

DESIGN CLARITY

designclarity.co
202.384.9165
Charlottesville, VA 22901

DATE 07/30/2025
TO Paul Battaglia and AIA Virginia Nominating Committee
FROM Shawn Mulligan
RE Letter of Interest – AIA Strategic Councilor

Dear AIA Virginia Board of Directors and Nominating Committee,

I am happy to express my strong interest in serving as AIA Virginia's representative on the AIA National Strategic Council. Having spent the past eighteen years building eight member engagement programs, for five different nonprofits, that serve professionals in all career stages—from emerging professionals to seasoned leaders—I understand that the future of our profession depends on our ability to listen deeply, think strategically, and act decisively on behalf of all members and the communities we serve.

My approach follows a consistent pattern: engage members where they are, learn what they truly need, and create sustainable solutions that empower them to thrive. As AIA Central Virginia's Emerging Professionals Liaison, I designed a member-driven program that visits local creative businesses monthly to teach young architects how professionals navigate growth, challenges, and success. Eight years and three leaders later, this program continues to grow because it was built with and for its members.

This philosophy guided my work on two AIA Virginia Mid-Career Task Forces, facilitating listening sessions across the state to understand member needs and build programs to meet them. This led to the launch of AIA Virginia's Mid-Career Roundtable, AIA Central Virginia's Mid-Career Professionals Group, and the creation of AIA Virginia's Leaders in Architecture & Business—the first US and state-level business and management training program for architects—all of which I now lead.

Through the pro-bono design studio partnership I created with Building Goodness Foundation, we empowered emerging professionals to lead community projects like a student-led design of the first playground for Walker Elementary School, Computers for Kids, Ready Kids, and Kindness Cafe, a coffee shop staffed by adults with cognitive disabilities. These projects serve communities while building the next generation of socially conscious architects.

As a current AIA Virginia Board Director and past AIA Central Virginia President, I turn member insights into actionable programming, and advocate for our profession at the local, state, and national levels. On the Education Advisory Council, I help plan signature events like Art of Practice and Architecture Exchange East Annual Conference, while regularly sharing insights at conferences. My 25 years of experience—from Rotterdam's OMA to Virginia's rural communities, single-family homes to Net Zero schools—provides the broad perspective essential for addressing architecture's evolving societal role.

The future requires leaders who can listen with empathy, think with creativity, and act with purpose, qualities I've demonstrated throughout my career and in service to our profession. I am committed to serving as an active conduit between our diverse membership and national priorities, bringing forward authentic voices from all firm sizes, career stages, and from the mountains to the coast.

I would be honored to represent AIA Virginia on the Strategic Council and contribute to shaping architecture's role in addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Respectfully,



Shawn Mulligan, AIA
Principal and Founder, DESIGN CLARITY

Director, AIA Virginia Board
Chair, Leaders in Architecture & Business
Past-President and Mid-Career Liaison, AIA Central Virginia

Sidney Griffin, AIA NOMA
President, AIA Central Virginia
AIA# 38327665

August 1, 2025

To the AIA Virginia Nominating Committee and AIA Virginia Board of Directors:

It's with full confidence and sincere enthusiasm that I nominate Shawn Mulligan, AIA, to serve as AIA Virginia's next Strategic Councilor. I've had the opportunity to work with Shawn both in the firm environment and through AIA Central Virginia where he's served the members of AIA Central Virginia for 8 years. I've seen firsthand how he operates—with clear vision, humility, and a rare ability to translate listening into action.

In Shawn's long history of service to the AIA, he's led initiatives and built programs to endure. He initiated the Emerging Professionals (EP) and the Mid-Career Professional groups in AIA Central Virginia both designed around a simple but powerful mission: meet members where they are, understand what they need, and build something meaningful with them. Shawn continues to lead the Mid-Career Professionals while the EP group continues to thrive under new leadership - a sign that his work has inspired shared aspirations to connect creative professionals in and beyond architecture.

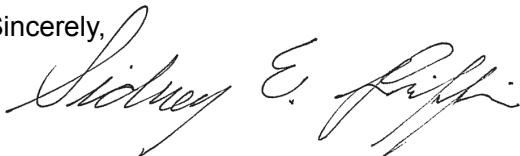
As Chair of AIA Virginia's new Leaders in Architecture & Business (LAB) program, Shawn has once again stepped into an uncharted space and turned it into a platform for connection and growth. The Strategic Council is designed for members who can think strategically, regard diverse voices, and connect local realities to national priorities. That's exactly the space Shawn has been working in for years.

What sets Shawn apart is a wide-angle view of the AECO industry that is grounded in the lived experience of our members. From emerging professionals to firm principals, Shawn advocates with compassion for our rural sole practitioners, the large-firm architects, and all flavors of professionals in between. His design work spans from Net Zero schools to preservation and community-based projects. He's led a pro-bono studio in partnership with Building Goodness Foundation to give emerging architects real-world leadership opportunities while delivering lasting impact in the community. And when he speaks—whether on the AIA Central Virginia Board, at ArchEx, or in a LAB session—he consistently brings clarity, insight, and practicality.

Shawn is exactly the kind of thoughtful, committed, and broadly engaged leader AIA Virginia should send to the Strategic Council. He listens deeply, asks the right questions, and has a consistent track record of turning dialogue into direction. He's ready for this role, and we'll be better as a chapter and profession with him at that table.

Please accept this nomination with my full support.

Sincerely,



Sidney Griffin, AIA NOMA

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TO Paul Battaglia and AIA Virginia Nominating Committee

FROM Shawn Mulligan

RE **Letter of Support – AIA Strategic Council**

Dear AIA Virginia Board of Directors and Nominating Committee,

As an Owner of DESIGN CLARITY, I support the commitment required to be an AIA Strategic Councilor.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sm', with a small dot above the 'm'.

Shawn Mulligan, AIA

Principal and Founder, **DESIGN CLARITY**

Director, AIA Virginia Board

Chair, Leaders in Architecture & Business

Past-President and Mid-Career Liaison, AIA Central Virginia

RESUME OVERVIEW

Shawn is a consultant and designer with over two decades of experience helping people and organizations solve the right problems and build programs - and places - that help them grow and thrive.



"What is particularly notable about Shawn is his passionate commitment to the people being served by the work. Whether he was speaking to a group of emerging leaders at our annual conference or elevating the voices of less visible members of the profession as a contributor to our magazine, his human-centered approach inevitably drove deeper engagements and opportunities for community building."

Rhea George, CAE
Senior DirectorMember Education
American Institute of Architects

SHAWN MULLIGAN, AIA

Founder, Principal

With over two decades of architectural expertise, Shawn has successfully led diverse projects, from furniture design to campus master plans, spanning residential, hospitality, preservation, and education sectors. Most recently he designed innovative Net Zero Energy schools at VMDO Architects, including an occupied addition and renovation of Maryland's top high school (246,000 SF), the Athletic Health and Wellness Center at Chatham Hall (34,700 SF), and the transformation of an abandoned school into a Career Technical Education Center (54,000 SF).

Shawn is passionate about community service, including the pro-bono design of Kindness Cafe and a Playground for Walker Elementary School, and almost two decades of nonprofit leadership with the Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Piedmont Housing Alliance, Building Goodness Foundation, Charlottesville Business Innovation Council, and the American Institute of Architects at local and state levels.

Education

Bachelor of Architecture (BArch), Virginia Tech - 1996-2001
BArch with Minor in Industrial Design, Cum Laude

Professional Experience

Design Clarity, Principal, Founder - 2023-Present
VMDO Architects, Senior Project Architect - 2019-2023
Dalglish Gilpin Paxton Architects, Project Architect - 2006-2019
Thomas S Shiner Architect, Architect - 2001-2006
Museum & Library Furniture, Sales Manager and Designer - 2001-2006
Office for Metropoliatan Architecture, Architectural Intern - 1999-2000

Project Experience

Hegyion Farm and Jewish Cultural Center | Coveseville, VA
Charlottesville Intigrated Psychiatry | Charlottesville, VA
Poolesville High School (MCPS), Addition & Renovation | Poolesville, MD
Athletic Health and Wellness Center (Chatham Hall) | Chatham, VA
Shihadeh Innovation Center (WPS), Addition & Renovation | Winchester, VA
Blue Ridge School, Master Plan | St George, VA
A Playground for Walker Elementary School (CPS) | Charlottesville, VA
Kindness Cafe + Play | Charlottesville, VA
Cochran House at The Jefferson Scholars Foundation | Charlottesville, VA
Old Parkland, Commercial Business Campus | Dallas, TX
Green Dragon Restaurant and Cafe | Dallas, TX
Historic Midway Farm, Addition & Historic Preservation | Free Union, VA
V House | Keene, VA
Jackson River House | Hot Springs, VA
Universal Studios Headquarters | Universal City, CA

SHAWN MULLIGAN AIA

202.384.9165 | shawn@designclarity.co | Charlottesville VA 22901

CREDENTIALS **Virginia Architect License #0401014176 | AIA #30375895**

EDUCATION **Virginia Tech | Blacksburg VA | Bachelor of Architecture (BArch)**
Bachelor of Architecture with Minor in Industrial Design, Cum Laude
Gould Turner Group Academic Scholarship (outstanding fourth year Architecture student)
Werner Graeff Memorial Award (outstanding Industrial Design senior)

EXPERIENCE **Design Clarity | 2023 - present**
Principal - Founder, Consultant, Architect

- › Consulting and design firm that helps leaders elevate their people, process, and place.
- › Responsible for client satisfaction, strategic planning, leadership coaching, and process improvement.
- › Architect, Project Manager, Owner's Representative, web and graphic design, community engagement.

VMDO Architects | Charlottesville VA | 2019 - 2023
Associate - Senior Project Manager, Senior Project Architect

- › Led multi-disciplinary teams designing high-performing, sustainable, Net Zero Energy schools.
- › Primary point of contact for client, community, and design partners.
- › Responsible for project performance, documentation, and coordination.
- › Internal: recruiter, business development, pro-bono project lead, project management expert.

Dalglish Gilpin Paxton Architects | Charlottesville VA | 2006 - 2019
Project Architect

- › Managed high-touch client and contractor relations on high-end projects - from start to finish.
- › Responsible for success of Residential, Commercial, Hospitality, and Historic Preservation projects.
- › Internal: recruiter, business development, office standards, photography, web and graphic design.

Thomas S Shiner Architect | Washington DC | 2001 - 2006
Architect

- › Led residential and commercial design projects, documentation, and construction administration.
- › Marketing and graphics, architectural photography, website design.

M&LF - Museum & Library Furniture | Washington DC | 2001 - 2006
Sales Manager, Designer

- › Institutional and custom furniture design, product development, and manufacturing.
- › Managed sales (tradeshows, direct, web, and custom), production scheduling, and shipping.
- › Marketing and graphics, advertising, product photography, website design.

OMA - Office for Metropolitan Architecture | Rotterdam NL | 1999 - 2000
Architectural Intern

- › Schematic Design for Universal Studios Headquarters, OMA's first US commission.
- › Co-founded Research & Development Office to find and deploy new materials and technologies.
- › Recruited and led a team to program a custom database that organized and connects data on products, sample libraries, working drawings and details, and photographs of the installation.

SERVICE **AIA Virginia**
Director, 2024-present
Chair, Leaders in Architecture & Business, 2025
Chair, Mid-Career Roundtable, 2019-present
Built and led the first year of the LAB program

AIA Central Virginia
President and Board Member, 2016-present
Founded Emerging and Mid-Career groups.
Community design project and outreach lead.
Improved governance, finances, communication.

CBIC - Cville Business Innovation Council
Strategic Executive Partner, 2025-present
Leadership Coaching, strategy, communications

CNE - Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Finance Committee, 2025-present
Program and Events Committee, 2016-present

BGF - Building Goodness Foundation
Pro-Bono Design Studio, 2019-present
Created community design studio, led projects

Charlottesville Chamber of Commerce
Leadership Charlottesville, 2016-2017
Start PHA Office of Community Wealth Building.

LVCA - Literacy Volunteers
Adult literacy tutor, Committees, 2007-2011 Board
Committees on curriculum and programs.

RECOGNITION Virginia School Boards Association Platinum Design Award - Shihadeh Innovation Center, 2022
Building Stone Pinnacle Award of Excellence, Residential - V House, 2019
Southern Home Magazine - Ivy Creek Residence, 2017
Home & Design Magazine - Roanoke Residence, and V House 'Back in Time', 2016
BIAA Brick in Architecture, ULI Innovations, CDA Copper in Architecture - Old Parkland, 2016