

NATIONAL ASSOCIATES COMMITTEE (NAC)

Indiana State and Territory Representative (STAR):

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Highlights from the National Associates Committee's Annual Meeting

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The National Associates Committee (NAC) recently wrapped up its Annual Meeting in Memphis, TN, alongside the Young Architect Forum (YAF), marking a pivotal shift in both the organization's approach. From February 1st to 3rd, the CiV - Center for Architecture + Design served as the backdrop for a gathering that emphasized inclusivity, collaboration, and a renewed commitment to the future of architecture.

A Shift Towards Inclusivity

One of the standout features of this year's meeting was the transition from a regional to a state/ territory representation model. By embracing this change, NAC welcomed a diverse group of participants, including 62 state and territory representatives and advisory board members. This shift set the stage for a more inclusive and collaborative environment, fostering a sense of unity among the attendees.

Interactive Engagement and Exploration

The event kicked off with a relaxed first day, allowing attendees to familiarize themselves with Memphis, participate in optional outings, and explore the architectural

wonders of the city. A vibrant Happy Hour at LRK, a leading Memphis-based architecture firm, and a joint NAC+YAF Dinner added a social touch to the proceedings, laying the groundwork for meaningful connections and collaborations.

Dynamic Program at CiV

The second day unfolded with an engaging program at CiV, featuring introductions, group activities, and committee focus group sessions. Participants actively participated in focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and virtual discussions with industry leaders, including insights from AIA President Kim Dowdell. This interactive format enriched the overall experience, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration among attendees.

Strategic Planning and Reflection

As the meeting progressed into its third and final day, attendees regrouped with newly assigned focus groups to plan activities and roles for the upcoming year. Director reports were presented, and participants had the opportunity to reflect on their collective experiences. The event concluded with a forward-looking session, setting the stage for the future steps of NAC. Additionally, participants with extended availability, took part in a community service project, embodying the commitment to social responsibility within the architectural profession.

Key Themes and Commitments

Key themes emerged from both NAC and YAF meetings, showcasing a commitment to various aspects of professional development. YAF discussions revolved around mentorship, work-life balance, advocacy for the profession, personal growth, transparent pay, and career advancement. NAC, on the other hand, delved into critical issues such as climate action and policies, civic engagement and accessibility, representation, AI, and technological advancement, along with the future of the architecture profession.

A Foundation for Future Success

The event's emphasis on inclusivity, interactive engagement, and strategic planning laid a solid foundation for future success and growth within the architecture profession. NAC's commitment to representing and advocating for AIA's associate members, coupled with its role as a catalyst for progress, was evident throughout the meeting, leaving attendees inspired and motivated for the challenges and opportunities ahead.