

**ACSA Governance Proposal**  
Updated March 31, 2017



# Proposal to Change the Board of Directors

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The ACSA Board of Directors is pleased to share a proposal for changing our governance structure to better enable the organization to lead architectural education and research. The proposal would shift the board’s seven regionally elected directors to a set of at-large directors, nominated and elected by the membership based on multiple criteria.

We invite all member school faculty to review and comment on the proposal. The board already received feedback by email and at the regional caucuses during the Annual Meeting in Detroit. This document has been updated to reflect comments to date.

We continue to solicit input by email to [feedback@acsa-arch.org](mailto:feedback@acsa-arch.org) by Friday, April 7. The ACSA board will meet thereafter to consider sending bylaws amendments to schools for a membership vote before the end of the school year.

## Origin of Governance Change

The proposal caps a three-year effort to revise our governance structure to make ACSA more nimble, more effective, and more engaged with our members.

The changes optimize our organizational structure by connecting governance to strategic goals, while preserving the role of members in guiding ACSA’s future directions. Following is a timeline of changes.

### Fall 2015—Create More Continuity

Bylaws amendments lengthened the vice president’s term to 2 years and combined secretary and treasurer positions.

### Spring 2016—Involve More Members in Governance

The board created a [new strategic plan](#) and established new working committees, led by ACSA members, that better respond to member needs and make progress on strategic plan goals.

### Now—Recalibrate the Board and Nominations Process

Assemble a diverse board of directors based on a range of competencies and demographic characteristics. Revamp the nominations process to better recruit volunteers at all levels of the organization.

## Proposed Changes

- 1. From Regional Directors to At-Large Directors.** Remove the “geographically defined constituent associations” that structure our board of directors, replacing the seven regionally elected directors with five directors elected by the entire membership. Director terms will be staggered. Current regional directors will complete their existing terms, and new at-large directors will join gradually over three years.
- 2. Recruiting Future Talent.** Create a single nominating committee for all board positions, and strengthen the nominations process by emphasizing the connection between board member skills and backgrounds with the organization’s strategic goals.
- 3. Working Committees.** Make permanent the three new program committees—Research & Scholarship, Education, and Leadership—established last year to involve more members in implementing the strategic plan and recommending future actions by the board of directors.

## 2017 - 18 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Regional directors cycle off from 2018-19 to 2021-22

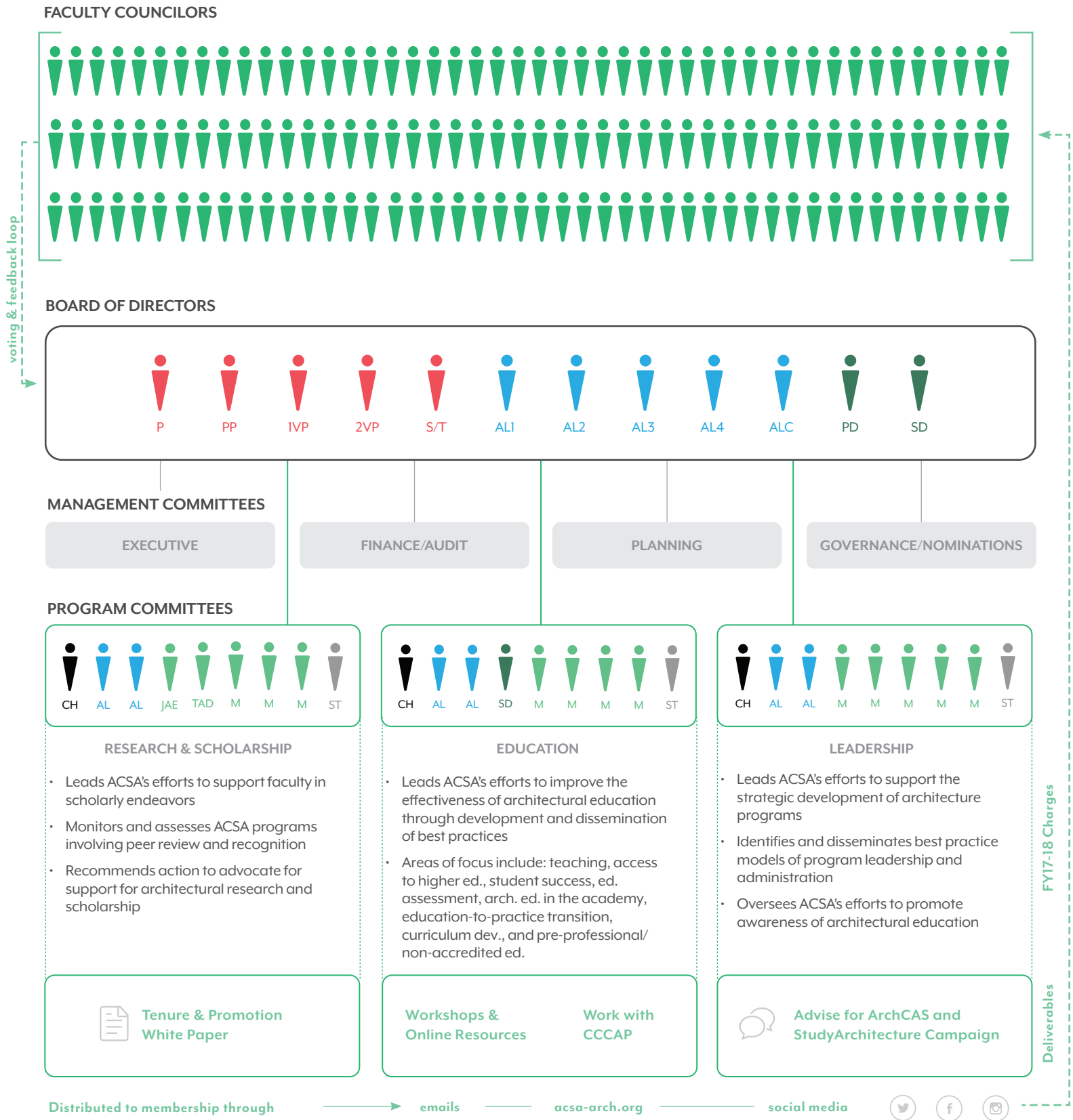


## 2021 - 22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Officers
- Regional/At-large Directors
- Public/Student Directors
- Position Removed
- P President
- VP Past President
- 1VP First Vice President
- 2VP Second Vice President
- S/T Secretary/Treasurer
- WC West Central
- CA Canadian
- NE North East
- EC East Central
- W West
- GU Gulf
- MA Mid-Atlantic
- AL At-Large
- ALC At-Large Canadian

# Proposed Governance Structure

Faculty Councilors Vote for Board, Feedback Loops Between Board, Program Committees, and Members



### What is the proposed change?

The proposal changes the composition of the Board of Directors. The proposal transitions the six regionally elected directors and one appointed Canadian director to five at-large directors elected by the entire membership.

The proposal follows from changes made last year to create three Program Committees that involve ACSA members not serving on the board. The Program Committees are charged with implementing the organization's strategic plan. Chairs of the Program Committees will continue to be non-board members and will participate in ACSA board activities from time to time to ensure they understand and contribute to discussions about the strategic direction of the organization.

### What problems does the change address?\*

In short: communication, transparency, and the connection between intention and outcome when it comes to board service. The changes are intended to improve feedback loops between members and the board through participation of more members in committees and a more transparent nominations process. The smaller sized board will focus more intently on strategic and fiduciary responsibilities, while the Program Committees will focus on measurable outcomes that respond to member needs. The three separate nominations processes in recent years have been disconnected, rushed, and, in some cases, resulted in no responses to calls for nominations. A more transparent and coordinated nominations process will result in better choices for ACSA members.

### Why stop having regional directors?

The ACSA board seeks a more intentional basis for carrying out the mission of leading architectural education and research. Based on feedback from the membership over the past couple of years, geography is only one among many characteristics that link schools and their faculty. The new board structure will allow the organization to recruit and nominate individuals for board service based on multiple characteristics.

### Will you stop having regions?

No, we will continue to use regions in our activities. The regional caucuses at the Annual Meeting will continue as a way to gain feedback. We will also continue to use regions as a way of grouping and analyzing our membership.

### But the schools in my region have cohesion.\*

Regional connections will continue to be encouraged through annual caucuses and other means that the board prefers or the members recommend. Regional connections are supported by the ACSA, but they don't exist because of ACSA.

Currently, not many regional activities happen through ACSA programs. ACSA strengthens the membership through other kinds of affinities.

\* This FAQ was updated for this edition.

### What about the Canadian Director?

Under the proposal, at least one at-large director must come from a Canadian full-member school. Currently, the Canadian Director is nominated by the Canadian Council of University Schools of Architecture, which is effectively composed of the administrative heads of the Canadian schools. In the new system, CCUSA would recommend a minimum of two candidates for the at-large Canadian position on the board, and the full ACSA membership would vote to select the director.

### How do I get in touch with the board if there is no director for my region?\*

The connection between members and the board is effectively the same. We will continue to assign board members to liaison with schools, and publish which schools are linked to which director online. Each year directors will introduce themselves to the faculty councilors and administrators at assigned schools. All members are also welcome to contact any member of the ACSA board throughout the year.

### How are board members elected?\*

The full membership votes for all eligible board slots from a slate of at least two candidates. Currently, only schools in a region can vote for their regional director or participate in the regional director nominating process. ACSA is an international organization, and we believe that members should be able to nominate and vote for all slots every year, not some slots every three years.

### What criteria will you use to nominate candidates?\*

Geographic diversity will be one among multiple criteria to use in identifying candidates for the board. School setting, race/ethnicity, gender are others. These would be codified in the organization's policies. The annual call for nominations will provide an outline of the organization's goals and the desired competencies to create a balance of perspectives and expertise designed to achieve these goals. The members have the power to nominate and vote on who is best qualified to serve.

### What if you don't keep having a regionally diverse board?

The nominations process will change so that the slate of candidates will be announced in early November. The membership will have multiple weeks to petition the Governance Committee to add additional names to the ballot.

### How do I become a board member or a committee member?\*

Each year ACSA will publish a call for volunteers. Responses will go to the Nominations Committee, and names will be held in the pool for multiple years. The Nominations Committee will recommend candidates for open board positions, and respondents to the call will also be eligible for membership on ACSA's committees, task forces, and peer review bodies. In short, the best path to becoming a board member starts by volunteering as a review, committee member, conference host, etc.

\* This FAQ was updated for this edition.