

WITHIN VIEW

Aandra Currie Shearer, NCIDQ No. 17159, CIDQ President

Among all the effects the past year has had on us, fatigue may be the most universal. It has been exhausting in so many respects and to varying degrees. There is however hope to be found on one front, as vaccinations in progress bring the home stretch of the pandemic into view.

[Learn how to stay active](#)

**FEELING OPTIMISTIC**

Thom Banks, Chief Executive Officer

Spring is here and with it, the promise of rapidly expanding vaccine distribution. So many of us are hopeful at the prospect of putting the pandemic behind us while acknowledging that its impact will be felt for a long, long time.

[See how HQ is engaging](#)

**Educators & the NCIDQ Exam –
Partnering for Professionalism Webinar**

April 30, 2021 | 1:00-2:00 PM EST

Join CIDQ's Director of Engagement Kimberly Woods, and CIDQ President Aandra Currie Shearer, for an info session on the NCIDQ Exam. This one-hour session will cover everything you and your students need to know about the NCIDQ Exam, importance of being certified, and recent updates for the spring 2021 exam administration. Bring your questions to the session or submit them ahead of time to kwoods@cidq.org. Don't miss out; **[register today](#)**.

**CIDQ WELCOMES
MATT BARUSCH!**

Matt recently joined the HQ team as **Government Affairs and Advocacy Manager**. In this position, Matt will advance CIDQ's policy agenda at the state and provincial level. His responsibilities include monitoring legislation, analyzing threats to the public from deregulatory efforts, generating advocacy resources that convey the nature and value of the NCIDQ Exam, and developing strategies to support our stakeholders in educating policy makers on the value of meaningful interior design regulation. Matt will focus on increasing understanding of the importance of reasonable regulation and its benefits to the public. He has a strong background in monitoring legislative activity, coordinating state advocacy campaigns and developing materials, in addition to successfully battling other deregulatory efforts. Before joining the team at CIDQ, Matt



held state advocacy positions with the National Association for Music Education, and the National Court Reporters Association. CIDQ is thrilled to have Matt on board – and we look forward to the impact he'll make.

ADVOCATING FOR REASONABLE REGULATION

We all know how much interior designers' work impacts the health, safety and welfare of every individual who steps foot into a building. That is why the interior design profession needs to be reasonably regulated by state/provincial government.

To date, the interior design profession has never been deregulated. States that have adopted policies like voluntary registration, allowing interior designers to practice autonomously and have "stamp and seal" privileges, have never had cause to revoke that authority. However, occupational regulation has emerged as a chief policy issue for state leaders in recent years, and many states are currently re-examining their occupational regulation policies under the guise of undue burdens of economic and social costs. Most recently, we saw this effort take form in Mississippi, where the state Legislature introduced legislation ([HB 1315](#)) that would repeal occupational licensure requirements for a number of professions, including interior design.

The path of this bill speaks to the importance of advocacy and of the need for certified interior designers to take an active role in advocating for reasonable regulation and public protection. This bill was on a fast-track, having been substituted and passed out of committee, and then passing the House in the span of a week. Now, thanks to the education of state legislators by grassroots advocates in the state, the bill has failed in Senate committee vote. We thank all MS interior designers who took action to prevent this deregulation and urge all certificate holders to have a proactive role in protecting the public.



WANTED! KNOWLEDGEABLE & EXPERIENCED BOARD MEMBERS

CIDQ is committed to protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare through NCIDQ Certification. We are not able to accomplish this without a strong governing body and the engagement of our volunteers. Being a **CIDQ Board Member** gives you the opportunity to expand your professional network and be an advocate for the interior design profession.

This year's Nominating Committee is looking for eligible candidates to fill the **President-Elect** position, as well as two **Director** positions. If you are devoted to the mission of CIDQ and are ready to take the next step to advancing the leadership of our organization, please complete [this application](#) and submit it to Kelly at knelson@cidq.org by **April 23, 2021**.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**Benjamin Huntington, FASID, NCIDQ, NYS CIDQ
NCIDQ Certificate No. 17672**

Benjamin Huntington, NCIDQ, founder of Veritate Design, shares his insights on volunteering with CIDQ and what it means to be a certified interior designer.

[Meet Benjamin.](#)



Why Certification Matters...to Employers

Employers should not only encourage, but expect and support their interior design practitioners to be NCIDQ Certified for:

- Risk Management
- Promotional Value
- Improved Productivity
- Happier Employees

[Learn how your your company can encourage and support employee's participation.](#)

PARTNER ADVERTISEMENT

Kickstart Your Career with ASID.

Do you know why nearly 90 percent of ASID members indicated that they were satisfied with their (ASID) membership? Because ASID advocates for ALL interior designers at EVERY stage of your career. Whatever your specialization — residential, commercial, hospitality, healthcare, government/institutional, retail, etc. — ASID has a place for you. Second, the ASID appellation signifies your commitment to excellence within the profession. Having “ASID” after your name is second to none and provides you with the competitive advantage to thrive in today’s marketplace as a new interior designer. And finally, the ASID Code of Ethics and its enforcement is recognized as the gold standard in the industry.



Start your ASID journey today. [Join here](#) by 4/30 and use **code NCIDQ21** to receive \$100 off the one-time application fee (plus, you’ll get access to over 50 hours of free CEUs and be assigned to a local chapter).





**Aandra Currie
Shearer**

CIDQ President
NCIDQ Certificate
No. 17159

President's Message

Among all the effects the past year has had on us, fatigue may be the most universal. It has been exhausting in so many respects and to varying degrees. There is, however, hope to be found on one front, as vaccinations in progress bring the home stretch of the pandemic into view. I think it is fitting that this coincides with our spring here in North America, which to me, always brings with it a sense of renewal and restored energy.

It is key to direct some of this energy into staying active and engaged in the interior design community — as our world evolves around us, who knows what our professional lives will look like going forward? This alone is a great reason to pursue certification. NCIDQ Certification provides a competitive advantage and confidence having reached the pinnacle of the journey through education, experience, and examination. I can't think of a better gift to give oneself, a loved one, or friend! CIDQ is excited that the spring 2021 exam administration will be the first using the new exam blueprint, developed following our 2019 Practice Analysis. Of note in this new iteration of the exam is the update to our exam codes, now based on the International Building and Plumbing Codes (IBC and IPC), and the accessibility section of the International Code Council (ICC). For those considering taking the exams, I recommend reaching out to your local ASID or IIDA chapter, a CIDQ Ambassador in your area, or your Canadian provincial board for advice in connecting with others while preparing. I also encourage employers to champion your staff — you have a role in inspiring them to become NCIDQ Certified. Consider supporting your teams with direct financial support for the exam costs or study materials, or for time off to study for and/or take the exams.

The way people use interior spaces has seen a wholesale shift over the past year. As interior designers, we are best qualified to lead the way in redeveloping and repurposing existing workspaces and guiding how the built interior environment evolves at work, at play, and at home. There is so much to be gained by all as we lead the charge to not just build back but build back better. Whether you engage locally or on a broader scale, this is an incredibly exciting time to be an active member of our interior design community! Stay safe and be kind!



Thom Banks
CIDQ Chief
Executive Officer

CEO's Message

Spring is here and with it, the promise of rapidly expanding vaccine distribution. So many of us are hopeful at the prospect of putting the pandemic behind us while acknowledging that its impact will be felt for a long, long time. At CIDQ, our headquarters team is looking forward to being able to engage in person again with our member boards, volunteers, candidates, and each other.

Through our strategic planning process, we've used the past year to think differently (in part, driven by COVID) about additional ways we could heighten engagement and add value for our member boards. As a headquarters team of just six people, maintaining meaningful connections with all our stakeholder groups (jurisdictional boards, candidates, students, educators, ambassadors, certificate holders, etc.) is challenging. At the beginning of this year, I promoted Kimberly Woods to be CIDQ's Director of Engagement with the bulk of her time dedicated to information sharing and connection-building activities. Many of you have interacted with Kimberly over the course of her five years and various roles with CIDQ and know the commitment, conscientiousness, and skill she brings to every task she takes on. This new role with expanded responsibilities is no different. She has embraced it and is dramatically increasing our outreach through presentations, informal information sessions, virtual conference attendance, and member board check-ins.

As I have written previously, the political climate in recent years has not been favorable toward occupational regulation of any sort. The fundamental purpose and value of regulation for public protection has often been dismissed and diminished in favor of purely economic arguments. CIDQ has sought to amplify its voice as an advocate for both the NCIDQ Exam and for the benefits of reasonable regulation. The public benefits when reasonable regulation permits interior designers to practice independently to the full extent of their capabilities as demonstrated by education, experience, and examination, and CIDQ supports legislation that enables them to do so. As part of CIDQ's effort to expand our organizational capacity on this front, I am pleased to welcome Matt Barusch to our headquarters team as Government Affairs and Advocacy Manager. You can read more about Matt elsewhere in this issue of Q Connection and look for ongoing updates from Matt in this publication.

I hope you are looking ahead with a renewed sense of optimism and resiliency. I know I am. Be well.

Volunteer Spotlight



Benjamin Huntington

NCIDQ Certificate

No. 17672

Benjamin Huntington, NCIDQ, founder of Veritate Design, shares his insights on volunteering with CIDQ and what it means to be a certified interior designer.

Q: How did you first get involved with CIDQ and why did you decide to volunteer with CIDQ?

A: I first became involved with CIDQ when I was invited to be a founding member of the Ambassadors Program.

Q: When did you become NCIDQ Certified and why?

A: I became NCIDQ Certified in 2002. I had been in America for about 15 years and wanted to further my career. Also, at that time I was volunteering with ASID NY Metro and wanted to be in a position to support state certification by personally stepping up.

Q: How has having an NCIDQ Certificate benefited you and your career?

A: It gives me a personal sense of self-worth and allows me to speak with authority about being a Certified Interior Designer.

Q: What would you tell a colleague who is considering taking the NCIDQ Exam?

A: If you have worked in the profession for a number of years, the NCIDQ Exam will be a reaffirmation of your everyday skills. Study hard for three to six months, join a study group and you will greatly improve your chances of passing.

Q: Why does NCIDQ Certification matter?

A: It is a true benchmark of your professionalism. It provides an opportunity to increase your potential earnings within almost any design practice. I have heard that having the NCIDQ credential is a prerequisite for many intermediate and senior design positions.

Q: What have you learned thru volunteering with CIDQ/how has it impacted your life?

A: Volunteering with CIDQ has given me many opportunities to develop interior design peer friendships. It has often provided me with valuable insights into the “business” of design. Most importantly, volunteering with CIDQ has given me an opportunity to help other interior designers grow their careers through a greater understanding of the value of the NCIDQ Certification.

Q: What advice would you give to those considering volunteering their time with CIDQ?

A: Once you start volunteering it is so rewarding you will never want to stop. It is the very best way to network with like-minded designers to increase your contacts and develop buddies.

Q: Tell us a fun fact about yourself.

A: I used to ride for a skateboard team in the UK 😊

Q: Any additional comments/thoughts you would like to share — related to exam, certification, profession, today/future challenges, etc.

A: Although the perceived mission of CIDQ is to have all designers take the NCIDQ Exam, it is so much more than that. CIDQ provides an invaluable service, educating the public at large, including national and local legislators of the complex set of skills that an interior designer has to learn to qualify. And perhaps most importantly, CIDQ has created and supports a nationwide community of like-minded design professionals who together can and will achieve almost anything they wish!