



Ontario Association of Architects

## OAA Society Visits 2019

### Meeting Format and Agenda

As OAA President for 2019, I am excited to embark on the Annual Tour of the OAA's Local Architectural Societies with OAA Executive Director Kristi Doyle. I am very much looking forward to meeting in person with members, making new acquaintances and seeing familiar faces.

On behalf of Council, I would like to start each visit with a brief overview of our priorities for the year, along with an update on the progress we have made. As summarized in the attachment, the 2019 priorities are:

- The Education Continuum;
- Membership Engagement; and
- Inclusivity & Equity Throughout the Profession.

I would then like to focus the majority of the meeting on an open discussion with members on issues that are of most interest to the group, including local initiatives and issues, bigger-picture challenges and opportunities for the profession and feedback on OAA programs and services. If there is a topic your group specifically wants to address, please feel free to let me know ahead of time.

At the meetings, I would also like to take the opportunity to provide a few quick reminders and updates on the following items:

- 2020 OAA Annual Conference in Toronto;
- Council nominations and elections;
- Committee vacancies;
- 2019 Survey of Members & Practices; and
- Architecture Policy for Canada.

Looking forward to seeing you and other members this fall!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kurtin', written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Kurtin, Architect  
OAA, FRAIC  
President

## **OAA Council Priorities for 2019**

*Summary Prepared by OAA President Kathleen Kurtin following Council's February 2019 Planning Session*

At our winter Planning Session, Council validated all of the initiatives currently underway. Some of these major initiatives will be wrapping up this year, including the launch of our new web site and logo and the completion of the renovation and re-habitation of our building. With a new and invigorated virtual and built home base we will be in an even stronger position to carry out our mandate of protecting the public interest through regulation and advocacy.

The leveraging of these two major initiatives was referenced many times the discussions. After reviewing the session notes and summarizing the final count of individual Council member's preferences, it is clear that Council's priorities for the upcoming year fall into two categories:

- First:           The Education Continuum  
                    and as a subgroup of education - Financial Literacy
- Second:         Membership engagement

I would like to add a third category - the primary reason I ran for council five years ago, and the principal motivation for putting my name forward for president: inclusivity and equity throughout the profession.

By focusing in the next year on these three priorities - education continuum, membership engagement and inclusivity/equity - I believe we can achieve significant improvements for the profession, which will in turn benefit and protect the public.

### **Education Continuum:**

Because Council has placed such a high priority on education and financial literacy I believe we need to ramp up our approach to education. While many of the pieces of the puzzle are currently available, they are scattered in many different places such as Continuing Education, Practice Resource Committee, ProDem Programs, Society Workshops, RAIC programs and University and Community College programs.

I suggest that the current Con-Ed committee be renamed and re-vamped as "the Education Committee" and place it under the SVP portfolio. The Education Committee would have an expanded mandate to oversee recommendations covering the whole spectrum of education, from primary and secondary school to universities, internship, licensure and the various phases of practice, and finally through to retirement. Based on Council's priorities the purview of this Committee might be seen to fall into four buckets:

1. What is an architect, why do I want to be an architect, how do I become an architect, and why do I want to hire an architect?
2. What do I need to know to become a good architect through education, internship and mentorship?
3. How do I keep current with emerging trends, building sciences and technologies, how do I learn from and share knowledge with my peers, and how do I prepare for transitioning through the various stages of my career?
4. Concurrently, how do I develop financial literacy, beginning in university, managing my time and the cost of an education, through to how do I know how much to ask to be paid

in a job interview, and what is a fair wage to pay my staff? How do I run a practice, price jobs, bid on projects, bill clients and pay myself and my employees an amount reflective of the complexity and responsibilities of being an architect, and then, how do I prepare for retirement? Financial literacy benefits owners and the public by enabling reduction of project risks and improving project outcomes.

In tandem with the Education Committee, I recommend that the Communications Committee be tasked with developing a strategy to inform and disseminate the information from the Education Committee to the various groups in an exciting and engaging manner.

Both committees would report to Council regularly.

### **Membership Engagement**

Membership engagement is equally important, and challenging in a different way. Suggestions from the Planning Session include:

- Promoting the *culture of volunteering* for members, practices, the OAA and the profession as a whole to *Humanize* self-regulation
- Engaging with each member who runs for Council, unsuccessfully, acknowledging their commitment and effort, and encouraging their participation on a committee, task force and/or round table that compliments their expertise.  
Promoting member participation in the Societies working with each Society uniquely and directly to promote their development
- Reaching out to Societies to source and nominate interested and skilled candidates for Council
- Promoting adjoining Societies to collaborate where mutually beneficial
- Enabling members to advance matters of public interest such as climate change action, design excellence, housing affordability
- Promoting mentorship for the Intern Program to members and employers

### **Inclusivity and Equity throughout the Profession**

Inclusivity and Equity should be woven through every decision we make and be reflected in both the education continuum and membership engagement.

There has been much research on “unconscious bias”, and as a starting point, I suggest we invite a representative from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion to make a presentation to Council and staff on the subject of “unconscious bias” at our June Council meeting. This may then impact the way we make decisions around composition of committees, the recruitment and support of candidates for Council, the Intern process, and staff recruitment. This could also be followed by a communication piece, possibly a podcast and/or lecture directed towards our membership.