

2024-2025

AIAS

SOUTH
QUAD
DIRECTOR

IRENE VU



Cooper Moore, AIAS, NOMA, Assoc. AIA, GRP

Past President

American Institute of Architecture Students

1735 New York Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20006-5292

Dear Past President Moore,

As of late, I have been reflecting on my time with the AIAS. Being involved with this organization since my second year of undergrad at the University of Texas at Arlington and being a part of so many life-changing events like the pandemic, I have seen how much the AIAS has persevered through thick and thin.

My reflection started after the most recent Grassroots conference when I was chatting with you during the Monuments Night Tour. Not only did I realize how long I have been involved with the AIAS (and how old I was when you asked if I was still in school), but I did not fully realize how this organization had changed me. I have always believed that this organization that many of us call home or home away from home can make an impact on others. However, I had never completely comprehended how integral and significant the AIAS was to me and so much of my life. From Forum Seattle to the most recent Grassroots conference, I have had the pleasure of doing new things and most importantly, meeting new people and reconnecting with familiar faces. Little did I know these very individuals have encouraged me to advocate for not only myself but also for so many others.

The AIAS has taught me to advocate and help others gain and experience equal opportunities that so many of our current members have the privilege to experience. With this principle and the passion to continue to help others, I am thrilled to write to you that I will be running for the position of South Quad Director at FORUM this upcoming January. As I am writing this very sentence to you and thinking about the many times I wanted to run for this position, 19-year-old me would not have imagined present-me going through this process in the slightest bit. But as I think of the friends that I have made in this organization who supported me in every way and the leaders who continuously have shown me compassion, empathy, and resiliency, I am so grateful to even be a part of this process.

I look forward to FORUM and want to thank you for your leadership and guidance. Being a part of this AIAS journey has truly been surreal and I cannot wait to learn and be inspired by others.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I hope to see you all in January.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Irene Vu', with a stylized, flowing script.

Irene Vu
Past President of UT Arlington- AIAS

IRENE VU

Phone: (832) 449-0215

Email: irenevu26@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Texas at Arlington- College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA)

2021 - present Dual Masters Architecture and City and Regional Planning

2017 - 2021 Bachelor of Science in Architecture | Minor in Urban Planning

EXPERIENCE

Orcutt Winslow- Las Colinas, TX

Summer 2023 Architectural Intern

HNTB- Dallas, TX

Summer 2022 Planning Intern

EYP- Dallas, TX

Fall 2021 Architectural Intern

Summer 2021 Architectural Intern

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

University of Texas at Arlington- American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)

2022-2023 AIAS President

AIA Dallas and AIA Fort Worth Liaison

2021 - 2022 AIAS- CAMP Director (CAPPA Architecture Mentorship Program)

2020 - 2021 AIAS- CAMP Co-Director (CAPPA Architecture Mentorship Program)

2019-2020 AIAS Co-Event Coordinator

University of Texas at Arlington- College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs (CAPPA)

2021 - Present Graduate Assistant

2020 - 2021 Studio Culture Committee

Member

Parallel Construction- Design Build

Student

2018-2020 UNIV- ARCH 1301 Course

Peer Academic Leader

NATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)

2023- Present Membership Committee

Member

2022-2023 Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee

Member

2020 - 2021 Learning and Teaching Culture Advisory Group (LTCAG)

Member

Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)

Fall 2022 AIAS/ ACSA New Faculty Teaching Award

Juror

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?

When I went to my first Forum conference in Seattle, I had no idea what to expect. In those three days, not only was I inspired to learn, but I was also in awe of the individuals who ran for the AIAS Board of Positions. Their perseverance, passion for the AIAS, and their desire to challenge the status quo of architectural education and its career path made me realize one thing. That through empowering ourselves and the members of the AIAS through means of diverse and equitable practices, positive change can happen. As South Quad Director, I hope to push members to challenge themselves and encourage others to do the same.

From serving on the UTA- AIAS board and national committees such as the JEDI committee and the LCTAG, I have also met so many individuals who want to make a difference on a local and national level and these individuals have become some of my closest friends. They have inspired me to be an advocate for not only myself but for everyone in the AIAS and the overall architectural community. The friends and connections I have made in the AIAS are truly invaluable and the compassion we have for one another extends beyond cities, states, and even the country. I believe these connections go a long way so giving opportunities to all members of the AIAS can foster a supportive relationship with one another. I hope to help foster these relationships, especially in the Squad, as South Quad Director.

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?

In the years I have been active with the AIAS, one of the new areas for the organization I believe should be more focused on is honing our relationship with the international chapters even more. In the past conferences and efforts made by the Council of Global Representatives, it is so amazing to see members from Latin America and the Middle East come to these conferences to share their experiences in leadership and advocacy in their schools. Having them shed light on their experiences truly adds to the diversity of the AIAS, allowing them to share what they learned in hopes of impacting others. Especially in the South Quad, our region is full of diversity. Whether it be the unique cultures and backgrounds of our members to their distinct thoughts on a multitude of subjects in the field of architecture, the South Quad truly embraces all students regardless of where they are from.

As South Quad Director, I hope to expand and strengthen our relationship with international and South Quad chapters. Through more collaborative efforts with the Council of Global Representatives such as potential calls or sessions, it can potentially open more opportunities for the regions to work with one another in the future.

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?

While all of these issues mentioned hold much importance to me, health and wellness as well as issues on equity have always been two subjects that have stood out. In fact, I believe both subjects act in tandem with one another. By advocating for not only equitable and equal practices in our schools (i.e., having a living Learning & Teaching Culture document) and even the workplace, but the overall wellness of an individual would also be impacted physically, mentally, and emotionally. Especially in our architectural education, we often push ourselves to the limit. However, the limit we push for is at the expense of our health and well-being. Initially, I had always believed that unhealthy habits such as pulling all-nighters and glorifying the lack of rest received would be the only detrimental factors to an architecture student. However, through the studio culture committee my school had and participating as a member of the LCTAG and JEDI committees, I have learned that possessing a strong relationship with faculty and other students can affect these aspects as well. Without having a supportive system, whether it be a faculty-student or administrative-student relationship, and not encouraging equitable practices, our health and wellness can be impacted immensely.

As South Quad Director, I hope to work closely with not only other Quad Directors and the President as well as the Alliance by continuing to gather national resources for local and international chapters. Resources like Better-Help and the Model Learning and Teaching Culture Document provided by the AIAS are not only available for all students but they should also be continued to be shared. I hope to continue to elevate the voices of students by providing them with a platform where they can share their experiences throughout the organization and advocate for more equity in the architectural field.

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?

Through attending national conferences, especially the South Quad conference, bringing members together becomes crucial. Each chapter in the South Quad, unique in their own way, possess a vast amount of experience as well as different backgrounds and purpose. From serving on various levels of the AIAS, I have seen this diversity bring future collaboration engagement to chapters in not just their respective schools, but even to other schools in their state or region. Most importantly, these experiences gave me the opportunity to connect and intimately work with so many different individuals with chapters of various sizes, age, and even educational levels. I hope to apply this body of knowledge I gained to further encourage chapters to make these connections on a local and even national level by serving as a liaison for communication, support, and engagement between them.

As South Quad Director, I believe providing opportunities such as being on national committees and providing existing or new resources should continue to be given to all chapters in the SQuad. Especially with providing these resources, I hope to create a guide that is readily available and accessible to all SQuad chapters. Particularly in the South Quad, I hope to further strengthen the relationship of schools within their respective state or neighboring states (i.e. connecting chapters within Texas and then connecting Texas chapters with Oklahoma) by giving them opportunities for meeting times with each other. I also intend to connect South Quad chapters with the international chapters to provide networking opportunities with one another as well as National Board members and other quads.

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.

Using the knowledge I have gained from my chapter and serving on the national committees, I hope to achieve a number of goals to further connect the South Quad on a local and national scale. If elected as South Quad Director, I intend to send emails and messages through Slack to all SQuad chapters and update them with national opportunities. I would also help continue to connect those chapters with local AIA chapters, firms, and other resources within their respective state. I would also work on content that highlights chapter achievements and membership such as Instagram takeovers and posts and overall engaging chapters through social media.

I would establish a series of meetings that will occur once a month: the first being with all of South Quad, the second between state chapters, and the third between state regions such as Texahoma. With the South Quad meetings, I would go over opportunities and updates from the national chapter as well as topics on which the chapters may have questions. By sharing information and experiences over these sessions, I hope to serve as a "middleman" and personally connect chapters with one another after them. A similar format will be established for the second and third meetings. On top of these meetings, I would like to collaborate with the Council of Global Representatives even more by setting up monthly meetings to connect South Quad and international chapters together and set up meetings with chapter leaders. Meetings with chapter leaders and board members would be available as well.

Throughout my potential one-year term, I hope to travel to various South Quad chapters to further strengthen our relationship with the chapters' leadership and overall membership on a more intimate level as well as to identify the challenges and questions they may have and also share the resources that the national chapter has and updates that they are working on. I would also like to create a guide on resources and common opportunities and questions that chapters experienced. This guide will hopefully serve as a living document for future SQuad Directors to use if they choose to utilize it.



UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS
ARLINGTON

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE,
PLANNING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

November 26, 2023
Elections Committee
The American Institute of Architecture Students
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Members of the AIAS Election Committee,

Please accept this letter of recommendation on behalf of Irene Vu's application for the South Quad Director position for the 2024-2025 American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) Board of Directors. As the faculty advisor of AIAS at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), I have had the privilege of working closely with Irene in her role as AIAS President from 2022-2023. In addition to leading the AIAS chapter at the country's fifth largest architectural school, Irene has also served as the Co-Director of the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs' (CAPPPA) Architecture Mentorship Program (CAMP), AIA Event Coordinator, and student representative on numerous college-wide committees.

During her time of service, Irene increased UTA's AIAS chapter enrollment by over 15% and organized numerous student-led events that had a significant impact on UTA's undergraduate and graduate student body culture. As President, Irene initiated and oversaw (1) the annual CAPPA career fair featuring more than 70 local employers across architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, and urban planning disciplines that generated over \$25K in revenue; (2) a quarterly professor/architect spotlight series that facilitated conversation between students and practitioners on timely topics relevant to the built environment; (3) initiatives that connected students to peer and professional mentors to help students acclimate to university and professional practice; and (4) celebratory collegial events in partnership with local AIA Chapters including the AIA Fort Worth Clay Shoot, AIA Dallas Home Tours, Beaux Arts Ball, Burger Burn, and more. Participation across all programs was high and received positive feedback from students, faculty, and industry partners who expressed how these opportunities led to a stronger professional-academic community in North Texas and helped students become stronger, more engaged designers and urban thinkers. Irene's support of AIAS CAMP was recognized with a 2022 Honor Award Certificate of Appreciation by AIA Fort Worth for outstanding service to the profession of architecture and the community. Her dedication to UTA has helped prepare students for academic achievement during their time at the university and beyond graduation and has set a high standard for future AIAS presidents.

I know Irene to be a dedicated and respected leader among her peers, professors, and professional colleagues. She consistently generates and implements new creative ideas to support students and foster a collaborative and collegial environment. Her organizational skills, ability to clearly communicate thoughts, tackle multiple leadership tasks simultaneously, and her collaborative approach will serve Irene well as the national South Quad Director.

I look forward to following Irene's career progression and believe she will make a fantastic AIAS Quad Director. I strongly recommend her for your consideration. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Lindgren'.

Julia Lindgren

*Faculty Advisor, AIAS + CAMP
Assistant Professor, School of Architecture
College of Architecture Planning and Public Affairs
University of Texas at Arlington*



November 27th 2023

Elections Committee
The American Institute of Architecture Students
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear AIAS Election Committee

It is an honor to submit this letter of recommendation for Irene Vu for the AIAS Squad Director Position. I have known Irene since our second year in Architecture school. I have witnessed her grow, assimilate, and transcend in her academia and involvement in our AIAS chapter's community.

I have had the chance to collaborate with Irene in both academia and extracurricular settings, it is remarkable her capability to be both a team member and leader in our community. She demonstrates initiative, drive, creativity, and collaboration in her efforts individually and amongst students and faculty in our institution. Her journey continues to be one that I praise as she pursues a Dual Masters in Architecture and Urban Planning and yet continues to provide her time equally to contribute to our architecture community in her service in our student organizations.

Furthermore, Irene has strived to provide services and opportunities for students to expand their awareness of not only AIAS, but as well that of the collegiate and local community of the Architecture field. She has demonstrated exemplary skills as a leader to captivate and lead individuals. In her time in AIAS, she has recruited dozens of new students to AIAS that has revitalized our chapter post COVID. As well to have led our AIAS chapter as President for a successful term in providing and aiding students in outreach, guidance, and awareness of the architecture realm beyond academic studio. In addition, she had been greatly involved in our chapter's CAMP Program, which serves as a mentorship program providing new students mentorship opportunities with upperclass students to learn and hone skill sets. To this day, she continues to pursue and establish new initiatives that entice students to involve themselves beyond the academia norm and to be greatly involved within our university's community. Irene's capability to be both a student and leader demonstrates her never-ending drive.

Irene is a leader, friend, and role model within our community. Her resolve in everything she strives for is remarkable. I am certain Irene is an exemplary and fit candidate for this new venture she shall embark on.

Sincerely,
Jesse Avila

Jesse Avila
AIAS | President
B.Arch Student UTA CAPP
Email: jesseavila710@gmail.com
Phone: (469) 733-7371

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: Irene Vu

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: 11/30/2023

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: Irene Vu

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: 11/30/2023

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): Irene Vu

Chapter: The University of Texas- Arlington

Chapter Leadership Position (if any): Past President

Email Address: irenevu26@gmail.com

Mobile Phone Number: (832) 449- 0215

Social Media Account Handles (optional):

- o Facebook: _____
- o Twitter: @_____
- o Instagram: @i.vu_____
- o Other: _____