

# IT'S A DIRECT CONNECTION

## PUTTING A FACE ON NCARB

When Mike Armstrong addressed the NCARB membership at its Annual Meeting in June for the first time, his words underscored the importance of listening closely, dialoguing intensely, and working to build relationships. For the new CEO of NCARB, the coming year is not only about molding an NCARB that he and the Board of Directors envision, it's also about implementing a strategic plan the Council

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outreach effort, NCARB staff and leadership visited the North Dakota, Illinois, California, Florida, Colorado, and Wyoming boards. Armstrong understands from experience the importance of learning first-hand how Members conduct their business and feels these meetings will establish the foundation of strong working relationships with our jurisdictions. (ARE®), and Member Board relations joined Arkansas Member Board Executive Kingsley Glasgow to lead NCARB/IDP roundtable discussions with the executives. During three, 30-minute sessions—speaking to about 50 relatively new component executives—the team fielded questions about IDP, ARE, potential outreach events in their cities, and NCARB resources available. Assistant Director, IDP, Nick Serfass,



**LEFT** DIRECTOR, IDP HARRY M. FALCONER JR., AIA, NCARB, GIVES A PRESENTATION AT THE AIA WESTERN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS, NV IN OCTOBER **RIGHT** MIKE ARMSTRONG SPEAKS AT THE 2011 NCARB ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON, DC

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“From my perspective, the Strategic Plan implies a strong undercurrent of outreach activity,” said Armstrong. “Successful implementation of each component rests, in a large degree, upon our capacity to relate to our Members, our customers, and our collateral organizations, and to communicate.”

He knows well the value of accountability, transparency, and collaboration. “NCARB outreach will never be just about talking at an audience. Our outreach activities are multi-faceted, and involve actively engaging and actively listening. They are a direct connection.”

And Armstrong walks the walk. Since his coming on board six months ago, he has met with all of the collateral organizations, and has had one-on-one conversations with almost all of the 91 individuals on NCARB staff. As part of this expanded

The Chair of the Florida Board of Architecture and Interior Design, John P. Ehrig, FAIA, LEED BD+C, is very supportive of NCARB’s efforts. “The Council’s initiative to reach out to the Member Boards is a great opportunity to foster the personal relationships that are needed in any national organization to facilitate open communication and understanding, said Ehrig. “Having the face-to-face dialogue and seeing first hand how the Member Boards function, is crucial in helping the Council understand the pressures and influences that impact a board. In my opinion, it is critical for the Council to see the operation of the boards in their own backyard.”

### EVER-EXPANDING REACH

In August, NCARB was invited to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Council of Architectural Component Executives (CACE) Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. NCARB assistant directors representing the Intern Development Program (IDP), Architect Registration Examination®

AIA, NCARB, said, “I am pleased when I am able to establish a strong relationship with even one executive during an outreach trip. This chance to connect with so many CACE executives at one time was a fantastic opportunity.”

### ON THE ROAD

Two years ago the NCARB Programs Outreach team hit the road with a goal to expand the already established outreach efforts to firms and all of the 123 schools with National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)-accredited programs. In the past two years the team has delivered 111 presentations to over 4,600 attendees when visiting conferences, schools, and firms. The team—comprised largely of staff architects representing the IDP, ARE, and programs like the Broadly Experienced Architect—serves as NCARB’s frontline. They are subject-matter experts with the goal of helping students and interns understand that they are in control of their path to licensure, and help them navigate the way to get there.

At a recent visit to Catholic University of America, a group of approximately 90 students had the opportunity to hear how to best prepare themselves for internship, examination, and all aspects of their growth as architectural professionals.

“The real value of having NCARB staff come out is that they are the ones who deal with licensure requirements every day,” said Dr. Raj Barr, FAIA, RIBA, NCARB, Professor of Practice at the Catholic University of America. “I value their ability to come and present firsthand information in a way that really resonates with the kids, even with recent shifting market

to overcome the stereotype of being a big government bureaucracy by showing how accessible we are and how we want to work together with candidates and licensees to fulfill their needs and goals.” And the students seem to appreciate the accessibility as well. Shawna Hammon, NC State AIAS Co-President said the students want more. “I can’t tell you how grateful NC State is for having NCARB come demystify IDP and the architecture licensure process for us. I’ve had several students ask me if we are holding another workshop in the future since they were unable to attend this presentation, and they

D. Manus, FAIA, held an open dialogue with attendees.

Manus and Veazey discussed how the collaboration between AIA and NCARB is stronger than it has ever been and how this joint effort greatly benefits the profession. Veazey emphasized that “firms need to understand that they are responsible for promoting licensure, and the importance of licensure for the profession.”

The total attendance at Chicago’s conference included 95 educator coordinators from 92 universities, 38 AIA state coordinators, nine auxiliary coordinators from



**LEFT TO RIGHT** DIRECTOR, ARE ERICA J. BROWN, AIA, NCARB, AT CONSTRUCT 2011 IN CHICAGO; NCARB’S BOOTH AT THE AIA NATIONAL CONVENTION IN NEW ORLEANS

conditions. I want students to get this information straight from the source.”

NCARB speakers provide a clear and casual forum for students to learn about the requirements for architectural licensure and ask questions about their own experiences. There are opportunities for students of all levels to be proactive in their internships, and NCARB Programs Outreach offers a great resource for essential insight into the IDP, ARE, and the important steps that can be taken today.

Another goal is to “put a face” on NCARB. After the September AIA North Carolina Design Conference, Cathe Evans, Executive Director, North Carolina Board of Architecture talked about being accessible. “Having a presence at the conference with NCARB staff gave us a face-to-face opportunity to demonstrate how the board, NCARB, and the AIA work together to facilitate licensure as well as protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. It also gave us the opportunity

have been hearing how great it was from their peers.”

### **THE IDP COORDINATORS’ CONFERENCE: AN INVALUABLE EVENT FOR EDUCATORS, AND STATE AND FIRM COORDINATORS**

This year’s IDP Coordinators Conference, held in July in Chicago, included events ranging from presentations by NCARB and AIA leadership, to guest speakers, breakout sessions, and networking events. Sponsored jointly by NCARB and AIA, the two-day conference brings together the network of coordinators who guide, supervise, and mentor interns through the IDP. This annual training event is an opportunity for the coordinators to learn about any changes to the licensure process, ask questions, and share best practices.

At the reception following the first day of workshops, 2011-2012 NCARB President/Chair of the Board Scott C. Veazey, AIA, NCARB, and 2011 AIA President Clark

seven firms, and representatives from AIA, the NAAB, the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA).

“I consider this year’s conference a huge success—it brought together IDP coordinators and collateral leadership from around the country all focused on supporting interns and the profession,” said Harry M. Falconer Jr., AIA, NCARB, Director, IDP.

Armstrong’s commitment to outreach has further energized an already growing program. “As an organization, we understand the importance of connecting with all of our stakeholders in meaningful ways, and recognize that embracing outreach in a variety of different settings is essential to our business model and our need to be accessible to the profession on all levels,” said Armstrong. **DC**