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UIA PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COMMISSION - ACTIVITY REPORT ZHUANG WEIMIN AND JAMES WRIGHT

2023 marks the 29th year since the founding of the Professional Practice Commission in Tokyo. Over the course of 11 official meetings in the 2021-2023 Term, the PPC built on its proud heritage of serving as an international forum for professional engagement and interaction benefitting the practice of architecture.

The work of the PPC includes the development of best practice guidelines in response to new challenges confronting the practice of architecture, as well as reviewing and updating its past work in order to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

Membership in the PPC: We began the triennium with a total of 31 members in the spring of 2021 and ended with 35 confirmed members plus contributors in the spring of 2023. While we have a very active and productive group, we require more participants to properly address the breadth of PPC issues facing our UIA members today.

We are actively recruiting new members and seek the Assembly's support in broadening the participation in the PPC.

In the fall of 2022, the PPC Co-Directors took the extraordinary action of proposing rules for PPC members involving meeting attendance and work effort participation. The goal is to have a PPC working body 100 percent composed of individuals involved and contributing to the work of the PPC, and to discourage Member Section appointment nominations to the PPC simply to bestow honorific titles upon certain individuals. The PPC seeks members and contributors who are eager for active engagement and who are willing to assist on task efforts

ACTIVITIES OF THE PPC

Brief descriptions of the 2021-2023 PPC work efforts follow.

1. Development of and support for the UIA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Declaration as applied to professional practice with ongoing support of the Gender Equity Accord

The current DEI initiative springs from the 2021 UIA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Declaration; both are rooted in the PPC-sponsored 2017 UIA Accord on Gender Equality.

The PPC DEI Task Team determined it was essential to establish a current status baseline at the UIA Member Section level as well with individual architects across all five UIA Regions. They developed two survey tools for collecting current status information and are currently analyzing the input with the intent of reporting on regional differences and the preparation of guidelines for Member Section best policy development.

Two digital surveys, one for Member Section response and one for individual architect responses, have been distributed with the assistance of the UIA Secretariat.

2. Comparative analysis of disciplinary bodies of architectural institutes and other national professional practice organisations

In a response to a suggestion by Vassilis Sgoutas, Past President and Current Honorary President of the UIA, the UIA Professional Practice Commission has accepted a work effort to study the nature of architectural practice disciplinary bodies related to architectural institutes, orders, chambers, etc.



The PPC surveyed its members across all five UIA Regions as to how these bodies are structured and how they operate. Those results have been assessed, and the survey responses were used to formulate best practice guidelines for eventual review and adoption by the UIA Council.

3. (Re-)Building after Disaster

“(Re-) Building after Disaster” builds on Responding to natural Disasters & Emergencies: Proposed Inclusive Design Guidelines for Architecture and Urban Planning, an effort of the UIA Working Body Architecture for All.

The PPC’s (Re-) Building task effort shifts the focus to the role of the architect practitioner in general in times of natural or human-made disaster situations, along with defining proactive pre-disaster measures architects can participate in the ideal of committing to “build back better”. The team surveyed currently available resources in Nepal, Columbia, and Nigeria, generally concluding that architectural expertise is missing from existing response criteria.

4. Creation of Guidelines for Owner-Architect project agreements

A PPC task team has tackled the challenge of developing recommended guidelines for use in improving Owner-Architect contractual agreements.

Acknowledging that no single agreement template can realistically serve all legal and social environments and all methods of project delivery, the PPC’s focus is on developing a framework on which to measure existing forms of agreement. With this framework, practitioners will be armed with UIA best practice guidance in negotiating modified terms and conditions.

5. Participation in an existing emerging professional mentoring program as a pilot effort to establishing a fully UIA-sponsored mentoring program

Organized, professional mentoring is conspicuously absent in the UIA. The PPC is working to fill that gap.

The PPC’s Professional Mentoring task team is approaching this challenge on dual tracks: on one track, PPC members are actively participating in the relatively new American Institute of Architects International component’s mentoring program, and learning from that experience; on the other track, other existing mentoring programs are being evaluated to be augmented by the feedback from a survey of UIA Member Sections. Ultimately, the PPC will establish guidelines for a UIA mentorship program and will seek UIA Council support for creating such a program.

Recent discussions have also included some level of involvement with the China-based DigitalFUTURES platform, such as could co-host a mentoring-related event.

6. Ongoing advocacy for the Architectural Practice Around the World (APAW) database

The UIA Architectural Practice Around the World (APAW) database is evolving to better respond to the needs of the Union’s Member Sections and architects around the world.

An initiative of the UIA Professional Practice Commission (PPC), the database was relaunched in 2020 to provide valuable information concerning architectural practice in UIA Member Sections. This 2023 update simplifies and accelerates searching and navigation and aims to benefit the advancement of the architectural profession globally. It is based on six main categories:

General information, on the architectural profession in the country

Licensure requirements, detailing continuing professional development, education and internship

Regulatory information, regarding code of ethics, intellectual property, registration



Practice, detailing the activities architects can carry out, their liability or the insurance they need

Procurement information, referring to the methods to obtain commissions or the ways to calculate fair compensation

International practice, information about relevant aspects of international ventures

All UIA Member Sections now have log-on access to the revised database questionnaire, and all are strongly encouraged to complete it as soon as possible.

7. Development of guidelines for architectural practice in a pandemic environment

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the UIA-circulated sourced material was felt by many to be of practical use to Member Sections.

This PPC task effort involves a comprehensive study of a multitude of source material, with plans to reinforce those findings with survey input from individual Member Sections. The ultimate goal is to create a ready practice reference tool for the next pandemic situation, having learned from COVID-19 and having built on that experience.

8. Comparative analysis of professional association membership and use of titles

At the request of the CNOA (Conseil National de l'Ordre des Architectes), the PPC surveyed its members across all five regions and compiled a comparative analysis as an aid to any architectural professional organisation reviewing its current policies. The survey revealed significant differences in policies.

9. Review and updating of UIA policy guidelines for architectural licensing and registration

These policy guidelines were adopted in 1999 and have not been updated since. The current task team—somewhat informed by the recently completed comparative analysis of professional association membership and titling—intends to expand the architectural licensing and registration policy guidelines in response to the wide range of current Member Section situations.

10. Guidelines and policies relating to the ethical challenges encountered with the design-build project delivery method

The design-build task team has conducted research into the various permutations of the design-build project delivery process and has outlined a framework for analysis and the formulation of best practice recommendations.

11. Review and updating of the 2017 Computer Practice Guidelines

Now over 25 years old, the UIA's Computer Practice Guidelines need review, updating, and likely expansion. The new guidelines will encompass current and evolving design software tools. This group also intends to draft a declaration to design software companies decrying certain software use costs and forced bundling practices with the goal of making the licensing of computer-aided applications more in financial reach of small firms and sole proprietorships.

12. Development of International Plan of Work policy guidelines

This effort is currently suspended but will be under consideration for resumption in the new triennium.

13. UIA Professional Practice Commission Peace Declaration

The PPC developed a brief but positive statement affirming the benefit of peaceful coexistence to the practice of architecture. In the coming triennium, the PPC will consider advancing this declaration to the UIA Council.



14. Collaboration with the SDG Commission

At the invitation of the SDG Commission, the PPC is collaborating on the refinement and implementation of the SDG Toolbox tool.

15. Preparations for and Participation in the World Congress in Copenhagen

The PPC has an active role in inter-Commission planning for shared exhibit space. The PPC will use its exhibit hall presence to raise awareness of the work of the PPC and to seek out potential new triennium term study task efforts.

REQUEST TO THE 29TH UIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. No Assembly motion to adopt PPC documents

The Professional Practice Commission does not request a motion to be made for acceptance and ratification of completed work product documents. The PPC expects to advance several work product draft documents for Council review and approval early in the coming Term.

2. Assembly motion to adopt this PPC report

The PPC requests a motion be made to the General Assembly of the UIA for acceptance of this report and the work-in-progress of the 2021-2023 Professional Practice Commission.