AIA Michigan

37637 Five Mile Road #269, Livonia, MI 48154

30 May 2025

AIA Michigan Newsletter

The Lone Architect is a Myth: Shaping Meaningful Change Together!

When I think about my day-to-day life…I do not live, work, learn, play, and worship alone. In fact, I do not believe I have done anything alone. For me…the lone artist or the lone architect is a myth. It celebrates the individual versus the community of architects and disciplines necessary to-do-what-we-do. I am not a solitary professional or academic. I collaborate! We collaborate! The people I work with…the people I live with…and…the people I learn with…collectively shape my thinking and my creative and professional work. In my first newsletter, I wrote: I believe that there is "a shared perspective of AIA Michigan, where variety is celebrated over singularity. We are a large state with a variety of markets, geographies, ways to practice, and architects to meet and serve them. Like a mosaic, where each ceramic or glass tile can have individual color, shape and identity, while still creating a bigger picture, we thrive when each of us retains our identity while still being a part of a larger community…our AIA Michigan Community!" When there is a variety of people who make up our collective network, the comprehensiveness of our thinking and our work increases.

With that in mind and given the academic year is coming to a close, I feel compelled to reflect a bit on a few things relative to the education of our architects studying in Michigan… Our state is fortunate to be home to five accredited schools of architecture (listed alphabetically: Andrews University, Kendall College of Art and Design, Lawrence Technological University, University of Detroit Mercy, and University of Michigan) and one post accredited degree school (Cranbrook Academy). Each one brings unique value to the *mosaic* of education and our discipline. We support and collaborate with each other. We also have a long tradition of collaborating with our professional colleagues. Thus, our state is also very fortunate to have a professional community that has supported the education of our students and emerging professionals is a variety of ways. In short, Michigan's architectural educational institutions have shaped meaningful change both locally and nationally!

Undoubtedly, many of you have heard in the news or through your colleagues of the uncertainty and concern which continue to rise in our universities and colleges at the national, state, and local levels. I would like to assure you, the one thing that is certain is that all six of our architectural educational institutions are working to provide a world class architectural education for all of our students that celebrates variety over singularity. We are committed to fostering a mosaic of students who will ultimately become a mosaic of architects who reflect the variety of people that make up our Michigan communities and beyond.

As I stated, our academic and professional communities support and collaborate with each other. This is a perfect transition to my other topic…We had another successful Legislative Day in Lansing on April 15th. First I would like to thank all of those who participated and to all of the firms that gave time for their employees to attend and do this important work. I have spoken to many of you through email and in person, and you were wondering if we would discuss the issues that have surfaced surrounding alternate paths to licensure. Though it was discussed in a few instances, it is a discussion that will begin with and be directed towards LARA (Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Bureau). As Bob Hoida, AIA, Chair of AIAMI Government Affairs Committee (GAC), explained in a recent GAC email conversation: LARA "will drive the direction, and will ultimately make a recommendation to the legislature." We are moving quickly to meet with LARA as we finalize our agenda for that meeting.

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I have been both a practicing architect and a professor simultaneously for 35+ years…and thus, I have seen the need for exploring ways to reduce the barriers for licensure especially for those established international architects arriving to our state or who have been in Michigan for many years. However, while I support expanded or alternative pathways, abolishing accredited educational requirements is not the answer. Rest assured that we will not forget that our academic and professional communities nurture and inspire each other! We work with our GAC leadership to address this unfortunate situation quickly and effectively.

When I first started writing these newsletters, I felt like I was writing into the *vast void of emptiness…* the blackhole of newsletters. Who would really read each of these installments? I know that I have read AIAMI newsletters in the past, but, I have always been a nerd for this sort of thing… Therefore, I would like to thank many of you have approached and assured me that you are reading them. Though now…I am starting to wonder if people are jumping to the end to find that *small piece of my background that has truly shaped who I am…* So here is one more tidbit: I mentioned in the second newsletter that I was once a major bowler. Besides bowling a perfect 300 game…when I was in eighth-grade, I participated in, and completed a 50-hour bowl-a-thon to raise money for our local small-town EMS and fire department to purchase a Jaws-of-Life.

Lastly, to state once again…Each year, AIA Michigan hosts a free and celebratory reception at the National AIA Conference. This year we will host it in Boston on June 4th from 5:00-7:00 at More Than Words, 242 E. Berkeley Street, which is about a 10-15 minute walk from the convention center. I hope to see you there! This is also an opportunity to talk with me about AIAMI's strategic decision-making framework process!

As always…I look forward to seeing you in the month ahead and throughout the year!!!

Cheers!

Dan Pitera, FAIA, NOMA, Hon. FALA
28 April 2025 @ 10:30 pm

