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Gilbert Tan MAIBC
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16 August 2010

Dear Gil:

RE: AIBC STAFFING/MEMBERSHIP RATIO

Thank you for posing this matter; it gives rise to careful thought. The relationship between AIBC membership numbers and staffing levels can be quantified at any point in time. It can also fluctuate for a variety of reasons. While, generally, more staff are needed to serve the demands of more members, there are also contextual factors (e.g. regulatory demands; public outreach and service; the profession's aspirations; and programs provided) unrelated strictly to numbers of members. Further to what you queried at the annual meeting, here are some pertinent facts and observations.

(A) Verbal Statements:

You stated, in essence: "I have been a member for 30 years now and observe that in 1980 there was a similar number of members. Now we have the same number of members but the institute staff has increased two- to three-fold. Staff growth is disproportionate to member growth."

The reality is that the number of members today and 30 years ago are not at all similar. The number of architects alone in 2009 was 220% of what it was in 1980. Also: the number of Intern Architects has more than tripled. The number of non-intern architect associates (of types that existed in 1980) have more than quadrupled, and there are 224 other people in newer associate and affiliate categories. Students have increased by a staggering amount. Architectural firms have almost tripled. The temporary licence volume is up by a factor of more than seven. Here is the tabulated comparison, taken from the AIBC's published annual reports. (Note: some categories of entries did not exist 30 years ago or were aggregated differently, as shown below.)

	<u>1980</u>	<u>2009</u>
(a) Registered Members (MAIBCs)	739	1624
(b) Honorary Members	15	26
(c) Intern Architects (IAs)	160	487
(d) Previously Registered Members	(k)	64
(e) Retired Members	(k)	134
(f) Intern Architectural Technologists	-	42
(g) Architectural Technologists	-	82
(h) Architectural Graduates	(k)	25
(i) Building Designers	-	37
(k) Associates (non-IAs) (d+e+h)	54	-
(l) Students	11	417
(m) Affiliates	-	28
(n) Firm	321	928
(o) Temporary Licences	7	51
Total Register Entries	1307	3980

A two- to three-fold increase in the number of staff over the same period is not at all disproportionate to either member (MAIBC) growth (at a factor of 2.2) or “register entry” growth (at a factor of 3). In 1980, there were five full-time staff members employed at the AIBC. In 2009, there were 16 full-time staff members (a growth factor of 3.2) along with two part-time consultants and two summer students.

Certain types of register entries and applicants (especially intern architects; firms; temporary licences; broadly educated/foreign trained persons) command attention of greater depth and complexity as functions of their origins or business structures. In my view, there is no member/staff ratio issue at hand ... even were that the only basis of staffing, which is not the case. The size of the register is far from the only factor in determining a reasonable complement of staff for the AIBC, as noted below.

(B) Written Submission:

“What is the ratio of registered member/staff over the years? e.g. as compared to 1980, 1990 & 2000.” (G. Tan)

The membership/staff (full-time) and registered entities/staff (full-time) ratios over those years, were:

1980:	739/5 = 147.8,	and	1307/5 = 261.4
1990:	1028/9 = 114.2		1960/9 = 217.0
2000:	1350/14 = 96.4		2756/14 = 196.9
2009:	1624/16 = 101.5		3980/16 = 248.7

That's the surficial arithmetic over 30 years but it doesn't tell the full story. For one thing, it is not feasible to add fractions of people to match incremental changes in demand. Staffing of service and programs is not a linear function; it entails hiring at particular thresholds. As well, any meaningful ratios need to compare equivalent situations.

In 1980 all AIBC staff members were "administrative", whereas today the staff includes a number of professionals and experts related to the AIBC's services and programs. Conducting day-to-day business and operations has become more complex since 1980, to which any experienced architect can relate. In 1980 the AIBC did not have, provide or manage to any significant extent, if at all, the following services and programs which it does successfully today:

- professional development opportunities and annual conference
- continuing education system and external providers network
- professional practice advice and counseling for members and public
- industry-standard AIBC contracts and related practice notes
- broadly educated foreign architects program
- communications strategies and media relations
- sponsor and business relationships
- exhibition gallery, walking tours and architects-in-the-schools programs
- prevention and policing of illegal practice
- practice consultation service

Most of those operational components listed above (and others) generate revenues, beyond annual registration and licensing fees, that account for approximately 30% of the institute's total annual capacity to cover its expenses, including staffing.

1980 was a simpler time, with far less public scrutiny and government accountability along with a significantly less litigious environment. AIBC Council was much smaller, without Lieutenant Governor Appointees. We now have legal expertise in-house and under contract, providing timely, informed advice, greater credibility and increased public confidence ... at a radically lower cost than engaging external law firms. The latter approach prevailed from 1980 well into the 2000s.

Worthy of time-capsulation: in 1980, the AIBC was feeling the sting of the expensive and counterproductive fallout of the "Lees" case; just beginning to consider a modern tariff of fees; looking forward to its first new Wang Word Processor; and receiving reports from its Metric Sub-Committee. Times have indeed changed.

Rest assured that staffing will continue to receive serious attention (in both number and calibre) in order to provide the capable and considerate service that our community needs and deserves. Thanks again for bringing your query to our attention, and for doing so in a collegial, respectful fashion.

Best wishes;

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Ernest" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael A. Ernest MAIBC
Executive Director

PS: given that your statements were made in a public forum attended by a large number of people, this letter will be posted on the AIBC web site and referenced in eNews.