



CODE OF ETHICS

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS
Established July 2024

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE CODE

1.01 Establishment. The Code of Ethics (“the Code”) has been established by the National Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) under the authority of Section 8.21 of the Bylaws.

1.02 Purpose of the Code. The AIAS strives to advance leadership, design, and service among architecture students in order to empower voices, ideas, and actions for the future. Members and Chapters of the AIAS are thus dedicated to upholding the AIAS’s values of impact, community, growth, passion, perspective, and balance. The Code establishes a vision for the AIAS community to aspire towards, while enforcing a standard of conduct amongst the membership.

1.03 Type of Code. The AIAS Code of Ethics is primarily an Aspirational Code with some aspects of an Enforceable Code where appropriate.

1.031 Ethical Standards. The Code introduces a set of aspirational Ethical Standards (“Standards”) by which AIAS Members and Chapters can utilize as a framework for continued success and growth. These Standards highlight strategies for elevating the contributions of the AIAS within both academic institutions and society at large.

1.032 Rules of Conduct. The Code includes a select number of enforceable Rules of Conduct (“Rules”) that shed light on particularly relevant areas wherein AIAS members must abide by particular standards to meet the needs and agency of the organization. The process for reporting a violation of these Rules can be found in the ‘Maintenance of the Code of Ethics’ Document, and information regarding violation repercussions can be found in Section 4: Appendix.

1.04 Structural Framework. The Code leverages the 6 AIAS Values Statements (seen below) as “categories” for the ethical aspirations of an AIAS Member and/or Chapter. Each Standard has been “tagged” with the Value(s) categories that are associated with that particular aspiration. By embedding the AIAS Values within the Code in this manner, as opposed to sectioning Standards by individual Value, the Code is able to indicate that many Standards align with multiple Value Statements simultaneously. This illustrates the interconnectedness of the AIAS Values in a way that Members and Chapters can learn from and embody in their voices, ideas, and actions.

1.041 Impact. We advocate for and enact positive change.

1.042 Community. We foster an inclusive network of peers that learn from, support, and drive one another.

1.043 Growth. We inspire students to reach their greatest potential through meaningful learning opportunities.

1.044 Passion. We pursue large goals and aspirations through each member’s enthusiasm.

1.045 Perspective. We link the profession’s opportunities to architectural education.

1.046 Balance. We promote respectful relationships, an environment of diversity, and a thriving studio culture,

SECTION 2: ETHICAL STANDARDS

2.0 CHAPTER STANDARDS

2.01 Chapters should strive to be transparent to their members, peers, faculty, school administration, and all appropriate parties as it relates to the operations of the chapter.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community**

Commentary:

1. *Operations of the chapter can include but are not limited to: budgeting, governance (changes in leadership and opportunities to engage in leadership), eventplanning and scheduling, and status in relation to National.*

2.02 Chapters should strive to represent and support their peers, remaining agile and responsive to the changing needs of their student body, in order to create a supportive and inclusive community.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Growth, Balance**

Commentary:

1. *Chapters should make an effort to provide opportunities for members to advocate for necessary adaptations to their operations and governance with respect to their changing environment.*
2. *Chapters should make every effort to provide opportunities for members to advocate for appropriate modifications to their school's studio culture policy and shall promote the ideas/values therein.*
3. *Chapters should make every effort to routinely review the accessibility and inclusivity of events and programming.*
4. *Supportive and inclusive practices can include but are not limited to:*
 - a. *Chapters engaging their membership in order to know how to best serve them, such as holding open forums at general body meetings, and*
 - b. *Chapters advocating in their respective communities on behalf of their members values with external entities, such as the AIA.*
5. *Faculty advisors should make every effort to encourage awareness of the Learning and Teaching Culture Policies (previously known as studio culture policies).*

2.03 Chapters should strive to promote the value of design.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Growth, Passion**

Commentary:

1. *Individual members and chapters are encouraged to define the value of design within the context of their unique perspective/institution.*

2.04 Chapters should strive to communicate the value and validity of the student voice.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Balance**

Commentary:

1. *By virtue of AIAS membership, the value and validity of the student voice extends beyond the limits of their individual institution. Chapter leaders are encouraged to illustrate the potential impact of the student voice in the context of the architectural collaterals.*
2. *Chapter leaders are provided opportunities to speak on behalf of their Chapter in academic, professional, and organizational settings. Chapter leaders are thus expected to recognize that they have the challenge and responsibility of conveying the opinions of their membership body.*

2.05 Chapters should strive to create a wide range of partnerships, programming, and leadership opportunities that:

- increase the accessibility of the AIAS,
- integrate a diverse membership,
- ensure Chapter leaders are representative of the populations they serve,
- reflect the needs and desires of the student population they are serving, and
- accommodate a broad range of professional trajectories.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Growth, Passion, Perspective, Balance**

Commentary:

1. *Partnerships are encouraged to include other student organizations at a Chapter's institution in order to foster an environment of inclusivity.*
2. *Chapters are also encouraged to collaborate with institutions and organizations beyond their academic institution to further encourage and support students in their pursuits.*

2.06 Chapters should continuously update their governing documents to address changes in their studio environment and in the diversity of student needs.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Balance**

Commentary:

1. *Governing documents include but are not limited to: Learning and Teaching Culture Policies (previously known as studio culture policies), Chapter Bylaws, and any additional elections procedures.*

2.1 MEMBER STANDARDS

2.11 Members should execute community-oriented projects responsibly.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Growth, Passion, Perspective, Balance**

Commentary:

1. *Members are expected to be respectful of existing conditions within the communities they are serving.*
2. *Members are encouraged to embrace efforts to provide both design-build and engagement solutions to address 5 community barriers:*
 - a. *Physical*
 - b. *Educational*
 - c. *Environmental*
 - d. *Socio-Economic*
 - e. *Cultural*
3. *Members are encouraged to reference the AIAS Public Policies Realm 3.0: Society for more information on executing community-oriented projects responsibly.*

2.12 Members should pursue excellence in their academic pursuits.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Growth, Passion, Balance**

Commentary:

1. *The AIAS expects members currently enrolled in school to prioritize their academics over their extracurricular engagements.*

2.13 Members should strive to support and mentor their peers in the pursuit of their personal aspirations: both academic and professional.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community**, **Growth**, **Perspective**

Commentary:

1. *Members are expected to support their peers in the advancement of their chosen aspirations, whether it aligns with their own ambitions or not.*
2. *Chapters are encouraged to incorporate mentorship practices into their local programming.*

2.14 Members should promote and respect the diversity of commitments and academic circumstances of their peers.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community**, **Balance**

Commentary:

1. *When working collaboratively, individual members' time management practices should be respected.*
2. *When coordinating programming, Chapter leaders should strive to understand the time commitments of their members such as to maximize the accessibility of events.*

2.15 Members should promote and respect the sharing of opinions, ideas, and thoughts with their peers, educators, and employers.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community**, **Perspective**, **Balance**

Commentary:

1. *Members are especially encouraged to discuss professional trajectories, wherein they support their peers in the advancement of their chosen career paths, whether it includes licensure or not.*

2.16 Members should strive to promote the values of the organization within their school community and embody these values when seeking and participating in extracurricular opportunities and endeavors.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact**, **Growth**, **Passion**,

Commentary: When representing the organization, members are expected to uphold professionalism.

2.17 Members are expected to conduct themselves in a civil manner.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community**, **Balance**

Commentary:

1. *Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner wherein they do not harass or discriminate in their professional or academic activities on the basis of race, religion, national origin, political affiliation, age, personal appearance, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.*
2. *Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is neither disparaging or derogatory.*

SECTION 3: RULES OF CONDUCT

3.0 GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

3.01 Members shall comply with the AIAS Bylaws and the Rules of the Board.

3.1 LAWS AND REGULATIONS

3.11 Members shall abide by all applicable local laws and regulations.

Commentary:

1. *Members are especially encouraged to discuss professional trajectories, wherein they support their peers in the advancement of their chosen career paths, whether it includes licensure or not.*

3.12 Members shall comply with the rules, regulations, and standards of conduct of their academic institutions.

3.2 POLITICAL STATEMENTS

3.21 When representing the AIAS, members must remain impartial to political causes, parties, and/or candidates.

Commentary:

1. *The AIAS is recognized by the IRS as a Section 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization, and is thus restricted in its political and legislative activities.*
2. *For further clarification on 501(c)(3) restrictions, contact the AIAS National Board of Directors or National Office.*

3.3 CHEATING

3.31 Members shall not act dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage when participating in opportunities offered by the AIAS.

3.4 ELECTIONS

3.41 Members shall not knowingly manipulate their local Chapter's elections process, whether conducting or participating.

Commentary:

1. *Chapters shall ensure that their election process, as stated in their Chapter By-Laws, is fair, equitable, accessible, and transparent to all members.*

SECTION 4: APPENDIX

4.0 KEY DEFINITIONS

4.01 Member. A Member is any individual who has paid the dues required of the national office and their local chapter, or has been granted membership allowed by the Nation Bylaws. Membership includes: general members, affiliate members, associate members, faculty advisors, legacy members. National Bylaw Section 2.5 can be referenced for more information on AIAS Membership.

4.02 Chapter. The jurisdiction of each chapter shall be confined to the student body of a single school except as provided for in the National Bylaws. See Bylaw Section 2.3 for more information on Chapters.

4.03 Board of Directors. The AIAS Board of Directors is the governing body that establishes national policy, controls the organization's assets, and promotes the interests of the organization. The Board is composed of the President, Vice President, 4 Quadrant Directors (West, South, Northeast, Midwest), 3 Collateral Liaisons (AIA, NCARB, ACSA), and the Executive Director. Additional members of the Board may be appointed to represent additional organizations and/or particularly underrepresented membership regions as needed. National Bylaw Section 3.021 can be referenced for more information on the Board of Directors.

4.04 Council of Presidents. The Council of Presidents (COP) is the governing body that represents the membership, and exercises oversight of and elects the Board of Directors. The COP meets bi-annually at the Grassroots and FORUM Conferences. The COP is composed of Chapter Delegates from Chapters in Good Standing. National Bylaw Section 3.022 can be referenced for more information on the Council of Presidents.

4.041 Delegates. COP Delegates are typically Chapter Presidents. If a Chapter President cannot attend a COP meeting, another Chapter Member may be designated as the Chapter's Delegate. If no Member from a Chapter can attend a COP meeting, a proxy Delegate from another Chapter in their Quadrant or Region may be selected to participate on their behalf.

4.05 Ethical Standard. Aspirational Statements that set goals for members to strive for.

4.06 Enforceable Rule. Regulations established within the Code that set a standard of conduct for members.

4.07 Complainant. The individual who submits a complaint, alleging a violation of a Rule within the Code.

4.08 Respondent. The individual accused of violating a Rule within the Code.

4.1 EXAMPLES OF OFFENSES

4.11 Purpose of Examples. The following are examples of offenses that should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee. For further clarification, please contact the Chair.

4.12 Example Violation of Rule 3.01. A student is a Member their freshman year and they never renew their membership. As a senior the student has included that they are an AIAS Member for all the years they are in architecture school on their resume. This violates AIAS Bylaw 2.91 Eligibility for Credentials.

Commentary: While disingenuous, this offense seems somewhat light in nature, and would recommend a Tier 1 Response from the Committee. (See Section 3.211 of the Maintenance of the Code)

4.13 Example Violation of Rule 3.12 - A student has committed plagiarism by copying design work from previous studios.

This student's academic institution has regulations against plagiarism.

Commentary: This Offense is particularly grave in nature, and would recommend a Tier 5 Response and a referral of Trial information and Evidence to the University within the bounds of legal behavior on the part of the Committee. (See Section 3.211 of the Maintenance of the Code)

4.14 Example Violation of Rule 3.21 - Prior to a US Presidential Election, the AIAS Chapter President utilizes the General Body Meeting as an opportunity to advocate for their candidate while in an attempt to influence the votes of members.

Commentary: Referring to Rule 3.21 listed in the 'Maintenance of the Code' regarding making political statements or actions in an official capacity within the AIAS, this offense is in conflict with the organization's identity as a 501(c)3. Considering recent scrutiny towards Non-profits of this tax designation from the federal level, the seriousness of this offense is elevated, and would recommend a Tier 4 Response from the Committee. (See Section 3.214 of the Maintenance of the Code)

4.15 Example Violation of Rule 3.21 - From their own observations, a Chapter Board Member believes that their entire Chapter has similar political values and viewpoints. Using AIAS branding and other resources, they organize a fundraising event to donate funds to a US Presidential Candidate's campaign.

*Commentary: Referring to Rule 3.21 listed in the 'Maintenance of the Code' regarding making political statements or actions in an **official capacity** within the AIAS, this offense is in conflict with the organization's identity as a 501(c)3. It is worth noting that members of the AIAS at any level of leadership **are allowed** as any other person to **make political statements** or hold political beliefs **as an individual**. It is only when **the statement is attached** to their position or capacity **within the organization** that it comes in conflict with rule 3.21. Considering recent scrutiny towards Non-profits of this tax designation from the federal level, and the financial nature of this particular offense, the seriousness of this offense is especially elevated, and would recommend a Tier 5 Response from the Committee. (See Section 3.215 of the Maintenance of the Code)*

4.16 Example Violation of Rule 3.31 - AIAS posts the top entries for a competition on the national Instagram account and asks the membership to "like" their favorite entry. The entry with the most "likes" will be named the winner. A Member Pays for an online bot service in order to add 1,000 likes to the post with their entry.

Commentary: This offense seems well suited for a Tier 3 Response by the Committee, going a step further than admonition or censure, but holding off from the more irrevocable circumstances of Suspension or Termination. (See Section 3.213 of the Maintenance of the Code)

4.17 Example Violation of Rule 3.41 - A Chapter President throws away ballots to ensure that certain candidates win their elections.

Commentary: Elections Offenses seem to call for a Tier 2 Response from the Committee. (See Section 3.212 of the Maintenance of the Code)

4.18 Example Violation of Rule 3.41 - Rather than host elections, a Chapter Executive Board conducts "interviews" to determine their successors.

Commentary: Elections Offenses seem to call for a Tier 2 Response from the Committee. (See Section 3.212 of the Maintenance of the Code)