



March 18, 2020

Ontario Association of Architects

Message from the President

Dear Colleagues,

This has been a challenging time for everyone—concerns over global health and safety, a new way of doing business, many cancellations, and, for some, questions about meeting Continuing Education (ConEd) requirements. As the COVID-19 situation evolves by the hour, we all find ourselves inundated with emails and newsflashes, amplified by the additional stresses associated with isolation and the unknown.

I want to assure you that the OAA understands the pandemic is greatly affecting our members' personal and professional lives. Yes, we have [closed OAA Headquarters](#) and cancelled our [2020 Annual Conference](#), and yes, we understand that this will have a serious impact on members working to meet their mandatory learning requirements. **In direct response, the current ConEd cycle will be extended by six months to December 31, 2020.** Additionally, the cap on the number of hours carried forward from this cycle to the next has been lifted. This decision has been coordinated with the other Canadian architectural regulators in keeping with ongoing efforts to harmonize our ConEd programs across the country.

The OAA is also working on a number of initiatives to bring online education to its members over the next few months, including the development of online versions of some of the cancelled conference courses and an online version of [Fundamentals of Running an Architectural Practice](#). In the absence of in-class sessions, there are still many online courses available from a multitude of suppliers—you can see some of the Distance Education options on the [OAA Website](#).

As we anticipate some practices may experience cash-flow challenges in the short term, the OAA is extending the deadline for payment of Certificate of Practice fees until July 31.

The OAA Website will also continually update and consolidate information and resources for practices on the status of [COVID-19](#). We will be posting information that may assist members forced with difficult business decisions, paralleled with employer responsibilities to protect the health of their staff, clients, and consultants. As the situation continues to unfold, new issues will emerge that we must face together.

This new normal provides opportunities for our profession to innovate and embrace change. **The OAA is also embracing change—today, we are launching a beta version of [OAA.chat](#).** This members' forum allows architects, interns, and Licensed Technologists OAA to connect and offer information about how to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. This new tool enables OAA members to talk to each other, share ideas, and discuss issues as we move toward a new way of doing business. Additionally, the OAA's existing social media platforms on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and the [bIOAAG](#) continue to be excellent ways to exchange information in the public realm.

In keeping with the recommendations of government and medical officials at municipal, provincial, and federal levels, it is important to remember that social distancing is one of the best measures for flattening the curve of the coronavirus. **I urge all practices to host virtual meetings as well as pursue options for their staff to work remotely from home if they have not yet done so.** There are many platforms available to facilitate this new approach to business.

The Toronto Society of Architects (TSA) has prepared an excellent resource page on their website and, with their permission, I am sharing that link. The site offers links to guides for businesses and owners, as well as working remotely:
<http://torontosocietyofarchitects.ca/initiatives/advocacy/covid-19-pandemic-preparedness>.

Now, more than ever, the architecture profession must adapt to these shifting paradigms and exhibit leadership and resiliency while taking good care. I remain open, as always, to your suggestions as we come together as a community of colleagues demonstrating our humanity.



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President

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