



DRAFT YAF SUMMIT20 Outcomes

## VALUE OF LICENSURE

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## Introduction

**Definition of Topic** (*written for an architect to understand*): Licensure (also known as registration) is a professional credential that ensures the competency of the design professional in the interests of the health, safety, and general welfare. This credential opens doors professionally and increases the value of the individual and the profession.

**Definition of Topic** (*written for a non-architect to understand*): Similar to a lawyer passing the bar exam, or a physician passing the boards, architectural licensure defines an individual's ability to practice in their chosen profession. However, unlike those other two professions, architecture has a much lower level of media saturation (there are many more prime-time dramas and reality shows about the legal and medical professions). Increasing the public's awareness of architectural practice – and its component parts, such as licensure -- will also increase its value.

**Why is this topic important to Young Architects?** Licensure is the great equalizer of the profession. Young architects who have set it as a career goal for themselves, and strive to achieve it, often find themselves confused with what to do next once that goal has been reached. Often there is no recognition of the achievement, nor any perceived increase in responsibility or compensation. Why undertake it? The path to licensure is mapped out through programs like IDP, and even internal development processes in individual firms, but the period immediately afterward can be a mystery to many. What comes next?

**Why is this topic important to the AIA?** By 2016, for every one Gen-Y member that enters the workforce, as many as five Boomers will be leaving it. This "Associate Crisis" isn't going to end overnight – the profession needs to reinforce the value of licensure in order to ensure that the next generation of practitioners carries our most valuable credential.

## Impacts

### Individual

1. Clarity of title ("intern" no more)
2. Professional goal/ career advancement

### Firm

1. Licensure is a marketing tool ("...we have 15 registered professionals on staff...")
2. Development doesn't end at licensure – IDP doesn't address marketing or team-building

### Profession

1. Stability – future generations need to carry the credential
2. Knowledge transfer

### Community

1. Perceived value of professional services
2. Human Capital ("our place at the table")



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#### Outcomes

##### Individual

1. Marked increase in individual responsibility (example: “interns” cannot run job meetings)
2. The achievement should be recognized/ celebrated in some fashion.

##### Firm

1. Firms should show some vested interest in licensure (i.e., adding new RAs’ names to letterhead)
2. Young architects should be supported on a “Leadership Track” beyond licensure

##### Profession

1. Value of licensure needs to be promoted in academia
  - a. “Toilet room details” should be viewed as “honing a craft/ developing a skill,” not as a menial task
  - b. Architecture is not just about Design (with a capital “D”) – a real-world perspective is needed
2. Increased emphasis needs to be placed on mentoring (at all levels)

##### Community

1. Public perception and understanding of architecture as a profession needs to be increased/ clarified
2. The profession needs to actively engage the community (in civic leadership roles, etc.)

#### Actions

##### Short Term (1-2 Years)

##### 1. Celebrate the achievement of licensure at the local level.

- a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Individual/ Community.**
- b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **Immediate recognition (within the same calendar year) of their achievement, with their local community.**
- c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **Increased public relations with the NAC – it will prove that the AIA is invested in their professional development.**
- d. What are the steps to implement this action? **YAF-National should develop a “press kit” of simple concepts for recognizing the achievement (for instance, a champagne toast at the year-end holiday party, a sample post in social media, or a suggested press release in the business section of the local newspaper) and distribute them to local chapters. Encourage these chapters to do what they can to reinforce the concept. Enlist local YAF/ NAC components to assist the effort by taking this on as one of their annual initiatives.**
- e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **See below.**
- f. **Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action?**

##### 2. Celebrate the achievement at both the state and national levels.

- a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Individual/ Community.**
- b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **By gaining an immediate sense of inclusiveness in the overall AIA, beyond their local chapter.**
- c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **Potential increases in attendance at state and national events.**
- d. What are the steps to implement this action? **Include a “bounce-back” option in the press kit (see above) to encourage local chapters to report their new RAs to state/ national. Develop a realistic recognition of the achievement at the state/ national level (“photo with the governor” at Architects’ Day, name-crawl during Convention). Track progress (through local chapters, state licensure boards) and send a special e-invitation for these events to recently registered professionals, encouraging their attendance.**
- e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **See above.**
- f. Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action? **Compare attendance records at state/ national events with rosters of recently registered professionals, and look for a correlated increase.**



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3. **Define a set of AIA benefits that can be realized immediately upon licensure.**
  - a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Individual/ Profession.**
  - b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **Immediate exposure to the AIA upon licensure; increased sense of community within the profession.**
  - c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **Increased membership, and participation from the “lost demographic.”**
  - d. What are the steps to implement this action?
    - i. **Make the benefits realistic and immediately recognizable – reduced dues for first year of AIA membership, complimentary admission to Convention, etc.**
    - ii. **Establish criteria for the reduced dues (example: recipients must also agree to continue with the AIA for at least one year beyond their first year, or offer a reduced rate for the first three years of membership) and/or admission to convention.**
    - iii. **Develop a “YAF Welcome packet” that reinforces the notion of a larger community that one has joined, thanks to their achievement;**
      1. **Packet should include names and contact information for YAF National officers, excerpts from CONNECTION, information on the Young Architects Award, etc**
      2. **Distribute this packet to new RAs (reported via the bounce-back process above) as soon as possible after achieving licensure.**
      3. **Include an insert from the state licensure board that describes the specific state requirements for establishing one’s license, including procuring the “RA” stamp.**
  - e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **State and local chapters should share equally in the dues reduction, and/or offer a small congratulatory scholarship toward the registration fees for convention. Welcome new registrants at the state and local levels (by publishing their names on the state website or in local chapter newsletters).**
  - f. Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action? **Track new membership rates and first-time attendees at Convention, and compare to the roster of RAs from the last calendar year.**

## Medium Term (3-4 years)

1. **Create a “YAF Firm” award for firms that have shown YAF commitment to “leadership track” professional development beyond licensure.**
  - a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Individual/ Firm/ Profession.**
  - b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **Much like the IDP process, a well-established leadership track can help to further an individual’s professional development in the first few years of licensure.**
  - c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **Younger architects will hopefully receive a more well-rounded set of experiences within their respective firms (beyond IDP) that will make them better professionals.**
  - d. What are the steps to implement this action?
    - i. **Model the “YAF Firm” award in a similar fashion to NCARB’s “IDP Firm” award.**
    - ii. **Develop a set of criteria that can be used as a baseline (names on company letterhead, increased professional responsibility, well-defined professional development track, etc.);**
    - iii. **Publish these criteria on the AIA’s website as a baseline;**
    - iv. **Encourage firms to submit their own programs for consideration of this award.**
  - e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **Encourage local chapters to participate by spreading the word about this initiative, and possibly hosting a scaled down version of the award. The overall competition could be structured so that the winner of the local events would then compete at the state level, then go on for consideration of the national “YAF Firm of the Year” award, which could be announced at Convention.**
  - f. Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action? **How many offices are recognizing the potential in their internal professional development opportunities? How many firms are applying for the award? Has the previous year’s winner “raised the stakes” for the current year’s award?**



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2. **Establish a formal YAF process/ presentation and begin approaching academia (similar to NCARB's methods).**
  - a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Profession.**
  - b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **The skills that one needs to develop to become a successful architect cannot be completely taught in school; the AIA can begin to address the "other side" of architectural practice. This would help to demystify the profession ("\*THIS\* is what an architect actually does...").**
  - c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **Making the AIA's presence known earlier in the process (while still in school) might help to encourage more young architects to seek out and join their local chapters upon graduation.**
  - d. What are the steps to implement this action?
    - i. **Establish a YAF National Liaison position, the sole responsibility of which is to visit schools of architecture to provide insight into the realities of the profession.**
      1. **Alternate: The IDP State Coordinator is meant to act as the liaison between the AIA and NCARB. Expand (and reinforce) the responsibilities of this position beyond IDP – enlist these individuals to represent both organizations by joining NCARB staff in visiting schools of architecture. (To reinforce the value of licensure, require that the IDP Coordinator be a recently registered architect.)**
    - ii. **Develop an AIA PowerPoint presentation template that defines what a registered architect (rather than a designer) is expected to do, and describe how IDP is the process through which that skill set begins to be developed.**
    - iii. **Sing the praises of the local AIA chapter's initiatives – ARE support, mentoring opportunities, design competitions, professional networking -- and show students how much benefit they could receive from joining.**
  - e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **IDP Coordinator/ YAF National Liaison(s) could team-up with local chapter YAF representation to visit schools in their region. Increase the visibility of the AIA in the academic setting -- encourage schools of architecture to require faculty members to belong to the AIA, or to reach out to the local chapter for guest critics at design reviews.**
  - f. Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action? **An increase in the number of Associate members, particularly immediately after graduation.**

## Long Term (5+ years)

1. **Develop an AIA marketing campaign that reinforces the value of design and design services.**
  - a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Profession.**
  - b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **An increased level of public awareness would make it easier to share the value of achieving licensure with those outside of the profession.**
  - c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **Higher levels of public awareness in the value of our services – the goal should be to help the general public understand why they need to hire an architect (as opposed to a builder).**
  - d. What are the steps to implement this action?
    - i. **Create an AIA brand. Develop a 45-second "elevator speech" that defines the profession. Develop a simple marketing slogan ("Got Architecture?"). Develop graphics that carry through with this theme.**
    - ii. **Develop an AIA committee that acts as a consultant (or producer) of a design-themed reality television series, positioning the architect as someone that adds value beyond the typical "do-it-yourself" approach to home improvement projects.**
    - iii. **Encourage architects to branch-out to related fields – through leadership positions, keynote speaking engagements, etc. – in order to position architects as leaders in the community.**
  - e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **The nationally branded marketing images could be made available for use on websites and promotional materials at the local and state levels. Local chapters could use these images in print advertisements with in-kind sponsors, etc.**
  - f. **Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action?**
2. **Bring camaraderie back into the licensure process.**



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- a. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above? **Individual/ Profession.**
- b. How does a young architect benefit from this? **The exam process has become highly flexible, which places more emphasis on the individual. This can actually make many exam candidates feel alienated from their peers. A return to the sense of “esprit de corps” that used to come with the exam would strengthen the overall community of the profession.**
- c. How does the AIA benefit from this? **An increase in the number of licensed architects, and/or decrease in the length of the average internship.**
- d. What are the steps to implement this action? **It might mean revamping the current exam structure to something a little less individualized (which, admittedly, some might see as a step backward). For example:**
  - i. **Make each division of the exam available at only certain times (possibly one division per month, or two divisions every three months?) to provide a more structure to the exam process.**
  - ii. **Allow IDP/ ARE concurrency only after a certain threshold has been reached (minimum of two years after graduation, minimum number of Training Units logged, etc.).**
- e. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level? **Encourage local chapters to support the exam process through the organization of (formal) review sessions and/ or (informal) study groups. Maintain a database of study materials that is constantly refined by current exam candidates.**
- f. Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action? **A measured increase in pass rates for each division of the exam, along with a reduction in the average amount of time required to complete all seven divisions.**