



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.

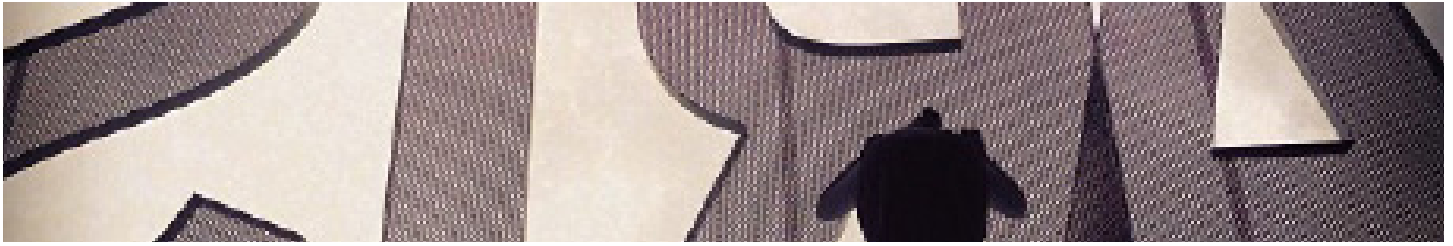
Mentorship Outside the Office

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.

“PIERS filled an interesting gap in the AIAKC program offerings for me, at a time when I was newly back in the KC area. It was an approachable way to meet other people in our profession and have a very open, easy conversations about anything and everything. I very quickly met people from very different backgrounds, firms, with different client and project experiences, and all at very different stages in their careers – and I still value the connections I made with each of the people in my groups.”

Mid-career PIERS participant

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

*“Coming to Kansas City as an out of state graduate, **PIERS** helped me find a community in both the architectural community as well as Kansas City.”*

Early career level **PIERS** participant

Cross-Generational Mentorship Teams

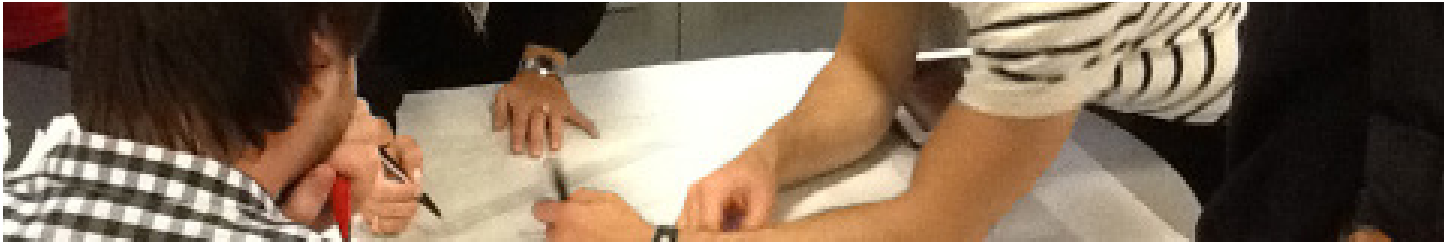
Rather than a “top-down” approach, **PIERS** is a small, collaborative learning group focused on knowledge sharing and enhancing the career development of each team member. **Each collaborative mentorship team is comprised of five members in a range of career stages.** Each member of the team should 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 4-6 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.

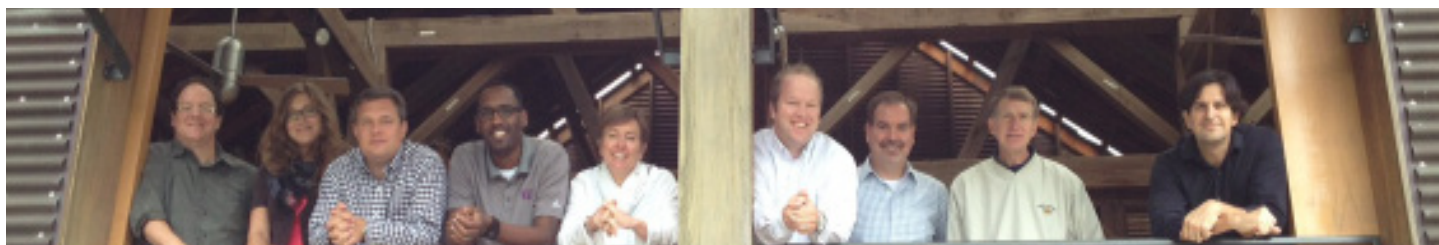
To ensure the success of **PIERS**, each participant is required to:

- Be an active participant on the team.
- Be willing to commit to meeting with mentoring team 4-6 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.

*“I’ve made some of my strongest professional connections through my **PIERS** group. It is a great way to meet architects at all career levels and gain both friends and mentors. The small group setting makes it fun and easy to get to know one another.”*

Mid-career level PIERS Participant

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

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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

“PIERS is a fantastic program! It’s a wonderful opportunity to meet colleagues at all levels of experience in the Architecture profession. Every year that I participate I make new friends and create lasting connections that help to strengthen a sense of community with those in our industry throughout the metro region.”

Senior career level PIERS participant

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
Dealing with difficult situations with coworkers