



College of Fellows Regional Representative's Liaison Report New England Region

To: AIA/NE

From: Glenn H. Gregg, FAIA, Regional Representative to the College

27 April 2012

Mentoring Program

Much discussion has occurred about the merits and success or lack thereof of the Mentoring Initiative by The College Fellows over the last year. After interviewing the constituents in the NE area in leadership roles of the Yong Architects Forum (YAF) & the Associates group – Casey Nicolson, AIA, Boston; Nicole Martineau, AIA, New Hampshire; Stephen Smith, Associate AIA, CT – there is mixed response regarding the merit and value of the program but there is strong consensus that the program, as presently constituted, has not been embraced by the YAF and the EAC (Emerging Architects Community)

Designed to make volunteer Fellows available as mentors on a one-on-one basis outside the workplace to newly registered architects (YAF covers up to the first 10 years of licensure) and interns for mentoring sessions, the volunteers have greatly outnumbered those seeking a mentor. Reasons are varied:

- Disparity of age between mentor & mentee
- Feeling of intimidation on the part the mentees
- Busy, active lives of the potential mentees, who already have continuing education obligations, make additional learning opportunities less attractive
- Differences in experience, manner of working & technical skill knowledge of the Fellows diminishes potential value to mentees
- Distances create difficulty for meeting
- Feeling that responsibility for success might be more likely if the Fellows took responsibility for providing a venue, organization, program design, setting up participants and providing the continuity that a continually changing leadership of the YAF and the EAC cannot provide

Whether this covers all the reasons why the program has not been more successful is unimportant...the bottom line is that we have a program which the Fellows have felt is important to our younger and emerging practitioners. We have expressed much concern about the long-term effect of the prolonged recessionary trend in the construction field and the potential loss of a significant portion of a generation or architects as a result. Experience can not

College of Fellows
Regional Representative's Liaison Report
New England Region



27 April 2012
Report
Page 2 of 2

only be gained by years of diligent practice but learned from the accumulated knowledge shared by those who have preceded you. In order for that to happen the desire to share and the desire to receive mentoring have to be mutual.

One of the persons I contacted noted that they have data bases and communication devices to poll their peers to seek opinions and to pose questions as to whether the idea of mentoring is important to them, if so how might it most effectively be implemented and conversely, if unimportant, is there another program which the College of Fellows might initiate to better support our YAF and EAC members.

We are, I believe, at a time, when the program of Mentoring needs re-evaluation and re-thinking.

NEWS from AIA/CT College of Fellows

The members of The College of Fellows from Connecticut continue to identify potential candidates for elevation to Fellowship and to vet nominees to enhance their prospects of successful application by providing candid and critical review of portfolios on a regular basis throughout the year.

At our annual dinner in October (which we share by inviting the Fellows of the ASLA as guests), we enjoy an evening of visiting with one another followed by toasts to our newly elected Fellows, in this case Michael Crosbie, FAIA and Elizabeth Gray, FAIA, who will be installed in Washington in May. After dinner, we are treated to a talk by a person distinguished in architecture or a related field. This year's speaker will be Jock Reynolds, Director of the Yale Art Gallery who will speak about the renovations and restoration of the three sections of the gallery – The Kahn Gallery (re-opened in 2009), the Old Art Gallery (Swarthout Hall) and Street Hall, scheduled to re-open this fall. Harold Roth, FAIA not only organizes and hosts the dinner each year at the Quinnipiack Club in New Haven but invariably provides a fascinating and entertaining speaker.

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College of Fellows
Regional Representative's Liaison Report
New England Region

