

To the Delegates of the 2024 AIA Annual Business Meeting,

As 32 representatives of several decades of leadership in the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), we feel a responsibility to express our support for the [recent letter](#) from the current AIAS Board of Directors and to stand with the current leadership of the AIAS against the creation of an AIA Student Membership Category. Many of us have served as Student Directors on the AIA Board of Directors, many of us have become dedicated volunteers and leaders within AIA, and all of us have benefited greatly from the opportunities provided by the AIAS.

The AIAS and AIA have been mutually-benefitting collaborators for much of our shared history. We appreciate that the AIA's proposal is intended to support architecture students and to better integrate them into their professional community, and we recognize AIA as a valuable partner in further enriching the student experience. Before the AIAS became an independent organization, the group existed as a membership category within AIA through the Associated Student Chapters of AIA (ASC/AIA). Over time it became clear that AIA could not internally provide a quality experience to this community, whose needs were so distinct from those of the primary member group of the Institute. This inability to adequately serve the student population was the issue that necessitated an independent student voice.

This proposal, though intended to foster unity and collaboration, is likely to worsen student confusion about membership opportunities and create competition between historic collaborators. In our time as AIAS leaders, we frequently addressed confusion between AIAS membership and local AIA student opportunities. Given the similarities in mission between AIA and the AIAS, as well as the limited resources students have to maintain multiple memberships, students are likely to join only one of these organizations. We have no doubt that AIA, with resources and membership numbers that dwarf those of the AIAS, could quickly become the principal organization for architecture students. We believe that students deserve not only all the resources and support that we can provide them, but an organization that was designed specifically to address their needs. The AIAS, created to provide an autonomous platform from which they can advocate, lead, make mistakes and learn from them independently, is that organization.

We believe that students are able to become more effective leaders in a self-governing organization created and managed by students, for students. Almost unique among student organizations, the grassroots nature of the AIAS allows students to decide what issues are important to them, and to empower themselves and their peers by bringing those issues to the national scale. Under proposed Bylaw 2.243 student members would "hold Honorary Membership [and] have no voting rights unless in service on the AIA Board of Directors," removing students from decision-making processes and experiences from which they benefit in the AIAS.

It is essential to have an independent student voice providing a unique perspective within the architectural community. The AIAS has long been an outspoken advocate for students and young professionals within various collaborative efforts within the architectural community. The recent strength of these partnerships attests to our profession's desire for stronger connections and demonstrates that division and competition, especially when the population affected are students hoping to enter into and be successful in our profession, will not help to further any of our goals.

In furthering this spirit of collaboration, we maintain that the most effective way for AIA to support students is by working through the AIAS, not against it.

Any decision-making by professionals on behalf of the student population is a disservice to both AIA and students of architecture. We reiterate our strong support of the letter issued by the current leadership of the AIAS linked above and our opposition to this proposed category of membership. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,
Legacy AIAS Officers and Past AIA Student Directors

Cooper Moore, AIAS, Assoc. AIA, GRP
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Nicole Bass, AIAS
2022-2023 AIAS Vice President

Sara Taketatsu
2020-2021 AIAS Vice President

Sarah Curry, Assoc. NOMA
2019-2020 AIAS President

Keshika De Saram, AIAS, Assoc. AIA
2017-2018 AIAS President

Rachel Law, OAA
2016-2017 AIAS Vice President

Joel Pominville
2015-2016 AIAS Vice-President

Charlie Klecha
2014-2015 AIAS President

Jennifer T. Matthews, AIAS, Assoc. NOMA
2013-2014 AIAS Vice President

Matthew A. Barstow
2012-2013 AIAS President
CEO Majestic World Holdings

Nick Mancusi
2011-2012 AIAS President

Danielle McDonough, AIA, LEED BD+C, CPHC
2010-2011 AIAS Vice President

Deana Vidal
2008-2009 AIAS Vice President

Anthony Vanky
2007-2008 AIAS Vice President

Matthew R Fochs
2005-2006 AIAS Vice President

Lawrence J Fabbroni, AIA
2002-03 AIAS National President
2018 AIA YAF National Chair

Scott Cornelius, AIAS, Assoc. AIA
2021-2022 AIAS President

Shannon DeFranza, AIAS, Assoc. AIA
2021-2022 AIAS Vice President

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2020-2021 AIAS President

Adam Gregory Fogel
2019-2020 AIAS Vice President

Elizabeth Seidel Pritchard
2017-2018 AIAS Vice President

Sarah W. Wingo, AIA, NCIDQ, NCARB
2016-2017 AIAS President

Danielle Mitchell, AIA
2015-2016 AIAS President

Obiekwe Okolo
2014-2015 AIAS Vice President

Westin Conahan
2013-2014 AIAS President

Brent A. Castro, AIA
2012-2013 AIAS Vice President
Page Southerland Page, Senior Design Architect, Assoc.Principal

Je'Nen M. Chastain, MBA, Assoc AIA
2009-2010 AIAS President

Andrew Caruso, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C
2007-2008 AIAS President, 2021 Chair AIA Global Practice
Committee

Jonathan Bahe, AIA
2006-2007 AIAS President

Jake Day
2004-2005 AIAS President

Katherine Bojsza, AIA, WELL AP, LEED GA, NCARB
2003-2004 AIAS Vice President

Shannon Kraus, FAIA
1995-1996 AIAS Vice President