



PIERS

Mentoring at Every Level

A New Model for Mentoring



AIA Kansas City strives to provide our members with the resources they need to advance their careers in meaningful, impactful ways. Mentorship has, and continues to be, a cornerstone of career advancement. And though mentorship was once seen as a top down, one-to-one experience, we believe effective mentoring involves a cross-generational, multi-directional flow of knowledge. Further, it is clear that mentoring is needed at all career stages - from emerging to established professional – as leadership skills continue to be developed throughout the career of the architect.

In order to help our members achieve their career goals, AIA Kansas City has re-imagined mentoring by designing a dynamic team approach to mentoring – **Piers**. Centered on collaboration, **Piers** allows members to tailor their experience to meet personal goals, build skills and find trusted guidance in a casual yet structured environment. With over 1,000 members that make up AIA Kansas City, **Piers** allows participants to tap into and leverage a wealth of expertise and guidance.

Mentorship Outside the Office

While research has shown that those who have mentors tend to have better career-related outcomes that stem from mentoring, it also shows those who receive the greatest benefit have multiple mentors. Although mentorship inside the firm is incredibly valuable, it is equally important to engage with those outside the firm to bring a new perspective to help bring career and professional goals into focus. The profession and practice of architecture is far too broad to expect that every possible skill and experience can be gained solely within a firm. Additionally, firm environments may not lend themselves to mentoring in certain areas of practice — especially relating to the business side of the profession, creating contacts for future projects or career opportunities, and navigating the various personalities inside and outside one’s firm. **Piers** allows participants to enhance the benefits of a mentoring relationship by expanding outside the office to generate many different perspectives rather than a single point of view.

Program Goals



Piers is open to current AIA members who wish to enhance their career development in a small group setting. The goals of the program are to:

- Provide a collaborative, small group learning environment to foster personal and professional growth
- Create meaningful and personalized experiences regardless of career level
- Emphasize on professional leadership and aspirations
- Develop and strengthen relationships outside the office – essential to career development and advancement
- Promote cross-generational interaction and learning

Cross-Generational Mentorship Teams

Rather than a “top-down” approach, **Piers** is a small, collaborative learning group focused on knowledge sharing and enhancing the career development of each team member. **Each collaborative mentorship team is comprised of five members in a range of career stages.** Each member of the team should expect to alternate in taking on leadership roles in organizing activities.



In order to form the mentoring teams, all participants will complete a personal profile questionnaire. All profile information will be reviewed by the mentoring committee who then works to match teams together.

A kick-off meeting will be held with those participating in the mentoring teams. At this meeting, tentative schedules, roles and responsibilities of team members, and suggestions for discussion topics and events are outlined. Following the kick-off meeting, teams are required to meet at least six times over the course of the year; meetings can be casual or structured as determined by the group itself.

Participant Responsibilities



Each mentorship team is designed to create an environment where all members of the group can feel free to contribute, share, and bring their own unique experiences to the table. In this way, mentorship is a 360-degree experience, where each member plays a role in learning and teaching.

To ensure the success of **Piers**, each participant is required to:

- Be an active participant on the team.
- Be willing to commit to meeting with mentoring team at least six times throughout the year.
- Be excited and passionate about growing within the profession.
- Be accountable to each member of the team.
- Ensure the goals of the group are met.
- Provide a confidential atmosphere for open discussion.
- Be receptive to feedback and constructive advice.
- Be open to sharing resources and expertise.
- Be a current AIA Kansas City member.

A fee will be due prior to the first program event (\$25/year).



Why Should I Participate?



For the Emerging Professional

To learn new things about yourself

The self-reflection that can result from a mentoring relationship can be a powerful growth experience and provide you with new insights about yourself.

To expand your strengths and exploit your hidden talents

A mentorship team will push you to do more with your strengths and help you discover and exploit hidden talents.

To contribute to the success of your firm, profession and community

Participating in a mentoring program helps emerging professionals build strong positions in the community which ultimately contributes to their success in advancing within their firm.

For career satisfaction

You will be more satisfied with your career if you're better at performing your job; and your firm will be more satisfied with your performance, lending more stability in your career.

To expand your personal network and expand your career

Entering into a mentoring relationship adds your mentor team to your personal network. Having an expanded network outside the office provides an excellent source of career planning advice and advancement.

For camaraderie and inspiration

Developing friendships outside the office not only adds to your sense of well-being, it can also be the basis of future professional partnerships. Moreover, new friendships can help to inspire us to see things in new or different ways.

For the Experienced or Established Professional

To learn new things about yourself

The self-reflection that can result from sharing your experiences with others can be a powerful growth experience and give you new insights about yourself. It's often been said that the best way to learn is to teach others.

For the satisfaction of passing on knowledge

Many experienced professionals simply gain great satisfaction from passing on and sharing knowledge.

To acquire new knowledge

You may find your team has skills or experiences from which you can learn. Similarly, the act of mentoring can refresh your own understanding of effective project management strategies and attitudes.

To expand your personal network

Entering into a mentoring relationship adds more individuals to your personal network. Connecting with others outside your own office is a valuable way to recruit talent and find out what new ideas are out there.

To recharge and re-energize

Stepping away from the familiar can help to recharge and re-energize your career. By working with different age groups, you'll be challenged to look at issues through a different lens and find solutions you may not have considered of before.

To build confidence

Having a team turning to you for advice and direction can help build your confidence.

For camaraderie and inspiration

Developing friendships outside the office not only adds to your sense of well-being, it can also be the basis of future professional partnerships. Moreover, new friendships can help to inspire us to see things in new or different ways.

Suggested Team Activities and Discussion Topics



Suggested Team Activities

- Project and office tours
- Attend AIA Kansas City events together
- Community service volunteering
- Attend local festivals for art, architecture, music, etc.
- Investigate a new restaurant or bar
- Visit gallery and museum exhibits

Suggested Team Discussion Topics

Advice

- Lessons learned
- Advice for members at different career stages
- Best practices

Firm Types

- Philosophies, markets, corporate structure
- Working in other markets, including international

Leadership

- Conducting meetings and delegating tasks
- Giving constructive feedback
- Dealing with difficult situations

Communication

- Communicating with clients, consultants, contractors, colleagues and the general public
- Techniques for presentation drawings and construction documentation
- How to communicate with contractors
- Presenting yourself well during interviews with potential clients
- Social media in architecture

Technology

- The role of technology in practice and how it effects project workflow
- Latest software and apps for the profession
- New materials and fabrication methods

Licensure/Continuing Education

- Importance of licensure
- ARE tips and study prep
- Attend CEU programs

Legal Issues, Contracts, and Fees

- Different methods of project delivery and their associated fee structure
- Codes and the permitting process
- Types of contracts and fee schedules
- Professional liability

Internal Firm Issues

- How to approach a supervisor to ask for a raise or promotion
- Communicating with a supervisor
- How to have an effective job performance review