



# SUMMARY REPORT OF OAA'S ROUNDTABLES ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide of a summary of the discussions which took place at the two OAA's Roundtables on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion which were held in the Fall of 2020, as well as outline the recommendations provided for how the OAA can implement equity-driven change moving forward.

On July 22, 2020, the OAA issued a Call for Participants to participate in a roundtable on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. In accordance with public health guidelines stemming from the global COVID-19 pandemic, the roundtables were held virtually over Zoom and were divided into two events in order to enable greater participation within the confines of the virtual format. The session for architect members was held on October 29, 2020 and the session for intern members and students was held on November 25, 2020.

The insights and reflections provided within this report are based on the thoughtful contributions of the 43 roundtable participants, and especially the labour of the participant leads (Farida Abu-Bakare, Kellie Chin, Maya Desai, Nadia Lawrence Akhbeis, Paniz Moayeri, Sapphira Charles, Yvonne Ip) who facilitated the discussions in the breakout rooms and provided anonymized notes of the group's considerations and recommendations. As the external equity consultant, it was my task to assist in the design and delivery of the two roundtables, facilitate the collective take-up of the group discussions, and summarize these discussions into an anonymized report. This report is not an investigation of individual complaints, nor does it contain findings pertaining to specific individuals or firms. Instead, this report offers detailed consideration of the expressed equity-related concerns relating to the work of the OAA and the architectural profession for the purpose of advancing equity, inclusion and diversity.

## 2. BACKGROUND

At the February 2020 planning session, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) Council set equity, diversity and inclusivity as a lens through which all decisions would be made. On June 9, 2020, President Kathleen Kurtin shared a message with OAA membership stating that “accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusivity are critical issues for the architecture profession” and that the OAA must “work to remove systemic obstacles faced by both those who practise architecture and those on the path toward licensure.” Following this message, the OAA issued an invitation to members on July 22, 2020, to participate in a Roundtable on Equity Diversity and Inclusion. Members and affiliates were invited to submit a brief statement of interest outlining the reasons they wanted to participate.

While the initial call for participants stated that “the OAA will only be able to select a limited number of participants for the roundtable”, all those who expressed interest in attending were invited to participate. The OAA further invited written feedback and submissions from those that expressed interest in participating but were unable to attend the scheduled roundtables. No written submissions were received. Finally, following each roundtable, a survey was circulated to all of the attendees and invitees, asking them to comment on their experience of the roundtable and share their perspectives on the most pressing equity gaps within the architectural professions and two or three actions or priorities they would like to see from the OAA.

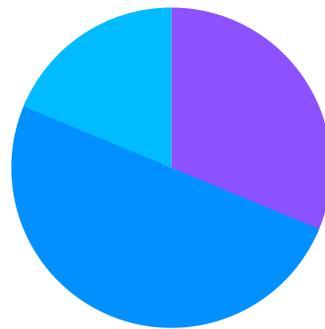
The roundtables were coordinated by Claire Hepburn, Deputy Registrar, and were structured to facilitate dialogue amongst participants and elicit collective feedback. After a brief introduction from President Kurtin, the facilitator, the section leads, and the participants were placed into separate breakout sessions for over an hour to provide feedback on the four discussion topics. A section lead was assigned to each breakout room to help facilitate the discussion and keep notes (which were subsequently submitted to the facilitator). After the hour, all participants were returned to the main room to take-up/report back on the discussion topics. Participants were advised that all contributions within the breakout rooms will be kept anonymous and that anonymized notes from the breakout discussions and the report-back would inform this summary report. Finally, participants were told that the report would be prepared for the OAA by the external consultant and shared with membership in late 2020 or early 2021.

We received positive feedback from the post-roundtable surveys indicating that all those in attendance felt that the discussion was handled with sincerity and respect and that most participants felt they had the opportunity to have their voices heard. A complete roll-up of these survey results is included as Appendix A.

### Q3 The discussion was handled with sincerity and respect.

#### Round Table #1

Was Unable to Attend  
18.8%

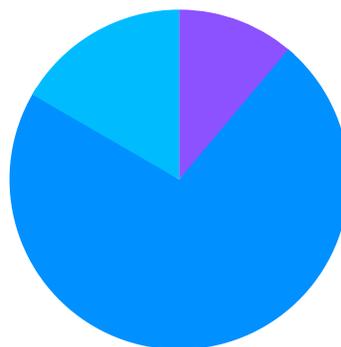


Somewhat Agree  
31.3%

Strongly Agree  
50%

#### Round Table #2

Was Unable to Attend  
16.7%



Somewhat Agree  
11.1%

Strongly Agree  
72.2%

## 3. DISCUSSION FEEDBACK

### 3.1 Discussion Themes

Participants were asked to explore the following questions and were also invited to delve into whichever topic areas were of most interest to them and their group.

#### 1. Naming the Problem

- What is the nature of the equity challenges facing architecture as a profession?
- What is unique about the challenges facing the OAA that are tied to architecture as a profession?
- How should the OAA best ensure that systemic concerns of inequity, underrepresentation and/or racism are brought to its attention and effectively addressed?
- Do you have any concerns or input about the collection of demographic data? If so, how are these concerns best addressed?

#### 2. Educating for Change

- What are the tools, training and knowledge that are needed to root out racism and discrimination within the profession?
- How do we enhance equity within the profession?
- How can the OAA act as a catalyst for the establishment of anti-racist and inclusive architectural practises?
- Should the OAA encourage architectural practises to report on what measures they are taking to advance equity?

#### 3. Recruitment, retention, and advancement of diverse talent

- In what ways does the internship program (IAP) and the licensing process create barriers for equity-seeking groups?
- What are some specific strategies for interrupting biases in the hiring process, in assigning meaningful, high profile and desirable work, or providing equitable access to career development opportunities?
- How do we create greater accountability at the leadership level for advancing diversity within the profession and attracting equity-seeking/historically marginalized groups?

#### 4. Building Communities of Support/Practise

- How do we build and enhance communities of support for historically/marginalized groups within the profession?
- What resources should be provided by the OAA to support the growth and maintenance of these communities of practise?
- What are the barriers, and early outreach opportunities, to consider in attracting greater diversity to architectural professions?
- How can the OAA promote/ recruit Council and Committee Members who are more reflective of Ontario's diverse population?

## 3.2 Naming the Problem

### 3.2.1 Lack of Diversity

*“The same voices are continuously empowered, and this produces a very homogenous environment.”*

When asked about the nature of the equity challenges facing the architectural profession, participants repeatedly cited the lack of diverse voices as creating an issue for the sustainability of the profession. In particular, participants cited the absence of women and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) representation in leadership positions, which then impacts access to career advancement as well as contributes to an ongoing wage gap. Participants described most partners at architectural firms as “White males” and stated that “pay, promotion and networking opportunities are skewed towards that demographic.” Critically, participants argued that “the architecture profession’s relative homogeneity at the decision-making level causes it to stagnate and prevents the resulting built environment from best reflecting and best serving its users.”

Participants further expressed that in the wake of George Floyd’s murder there was a sudden “push for diverse hierarchy but only into lower levels.” Participants were concerned that the diversity was just being used as “a marketing tool” rather than a sincere commitment to listen to marginalized voices within the profession or address inequities. Accordingly, participants insisted that a commitment to diversity must be accompanied by a commitment to equity.

#### Equity Context

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) distinguishes between equity and diversity in its policy *Count Me In: Collecting Human Rights-Based Data* as follows: “Diversity refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and characteristics” and equity refers to “the rights of people to have equal access to goods, services and opportunities in society.” Significantly, the “presence” of a diversity of characteristics does not necessarily entail that people have equal access to opportunities and goods within an organization or social context.

## 3.2.2 Racialized, Gendered and Intersectional Barriers

*“When BIPOC individuals push through the inequalities faced in school, to successfully become architecture graduates, we become a part of a profession that is engrained with oppression for people of colour. This reality makes many of us ‘token’ people of colour in firms, who deal with unconscious biases that rarely allow us to progress up the line of management or get paid fairly.”*

Beyond the lack of diversity, participants cited the presence of structural barriers as limiting the opportunities and advancement of equity-seeking groups within the profession. Further, equity-seeking groups expressed that there is a lack of understanding throughout the profession of “what systemic oppression is and how to go about breaking down barriers.” Resultantly, marginalized members of the profession have the added responsibility of educating dominant members of the profession on oppression.

As one participant expressed: “It might be easier to attract BIPOC members if it didn’t seem like the onus of breaking down systemic oppression is solely in the hands of the BIPOC community.” Though participants stressed the presence of barriers relating to race, ethnicity and gender, some participants also stressed that these issues should be recognized as intersectional – in that these separate barriers are inter-locking and may be especially challenging for those facing multiple barriers to inclusion within the profession.

### *Disconnect from BIPOC communities*

Several participants described the architectural profession as disconnected from Black, Indigenous and racialized communities. One participant described that “BIPOC members who find their way into the architecture profession most often end up adapting to a system that is not set up to accept them or allow them to succeed.”

### **Equity Context**

Oppression refers to a pattern of persistent and systematic disadvantage imposed on large groups of people, in many domains of social life, including employment.

Further, another participant shared that “Because the profession does not have a relationship with BIPOC communities, there is not equal access for people in these communities to enter the architecture profession.” This concern was repeated amongst participants who expressed that the gulf between architecture and BIPOC communities entails that members of BIPOC communities do not see architecture as a possible or viable career path. In particular, participants pointed to a lack of engagement with, and recruitment from, Indigenous communities which is exacerbated by the OAA failing to acknowledge its role in colonization – “it wasn't that long ago that the OAA was handing out design awards to residential school designs.” This disconnect between BIPOC communities and architecture, undermines BIPOC members’ sense of belonging within the profession, as well as contributes to a lack of awareness of historical inequities and cultural contexts within the profession.

#### *Gender roles and caregiving*

Several participants raised concerns regarding the relationship between gender roles and care-giving responsibilities. These participants referred to the need to secure maternity/parental rights and more representation of parenthood within architecture. Another participant described that there is an office culture which requires “long hours and working overtime to appear committed to your job – this is especially detrimental for females with children.” This barrier can be further exacerbated by gendered stereotypes within the construction industry which treat women as less capable. The combined impact of gendered stereotypes and lack of support for caregiving responsibilities can result in gender-related leadership and pay gaps, inequitable access to high-profile projects, differential rates of advancement, and gender-based attrition. As one participant expressed: “Workplaces seem to be supportive of patriarchal practises; there doesn't seem to be urgency in breaking down systemic barriers to elevate female/minority voices.”

### **Equity Context**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy and Guidelines on Discrimination based on Family Status* identifies that though “gender roles are becoming more flexible, caregiving responsibilities remain highly gendered, with women providing the bulk of caregiving for children, aging parents or relatives, or family members with disabilities.”

This experience was underscored by the reflections from one breakout group in particular who shared that:

4 out of the 5 members had their own practise, [ . . . ] We all realized that we either quit a firm to adapt our license in other ways, or we found it more productive and safe to open our own business - regardless of its success. We all believed that we struggled as interns to gain the experience that was necessary, especially the women in our group who became moms while being interns. As women, we experienced difficulties and outward discriminations in regards to moving up in a practise, equality in pay, and in gaining experience towards becoming licensed, especially if you are a woman with children.

#### *Canadian experience requirements*

Several participants referred to 'Canadian experience' requirements within the profession and described these requirements as creating barriers and a double-standard for internationally-trained architects and interns.

Participants described facing challenges "proving the validity of international experience" and stated that meeting the "standards and requests for proof" is a lengthy and involved process. As stated by one participant: "Individuals licensed in other countries (who are generally POC) should not be asked to repeat the entire intern process from scratch." This sentiment was echoed by those who shared experiences of "lost years chasing hours", lack of recognition of international hours, and lack of assistance for international architects with internships or placements. Participants called on the OAA to "break down the stigma against interns and internationally trained architects" and create "a faster and smoother transition for foreign-trained architects to get licensed." Further, participants called for a review of the "protracted licensure process for foreign architects [ . . . ] to see if it is actually discriminatory."

### **Equity Context**

In its 2013 *Policy on Removing the "Canadian Experience" Barrier*, the OHRC took the position "that a strict requirement for 'Canadian experience' is discriminatory on its face and can only be used in limited circumstances."

### 3.2.3 Architectural Practices

*“Architecture has always been an apprenticeship-based profession and education. This creates an inherent imbalance in the power dynamics between younger individuals and older supervisors, which is further problematic when you realize it is the interns who are the more diverse population compared to the mainly White, straight, cis men who run architecture offices.”*

Participants were asked to consider the unique challenges facing the OAA that are tied to architecture as a profession. Several participants referred to a disconnect between the traditional approach to architecture and a new, more diverse, cohort of interns.

Participants described the profession as “older and rooted in tradition, [ . . . with] existing habits [that] are hard to break.” According to participants, these habits reproduce an exclusionary focus on “starchitects” and “studio culture” which “hampers real expression.” Participants saw the need to break from “routine and habit to create a new environment for the future of the profession.” Participants also spoke to the need to “showcase the people behind the work” by publishing all of the names of team members involved in projects, buildings and awards.

Notwithstanding the increased diversity in more recent internship cohorts, participants expressed that there are still limited supports for members from equity-seeking groups such as opportunities for mentorship, advice or support from those more established in the profession. As one participant described, for “the BIPOC community, and for women, this potentially results in a longer progress to licensure, lower wages, acceptance of an inequitable profession, or leaving the profession entirely.” The presence of institutional barriers can contribute to higher attrition rates amongst equity-seeking groups and limit the potential for equity-driven change or the emergence of a more diverse profession. Some participants described practices that impede diversity efforts across the profession such as informal hiring practices within existing networks and limited opportunities for recent graduates.

While some participants described the profession as purposefully exclusive – stating “those making the decisions are benefiting from these decisions” – other participants recognized the pressure on current leaders within the profession to constantly secure projects which then limits EDI and social impact initiatives.

“All these problems derived from the current architecture ecosystem of going low with the fee to get the project and it has a ripple effect in the profession such as understaffing, putting pressure on schedules and having no time to teach/mentor the staff.” Finally, participants identified architecture as a particularly hierarchical profession where one’s status impacts one’s opportunity to be heard and stated that “everyone should be provided a seat and voice at the table.”

### 3.2.4 Pay Inequity/Financial Barriers

*“[The most pressing gap in the architectural profession is] equitable pay, which has inevitable downstream effects on POC entering the profession.”*

Participants repeatedly voiced concerns regarding fair pay, transparent wages, and workplace expectations. Participants described the profession as having “low and inconsistent salary and no overtime rule”, which has particular consequences for those already marginalized within the profession. As one participant expressed: “Long hours and overtime create an exclusionary culture, leading caretakers and those who cannot prioritize work to leave the profession. There are no remote-jobs, no part-time jobs, etc.” Additionally, the expense of attaining an architectural education and going through the licensing process was identified as a barrier, which impacts BIPOC individuals disproportionately and impedes diversity. As expressed by one participant: “More so than racial boundaries, it is actually the financial restrictions that result in many racialized and other marginalized individuals dropping out of the profession in different stages. Architectural education is extremely expensive, and the admission demands of architecture schools already narrows the pools of those who enter architectural education to mostly upper-middle class folks.”

Once in the profession, financial disparities continue to be experienced as gaps in salary, benefits, vacation, and positions. These disparities impact both who enters into the profession, as well as the ability to advance within the profession. Participants shared anecdotal stories of “wealthy classmates starting firms” and asked, “who can really afford to start a firm?” One participant expressed that “when you get to the senior level, it is very hard to raise both position-wise and salary-wise. You should always have an advocate in the leadership position to be your voice at the table, especially if you identify as BIPOC and female.” Participants suggested that more standardization in compensation and in charging for projects would be beneficial to the profession. For instance, one participant suggested that the OAA “publish free salary reports and guidelines so that OAA members are able to assess if they are being properly compensated.”

### 3.3 Education

*“OAA has the responsibility to plant the seed and give tools that educate all members on equity.”*

*“You cannot educate people out of systemic problems”*

Participants described education as “a big part of the pathway forward.” Participants identified the need for equity and anti-racism training at various stages in the profession, starting with architectural education. The education system was described as “heavily rooted in glorified Western cultures/ideologies” which are “then carried into the profession.” Participants suggested that through the inclusion of different architectural styles and global histories within the curriculum, the profession could become more attractive to racialized and Indigenous communities. Participants recommended that efforts be made prior to post-secondary education, such as design internships and study programs for high school students – in particular within communities that are under-represented within the architectural profession. Interestingly, some participants identified that there have been efforts within university curriculums to “break out of the Western canon”, but that these efforts have yet to penetrate standard practices within the profession where there is still reverence for the Western canon. These participants named a disconnect between the breadth of ideas that are invited within school contexts and what is valued within the profession. Resultantly, participants called for stronger partnerships between educational institutions and professional practices in order to ensure that the advancements within the curriculum also push the boundaries of the profession and increase opportunities for professional mentorship.

Within the profession, there were several calls for training, workshops, and professional development on equity, anti-racism and unconscious bias. Some of the participants insisted that this training should be provided by the OAA and be mandatory for all OAA members at all levels. Others recommended that firms be required to undertake anti-racism and equity training, and then report to the OAA on equity initiatives within their firms. There were repeated recommendations to tie equity-based learning to continuing education credits.

By standardizing equity-based education as part of the admissions course and yearly continuing education hours, these recommendations seek to build a common understanding within the profession of how structural barriers and systemic racism function, and how they relate to “wage gaps, lack of opportunities, discrimination and bias” facing marginalized members. One participant further recommended that the continuing education hours could be used to encourage volunteer and mentorship work to facilitate reciprocal learning opportunities between those established within the profession, and members of historically underrepresented groups and underserved communities. Continuing education hours could also be utilized as a tool to recognize the equity-driven work already being undertaken by members within the profession.

Participants recommended accountability mechanisms to ensure that beyond training, leaders within the profession are reporting on equity and diversity efforts undertaken within their firms. Participants called on the OAA to create incentives and establish reporting requirements which encourage “firms to reach milestones of success in creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment.” These incentives and accountability requirements for firms could include equity-based awards, inclusion index reports, and equity-related workplace standards (e.g., human rights policy, equitable access to workplace benefits, accessible practices, etc.). As stated by one group of participants: “The OAA design awards have power. They also give incentives to practices. The OAA needs to mandate that practices meet certain pre-established criteria around equity to be considered for the awards.” Participants further suggested that OAA student awards should no longer be based on GPA, but instead, OAA should award “student projects that tackle pressing social, environmental, equity-based challenges.”

## Equity Context

Research into diversity training initiatives has found that, “short-term educational interventions in general do not change people”, and that diversity training “alone, it does little to change attitudes or behavior” (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, emphasis added).

## 3.4 Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Diverse Talent

*“Having target numbers is important, and it’s a good start but how are they going to be supporting these historically marginalized individuals long term so that they stay with and [succeed] within their respective firms.”*

Participants identified that the lack of diverse representation within the profession is self-perpetuating: “If people don’t see themselves in leadership, how can people aim to stay or see options for advancement?” Accordingly, even if there are more women and BIPOC individuals entering the profession, participants voiced concerns that these individuals would not continue in a profession that does not support their success. Participants described that the lack of diversity within leadership as maintained through nepotistic hiring practices and institutional biases towards “a certain ‘type’ of architect [that is believed] to bring in clients.” Under these conditions, “like attracts like” and individuals from equity-seeking groups are less likely to succeed. Some participants recommended establishing targeted hiring/promotion strategies to ensure a minimum percentage of BIPOC, women and other equity-seeking groups are represented in leadership positions. Other participants feared that the imposition of quotas or diversity targets would result in tokenism.

### Equity Context

In its 2005 *Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination*, the OHRC describes tokenism as The practice of hiring a few members of racialized groups for relatively powerless positions in order to create an appearance of having an inclusive and equitable organization. In reality, these individuals have little voice in the organization. At the same time, they are seen as representative of the group to which they belong and, as a result, their thoughts, beliefs, and actions are likely to be taken as typical of all in their group. Token measures to promote organizational diversity do not work and circumvent substantive change.

## Equity Context

Tokenistic representation of historically underrepresented groups will exacerbate the conditions of “identity/cultural taxation” (Joseph and Hirshfield, 2011) by placing added expectations on individuals to prove their worth and speak on behalf of other members of their identity group. Accordingly, it is essential that representational diversity goals be tied to institutional equity measures that support the success of those from equity-seeking groups.

Participants were split on whether targeted representation-based strategies within the architectural profession would benefit and harm members of historically underrepresented groups. Some participants saw targets as a necessary “first step” to “open the door.” Other participants stated that it is not enough to have a seat at the table without adequate support. As one participant expressed, “It can be very demoralizing when they realize the only reason, they are there is because of tokenism. It is a step but be cognizant of the repercussions and the toll that it can take on the individual placed in the token position.”

The second roundtable (consisting of students and intern architects) was asked to consider in what ways the internship program (IAP) and the licensing process create barriers for equity-seeking groups. Participants shared that “the way the program is set up can lead to toxic environments and power imbalance because of the requirement for very specific types of hours.” One participant spoke to the intern’s dependency on their supervisor to get the required experience, which creates conditions where even if the intern is placed in a toxic environment “they can’t just leave, it’s not that straightforward.”

Participants called on the OAA to govern these relationships and play a stronger role in attracting people to the profession and supporting them through the internship program. Participants shared that the barriers they face discourage entry into the profession. One participant stated: “the closer I come to the end, the less attractive the profession seems to be.”

Interns also expressed feeling powerless due to the single-entry point into the profession, the length of time required for the licensing process – purportedly “3-5 years on average with Canadian M.Arch degrees” – and the impact of being an intern on workplace hierarchies. One participant commented that “This is especially disheartening when you consider that the intern population is significantly more diverse, and inherently has no power in the structure of many offices.” Interns also expressed feeling marginalized within the OAA since they have only one “nonvoting seat on council” and because the ‘self-governing’ strategy of the OAA is dictated by long standing members who are “significantly less diverse” than the intern population. Participants suggested that more equitable practices of evaluation in the internship program (such as blind reviews of intern hours and consideration of research hours) would assist in diversifying the profession, as well as more entry points into the profession from trades (such as licensed technologists).

### 3.5 Building Communities of Support

*“We have a large, diverse intern population that has talked about these issues for YEARS with little to no interest or engagement from the council or others in power. We can’t just keep putting the burden of this work on BIPOC members of our community, who by the way, often can’t even ask for time off work to engage with these conversations while they take place in the middle of the working day.”*

Participants expressed skepticism that there is a real commitment on the part of the profession and the OAA to address systemic inequities. Within the context of this skepticism, additional efforts must be made to identify avenues for engaging in genuine support that is beyond performative or superficial measures. For instance, while many participants were enthusiastic about the roundtable discussions, we also heard feedback that these discussions risk placing “the burden of institutional reform on the community only.” One participant expressed that they “would like to see that the discussion extended past the largely women and BIPOC group who have been burdened with raising their concerns in order to better confront the White male hegemony that is currently comfortably benefiting from a complete lack of awareness and accountability.”

Participants called upon the OAA to identify more avenues for diverse voices to be heard, recognized and compensated. While some participants called for more diversity on Council and committees, other participants shared that individuals from equity-seeking groups “don’t feel like they will be respected in the space” and so are unwilling to participate until the OAA demonstrates greater accountability to equity and anti-racism concerns.

Participants suggested that the OAA provide financial support, such as creating scholarships and research opportunities “aimed at addressing systemic concerns at a baseline level.” While some participants were eager for additional forums to connect with other members of equity-seeking groups, others expressed that the onus should be on leaders within the profession to “do their homework to understand systemic barriers” and stop offloading institutional responsibility on to equity-seeking groups. As articulated by one participant: “We need to make it mandatory – not voluntary – for licensed OAA members to be part of these conversations. As it stands, the burden is entirely on BIPOC and other marginalized members of our community, who consistently have to advocate for themselves while under pressure.” Participants suggested that the OAA could share and sponsor equity-seeking communities within the profession and take guidance from organizations and networks already engaged in this work, such as Black Architects and Interior Designers Association Canada (BAIDA) and Building Equality in Architecture Toronto (BEAT).

A number of participants averred that “mentorship is key” and suggested that the OAA develop a Mentorship Toolkit that could be made available to firms and HR groups. One group of participants stated that the “OAA needs to be more supportive and help with the mentorship and the intern programs by matching individuals in the system [. . .] as part of the mentors’ continued education.” Participants described the existing mentorship framework as overly reliant on individuals to reach out and find mentors, which places internationally-trained architects and those without existing connections at a disadvantage.

Participants further suggested that the OAA could sponsor existing professional mentorship programs, connect with retired architects, and create incentives for firms who commit to mentorship.

Participants emphasized that mentorship could be used as a tool to create “diversity amongst the leaders in the profession”, and to ensure architects from equity-seeking groups are provided with opportunities to “shadow a leader/partner/principal/associate of a firm, in order to understand the roles and responsibilities involved in climbing the ladder.” Repeatedly, participants declared that “strong mentorship = stronger profession” and “Mentorship Mentorship Mentorship should be the mantra.”

Finally, many participants called on the OAA to play a more active role in bringing about equitable change. Participants stated, “that before the OAA can be a catalyst, they need to be aware of its history, its policies, its licensure”, and take responsibility for upholding inequitable systems. Participants identified the need for more critical public engagement in architecture – such as showcasing topics and initiatives that consider social responsibility, urban planning for historically-marginalized communities, and environmental racism. As expressed by one participant: “The OAA has the means to regulate the profession. Our profession results in the physical manifestation of the values of our society as our built environment. In this way, the OAA holds extraordinary potential and responsibility to facilitate a built world that reflects our society and the principles of equity.”

### 3.6 Demographic Data Collection

*“I would like to see the OAA begin collecting data regarding minority architects. If this happens, there will be a baseline to grow from and measure the success of the OAA’s efforts. I would caution that the OAA should collect this data with the knowledge that it takes a lot of courage for the BIPOC members to speak up and provide personal information. We are happy to provide this information to the OAA because we are trusting that you will be active and bold in making significant changes to the system.”*

Roundtable participants were informed that, in September, OAA Council agreed to implement a demographic survey of its members that collects race-based and other equity relevant data to provide a baseline for measuring progress as the Association works to better ensure equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the profession.

There was broad consensus amongst participants that demographic data collection is necessary in order to identify, track and ameliorate inequities and racial disparities within the profession and that this collection should take place annually. One participant shared that “data collection is a great opportunity to live up to their rhetoric, and the OAA has the power to bring that together and be transparent.” While there is broad support for the collection of demographic data, participants identified concerns regarding what the OAA is going to do with the data they collect and how it will be shared with membership.

Some participants voiced concerns that BIPOC members would be overrepresented in a voluntary data collection exercise, “since they are the most likely ones to respond.” Additionally, some participants worried that “data can feel like a stalling tactic and lead to long periods of inaction.” Participants identified that while the initial data collection and analysis is taking place, it is still possible for the OAA to advance work on other identified equity issues.

Participants expressed that the data collected should not be restricted to race-based data, but that it should be broadened to include intersecting human rights grounds. Participants differentiated between race and ethnicity and recommended that the survey capture both identity categories. This is consistent with the approach set by the Ontario Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism, which differentiates between race and ethnic categories by asking separate questions, whereas the Canadian census categories conflate race, ethnicity and nationality. Participants also identified that the survey should include questions that go beyond the binary categories of male and female to reflect the full spectrum of gender and help increase trans-visibility and disrupt cisnormativity within the profession. Additionally, participants spoke of a generational divide within the profession, which could be examined further through age-related categories. Beyond identity categories, participants suggested that the data could be used to capture professional paths, retention challenges and experiences of workplace processes (such as hiring and advancement). Participants were particularly interested in seeing wage transparency incorporated into the demographic survey as “anonymous salary data correlated to data on demographics.” Participants described the absence of pay standards and wage transparency, as intimately tied to structural barriers within the profession. In addition to the OAA surveying membership directly, participants suggested that architectural firms should be required to report on equity measures (including outreach and mentorship initiatives).

As described by one participant: “The data collected by the OAA should include surveys for firms that record HR policies and information on what is currently taking place regarding equity in firms.” This recommendation was articulated differently by another participant, who stated that:

I do not believe that we can make change for our profession without also understanding how the leaders of architectural firms are running their practice, and if there are discrepancies in the hiring process, in the wage gaps, in annual staff reviews (if staff are asking to grow and move up), and in the pyramid of power. It would be great to somehow implement yearly practice audits, which would allow transparency in highlighting how practices and their leaders are running their offices. Within this audit, a firm should be able to address their hiring process, salaries of individuals, yearly staff assessments, promotions/hierarchy of their office, and what type of education/outreach efforts that they participated in or encouraged. Leaders should be expected to reinforce conversations and reflection in regards to discrimination and inclusion. If the OAA begins to collect information about the structure of firms, then a baseline can be established to understand how to best implement policies and equity for the OAA to grow in a [positive] and inclusive way.

## Equity Context

Both the OHRC and the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD) are supportive of the collection of demographic data for equity purposes. According to the OHRC, human rights-based data collection should be conducted for the following purposes:

- Monitor and evaluate discrimination
- Identify and remove systemic barriers
- Lessen or prevent disadvantage
- Promote substantive equality for people identified by Code grounds

Further, the *Anti-Racism Data Standards* developed by the ARD require that public service organizations publically report on the data they collected, while ensuring that the data is de-identified. Data should be shared in a manner that fosters community trust and accountability and ensures meaningful engagement with those most adversely impacted by racism and structural inequities. Engagement with equity-seeking members is necessary to contextualize data findings within lived experiences and provide opportunities for feedback and response.

Yet another participant suggested that not only should the OAA require firms to report on equity measures, but that these firms should also report on career progression within their firms (including the remuneration and benefits that employees would typically get at various milestones).

It was recommended that this data be made available to the membership to enable them to foresee what their career and remuneration graph would be if they joined the firm. Finally, the OAA should publically recognize firms with who engage in equity initiatives, and where there is evidence of support for career progression (such as a high number of students becoming licensed).

## 4. PATH FORWARD

*"We have had the courage to participate at the roundtable and reflect back on some tough and sensitive issues. Our comments and views during the roundtable and as part of this survey should be treated as confidential by OAA and all members who participated. These comments and suggestions should not be lost in paperwork or a report, but there needs to be some implementation. If the OAA checks its membership, the colour of OAA is changing. OAA needs to assist in better integration so the next generation of leadership does not lay its foundation on bitter experiences."*

Participants expressed feeling encouraged that the OAA convened these discussions and committed to the collection of demographic data. Comments included:

- Thank you to the leadership for hearing us out.
- It was a great opportunity and would love to see more from this.
- Thanks to OAA for providing this platform.
- This was a good event and I am pleased that the OAA has finally taken this crucial step in initiating a dialogue.

However, participants were also clear that these conversations must translate into action:

- It is a welcome beginning and I look forward to the concrete, actionable items that will be put forward.
- It was a very important first step. The momentum has to be maintained to instill change.

- Kudos to the OAA for working to turn our profession around and bringing it into the 21st century. But it's not keeping pace with the rest of the world. If we don't have bolder and more decisive leadership like that of the current council, all this work will be for naught.

Further, participants expressed that the roundtable discussions, at times, “felt like an echo chamber” in that the conversations were taking place only amongst those who were already committed to implementing equity measures and were from equity-seeking groups. Accordingly, participants maintained that the path forward must involve those members of the profession who do not currently understand the value of equity, inclusion and diversity. Participants stated that “equity work needs to be more formalized and [built into the OAA’s] mandate because currently, it is not official.” Even more, in order to support the continuity of equity-driven change and demographic data collection, participants recommended that the OAA appoint a Chief Diversity Officer and/or identify an equity lead with a well-resourced team to ensure the sustainability and formalization of equity work.

As noted above, participants were also keen to see an intersectional approach to equity work that recognizes that structural inequities such as racism and sexism are connected to, and sustained by, interlocking oppressions such as ableism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity and ageism. While many of the participants focused on the barriers facing women and BIPOC members, there were also calls to draw greater attention to communities whose absence from the profession is sustained by being left out of the conversation. For example, participants stressed that inequitable access health benefits within the profession has particular impacts on trans members and members with visible and invisible disabilities.

Finally, participants assert that the path forward must also look backward in order to acknowledge historical inequities and structural barriers built into the OAA. Participants stated that “we need the OAA to start with itself and its role in perpetuating problems instead of trying to jump into being a ‘catalyst’ for change.” By looking both inward and backward, the OAA will be better equipped to dismantle structural barriers and to advance equity, inclusion and diversity throughout the profession.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the concerns and insights offered by participants, as well as their suggestions as to how to move forward. As these recommendations are derived from a small sample of the overall membership and are not the result of a thorough assessment of the OAA's current organizational practices, these recommendations should be explored in consideration of the OAA's long-term strategic goals, operational constraints, and regulatory mandate.

The recommendations are all aimed at a consultative approach to equity, inclusion and diversity work that seeks to balance the need for community engagement against limiting the demands placed on equity-seeking groups within the profession. While these recommendations are necessarily high-level, they are also informed by more targeted suggestions offered by roundtable participants through the post-roundtable survey. A complete list of the action items identified in the survey is included as Appendix B.

- 1.** In order to attend to concerns of the lack of diverse voices within the profession, the OAA should make a sustained and conscious effort to showcase the work and perspectives of equity-seeking members by creating forums, hosting webinars, and establishing awards and recognition. The OAA should further lend its platform in support of equity-seeking initiatives.
- 2.** The OAA should work actively to form connections with underserved and underrepresented communities by establishing scholarships, internships, and mentorship opportunities for youth within equity-seeking communities. The OAA should also encourage research and projects that promote community engagement and incorporate equity into the built environment.
- 3.** The OAA should play a role in establishing and supporting industry standards around human resources and human rights policies and procedures. These standards should be especially attentive to accommodation processes, equitable access to workplace benefits, and maternity/parental leave.
- 4.** The OAA should conduct a consultative review of the licensure process for internationally-trained architects from a human rights and equity perspective.

**5.** The OAA should work to ameliorate the financial barriers which both prevent entry into and continuation and advancement within, the profession. This recommendation could include creating or encouraging student bursaries, establishing pay and benefits standards, and promoting wage transparency.

**6.** In order to promote an understanding of equity, inclusion and diversity throughout the profession, the OAA should:

- establish stronger partnerships between educational institutions and architectural firms while encouraging greater diversity in the curriculum and within professional practices;
- embed equity and anti-racism training into the continuing education requirements; and
- explore the use of continuing education requirements to encourage equity-based research and community work.

**7.** In order to support the recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse talent within the profession, the OAA should create incentives and accountability requirements for firms. These could include equity-based awards, inclusion index reports, and equity-related workplace standards.

**8.** In consultation with members of equity-seeking groups and professional affinity networks, the OAA should explore the use of representational targets on the Council and amongst leadership within the profession. It is essential that representational diversity goals be tied to institutional equity measures that support the success of those from equity-seeking groups and avoid tokenism.

**9.** The OAA should conduct a consultative review of the internship program, with input from current and past interns and focused attention to equity concerns. The review should establish short-term and long-term strategies to support the success of equity-seeking groups through the internship process, and identify a mechanism through which interns can report inequitable treatment by supervisors to the OAA.

**10.** The OAA should identify more avenues for members of equity-seeking groups to be heard, recognized and compensated, such as:

- establishing safe and accessible channels to voice concerns to the OAA;
- recognizing, profiling and supporting the equity work already underway within the profession; and
- creating compensated opportunities to do equity-based work for the OAA, such as committee work.

**11.** The OAA should develop a more robust mentorship program that connects those established within the profession with newer members, interns, students, and internationally-trained architects who do not have pre-existing professional networks. As part of the mentorship program, the OAA should provide mentors, schools and firms with a mentorship toolkit.

**12.** The OAA should encourage critical public engagement in architecture and be an advocate for equitable and inclusive practices, such as by showcasing topics and initiatives that explore social responsibility, urban planning for historically-marginalized communities, and environmental racism.

**13.** The OAA should ensure that its approach to data collection is informed by human rights and anti-racism best practices, and respects the dignity and privacy of the membership. Further, the long-term data collection framework should:

- take an intersectional approach to understand and analyzing demographic data;
- incorporate wage transparency and professional advancement;
- require firm-level reporting based on inclusion indexes; and
- include public de-identified reporting.

**14.** In order to implement the above recommendations, the OAA should formalize its equity mandate and build the internal capacity to promote equity-initiatives, track progress in relation to diversity and inclusion, and ensure accountability for inequitable practices within the profession. This could be achieved through the appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer and/or the establishment of a resourced equity team.

## 6. GLOSSARY

**BIPOC** is an acronym for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. It is used to differentiate among racialized people and draws attention to those identified within the Ontario Anti-Racism Act as being “most adversely impacted by systemic racism, including Indigenous and Black communities.” The acronym is also at times presented as IBPOC to prioritize the experiences of Indigenous communities and draw attention to Truth and Reconciliation commitments.

**Cisgender and cisnormativity:** Most people are “cisgender” (not trans); that is, their gender identity is in line with or “matches” the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity (“cis” meaning “the same as”) refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are cisgender and that everyone accepts this as “the norm.” The term “cisnormativity” is used to describe prejudice against trans people that is less overt or direct and more widespread or systemic in society, organizations, and institutions. This form of systemic prejudice may even be unintentional and unrecognized by the people or organizations responsible.

**Diversity** refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and characteristics. Diversity as a descriptor can be applied to a group of people or an organization but should not be used to describe an individual.

**Equity** refers to the rights of people to have equal access to goods, services and opportunities in society.

**Equity-seeking groups** are communities that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

**Ethnic groups** refer to a person's ethnic or cultural origins. Ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic, and/or religious characteristics.

**Intersectionality** is the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, opportunities, and/or power imbalances. An intersectional analysis enables a better understanding of the impacts of any one particular systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors.

**Racialized** (person or group) can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as "visible minorities" under the Canadian census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.

**Trans or transgender:** An umbrella term that describes people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man in society. "Trans" can mean transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over the gender spectrum. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross-dressers, or gender non-conforming (gender variant or genderqueer). "Trans" includes people whose gender identity is different from the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex. Trans people may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments, such as hormone therapy and a range of surgical procedures, to align their bodies with their internally felt gender identity.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF  
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# SURVEY RESULTS

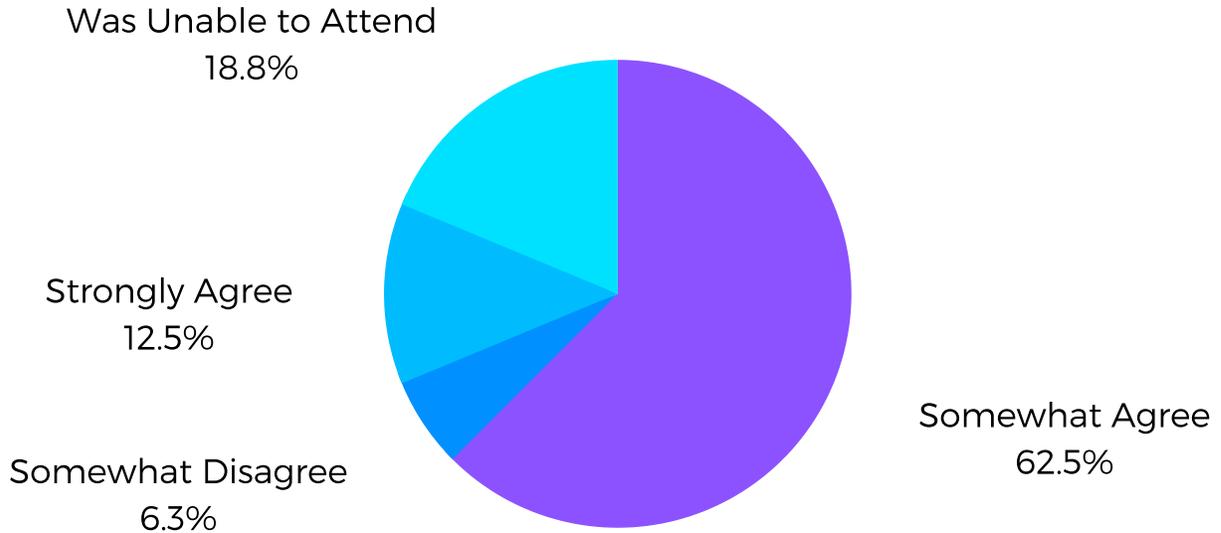
EQUITY INCLUSION & DIVERSITY  
ROUNDTABLE

APPENDIX A

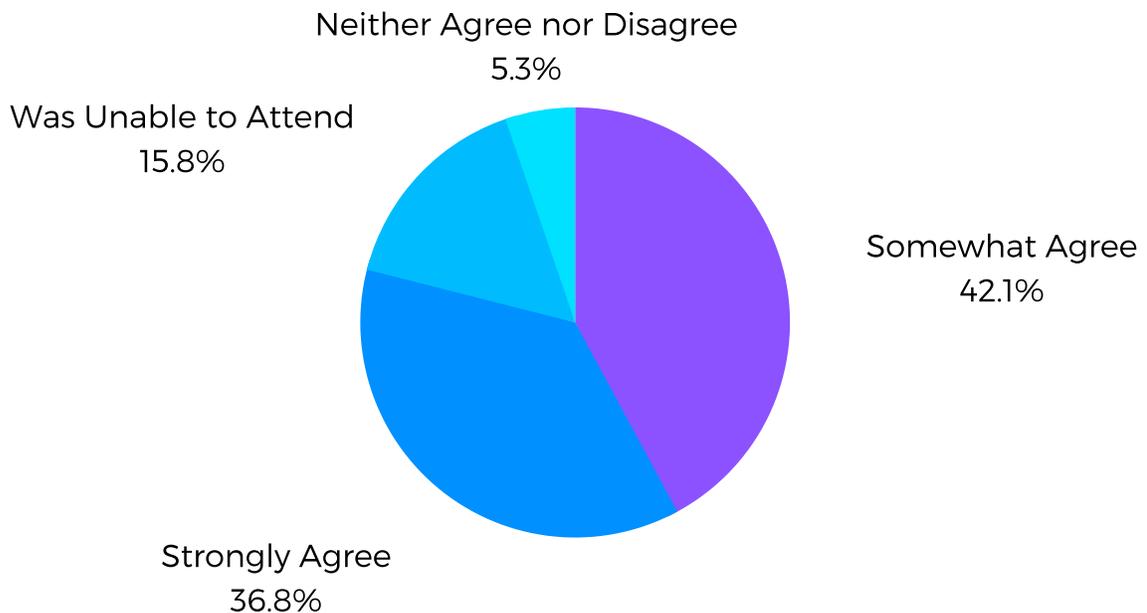
# SURVEY RESULTS

**Q1: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I had an opportunity to voice my concerns during the Roundtable:**

## Round Table #1



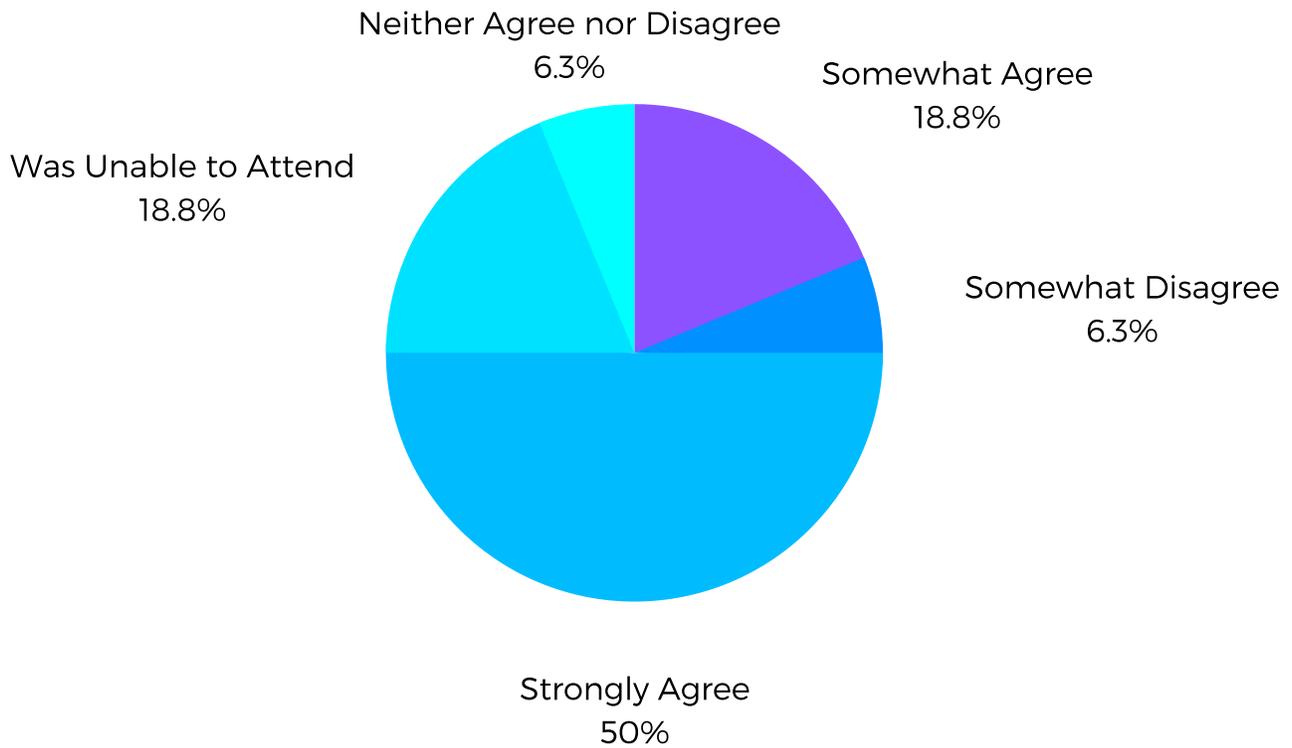
## Round Table #2



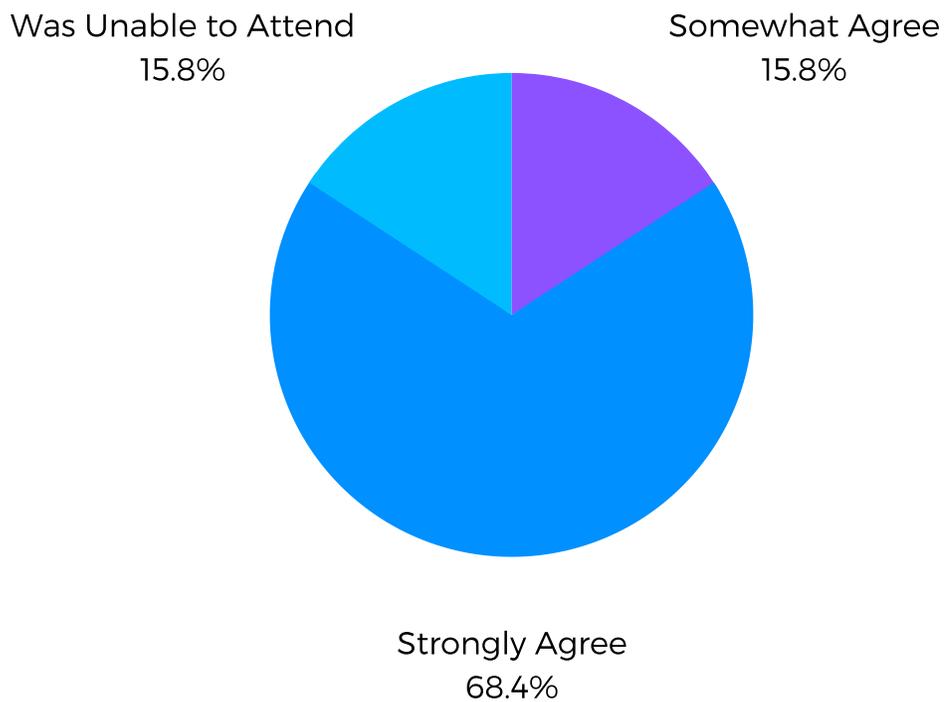
# SURVEY RESULTS

Q2: The topics that were covered were important to me:

## Round Table #1



## Round Table #2

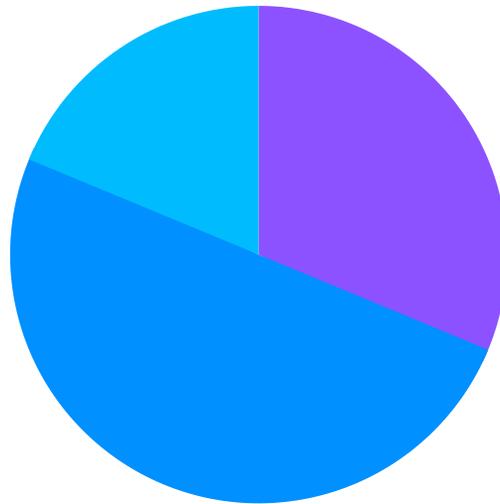


# SURVEY RESULTS

**Q3: The discussion was handled with sincerity and respect:**

## Round Table #1

Was Unable to Attend  
18.8%

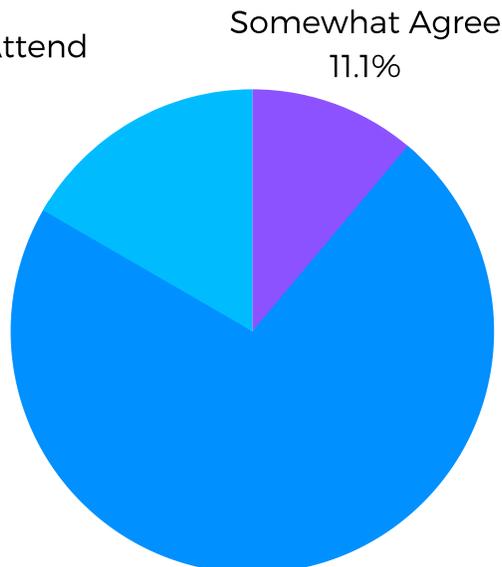


Somewhat Agree  
31.3%

Strongly Agree  
50%

## Round Table #2

Was Unable to Attend  
16.7%



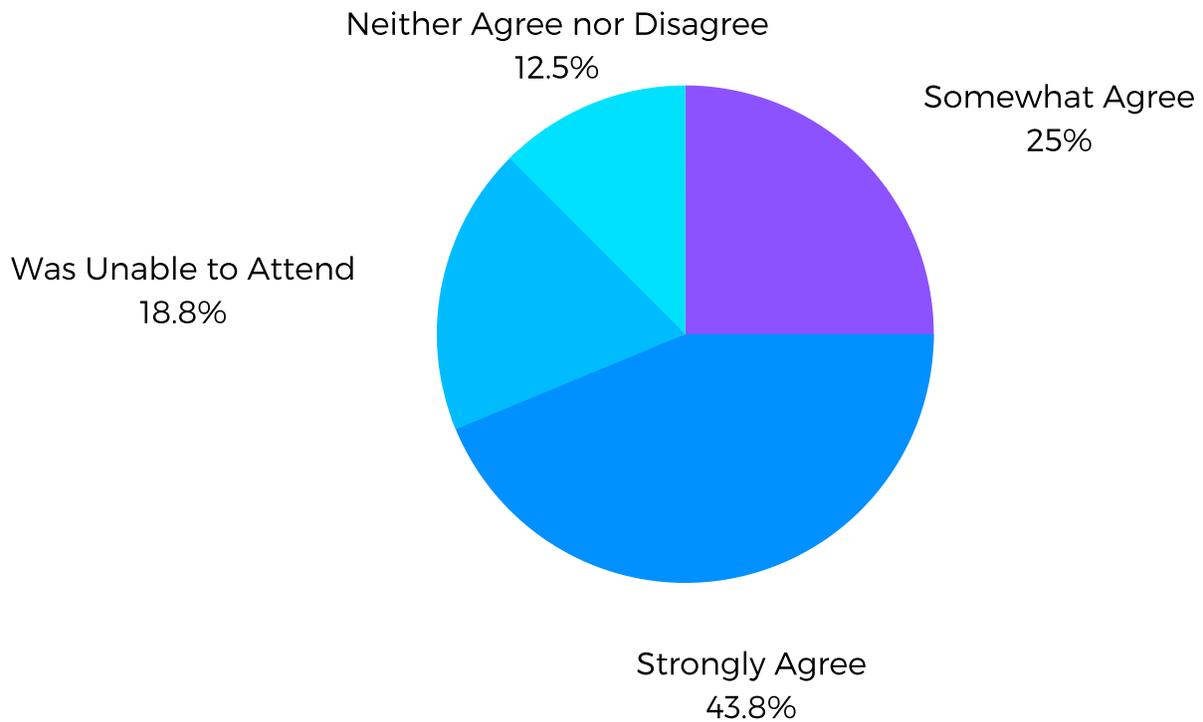
Somewhat Agree  
11.1%

Strongly Agree  
72.2%

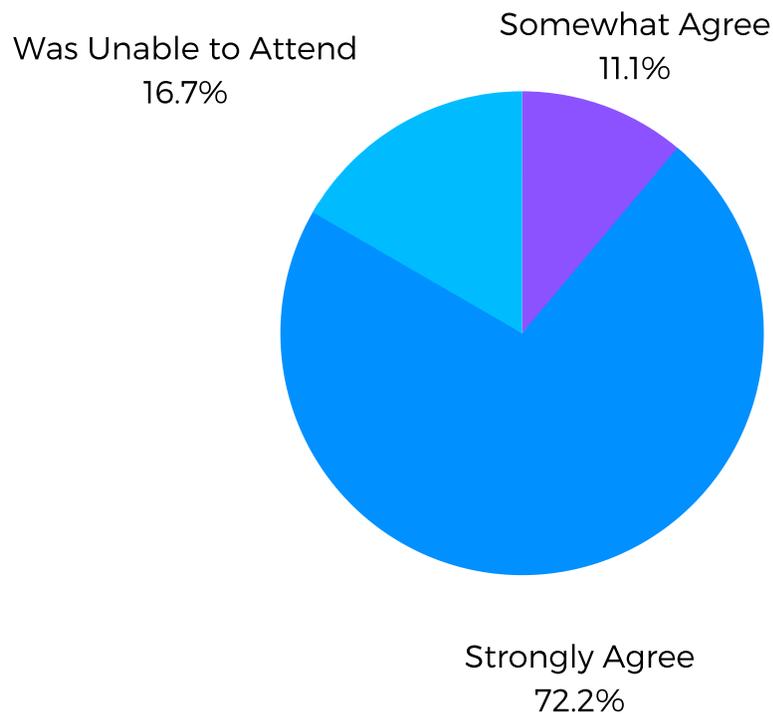
# SURVEY RESULTS

**Q4: Having participated in this Roundtable, I plan on engaging more with OAA activities in the future?:**

## Round Table #1



## Round Table #2



# NOTABLE RESPONSES

## Q5: From your perspective, what are the most pressing equity gaps within the architectural professions?

**Respondents identified gaps between members of all historically marginalized groups and that these issues are intersectional rather than stand-alone issues. Further specific comments are listed below:**

- There is a huge gap between all the efforts I made before becoming an OAA member and the public recognition afterwards.
- There is a huge gap between the promotion and protection of OAA members from OAA and those of other associations, such as AIBC, PEO, etc.
- Expensive Licensure Process, lack of female and/or minority leadership roles, no Canadian experience rules for foreign-trained architects.
- Most partners of architecture firms are white males. Pay, promotion and networking opportunities are skewed towards that demographic.
- Before 2020, the lack of acknowledgment of minorities in architecture and a lack of exposure to minority communities to let them know of this possible career path.
- Most relevant to me, are there any trans architects (specifically trans women and trans women of colour architects)? Not having any data on this is pressing.
- Engaging with and recruiting from indigenous communities.
- Equitable pay, which has inevitable downstream effects on POC entering the profession.
- Lack of awareness and acknowledgement from those within the profession on the meaning of equity and how privilege has played a role in their success.
- Long hours and overtime create an exclusionary culture, leading caretakers and those who cannot prioritize work to leave the profession. There are no remote-jobs, no part-time jobs, etc.
- Individuals licensed in other countries (who are generally POC) should not be asked to repeat the entire intern process from scratch
- Intern architects only have a nonvoting seat on the council and absolutely have no power. This is while the intern population is significantly more diverse than the rest of the OAA.

# NOTABLE RESPONSES

## Q6: What are two or three actions or priorities you would like to see the OAA commit to?

**Respondents identified multiple areas in which the OAA could take action to benefit the profession as a whole. Further specific comments are listed below:**

- Partner with a Human Resources firm to assist your members (interns and licensed architects) with support and guidance if they are faced with polarizing treatment
- The hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer within the OAA would be ideal in understanding how to enable equality in the profession of architecture from the top down.
- Educating members on the root of systemic racism and how it is set up in our society and the architecture profession.
- OAA could establish an outreach program that promotes relationships within youth groups and high schools.
- The OAA could begin collecting data regarding minority architects - and continue monitoring to identify equitable employers/firms.
- I would like to see the OAA listen to communities that have been established to create support and visibility for marginalized members.
- Proactive measures to counter inequities in our profession, including technology, the building code, new and innovative construction methods, sustainable business practices, etc.
- OAA can mandate that when architects publish work than they mention the names of everyone in the team.
- OAA can put real data charts about firms, noting how members have progressed within firms, including remuneration and benefits that employees would typically get at various milestones.
- Add under the ethics for OAA partnered architecture firms 'have health insurance coverage for trans medical needs that are excluded from the provincial plans'.
- Wage standards and transparency for all firms have firms report on equity issues.
- Mandatory cultural training for all licensed architects.
- OAA awards in schools should focus on individuals with underrepresented backgrounds and not be inherently grades-based (BIPOC and LGTBQ+ individuals can often be discriminated towards directly and indirectly in the grading system and those with financial security often do better in architecture schools anyway).

# NOTABLE RESPONSES

## Q7: Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Roundtable?

**Respondents identified ways in which the conversations were both helpful and how they were hindered. Further specific comments are listed below:**

- It is no surprise that the virtual room consisted primarily of younger women of diverse backgrounds.
- The OAA needs to start valuing the younger members more and providing more to equalize and maintain more of us for the long run especially because a career and living can now be made with a simple BCIN without all the red tape and barriers within the profession.
- This was a good event and I am pleased that the OAA has finally taken this crucial step in initiating a dialogue, but it felt like an echo chamber.
- The OAA has the means to regulate the profession. Our profession results in the physical manifestation of the values of our society as our built environment. In this way, the OAA holds extraordinary potential and responsibility to facilitate a built world that reflects our society and the principles of equity.
- Having had the discussion amongst licensed architects would have further enriched and brought new ideas forward.
- I would like to see that the discussion extends past the largely women and BIPOC group who have been burdened with raising their concerns in order to better confront the white male hegemony that is currently comfortably benefiting from a complete lack of awareness and accountability.
- Our comments and views during the roundtable and as part of this survey should be treated as confidential by OAA and all members who participated.
- These comments and suggestions should not be lost in paperwork or a report, but there needs to be some implementation.
- It was a very important first step. The momentum has to be maintained to instill change. Looking forward to the report.
- The OAA should commit to actionable steps based on the Roundtable and following report.
- It was a great opportunity and would love to see more from this
- When it comes to diversity and equity I think the lack of knowledge and exposure to people that are different from us (or in different situations than us) is a roadblock to progress. It will be great if the OAA could set up some classes or cultural events to facilitate this, maybe with continuing education credits as an incentive.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF  
ARCHITECTS

# **SURVEY FEEDBACK ROLLUP**

EQUITY INCLUSION & DIVERSITY  
ROUNDTABLE

APPENDIX B

# WHAT ARE TWO OR THREE ACTIONS OR PRIORITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE OAA COMMIT TO?

1.
  - Add gender minority options to the OAA membership survey to gain data.
  - Add under the ethics for OAA partnered architecture firms 'have health insurance coverage for trans medical needs that are excluded from the provincial plans'.
  - No longer give the OAA student awards based on GPA, as GPA in architectural education is based on subjective review processes and therefore GPA is a reflection of systemic biases in the education system rather than quality or ingenuity of ones work. Make the OAA awards about how student projects tackle the pressing social, environmental, equity based challenges.
2.
  - Equity for age related discrimination
3.
  - Same voting and representation for rights of interns within OAA, change "intern" demeaning terminology, modernize traditional methods and ideology of OAA to look towards a more progressive self-governing strategy rather than the traditionalist approach, required mentoring of newer members by fellows and older standing members.
4.
  - Establish a mentoring program to help guide newcomers through the process of getting licensed; inspire, engage with and recruit from high schools in indigenous communities in Ontario and the territories.
5.
  - Pay / wage
  - Transparency amongst members; changes to IAP to make it safer and more roductive
6.
  - Take a stance and advise members according to the beliefs you stand behind and become more inclusive to those within the field but outside the profession.
7.
  - More diversity and openly-equal opportunities all over (not just student), even though its said there the equity and equality is present, there is very little representation visible. More conversations about how the community engagement can be further enhanced.
8.
  - Require all offices to do equity and anti-racism training, and report to the OAA about the training completed each year. Training could be through OAA-run courses, or through private sessions organized by the office itself. Principals and upper management must attend training.
  - Institute more equitable practices of evaluation in the internship program.
  - Publish free salary reports and guidelines so that OAA members are able to assess if they are being properly compensated.

- Initiatives to better represent and encourage architecture by and for marginalized communities - scholarships for students of marginalized communities, outreach at the high school level to marginalized communities to educate about and promote the profession, adjusting criteria for OAA / other awards to better recognize work that is done for or by marginalized communities, bursaries and support for women / BIPOC starting their own practice, etc
- 9.
- Reexamining the licensure process and studying where licensure candidates drop off in order to encourage licensure from women and international candidates. Also studying why architecture graduates from domestic schools decline to pursue licensure. The problem is not a lack of architects, it is the makeup of architects
  - Establishing standards for salaries and parental leave to ensure that employees are not exploited, and hold the profession to a higher standard across the board

- Help to obtain work in practices with support from the OAA.
  - Inclusivity practice for all races and Colour.
  - Openness within practices, to inform on how they are being more inclusive.
    - Providing hiring and education opportunities to facilitate internship, training, and licensure
- 10.
- Organizing conferences to share knowledge, research topics, and connect people in the field.
  - Regulating minimum salaries and protection of rights for interns and architects.
  - Considering academic experiences such as masters and Ph.Ds in the licensure process, as well as teaching experiences. Maybe opening an Architectural Educators license.

- The OAA should designate an officer to whom members can reach out to with various concern within the field, the officer should also follow up.
  - Secondly, the path to licensure (especially for foreign trained architects), help with the mentor search and mentorship for students who do not have anyone in working in the profession in their circles. The licensing process can be complex at times for foreign trained architects and many of us don't quite understand it well.
  - Lastly, I think most members will like to feel heard. The OAA should put a plan of action to address members concerns.
- 11.

- Addressing pay equity and transparency in the profession
  - Creating/ensuring that architectural firms address equity, anti-racism, and anti-black racism training
  - Reviewing/revising the IAP process to consider a number of equity barriers.
- 12.

- Implement annual demographic survey (beyond the scope of race and ethnicity) of its members AND curating a strategy report responding to the survey results and establishes wage standards, promote wage transparency, and include clear, measurable incentives and policy recommendations aimed at removing structural barriers within the profession.
  - Share and sponsor BIPOC communities in this profession, do the research and establish realistic goals, and set the standards (consider BAIDA's call)
- 13.

- The OAA needs to stand firm to ensure firms do not take advantage of new comers to Canada or other BIPOC individuals (especially interns) by underpaying them, the OAA needs to demand standard policies across architecture firms for pay.
- Standardize health care policies - especially for trans individuals and others with conditions that OHIP does not cover. Lack of health care access pushes many outside of the profession.
- Standardized Maternity/Paternity pay.
- The OAA needs to keep demographic data of its members (including gender diversity) and compare it to demographics from architecture schools, the intern program, licensed architects, and principles to identify pinching points that pushes individuals outside of the practice
- Intern architects need more REAL representation on council, not just one NON-VOTING seat that in effect can't do much.

14.

- Mandatory cultural training for all licensed architects
- Council members should be part of these conversations and get involved, we won't fix anything if the main team working to improve architectural practice in Ontario consists of non-architects (a lawyer and a political science phd candidate who while well-informed and well-meaning, don't actually know anything about how architecture is practiced)
- The conversations around equity needs to happen between interns (who, again, ARE the main source of diversity) and the licensed population and from principles (who are mainly straight white men who don't engage with these conversations)
- OAA awards in schools should focus on individuals with underrepresented backgrounds and not be inherently grades-based (BIPOC and LGTBTQ+ individuals can often be discriminated towards directly and indirectly in the grading system and those with financial security often do better in architecture schools anyway)
- OAA awards for built projects / practices should not go to firms which have proven themselves not to be inclusive in practice through any of the discriminatory actions mentioned above. OAA must incentive good practice for architecture firms.

15.

- Mandatory mentoring as part of con-ed, but senior architects are assigned a mentee so there is no bias in choice and there is equal access to professionals.
- Having more committees members from diverse backgrounds, who have a real say/vote and don't need to have to be licensed yet.

16.

- Undertake an historical analysis;
- Implement a DEI in future OAA yearly conference;
- Mandate credit contED on DEI

17.

- Incentives to companies to promote the hiring of diverse candidates especially new comers to the country.
- Ongoing survey to identify equitable employers.
- Active involvement to bring about legislative changes to promote the diversity and inclusion in the profession.

18.

- More awareness, training and mentorship.

- OAA can make a big difference, some ways are
  - OAA needs to provide more tools for Mentorship within and outside the work environment. Maybe involve retired architects, or give incentives or highlight firms who commit to mentorship. Maybe a program where members can shadow seniors. Provide opportunities for interns who are not able to get the hours at the firms. Mentorship cannot be limited to interns it is a lifelong process. Strong mentorship = Stronger profession.
- 19.
- OAA can mandate that when architects publish work that they mention the names of everyone in the team. This serves the same purpose as a publication or a patent for other occupations. This would be beneficial to employees who work with employers that write in the hiring documents that when candidates leave the firm they will not be provided with any copies of work or given work references.
  - OAA can provide Canadian trained architects a platform equal to BEFA so there is no grudge against candidates becoming licensed through BEFA. The number of foreign trained interns and architects is increasing at a rapid rate, a support system and mentorship is much needed for a healthy profession.
  - OAA can put real data charts about firms, noting how members have progressed within firms, including remuneration and benefits that employees would typically get at various milestones. This data should be available to the members so that they can foresee what their career & remuneration graph would be if they joined the firm. OAA should give shoutout and benefits to firms where there is a high number of students becoming licensed and visa versa should maybe question firms where interns never become licensed.

- 20.
- Offer more courses annually that address Inclusion + Equity.
  - Adjust how council is run that allows it to be more accessible position to more people.

- 21.
- Yearly demographic surveys with published results; guidelines/resources for firms

- 22.
- To promote public awareness of architectural profession. Only when members are widely respected can they treat their subordinates more equally.
  - To engage a lawyer to review the existing OAA architect act and re-root all terms into the Canadian common law.

- 23.
- Demographic data, employment engagement/ survey

- 24.
- Become advocates for the OAA Licensure Process, offer financial aid to interns who cannot afford the process.
  - Hold firms accountable for lack of female and/or minority leaders within their firm organization structure.
  - Allow more licensure opportunities to foreign trained architects, demystify the process.

- 25.
- Addressing the wage gap in the profession and holding firms accountable to equal pay for equal work, provide young architects with salary information on the website based on surveys and market data, provide more accessible, free continuing education content related to diversity

- 26.
- Stream A:
    - Do a holistic survey to collect as much as first hand data.
    - Analyze the data.
    - Strategize as per the findings of the survey
  - Stream B: is to act upon the already discussed issues like
    - Allocate compensation for overtime work,
    - No long hour expectations from staff by understaffing the project and force
    - The leadership to do a fair staffing as per the deliverables/schedule of the projects
    - Allocate time for capacity building and do not expect the staff to learn softwares and other things in their own time and budget... main victims of all the above issues are BIPOC and immigrant populations with no voice and courage to stand up against the traditional system ...

- 27.
- The promotion of women and BIPOC architects in the OAA and in the media is a big one. OAA can have a running list of firms who have women and BIPOC architects in leading positions, not just meet a certain quota. There can be highlights of the work of these architects, but also the meandering road they took to get there. It would be good to hear the choices they made, the opportunities missed and the regrets, in addition to their achievements. The spotlight has been on white male architects for so long that it is high time to shift it.
  - Continuing Ed should have a segment on EDI, and it may even need to be a series of mandatory, in-person course. Otherwise, the white male partner simply gets a junior to take the course for them.
  - Women and BIPOC architects need to be much more prevalent in universities. It is discouraging for all students to see predominantly white male professors. Following that trend, high school students, especially those in very diverse neighbourhoods, need to see that architecture is a real choice. For them to consider that, they need to see role models that they can relate to and model themselves after.
  - A mentorship program for current, emerging architects would be very helpful and OAA is poised to be the liaison for such a program.

- 28.
- Proactive measures to counter inequities in our profession. Old white men who have not kept up with changes in the profession, like technology, the building code, new and innovative construction methods, sustainable business practices, etc. should not be allowed to exploit the younger generation and maintain the status quo of inequalities. ConEd should be structured to mandate con-ed in core competencies and evolving/innovative developments in our industry. Or, just as drivers are retested at a certain age, so should architects.

28.

- If the old white men architects were to take the EXAC today, most would fail. They stick fast to their privileged positions by preying on the young architects who are increasingly of diverse backgrounds to do their work for insulting wages. The architectural profession in Ontario survives by eating its young. This has led to the erosion of the profession of architecture in Ontario. OAA's complacency in this is ultimately leading to public harm.

29.

- I hope you don't mind, but I have more than 3 actions to write about.
- The OAA is primarily made up of small to mid sized firms who do not employ HR staff. This makes many of your members vulnerable to discrimination, biases, unequal treatment or worse. We are a self governing body that partners with an insurance company that solely deals with architects and OAA practices. I believe it would be helpful to partner with a Human Resources firm to assist your members (interns and licensed architects) with support and guidance if they are faced with polarizing treatment. As previously mentioned, many experiences felt by women and BIPOC members result in trauma and fear, and I believe support needs to be provided to those members outside of their places of employment. An external HR firm could also conduct exit interviews to understand why women or the BIPOC members are leaving jobs. I believe this will assist in collecting data on real struggles, which can enforce change in our profession, and more importantly, it will provide trust in the OAA from the minority members.
- I believe hiring a Chief Diversity Officer within the OAA would be ideal in understanding how to enable equality in the profession of architecture from the top down. I do not believe the OAA can ask its members and practices to promote diversity if it is not seen within the governing body. In our current climate, it is important to promote diversity, even if that means expanding the council specifically for BIPOC members. OAA members may choose to not vote in people of colour (based on their name or their picture), but I believe it is essential for the OAA to take an equitable and bold approach that will show support for the BIPOC members, and allow the upcoming generations of architects to see themselves within the governing body.
- I believe education is essential for all members. Educating members on the root of systemic racism and how it is set up in our society and within the architecture profession; items such as wage gaps, lack of opportunities, silent discriminations/bias' etc. Education should be implemented into the Admissions Course and should be mandated as part of yearly ongoing Con-Ed hours. Education should be mandatory, however, change and reflection will always be a choice. OAA has the responsibility to plant the seed and give tools that educate all members on equity. In addition, the OAA should enforce education for leaders of practices on how to continue and promote a conversation around discriminations within their offices.
- As part of education, OAA could establish an outreach program that promotes relationships within youth groups and high schools. Members could volunteer and collect Con-Ed hours for their participation in establishing relationships and educating the youth about our profession. I would also caution the existence of outreach programs until the system at the association level is balanced. Many youth who are interested in the profession will look into our association to see if they can see themselves represented.

29.

- If they cannot see someone that relates to their gender or culture, they will become aware that their path to succeeding in architecture may be difficult. Giving kids the confidence to achieve above average jobs is only great if the profession can provide them equitable opportunities in terms of fundraising for scholarships and mentoring during their educational journey. It is equally important to provide support and equitable opportunities for them after they graduate. It would be regrettable if we provided education and confidence to the youth in regards to the architecture profession and then set them up for failure once they achieve their goals. The OAA should ideally be set up in a way that would support a person through outreach, education and into their career. Again, I believe a top down approach should be taken; one cannot help others if we can't support ourselves.
- I would like to see the OAA begin collecting data regarding minority architects. If this happens, there will be a baseline to grow from and measure the success of the OAA's efforts. I would caution that the OAA should collect this data with the knowledge that it takes a lot of courage for the BIPOC members to speak up and provide personal information. We are happy to provide this information to the OAA because we are trusting that you will be active and bold in making significant changes to the system.
- In addition to collecting data from individual members, I believe that the OAA should also be collecting data from the leaders of architectural practices. I do not believe that we can make change for our profession without also understanding how the leaders of architectural firms are running their practice, and if there are discrepancies in the hiring process, in the wage gaps, in annual staff reviews (if staff are asking to grow and move up), and in the pyramid of power. It would be great to somehow implement yearly practice audits which would allow transparency in highlighting how practices and their leaders are running their offices. Within this audit, a firm should be able to address their hiring process, salaries of individuals, yearly staff assessments, promotions/hierarchy of their office, and what type of education/outreach efforts that they participated in or encouraged. Leaders should be expected to reinforce conversations and reflection in regards to discrimination and inclusion. If the OAA begins to collect information about the structure of firms, then a baseline can be established to understand how to best implement policies and equity for the OAA to grow in a positivity and inclusive way.
- I would like to see the OAA listen to communities that have been established to create support and visibility for marginalized members. Learning from these communities can provide insight to what they believe is missing from the association. It can also help the OAA understand the changes/adaptation that should be made to policies to allow for support, visibility and inclusion for all genders and races...Listen and speak up. As members, we have a voice, but we understand that we do not have the power to change the system or change policies. The Architect's Act and the Canadian Handbook of Practice are sound resources, however, the OAA should internally expand on them by creating policies that are specific to advancing a platform for their visibility, and support for their talent/achievements.

29.

- Mentoring is a terrific idea for Interns and I believe we should be able to continue mentorship programs when we become licensed. This could allow an architect to shadow a leader/partner/principal/associate of a firm in order to understand the roles and responsibilities involved in climbing the ladder. By doing this, a BIPOC person or a woman could allow themselves to become visible and prepared for a management role that they may have not been available to them. Programs such as this, may allow discrimination within the field to dissipate, and it may also be a way of creating diversity amongst the leaders in our profession.

30.

- Based on surveys and promises, I'd like to see ongoing monitoring initiatives and keeping the public informed of these actions.