

BSA Committee on the Environment Co-Chair Election

Candidates' Statement

Alejandra Menchaca, PhD, LEED AP, WELL AP *(running in conjunction with Michael Grant)*

Senior Associate, Thornton Tomasetti

Alejandra is a building scientist and educator, and currently leads the Sustainability practice for Thornton Tomasetti's Boston office. A mechanical engineer by training (with a short stint as rocket scientist), Alejandra has worked both as an in-house expert at an architecture firm, as well as an external sustainability design consultant, with an expertise in passive design and human comfort. She is passionate about exploring new ways to improve the communication between engineers and designers, dreaming of a built environment that is as beautiful and inspiring as it is healthy, low-energy, and affordable for all. Alejandra is a voting member of ASHRAE's SSPC 62.1 Ventilation Subcommittee, vice-chair of the USGBC Environmental Quality Technical Advisory Group, and a Technical Committee member of the IBPSA Boston Chapter. She holds a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from MIT with focus on Building Technologies, and has lectured at both the MIT's School of Architecture and Planning and the Harvard GSD.

Michael Grant, AIA, LEED AP *(running in conjunction with Alejandra Menchaca)*

Associate, Stantec

Michael is an architect and educator with a focus on sustainable building design. His passion for the inventive integration of building form and environmental performance have led him to play key design roles on several notable high-performance building projects including net-zero-energy, LEED v.4, and LEED Platinum certified projects. Projects for which Michael was a senior member of the design team have been recognized for design excellence with regional and national awards including the BSA Sustainable Design Honor Award* and the AIA Honor Award.** Michael holds an undergraduate degree in Architecture from the University of Virginia and a Master of Architecture from Harvard University. He has taught architectural design and building technology courses at the University of Michigan, RISD, Northeastern University, and Roger Williams University.

* with Architerra

** with Thompson and Rose Architects (now Charles Rose Architects)

Alejandra Menchaca and Michael Grant are pleased to announce their joint candidacy for co-chairs of the BSA Committee on the Environment. Individually we are each veterans of sustainable design practice in the New England region and together form an energetic, strongly-qualified team with a solid grounding in sustainable design practice to guide the next three years of COTE's activities, building on the good work done by the current co-chairs Blake Jackson and Steven Burke. Michael, an architect, brings recent experience with high performance and zero net energy building design while Alejandra, an engineer, brings expertise in energy systems design, performance metering and monitoring, fault detection, and forward-looking collaborative strategies from her recent experience as a sustainable design consultant and professor of sustainable design at Harvard.

Our Vision for COTE:

This election comes at an important moment in the evolution of environmentally sustainable and resilient design expertise within the profession. Since the current co-chairs were elected, the architectural community has grown in practical experience with high-performance design, resilient design, and experience with new standards such as the Living Building Challenge, WELL and LEED v.4. In just that time, 30 more projects have earned the AIA COTE Top Ten Green building award, the BSA has recognized 15 more projects with its Sustainable Design Award program, 21 more projects have been certified Zero Energy by the Living Building Institute, and 8 more buildings have achieved full Living Building certification, with many more achieving Petal Certification. During that time also New York City implemented new building codes for flood resistant construction, the Climate Ready Boston report was issued, and the City of Cambridge voted to adopt its Net Zero 25-Year Action Plan.

We see this moment as an ideal time for the profession to broadly benefit from a sharing of the lessons learned in the design and construction of a growing body of exemplary environmentally conscious high-performance buildings, landscapes and urban designs. COTE is perfectly positioned to act as a catalyst and forum for the dissemination of sustainable design expertise from accomplished practitioners, consultants, and clients. This renewed focus on COTE as a resource for best sustainable design practice will guide our activities if we are elected, and we will implement this vision in ways that will include:

- Instituting a COTE Project Round Table discussion series with project teams including architects, owners, engineers and contractors responsible for exemplary sustainable and resilient design projects at all scales to share expertise and practical advice
- Hosting “news you can use” guest speakers drawn from manufacturers, academics, commissioning agents and building operations experts and focusing on current and new topics in sustainable design that will give architects and other design team members the resources and information they need to make their projects more sustainable
- Developing specific policy goals for local and state legislation and codes relating to issues of sustainability and resiliency and submitting these goals to BSA committees on policy advocacy and codes for their action.
- Supporting both small and large practitioners through guidance and education regarding the AIA 2030 Commitment reporting through workshops and state-of-the-Commitment presentations
- Providing continuity to the organization of the New England Sustainable Design Summit (in collaboration with AIA New Hampshire, AIA New England) and support the Bi-Annual USGBC Healthy Materials Summit

We hope these ideas are exciting and relevant to the BSA membership, and we ask for your vote for the BSA Committee on the Environment Co-Chairmanship.