AIA-MN Council of Firms Knowledge Community – February 26, 2018
TOPIC: TRAINING

Everyone can stretch and grow at any point in their career – if we stop learning, we will not just stand still, we will lose ground.

In February, the AIA-MN Council of Firms discussed internal and external training programs and practices. For the firms in attendance, logistics of training varies significantly firm-by-firm, but their focus is commonly aligned around four areas: Design, Technical Knowledge, Marketing and Leadership.

Training is supported in different ways at each firm – some offer a certain number of professional development hours per year, an annual training budget per individual, convention fees (full or partial), or formal firmwide mentorship plans.

Here are highlights from various firms:
- internal tracks based on Designer, Project Manager and Project Architect role
- training planned around surveys or self-assessments on interest/aptitude in categories (BIM, Design, Technical Detailing, Building Envelope, Specifications, Contracts, etc.)
- software training, including BIM and Virtual Reality
- recordings of internal training sessions available for new hires or people looking to learn
- bring in experts: cyber security, business, financial, communication, presentation training, etc.
- annual mandatory training in Ethics, Insurance/Liability, Equity and Diversity
- formal to informal mentor programs; cross-mentoring and job shadowing within studios
- resources like www.Lynda.com and YouTube – best practice: highlight the most valuable links on desired topics
- internal experts as resources: Code, Quality Assurance, Sustainability, Wellness, etc.
- webinars and lunch and learns with AIA credit
- AIA National and AIA-MN conferences, seminars, webinars
- send staff to the AIA-MN Leadership Forum or internal firm leadership training

In order to remain relevant as architects and designers into the future - with young professionals entering the field, technologies evolving and innovations emerging - firm leaders must continue to support professional growth by offering staff the tools and training they need to be successful.