



# PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

**2025-2026 REVIEW**





## 2025 PILLARS CLASS

Alexandra Bojarski-Stauffer, AIA - Emerald Hive Design

Natalie Buckley - Walter P. Moore

Jessica Carson - JE Dunn Construction

Lane Edson, Assoc. AIA - NSPJ Architects

Kourtney Goss - McCownGordon Construction

Ethan Hale, AIA - Hoefer Welker

Reid Lundin - DLR Group

Emma Meier-Luinenburg, Assoc. AIA - BRR Architecture

Kylie Miller, AIA - Populous

Katie Pruser, Assoc. AIA - HFG Architecture

Jenna Roblee, Assoc. AIA - Finkle + Williams Architecture

Tess Ryan, Assoc. AIA - AECOM

Sean Stattelman, Assoc. AIA - Pulse Design Group

Ryan Sudhoff, AIA - Gensler

Paige Vespestad - Smith & Boucher

Erin Wheeler, AIA - Yaeger Architecture

## ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.



*Pillars tour The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and see behind-the-scenes of the preparation and storage spaces*



*Group photo on the steps of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*

## MARCH: ART FOR ALL

The March Pillars session focused on the idea that art in Kansas City thrives at all scales; from internationally renowned museums to local creative spaces, there is no shortage of opportunities to enjoy, create, or support the arts in our community.

The afternoon began at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art where Matt Smith, Director of Exhibition Design & Gallery Management, and Dan Wehmueller, Executive Project Manager, provided a presentation detailing the history and future goals of the museum. The presentation was conversational, allowing the group the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the status of the museum expansion project, the connection to the community, and the creation of a cultural district.

After the discussion, the session continued with a tour of spaces in The Nelson-Atkins that are never seen by the public: art storage, framing, staging, and a ride in The Nelson's large freight elevators. Although the museum has over 45,000 works in its collection, only a small percentage of their art can be displayed at one time. This look behind-the-scenes revealed how much care and work goes into curating a world-class art museum.

The day concluded at the Belger Arts Center where the Pillars examined the value of art on a local scale and gained

an understanding of how the facilities, tools, and programs offered by the Belger provide opportunities for artists and connection with the community. After an introduction from Consuelo Cruz and Katie Hogan at the Crane Yard Studios and Gallery, the group traveled down the street to the Belger Glass Annex. There, the Pillars were captivated by a glass blowing demonstration by Emily Potter, Tyler Suter, and Michael Carson.

By the end of the session, the group was able to experience art in Kansas City at multiple scales while gaining an understanding of opportunities present for community involvement, local artists, and international recognition.



*Pillars observe an exciting glass blowing demonstration at the Belger Glass Annex*