

## Knowledge Community types

Grassroots Knowledge Communities are semi-permanent groups, organized in accordance with policies approved by the BSA leadership, which meet on a regular basis to discuss, learn about, and disseminate information about specific topics that are relevant to practice and the profession.<sup>1</sup>

Such Knowledge Communities fall into two groups: **Knowledge Communities** proper are organized by themes focused on disciplinary issues such as specific building types, evolving practice models, urban design, public policy, and cross-disciplinary issues (art, landscape architecture, etc.). **Networks** are Knowledge Communities of like-minded professionals who meet to share information and best practices. These include design firm support professionals (marketing, information resources, and administration/HR) and user groups focused on specific software applications.

Both types of Knowledge Communities fall under the jurisdiction of a group of Board-level commissioners. Commissioners monitor the programming of the Knowledge Communities to ensure the highest level of quality and relevance, consult with chairs on succession plans, and report to the Board on the activities of groups under their jurisdiction.

## Knowledge Community requirements

The BSA supports the entrepreneurial initiative of members who launch and maintain relevant and engaging Knowledge Communities. To ensure that the organization's resources, including funds and staff time, are well-spent and the excellent work of the Knowledge Communities is being communicated to other BSA members and the widest-possible audience, new standards have been adopted by the Board. Knowledge Community status requires a minimum attendance level, regular meetings, and dissemination of the work of the group.

### *Baseline Knowledge Community Standards*

A Knowledge Community is expected to:

- a) consistently attract at least eight attendees per meeting (inclusive of Chairs)
- b) meet at least quarterly, with recommended monthly meetings
- c) cancel no more than two meetings per year after a meeting date has been advertised
- d) share key content with the staff Knowledge Community liaison to be disseminated on the BSA website, in social media, and other publications, as appropriate

These standards are not meant to limit other kinds of short or long-term entrepreneurial activities by members in the guise of focus groups, task forces or ad hoc Knowledge Communities. Those who wish to initiate a structured group of any kind should contact the staff Knowledge Community liaison for advice and assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to Grassroots Knowledge Communities, there are several standing Knowledge Communities defined in the BSA by-laws. From time to time the Board may also appoint its own sub-committees and task forces. This document addresses only the Grassroots Knowledge Communities.

## **Formation and review process**

A proposal for a new Knowledge Community should be submitted in writing to the staff Knowledge Community liaison who will review and submit to the Board VPs. The proposal should describe the Knowledge Community's statement of purpose and goals, and why it would fill a role distinct from existing Knowledge Communities. Within 30 days the Board VPs and senior BSA staff will review the proposal and determine whether it can be supported. At the end of a Knowledge Community's first year, the appropriate Board VP will review its annual report (see below) and decide whether to recommend its continuance.

## **Knowledge Community chair terms of office**

Knowledge Community chairs are asked to commit to a term of *three years or less*, and to cultivate new leadership from within the Knowledge Community or network. This will ensure that Knowledge Community responsibilities do not become burdensome for any individual, that new content and programming ideas are introduced regularly, and that leadership opportunities are open to emerging professionals and other newcomers to the organization. It is hoped that this policy will increase the number of meaningful mentoring relationships between seasoned experts and emerging professionals in the many varied content areas represented by the BSA Knowledge Community structure.

*Term limit:* An individual may serve as chair for up to **three** years.

*Number of chairs:* A Knowledge Community may have a maximum of **two** official chairs.

*Additional terms:* A past chair may become chair again after a hiatus of two years or more.

*Selection of new chairs:* New chairs may be nominated by the existing chair in consultation with the staff Knowledge Community liaison.

## **Annual Reports**

The chair of each Knowledge Community shall submit a written annual report on the Knowledge Community's activities during the previous 12 months. These reports are due on November 1, in preparation for the BSA's Annual Meeting, and should be sent to the appropriate commissioner and the staff Knowledge Community liaison.

## **Communication and Outreach**

BSA Knowledge Communities and Knowledge Community chairs may not speak on behalf of the organization nor advocate for specific policy positions, either in the press or by issuing statements on the letterhead of the BSA or a BSA Knowledge Community, without appropriate authorization from the Executive Director and the Board. Public statements must be in keeping with the long-standing "Who Speaks for the BSA?" policy. This policy is attached, and is also included in the BSA Book.

## **Who Speaks for the BSA?**

A Policy Statement

## **Overview**

The executive leadership of the BSA is structured as a collaborative relationship between the annually elected President and the continuing Executive Director, both of them acting within the policy framework established by the BSA Board. Every year this relationship changes with the installation of a new President who brings fresh perspective to an organization with an ongoing program of strategic objectives and business goals, which the Executive Director is charged with implementing.

As the two primary spokespersons for the BSA, the President and Executive Director must collaborate so that the interests of the BSA membership are consistently and ethically communicated. A strict division of communication responsibilities would not serve this end; rather, each individual must consider the issue(s) and work with the other, and with the directors and Knowledge Community chairs who may also be dealing with the issue, to achieve the most effective approach.

The communication domain of the President will ordinarily include serving as the voice of the BSA to public audiences on matters of professional practice, especially to advance vital issues that affect the profession and/or the built environment. Because the BSA Board comprises the elected representatives of the membership, the President should generally represent the position of the Board as regards the membership when it is appropriate to do so.

The communication domain of the Executive Director will ordinarily include: serving as the primary media contact, either responding directly where the Board has determined a position, or connecting the media to the President or another appropriate spokesperson; and serving as the primary spokesperson for issues relating to ongoing BSA business operations and implementation of Board-determined strategies.

In addition to the President and the Executive Director, Board members and other officers, Knowledge Community chairs and members, BSA nominees/appointees to other bodies, and BSA staff members, all represent the BSA in numerous informal and formal capacities.

From time to time, any one of us – the President or another officer, a director, a Knowledge Community chair or member, the Executive Director, or BSA staff may be asked by virtue of his or her position to speak for the BSA on matters ranging from design to public policy to the BSA's membership activities. It is expected that each BSA member will be an articulate, forceful voice for the profession and the Communities we serve as each of us draws on the strength of personal convictions, training, experience and insights.

Of course, BSA members are urged to cherish the right to free expression by employing, it by speaking out whenever appropriate as citizens and professionals. This BSA policy statement is meant only to clarify how BSA institutional points of view may be expressed.

## **Policy**

None of us speaks formally for the BSA unless so empowered by the Board of Directors. To speak for the BSA, to represent "the BSA's position" to the public, or to obligate or commit the BSA to

undertake certain actions, we must secure Board endorsement and be delegated by the Board to speak on its behalf.

This does not mean that every such statement requires express Board authorization. When the BSA has previously taken a position on an issue, Board authorization would not typically be required for statements by the President, the Executive Director, or the relevant Board member or Knowledge Community chair under whose purview the issue falls, unless there is a change from the BSA's previous position.

If time does not permit seeking Board endorsement of a new or changed point of view any one of us wishes to express, and that is subject to this policy, we then are required to be clear about whom we represent ("I'm speaking as chair of the Urban Design Committee" or "I'm speaking as an individual architect", etc.). It is worth noting that Knowledge Community members do not speak for their Knowledge Communities unless empowered to do so by the appropriate Knowledge Community chairs.

In applying this policy, special care should be given to situations in which there is a higher expectation that a person could be understood to speak formally on behalf the BSA. This would include statements made "on the record" to newspapers, radio, and television stations; to written comments submitted to government agencies; and to other documents that may be widely disseminated through the internet and other electronic media. Conversely, comments made in conferences, panel discussions, and the like, would not typically be subject to the same expectation.

The BSA board adopted this policy on November 9, 1984, reaffirmed it on September 8, 1994, and revised and reaffirmed it on September 2, 2010.