

Ask the Candidates | David C.K. Sin

Electoral District: City of Toronto

Question 1: Are you a Climate Change Denier? If you answer yes, I'll vote for you.

From: Don Bielech
City: Toronto

A: It is no doubt that Climate Change is a pressing issue today and is a complicated one. I look forward to discussing this and bringing it to the attention of all design professionals. As architects, we will have lots of opportunities to deal with Climate Change issues for years to come. However, the opportunity to make change and to advance our profession expires by November 23. I am counting on your vote.

Question 2: Currently most committees of the OAA exclude the participation of Intern Architects and student associates. Shouldn't we be trying to embrace the energy of the next generation of practitioners? Where do you see the role of intern architects and student associates in the OAA?

From: John (Anonymous)
City: Toronto

A: I realize that the interns are not included in most committees and that they are not being taken seriously in the limited committees they are in. I would like to broaden the interns and student associates participations and to make sure that they have a voice. I envision the active presence of young members in many committees and industry events, as equal participants where we can learn from each other, share our ideas and communicate to Council and the public as one voice. Furthermore, I would like to see the right to nominate candidates and the right to vote be extended to the interns.

Question 3: The current state of architecture in Toronto is banal when compared to the rest of the world. For example, Toronto waterfront is a sea of mediocre green glass towers that will likely overtime not age well. How will you change this if elected?

From: Nancy Cohen
City: Toronto

A: The state of architecture in our society is mostly the product of our economic, cultural and political environment. In a society saturated with reality TV shows and a world run by accountants, lawyers and MBAs, change may be slow. We can start by focusing on engaging the public and advocating public education. Above all, I would push for putting in place a permanent awareness program for both the public and our members, to promote architecture and the importance of our services.

Question 4: Architects around the world are designing exceptional buildings yet the OAA seems focused on only the production side of the business. What do you think the role of the OAA is?

From: Nancy Cohen
City: Toronto

A: The official role of the OAA is to regulate, represent, support and promote its members. A better question would be how best to utilize and prioritize our limited resources to achieve the maximum result in a changing world. I would like to focus more on supporting and promoting our members so that we can be better at what we do, and be better ambassadors to promote arts and architecture in the public realm.

Question 5: Why are there so few women partners in architecture firms, especially the larger and well established ones? Like Justin said, it is 2015, so what is wrong with our profession? What will you do to affect this if elected?

From: Nancy Cohen
City: Toronto

A: It is no doubt that discrimination of all kinds exist in our society, not just towards women. In my view, affirmative action has its share of negative effects and is another form of discrimination. I believe women are as good as men in our profession and we should all be given equal opportunities. When I was a student in University, the majority of the students in professional schools were male. Today, roughly half of the student body are female in most of the professional schools including architecture. We have come a long way. I applaud some efforts in recent years to raise awareness of women in our profession but I think we should focus more on promoting equal opportunities for all; irrespective of gender, race, religion and sexual orientation.