Paths to becoming a licensed architect.
This past May during a horrible thunderstorm, I fought my way through the back roads of Paramus to attend EPIC’s presentation with Mike Riscica of Young Architect. The theme of the evening was “Getting Started with the ARE,” but the presentation wasn’t about specific questions or specific, carefully planned testing strategies. It approached the topic in an almost holistic manner and reminded everyone of the impact that the exams have on your life and career. And while Mike said many things that I agreed with that evening, one line really stands out. He reminded everyone that we are all on our own path. This is something that we all already know and something that in many ways defines our profession. It is also something that is good to be reminded of from time to time.

When I think of licensure, I think of my own experience and my own path. Going all the way back to my first studio in architecture school, it did not take long to realize that with design there are no answers only possibilities, and that what you get out of school is completely up to you. My first job in architecture was in a miserable windowless basement, where I wondered every day when the lone office plant that was somehow alive in such conditions would finally give up and die. Still there was some value there and, just like studio, what I got out of it was completely up to me. At the time, it felt like I waited too long to complete and submit forms for AXP or IDP or whatever it was called then, or that I waited too long in whatever job I was doing at the time, although now in retrospect it seems like everything worked out just about right. I decided to over prepare for the exams, took them all within the same lost year and remain thankful to this day that I no longer have to take them. Although as soon as the fog had lifted from passing that last test, I knew that my path was far from over.

After the exams, I quickly realized that whatever knowledge I had was valuable to friends and colleagues still thinking about licensure. I would not wish my path on anyone (seriously- if you’re ever offered a job in a windowless basement, hold out for a better job with actual daylight), but every twist and turn and obstacle along the way that I experienced is worth sharing and passing on. I have been fortunate enough to have served as a mentor for multiple people in the AXP/ARE process. Each is definitely on their own path, and that’s how it should be. I remain in awe and inspired by all of them. Whether they pass or fail, it takes courage and commitment to walk every single step on that path. If you’re an AIA Associate Member who is thinking about taking the exams or if you are in the process of taking them now, you can probably figure out my advice at this point. You need to do this at your pace, on your own time and when you’re ready. And while you are on your own path, that doesn’t mean that you’re on your own. Look to your family, friends and colleagues for support and advice. Learn from our mistakes when you can, and never be afraid to make your own.

Of course none of this ends once you get licensed. There are all sorts of additional accreditations out there, I still like to point out that there are more letters after my name than in my name on my business card. And we all know about continuing education requirements, a codified reinforcement that we are in a profession where we never stop learning and we never stop growing. No matter where you are in architecture, think back to what you have learned and what you have experienced and share when you can. And know that today and every day you will continue to grow and learn as part of a profession where licensure is not an end but only another step along whatever path you choose to take.

In other, less thematically relevant news, I just wanted to give a quick update of some of the events that your Architects League is planning this Summer. In July, we will be offering a full day trip up the Hudson Valley, including stops at Russel Wright’s Manitoa, Dia: Beacon and Boscobel, with an outdoor performance by the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival to close out the day. In August, we’re teaming up with AIA Central New Jersey to offer a day trip to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Robbinsville and a featured building tour at Princeton University. And in September, we’re going up to New Canaan to tour SANAA’s Grace Farms and Philip Johnson’s Glass House. All of these tours have limited capacity, so make sure to reserve a spot when you see email announcements.

And even if you can’t make all of three of our Summer tours, don’t forget that there’s a whole great big world out there. Go outside, explore what you can, take advantage of whatever time you can find and have a great Summer.

Joseph E. David, AIA
ALNNJ President 2018

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Nevertheless, the profession of architecture may have started in Egypt at that point in time. Obviously, the practice of architecture was not regulated then, and for a long time, those who proclaimed themselves architect were usually artists who probably offered their services to those who held prominent position in the society. It was not until the 19th century when a more precise definition came about for an individual who is skilled in the art and science of building design. Technology probably played a significant role in this as skyscrapers began to appear in major cities throughout the world, although there was certainly great architecture designed by the likes of Richard Morris Hunt, Calvert Vaux, John Welch, and many others before the advent of these technologies.

In the 1800s, anyone could call themselves an architect without a formal education. Many obtained their knowledge by serving as apprentices of other prominent architects of the time. The New York Society of Architects, the predecessor of the American Institute of Architects, was founded in 1857 by a group of 13 architects. They drafted the charter’s constitution and bylaws on March 10th, 1857 and renamed the organization to the name we know today. As a group organized and led by architects, the primary function of AIA was to establish professional standards and policies for training. Licensing law, however, was not part of the mission of the group. Since there were no formal architecture schools, AIA provided support to established universities and create programs focused on architectural studies, many of which have since been accredited by the National Architecture Accreditation Board (NAAB) (www.naab.org). The first state to enact licensing law was Illinois in 1857, the next 50 years or so saw other states adopted law to regulate the practice. It was not until 1919 when members of AIA convened in Nashville, TN for the annual convention that National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) was formed. Architects from 13 states created this organization to formulate all aspects of licensing to make the laws from various states more uniform.

Today, NCARB is comprised of architectural licensing boards from 54 jurisdictions, including the United States and its territories. A listing of the individual boards along with contact information can be found by visiting NCARB’s website at www.ncarb.org. Additional details and licensing requirements of the individual boards are also included in the website.

Part of the rite of passage to become a licensed architect is to pass the Architect Registration Exam (ARE). The first time this standardized exam was administered was in 1979. For almost twenty years, it was given only once a year at major cities. The exam was paper-based, entailed nine divisions and was to be completed in four consecutive days. The first computerized version was introduced in 1997, still nine divisions, but candidates were allowed to take one division at a time for an unlimited period of time. A few years later, a “rolling clock” was introduced to encourage quicker completion of all the divisions by test takers. Ovrs the years, NCARB made more format and policy changes to the exam. Version 3.0 was introduced in 2004 upon a comprehensive Practice Analysis study conducted by NCARB. ARE 4.0, which followed, formally ends on June 30th of 2018, to be replaced by ARE 5.0. More information on ARE 5.0 is available at the ncarb.org website.
A new licensing model

Up to recent times, the process to become licensed has been rather linear. Attend an NAAB accredited college (or work for a number of years under the supervision of a licensed architect after receiving a high school diplomas as allowed by a few state boards), gain working experience as required to fulfill the Architectural Experience Program (AXP) requirements, submit an application to the state board to seek permission to sit for the exam, study, pass all the divisions, and receive a congratulatory letter from the state board that you are a licensed architect of such jurisdiction. The average time it takes for someone following this process to become a licensed architect is around 14 years. There are variations of this process such as when the education received is from a foreign country or for those who change career or some other personal circumstance, but the process is still very similar. However, there is a new program that would alter the path to allow someone become licensed in a shorter amount of time.

The program is called Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL). Currently in its third year, the “initiative encourages NAAB-accredited programs to incorporate the Architectural Experience Program™ (AXP) and the opportunity to take the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE) while completing academic curricula”. It is not intended to replace the NAAB-accredited program, however. While it may be too early to tell whether this expedited path to licensure is good for the industry, there are critics who think IPAL may take away the valuable learning experience a typical architecture student and graduate gets before having to focus on the ARE. One such critic is Michael Riscica, the founder of the Young Architect blog (www.youngarchitect.com) and the author of “How to Pass the Architectural Registration Exam”. When Mike spoke to some of the students recently about the program, many did not understand how it works. For Mike, who became a licensed architect in the State of Oregon in 2013, the whole notion of the program is quite “silly”. He felt that the program has been created in the interest of academia rather than for the welfare of the industry. “It maybe a marketing ploy by schools”, he said. In his opinion, “… school is a place to take risk. This only encourages thinking inside the box.” Riscica believes the traditional path to licensure is still better because it creates better real-life experience for graduates that, through AXP, allows the candidate to take on the responsibility to become licensed. The protocol, he asserts, just simply make sense. He also thinks, though, that IPAL is going toward the right direction. Whereas architecture schools traditionally have nothing to do with the ARE, now there is a connection. It makes students more aware of what they will have to face after a few years of working experience. He suggests rather than giving the opportunity for students to take all of the exam divisions prior to graduation, just allow only one exam to be taken with the balance to be taken post-graduation. He also believes more professional practice courses and design firm experience should be integrated into the program. Lastly, Mike has a philosophy when it comes to taking the licensing exam: “The process is not an obstacle, it should not be viewed as a chore. Rather, look at it as an opportunity to be a better architect.” Looking through his lenses, it is true then that IPAL is not a program for everybody nor was it intended to be.
Architecture Pre-Licensing, Post Licensing, and Continuing Education

The road to become a licensed architect does not begin by just completing a NAAB-accredited education or by simply working in professional practice setting. Having a mentor is an integral part of this process. While it is a requirement for a licensure candidate enrolled in the AXP to be under the management of an AXP Supervisor, having a mentor is not a requirement. Engaging a mentor, especially one who has completed the grueling ARE, would be beneficial to the licensure candidate. This relationship provides a strong mental foundation to tackle the exam when the mentor is committed to help the candidate, and provides a source of encouragement.

So where would one find a mentor? While some AIA chapters such as AIA Chicago have a mentorship program, other local AIA chapters may have members who volunteer to be mentors. One can also find a mentor at industry networking events such as regional trade shows or the larger national event such as the national events such as the AIA Conference on Architecture.

The benefits of having a mentor do not end when one becomes a licensed architect. In fact, having a license to practice is just another stage in a career that is even more challenging. With the help of a mentor, this experience can be quite fulfilling. On the other hand, this relationship can come full circle when a licensed architect goes from a mentee to a mentor. There is no better way to pass along the knowledge gained during the licensing process to the next generation of licensure candidates and practitioners. Currently, there are several AIA mentorship programs that cater to seasoned professionals around the country. These programs are often found within the committees in the local chapters. For example, AIA Georgia’s Equity In Architecture committee started a mentoring program in 2017 with a small group of architects at different levels of their career rather than a one-on-one approach. To volunteer as a mentor, or if you are interested in starting a mentorship program, contact your local AIA chapter.

Last, but not least, receiving a license is no doubt a huge achievement, but maintaining a license will require a lot of discipline and a lot more education. Every state board requires licensed professionals to keep up their knowledge through continuing education as a means to maintain licensure. In New Jersey, the requirement per the Division of Consumer Affair is “…a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education per biennial renewal period. At least 16 C.E. hours shall be obtained from courses or programs within the definition of health, safety and welfare pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:27-3.1. The remaining C.E. hours shall be in educational activities that are directly related to the practice of architecture.”

Local AIA chapters often host continuing education seminars or presentations that are approved by AIA National and offer Learning Units (LUs). AIA Architect members are required to complete 18 LUs each calendar year. Of those 18 LUs, 12 must be in Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW) topics. In addition to being required to maintain AIA membership, LUs may also be applied toward fulfilling the Continuing Education requirements of state licensing boards. However, not all AIA approved seminars or presentations are guaranteed to be accepted in every licensing jurisdiction. License holders should confirm with their licensing board whether specific programs meet the jurisdiction’s continuing education requirements. Regional AIA Trade Shows, as well as the National AIA Conference on Architecture, are also good opportunities for earning LUs and potentially satisfying a substantial portion of C.E. requirements within a day or two. Other organizations, such as the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI), the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), and the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), also host events that may be applied toward the fulfillment of continuing education requirements. NCARB’s Mini-Monograph series, which is free for NCARB certificate holders, offers self-study courses for C.E. credits. Numerous product manufacturers and suppliers of construction materials offer AIA-approved “lunch and learn” courses for free at your workplace. Furthermore, Architect Magazine provides AIA-approved articles with quizzes that license holders may take, and then self-report the results to AIA to earn LUs. If these units are acceptable to your licensing board, this can be a great way to meet Continuing Education requirements.
**Spring Kessler Walking Tour**

The Spring 2018 Ted Kessler Walking Tour took place on Sunday May 6 and followed a route in Brooklyn Heights and Dumbo. Highlights included a visit to the Empire Stores, Grace Court Alley, Joralemon Street, Jane’s Carousel, the Promenade, Squibb Park Bridge and Brooklyn Bridge Park. The route went under both bridges twice and went through historic districts, saw new construction and stopped at sweeping views of the East River and Lower Manhattan.

The Ted Kessler Walking Tours are an Architects League tradition since 2007, when they were founded by current ALNNJ President Joseph E David, AIA, who continues to lead and research a brand new route every year. The twelfth annual Ted Kessler Tour will premiere an all new route in Long Island City, Queens on Saturday November 3, 2018.

**AIA Eastern NY Design Jury**

The Architects League of Northern New Jersey was honored to serve as the jury for AIA Eastern New York’s 2018 Design Awards Program. The jury consisted of five Architects League members who evaluated multiple submitted boards and selected three projects for Honor Awards and three additional projects for Merit Awards.

Juror members included:
- **Matthew A. Fink, AIA, LEED AP BD+C** is a Project Architect at LAN Associates and received the 2017 Young Architect of the Year Award from AIA New Jersey
- **Ralph Rosenberg, AIA, PP, LEED AP** is Associate Design Principal at NK Architects and serves as Programs Chair with the Architects League
- **Kurt Vierheilig, AIA, LEED AP BD+C** is a Partner and Director of Design at DMR Architects and serves as Chair of the Architects League Emerging Professionals Committee
- **Suzanne DiGeronimo, FAIA, PP** is an owner and principal at DiGeronimo Architects and served as a juror in the 2018 International Urban and Regional Design Awards
- **Joseph E David, AIA, LEED AP BD+C** currently serves as Architects League President and served as Chair of the Design Awards Jury, responsible for selecting jury members and establishing criteria and rules.

Jury statement:

“It is the charge of a design jury to make selections based on the individual excellence of a project and this is always a difficult task. It should be noted that the overall quality of submissions for the 2018 AIA Eastern New York Design Awards consistently impressed the Jury with projects both large and small, both built and unbuilt, and in a wide variety of design styles and categories.”
2018 ALNNJ Scholarships

Since 1955, the Architects League of Northern New Jersey has offered a scholarship program, and annual scholarship awards remain one of the cornerstones of our organization. This year we received many strong applications and four were chosen to receive awards of $2,000 each. The Architects League Scholarship Awards are a joint program with the AIA Component Scholarship Grant and are made possible with assistance from our 2018 Platinum Sponsor Pella Windows & Doors and through proceeds from our annual Golf Outing.

The 2018 Architects League Scholarship recipients are:

Christina Kavanagh, 2018 Albert O. Halse Memorial Award
Christina is an architecture student from Wood-Ridge, New Jersey who will be entering her third year this Fall at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte where she has been on the Chancellor’s List, which recognizes students who maintain a 3.8 GPA or higher. Christina has worked in architecture offices in Bergen County every summer and has volunteered at UNC Charlotte during the school year.

Shaun Scott, 2018 Architects League Scholastic Achievement Award
Shaun graduated from Indian Hills High School in 2002 and has owned his own carpentry business since 2008. In 2016, he returned to school and entered the architecture program at Brookdale Community College where he graduated with a 4.0 GPA. Shaun is planning on attending New Jersey Institute of Technology this Fall in pursuit of a Bachelor of Architecture Degree.

Jessica Dunitz, 2018 ALNNJ Scholarship for High School Students
Jessica is a high school senior from Wayne, New Jersey who will be graduating from Wayne Valley High School this Spring. In Fall 2018, Jessica will be attending Drexel University in Philadelphia on an accelerated 4 + 2 path towards her architecture degree. Jessica is a member of the National Honor Society, the National Art Honor Society and a member of her high school’s softball and volleyball teams.

Daniella Tero, 2018 ALNNJ Scholarship for High School Students
Daniella is a high school senior from Bayonne, New Jersey who will be graduating from High Tech High School in North Bergen this Spring. In Fall 2018, Daniella will be attending Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York where she will be pursuing a Bachelor of Architecture degree. Daniella serves as a Peer Leader, participates in the ACE Mentoring Program and has volunteered in Guatemala where she visited schools and clinics and helped to build two homes.

A list of winners as chosen by a jury of Architects League members:

Honor Award – Commercial/Industrial
Yaddo Artist Studios, Phinney Design Group
“Compact and simple, each space is unique yet reads as one with its site and environment.”

Honor Award – Institutional
Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Envision Architects, DPC
“This inviting education center is a sustainability showcase, with design features that can be used as a teaching tools for visitors.”

Honor Award – Residential
14 Hudson, Balzer and Tuck Architecture
“This project has a notably well designed massing and scale featuring rectilinear volumes carved with balconies and the occasional architectural surprise.”

Merit Award – Adaptive Reuse
Rehabilitation of Building 25, JMZ Architects and Planners, PC
“Visually outstanding, this project brings the past, present and future together.”

Merit Award – Institutional
MVCC Rome Campus Transformation, JMZ Architects and Planners, PC
“The volumes are nicely layered and the contrast of color and scale on the façade and massing are quite sensitive and successfully accomplished.”

Finger Lakes Community College Campus Center, Balzer and Tuck Architecture
“With remnants of the original building reused along with its original footprint, the project bravely chooses to create something new with echoes of its past.”
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**Ellis Island Tour**

On Saturday June 9th, the Architects League participated in a private hard hat tour of the abandoned hospital complex on Ellis Island. Our tour guide was Matthew Funk, an architect with extensive knowledge of the buildings, construction and history of the island, and he was able to explain not only the functions of the abandoned hospital but also stories of the people whose lives were changed there. Our tour was led through a maze of connected corridors with broken windows and went through really unique spaces including the laundry room, hospital wards and autopsy theatre. Throughout the complex, an artist named JR installed photos of Ellis Island immigrants, often in unexpected places. Approximately 40% of the population of the United States can trace roots back through Ellis Island, and this ALNNJ Special Event provided a rare chance to see the island’s abandoned hospital in its pre-renovated state.

**ALNNJ April Member Meeting**

On April 19th, AIA New Jersey President Verity Frizzell, FAIA, discussed the subject of equity and diversity in architecture firms. In addition, Joe Simonetta, Hon. AIA, discussed the strategy for effective political action for architects and explained the value of communication with political leaders and the benefits to ALNNJ members. This well-attended event was held at the “Design Within Reach” showroom at the Garden State Plaza in Paramus.

**“Let’s Build a Town”**

On Wednesday May 6, Architects League members Cecilia Cano, Assoc AIA and Joseph E. David, AIA, presented “Let’s Build a Town”, a brand new program developed by the ALNNJ that was based off of the AIA 150 initiative from AIA New Jersey. This highly interactive hour long program involved each of the students individually drawing elevations and creating their own buildings out of paper, and then working together to decide what type of building should go where on a large town map. The presentation took place at an eighth grade STEAM class at Lincoln Middle School in Kearny, New Jersey, and approximately 20 students participated and really enjoyed this early exposure to architecture and planning.

Powerpoint presentations and PDF handouts from this newly developed program are available for all Architects League members interested in presenting to middle school students. If you’re interested, please contact Joe David at joe@kcg-arch.com for information.

**ALNNJ June Member Meeting**

The June Membership Meeting was held on Thursday June 14th at the Piggyback Bar in Jersey City. The event featured a presentation by Dan Kaplan, FAIA and Jim Bushong, AIA on Harborside Tower. The first new commercial office skyscraper in Jersey City in over twenty years, Harborside Tower, being developed by Mack Cali and SJP Properties, is an innovative culmination of cutting-edge architecture, sustainability, technology and engineering. The 1.2 million square foot, 40 story tower is designed by FXCollaborative.

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