

# **Dana Otoom**

**AIAS American Univeristy in Dubai Chapter President**

**2023 – 2024 Middle East Regional Director Candidacy Declaration Packet**



Dear Cooper Moore, AIAS, NOMA, Assoc. AIA, GRP Past President,

I am excited to be running for the role of Middle East Regional Director.

Having actively participated in various leadership roles, I believe I possess the necessary skills to guide and inspire a team towards accomplishing both small-scale and ambitious shared objectives. In my experience within my AIAS chapter, we have always fostered a reciprocal learning opportunity with students of all ages. We valued sharing ideas and experimented with new roles and responsibilities; empowering each other. As the current AIAS American University in Dubai Chapter President, I have come to appreciate the unique perspectives each team member brings to the table, enriching our collective understanding of a given situation.

Being in my third year as a member of the AIAS American University in Dubai chapter, I have observed that Middle East chapters may feel somewhat distant from the broader benefits offered by the AIAS organization. This sense of isolation could stem from major events predominantly occurring in the US or a misalignment of benefits with our local context. I am enthusiastic about addressing these issues to make AIAS more accessible and relevant to Middle East chapters. I believe that by tailoring our approach, we can encourage increased membership and foster a sense of belonging within the larger AIAS community.

Furthermore, I see immense potential in fostering collaboration among Middle East chapters. Geographical proximity might suggest a uniformity in our experiences as architecture students, but the reality is quite the opposite. By facilitating cross-chapter collaboration, we can harness diverse perspectives to develop impactful campaigns, innovative designs, and engaging events. More importantly, this collaborative effort has the potential to cultivate a tightly-knit community that regularly exchanges ideas.

In line with my vision for the role, I envision students taking the initiative to connect across borders, participating in joint competitions, offering advice on individual projects, and building lasting friendships. Creating such connections will not only enhance our academic and professional experiences but will also contribute to the formation of a supportive and interconnected regional architecture community.

I am excited about the prospect of contributing to the growth and inclusivity of AIAS in the Middle East. Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my experiences align with the vision for this role.

Sincerely,  
Dana Otoom



# DANA OTOOM

4TH YEAR ARCHITECTURE STUDENT

NATIONALITY: JORDANIAN

GPA: 3.79

I AM CURRENTLY A FOURTH YEAR ARCHITECTURE STUDENT , AND HAVE A STRONG CURIOSITY FOR THE POSSIBILITIES WITHIN THE CREATIVE DESIGN FIELD. I THOROUGHLY ENJOY EXPLORING NEW ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE MY CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND OVERALL EXPERIENCES. COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS IS SOMETHING I HIGHLY VALUE, AS IT ALLOWS US TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER AND COLLECTIVELY CREATE GREATER THINGS THAN WE COULD AS INDIVIDUALS.

## EDUCATION

SCHOOL

**QATAR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
(2006 - 2020)**

UNIVERSITY

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI  
(2020 - CURRENT)**

## SKILLS

RHINO CERTIFIED

GRASSHOPPER CERTIFIED

VR SKETCH CERTIFIED

REVIT

PHOTOSHOP

MIDJOURNEY AI

PHOTOGRAPHY

CREATIVE THINKING

COLLABORATION

## CONTACT

+971 586882911

DANA.OTOOM@MYMAIL.AUD.EDU  
DANAOTOOM0405@GMAIL.COM

@DANAAOTOOM  
@D.OTOOM

DUBAI MEDIA CITY, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN  
DUBAI

## LEADERSHIP ROLES + EXPERIENCE

### MEMBER OF AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

SEPT. 2021 - CURRENT

**SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR**, HANDLING INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK ACCOUNTS AND CREATING CONTENT FOR BOTH (SEPT. '21-JUN '22). **SECRETARY** OF THE CLUB, HANDLING ALL EVENT PROPOSALS; LIAISON WITH FACULTY AND STUDENTS (SEPT. '22-JUN'23. **PRESIDENT** OF THE AIAS AUD CHAPTER; COORDINATING ALL EVENTS, GUEST LECTURES AND ACTIVITIES (CURRENT).

### SHORTLISTED: UOS X BEEAH 2ND YOUTH SUSTAINABILITY COMPETITION

MARCH 2022

INFORMATIVE VIDEO PROPOSING **STRATEGIES FOCUSED ON THE SDG GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**, MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE UAE ENERGY STRATEGY 2050.

### COSENTINO DESIGN CHALLENGE 16: THE FIFTH FAÇADE A REFLECTION ON THE ROOF

JUNE 2022

PROPOSING A MODULAR SYSTEM UTILISING LEFTOVER MATERIALS FROM COSENTINO TO CREATE A MORE LIVELY ROOFTOP.

### PROTOLAB DESIGN&BUILD WORKSHOP - RE:CULTIVATION

JULY 2022

DESIGNING A **TRANSPORTABLE EMERGENCY CARDBOARD HOUSE** TO BE USED IN COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING NATURAL DISASTERS OR CONFLICT. MATERIALS RESTRICTED TO PAPER AND BOARD FOR STRUCTURE, INSULATION AND FORM.

### COSENTINO DESIGN CHALLENGE 17: POP- UP RETAIL, FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

APRIL 2023

A **PARAMETRIC, EASILY FLATTENED AND TRANSPORTED POP-UP STRUCTURE** DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE COSENTINO'S MATERIALS AS WELL AS ACCOMMODATE COLLABORATIONS WITH CAFES OR OTHER BUSINESSES. FEATURING AN INFLATABLE SHADING DEVICE.

### FIRST PLACE: AUD X AGC - SHAPING AIR WITH ETFE

MAY 2023

AN INNOVATIVE ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTION THAT MERGES TECHNOLOGY AND NATURE TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE INDOOR FARM ENCLOSED BY **ETFE CUSHIONS** IN A DYNAMIC VORONOI FRAME. THE STRUCTURE MIMICS THE GROWTH OF ROOTS THROUGH SOIL, WITH A SPREADING CANOPY THAT SHADES THE GROUND LEVEL AND PROVIDES A PROMENADE ABOVE.



14 December 2023

To the AIAS Selection Committee,

As an Associate Professor of Architecture and as a former AIAS Faculty Advisor at the American University in Dubai (AUD), it is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of recommendation for Dana Ootom, an exceptional architecture student, in support of her candidacy for the AIAS Middle East Regional Director position.

Having known Dana for two years as her course instructor in ARCH202 · Architectural Design Studio IV, DDFT351 · Introduction to Parametric Design, and DDFT352 · Intermediate Parametric Design, I have witnessed firsthand her remarkable potential as a leader and advocate for the architectural student community.

Dana's dedication to architectural excellence is evident in her unwavering commitment to her studies. Her hard work, openness to new ideas and willingness to push boundaries led her to win the recent ETFE design competition (AUD x AGC Shaping Air with ETFE). This innovative project, merging technology and nature for an indoor farm, showcases her strong design instincts, sustainability awareness, and technical proficiency.

Beyond academics, Dana demonstrates exemplary leadership qualities. She has been part of the AIAS AUD Chapter since 2021 and has worked up to her current AIAS President position. Thanks to the hard work of the team, advisor and herself, they achieved the "Outstanding Student Club" award during the AUD Annual Awards in 2022. Her ability to motivate and collaborate effectively with her team, along with her active involvement in the Student Government Association and football team, further attests to her organizational skills and demonstrates a balanced approach to university life, fostering a well-rounded, inclusive, engaging leadership style.

Having studied and lived in the Middle East, Dana profoundly understands the unique challenges and opportunities for architecture students in the region. She is passionate about fostering cultural exchange and collaboration within the AIAS Middle East, building bridges between students across diverse contexts.

Dana's curiosity, passion, and leadership skills make her the perfect candidate to represent the Middle East region on the AIAS Board of Directors. Her strategic vision, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and ability to advocate for student interests align perfectly with the AIAS mission. I am confident she will be a valuable asset, bringing fresh perspectives and dynamic energy to the board.

I highly recommend Dana Ootom for the AIAS Middle East Regional Director position. Her talent, dedication, and leadership qualities make her an exceptional candidate who will contribute significantly to the organization's success.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,



**JOSE A. CARRILLO**  
*Associate Professor of Architecture*

T: +971 4 399 9000 Ext.237

E: [jcarrillo@aud.edu](mailto:jcarrillo@aud.edu)

Dear Cooper Moore, AIAS, NOMA, Assoc. AIA, GRP Past President,

I trust this message finds you well. I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Dana Otoom's candidacy for the position of AIAS Middle East Regional Director.

Having had the privilege of working closely with Dana Otoom within the AIAS American University in Dubai chapter, as well as on design projects within our studio, I can attest to her exceptional leadership skills and dedication to our community. In her role as the AIAS AUD President, Dana has consistently demonstrated a keen understanding of our members' needs and an innovative approach to addressing them.

What sets Dana Otoom apart is not only her ability to lead but also her commitment to fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment. She has successfully initiated and executed creative projects and events that have brought our members together, creating a sense of unity within our chapter.

I am particularly excited about Dana's vision for bridging the gap between Middle East chapters and the broader AIAS organization. She has a genuine passion for tailoring the AIAS experience to better suit our local context and ensuring that every member feels valued and connected.

In addition to her professional qualities, Dana Otoom is a supportive and approachable colleague. She actively listens to the ideas and concerns of fellow members, creating an atmosphere where everyone's voice is heard and respected.

I have full confidence that Dana Otoom would excel in the role of AIAS Middle East Regional Director, contributing significantly to the growth and cohesion of our regional chapters. Her collaborative spirit, creative mindset, and genuine dedication to the AIAS community makes her an ideal candidate for this position.

If you require any further information or have questions, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for considering Dana Otoom for this important role.

Warm regards,  
Alia Almarri  
AIAS Creative Coordinator



Mobile: +971 50 544 5291  
Email: [alia.almarri@mymail.aud.edu](mailto:alia.almarri@mymail.aud.edu)

## ELECTIONS 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?

The AIAS organization stands out for its inclusive approach, seamlessly integrating and considering all members worldwide. Despite studying in diverse contexts, a sense of unity prevails among us within AIAS, rooted in our shared commitment to its traditions and values. This synergy establishes a sustainable platform, fostering the expression of student voices.

Assuming a role among the directors of this space for architecture students promises significant rewards. Engaging with a diverse student body not only provides personal benefits but also allows me to witness their individual journeys as they discover their unique voices within our tight-knit community.

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?

As a student-led organization, staying current with the latest design technologies and methodologies, including AI, algorithmic design, and human-centric design, would be highly beneficial. Encouraging fellow students to explore and experiment with these tools is crucial. As the next generation of architects and designers, our strength lies in innovation and creativity, making us a go-to source for fresh ideas. Collaboration across chapters is key to broadening our skill set, enabling us to adapt to diverse contexts more effectively.

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 National Board of Directors?

I'm actively promoting health and wellness within our chapter at the American University in Dubai. The pervasive stereotype that associates architecture students with insufficient sleep and unhealthy eating habits has been glamorized. Unfortunately, this perception can influence students, particularly those in their early years, to believe that maintaining good health implies a lack of dedication to their work. Addressing and changing this widespread mindset may pose significant challenges, but it is crucial for us to do so.

In order to address this challenge, it's essential to equip students with resources and tools that assist in managing their time, stress, and sleep effectively. Many students struggle with time management, leading to adverse effects on their well-being. Conducting workshops focused on imparting these crucial skills can be instrumental. These sessions would not only provide practical guidance but also create a platform for students to interact, sharing their experiences on what has

worked for them and what hasn't. This collaborative approach fosters a supportive environment for learning and implementing effective strategies.

4. The AIAS has over 250 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?

I believe that establishing connections between different chapters through widely-used social media platforms like Instagram would prove highly effective. Given that students are already leveraging these platforms for inspiration and international communication, it provides a seamless way to foster collaboration. Following the initial connection, platforms like MS Teams can be employed for collaborative work, while tools like Miro Boards, functioning through cloud services, facilitate the creation of consolidated visual representations for merging ideas. This approach not only aligns with the way students engage with technology but also streamlines the collaborative process, enabling the creation of cohesive and innovative concepts.

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.

My vision involves nurturing relationships among Middle East chapters by identifying common goals and compatibility. Through regular meetings, I would stay informed about their plans and chapter objectives, enabling me to assess potential connections between them. Leveraging my experience within our chapter, I could share insights on overcoming challenges and engaging the student cohort.

This collaborative approach allows chapter presidents to collectively discuss and evaluate the most effective methods, drawing on shared experiences. Such a strategy proves efficient as it facilitates knowledge transfer, helping chapters learn from one another's successes and avoid repeating mistakes.

Utilizing widely-used platforms in the region such as Instagram and WhatsApp enhances this collaborative effort. Instagram serves as a visual platform for sharing ideas, while WhatsApp enables quick responses and in-depth discussions through voice memos, providing flexibility for individuals to engage at their convenience. This combination of platforms ensures effective communication and knowledge exchange among chapters.

## 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.

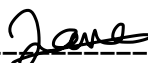
The ACSA, AIA, and AIAS further support architects, students, and recent graduate doing pro-bono work. We recognize the distinction between unpaid work for profit-making employers, and unpaid work for non-profit organizations, communities in need, and volunteer activities, which allows participants to 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: Dana Otroom

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: 

Date: 14 December 2023



## 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.

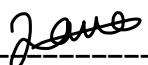
As leaders of this organization, and future leaders of this profession, we must uphold the highest ethical practice. Questionable behavior during elections will not be tolerated. Any concerns should be immediately raised with the Past President.

### 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: Dana Otoom

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: 14 December 2023

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): Dana Otoom

Chapter: American University in Dubai

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): President

Email Address: dana.otoom@mymail.aud.edu

Mobile Phone Number: +971 586882911

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

o Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

o Twitter: @\_\_\_\_\_

o Instagram: @danaaotoom @d.otoom

o Other: [https://www.linkedin.com/in/dana-otoom-417b8a145?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_campaign=share\\_via&utm\\_content=profile&utm\\_medium=ios\\_app](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dana-otoom-417b8a145?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app)