

ERIN CONTI

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY 2018
AIAS Midwest Quad Director 2019-2020

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November 11, 2018

Keshika De Saram, AIAS, Assoc. AIA, Past President
American Institute of Architecture Students
1735 New York Ave.
Washington D.C. 20006

Dear Past President De Saram,

I am writing to you today to formally declare my intent to run for the position of the 2019-2020 American Institute of Architecture Students Midwest Quadrant Director.

My AIAS journey began four years ago at Keene State College. Although I did not know much about the organization I was chosen to represent our chapter at its first Forum conference, at Forum 2014 in Nashville. Little did I know how much that experience would change my life. The AIAS has connected me to a countless number of architecture students from across the country with a shared passion for not only architecture, but for leadership, and a desire to make a difference in the world through the power of design. It connected me to my peers that became colleagues, mentors, and friends who never cease to inspire me. The magnitude of force with which this group of designers and leaders has to create a better future for architectural education and the profession is so powerful and is what has driven me to do all I can to aid in this effort.

Leaders before me saw a potential that I did not always see in myself and encouraged me to do more and say more, and have supported me each step of the way. It was their confidence in me that led me to serve in a variety of capacities on both the local and national levels with chapter leadership, Freedom by Design, and the NCARB Licensing Advisor's Community and find the confidence in myself to reach even further. The AIAS has shaped me into the student and leader that I am today and continues to do so as I keep growing through new endeavors in a new program and chapter as a first year graduate student at The Illinois Institute of Technology.

Through my experiences in leadership and at two schools, each with very differing programs, I have seen the AIAS through multiple lenses over the last four years, and believe that I can offer a unique perspective to members of the Midwest Quad. I have gained the skills that are necessary to fulfill the role of a Quadrant Director; to facilitate communication and provide support in overcoming the challenges faced by students and chapters within our organization. I want to encourage other students to do and say more to help grow their chapters and push the AIAS to new heights.

I have gained more than I thought possible throughout my journey within the AIAS. It has taught me how we can shape the world as the future of the profession, how to be a better designer, and how to be an effective leader. I have seen an incredible amount of positive change made to improve architectural education through the efforts of so many dedicated leaders while serving in many different roles. It would be an honor to continue to serve the AIAS and do all that I can do to help further our organization's efforts as the next Midwest Quadrant Director.

Thank you for your time and consideration,


Erin Conti, AIAS

EDUCATION

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - CHICAGO, IL

Master of Architecture Expected May 2020

KEENE STATE COLLEGE – KEENE, NH

Bachelor of Science in Architecture – Summa Cum Laude May 2018

Minor: Occupational Safety and Health Applied Sciences

Study Abroad: Istituto Lorenzo de Medici, Florence, Italy Spring 2017

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACADEMIC

Keene State College Dean’s List 2014-2018

KSC Presidential Scholarship Recipient 2014-2018

Lorenzo de Medici Full Tuition Scholarship Recipient 2016

OSHA CERTIFICATION

OSHA 511 Occupational Safety & Health Standards for General Industry

OSHA 510 Occupational Safety and Health Standards for Construction

OSHA 10-hour Construction Safety and Health Training Card

EXPERIENCE

LEADERSHIP

American Institute of Architecture Students

AIAS Equity and Diversity Task Force - Chair 2018-2019

AIAS Keene State College Chapter President 2017-2018

AIAS Freedom by Design Advisory Group 2016-2018

NCARB Student Licensing Advisor Keene State College 2016-2018

AIAS Keene State College Chapter Vice President 2016-2017

AIAS Keene State College Freedom by Design Program Director 2015-2017

AIAS National Election’s Committee 2016

AIAS Keene State College Chapter Secretary 2015-2016

Chock Full O’ Notes - Keene State A Cappella:
Social Media Manager/Public Relations Coordinator 2016-2018

EMPLOYMENT

Keene State College, LP Young Student Center
Building Manager 2016-2018

Corporate Cost Control, Londonderry NH
Full Time Receptionist / Data Entry Clerk Summer 2017/2018

Keene State College
Orientation Staff 2015-2017

Keene State College, LP Young Student Center
Information Desk Attendant 2014-2016

Corporate Cost Control, Londonderry NH
Part-time Data Entry Clerk 2012-2015

SKILLS

AutoCAD, Google Sketchup, Revit, Rhinoceros 5.0, Adobe Creative Suite:
InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Microsoft Office

Drafting, Model Making, Pencil Rendering



November 11, 2018

Keshika De Saram, AIAS, Assoc. AIA, Past President
American Institute of Architecture Students
1735 New York Ave.
Washington D.C. 20006

Re: Erin Conti for National Board of Directors of AIAS

Dear Mr. De Saram,

MARTIN FELSEN
Associate Professor,
Director, Master of Architecture
Program

College of Architecture
Illinois Institute of Technology

S.R. Crown Hall
3360 S. State Street
Chicago, IL 60616, USA

felsen@iit.edu
312.617.4268

The Illinois Institute of Technology is proud to support Erin Conti for her candidacy to the National Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS). Throughout her academic career, Erin has been a committed and spirited participant in AIAS. She joined AIAS in her first year as an undergraduate at Keene State College and maintained substantial involvement throughout her undergraduate education. When Erin began her graduate studies in the Master of Architecture program here at IIT she immediately joined our AIAS and has already begun to make significant contributions based on her many AIAS experiences.

Her dedication to the organization is reflected in her actions, serving the AIAS on both the local and national level for the past four years. Through her roles as Keene State College Chapter President, Freedom by Design Director, and NCARB Licensing Advisor, she worked to provide resources, opportunities, and leadership to help fellow undergraduate students and the KSC chapter succeed. As a national committee member of the Freedom by Design Advisory Group for two years, and currently as a national committee chair for the Equity and Diversity Task Force, she has worked to provide resources and support for students in programs throughout the entire national AIAS organization.

Time and again, Erin has demonstrated the organizational and leadership skills needed to take on the responsibilities of the position of Midwest Quad Director. I extend the support of the IIT College of Architecture to Erin in her candidacy to the 2018 Board of Director Elections.

Sincerely,

Martin Felsen, FAIA
Associate Professor,
Director, Master of Architecture Program

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?

I have always been drawn to positions of leadership, but have not always been confident in my abilities to lead. I am drawn by the passion that I have seen in leaders before me to make a difference through their service. My involvement in the AIAS began through encouragement of the chapter president at Keene State College during my first year. I did not know much about the organization, but when I was presented with the opportunity to represent our chapter at its first Forum, at Forum 2014 in Nashville I took a chance and signed up. Attending that Forum sparked my passion for the AIAS because I met so many students that shared passion for architecture and for making a difference in the world through design. I saw what other chapters were doing at schools all across the country and this inspired me to get involved to grow our chapter and the organization as a whole. During my time in the AIAS I have served in many roles both within my chapter and on the national level. The passion I found for the AIAS at my first Forum has driven me to become the leader I am today, and the friends and mentors I have gained through this organization have been invaluable. They have encouraged me to continue to do more and say more, and helped me gain the confidence to reach even further than I thought possible. To anyone who has yet to realize their potential for leadership, be sure to listen to the people that believe in you. You never know where it could take you.

2. 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, studio 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?

While I feel very strongly about all of the issues affecting students that the AIAS advocates for, I believe that they are not all stand alone issues. Many of the challenges we face as architecture students, such as equity, and health and wellness, could be combated through improving studio culture. Coming from an unaccredited program in my undergraduate education, we did not have a studio culture policy, and many students did not have an understanding of what studio culture means. As a leader in my chapter I did my best to provide resources and educate our membership. Studio culture affects every student regardless of the program they are in. It affects the ability to learn and the overall health and wellness of every student. Fostering a positive studio culture means creating a healthy learning environment in which every student can feel confident in their own work, collaborate, and be able to express when they are met with challenges. Studio culture is one of the issues that I have brought into the conversations within the Equity and Diversity Task Force as issues surrounding equity and diversity can stem from issues involving studio culture. Through gathering a variety of studio culture policies from different chapters among the members of our committee it is evident that there is a large disconnect between programs across the country regarding the meaning and the importance of studio culture. Some policies are quite extensive, others have clearly only been written to fulfill the requirement for accreditation, and some are very outdated. A studio culture policy is an agreement between the students, faculty, and administration of how everyone involved will work and interact in a studio environment, and when a policy is not carefully written and updated it is unfair to those who are trying to learn in that studio. It is our aim to bring awareness of this issue to the AIAS membership and encourage chapters to be advocates for themselves and for their education at their schools. As an elected leader on the AIAS Board of Directors I would work to continue this effort and facilitate conversations among members of different chapters surrounding studio culture to increase students' understanding of their own studio culture and policy, as well as those of other programs, so they can be effective advocates at their schools.

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

The connections between AIAS members, faculty, and professionals are made through a variety of ways in our ever-growing technological and media-driven world. Not only are there connections made in person at conferences, but they are being made online, through social media. The use of Facebook, Instagram, Slack, and Google Meetups has changed the way members of our organization connect and collaborate. There is so much work done throughout the year by the Board of Directors and National Committees that is completed through the use of only Google Meetups, which is incredible and I believe that there is potential to expand on the ways we use these virtual resources. I also think it is important to recognize that not every member or chapter is able to attend conferences, and that the connections made virtually are as valuable as those made when members attend Quad, Forum, or Grassroots. One of the advantages of attending a conference is connecting with the members of the Board of Directors. Members who are not on the Council of Presidents and who are unable to attend conferences typically do not interact with BOD members, and that is where I think some connections are lost in the AIAS. If elected, I would use my position on the board to change this and bring the connection to Nationals to more of the membership. I would do my best to interact with each chapter on an individual basis, and I would do so through our online resources. Sitting in on chapter meetings virtually or holding calls that general chapter members could participate in could increase the connection of the membership to the National Office.

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

Architecture is a field that requires collaboration, both in education and in practice. It is important for students to have the opportunity to collaborate with each other, and the AIAS does an excellent job of encouraging collaboration among students as well as members of the collateral organizations. One opportunity I think the AIAS should explore is collaboration with other architecture student organizations, as well as organizations outside of architecture. Many chapters, including the chapter at Illinois Institute of Technology, already collaborate with student chapters of other organizations such as the National Organization of Minority Architects and the American Society of Landscape Architects when hosting events and increase the participation of students at them. As students in these organizations, we all have a passion for architecture and strive to engage in our communities. I think that collaborating with these organizations on a national level would be very beneficial to the AIAS. In working together on efforts in advocacy we could reach more students and have a larger impact on these issues in architectural education that affects all students. I also believe it would be beneficial for students if the AIAS collaborated with organizations that are not directly related to architecture. The AIAS informs students on alternative paths one could take after completing their degree in architecture, one of the ways of doing so being the Archetype Podcast. I think that collaborating with other organizations that relate to some of the alternative paths students could take would give students an opportunity to explore these potential paths if they are unsure of the path they wish to take. Bringing At Keene State College, we collaborated with organizations such as the American Society of Safety Engineers, as we had many students in the architecture program who took classes in the occupational health and safety program. These students still shared a passion for architecture, but wanted to pursue construction management. Students graduating from both programs have returned as alumni and spoken about how even though they did not become architects, receiving an architectural education helped them succeed in their career goals. Building relationships with organizations like this and encouraging them on the local level would benefit students who wish to pursue professions outside of architecture, but still have a passion for architecture and for the AIAS.



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: Erin Conti

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: *Erin R Conti* Date: 11/13/2018



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS ELECTIONS CODE OF ETHICS

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

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

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

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

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

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: *Erin R Conti*

Date: 11/13/2018

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): _Erin Conti_____

Chapter: _Illinois Institute of Technology_____

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): _____

EmailAddress: __erin.conti41@gmail.com_____

Mobile Phone Number: _(603)341-4682_____

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

- Facebook: __Erin Conti_____
- Twitter: @_____
- Instagram: __@erinn.contii_____
- Other: _____



ERIN CONTI

MIDWEST QUAD DIRECTOR
2019-2020

Equity and Diversity Task Force Chair
Past Chapter President Keene State College '17-'18