

ACSA TASK FORCE CALIBRATES PEER REVIEW VENUES

ACSA offers many of the relatively few venues for competitive, peer-reviewed scholarship and meets common standards for peer review with these venues, according to a recent report.

The report, made by an ad hoc Peer Review Task Force created by the ACSA board of directors, recommends that ACSA work to provide clearer information on peer review policies and procedures as well as aggregate information on the acceptance rates and processes of venues such as the Journal of Architectural Education (JAE), ACSA Annual Meeting, and ACSA annual awards program.

“Compared with other fields, there are relatively few outlets for architectural scholarship in North America. ACSA controls a considerable percentage of these, and thus bears particular responsibility for ensuring that faculty who participate in conferences, JAE, etc., can rely on the association’s policies during tenure and promotion,” the report said.

The task force worked in fall of 2007 to review peer review policies, procedures, and acceptance rates of ACSA’s peer-reviewed publications and conferences and calibrate them against journals and conferences in other disciplines. In addition to confirming that ACSA’s activities met established standards and procedures, the task force encouraged the organization to develop a statement on peer review that “would demonstrate the association’s commitment to both the spirit and the letter of its peer review policies.” The task force cited the College Art Association’s statement as a model.

The task force also recommended the organization make peer-reviewed conference papers more widely available. At present, the report notes, conference proceedings are not indexed and are not routinely available in libraries.

“A good deal of scholarly production in our field thus essentially ‘disappears’ after its presentation, missing an opportunity to build a body of research while, we suspect, leaving interested parties in other fields at something of a loss to understand how we advance and share knowledge. This leaves peer review under the ACSA’s purview as a form of validation, but we believe it could play a role in dissemination—clearly a topic beyond our mandate but one we would encourage the Board to investigate.”

At its March 2008 meeting, the board of directors asked that ongoing work to index the proceedings and make this index available online continue and be completed as soon as possible. Further, the board plans to work on developing a statement on peer review, following the suggestions of the task force.

Peer Review Task Force Members

Craig Barton, University of Virginia
 Thomas Leslie, Iowa State University, chair
 Wellington “Duke” Reiter, Arizona State University
 Carmina Sánchez-del-Valle, Hampton University
 Brenda Case Scheer, University of Utah
ACSA thanks the members for their service!

ACSA Peer Review Calibration Matrix
 April 2008

Venue	Blind Peer Review	Non-blind Peer Review	Standard Number of Reviewers	Abstract or Complete Submission	Included in Proceedings	Total Submissions	Acceptance Rate (%)	Notes	
ACSA FALL CONFERENCES									
2007 Paper/Design Presentations									
Southwest Conference	x		3	abstract	x	108	29%		
Southeast Conference	x		3	abstract	x	122	34%		
East Central Conference	x		3	abstract	x	58	76%		
2009 97th ACSA ANNUAL MEETING									
Session Topic Proposals	x		3			112	18%	Paper and poster submissions are made to specific topic sessions, each organized by a chair who does not know identity of authors, oversees peer review, and accepts submissions. Session topic proposals outline peer-reviewed paper sessions and form the basis for the Annual Meeting call for papers.	
2008 96th ACSA ANNUAL MEETING									
Poster Presentation	x		3	complete	x	67	70%		
Paper Presentation	x		3	complete	x	232	44%		
2007-08 ACSA AWARDS PROGRAM									
Faculty Design	x		3		x	50	8%	ACSA published a summary awards booklet in March 2008. ACSA Board’s Awards Committee oversees review of awards submissions. Faculty Design Awards reviewed by separate jury and may select additional presentations at the Annual Meeting that do not receive the award.	
Collaborative Practice	x		3		x	13	31%		
New Faculty Teaching		x	3		x	8	38%		
Creative Achievement	x		3		x	7	43%		
Distinguished Professor		x	3		x	8	38%		
Housing Awards	x		3		x	8	25%		
JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION									
Scholarship of Design Articles	x		2				13%	Op Arch and Reviews may also be blind peer reviewed. Acceptance rate reflects rates since June 2006.	
Design as Scholarship Articles	x		juried, varies						
Op Arch		x							
Reviews		x							