


## 2024 Nominees to the 2025 Board of Directors

Name:	Laura Knauss, AIA	
Position Nominated for:	VP of Government Relations	
<p>A 100-Word (maximum) summary of your background, education, professional history, and service to the professions.</p>		
<p>Laura Knauss, AIA, is President and Chief Practice Officer of Lionakis. Her 34-year history with the firm has been as practitioner and practice leader in the Education market. She has served on the AIA Central Valley’s Board for seven years, currently in the Past President role. Specifically applicable to the role of VP of Government Relations is her experience serving the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) as a member of the Board of Directors, preceded by two terms on the Legislative Advisory Committee. In both roles, Laura participated in the evaluation and crafting of messaging around key legislative issues.</p>		
<p>A 200-word (maximum) summary of the candidate’s philosophy, goals, and objectives in serving in this office.</p>		
<p>As practitioners, we are excellent advocates for our clients and the end users of the spaces we design. We aren’t always, however, the best advocates for ourselves and our profession in defining the “value of the architect” in the construction industry or in the greater community. As such, we find legislative agendas and contractual language that attempt to diminish that role, raise our <i>standard of care</i> or inappropriately apply rules/regulations to our professional services. Often, these agendas come from a lack of understanding of the difference between “construction” and professional services...education must go hand-in-hand with advocacy.</p> <p>Regulatory agency relationships are also key as they, as rule makers and code officials, can have a significant impact on our practice. As a long-time practitioner, I have significant opportunity to interface with the Division of the State Architect (DSA) as a current member of the Public School Construction Consortium (PSCC), but also on agency hosted task forces within the school construction industry. This experience can be leveraged in communicating with other regulatory agencies.</p> <p>I look forward to joining the Executive Committee of AIA California’s Board of Directors and working with the Director of Government Relations as Chair of the Advocacy Advisory Committee.</p>		
<p>Candidates are also permitted to submit a letter of support for their nomination from any individual, AIA member or otherwise. This letter shall not be longer than 2 pages in length, including letterhead. Letters exceeding this requirement will not be accepted.</p>	<p>Nomination and additional supporting documents attached.</p>	

### Next Steps:

- Candidates have received the virtual meeting invitation for the Friday, November 8, 2024 Board of Directors meeting.
- Candidates will give a speech not to exceed 3 minutes during the November 8, 2024 board meeting. Speech can be in-person, virtually, or pre-recorded.

September 5, 2024

Nominations Committee  
Board of Directors  
AIA California  
1931 H Street  
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Nominations Committee,

It's with great pleasure that I nominate Laura Knauss, AIA for AIA California's Vice President of Government Relations 2025/2026. I believe Laura is the natural choice for this critical role because of her extensive service within AIA California's Board and committees, AIA Central Valley's Board and committees, the California Architectural Foundation's Board of Regents, as well as in her leadership roles with Lionakis – as Principal and Chief Practice Officer, and the Lionakis Foundation – as Chair. She works tirelessly on behalf of the profession, the built environment, and the communities she is a part of. During her term as AIACV President in 2023, our first comprehensive Housing Policy was developed – with specific initiatives supported in the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and two successful K-12 outreach programs were established – Architecture by the Book (now with CAF) and our Architecture Coloring Book, as well as expanding AIACV's annual architecture festival – Experience Architecture, into a more vibrant and sustainable public outreach program.

Laura has many attributes that contribute to her success as a business leader, architect, and volunteer: she leads by example, inspiring those around her to find their own excellence within – whether they are a seasoned or an emerging professional. She lays the groundwork for achievement as well by establishing critical infrastructure such as a formal training program for her firm's emerging professionals, supporting 2023's Say it Loud Program, hosting a panel at the annual Women in Construction conference through Sacramento Regional Builders Exchange (SRBX) and the Construction Industry Education Foundation (CIEF), paying it forward through direct mentorship – as well as many other endeavors!



Having served on the AIA Central Valley Board of Directors with Laura, I know she doesn't shy away from tough situations or decisions. I can personally always count on her and know the same would be true of AIA California's leadership with her as the Vice President of Government Relations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Melisa Gaudreau'.

Melisa Gaudreau, AIA  
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