Tomorrow's Architect

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On June 20, 1969 the delegates to the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards convention met in Chicago. They reviewed the multitude of changes that have overtaken the need of our profession and the architectural profession. And their conclusion was simple and sweeping: It's time to change the method of training architects and the licensing examination.

The architectural student who has a 1958 or 1959 degree has little in common with the society. He is an architect, but he wants to be also a planner, an organizer, an urban designer, a technician, a planner, an urban designer, a technician and a technologist. And all of these things equally. This yearning toward total involvement is a fine wish, but it is more than just a wish. The convention realized that architecture in 1970, 1980 or 1990 must and will be all of these things. Its question: How can we best prepare our future architects?

Licensing Exam

Apparently the present architectural training and licensing exam is not adequately doing the job. The following are some of the convention's recommendations for changing it:

1. The forward steps now being proposed could only be based on the acceptance by all the states of a national, uniform requirements and examination.

2. We need to re-assess our whole process for training examination and particularly what it is we should and want to accomplish, and what legal and professional requirements and objectives are to be satisfied.

3. We still train and examine in the long-standing divisions of subject matter, that is, history, theory, structure, design, site planning and so forth, even though these subject matter divisions do not respond holly in content or emphasis to the need of our profession and particularly to our projection of the future. We, the architects, must recognize there are expressions from the profession and from candidates questioning the relevancy of the present subject matter in the light of the changing interest and changing demands of our society.

4. The training and examination process is now largely organic, in providing the architect's level of knowledge rather than providing for a technician's ability to separate, organize and conceptualize; that is, those things that make him uniquely an architect.

Flexible Approach

5. The process is exclusive in every part that must be mastered by every person. Thus there is at present no way for one to take a flexible approach by selecting certain disciplines and then be required to demonstrate ability in depth in his own area of strength.

6. The candidate who possesses outstanding capabilities in say, management or some technically oriented new sub-discipline, but yet possesses less than the minimal competence in design of buildings now required, is presently excluded from the profession and must seek another profession or enter architecture as a second-class citizen. More than likely in the future he will enter another profession in competition with the architecture.

7. The examination committee proposes to increase the length of the examination, from 38 to 33 hours. Beyond the examination, the profession itself can further the change. Rather than lose many promising young architects to other fields, we architects must recognize that some graduates seek employment as urban designers or in city planning offices or for government, some want to work in new areas of computer usage and some want to work in the Peace Corps, or other similar governmental programs.

Vitalize Role

Why not accept this type of experience as full credit (up to a maximum of two years) toward the three year internship required by state statutes and allow the remaining one year of internship under a registered architect continue to be required. Further studies should be made to formalize the internship and make it more vital to the young graduate.

In order to broaden our program we could also devise a system, as many schools are contemplating, whereby a B.A. or M.A. graduate in another field (arts, law, planning, etc.) might return to the university and complete another three-year work for a Master of Architecture degree, thus developing professionals with a broader scope into other related fields.

In short, our profession must begin to prepare these young men for the type of work they desire and of which they are capable, as well as filling the needs of our complicated society, or we will suffer the disastrous consequences of losing them.