NCARB recently held their biennial training summit for Architect Licensing Advisors. Over the course of three days, roughly 250 volunteers & professionals gathered representing nearly all 55 US licensure jurisdictions including students, collegiate faculty & staff, architects & associates in the profession, firm leaders, NCARB staff, & state licensing board members. These volunteer advisors took part in various short sessions, lectures, & roundtable discussions with a focus on how each in their own role could best serve as a resource to licensure candidates.

As NCARB establishes & generally oversees the process for licensure, the summit training explored topics closely related to the various steps involved on the path to architectural licensure in the U.S. Some of these topics included how advisors, mentors, & supervisors can best support the needs of licensure candidates in developing competency in the Architectural Experience Program (AXP), preparing licensure candidates for the Architect Registration Examination (ARE), & in general how to support these individuals as they navigate forward through the profession.

Just a few months ago, I only vaguely knew of licensing advisors & even less of the resource they represent. While attending the summit, I realized how valuable as a group this network of advisors can be. While the licensing advisor should ideally be the first stop when one has questions regarding the requirements of licensure or reciprocity, not any one advisor will have all the answers. However, as the future of architecture as a profession continues to evolve, & the requirements that NCARB sets forth for licensure change over time to better fit the needs of the candidate & the roles of our profession, there will be licensing advisors along the way that lean on each other to provide guidance & encouragement to those who seek assistance.

As the newly appointed Licensing Advisor for AIA Tennessee & as a first-time attendee to the summit, my experience was both educational & highly motivating. Over the next two years, I’ll look to implement what I learned & share that with the members & allies of AIA Tennessee. Among these goals, working toward educating both the licensure candidate & those that support them, offering programs & new resources through study materials & mentorship programs, & establishing a network of communication that makes my role visible & widely available to all will be key areas of focus.

The training summit was a good reminder that licensure is much more than a simple milestone to check off during your career. It is a process & one that is different for every individual. More than just passing
a test, & certainly more than logging a bunch of experience hours, licensure is a process that represents often years of hard work & dedication. No two paths to will be exactly the same. Among the setbacks & successes, each step of the way holds its own set of challenges & it’s the role of the licensing advisor to help see individuals through those steps & on toward their goals. Whether that particular step be finishing education requirements or applying for international reciprocity, submitting design portfolios for experience equivalency or simply finding study help to pass that last exam, I encourage everyone working toward these goals, if you have questions, ask. I myself & fellow licensing advisors are always more than happy to help.

For more information please feel free to reach me at crau@dia-arch.com.