



CANDIDATE for SECOND VICE PRESIDENT (4-year term)

Mo Zell, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Candidate Statement

The ACSA has traditionally lead discussions regarding architectural education and how it should respond to change—changes brought on by economic downturns, environmental crisis, emerging technologies, student debt, and devaluing of university education among others. Today, we continue to face these same issues, but with the added crises of a global pandemic and centuries of systemic racism brought to the foreground by recent examples of social injustice and resulting elevated activism. We are at a crossroads; a revolutionary moment in time driven by chants insisting that we not “go back to normal” but rather create a new normal. A normal that repudiates racism and encourages inclusivism at all levels. In these times, we need leadership that is willing to take a critical view of both the educational system and ACSA’s role within it.

As 2nd Vice President of ACSA I will work with the board and colleagues across the world to collectively address, with a steady hand, these monumental challenges. I am an action-oriented, creative thinker who problem solves by building strong, mutually-benefiting relationships in hopes to create the new normal so desperately needed.

ACSA has the infrastructure in place to become more—more beneficial to all colleagues, more connected to non-accredited programs, and more supportive to junior faculty. We need to push harder and faster to become the leaders of change around diversity, equity and inclusion. We can’t wait for societal change to happen. We have to be the instigators of this change. We need to support initiatives with more BIPOC faculty, we need to create more opportunities to impact K–12 education and the pipeline into architecture equalizing the status of professional and non-professional programs, and we need to expand post-graduation opportunities for students.

We need to capitalize on untapped opportunities to build stronger alignments across the regions and support administrators and faculty at all schools by bringing colleagues together more frequently. With the embrace of new technologies to support connectivity, we can make this happen. We must constantly reconfirm the value of ACSA to our membership and strive to meet at more than two annual conferences.

I remain hopeful and optimistic about ACSA’s critical role in bringing schools and educators together through specific events and initiatives. I see this evidenced in the following:

- Dissemination of research data highlighting gender, ethnic, and racial inequities like the “Where are My People: Black in Architecture.”
- Beginning with the presidency of Rashida Ng, the ACSA board has made a long-term commitment to dig deep into the issues of systemic racism in architectural education.
- Introduction of frequent, online panel discussions this past year.
- Action-oriented conferences like the “Less Talk/More Action” conference at Stanford which included presentations on a Future Faculty Workshop, decolonizing the history/theory curriculum, and antiracism in public space.
- Broadening the membership by engaging 2–year colleges.
- Supporting NOMA as a collateral organization.

My previous experience as an ACSA faculty councilor and East Central Regional Director from 2013–2016, along with my administrative leadership at UW–Milwaukee (UWM) including Undergraduate Program Committee Chair, Associate Dean, and currently Department of Architecture Chair, have prepared me for the position of ACSA Second Vice President. At UWM, I have worked with colleagues to guide the department through a 9% budget cut, create new student support services (SARUP Externship Program), implement revenue generating strategies (through new GERs and turning our \$250,000 study abroad revenue loss into a revenue neutral situation), and increase faculty research support (\$5,000 for new installations in our Research Garden). At ACSA, I was part of a team that implemented the Study Architecture website and welcomed Community College colleagues to our annual meetings. I strive for inclusivity and innovation (whether it’s a conference or a budget crisis). Perhaps best demonstrated in my role as co-chair for the 2018 ACSA fall conference held at UWM, I engaged colleagues, communities, professionals, and industry partners within and outside of the discipline to rethink the standard conference format. This resulted in receiving a \$30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a blind juried ideas competition that engaged designers from around the world, a commissioned pavilion, 3 exhibitions including one inside the Santiago Calatrava wing of the Milwaukee Art Museum, a traveling exhibition, and 2 interpretive dance performances. All this work was completed through leadership and collaboration.

The heart of what we do as academics, practitioners, and scholars is make connections to other human beings—through our teaching, research, service and through the making of our built environment. Knowing this gives me hope that together we can tackle any challenge. Given all that is happening globally and in higher education, I humbly submit my credentials to rejoin ACSA by seeking this leadership role.





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Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Yale University, School of Architecture, Master of Architecture 1998
University of Virginia, School of Architecture, BS in Architecture, Minor in Mathematics 1994
Licensed Architect: Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2007 - present

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, School of Architecture and Urban Planning
Chair, Department of Architecture 2018 - present
Associate Dean 2013 - 2018
Professor 2020 - present
Associate Professor 2011 - 2018
Assistant Professor 2008 - 2011
Northeastern University, School of Architecture, College of Arts & Sciences
Assistant Professor 2002 - 2008
North Carolina State University, School of Architecture, College of Design
Visiting Assistant Professor 2001 - 2002
Clemson University, School of Architecture, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
Lecturer 2000 - 2001
bauenstudio, Principal 2006 - present

ONGOING INITIATIVES

SARUP Mobile Design Box (MDB) 2015 - present
- Hosted National Building Museum Exhibition: Evicted based on Matthew Desmond's Book
Women in Design Milwaukee 2015 - present
- 2019 AIA National Diversity Recognition Award
SARUP Externship Program [2018 placements: 90 students | 66 firms] 2013 - 2018
- 2016/2017 AIA/ACSA Practice and Leadership Award

AWARDS and RANKINGS IN COMPETITIONS

Chapter Visibility Award by the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects 2018
Detroit Design Center in a Box Competition finalist 2018
Van Alen Institute, National Park Service, 'Memorials for the Future': semifinalist 2016
Chicago Architecture Foundation's Burnham Prize Honorable Mention Award 2011
National Ideas Competition for the Washington Monument Grounds: semifinalist 2011
AIAS Community Service Honor Award for SUPERjury 2011
ACSA Faculty Design Honorable Mention Award 2010
Boston Society of Architects Citation for Design: NEU Memorial 2008
Boston Society of Landscape Architects (BSLA) Merit Award: NEU Memorial 2008

FUNDED RESEARCH + BOOK

UW System Ignite Grant: Mobile Design Box 2020
Architectural Design II studio, funded Milwaukee Art Museum 2018
The Architectural Drawing Course - book publication 2018
Elective Design studio, funded Chipstone 2015 - 2019
UWM Research Growth Initiative Award: WaterLIGHT 2016
Haggerty Art Museum installation. Group show: 'Current Tendencies IV: Topography Transformed' 2015

SERVICE

ACSA Fall Conference: PLAY with the Rules, co-chair 2018
ACSA East Central Regional Director 2013 - 2016
ACSA Faculty Councilor, UW-Milwaukee 2008 - 2013
UWM Faculty Senate 2018 - present
SARUP Dan Kiley Symposium & Exhibition: The Landscape Architecture Legacy of Dan Kiley 2017
SARUP Community Design & Development Forum (CDDF), co-chair 2016