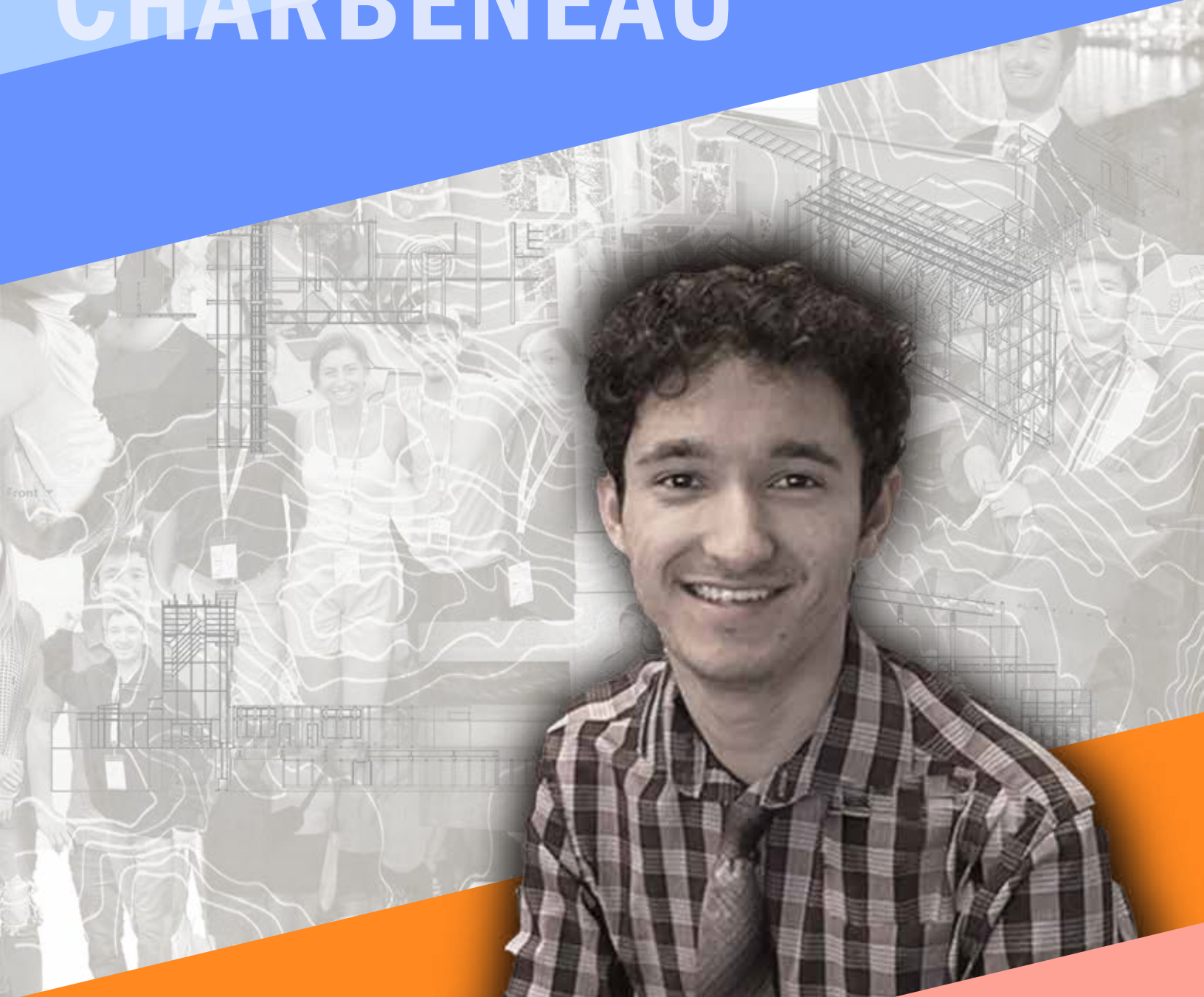


JAMES CHARBENEAU



WEST QUAD DIRECTOR CANDIDACY - 2026 / 27



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Nov. 2025

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Jordan Luther

AIAS Past President & Elections Chair

Dear Jordan,

I'm excited to share my declaration and intent to run for West Quad Director for the 2026–2027 term, by the posted date of November 22, 2025 at 11:59pm HST. It is my sincere intention to support the AIAS at every level—from its smallest functions to its largest—and to help strengthen the organization for both current and future members. I'm writing this letter at a time when I feel truly ready to serve our community. Over this past year, I've contributed meaningfully at the national level and gained perspective on the organization from the chapter scale all the way to national committees. I believe this is the right moment to pursue an official board position.

Throughout my journey in the American Institute of Architecture Students, I've learned what it means to be a leader. I've grown simply by talking with others, coordinating initiatives, and supporting the people around me. AIAS is more than an organization—it's a model for anyone who wants to lead and shape the architectural world they're entering. There is no single path into the profession; AIAS allows students to explore possibilities, discover unexpected opportunities, and grow into leaders. This is the heart of its mission, and it's a mission I want to help carry forward.

So what would I do as West Quad Director? My primary goal is to unify and support the West Quad so that no chapter feels isolated or deprived of resources. The West Quad is geographically vast and spread out, making it challenging for chapters to connect, collaborate, and grow together. This distance places more responsibility on the director and on chapter leaders to build bridges and maintain communication. While the challenge is real, it's absolutely surmountable—and I'm committed to putting in the effort required to strengthen those connections.

My experiences writing for *CRIT*, serving on a national committee, and leading the FORUM planning team have prepared me to serve as a liaison to whichever committees I may be assigned. These opportunities have made me a more thoughtful leader and a stronger collaborator. They've also taught me to be critical of my own work—something I hope to carry into my term by offering guidance, advocating for productive change, and remaining open to

new ideas and perspectives. I want to share the hard lessons I've learned while continuing to learn from others.

AIAS is a malleable organization—constantly reshaped by its members, its leadership, and the natural turnover that comes with a student-led structure. But its resilience is what allows it to thrive year after year. This ever-evolving landscape is what makes AIAS exciting, and I hope that through my experience, passion, and dedication, I can help support the organization's growth and uphold its mission.

I'm looking forward to working with you throughout this campaign and the journey ahead.

Sincerely,

James Charbeneau

AIAS CU Denver

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?
 - Over the many year's I've served different positions with the AIAS, the most motivating part of this organization is its connection to the community. This comes in many forms and ways, but I've run into many former members and architecture professionals outside the organization, and I believe this is the proof of the AIAS' mission statement at work. An institution that manages to create a larger web of members, allies, and alumni is bound to generate a larger community outside of its walls. I've created many connections and prospects with the current members and board I consider friends. I feel at home or at place whenever I get to interact with them again, I hope to carry this facet and bring it upon a new cohort of students.
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?**
 - I'm not immune to the fact that the organization isn't perfect, but nor am I. It takes strength to recognize that- and an organization that holds itself accountable is better served and prospered. As always- the changing of the special committees is the most direct way to change the organization's mission, but communicating with the board on a regular basis would allow myself and the other board members to analyze the state of the organization and whether it needs to be readjusted or not. Tighter structure and deadlines across the board and committees are utmost the best way to hold the organization accountable for its many functions. We are all students and have busy lives, it can be easy to push aside medial tasks, but letting these slide can hurt the organization and begin to lag necessary components up to an annual basis. Additionally, I'd love to share my experience and failures with a new cohort to help them better understand the positions they signed up for, and allow for better success.
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?
 - As a member that has moved across state borders and seen perspectives from two different chapters- no chapter is alike, and nor do they all have the same issues to overcome. The biggest role the AIAS provides is tool for opportunity. As vague as that sounds, for budding chapters, many potential leaders and change-makers don't understand the value of the organization and what it has to offer. My previous chapter found it upon ourselves to learn how to send students to conferencing and open up the

chapter to as many activities, events, and lectures as possible. With activity comes challenge, and that challenge may but up to, but not limited to calendar structure and financing- all of which I've had different experiences in. From two different perspectives, I've helped budding chapters expand past their previous activity. I am not the sole reason for a chapter's success (it takes a team of highly motivated members), but I've seen where it's worked, and where it hasn't, and how demanding it may be for a chapter to succeed. The issue isn't how difficult it is to generate success, but the transparency it takes to provide the proper resources to willing chapters, and not limited to- but how involved their schools are in aiding the AIAS members. It's up to directors and prospered members to help direct chapters to greater success- based off of various experiences, and a belief of what works and what doesn't. One of the biggest lesson's learned is that chapters across the country face different challenges from their own schools, communities, and members. Whether it's bureaucracy, or their own local AIA, each chapter faces a different set of obstacles, and helping them face these unforeseen challenges is the biggest roadblock that many chapters face when trying to attain success and visible activity.

4. The AIAS has over 250 active 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?
 - This facet is most important to the role of the West Quad Director, who's biggest obstacle is connecting chapters that may be separated almost the entire country's length apart. Not only are the chapters geographically further away, but the west provides larger obstacles that keep these chapters so interconnected the way legacy chapters on the East half of the country have the advantage with. What that does provide- is a uniquely diverse background of community, landscape, and people. Not only are we practicing architecture of different climate and environments, but we're also practicing architecture of different culture and diversity, even separate from the culture of the eastern half of the country. The West Quad is a deeply diverse quad, and has always had trouble establishing solid connection. As said director, out reach to all of these active, potentially active chapters, and prospecting schools looking to activate a new chapter would ultimately benefit the organization by generating new members, experiences, and opportunities.
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.
 - Stepping in as an official board member will definitely provide a learning curve, but intentionally understanding the workload and developing a game plan to carry out for the duration of my term will lay groundwork for the success of the following year.

As an example, for our 'Pod Calls,' we don't need to send out a meeting link every month, instead, they could start in August based off of a schedule and hold them monthly by the week. By each of these weeks, multiple calls will be held, and it would be up to the chapter to send its president (or delegate) to attend these calls. But having regularity will allow the chapters across the quad to make plans to attend and make the call feel more familiar. Additionally, for the committees, I would ensure that each committee leader work with me to generate and create an agenda that should last the whole term. That way members of the committee can be held accountable. Committees are easy to forget, and developing a calendar that keeps the schedule concise and on track will help both the members and leaders of the committee. This should help leaders gauge where their work should be at and whether or not their committee is producing good content or needs to be accelerated.

JAMES CHARBENEAU

jac007mc@gmail.com

505 - 453 - 7413

Denver, CO
80202

E D U C A T I O N

University of New Mexico
Bachelor of Arts In Architecture
2024

University of Colorado - Denver
Masters of Architecture
Current

S U M M A R Y

Generally active and connective. Easily makes connections between people and and professionals. Strongest suit comes with coming up with creative solutions and using creative responses to fix a situation to satisfy people/ customers. Extremely dedicated to the positions typically sought out.

S K I L L S

- Friendly to talk to as well as open door.
- Fabricator for all sorts of mediums.
- Communicator between my club's presidents and organizations across campus.

- Supporter for other members across my activities.
- Skilled in understanding many computer programs for design purposes.

Professional Experience

Treasurer | AIAS at the University of New Mexico
2023-2024 (NM)

Managing funds for the UNM chapter, including talking to and managing with UNM's student government accounting office, arrange funds for events and trips, and creating fundraisers or ways to lobby funds for the students.

Co-president | Installations Committee at the University of New Mexico 2023-2024 (NM)
Generating ideas for installations that the University or Architecture department may request. Allocating funds for projects, and opening doors for students to fabricate freely.

FORUM Chair | AIAS 2025 - (2026 FORUM) (CO)
Fast paced high-stakes environment in which communication was integral as well as being hands on with everything front of house.

Wait Staff / Busser | Brown Palace 2024-Current (CO)
Front of house service within outlets inside the Brown Palace Spa and Autograph Collection.

S o f t w a r e •

- Proficient in the Adobe Suite:
- Illustrator
- InDesign
- Photoshop
- PremierPro
- AutoDesk:
- AutoCAD
- Revit

- Rhino 7/8
- Enscape Rendering
- SketchUp
- Safaira Plugin
- Final Draft Pro

S k i l l s e t /
I n t e r e s t s •

Fabrication:

- Woodworking
- Laser cutting (Epilogue + Universal)
- Welding
- CNC Plasma cutting
- CNC Routing

Film:

- Screenwriting!
- Filming techniques
- Film editing

Extra:

- Painting (Acrylic / Watercolor)
- AIAS national and committees

Leyuan Li
Assistant Professor
University of Colorado Denver College of Architecture and Planning
ACSA Liaison to AIAS

November 21, 2025

To the AIAS Board of Directors,

It is my great pleasure to recommend James Charbeneau for the position of 2026–2027 AIAS West Quad Director. As the AIAS Faculty Advisor at the University of Colorado Denver and the ACSA Liaison to the AIAS Board, I have had the opportunity to work closely with James during his graduate studies and through his leadership in planning the AIAS Forum 2026. I can state without hesitation that he is one of the most dedicated, organized, and visionary student leaders with whom I have worked.

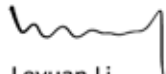
James is currently pursuing his Master of Architecture at CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning, where he has distinguished himself through both academic excellence and a deep commitment to student leadership. As the Planning Chair for AIAS Forum 2026, he has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for strategic coordination and clear communication. He consistently seeks feedback, incorporates diverse perspectives, and uplifts the voices of those around him by hosting weekly meetings and providing regular updates to the planning team. His ability to manage complex logistics while fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment speaks to his talent as a leader. Under his guidance, the Forum planning process has been both highly organized and profoundly student-centered. His calm, reliable presence and his ability to anticipate challenges have made him an indispensable contributor to the success of Forum 2026.

In addition, James brings a strong understanding of the AIAS mission and the unique needs of students across the West Quad. He approaches leadership with empathy, integrity, and a genuine commitment to reactivating our local AIAS chapter, bringing in institutional knowledge informed by his valuable AIAS leadership at the University of New Mexico. I am confident that his vision for the role of West Quad Director is grounded in both practical experience and aspirational perspectives. He is well prepared to build stronger connections among chapters and to advocate for student wellbeing at the national level.

I give James my strongest endorsement for the West Quad Director position. His collaborative spirit makes an outstanding candidate who will contribute meaningfully and thoughtfully to the AIAS Board. Please feel free to contact me if any additional information would be helpful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Li



Leyuan Li
Assistant Professor
University of Colorado Denver College of Architecture and Planning
ACSA Liaison to AIAS

Letter of Recommendation

November 22, 2025

American Institute of Architecture Students AIAS
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

To the Selection Committee,

I am pleased to recommend James for the position of West Quad Director. Over the past few months of working with him on FORUM, I've gotten to know him not just as a dependable teammate, but as someone who consistently brings intention, care, and real leadership into everything he takes on.

From the beginning, James stepped into a demanding project with confidence and humility. He is the kind of person who notices what needs to be done and quietly makes sure it happens. No matter how complicated things became, he stayed level-headed, thoughtful, and always willing to support the team. His presence has been steady, and his work ethic speaks for itself.

What has really made an impression on me is how deeply he believes in the potential of CU Denver's architecture community. He understands how important it is for our chapter to have representation at the national level, especially after several years without a West Quad Director. His interest in stepping into this role comes from a genuine desire to advocate for students and ensure their voices are part of the larger conversation within AIAS.

James is someone who cares about people, listens sincerely, and brings out the best in those around him. He has the maturity, vision, and dedication that make strong leaders—not because he tries to stand out, but because he naturally lifts the group with him.

I am confident that he would serve the West Quad with integrity and enthusiasm, and that he would represent CU Denver with the commitment it deserves.

Please feel free to reach out if any additional information is needed.

Best regards,

Dania Morelli

Dania Morelli, AIAS



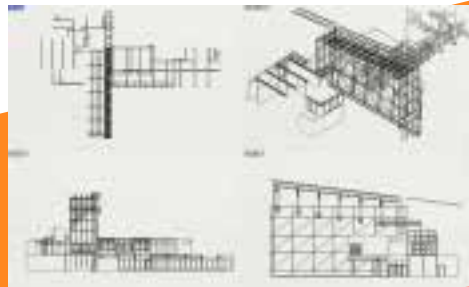
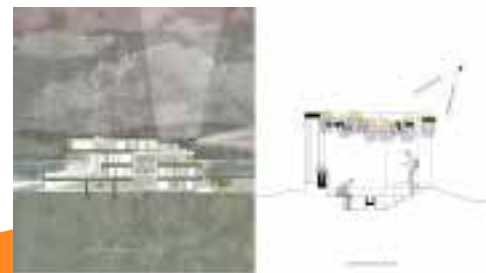
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123-456-7890



hello@reallygreatsite.com



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: James Charbeneau

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: 11/22/25

Please submit this form with your confirmation for participation.

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: James Charbeneau

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: 11/22/25



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): James Charbeneau

Chapter: University of Colorado Denver

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): Chapter Member

Email Address: jac007mc@gmail.com

Mobile Phone Number: (505) 453-7413

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

- Facebook: _____
- Twitter: @_____
- Instagram: just_another_jac
- Other: _____