The SMPS Seattle Nominations & Elections Committee is pleased to present the 2020/2021 Slate of Officers for the SMPS Seattle Chapter Board of Directors.

SMPS is most effective when it represents its members well. Each candidate is impressively qualified and committed to serving our members and the chapter. On the following pages, we have included biographies for all candidates along with their visions for their positions this coming year. Once you have reviewed the candidates, please click here to vote to approve or reject this slate of candidates.

Your vote counts! We need 30% of the membership to approve this slate of candidates to move forward. Voting concludes June 26.

Once approved, this 2020/2021 Board of Directors will begin preparing for the upcoming SMPS year, which begins September 2020. They will be introduced at the Annual Kick-Off event in mid-September (stay tuned for details!).

Each committee relies on member participation for a successful year. Volunteering is a great way to expand your professional network and promote your firm to other A/E/C professionals. If you are interested in any of the committees, please contact the appropriate director and/or attend the SMPS Seattle 2020/2021 Annual Kick-Off to get signed up.

Keep Reading to Meet the 2020/2021 Slate of Officers

Click Here to Vote



Melanie Cochrun, CPSM | President

Director of Marketing & Communications | GLY Construction

Dear Members:

Thank you for the trust you placed in me for two terms as your Director at Large: Education, and as your President-Elect last year.

Over the past three years of my board service I had the good fortune to work with the most talented, passionate marketers working in the AEC industry today. SMPS Seattle: I am talking about YOU!

When I think about the role SMPS has played in my professional trajectory, I see the value of having an open space to tackle the tough topics with honest conversation. In my 16 years of SMPS membership I have laughed, screamed, and cried through six different roles, starting a family, earning the CPSM credential, facilitating a roundtable, and finding the courage to volunteer for board service.

I wish to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of past presidents Amanda Erickson, Amy Pugh, Erin Hatch, Heidi Maki and my fellow board members. Being in your orbit taught me about servant leadership, and the limitless potential of a unified mindset.

There is a lot of work to be done.

This year marks a reset of our chapter's three-year Strategic Plan. Now more than ever, we need to take stock and discard what no longer serves. To focus on things that move us forward together, we will continue providing the benefits you value while challenging status quo:

- educational topics, speakers, and formats
- networking opportunities
- how we welcome and engage new members
- where we communicate

At the heart of our new plan is a hard question: how do we turn intention and dialogue into action? I am up for it, and as you'll read in the pages that follow, so is this accomplished slate of officers. Their tenacity to seek and activate plans for real and sustaining transformation will be unstoppable.

With your help we will see 2020/2021 unfold into an extraordinary year for SMPS Seattle and our beloved Pacific Northwest.

I am honored to have this opportunity, and humbly ask for your vote. As your President, I commit to listening, learning, and connecting you to the resources and support you need.

Please, hold me accountable. Hold all of us accountable.

We are here for you.



Liz Wasson Coleman | President-Elect

Marketing Director | Johnston Architects

When I joined Seattle's A/E/C industry in 2004 in an administrative support role I never imagined that I'd still be working with designers 16 years later, let alone that I would be leading marketing efforts. As I've learned through my experience in SMPS, my story isn't an uncommon one: I didn't set out to make this my career, but once I discovered the possibilities and realized there was a long-term place for me in this industry, I led myself here. I wish I had been introduced to SMPS sooner because I have no doubt it would have made my professional journey more efficient, effective, and – let's be honest – a lot more fun. As President-Elect, my goal is to ensure SMPS is a resource for marketers throughout the Northwest – including those who don't realize how much our organization has to offer.

Since 2013 I have been honing my marketing and leadership skills in organizations of various sizes, disciplines, and corporate structures. I was in over my head plenty of times, but with the professional support of SMPS members and the education I've received through this organization, I've made it through some very challenging moments. The most valuable lesson I've learned through these experiences is how important it is to surround yourself with people of diverse backgrounds with different personal and professional perspectives, and who are better at what they do than you are. Great leaders identify their own weaknesses and recognize them as strengths when they see them in others. That's the kind of leader I strive to be, and that is what I have witnessed during my time volunteering with SMPS Seattle. Let's continue to discover one another's strengths and work together to elevate our SMPS chapter and broader community.



Heidi Maki | Past President

Associate Principal - Marketing & BD | Swenson Say Faget

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as SMPS Seattle President for the past year. With over 300 members, the Seattle Chapter continues to be the largest in the country, and that is entirely due to our amazing members, volunteers, and board of directors!

For the 2020/2021 year, I am excited to continue to work closely with Melanie, Liz, and the entire board to provide educational and networking opportunities for our AEC community. As past president, I oversee the Sponsorship Drive and Nominations Committee. I also serve as the Seattle Chapter's delegate for the Pacific Regional Conference (PRC) in Sacramento. In 2021, the Society plans to implement the use of Billhighway – an online platform providing consistent membership and bookkeeping tools for all chapters. I am thrilled to be Seattle's primary contact for that transition.

Serving on the SMPS Board for the past 7 years has been a fantastic experience. I've learned so much about working with a team, leadership, and best of all – camaraderie. If you are entertaining thoughts of board service in the future, I highly recommend it! In the meantime, please vote to approve this impressive slate of officers.

I look forward to serving you again this year!



Megan Bergstrom | Secretary

Marketing Manager | PCS Structural Solutions

I have been proud to serve SMPS Seattle as Secretary over the last year, and I'm excited for the opportunity to continue in this role in 2021. Having been a member of SMPS Seattle for over four years and a volunteer for three, I'm a believer in the power of our volunteers to truly be a force for good in our marketing community. The camaraderie with my fellow marketers and knowledge gleaned from each other at workshops, roundtables, and other events have supported my personal and career growth immensely. I want to continue in my role as Secretary this year because I love working alongside our passionate and talented Board of Directors, supporting their efforts to deliver outstanding content and networking opportunities to our members. By doing my part to keep our chapter running smoothly, I can help SMPS Seattle make a positive impact for every member.

I am the Marketing Manager at PCS Structural Solutions, a 70-person structural engineering firm with offices in Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland. I have five years of experience as an A/E/C/ marketer, and I love that every day brings a new challenge—whether I'm writing, designing, or researching, there's always something interesting to practice.



Mary Bruenn | Treasurer

Marketing Coordinator | NEXUS bec, Inc.

I have been an SMPS member and treasury committee volunteer since 2016. I would like to continue to do my part in giving back to the organization that has supported my growth by dedicating my time to the position of Treasurer.

Juggling (duties) is something I am passionate about and I have worked on perfecting that skill for years. From project coordination to writing statements of qualification I can blend big picture thinking with an attention to detail. These two skills are critical for budgeting, adhering to deadlines, and reconciling entries.

Furthermore, my strengths in Microsoft Excel, bookkeeping, and all things numbers, give me a background that is essential for performing accounting duties handled by this position. With dedication, accuracy, and reliability, I am ready to balance the books for SMPS.



Karen Sullivan | Director at Large: Education

Business Development Manager | Wood Harbinger

As I think about programming for the 2020/2021 board year, numerous questions come to mind. Will all counties in Western Washington be open in Phase 4? Will attendees be ready to gather in large groups? Small groups? Will the Washington Athletic Club be open, and if so, what precautions will be in place?

Although there are so many unknowns, I can tell you that the Education Committee and the Board of Directors are committed to providing you with relevant programming, virtually and/or in-person. We are here to serve you. Your responses to the upcoming annual member survey will guide us as we evaluate and select topics and speakers, balance the CPSM Domains, and determine the platforms, formats, and locations. Thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to another year as Director at Large: Education.



Bill Michie | Director at Large: Professional Development

Marketing Manager | Lydig Construction

I am excited to be your candidate for the 2020/2021 Director at Large: Professional Development. Considering that many of you joined SMPS to become better marketers and enhance your career opportunities, I do not take this role lightly. I, along with our dedicated committee, will continue to provide the robust professional development program already in place – the Fellows Forum, Roundtables, CPSM Study Groups, and scholarships. I view these programs as the north star helping you navigate your career path; they'll always be there for you.

My goal for 2020/2021 is to help you thrive as an AEC marketer in uncertain times. We will do this by growing our existing programs and catering them to the current needs of our members and the state of our industry. I will lead the Professional Development committee in seeking new ideas and best practices from our peer chapters, as well as other organizations across the industry. We will strive to provide you with tangible tools and resources to aid you in taking the next step in your career, whether that is asking for a promotion, applying for a new position, exploring grad schools, or just needing a soundboard.

SMPS Seattle, and its members, have been an important element of my own professional development. I am honored to now be able to help others along their professional journey. Thank you for the opportunity and consideration, I look forward to serving you and our chapter.



Ranjana Sterling | Director at Large: Special Events

Marketing Manager | Blueline

I am thrilled to be serving on the SMPS Seattle Chapter Board for a second term. We are an innovative chapter and have committed volunteers who work hard to ensure that we have access to the best programs and workshops. I am especially humbled by the amount of work that my fabulous Special Events committee has put in over the last year to bring great networking events to our chapter. We started the year full steam ahead with our Kick-off Event and kept the momentum going with our ever-popular Trivia Night, as well as teaming up with Top Golf to bring a fresh and interactive element to our January Special Event. After putting a lot of effort into organizing this year's Reign Awards gala, the Reign Awards team took the news about the cancellation of the physical event in stride and rolled up their sleeves to bring the gala into the virtual realm. I am looking forward to teaming up with my amazing committee members next year to bring our chapter more networking opportunities to stay connected and learn from each other.

I joined SMPS in 2018 because I don't think any AEC marketer benefits from staying inside of their work bubble. Once I started to go to more events, joined a roundtable, and leapt at the chance to volunteer for the chapter; I felt more tethered to the organization. I was lucky enough to have had unofficial mentors on the SMPS board recognize my enthusiasm and eagerness to contribute early on. This opened opportunities for me to take on more responsibilities as a volunteer and blaze my own path within the organization. For me SMPS is not just a resource; it's a huge part of my life, both professionally and personally.



Rebecca Crouse | Director at Large: Membership

Marketing Specialist | David Evans and Associates

In 2020, I had the privilege of serving on the membership committee and contributed to the "roll out" of the Welcome Wagon program. It was a great experience, and I really enjoyed the collaboration with chapter committees and the board. In the next year, I want to stay involved and see the Welcome Wagon program evolve to meet the needs of our large and diverse membership.

Cultivating a strong and connected chapter will be a challenge as we move through the current crisis. Our methods will have to be flexible and creative in order to provide the same valuable programs and benefits. I'm confident that our strong leadership and committed members can create innovative solutions to the obstacles we'll face as a chapter and as an industry. I'd be honored to work toward that goal and serve you as the next Director at Large: Membership.



Jessica Congdon | Director at Large: Marketing

Marketing Coordinator | Schuchart

Having been a member of SMPS Seattle for the past five years, I am very excited about serving a second year on the Board of Directors. When I first joined SMPS, I was new to the industry (and city) and had no idea what to expect but knew I wanted to make connections and learn from my peers. SMPS Seattle has given me that and more. After three years on the Marketing Committee, I knew that I wanted to be more involved in the chapter. This past year on the Board was a new experience for me, and I was able to make connections with my new and returning committee members and help them utilize their skills and in some cases learn new ones (myself included!). This past year we were able to bring the blog to a whole new level, create exceptionally engaging graphics, draw our members in with the engaging emails and newsletters, and keep the website updated with relevant information. This year, my goal is to expand upon those successes. A firm believer in teamwork and working efficiently, I am looking to create a graphics squad to divide up the requests for graphics, continue the momentum we have with the blog, and find new ways the marketing committee can assist the other committees with their marketing needs. Thank you in advance for your approval, I am looking forward to another great year!



Sandy Chapin | Senior Advisor

Marketing & Communications Manager | UMC

We are living in unpredictable times. When the past year's board was confronted with the COVID crisis, they pivoted gracefully and effectively to continue to serve our members. Way to go! We don't know what the next year will bring; but one thing that is certain, we will have to be open, flexible, and determined to embrace new ideas and methods to see to it that the mission of SMPS continues—Advocate, Educate, Connect—A/E/C.

My 20 years in A/E/C marketing and long history participating in SMPS has given me a deep understanding of issues that are important to A/E/C marketers and their firms. I am currently Marketing and Communication Manager at UMC where I am involved in firm leadership, strategic initiatives, internal and external communications, and team management. My past roles in SMPS include two years as Director of Programs, three years in the Presidential track, four years as Roundtable Chair, two years as Fellows Forum Chair, and work on numerous committees. I have attended more conferences, regionally and nationally, than I can count, and have been in a roundtable my entire time with SMPS. From these experiences, I have created amazing relationships with SMPS Seattle members, from the fellows to new members, as well as a wide array of SMPS HQ leaders and past presidents from around the US. These experiences and relationships have guided me throughout my career and greatly influenced who I am as an individual.

I am honored to have the opportunity to continue to contribute to our fabulous chapter and, most importantly, to our members by serving as Senior Advisor. I look forward to working together with the board to help guide our chapter through today's challenges and into the "new norm"—whatever that will look like.