



June 23, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT
Jennifer Gilhoi
gilhoi@aia-mn.org

Fourteen AIA Minnesota Architects Complete the Inaugural Leadership FORUM



Minneapolis, Minnesota - The American Institute of Architects Minnesota (AIA Minnesota) recognized 14 individuals who completed the inaugural Leadership FORUM program at a reception on June 15 at Ellerbe Becket, an AECOM company, in downtown Minneapolis. Over 40 people involved in the program attended, including members of the FORUM Advisory Board, the Minnesota Architectural Foundation, guest speakers and content instructors for the FORUM, firm principals who served as candidate sponsors and the program graduates. All were there to show support of the inaugural class and reflect on the learning and purpose of FORUM.

The FORUM program, created to foster and develop leadership for AIA Minnesota member architects during mid-career, assists AIA Minnesota architect members in understanding and strengthening their role in leadership in areas of community involvement, government, professional practice, business development and mentorship. Experts related to each area of curriculum were brought in for each of the six monthly sessions beginning in January 2010 and ending with the last session on June 15. Jon Buggy, AIA, managing principal of Ellerbe Becket, served as the program advisor and led the group in finding and developing their own leadership style.

The graduating class includes:

Timothy Bicknell, AIA, Ellerbe Becket
Joseph Conti, AIA, Joseph Conti Architecture
Nina Ebbighausen, AIA, Architectural Alliance
Mamie Harvey, AIA, Architectural Alliance
Greg Houck, AIA, Shea
Michael Koch, AIA, HGA
Scott Krenner, AIA, Cuningham Group Architecture
Karen Lu, AIA, VJAA
Jeffery Mandyck, AIA, Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle
Ashley Mitlyng, AIA, Kuhl Designers Builders
Jeffery Schoeneck, AIA, UrbanWorks
Kenneth Sheehan, AIA, Architectural Alliance
Anne Wagner, AIA, Lifetime Fitness
Nicole Washburn, AIA, JLG Architecture

The program kicked off in September 2009 with a mixer to talk with all interested candidates and sponsors. Candidates went through an application process and the FORUM Advisory Board reviewed and selected candidates in October and announced the selections at the AIA Minnesota Convention in November. The program participants span a wide variety of companies and represent firms that are small and large, residential and commercial, and private and corporate.



The focus of the FORUM was on defining the parameters and attributes of leadership and experts on that session's specific topic were brought in to set the stage for learning and discussion.

Speakers included:

Mary Brainerd, CEO of Health Partners on leadership style, conflict resolution ideas, and general issues surrounding her perspective on working with colleagues;

Debra Magnuson of Career Partners, International, on generational differences and how to communicate best and successfully inspire different age groups;

Diane Moore, editor of *The Office Professional*, conference and keynote speaker and author of *CareerAbility©: Skills Office Professionals Need to Succeed in the 21st Century*, on communicating and connecting effectively;

James P. Cramer, author of *"The Next Architect"* and *"How Firms Succeed,"* on trends and transformation occurring in the profession;

John Shardlow, FAICP, principal at Bonestroo and recent recipient of Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, on engaging neighborhood groups, public leaders, and city officials;

Jon Buggy, AIA, facilitated the final session focusing on ways in which the 14 participants had already implemented the leadership principals they had learned during the previous 5 sessions.

At the reception on June 15, all of the program graduates had a chance to summarize their thoughts on the program. All were grateful for the opportunity and commented on the well-thought out curriculum, impressive credibility, relevance and knowledge of the guest speakers and interactive dialogue and format of the sessions. "This program shows that AIA Minnesota sponsors, many of whom are our mentors, are dedicated to the growth of leaders for this generation of architects," said Ashley Mitlyng, AIA.

Others commented that at the onset, they were ready to sit back and learn and were surprised at first then later pleased, to find out that it pushed them out of their comfort zone to look internally to discover how their values could translate into a leadership style that's right for them. "Many of us feel like we're at a critical point in our career to set a path to leadership. Through this program I realized that leadership is a deliberate effort and now I have the tools to make that happen," noted Ken Sheehan, AIA.

The FORUM graduates have already started talking about a project, such as a design charrette or community activity that they can work on to put their leadership skills to use. Some of them will be reporting back to the membership at large at the AIA Minnesota Convention in November, and then watching as a new group of candidates are selected and begin the FORUM 2011 program. Nina Ebbighausen, AIA, summed up the relationships created through the program, "After sharing so much with our FORUM peer group, we now hope to serve as a sounding board for one another, checking in from time to time and inspiring each other to keep on our leadership development tracks."

*The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our Web site at www.aia-mn.org and pick up a copy of *Architecture Minnesota*, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.*