The SMPS Seattle Nominations & Elections Committee is pleased to present the 2021/2022 Slate of Candidates 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 25.

Once approved, this 2021/2022 Board of Directors will begin preparing for the upcoming SMPS year, which begins September 2021. 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 2021/2022 Annual Kick-Off to get signed up.

Keep Reading to Meet the 2021/2022 Slate of Candidates

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Liz Wasson Coleman (she/her) | President

Marketing Director | Johnston Architects

When I first joined SMPS Seattle as a new Marketing Coordinator in 2014, my perspective as a member was, “What can I learn?” When I stepped up to volunteer on a committee in 2018 as a Business Development professional, my member perspective was, “Who can I connect with?” But when I was privileged enough to join the Board of Directors in 2019 my perspective shifted yet again and I asked myself, “How can I help?”

The last 15 months have given each of us unique opportunities to re-evaluate our priorities and values from multiple perspectives. Over the last decade I have worked to blur the lines between my personal and professional selves as much as possible, to live and work with authenticity and purpose – an ongoing practice. The last year has shown me that in times of upheaval, confusion, and uncertainty, authenticity is more important than ever to promote opportunities for healing, understanding, and action.

In the fall of 2020, SMPS Seattle implemented a new three-year Strategic Plan, emphasizing our values around giving back to the broader community while looking at each of our programs and events through a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In less than a year we have donated nearly $3,000 to nonprofit organizations and awarded more than $4,200 in membership and continuing education scholarships! And by incorporating feedback from dozens of our members, we have formed an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee to help shape our chapter’s practices for decades to come.

We are working to become a more inclusive organization in every way, directing the future of our chapter by listening to the diverse perspectives of our members. While amplifying BIPOC voices, we will also work to support our LGBTQ+ members; normalize neurodiversity and mental health challenges; be more accessible to those with physical challenges, visual, or hearing impairments; and recognize inequity in educational access and socio-economic challenges.

It’s time for all of us to step into SMPS Seattle’s 40th year with authenticity and purpose. I believe that with your support we will amaze ourselves with how much we can accomplish through empathy and action. I come before you today asking for your vote as SMPS Seattle President, and my challenge for all of us is, “How can we do more?” With the support of our excellent Slate of Candidates and you, our hundreds of members, I believe SMPS Seattle will identify lots of ways to do – and be – more.

Filling numerous roles in the Pacific Northwest A/E/C industry since 2004, I currently serve as the Marketing Director at Johnston Architects. My past roles at FORMA Construction, Ankrom Moisan Architects, Boxwood, and Sliderule Engineering Works provide me with perspectives from the multiple disciplines that represent our chapter membership. I hold a BA in Arts & Literature from Antioch University.



Jessica Congdon (she/her) | President-Elect

Seven years ago, I was new to the state and especially new to the industry. I never imagined I would be working for a construction company, let alone serving on a Board of Directors. Being a part of the SMPS Seattle chapter these past five years has greatly increased my knowledge of the A/E/C industry, expanded my network, and given me the opportunity to work with an incredibly talented group of peers.

Serving as the Director of Marketing on the Board of Directors these past two years, and as a volunteer prior to that has been extremely rewarding. It expanded my understanding of everything the SMPS Seattle volunteer community does to make our chapter a success. I enjoyed working with my committee and supporting them to achieve their goals. As President-Elect, I am excited for the opportunity to get to know all the committees better, support the President, BOD, and our membership.

As we look forward to the 2021/2022 SMPS year, getting our members back together safely while providing high quality educational and networking opportunities is our priority. I look forward to seeing you in person and serving you again this year!

With six years of experience working in the A/E/C industry, I enjoy that every day is unique and I have the opportunity to collaborate with so many different people each day on proposal development, social media content, project photography, marketing collateral, award submissions, and more. I am fascinated by all the phases a project goes through from design through to completion and then telling that project's story. Outside of work, I am an adventurer. Most weekends you can find me on a mountain, kayaking, or just sitting back and enjoying a local brew.



Melanie Cochrun, CPSM (she/her) | Past President

Director of Marketing & Communications | GLY Construction

As we come to the close of 2020/2021, I would like to say thank you to our indomitable community of volunteers and board leaders. Your dedication to our one-of-a-kind organization, and to each other, made navigating the COVID pandemic possible. Together, we looked at our situation as exciting uncharted territory. We experimented with new programs, event technologies, and opportunities to expand networking beyond traditional chapter structures. I know it wasn't always easy. Recasting favorite events and cherished traditions as virtual experiences takes courage, imagination, and faith.

To our generous sponsors and member firms, I also say thank you. Your support helped fuel our Strategic Plan to establish an EDI Committee, incorporate charitable giving into events, and provide scholarships and discounted event tickets. These immediate actions invited diverse voices and created more equitable awareness of and access to A/E/C marketing education. SMPS Seattle will continue to play a role in our industry's future.

I may have 22 years in the A/E/C industry, 12 years at GLY Construction, and 9 years as a CPSM, but this past year taught me more than all of that experience combined. Thank you, SMPS Seattle members, for the opportunity to be your President during such an indelible time. I look forward to working with the brilliant individuals comprising our 2021/2022 Slate of Candidates, and to seeing all of you when we resume live in-person events this Fall.

As Director of Marketing at GLY, I focus on promoting our mission and values as strategic differentiators. I work with a stellar team that looks for creative ways to collaborate with our technical colleagues in delivering an education-based marketing program. I hold a BA in English Lit from Western Washington University. Before serving as chapter President, I was Director of Education for two terms.



Ranjana Sterling (she/her) | Secretary

Marketing Manager | Blueline

I am thrilled to be serving on the SMPS Seattle Chapter Board for a third term. While serving our chapter as the Director of Special Events for the past two years, I was incredibly humbled by the amount of work that our Special Events Committee volunteers put in to bring great networking events to our chapter.

While I do love planning a good party, it's now time to do something different. In this role, I am looking forward to working alongside my fellow board members as we continue to look for ways to create value for our members. I am a people person by nature and love connecting people. As Secretary, I get a chance to provide a member-centric experience by engaging with our members and gathering data for how we can improve the SMPS experience for all.

I am acutely aware that I am the only BIPOC person on the board. While I do believe representation matters, it doesn't carry much weight without intent. I intend to be a change agent by sharing my worldview that was shaped by my experiences as a BIPOC and an immigrant, along with my work in the DEI space. I also pledge to always LISTEN to our members as we move along in our journey to achieve sustainable change by fostering a culture that brings a deeper sense of belonging, removing barriers to accessing our programs and volunteer opportunities, and empowering our members with knowledge to drive real change.

As Marketing Manager and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair at Blueline, I enjoy wearing many hats (accessories!) at my firm. In addition to coordinating proposal production, I also support marketing, social media, and public relations strategies; marketing material; content creation; tracking business development plans and efforts; and managing the website and brand.



Mary Bruenn (she/her) | Treasurer

Marketing Coordinator | NEXUS bec, Inc.

I have been an SMPS member and a Treasurer Committee volunteer since 2016. I look forward to continuing to give back to the organization that has supported my growth by returning for my second-year commitment to the position of Treasurer.

During the 2020/2021 board year, SMPS Seattle transitioned to using The Society's organization-wide banking and accounting platform called Billhighway. This was no small task. We are gradually mastering the skills to use this system that links our StarChapter website platform to the Billhighway payment processing and accounting program. This transition will greatly simplify the treasurer's role and overall financial process for future volunteers.

My ability to blend big picture thinking with attention to detail 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 the bookkeeping duties required by this position. With dedication, accuracy, and reliability, I am ready to continue to balance the books for SMPS.

Like many, I landed an admin role in the A/E/C industry 7 years ago and worked my way into marketing. I currently serve as the Marketing Coordinator for Nexus, building envelope consultants. As I learned on the job, I fell in love with the intricacies of marketing. Without looking back, my career has benefited greatly by not having to do it alone. SMPS has been the mentor I needed to fill the gaps I inevitably encountered in my journey.



Sarah Wortman, CPSM (she/her) | Director at Large: Education

Director of Business Development | GGLO

Guided by both the SMPS Domains of Practice and the feedback we get from our annual membership survey, our Education Committee focuses on providing content that answers your urgent questions (what's an A3 proposal?), helps you navigate our changing world (what are the best online conferencing platforms for networking?) and positions you for growth and success in your A/E/C Marketing career. Whether virtually or in person, I would be honored to maintain the Seattle chapter's tradition of providing timely, informative and relevant educational opportunities that add value to your SMPS membership. Since joining SMPS in 2009, I've been an active participant in chapters in the West, East and Midwest and am thrilled to be back in Seattle where my SMPS journey began. I hope that my over 20 years' experience in A/E/C marketing, coupled with my insatiable desire to learn new things, makes me a good fit to lead the Education Committee.

In 1997, I began working in A/E/C marketing and currently serve as the Director of Business Development for GGLO. With an unwavering commitment to continuous education, I am a Certified Professional Services Marketer (CPSM), and have a Bachelor's degree in Speech Communications from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and a Master's of Fine Arts in Radio/TV/Film from Northwestern University.



Bill Michie (he/him) | Director at Large: Professional Development

Marketing Manager | Lydig Construction

I am excited to return to the SMPS Seattle BOD as Director of Professional Development. I am eager to continue to help marketers navigate the A/E/C industry and prepare for advancement or explore new opportunities. This past year on the BOD was a blast and I am proud of what the Professional Development Committee was able to achieve during these unprecedented times.

For the 2021/2022 Board Year our team will focus our efforts on:

- Pivoting Professional Development Programs back to in-person meetings.
- Continue to grow the Roundtables Program and evaluate hybrid (online/in-person) groups and additional locations.
- Provide more structure and support to Roundtable facilitators.
- Help more SMPS Seattle members pass the CPSM Exam. Don't forget our scholarships!

Most importantly, the Professional Development Committee will continue to provide you with tangible tools and resources. Whether you are asking for a promotion, applying for a new position, exploring grad schools, or just needing a soundboard, we've got you covered.

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 in another unprecedented year.

I have been an A/E/C marketer for 13 years and an SMPS member just as long. I have been active with our chapter and have served SMPS as a committee member, chair, director, and speaker. As the Marketing Manager at Lydig Construction, I am responsible for leading all marketing, communication, and business development support efforts for our western region.



Jackie Corley (she/her) | Director at Large: Special Events

Marketing and Proposals Manager | The Walsh Group

I am very excited to be joining the 2021/2022 Board of Directors as the Director of Special Events. Over the past 5 years, I have had the privilege of learning from all the great Special Events leaders. This experience will serve as my guiding principles to lead upcoming events and work as a cohesive team. Moving back to in-person or possibly a hybrid event structure will be an exciting twist to what was traditionally required. The Special Events Committee is a group of dedicated and hard-working volunteers that will ensure networking opportunities continue while keeping health and safety top of mind. SMPS Seattle has been instrumental in my marketing career. The education, network, and various resources are priceless. I am privileged to be serving with such a strong leadership group.

In October 2015, I joined The Walsh Group where I currently serve as the Marketing and Proposals Manager. Since joining SMPS in January 2016, my experience includes being a member of the Special Events Committee, co-chairing the Reign Awards, participating in a Roundtable, and attending many of the SMPS Seattle events.



Rebecca Crouse (she/her) | Director at Large: Membership

Marketing Specialist | David Evans and Associates

It's been an honor to serve on the Board this term. This year, the Membership Committee worked to create meaningful connections virtually and represent our big and varied membership. We hosted chapter-wide events and adapted the Welcome Wagon program by creating informal meet-ups that engage both new and long-time members. I can't say enough great things about the individuals who volunteer on the Membership Committee. They are dedicated, thoughtful, and accountable.

In 2020/2021, most of us faced unique constraints, both personally and professionally. With those challenges came opportunities and the chance to explore different ways of connecting and working. Many members enjoyed remote work, and the convenience of virtual activities allowed them to interact with the chapter more often. Alternatively, other members are already back to the "new" normal and seeking more in-person events. In this coming year, I will advocate for a mix of activities so all members are served.

I also want to continue building awareness of the A/E/C industry and SMPS as part of our outreach approach. The more people know about professional services marketing, the more likely they will see it as a possible career path. As a chapter, we've been exploring ways to support a more diverse and inclusive membership, and this would be a step in that direction. This outreach would involve building connections with local schools and professional organizations as well as the development of student membership benefits within our chapter.

I'm a Marketing Specialist at David Evans and Associates, Inc., primarily supporting business development and proposal management in the Puget Sound region. I currently serve as the Director at Large for Membership. Like many of you, my career has taken some exciting twists and turns. I have held various roles in custom manufacturing/engineering, wellness, and construction over the past two decades.



Stephanie Babb (she/her) | Director at Large: Marketing

Marketing Coordinator | Tri Star Team at RE/Max NW

For the past two years I loved serving as the Social Media Chair of the Marketing Committee, and I am so excited for the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors. SMPS has been a career game-changer for me; after taking A/E/C 101 and joining the Marketing Committee, I gained more connections, confidence, and knowledge than I ever imagined. I look forward to extending my support of the SMPS community to the board level next year.

In the 2021/2022 year, I want to expand upon our successful campaigns from past years to encourage SMPS membership, increase attendance, and grow our volunteer base. As our educational and networking events start to shift, the Marketing Committee will continue to provide members and attendees the best up-to-date information through the website, emails, newsletters, and social media. The Marketing Committee has been lucky to have consistent, passionate team members who constantly have new ideas to elevate our content. I am honored for the opportunity to serve as the Director at Large for the Marketing Committee.

Over the past six years in the A/E/C industry, marketing has become a true passion. Working in both architecture and engineering firms has given me a great perspective on the intricacies of this industry. As a person who loves problem solving, I enjoy the never-ending change and challenges of A/E/C. I recently transitioned to the Tri Star Team at RE/Max NW and am looking forward to leveraging ideas gained from SMPS programs into our current marketing.



Sandy Chapin (she/her) | Senior Advisor

Marketing & Communications Manager | UMC

It's been an honor to serve SMPS Seattle as Senior Advisor this year, and I look forward to continuing in that role. In my 21 years in A/E/C marketing, I've valued my participation in SMPS. It has given me a deep understanding of issues that are important to A/E/C marketers and their firms. As Marketing and Communication Manager at UMC, 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, 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 proud to have the opportunity to continue to contribute to our fabulous chapter and, most importantly, to our members by serving as Senior Advisor for another year. I look forward to working together with the board to help guide our chapter as we turn challenges into opportunities.

At UMC, I'm the Marketing and Communication Manager on a great team of marketers. With 21 years in A/E/C marketing and a long history serving SMPS, I have a strong understanding of SMPS members' needs. I'm honored to have served as Senior Advisor on the SMPS Seattle Board of Directors in 2020/2021 and look forward to another great year.