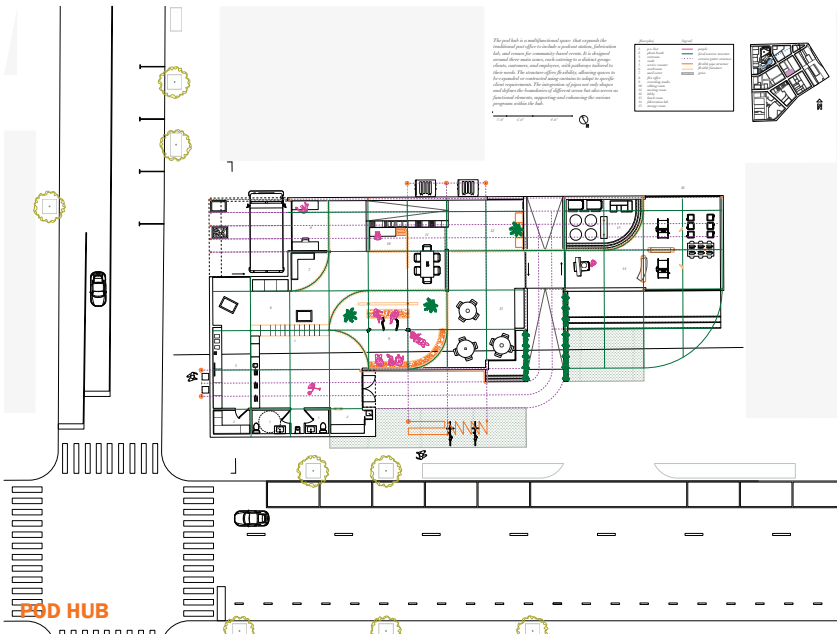


Post Office+ is a project designed to address the struggles the USPS has faced due to cultural, social, and technological changes that have rendered it unprofitable since 2006. The rise of digital communications, e-commerce, and electronic payments has significantly reduced the use of traditional mail. This decline, compounded by competition from private couriers, internal inefficiencies, and regulatory constraints, has diminished the USPS's role in commercial and civic life.

Post Office+ introduces a new initiative: a podcast aimed at revitalizing the USPS by fostering community engagement. After analyzing Kalamazoo—a city rich in art, architecture, and talent but often overlooked except during specific seasons—the project proposes a podcast to promote local businesses while emphasizing adaptability. Although the USPS currently has a podcast, it lacks proper promotion. This project envisions an enhanced, community-driven podcast platform that aligns with USPS goals.



Using materials like pipes and 3D joinery, the physical space and program can expand or contract based on need, supporting various initiatives hosted by the post office. A key feature of the project is the "PodLock," a mobile structure that combines the post office and podcast programs. The PodLock operates by rotating locations across downtown Kalamazoo, enabling package pickups at local businesses. The pop-up structure is highly adaptable, with customizable planks of wood, pipes, and 3D joinery, allowing it to adjust to different settings and needs while supporting the overall vision of Post Office+.





Mireille Roddier, Associate Professor
Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning, **Architecture Program**
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, **Women's and Gender Studies Department**
mroddier@umich.edu

November 28th, 2024

Letter of Support for AIAS National President Candidacy: Tala Dababna

Dear Mr. Brock,

It is with extreme confidence and delight that I write this letter in support of Tala Dababna's candidacy for next year's AIAS national presidency. I have been teaching at the Taubman College for twenty-four years, and few students have impressed me as much as Ms Dababna. I first met her when, as a sophomore, she and her senior peer mentor Aaron Comstock came to me at the end of the 2022-23 school year, declaring their intent to restart our school's chapter of AIAS—of which no current student had any memory. I had served as faculty advisor in the past, and had watched our chapter slowly dissolve and entirely disintegrate with the Covid-19 epidemic. Energized by their enthusiasm, I was relieved to think that our school could progressively rebuild what it once had. A year later, their chapter had 120 members.

Some things are easier to explain than others. It took seeing Tala in action, for me to understand the extent of her capacity as a *leader*. She *leads* in every sense of the word, to the point where I worried that, as the heart-pumping engine of our chapter, it wouldn't survive her graduation. But watching her capacity to empower others eased all fears. Her capacity to organize, delegate, and especially inspire led to the remarkable achievements of our chapter under her leadership — this group of students created a vibrant, forward-thinking community that has healed our student community through the aftermath of the Covid-19 years. They restarted the Freedom by Design workshops, organized professional lecture series, portfolio and mock interview workshops, attended Forum, and revived the Beaux-Arts ball into the entirely redesigned TAB — the Taubman Architecture Ball, holding onto the importance of rituals while shedding the weight of uncritically preserved traditions.

But what most eased my fear that the chapter relied too much on her, was watching her emancipate the chapter from her own leadership, and anchor it in both past traditions and future directions. As only the best leaders of organizations do, she gave the chapters both roots and wings (an aspiration that also appraises parenting skills).

One day it occurred to me—and I mentioned it as we were discussing her future plans—that she could consider law school: not that she's not a dedicated and talented architect, but I was struck by her capacity for understanding regulations, especially concerning student associations, university policies, the financial and administrative aspects of running such organizations. "How do you know all this?" I asked regarding the AIAS policies we were discussing. "Oh, I read all the AIAS By-laws, and had every member of the chapter read them all as well, and we had a meeting to discuss and clarify any questions." *This* is how roots are grown.

As soon as the chapter was instituted, she simultaneously started working on ensuring its longevity far past her graduation date: through the rigorous and disciplined construction of archives, rules, know-how, and a

carefully elaborated constitution; and by setting up precedents that, by example, inspired the younger members to get involved, mentoring them along the way. *This* is how wings unfold.

To be honest, I don't exactly know how, at such a young age, Tala knows how to do it all, with such ease and grace. I envy her time-management skills. While most of us—her peers and teachers alike—spend our days running behind, sacrificing either quality or quantity, Tala holds jobs, familial responsibilities, yet is the first one in studio early morning, produces exquisite design studio work, served as Taubman College's elected representative with the University Central Student Government, volunteers as a peer-mentor, worked with the College Admissions team, and expertly runs our chapter of AIAS—at this point the biggest chapter we've had. I am convinced that, whatever Tala Dababna's future is meant to be, she will make it happen. There is nothing she cannot figure out how to do, and do well.

What most strikingly drives her however, is the sensation of giving back. I don't sense any false pride or ambition in her actions, only joy and gratitude. Her radiant presence in our school contrasts with her fearlessness at taking on new challenges. Her calmness inspires confidence: it all seems doable. Even I feel reassured by her. I think I know where and when these skills were acquired: I also migrated to the US during high-school, and recognize the set of navigation skills one develops when thrown into this country's specific jungle of adolescent social relations bred out of cut-throat competitiveness. The complexity of the situation, combined with her sensibility and deep empathy, surely have informed her capacity to maneuver the most entangled situations with such ease and generosity.

I have served on search committees for many an administrative leader — deans, chairs, etc. We often conclude interviews with the common conclusion that those who most want the position, want it for the wrong reasons, and those who would be the best candidates don't really want it. (This observation was best articulated in the recent Edward Berger film, *Conclave*, in reference to the papacy!) I wish I could convey how exceptional an opportunity it is for AIAS to have a candidate like Tala Dababna apply for the presidency. She hesitated for a long time after we first talked about it. I asked her what convinced her to apply. "The capacity to help, to share what I've figured out, to make AIAS accessible to more students, to help with distributing opportunities where they are most needed."

Tala Dababna has the personality, the skills, the heart and generosity, and the innate talent for such a position. She would be as impactful and memorable at the national scale as she has been for our Taubman College. Thank you for carefully considering her candidacy. I recommend her with unbounded enthusiasm.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mireille Roddier
AIAS faculty advisor
+1 (510) 495-5251



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

November 23, 2024

From: Aaron Comstock
AIAS - University of Michigan Co-President
2000 Bonisteel Boulevard
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2069
michiganaias@umich.edu

To: Colt Brock
AIAS Past President
1012 14th Street NW Suite 415
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Past-President Brock, AIAS, NOMA, Assoc. AIA and AIAS Elections Committee:

I am honored to recommend Tala Dababna for the position of President within the American Institute of Architecture Students. I have been privileged to know Tala since being assigned to be her mentor in the Fall of 2022. Within a few weeks of knowing her, it was evident that Tala had a driving passion for architecture and an innate ability to work with others. Both of these qualities shine in the esteemed goals she shared with me of being a leader and becoming the youngest licensed architect in the country. Since the Fall of 2022, her goals may have changed but her enthusiasm for the field and its students has not.

In the Spring of 2023, Tala came to me asking me to take part in a team she was building known as the American Institute of Architecture Students. I soon came to realize that not only had she done the research, but she had already started making the team. Our founding executive board held our first election in May 2023 and I have been fortunate enough to work with Tala as Co-president of the University of Michigan's AIAS chapter for the last two years. She has been vital to the growth of our chapter to 70+ members in our first year, and over 110 members in our second year at the school. Under her leadership, our chapter was also awarded the 2024 Chapter of the Year award, a prestigious award as you know, and something that has not been accomplished at the University of Michigan in over 30 years. Tala is directly responsible for creating what University of Michigan faculty have called "a vibrant, forward-thinking student association that has attracted and coalesced our rather introverted post-pandemic student body into a dynamic, fast-healing community." While I can't think of a better way to describe our chapter than that, I can only attempt to speak to the day-to-day I see from Tala. She is the type of leader students naturally gravitate towards and look up to, including myself. Many students, AIAS members or not, feel comfortable coming to her with professional or personal questions. She also inspires the student body beyond words can explain. Her enthusiasm for pushing students to be their best and think outside the box has directly led to the development of 8 committees in our chapter that require applications due to

TAUBMAN COLLEGE



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

student interest. Her organization skills and attention to detail are also illustrated in the development of the file system; finite detail in which our 27-page constitution stands, which has been used as a precedent for numerous other student organizations; and example-setting documentation that our chapter has implemented to reduce loss of knowledge during periods of turnover. Tala's leadership in the zealous founding and tremendous growth of our University of Michigan AIAS Chapter is one of many examples highlighting her passion for architecture as a field, her influence on those around her, and her dedication to the American Institute of American Architecture Students organization.

In addition to her role as Co-President of our AIAS chapter, Tala has also taken on numerous other positions in student organizations to positively impact the lives of others with boundless amounts of her time and energy. Outside of AIAS, Tala has taken over the leadership role of the Taubman Architecture Ball (TAB), an organization dedicated to our architecture college's school-wide ball focused on the creation of a positive student culture and community in the post-pandemic academic world. She is also a peer mentor in our mentorship program where she regularly meets with five students to support them by offering guidance, sharing connections and resources, being a motivating force when needed, and even simply serving as a listening ear. All of her roles in these organizations and programs are in addition to a full-time student workload, a job as a community manager for the university, and a research assistant to a faculty member. How she accomplishes all of this to the distinguished degree that she does humbles me daily.

Throughout my time as a leader within AIAS, I recognized the significance of having the right person lead us at a national level so I do not make my recommendation to this position lightly.

I, like many others in the organization, have come to expect a leader who not only has the ability to lead but inspires us to push forward as the future of architecture across the globe. The President must be diligent, organized, passionate, and be able to develop cohesive teams built on connection and collaboration. Qualities such as these are an integral part of who Tala is and are demonstrated by her every day, making it a true pleasure to put my full support behind her in this endeavor.

I thank you for carefully considering Tala for this position and recommend her wholeheartedly to be our next AIAS President. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Aaron Comstock
B.S. Arch '23, M. Arch '25
University of Michigan AIAS Co-President
AIA Taubman College Student Liaison

TAUBMAN COLLEGE



Questionnaire

1. We all love the AIAS for different reasons, but it takes a critical and constructive analysis of the institutions we appreciate most to continue to evolve them into entities that can support each new generation of membership. Why are you running for a position on the AIAS Board of Directors? What about the organization and its membership motivates you to seek a leadership position?

What motivates me the most is students' original excitement as they enter the field. Yet, **towards the end of their education a lot of my peers feel lost or unsure that they want to continue.** This **pivotal stage** is normal yet critical, and as a leader, I want to **empower students to confidently navigate it.** My goal is to **provide the resources, guidance, and tools they need to market themselves effectively and build successful, fulfilling careers.** The AIAS has the power to shape this journey, and I'm dedicated to evolving the organization to support and inspire the next generation of architects.

2. Though it may be hard to believe, the AIAS is not perfect. A critical analysis of any organization is a healthy part of its operation. There may be things that you feel the AIAS could do better, or maybe you see new opportunities or partners to engage. Where do you see room for improvement or new areas for the organization to expand into?

AIAS has been doing a great job at maintaining relationships with our sibling organizations. However, what I see as missing is an **awareness in professional firms of the significant curricular changes in academia over the years.** There seems to be a lack of communication and understanding between the professional and academic worlds. While both are evolving at their own pace, **there are not many shared checkpoints** along the way to verify and compare the compatibility of their goals.

As an organization that helps connect both sides and helps students get ready to move on to the real world, **I would like to encourage more communication between professionals and schools.** Professionals should be aware of the changes happening in education, such as the growing awareness of the environmental impacts of the construction industry, students' increasing skepticism toward traditional institutions due to the wealth of resources available online, and the rise of alternative career paths. Similarly, schools should be more attuned to the evolving needs of the industry. **I would like to see them working towards converging rather than assuming that, by default, they are on parallel paths.**

I am hoping an institution like AIAS could prompt a cultural change, **strengthening seasoned professionals' appreciation of the idiosyncratic skills that architecture schools help develop rather than their valuation of recent graduates based on their proficiencies in softwares or willingness to perform menial tasks.** Let's hope for an efficient work environment.

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 & 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 Board of Directors?

For me I think one thing I would like to focus on is building a sustainable way of operating chapter. I believe that students attend college not only for the education but for the transformative experiences that help shape them into well-rounded individuals. In architecture school, the culture often promotes long hours spent at desks tackling large deliverables. While this might seem productive on the surface, it can sometimes lead to feeling overextended, hinder opportunities for personal growth, and reduce the ability to fully embrace the collegiate experience. **This imbalance between academic demands and personal development is a critical issue that I find deeply important.**

As a student who co-founded a chapter to promote these very values, I am committed to **championing a culture that prioritizes health, wellness, and sustainable ways of working.** The organizations we dedicate ourselves to building—such as AIAS, NOMAS, and others—exist not just as support systems but as platforms to advocate for and model better practices. These organizations have the potential to **lead by example, emphasizing the importance of taking breaks, networking, and dedicating time to personal and professional growth beyond our desks.** By encouraging students to engage in activities like Freedom by Design, student governments, or organizing events, we can help them discover and refine their own unique strengths and passions. These experiences build a diverse set of skills, foster creativity and adaptability, and allow students to develop qualities that celebrate their individuality and set them apart from the crowd.

To make progress on this issue, **I would focus on initiatives that promote balance and celebrate individuality.** Workshops could offer tools for effective time management, emphasize the importance of sleep, and explore efficient workflows. **Sharing unique work from chapters and alumni stories would inspire students by showcasing diverse paths and the value of embracing their own strengths.** By fostering a culture that views breaks as essential for long-term success, we can encourage healthier, more productive habits while supporting personal growth. Ultimately, by reshaping the culture of architectural education to embrace wellness, skill-building, and leadership, **we can empower students to thrive not just as architects but as dynamic leaders capable of transforming the profession for the better.**

4. The AIAS has over 300 chapters across the U.S. and around the world, ranging in size, age range, and even purpose. 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?

Connecting people has always been a priority for me, and while conferences do an excellent job of fostering these connections, many students unfortunately might miss out due to financial inaccessibility. To address this, **I would work to make conferences more affordable and inclusive, ensuring they are collaborative spaces where all members can engage meaningfully.**

In addition, I propose implementing a system that has been highly effective at a chapter level and could thrive nationally—**creating streamlined communication channels between chapters with shared qualities or interests.**

This could be achieved **by utilizing and enhancing the existing member directory.** Chapters would be concisely described based on factors like size, school demographics, e-board structures, committees, funding models, and other key details. Such transparency would improve communication across the organization and encourage connections beyond the current quad-based system.

This initiative could be particularly impactful for newly established or struggling chapters. During conferences and quad meetings, there are often chapters looking to address challenges or establish strong foundations. By using data to identify well performing chapters or those excelling in specific areas, we can create a mentorship network, **helping newer chapters learn best practices and feel supported by the broader AIAS community.**

When chapters feel connected, supported, and valued as part of a trusted network, growth and engagement naturally follow. By taking these steps, we can ensure every member and chapter feels empowered to thrive, no matter their size, location, or stage of development.

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.

I believe the key to fulfilling the responsibilities of the president lies in **setting clear goals, establishing a timeline, and creating a detailed action plan**. My approach would center on maintaining consistent communication with chapters by engaging with them directly through **visits, fostering a strong and interactive social media presence, and actively seeking feedback to better understand and address their needs**.

As president, I would ensure that national initiatives, chapter goals, the professional world, and sibling organizations are all **aligned and aware of each other's aspirations**. This role requires acting as a bridge between these groups, facilitating open dialogue, and working collaboratively to create meaningful change. By listening attentively and staying proactive, I would strive to **keep the organization united and moving forward**.

Ultimately, my primary goal is to foster a culture of **inclusivity, transparency, and support** across all chapters while ensuring that the organization remains adaptable and forward-thinking. With a positive attitude and a commitment to collaboration, I aim to lead with purpose and make a lasting impact during my term.

6. As an organization that is constantly evolving, the AIAS has to often re-evaluate its priorities. What strategic priorities would you like to see the AIAS focus on during your time on the Board?

While AIAS has made significant progress in securing sponsors and enhancing our platforms, one key area I would prioritize is refining our financial strategy to ensure long-term sustainability and accessibility. I've had conversations with members who perceive dues as a barrier to accessing the full benefits we offer. **This perception shouldn't exist**. With rising dues and the financial burdens students face due to inflation, it's essential to reassess how we allocate resources, raise funds, and support our members.

I aim to streamline AIAS' financial plan by **critically evaluating our investments, sponsorship strategies, and conference funding**. My focus will be on **minimizing unnecessary expenses, optimizing our budget, and reinvesting savings** to make AIAS more accessible while **maintaining or even improving the quality of our offerings**. This approach will ensure we continue to thrive while breaking down financial barriers for all members.

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: Tala Dababna

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: Tala Dababna

Date: 11/29/2024



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: Tala Dababna

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: Tala Dababna

Date: 11/29/2024

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): Tala Dababna

Chapter: University of Michigan

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): Co-Founder & Co-President

Email Address: tdababna@umich.edu

Mobile Phone Number: 734-686-1727

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

- o Facebook: _____
- o Twitter: @_____
- o Instagram: taladababna
- o Other: _____