Introduction

On January 10, 2009, the Academy for Emerging Professionals held its first strategic planning session in San Francisco. This strategic plan was the culmination of input from over 60 AIACC stakeholders, including many from various AIA leadership positions around the state, who spent one day discussing the Academy and its benefit to the AIA California Council and AIA local components. Together the stakeholders created a list of key issues, which brought focus, order and overall direction to the Academy and assisted in prioritizing responsibilities. The following strategic plan is designed to be a guide to the Academy’s Council of Advisors as they set their annual goals to provide resources, support and advocacy to emerging professionals in California.

Background of the Academy

The Academy for Emerging Professionals (AEP) is a committee of the AIA California Council (AIACC). The Academy’s purpose is to develop and maintain the network of leaders among the Emerging Professionals around the state and use this network to funnel news and information, as it pertains to the career development of Emerging Professionals, among the National, State and local levels of the AIA. The Academy is charged with being the resource for emerging professionals in all areas of career development such as mentorship, licensing, leadership, networking and life-work balance. The AEP facilitates Emerging Professional activities at a statewide level by assisting in organizing and searching for programs that local AIA chapters can present and/or share with their emerging professional members.

In addition, the Academy also advocates on behalf of Emerging Professionals on the AIACC board of directors and holds five full voting positions on the AIACC board. The Academy also upholds the value of emerging professionals in state and national AIA policy as well as state and national legislation as it pertains to the profession. Furthermore, the Academy represents emerging professionals when communicating and working with the California Architects Board (CAB) and the National Council of Architectural Registration Board (NCARB) on issues related to licensing and practice.

The Academy is comprised of AIA members in leadership positions as they pertain to students, associates, and recently licensed architects. The committee members are leaders that are elected by the AIACC Board of Directors, appointed by the AIACC President, individuals from AIA chapters throughout California, as well as AIA National leadership. All members of the Academy represent and advocate on behalf of AIA members in the early stages of their architectural careers.

The Academy is lead by a group of 11 individuals called the Council of Advisors (COA). These individuals hold the state and/or national AIA leadership positions for Students, Associates and recently licensed Architects. The following is a list of the positions that create the COA:

Vice President of the Academy
Young Architects Forum Director – North
Young Architects Forum Director – South
Regional Associate Director
Associate Director – North
Associate Director – South
Student Director – North
Student Director – South
IDP Coordinator – North
IDP Coordinator – South
Architect At Large Member

In addition to the COA, the Academy is also comprised of 22 AEP Component Directors. Each AIA component in the state selects one individual to represent their chapter in the Academy. These individuals are the key contacts through which the COA disseminates information to all AIA chapters and in-turn the Component Directors disseminates the information to all Emerging Professionals in their respective chapters.
Mission of the Academy

The mission of the Academy of Emerging Professionals is to be the collective voice and the source for information and support regarding career development for Emerging Professionals in the early stages of their architectural career.

The Academy accomplishes this mission by:

- Advocating on behalf of emerging professionals to both the AIA California Council and the profession as a whole.
- Instilling the importance of mentorship in the profession and providing resources for programs focused on mentorship.
- Creating and maintaining the network of emerging professional leaders throughout the state.
- Instilling the value of licensure to emerging professionals but equally support, those who decide to not pursue licensure.
- Instilling the value of AIA to Emerging Professionals and the value of Emerging professionals to the AIA.
- Providing resources for programs focused on career development.
- Providing resources and opportunities for leadership development.

Values of the Academy

Mentorship
We believe that in order to fully appreciate the complexities of the architecture profession and grow one’s career to achieve personal & professional success mentorship is paramount. Supporting fellow colleagues is essential to the success of the profession and is a duty of all professionals, not only as employers but also as fellow employees and colleagues. Mentorship is not a top down process but rather a cross-generational and non-hierarchical sharing of experience and support.

Career Development
Working in such a constantly evolving profession takes continuous dedication and focus to be successful. We believe that the success of the profession is reliant on the success of the individuals that make up the profession. Continuous development of an individual’s career is necessary to achieve a strong profession and a solid development during the early stages of one’s career is essential.

Professional Networking
We believe that no one creates quality architecture alone. In our profession, the ability to not only work with others but also learn from those around us is a vital part of one’s career development. We therefore support the constant development of a professional network of colleagues and allied professionals from which we can learn, share and celebrate together.

Leadership
Since our profession requires such high levels of coordination and working typically with multiple individuals to find architectural solutions having skills in leadership is a requirement. Being a leader in the profession not only assists in career development but also creates stronger citizens.

Accountability
Accountability is the ongoing process of assessing the effectiveness with which the Academy meets the standards and expectations that have been established by the AIACC Executive Committee, Council of Advisors and what has been outlined in the strategic plan. All leaders of the Academy have a mutual responsibility for the quality and scope of our services we provided to all emerging professional members of the AIACC.

Communication
In order to achieve our mission effectively and garner trust and reliability of our members information & resources are to be continuously shared throughout all chapters as well as to each individual member using multiple communication channels. Effective communication also involves creating a databank where all communication can be collected and stored for access at all times by members of the AIACC who need information concerning emerging professional issues. We are charged with the responsibility to communicate openly as both receivers and senders of information.
Diversity
We recognize and celebrate the similarities and differences of emerging professionals. We realize that not all AIACC members are following the same path and that each member has a variety of factors, both personally and professionally, that result in vastly different opportunities as well as challenges as they relate to their career development. The Academy equally supports the career development of all members. We value diversity within the profession because it promotes learning, enriches our relationships, and enhances our ability to solve problems, make decisions and be creative in all we do.

Resource Allocation
We are committed to providing access to relevant learning opportunities for AIACC members as they relate to the career development of emerging professionals. It is also important that the resources necessary for emerging professionals as well as the Academy’s success be distributed in a manner that supports this commitment.

Goals of the Academy

Mentorship
• Support the mentorship of Emerging Professionals in all areas of a member’s professional career.
• Encourage programming in local components that promote mentorship within the component as well as in member firms.

Career Development
• Support students in their transition from academia into the profession.
• Support associate members not on the licensing tract with career development.
• Support associate members on the licensing tract through the licensing process.
• Support recently licensed architects with career transitioning and potential firm start up.
• Help AIA components develop programming for career development for Emerging Professionals.

Professional Networking
• Facilitate networking between Emerging Professionals and other AIA members.

Leadership
• Encourage involvement of Emerging Professionals in their local AIA chapter as well as state and national involvement.

Professional Excellence
• Encourage Emerging Professionals to submit for local, state and national recognition in all areas of professional work.

Advocacy
• Bring issues of relevance facing Emerging Professionals to the AIACC Board for discussion and action as needed.
• Represent the Emerging Professional to the California Architects Board
• Facilitate the exchange of information between the California Architects Board and Emerging Professional members.

Communication
• Develop and maintain a database of AIA component director’s contact information and consistently use the database to disseminate information and garner response to issues that arise over the course of each year.
• Develop and maintain an AEP website that can serve as a communication hub and information databank for all AIACC members.

Resource Allocation
• Disseminate information from the national and state AIA to the local chapters as well as to individual members and vice versa.
• Provide a succinct list of resources and information regarding the licensing process for both AIA components and individual members.
• Help facilitate the exchange of best practice programs and resource sharing between AIA components.
Implementation and Evaluation

The implementation process, which has already begun, includes the development of action plans, including objectives, timelines, criteria employed to evaluate progress, assignments of responsibility, an annual calendar and budget review and evaluation. This process will have the purpose of not only realizing our goals but also of institutionalizing one of the fundamental objectives of strategic planning: strategic thinking and acting. Monitoring and evaluation, whose goals are to gauge progress and to determine if changes in the strategic plan or any of its components are needed, will necessarily be a part of that implementation effort.