



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2024-2025 REVIEW





2025 PILLARS CLASS

Caleb Bertels, AIA - Hoefler Welker

Steve Burton, AIA - BRR Architecture

Rachel Dumsky, AIA - NSPJ Architects

Andra Eglitis, AIA - SFS Architecture

Allison Kelly, Assoc. AIA - Pulse Design Group

Phillip Perkins, AIA - HNTB

Bruno Rodriguez Escobedo, Assoc. AIA - Populous

Claire Ryan, AIA - Black and Veatch

Tanvi Sanghvi, AIA - Helix Architecture + Design

Keegan Thompson, Assoc. AIA - DLR Group

Melissa Watson, Assoc. AIA - HOK

Kathryn Eckhoff - Wallace Design Collective

Travis Kingsley - 5BY5 Engineers

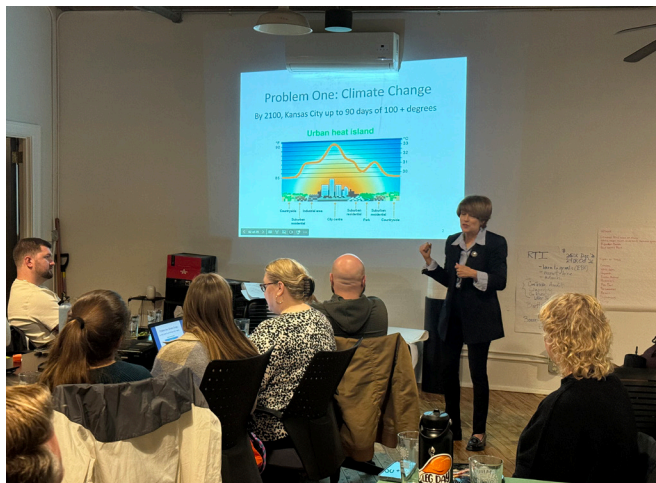
Kate Moeder - Hufft

Wesley Morris - Garver

Zach Russell - PMA Engineering

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.



Speaking with Bridging the Gap, KC Can Compost, and Recyclers for Change



A tour of the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens

NOVEMBER: SUSTAINABILITY

In November, Pillars took a look at local sustainable initiatives at the individual, organizational, and municipal scale. Starting at the offices of Bridging the Gap in the West Bottoms, the Pillars heard from Executive Director Kristin Riott about the organization's history of environmental education and volunteer action. Programs such as the Heartland Tree Alliance, the KC Wildlands Team, and local recycling centers have helped plant countless trees and prairie lands and preserved native ecosystems.

The Pillars also heard from Kristan Chamberlain, Co-founder and CEO of KC Can Compost, a non-profit diverting food waste from landfills to compost and helps train people for employment in green industry jobs. The group heard about the history of the initiative and ways in which it offers different methods for all interested citizens to participate in composting.

Donna McCullough and Kathy Leopp then gave the Pillars insight into their organization, Recyclers for Change and how individuals can implement sustainable change in their community. This organization of female cyclists increases awareness of climate change and ways to reduce its causes by creating a network of environmentally-conscience bike riders and local food waste management programs.

From the West Bottoms, the Pillars traveled to the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens for a look into ways people can experience nature at the personal level. The group spent time exploring some of the park's 300 acres over 1700 species of trees as well as some of the local art on display.

Lastly, the Pillars sat down with Overland Park's Sustainability Manager, Laura Isch, for an open discussion about her work to identify and implement the city's sustainability goals, including the pursuit for LEED for Cities. During the open forum, the Pillars learned about what sustainability looks like at the scale of a city, how to measure environmental factors and milestones, and strategies for creating resilient communities that will stand the test of time.



An interactive talk with Laura Isch, Sustainability Manager for Overland Park