



**ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

## Board Policy

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<b>POLICY CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Organizational Performance</b>
<b>POLICY FOCUS:</b>	<b>3.6 Communications and External Relations</b>
<b>DATE OF POLICY:</b>	<b>June 2024</b>

### Public Outreach

#### Preamble

- 3.6.1** The AIBC Board is accountable to the public for its decisions and actions. This accountability requires awareness of evolving public interests and needs, as well as an understanding of the AIBC’s regulatory mandate and the programs and services available to the public. In November 2016, the Board adopted the following definition of public outreach, which guides this policy and activities contained within it: “To advance the understanding of the architectural profession in serving the public interest and enhancing the quality of our communities.”
- 3.6.2** The AIBC recognizes that media is an effective channel for reaching the general public regarding the initiatives, programs, and services of the AIBC, and to amplify and increase awareness among the general public of the AIBC’s regulatory role.

#### Public Outreach Policy Statements

- 3.6.3** Although the AIBC does not engage in advocacy efforts specific to individual Architects or other Registrants or groups of Architects or other Registrants, there is reason and value for the AIBC to undertake public education regarding the understanding of the profession as a whole, as well as initiatives to ensure alignment between the regulation of the profession and public interests.
- 3.6.4** Generally, the AIBC supports initiatives towards a public that is both knowledgeable and supportive of the role of Architects and the value of architecture as a key component of the shared built environment.
- 3.6.5** The AIBC is committed to responsive and proactive media relations as a means of reaching the public.

Accordingly, with regard to public outreach, the Board and the Chief Executive Officer will:

- 3.6.6** Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for delivering coordinated programs and services that raise the level of public understanding of the architectural profession and its regulation.
- 3.6.7** Support an organizational communications approach that calls for formal, public responses to issues of public interest pertaining to the built environment.
- 3.6.8** Ensure that public outreach initiatives serve to:

- increase awareness and understanding of the AIBC's regulatory role and the architectural profession on a whole;
- respond to the evolving public expectations and needs, ensuring alignment with the regulation of the profession and public interests;
- share the AIBC's involvement in the development of public policy; and
- reinforce the AIBC as a reliable resource in matters pertaining to professional regulation and the built environment.

### **3.6.9** Support responsive and helpful working relationships with media.

## **Industry Awards**

### **Preamble**

**3.6.10** Within the built environment there exists various awards programs for the acknowledgement and recognition of both projects and practitioners. Board Members, most often the Board Chair, are often invited to judge the award submissions, or to present an award. While this does fit within Public Outreach, it creates the following risks when the Board Chair (or any Board Member) judges another organization's architectural or related awards:

- The Board Chair is prominently identified as such, creating an impression that they are speaking on behalf of the AIBC when acting as a judge.
- An award is given, at the Board Chair's selection, to an Architect/Firm that has been disciplined or is about to be.
- An award is not given on the basis that the AIBC has provided information about potential discipline concerning the nominee. The nominee could reasonably complain that they were treated unfairly, or their privacy was breached, which are both potentially quite problematic for the AIBC and the awards organizer.

### **Industry Awards Policy Statements**

**3.6.11** In the limited circumstance in which a Board Member or Board Chair is asked to serve as an award judge, the following policy exists:

- It will be made clear to all that the individual is serving as a judge in their individual capacity as an Architect or other Registrant, and not as a representative of the AIBC. As such, the profile given to the Board Member's role at the AIBC will be minimized, including not highlighting their role on the Board in promotional material or 'judge's biographies', etc.
- If any judge, or the organizer, wants to know an award nominee's discipline history, the AIBC will provide the information to the organizer only, exactly as would be provided to any member of the public, and not more.

- If the situation arises, the Board Member will identify and declare any conflict of interest to the organizer and will recuse themselves as a judge if they had any professional or personal involvement with a project that is being considered for an award.

Accordingly, with regard to industry awards, the Board and the Chief Executive Officer will:

- 3.6.12** Support adherence to this policy if approached regarding participation as a judge in, or sponsor of, an awards program within the built environment.

## Registrant Relations

### Preamble

- 3.6.13** It is important that AIBC Registrants maintain confidence in the Institute and its ability to deliver on its mandate. This is achieved through transparent communication and active engagement, characterized by consistent, timely, and inclusive processes and mechanism(s) for sharing information with Registrants and inviting feedback, as and when appropriate.

### Policy Statements

- 3.6.14** Registrants are kept informed of important regulatory information and industry news. The AIBC has an active and ongoing process of engagement to ensure open communications and interaction with its Registrants.

Accordingly, with regard to Registrant relations, the Board and the Chief Executive Officer collectively will:

- 3.6.15** Ensure open and direct communication with Registrants on a regular, ongoing basis to share information and gather feedback that will help inform programs, initiatives, and high-level decision and policymaking on regulatory matters.
- 3.6.16** Ensure that the AIBC's annual budget contains the necessary resources to facilitate engagement with Registrants in an effective and ongoing manner.
- 3.6.17** Establish and employ an approach whereby Registrant engagement is used as a means to:
- improve communications including ongoing dialogue, consultation, and collaboration;
  - gather useful data and input;
  - foster the implementation of initiatives;
  - verify the impact of decisions made;
  - achieve more effective decision-making; and
  - enhance the quality of services provided.
- 3.6.18** Employ and facilitate Registrant engagement strategies that recognize the principles of diversity and inclusion.
- 3.6.19** In the event that the Board may occasionally require a special levy to address material, significant,

unexpected financial requirements, Registrants will be consulted prior to a Board vote to approve the special levy and any accompanying fee for non-payment of the special levy.

## Registrant Relations: Bylaw Notification

### Preamble

- 3.6.20** Given the importance of Bylaws to the governance of the profession, including the establishment of certain professional conduct and ethical standards, an appropriate information sharing and consultation process for Registrants and other relevant individuals and organizations is warranted. In addition, Registrant consultation provides a genuine opportunity to improve the language of the Bylaws and to assess support prior to a Board vote.
- 3.6.21** The Board recognizes that a spectrum of Bylaw consultation strategies is available; that the options chosen may vary with the nature of the Bylaws under consideration; and that Bylaw consultation may involve internal and external persons and organizations.

### Policy Statements

- 3.6.22** Any Bylaw amendment proposal that the Board supports in principle may proceed to a consultation process with Registrants and other relevant persons and organizations (“Bylaw consultation”) prior to any Bylaw approval by the Board.
- 3.6.23** Bylaw consultation always includes notification and posting of the Bylaw initiative to Registrants and the public through publication on the AIBC web site for a reasonable period of time. Bylaw consultation may include an opportunity for Registrants and the public to provide feedback, and/or a Registrant information session depending on the topic of the Bylaw, at the discretion of the CEO.
- 3.6.24** In recognition of the provincial government’s statutory authority to disallow any Bylaw passed by the Board, any Bylaw consultation always includes adequate notice to, and consultation with, relevant provincial government representatives prior to any Bylaw vote.

## Business Relations

### Preamble

- 3.6.25** The AIBC has numerous and ongoing relationships with external businesses and business representatives involved with the architectural profession and the built environment.

### Policy Statements

- 3.6.26** The AIBC will develop mutually-beneficial relationships with the business community that appropriately support the objectives, programs and services of the AIBC and that are in keeping with the AIBC’s public interest mandate.

- 3.6.27** Proper measures and oversight are in place to assess, manage and monitor any risks resulting from a business relationship with an external party.

Accordingly, with regard to business relations, the Chief Executive Officer will:

- 3.6.28** Oversee an operational environment that recognizes the value and benefits associated with business relationships supporting shared purpose and goals. Ensure the objectives of any business relationship undertaken are compatible with the mandate, goals, and values of the AIBC.
- 3.6.29** Direct that, in pursuing such relationships, all effort is made to ensure any such relationships are mutually beneficial, and that the interests of the AIBC are protected. Ensure that proper measures and oversight are in place to assess, manage and monitor risks, including financial and reputational risks, inherent with individual business relationships.
- 3.6.30** Enable a business relationship strategy that supports the educational needs of Registrants.
- 3.6.31** Require that, while collaborative arrangement may include advertising or promotional campaigns, such efforts must not be the focus of the AIBC's business partnering activities.
- 3.6.32** Require that all partnering and collaborative business arrangements are mindful of public perceptions, avoid conflicts of interest, uphold public trust and confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the AIBC, and support the positive reputation of the AIBC. Attention must be given to ensure any conflict of interest, real or perceived, is avoided.

## Government Relations

### Preamble

- 3.6.33** Regulatory bodies have the opportunity to impact public policy and governmental programs, including those at the local, provincial, and federal levels. This is best realized through focused and ongoing government relation's efforts. As a regulated profession empowered by government to oversee the profession while protecting the public interest, the importance of proactive engagement with government has added importance.

### Policy Statements

- 3.6.34** The AIBC is committed to fostering dialogue and providing information and advice to all levels of government on architecture-related matters, particularly those concerning public policy. There is active, ongoing government engagement to maximize the AIBC's effectiveness as a regulator in the public interest.
- 3.6.35** The AIBC is involved with any government initiatives that will or may impact the architectural profession in British Columbia, working with the appropriate governmental policy-makers, including the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG), and the Ministry of Housing's Building and Safety Standards Branch (BSSB).

Accordingly, with regard to government relations, the Chief Executive Officer will:

- 3.6.36** Ensure ongoing and responsive engagement with governmental policy-makers, primarily, the OSPG and the BSSB.
- 3.6.37** Encourage the positioning of the AIBC as a supportive contributor to government in its development of legislation, policies and programs.

## **Relations with Interested and Affected Parties**

### **Preamble**

- 3.6.38** The AIBC's organizational initiatives must take into consideration the needs and interests of those directly affected – the interested and affected parties. Engagement with interested and affected parties is important, especially with public policy decision-making and delivery.

### **Policy Statements**

- 3.6.39** The AIBC will respect and consider the values, needs, and interests of interested and affected parties in its decision-making, and as a means of understanding external perspectives and responding to external expectations.
- 3.6.40** Effective corporate relations provide opportunities to align organizational objectives with societal needs and expectations.

Accordingly, with regard to relations with interested and affected parties, the Board and the Chief Executive Officer collectively will:

- 3.6.41** Ensure engagement of relevant interested and affected parties in identifying, understanding, and responding to shared issues and concerns.
- 3.6.42** Ensure that the AIBC's annual budget contains the necessary resources to facilitate engagement with interested and affected parties in an effective and ongoing manner.
- 3.6.43** Establish and employ an approach whereby engagement is used as a means to:
  - improve communications including ongoing dialogue, consultation and collaboration;
  - gather useful data and input;
  - build broader community support and social capital;
  - foster the implementation of initiatives;
  - verify the impact of decisions made;
  - achieve more effective decision-making;
  - enhance the quality of services provided; and

- gain insight into emerging trends, risks and opportunities.

## **Crisis Communications**

### **Preamble**

**3.6.44** Organizations are sometimes faced with unanticipated, impactful events or circumstances that call for a focused and timely communications response to best represent the interests of the organization and its people. In times of crisis, the ability to provide accurate information in a timely manner is increasingly important.

### **Policy Statements**

**3.6.45** The AIBC will have in place a crisis response strategy in the event of emergent circumstances that threaten the authority, integrity, or viability of the AIBC, and which includes a process that provides a controlled flow of information.

**3.6.46** In the event of such circumstances arising, the Board Chair will speak on behalf of the Board after having consulted with the Chief Executive Officer regarding what is to be communicated and to whom.

**3.6.47** The AIBC recognizes clear lines of communications during a crisis or emergency for the timely provision of accurate, relevant, and consistent information. This includes agreement regarding lead responsibility as the organization's official spokesperson.

**3.6.48** The AIBC's approach to crisis communications is proactive (i.e., using efforts to identify and assess in advance those developments that might lead to a crisis) as well as reactive wherein best practices are reinforced, and lessons are learned in order to avoid recurrence.

Accordingly, the Board will:

**3.6.49** Monitor and oversee the appropriate response in situations necessitating crisis communications.

Accordingly, the Chief Executive Officer will:

**3.6.50** Ensure a process is in place that provides a controlled flow of information so as to minimize any damage to the AIBC's authority, position, or reputation as the regulator of the architectural profession in British Columbia, serving in the public interest.

**3.6.51** Oversee the appropriate response in situations necessitating crisis communications including, but not limited to, the following:

- high-profile disciplinary decisions;
- instances of professional misconduct that would be seen as illegal or immoral;
- legal action against the AIBC, its Board, staff, volunteers, individual Registrants, or a portion of its Registrants;

- a public stance or opinion that may be seen as negative or controversial;
- any industry-related policy or practice that poses an immediate threat to public safety; or
- public confidence in the profession, and/or its regulation, being brought into question.

**3.6.52** Have measures and procedures in place to facilitate a return to normal operations as quickly and appropriately as is possible following a crisis situation.

#### Revision and Approval Log

June 11, 2024	Approved by AIBC Board