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PRESIDENT, NCARB

## Letter From the President

by Douglas K. Engebretson, FAIA

We begin the 2008 fiscal year with a lot on our plate. I am happy to say that the resources and people that will allow the Council to be successful in working toward and achieving our goals are available and ready to make it happen. Again, this year, the Board of Directors will be working to achieve the elements identified in our Strategic Plan, building on the successes of the last two years and accomplishing—both the beginning, the continuation, and seeing to completion—some of the strategies identified and worked on over the last two years.

Of the 11 strategies in our Strategic Plan, I believe we will make significant progress in at least four areas that I would consider my top priorities: 1) the Architect Registration Exam® (ARE®), 2) the Intern Development Program (IDP), 3) customer service, and 4) determining a course of action on the issues around interior architecture.

The roll out of ARE 4.0, having been in the creation stage for several years, will complete this cycle of exam improvements with a reorganized exam structure; fewer divisions

and therefore less potential trips to the testing centers; and, upgraded technologies driving the exam. With the final testing and evaluation sequences underway, it will become available at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

The IDP is (and has been) receiving additional attention to align the experience with the needed skill sets identified in the Practice Analysis. Furthermore, we must find ways to enhance the delivery of the experience through greater awareness by the practitioners of how important a role they play in making the program as good as it can be. The IDP program needs the focused collaboration of all five of the collaterals to make IDP the experience for the intern that we know is necessary.

We are increasing our efforts with regard to customer service issues this year. The renewed push to find better ways to service our customers began last fiscal year with a Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) study currently being completed. The Board of Directors and staff leadership are intent

on using this re-evaluation to determine how we can improve the personal and automated means of communicating, receiving, and exchanging information with our Council customers, including those involved with IDP, ARE, and our Certificate holders. We have been tracking time frames for several quarters and believe this BPR study will guide NCARB in making the investment in new programming and systems that will allow a more responsive communication system allowing our customers improved tracking opportunities for their progress through the system.

Understanding the implications of some of the proposed jurisdictional legislation that tries to separate the inside of a building from the outside of a building, in terms of who should assume responsibility for the architecture of those portions, is an area that we will bring renewed energy to this year. Several of our committees and task forces will be exploring the role that we and the collaterals could assume pertaining to those individuals who may wish to focus their professional services on the interior architecture of a building.

While these are some top priorities, we have many others that are ongoing elements of the services we provide to our customers, which will be maintained and reported on in the various printed and electronic media releases that you will be receiving throughout the year. As many of you know, all of this is being accomplished at the same time we are going through a reorganization of our headquarters' staff structure to allow for better lines of communication and control of the services we provide. Also our office will be relocating to another floor in the same building on K Street.

Over the last several years, the collaterals (AIA, NCARB, ACSA, NAAB, and AIAS) have developed a good working relationship and a high degree of regard for the mission that each of us is working to fulfill. Our new mission statement, developed with the help and guidance of many Member Board Members was officially unveiled at the Annual Meeting in Denver last June. It is worth repeating here:

**"The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public through effective regulation and exemplary service."**

The focus and emphasis on what we do always centers on *protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public*. The work we do for our Member Boards and for the Council must always meet the test of this mission. In that way, we will maintain the public's trust and continue to be given the privilege to occupy those seats on the Registration Boards in our jurisdictions. Our mission may at times seem to run contrary to speeding the ability of our interns to become licensed, but it is really about assuring the public that those who achieve the right to call themselves an Architect have, indeed, the qualifications to protect the public and are able to practice independently.

I know that as the Board of Directors continues its work this year, we will all be encouraging you to share your thoughts and concerns with us. Please know that you can contact the Director from your region, or anyone on the Board of Directors with thoughts and suggestions aimed at making NCARB as effective as it can be. This Fall we will be holding the Member Board Chairs Conference in Memphis, TN. This conference occurs every two years and is the time for us to revisit the issues and activities that you consider important. Let your Member Board Chair know of any suggestions you have or concerns you would like addressed at this forum. This event will give direction for the next two years and it is in this venue that new initiatives are often given birth. Those of you who are Chairs, we encourage your attendance. If you cannot make the dates, please consider sending another board member to represent your jurisdiction. The work and opinions expressed at this conference provide important guidance to the future activities of the Council.

And, most importantly, thanks to all of you who volunteer your time to support the work of the Council. The support services NCARB provides to our customers and Member Boards is made possible because of the dedicated work of our Washington, DC headquar-

ters' staff, totaling more than 70 individuals, and the significant volunteer commitment of our Member Board Members and our Member Board Executives.

In addition to the time you spend in your own jurisdictions, many of you commit countless hours supporting the programs of NCARB by accepting appointment to our 54 committees, task forces, special workshops or panels and the Board of Directors. We were able to fill approximately 290 volunteer positions this year of which 68 are specifically involved in maintaining the ARE with another 103 positions being involved in ARE related efforts. The 68 ARE maintenance volunteers give the Council over 10,000 hours of volunteer time each year.

Because of the time, wisdom, and knowledge you share with the NCARB, we are able to provide better service, make more informed decisions and maintain the reasonable fees that we must charge for the ARE, IDP, and monographs that comprise some of the services to our customers. Thank you for your contributions!



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