



2023-2024 AIAS Board of Directors

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Kimberly Tuttle AIA, NCARB, NOMA
Acting Executive Director
American Institute of Architecture Students

05.15.2024

Attn: Delegates of the American Institute of Architects

Re: AIAS Position on Proposed AIA Student Membership

As representatives of 4,500 student members, the AIAS Board of Directors has compiled a list of concerns regarding the proposed AIA Bylaw amendment to add a 'Student Member' category. Our primary concern is the unnecessary competition and confusion that this new membership category will create for AIAS members, as well as many other student organizations of the allied disciplines. It is for these reasons that we implore the AIA to:

- **Help us unify the student voice; do not divide it.** Considering that the proposed AIA student membership is free, it will be a stark contrast to the AIAS' \$47 membership fee. This will make the AIAS and AIA clear competitors rather than mutually benefiting collaborators. We share grave concerns about being undercut by the AIA, the very institution that helped found us. We believe that introducing increased competition between our two organizations is unnecessary, and has the strong potential to be significantly detrimental to the AIAS, which simply does not have the resources to make membership free.
- **Students are already navigating unknowns; let's eliminate confusion.** We believe this bylaw amendment will confuse prospective and current AIAS student members alike. The AIAS is an international organization that serves members around the world who may not, in both place and custom, fit neatly within the structure of the AIA. We are further concerned by how student voices will be elevated and to what extent students will benefit beyond discounted registration to conferences (which students and AIAS members already have).

The AIA is and always has been a strong ally of the AIAS. The AIAS welcomes collaboration between our two organizations in engaging with students and recent graduates. AIAS and AIA have a plethora of shared goals and we are open to any conversations about collaboration. We are concerned that the proposed student membership duplicates the work of the AIAS, as we advance leadership, design, and service among architecture students, and we hold a vision for a more sustainable, healthy, and equitable future through the empowerment of student voices, ideas, and actions.

We believe wholeheartedly that the best way for the AIA to support and engage with students is to empower them, in collaboration with student-led organizations like the AIAS, where students have the agency to make collective decisions and advocate for both themselves and others.

The AIA has noted on its website that they are "partnering with AIAS, NOMAS, and other existing student organizations to leverage all our unique strengths to deliver the most value to students", yet we do not feel adequate and intentional consideration of the future collaboration between AIA and the AIAS has been granted in this proposal. The AIAS is more than open to collaboration if our concerns are addressed. We ask the AIA to reaffirm the AIAS as allies and collaborators in the field of architecture and explore alternative methods of engaging with students.

Therefore, the AIAS stands against bylaw amendment 2.014 and respectfully requests that Delegates of the AIA who truly wish to empower students VOTE NO on this proposed change.

Sincerely,
Leaders of the 2023-24 Board of Directors
American Institute of Architecture Students

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2024 AIA Student Director

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