

AIA Arkansas Convention

Fellowship: Culture & Mechanics

Tim Culvahouse, FAIA, tim@culvahouse.net

2018.10.18

I'm glad I waited to post this rendition of Thursday's workshop, "The ABCs of F," because our conversation sparked some new thoughts, which I've jotted down here on the fly. Rather than begin with the nuts and bolts of the submittal (which start on page 3), I'm going to flip things around and open with . . .

A Culture of Fellowship

One of AIA Arkansas' goals is to increase the number of Fellows in the chapter. Helping people put together effective submittals is a step in that direction, but it's the last step. The first step is developing a culture that encourages members to become the kind of folks who naturally end up as Fellows. And it's not only the young who can benefit. As Wavy Gravy says, "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

The gist of it is to think of Fellowship not only as an honor, but also as a model for professional development. As such, it encourages architects to master an area of expertise and to share that expertise broadly with the profession. I'll take this one step further and say that *sharing expertise is one of the best ways to master it*. The mastery and the sharing aren't separate things; they form a loop.

Expertise and the Generalist

For some architects, it's not too difficult to identify an expertise—or an emerging expertise. I used the example of Keith Boswell, FAIA, a partner in the San Francisco office of SOM, who's an authority on curtain walls. That's an easy expertise to name. For many architects, however, it's less clear, because we often—and quite appropriately—think of architecture as a generalist discipline. Many of us don't think of ourselves as specialists. It's hard to name an expertise more specific than "architecture."

In the Fellowship context, Object 1, "Design," is the closest thing to a place for the all-around architect. As in the profession at large, the assumption is that design awards and feature stories in architecture magazines identify all-around excellence. We all understand the problems with that assumption; we're familiar with much-celebrated buildings that fail dramatically on one front or another. Nevertheless, these are the prevailing tools for evaluating buildings holistically *for a broad audience*.

The upshot is that, if you want to be recognized broadly for all-around excellence, you have to pursue design awards and publication. (What counts as featured publication is less clear in the digital age, in which there are no longer a finite number of pages available for publication, but that's a rabbit hole I'm not qualified to explore.) To do so, you need to be systematic, setting a budget, hiring good photographers, regularly packaging your projects for submittal for awards and publication. And for resubmittal. A great guide to the awards submittal process is David Meckel's "Thank You for Submitting," <http://www.aiacc.org/2017/01/21/thank-you-for-submitting-2/>.

Even Generalists Can Be More Specific . . . and Should

Even in Object 1 submittals, your story needs to be more cohesive and intentional than simply, "I have done good buildings." The process of putting together a Fellowship submittal is a great opportunity to reflect back on your work to identify common threads. We often miss them in the ceaseless forward motion of practice. Here's an example of a thread: there's a firm in San Francisco called Hornberger + Worstell. They specialize in hotels and resorts and there's a recurring motif in several of their projects that reveals a distinctive strength. You can see it in these images. At the base of the monumental chimney on the left is an outdoor fireplace, similar to the



one on the right. The one on the right has a similarly grand chimney. The one on the left is a resort in, I think, Texas; the one on the right is a prep school in Pebble Beach, California. In both cases, the chimney anchors the

building in the broader landscape, at a scale of that landscape, while the fireplace makes an intimate gathering place for just a few people. It turns out that Hornberger + Worstell are particularly good at creating intimate spaces within a grand composition. They do it inside their buildings, as well, which makes sense for hospitality projects, in which grandeur may be called for, but in which people seek quiet eddies where they can step aside from the spectacle. This is a form of expertise, just as much as mastering the detailing of curtain walls.

If you look at your work this way, looking back through it for threads, you are likely to discover things that you can continue to build on. You'll also be able to articulate better what you do, which will make it easier to discuss it with others. It will make it easier to share. And you'll get a lot of return on that.

Also, identifying such threads could lead to possibilities to publish work retrospectively, something that's generally hard to do. Architecture journals are interested in a building for only a few months after it's completed. If you don't get it published then, you miss your chance. But if there's a bigger idea, one that spans many of your buildings—and perhaps can be seen in buildings by others, as well—there's the possibility of an article about that idea, which has a longer shelf life. Depending on the idea, it may appeal to a wider range of publications, as well—*Fast Company*, for example, or the Science section of the *Times*, or who knows what. Worth exploring.

Business Development

As Art Gensler has written, "Expertise closes deals," so this way of thinking about professional development not as sitting listening to a product salesperson but, instead, honing your expertise through sharing it, is good for business. It's good in two ways: greater expertise raises your market position, and sharing promotes referrals—because the most likely people to recommend you, other than perhaps your existing clients, are your fellow architects. In short, then, I'm suggesting that you think of these four things as being all wrapped up together:

- Mastery of expertise
- Sharing of expertise
- Professional development
- Business development

Thinking this way may enable you to redirect resources so that your investment of time and money is more effective. For example, it may be a better use of professional development funds to encourage staff to play active roles at a convention than to sit in the audience.

How might you, individually, as a firm, or as an AIA section or chapter, nurture a culture of fellowship (small "f"), a culture of sharing? Some things you might do are, pretty random and in no particular order:

- Invite one another to speak.
- Organize a round robin, speaking at one another's firms.
- Encourage and support younger colleagues to seek speaking opportunities.
- Invite visitors in. Be the place every architecturally interested visitor to your town wants to stop.
- Offer to talk to a class at the university.
- Host a salon.
- Look for unexpected relationships—the botanist or psychologist who shares an interest in some design issue.
- Craft questions for experts you'd like to get to know; most people like to be asked to hold forth on what they're good at.
- Start an interview series. For *ARCADE*, a terrific architecture and design journal out of Seattle, a firm called Build LLC regularly conducts interviews of notable people. Here's an example: <http://arcadenw.org/article/sensibilities-and-intuitions-of-the-master-designer>.
- Work the national AIA Convention: plan ahead to identify people you'd like to meet—speakers and others you know will be there—and familiarize yourself with something they've done, so you can ask about it and have an intelligent conversation. Bring younger colleagues along with you to do the same.
- Encourage younger colleagues to build **developmental resumes**, my term for resumes that don't just list what one's done, but also record who helped make those things possible—journalists, editors, collaborators—for future reference

Those are a few thoughts for the long haul. Beginning on the next page is the presentation about the Fellowship submittal itself.

**The ABCs of F:
Preparing for Fellowship**

**Tim Culvahouse, FAIA, tim@culvahouse.net
www.culvahouse.net/hotsprings**

These are my best recommendations, based on my experience, but I'm not infallible. Please do not count on me to get everything right. Even if what I say was right in the most recent round, it could change. So: depend on the AIA website.

First Hour

**Understand what Fellowship is
and how to apply for it.**

Second Hour

**Understand how to determine if
you're qualified.
Understand how to get qualified.**

First Hour

Principles

Context

Supporters

Story

Submittal

<p>Second Hour</p> <p>Am I Qualified?</p> <p>Getting Qualified</p> <p>Becoming Influential</p> <p>&</p> <p>Prospering</p>	<p>Re: becoming influential & prospering, I'm going to pitch an idea about the relationship between honing one's expertise and sharing one's expertise. My conviction is that the best way to hone expertise is to share it, which is also one of the best ways to do business development.</p>
<p>The express purpose of Fellowship is to recognize achievement and influence on the profession.</p>	<p>A Fellow is someone who has done exceptional work in some area of practice <i>and</i> whose work has had a broad effect on the profession. Typically, this is an effect with national breadth. The work itself doesn't have to be spread out around the country, but it must have been disseminated at a national scale.</p>
<p>1</p> <p>It hinges on influence.</p>	<p>If you're influential, the accomplishment is going to be there, but not necessarily the other way around. Almost always, influence is the sticking point, because many of us have just been doing our work, not seeking to disseminate it. That's a perfectly fine way to do things, but it doesn't qualify one for Fellowship.</p>

<p>2</p> <p>Influence comes from sharing.</p>	<p>Influence is a daunting idea, but sharing is less so, and it's through sharing that one becomes influential. Sharing is not the same thing as pitching. Sharing puts knowledge in a form that allows another person to incorporate it into what they do and to further develop it. And sharing elicits response and conversation; pitching is much more one-way.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>The submittal is about you.</p>	<p>It's not about the work, <i>per se</i>. It's about what you contributed to the work.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>It is one story, not many.</p>	<p>Fellowship doesn't honor the Renaissance person. The closest it comes to it is in Object 1, if we assume that design is the summation of all that we do and that design awards and publications capture it.</p> <p>Even within Object 1, the case will be stronger if there's a clear story that unites the exhibited projects, rather than simply that they're all celebrated buildings.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The submittal is a script.</p>	<p>One of the seven jurors will be responsible for presenting your case to the other jurors. You want to make it easy to do.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">None of it is written yet.</p>	<p>You can't use boilerplate from Qualifications and Proposals; you can't use your website text or your brochure text. None of that stuff is about you.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Getting by isn't good enough.</p>	<p>This statement is true in two senses: you can't approach this successfully with a "Can I get by with . . . ?" attitude; and you have to get a 2/3 vote of the jury—only six jurors vote on each submittal; I'll explain this later, but the gist of it is it's a big hump to get from 2 votes to 4 votes.</p>

8

Best foot forward, each step.

A corollary of the previous principle, what this means is that you can't settle for listing the awards you remember; you have to dig out all of them. Same with everything else. Put in the effort to make every element of your submittal the best it can be.

9

It deserves a job number.

A Fellowship submittal is a lot of work. It takes time and resources—from you, your staff, others whom you enlist. It is a project. Treat it as one.

10

It's due at 5 pm Eastern Time.

This hardly rises to the level of a principle, but it's a sad fact. Your colleagues in Knoxville get one more hour to complete their submittals than you do. Sometimes, life isn't fair.

Seriously: this is a strict rule. It's enforced by the mechanics of the online portal, which will shut you out after this time. I have a colleague in San Francisco whose assistant tried to upload the submittal after 2 pm Pacific Time. This colleague had to wait until the following year to submit. I'm not sure what happened to the assistant.

11

Fellowship is also a model.

Fellowship is great as an honor, recognizing things accomplished in the past. But it also provides an excellent model for how to accomplish bigger and better things in the future.

To look at it this way is to reverse engineer it—to look at the careers of Fellows and ask how they got there. They got there by sharing their knowledge and insight—their expertise.

The underlying purpose of Fellowship is to encourage architects to master an area of expertise and share it.

These are my words, but they capture the gist of it.

My conviction is that the best way to hone one's expertise is to share it: there's no better way to master something than to teach it to someone else. So Fellowship is a terrific model for professional development.

And, because, as Art Gensler has written, "Expertise closes deals," it's a terrific model for business development, as well.

Context

2018 Statistics

297 candidates

152 elevated 51%

1st year: 114 of 223 51%

2nd year: 32 of 62 52%

3rd year: 6 of 12 50%

It's not particularly helpful to study the statistics, and these are a limited sample, but people are always interested to know.

A couple of things to take away from the next few slides are:

—the success rate varies from year to year; and

—not everybody succeeds the first time around, or even the second time around.

2015 Statistics

239 candidates

147 elevated 62%

1st year: 111 of 177 63%

2nd year: 26 of 42 62%

3rd year: 10 of 20 50%

	2018	2015
Candidates	292	239
Elevated	51%	62%
1st year	51%	63%
2nd year	52%	62%
3rd year	50%	50%

	2018	2018	2015
Object 1:	37 of 81	46%	68%
Object 2:	67 of 134	50%	56%
Object 3:	21 of 34	62%	63%
Object 4:	13 of 23	57%	64%
Object 5:	14 of 25	56%	67%

It wouldn't appear, from these two snapshots, that there's much to be gained by the choice of one Object over another.

Schedule

If you apply **October 2019**, you will be applying for the **Class of 2020**.

The **2020 Jury** will be announced sometime soon after the **2019 AIA Conference on Architecture**.

Schedule

Your submittal is due in mid-October, **5 pm EST. 4 pm CST**.

The jury meets in mid-January.

New Fellows are announced in late January or early February.

Jury

There are 7 jurors, from 7 regions.

Each juror presents 1/7 of the submittals to 5 other jurors. The 7th is out of the room.

After the submittals are in, the AIA staff vets them for adherence to the rules, then divvies them up among the 7 jurors. Each juror gets around 40. (In 2015, each would have gotten 34 or 35; in 2018, each would have gotten 42 or 43.)

The jurors take turns presenting the cases they're responsible for. As the AIA's "Demystifying Fellowship" slide-deck puts it, "Presenter draws attention to what does or does not support claims," and, "Presenter answers questions from jurors and makes recommendation."

Jury

Each submittal gets 10-12 minutes (which adds up to 50+ hours of deliberation).

4 votes are required for elevation.

The same 6 jurors revisit ties.

There are 6 jurors in the room at any one time; the 7th is next door, reviewing the case he or she will present next. The 6—the presenter and the 5 others—vote on the case at hand.

In the recent past, the administrators of the program have said "7 minutes," rather than "10-12 minutes," but either way it's not a lot of time. This is why your story has to be clear and easy for your juror to present.

Note that elevation requires a 2/3 majority. Ties are not resolved by bringing in the 7th juror.

Jury

The Jury of Fellows is not in the business of discovering heretofore unrecognized talent.

You must show prior recognition.

For Object 1 submittals, the jury is not acting as a design awards jury; they're not debating the merits of the projects exhibited. They haven't the time, and it's not what they're asked to do. They're asked to evaluate the extent to which the work has already been judged worthy by authoritative third parties—award-granting organizations, publications, schools that have invited the architect to speak. The jury has the same duty for every Object.

Note how, in this system, accomplishment is judged by recognition: influence is the coin of the realm.

2019 Jury

Mary P. Cox, FAIA, Chair
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia

Peter Bardwell, FAIA
Bardwell + Associates, LLC
Columbus, Ohio

Mary A. Burke, FAIA
Burke Design & Architecture PLLC
New York City, New York

Philip Castillo, FAIA
Jahn
Chicago, Illinois

Mary Johnston, FAIA
Johnston Architects, LLC
Seattle, Washington

Paul Mankins, FAIA
Substancearchitecture
Des Moines, Iowa

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA
Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania

Note that the jurors are from different parts of the country. If there were a juror from the Gulf States Region, he or she would be the one who's out of the room, prepping for the next presentation, when your case is considered.

Supporters

Nominators

Sponsor

References

Your Firm

Consultants

AIA

Who nominates you?

Your local chapter
or
10 AIA members
or
5 Fellows

Who should your sponsor be?

Good: your competitor.
Less good: your boss.

You want a sponsor who knows you well but who has no business stake in your success. The sponsor can be your retired former boss or your previous boss or partner at another firm, but not someone at your current firm.

(Spouse is also not good.)

The sponsor can be either FAIA or AIA, but I've never seen one who wasn't FAIA. It makes sense to allow AIA, though; otherwise, a chapter without any Fellows might be a difficult place to become a Fellow. But if you can get a Fellow to sponsor you, do.

What does your sponsor do?

Writes crucial cover letter.
Honchos your recommenders.
Gives you a hard time.

Who should write letters?

People who know you and your work.

People who can speak with authority on the subject at hand.

5 of 7 must be AIA members of any sort.

2 can be anybody; clients are good.

If it's between a celebrity architect who only sort-of knows you and an uncelebrated colleague who knows you well, go with the colleague.

If it's between a Fellow who only sort-of knows you and some other rank of AIA member who knows you well, go with the one who knows you well.

Both your sponsor and your 5 AIA letter writers must be members in good standing. Confirm that they are; your local chapter should have access to a database that will provide this info.

The second year, you add 3 more letters, which can be from anyone.

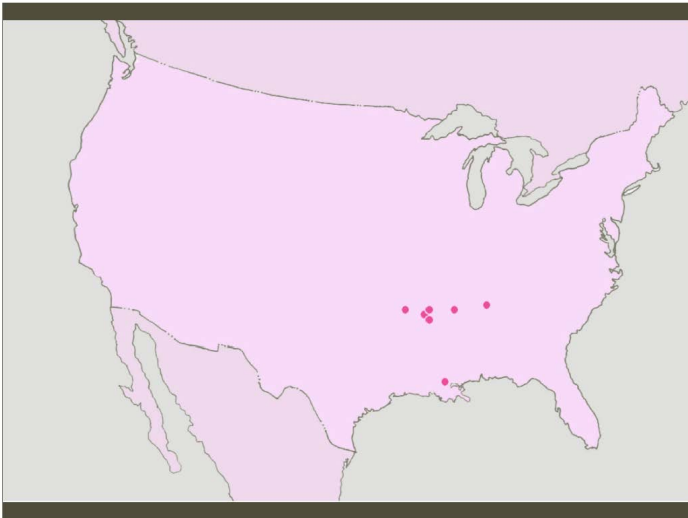
The third year, you add 3 more letters, which can be from anyone.

Previous letters remain in your file, but can be updated.

You can't swap out writers.

This will be the opportunity to bring in all the non-AIA members you wished you were able to call upon the first time around.

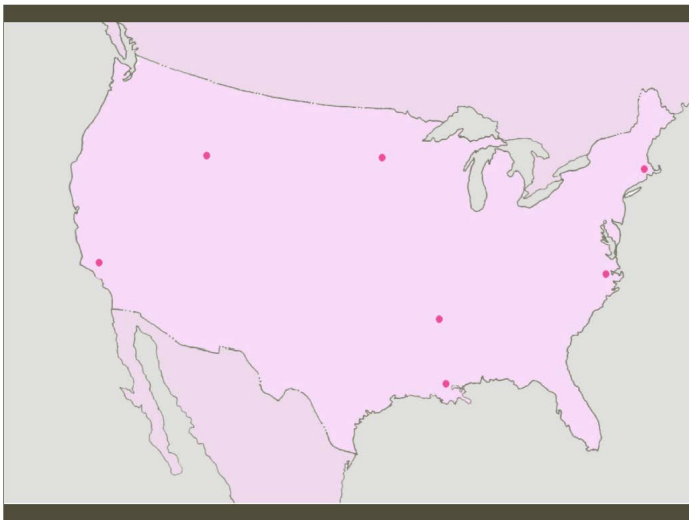
There is actually one circumstance in which you can substitute a new letter writer for a previous one: if you replace your previous sponsor with one of your previous letter writers. You are allowed to change sponsors.



This is what you might imagine as a typical distribution of reference letter writers for a candidate from Arkansas. But . . .



... it is not a good distribution. The implication of having all of your letter writers from close to home is that nobody outside of your region has heard of you. This undermines the case for broad influence.



A broad distribution of letter writers doesn't, of course, *prove* that you have had broad influence—they could just be people you've kept up with from college—but it doesn't undercut the idea.

Candidates often have trouble at first thinking of widely distributed references. I recommend against settling on a list of letter writers too early, because it may happen that something jogs your memory: "Oh, why didn't I think of so-and-so earlier?" One exercise that can help jog your memory is . . .

2019 Jury

Mary P. Cox, FAIA, Chair
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia

Peter Bardwell, FAIA
Bardwell + Associates, LLC
Columbus, Ohio

Mary A. Burke, FAIA
Burke Design & Architecture PLLC
New York City, New York

Philip Castillo, FAIA
Jahn
Chicago, Illinois

Mary Johnston, FAIA
Johnston Architects, LLC
Seattle, Washington

Paul Mankins, FAIA
Substancearchitecture
Des Moines, Iowa

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA
Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania

... the Match the Jurors Game. Look at where the jurors are from, and ask yourself if you know anyone from around there. It's not at all necessary that you do, but it may help you recall people you've not thought of. And if it should happen that you do have someone in the same town as one of the jurors, that juror might know that reference, which may amplify the reference's impact.

Other connections between jurors and references are worth looking for.

But never ask a reference or anyone to approach a juror directly on your behalf.

What do your letter writers write?

**Each focuses on one or two points.
Prompt them.**

They don't ape the language of your summary.

They include specifics.

They keep it to a single page.

One way to narrow down your list of possible references is to match them to your exhibits, so that each one can substantiate the claim made in that exhibit or reinforce the point that the exhibit is designed to make.

What does your firm do?

Well, that depends.

Your firm can provide a lot of support, both in gathering evidence and in crafting the submittal itself.

Some firms have good records of awards and publications and the like; others don't. It's best if you keep track of these things yourself for the projects you work on, so you're sure to have the information available for this or any other use.

It's in the interest of the firm for you to succeed, so if your firm does not support you enthusiastically, it may be time to look for another job.

Who else can help?

Writer.

Editor.

Proofreader.

Graphic designer.

Strategist.

You can hire people to help you write the text or to edit text that you write. It is a good idea, in any case, to have someone who's good at it proofread the document. Typos can take the punch out.

The submittal needn't be a masterpiece of graphic design, but it should be clear. The hierarchy of elements should make it easy to grasp and should support your argument. Graphic designers are better at these things that we are.

You can hire someone with experience in the genre to help you strategize.

How can the AIA help?

Local component?

AIA website.

Exemplary submittals.

“Demystifying Fellowship.”

Answering questions.

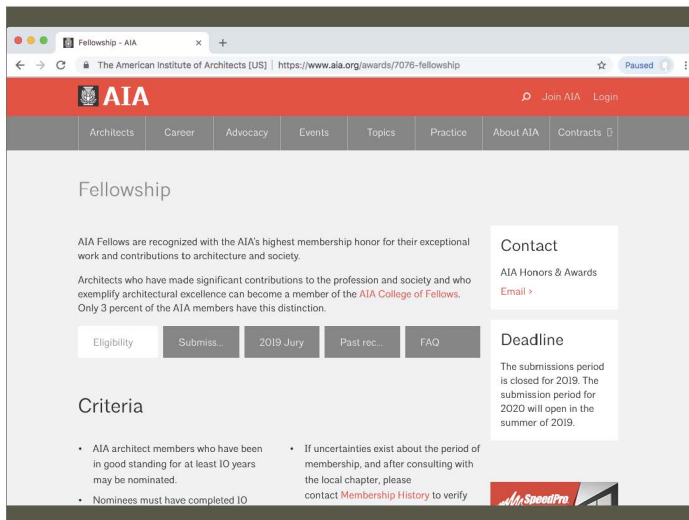
Feedback.

Some local components have robust coaching processes.

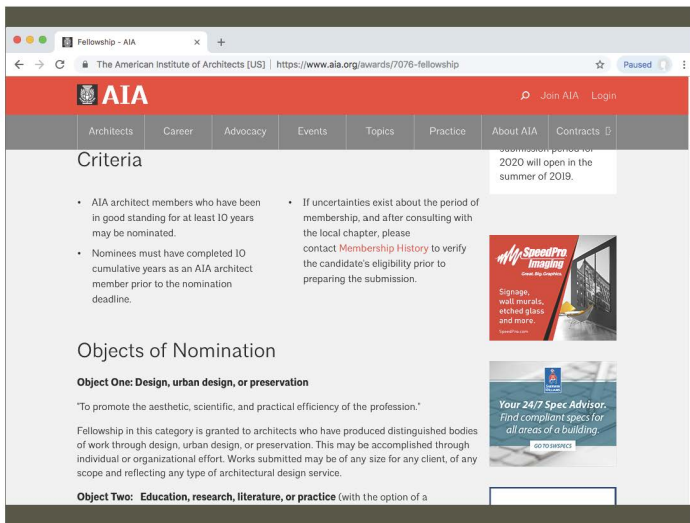
The AIA Fellowship website (see following slides) has good resources, including examples of successful submittals and a presentation given each year at the national convention on “Demystifying Fellowship.”

Staff responsible for the program are good about answering questions.

If you don’t succeed the first time around, they offer you helpful, informative feedback from the jury.



Currently, the URL for the Fellowship page is <https://www.aia.org/awards/7076-fellowship>. This may change, but if you go to AIA.org and search “Fellowship,” it should come up readily. It currently has five main tabs.



The first tab, the homepage, gives the basic criterion: you must have been a member of the AIA in good standing for a cumulative total of 10 years prior to the submittal date. Your local component can look this up.

The homepage also lists the Objects of Nomination—the categories within which you may submit.

- Object 1: Design**
- Object 2: Practice**
- Object 3: AIA or Related Org.**
- Object 4: [Architect as Client]**
- Object 5: Volunteer Service
Alternative Career**

These are shorthand names for the Objects. "Architect as Client" is my personal shorthand for Object 4, not the AIA's, but in my experience it covers it (see below).

Until recently, if the jury determined that they couldn't approve your submittal in the Object you selected, but could do so under another Object, they were not allowed to move it from one to the other; they could only recommend that you submit in the other Object the next time around. They are now able to move it, but apparently remain reluctant to.

"To ensure the advancement of the living standards of people through their improved environment."

"To make the profession of ever-increasing service to society."

The top-line description of the Object is not helpful. Here are two of the five. Can you match them with their Objects?

The short paragraph that follows the top-line statement is where you actually learn what the Object covers.

Object 1

architects who have produced
distinguished bodies of work
through
DESIGN
URBAN DESIGN
or
PRESERVATION

Object 1, “Design,” is the one in which all of the exhibits will be buildings or master plans or urban design schemes—in other words, projects in the common sense of the term. For this Object, a minimum of 5 exhibits is required. The principal forms of evidence are design awards and project publications.

(Apparently, the reason the jury was formerly prohibited from moving a submittal from one Object to another is that in the past someone who submitted in Object 1 was moved to Object 2 and elevated . . . and raised hell about it, because they wanted to be in “Design.”)

Object 2

architects who have made notable contributions
through their work in
EDUCATION
RESEARCH
LITERATURE
or
PRACTICE

Object 2 is the broadest. It’s casually referred to as “Practice,” but it includes teaching, writing, and research, as well. In this object, it’s not uncommon for a candidate to do more than one of these things, even all of them—for instance, a practitioner with a specialty in practice management might teach professional practice courses in an architecture school. You’re nevertheless required to choose one of the subcategories.

For this object, you’re likely to include exhibits that aren’t projects.

Object 2

PRACTICE
is divided into
Management
and
Technical Advancement

If you choose “Practice,” you must choose a sub-sub-category, either “Management” or “Technical Advancement.” This is a recent innovation, and I don’t like it, mainly because one of the most common practice submittals—specialization in a building type—doesn’t fit under either, because it involves more than either. Sometimes, it’s not an easy call to make, but I’ve not heard of submittals being bounced on account of this choice.

Again, exhibits may include things other than buildings.

Object 3

architects who have actively, efficiently, and cooperatively

LED THE INSTITUTE

or

LED A RELATED PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

Object 3 is pretty self-explanatory. To succeed in it, you need to have had some impact at the national level, though not necessarily a formal position at the national level. That is, for example, if as president of AIA Arkansas you led an initiative that was subsequently picked up by other state or regional components or by AIA National, that would count as national influence.

Object 4

architects who have made notable contributions in

PUBLIC SERVICE

GOVERNMENT

or

INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

These are folks who have positions in major institutions—municipalities, universities, corporations such as Kaiser Permanente—that make them responsible for the buildings those institutions build, or the planning they do, or the like. So, typically, they are responsible for hiring architects, and the exhibits often include buildings designed by the architects they hired.

Object 5

architects who have made notable contributions to the public good through

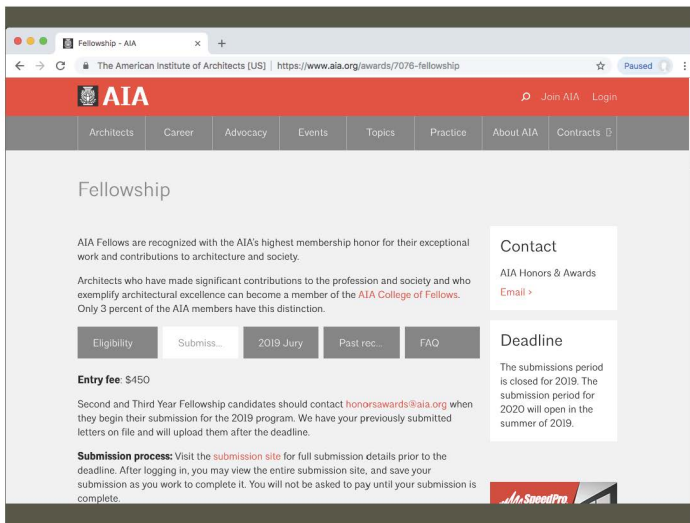
ALTERNATIVE CAREERS

or

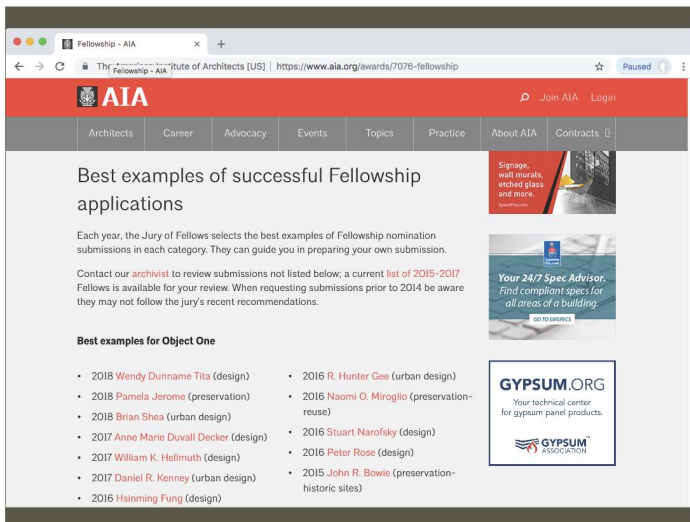
VOLUNTEER WORK

with organizations not directly connected to the built environment

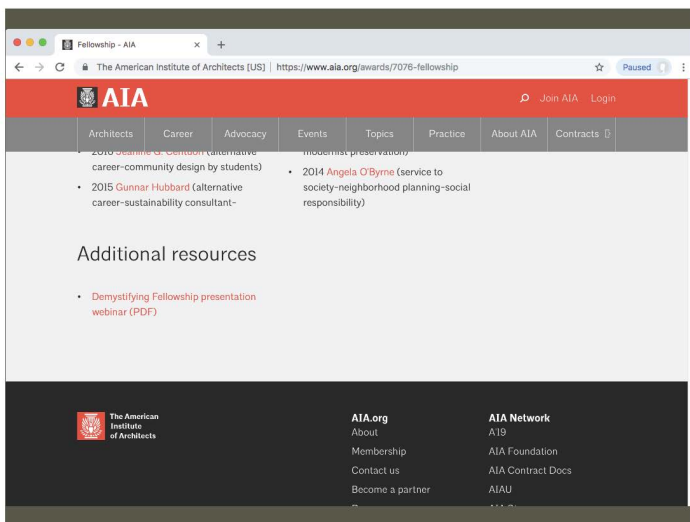
This is a weird category, because its sub-categories have nothing to do with one another. “Alternative Careers” encompasses architects who practice under a different name—as an acoustician or a theater consultant, that sort of thing. “Volunteer Work” is what it sounds like, but the phrase, “not directly connected to the built environment,” is misleading; for example, one of the 2018 Fellows was elevated for giving “visibility and relevance to mid-century regional modernist architecture of the Pacific Northwest, making it a forceful influence on design across the nation.”



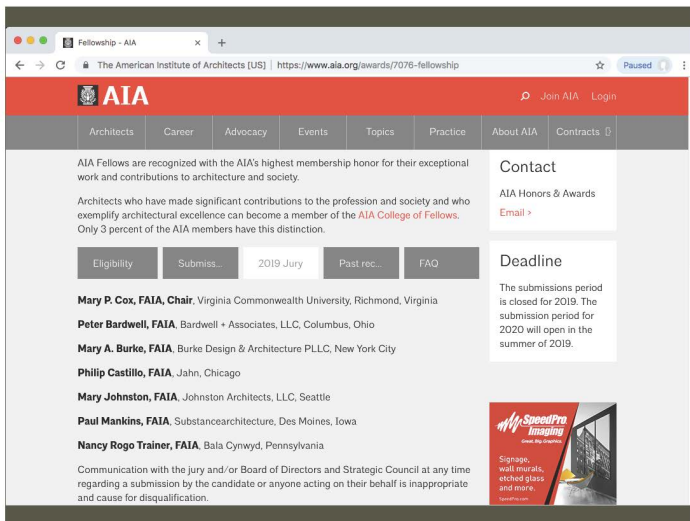
The second tab, “Submiss . . .” or “Submission Details,” if your screen is wide enough, tells you the entry fee and provides a link to the submission portal (which is also in the sidebar that is unchanged between pages). But its most helpful offerings are . . .



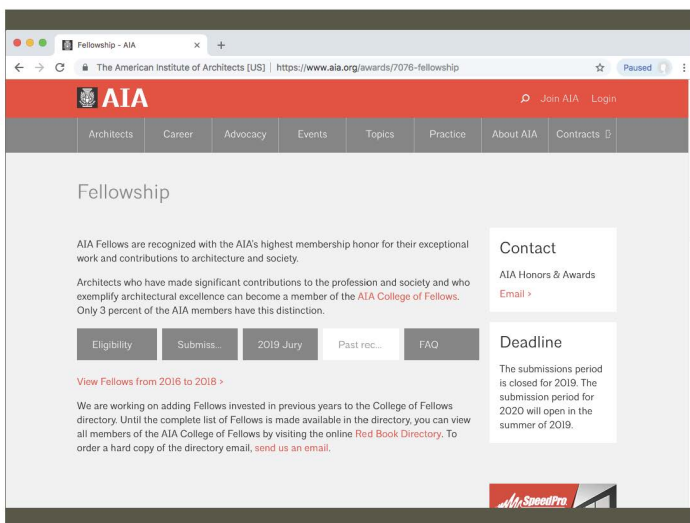
. . . examples of recent successful applications, divided by Object—which you should download and study—and . . .



. . . the slide deck from “Demystifying Fellowship,” a presentation given each year by AIA staff at the national AIA Conference. Download and study it.

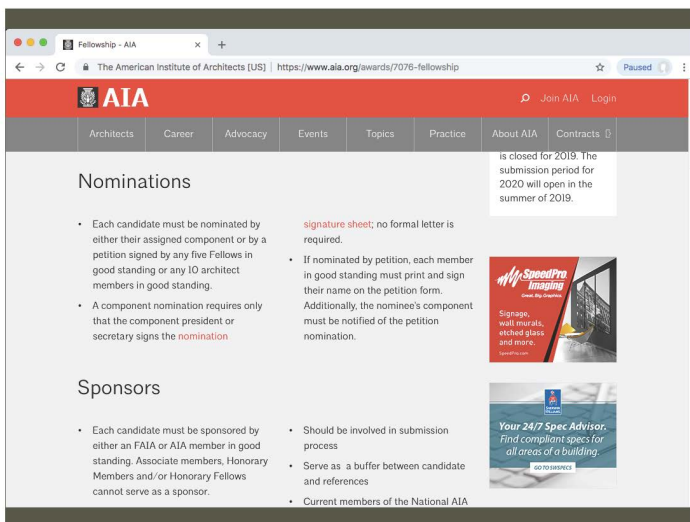


The third tab is a list of the jurors. As I mentioned, the new list will go up shortly after the convention.



The fourth tab takes you to listings of all current and previous Fellows. Those from 2016 forward are in an online database; ones prior to that are in a PDF of the "Red Book," the printed history of Fellowship, which lists all Fellows since 1857, organized both chronologically and alphabetically.

You can use this resource to learn whether someone is a Fellow or not.



The fifth tab is called "FAQs," but it's not really FAQs, it's a list of rules and recommendations. You should read it carefully. It also has a link to the Nomination Signature Sheet, which whoever is nominating you needs to sign. If it's your local component, the president or secretary signs.

HonorsAwards@AIA.org
FirstnameLastname@AIA.org

You're asked to direct questions to HonorsAwards@AIA.org. In the past, the people in charge have been happy to receive questions directly, but there has been some staff turnover lately. Kathleen Daileida, who ran the program for many years and was fantastic, retired in late 2017. She was succeeded by the team of Elizabeth Wolverton and Elizabeth Henry, who did it for a year then moved to other positions in the national office. Currently, the director is Elizabeth Ray, but I've not corresponded with her much, so I can't say what her preferences are re: receiving questions.

**Debriefing,
late February - early April.**

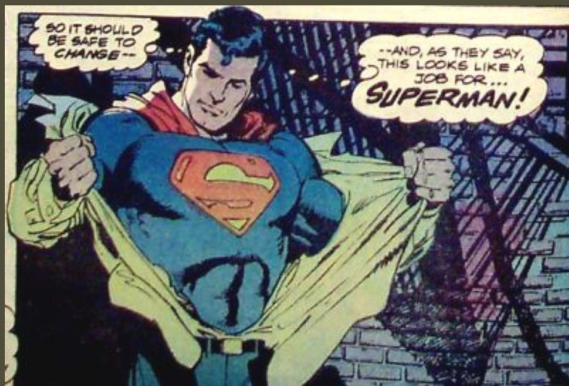
If you don't succeed, you'll receive an email encouraging you to set up a time to talk to the program director, to hear the feedback from the jury. It's usually very helpful. The subsequent year's jury will see the feedback, so they'll know what was found lacking previously. It is generally thought that, if you are able to remedy those things in your subsequent submittal, you'll succeed. No guarantee, but likely.

In principle, they'll tell you if there's no point in resubmitting, though it may be couched as "not enough evidence of broad influence."

Your Story

This story is about a
larger-than-life character
who shares many of your
qualities and successes, but is
stronger and
better looking, so . . .

. . . be your superhero self:



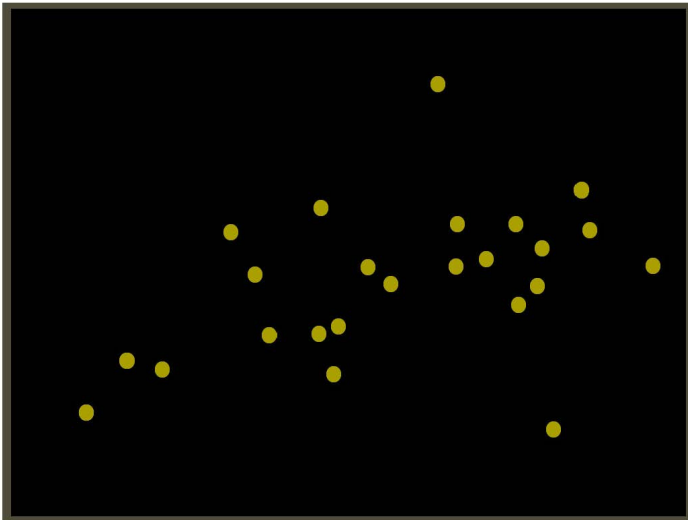
. . . be your superhero self:



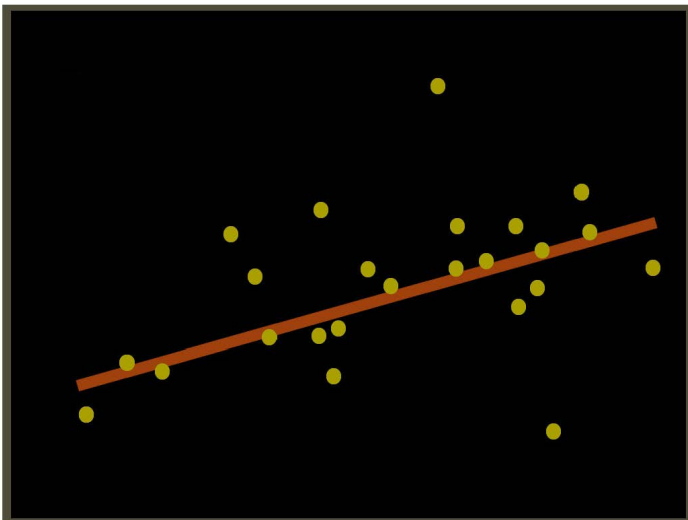
If I could choose what superhero to be,
I'd choose Black Widow. Mind games!

Identifying Your Story

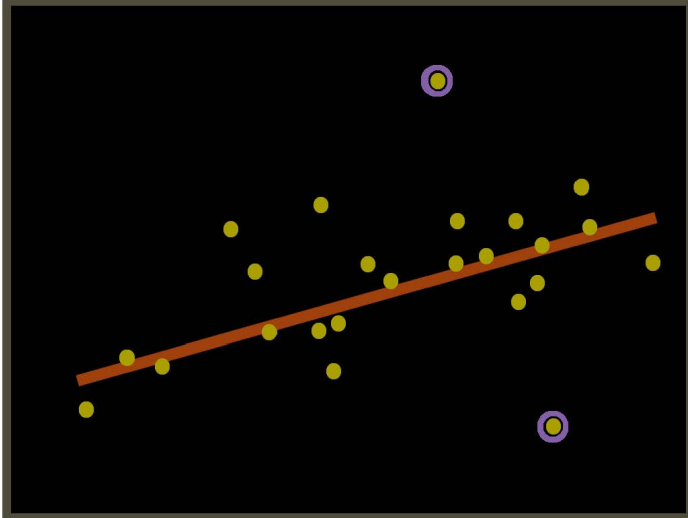
It can be hard to narrow down your accomplishments to a single story, but it's essential to do so. You will not succeed if you try to tell more than one story, because it will appear that none of them is significant enough on its own—or that you don't believe it is.



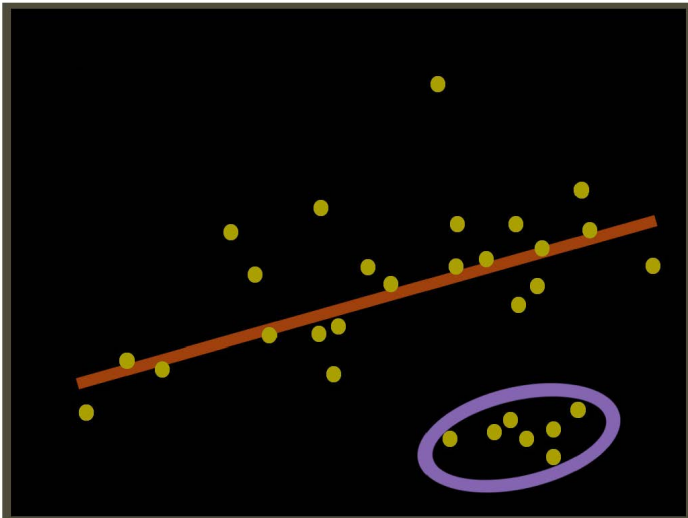
Let's say this is a scatter plot of your accomplishments. How you might create such a plot, I have no idea; it's just a graphic tool to help me explain how you might go about narrowing things down.



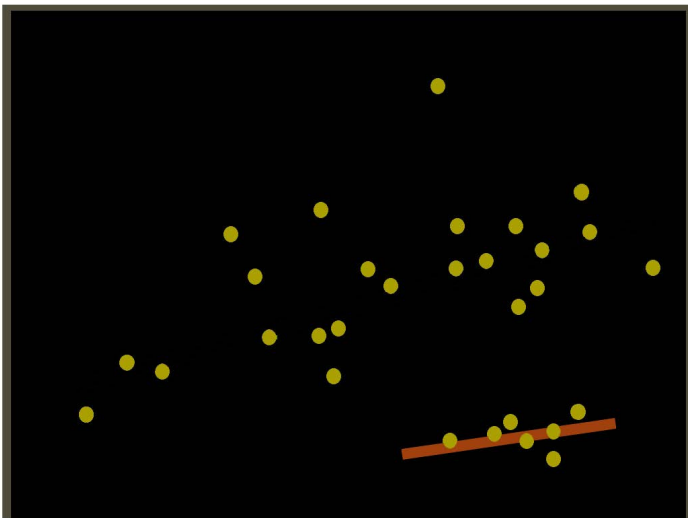
If you eyeball this array, it's pretty clear that your story is going to be along the red line; it will include those accomplishments near the line.



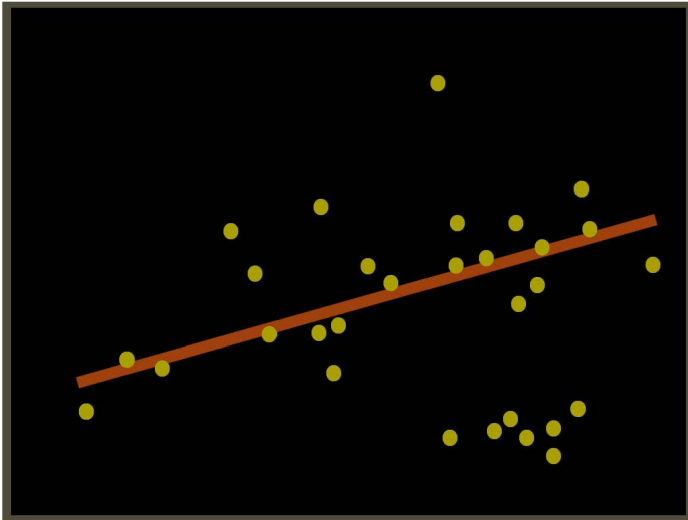
It won't include the outliers circled here in purple. You will not mention them in your Section 1 Summary. They may appear in Section 2, but they're not essential to your case and should not distract from it.



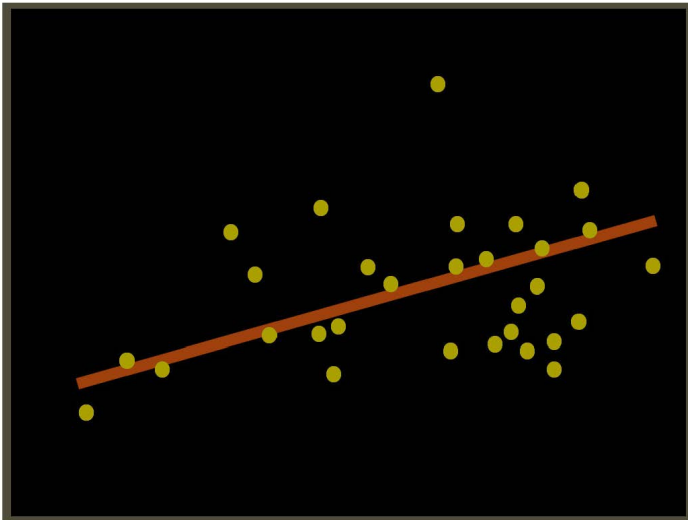
In this version, there's a clump of accomplishments in the lower left-hand corner.



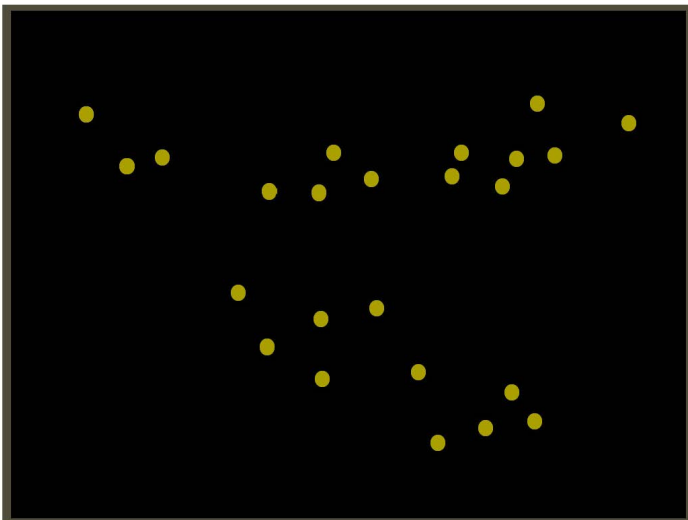
Even though there are fewer accomplishments in this cluster, if they are more consequential, they might be your story. For example, if you've done a lot of different building types, but among them you've done seven US embassies or consular buildings, that might be what you present.



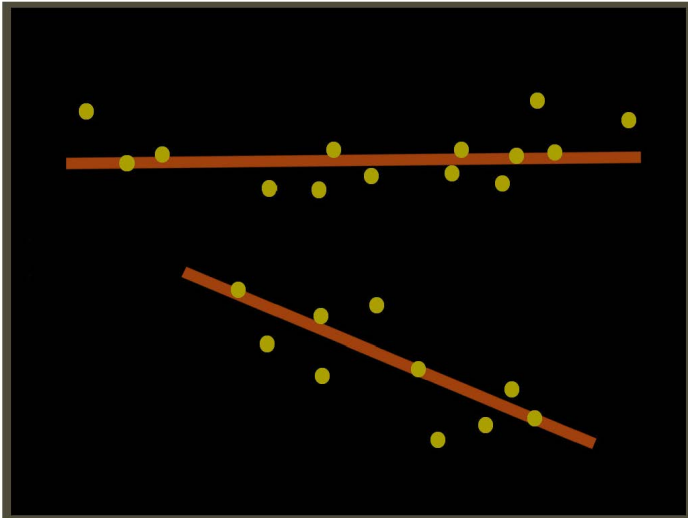
Another possibility is that you ask yourself what that smaller cluster has in common with the more extended story. You may find that it's possible . . .



. . . to tell the story in a way that brings them together. For example, you may have been thinking in terms of private sector vs. public sector projects, but if you think instead in terms of building performance, they come together.



You may discover that you have two relatively equal clusters of accomplishments.



If so, either one is fine. Pick the one that you have the best evidence for. But, again, don't try to include both.

The Submittal

Sponsor's Letter

Section 1: Summary

35-Word Statement

The Story

Section 2: Accomplishments

Work

Honors

Publications

Section 3: Exhibits

Your submittal is a script.

Your submittal acts as a script for the juror who's been assigned your case to present to the jury.

Make it easy for the Juror responsible for your submittal to present your strengths.

Follow the rules.
Focus on what you contributed.
Back up your assertions.
Don't pull your punches.
Don't exaggerate.
Don't pad.
Don't end with a whimper.

Sponsor Letter

Echoes your Summary, but in a personal voice.
Is a single page.

You see quite a few violations of the rules in the exemplary submittals posted on the AIA website, but I still don't see the sense in taking the chance of being disqualified.

By "Don't end with a whimper," I mean don't write a strong Section 1 statement about, for example, your extensive portfolio of airport designs, then end with, "She also served on the AIA Little Rock Mentorship Committee for three years."

The Sponsor can put more character into the cover letter than you are likely to have in your Section 1 statement, but the two must tell the same story.

The Sponsor should say how he or she knows you. It's a good idea to be concrete, to include a particular instance in which you excelled, one that the juror is familiar with. (That's good advice for reference letter writers, too.)

Section 1

Begins with a 35-word statement that sounds good read aloud.

Tells one story clearly.

Tells the jurors what to expect.

Is a single page.

The 35-word statement should sound good when read aloud, because it is what will be read when you walk across the stage to get your medal. And reading aloud is a good test of almost any writing.

By “tells the jurors what to expect,” I don’t mean it should say, literally, “Here’s what you’re going to find in the rest of this submittal,” but rather that the ideas in the summary should correspond to the ideas highlighted in Section 2 and demonstrated in the exhibits (Section 3).

Section 2

Lists your significant accomplishments.

Focuses on your story, but can include other things.

Is easy to grasp.

Section 2 is an opportunity to show the quantitative extent of your accomplishments, and it should include all significant accomplishments, whether they are a part of your story or not. If, for example, your story is about the design of embassies and consulates, you should still list other significant projects and include awards and publications related to them. It’s good to use subcategories to make the distinction, e.g., “Consulates & Embassies,” “Other Significant Projects.”

I should have said, as well, that it’s best to put everything in reverse chronological order.

Section 2

Introduce subsections to clarify or strengthen a point.

Use every element to inform, not decorate.

Do not expand any item to exhibit-like prominence.

You can include a paragraph or two at the beginning of each subsection of Section 2, which allows you to highlight how the items in that subsection relate to your story.

While architects like eye candy, your submittal will be stronger if every graphic element conveys information.

Section 2 is not meant to be an extension of either Section 1 or Section 3. So, while you can include text as mentioned above, as well as thumbnail images, don’t try to work in an extra exhibit.

Section 2.1: Significant Work

Projects.

Jury service.

Presentations / lectures.

AIA Involvement.

Civic / volunteer involvement.

It's a good idea to separate out AIA involvement from other volunteer service.

Section 2.2: Honors, awards, recognition

Use informative subcategories.

Highlight AIA awards & honors.

Include exhibitions here.

A common and smart thing to do is to have a subcategory for AIA Awards and another for Other Awards. You can break it down further, e.g.,

- National AIA Awards

- Regional AIA Awards

- Local AIA Awards

- Other National Awards

- Other Regional Awards

- Other Local Awards

... or whatever categories make sense for what you have.

They don't tell you where to list exhibitions, but to me they are forms of recognition, so I'd put them here.

Section 2.3: Publications

Include only significant ones.

If the significance isn't obvious, use a few words to explain it.

Highlight the most significant information.

Use thumbnails only to inform.

Generally speaking, leave out the local newspaper articles that just tell about the opening of the building or that sort of thing. But if there's something more significant about a local article, include it but say what's significant about it or quote a significant passage.

A common thing to do is to include particularly impressive quotations from articles in a sidebar or in larger font between entries.

"NKU's Health Innovation Center Now Under Construction"

Healthcare Design, 10/2015

"In Detail > Collaborative Life Sciences Building: An acrobatic structure and rugged exterior cladding by CO Architects and SERA Architects bring to life a cutting-edge technical laboratory building"

The Architect's Newspaper, 10/2015

"In Detail: Collaborative Life Sciences Building & Skourtes Tower"

The West Architect's Newspaper, 09/2015

"Collaboration is Key"

School Construction News, 08/2015

This and the next three slides show publication listings from four of the exemplary submittals currently posted on the AIA website. Each has its problems. This one omits the author; it leaves the reader guessing what the "Collaboration is Key" article has to do with the candidate. And it emphasizes the article title over the journal title, which is the opposite of what you should do. The most important bit of info is the journal title, because it indicates the breadth of dissemination of the material.

- | | |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvard Design Magazine 40. 'Off-the-Grid Treatment.' 2015. Rose, Peter.• Boston.com. 'Martha's Vineyard house designed to be moved if its cliff starts to erode.' 08 June 2015. Turchi, Megan.• Custom Home Magazine. 'Master Class: Going Abroad.' Spring 2015. Johnson, Sara.• Dwell.com. 'New England Vacation Home Emphasizes Island Breeze and Spectacular Views.' 27 March 2015. Janzen, Emma.• Boston Magazine. 'Martha's Vineyard Concrete Home Wins Design Award.' 20 February 2015. Rassow, Olivia. |
| 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boston Home Magazine. 'House of Stone.' Fall 2014. Giacobbe, Alyssa.• Timber + Design Magazine. 'Close to Invisible.' August 2014.• Architectural Record. 'House of the Month: Island Residence.' June 2014. Minutillo, Josephine. |

This one includes the author, but it's given last name first, which makes it slower to grasp recognizable names, which is the point of listing the authors.

It doesn't identify the project addressed in each article.

There is no hierarchy of information; even the convention of putting journal titles in italics has been neglected.

The sameness of all the elements makes it difficult to read.

Carlyle Master Plan, Alexandria, Virginia

Shea, Brian. "Extending a City: The Carlyle Master Plan, Alexandria, Virginia." *Urban Land*, June 1992.

Lewis, Roger K. "Carlyle New Approach Near Old Town." *The Washington Post*, 16 June 1990.

Oppenheimer Dean, Andrea. "Taming the City Edge." *Architecture*, April 1990.

Forgey, Benjamin. "Alexandria Alternative." *The Washington Post*, 14 October 1989.

Cityfront Center, Chicago, Illinois

Sinkevitch, Alice, and Laurie McGovern Petersen. *AIA Guide to Chicago*. University of Illinois Press, 3rd ed., 2014.

Goldberger, Paul. "In Chicago, A New Romanticism." *The New York Times*. 29 Oct 1989.

Kogan, Rick. "A Moving Experience." *Chicago Tribune*. 1 Oct 1989.

This one's easier to read, and journal titles are in italics. Authors are, again, last name first, which is less fluid; the reader will more quickly grasp "Paul Goldberger" than "Goldberger, Paul."

Organizing the publications list by project is a common, acceptable option.

NEWSDAY | 2001
 Feature Article, Haber Residence

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECT MAGAZINE | 2001
 Stuart Narofsky Profile Feature

DESIGN TIMES MAGAZINE | 2000
 Outdoor Entertainment Feature, Malhotra Residence

TRADITIONAL HOME MAGAZINE | 2000
 Feature Article, Ennis Residence

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECT MAGAZINE | 2000
 Feature Article, Patel Residence

NEWSDAY | 2000
 Feature Article, Malhotra Residence

DESIGN TIMES MAGAZINE | 1999
 Outdoor Living Feature, Fried Residence

This one is graphically clear, and its strength is its highlighting of the journal title, but it leaves out the author. It could be that “Feature Article” is more effective than the actual article title would be, so perhaps it is an OK choice.

2015 ***The New York Times***
 Allison Arieff, “What a Great Building,” 23 June
 HIGHLAND DAYCARE CENTER

ARCHITECT
 Aaron Betsky, “I Love This Building,” May
 HIGHLAND DAYCARE CENTER

2014 ***Casabella***
 Francesco Dal Co, “Un edificio eccellente,” October
 HIGHLAND DAYCARE CENTER

Here’s a version I’ve concocted that does what I believe such listings should do:

It makes the dates easy to find.

It most strongly emphasizes the journal title (or book, if it’s a book).

It makes the author easy to see, as well.

It identifies the relevant project.

Even though the previous example makes the journal titles clear without using italics, italics are a good idea because . . .

2015 **AIA Arkansas**
 Honor Award
 HIGHLAND DAYCARE CENTER

Chicago Athenaeum
 American Architecture Award
 HIGHLAND DAYCARE CENTER

Contract
 Merit Award - Institutional
 HIGHLAND DAYCARE CENTER

. . . in the awards listing, you can distinguish awards given by journals from awards given by other organizations. The advantage to this is that it calls out awards that were sure to have been published. A small point, and a reader might or might not think about that, but it doesn’t hurt. Best foot forward.



- William Botswick
"AIA 2009: 10x10 Cities"
Architectural Record (architecturalrecord.com) /
May 1, 2009

- "10x10 Cities Exhibition Opens on April 17th in San Francisco"
Bustler.net / April 13, 2009

- Dorit Fromm
"Designing for the Changing Face of Education"
Contract Magazine (contractdesign.com) / February 20, 2009
(Tenderloin School)



- Task Force on the Future for Growth
and Development in Maryland,
Vertical Schools Report / 2009
(Tenderloin School)

Here's an example of thumbnails that are merely decorative. They break up the monotony of the list, but they don't inform. A reader *might* be able to make out "Architectural Record" in the upper one, but there's no information in the lower one.



Michael Cockram, "The Products of Climate Change,"
Sweets News and Products (August/September 2013)
Ron Nyren, "ULX: From Brown to Green," *Urban Land* (July/August 2013)
Sara Hart, "Bioinnovation Center," *Greensource* (May 2013)
"Back to the future...", *WorldArchitectureNews.com* (April 2012)
Debbie Elliot, "In Katrina's Wake, New Orleans Enjoys Startup Boom,"
NPR.org (January 2012)
Jennifer Welsh, "Biotech on the Bayou," *The Scientist* (October 2010)
VETERANS AFFAIRS REPLACEMENT MEDICAL CENTER
"Clark/McCarthy Healthcare Partners Powers Up Central Energy Plant at
VA New Orleans Replacement Medical Center," *BusinessWire.com* (September 2014)
"Architect Turns Building 'Upside Down' to Protect Veterans
from Natural Disasters," *PSFK.com* (August 2014)
Belinda Lanks, "Designing an Upside-Down, Hurricane-Proof Hospital
for New Orleans," *BusinessWeek.com* (August 2014)
Adriana Lopez, "America's New Frontier For Business Opportunity,"
Forbes.com (January 2013)
Tim Griffith, "An Immersive Approach," *Metropolis* (October 2011)
Brad Vogel, "Persistence Pays Off in New Orleans Hospitals Fight,"
PreservationNation.com (February 2011)

These thumbnails, however, provide a lot of information. The reader immediately recognizes most if not all of these journals and thereby grasps the reach of the candidate's work before even reading the listings.

Section 3: Exhibits

The jury hasn't the time or the charter to understand the work.

As mentioned before, the jury process is fast-paced. The jury wants to learn what you contributed to the success of the things exhibited. The details of the things themselves are far less important. Square footages, for example, are just a distraction, unless they differ vastly from what would be expected, in a way that is significant for the story.

Section 3: Exhibits

Minimum 5 projects for Object 1

Minimum 7 projects for the other objects.

Easy on the unfinished projects.

It's generally best to include only completed projects, but if there's a particularly significant project under construction or otherwise on course, you can include it. If it demonstrates an advance on some component of your expertise/story, you should include it. But never have fewer than 5 completed projects (buildings or otherwise) for any category, and no more than 2 or 3 incomplete projects altogether.

Section 3: Exhibits

Organize by

Challenge;

Response (what you did); and

Outcome.

Be concise.

List honors and publications.

The jury a few years ago began recommending that the exhibit text be structured to describe Challenge, Role, and Outcome. I substitute "Response" for "Role," because they don't mean your job title. They mean what you did to address the challenge. The point is to focus on your contribution and what it accomplished. Though only a recommendation, I'd treat it as a rule. One of the administrators told me that almost everyone puts it in this form the 2nd time around, which is telling.

Section 3: Exhibits

Declaration of Responsibility

Can be a firm member;

Better if it's the client or . . .

Each exhibit must have a Declaration of Responsibility, which is a brief statement along the lines of, "I have personal knowledge that the candidate [did whatever the exhibit says she did]." Anyone for whom that's true can sign it, but it's not best to have a member of your firm sign all of them. Doing that is missing an opportunity to broaden the number of people the jurors can see you've touched, which makes your influence seem narrower. It is something the jury sometimes calls out in feedback on an unsuccessful submittal.

1. Your case hinges on influence.
2. Influence comes from sharing.
3. The submittal is about you.
4. It is one story, not many.
5. The submittal is a script.
6. None of it is written yet.
7. Getting by isn't good enough.
8. Put your best foot forward, each step.
9. The submittal deserves a job number.
10. It's due at 5 pm Eastern Time.
11. Fellowship is a model.

A review of the 11 principles.

Thank you.

Tim Culvahouse, FAIA, tim@culvahouse.net