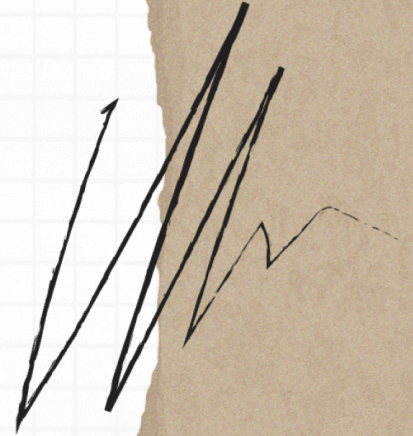


Fostering Community: ACSP Interest Group Leadership

A Guide for Group Leaders and Members



ACSP



ACSP Mission and Values Refresher

Our Mission

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning promotes education, research and outreach in the United States and Canada and throughout the world by seeking to:

- Recognize diverse needs and interests in planning;
- Strengthen the role of planning education in colleges and universities through publications, conferences and community engagement;
- Improve and enhance the accreditation process, and;
- Extend planning beyond the classroom into the world of practice.

Our Values

- Excellence in education and scholarship
- Broadly inclusive methodological perspectives and a fully inclusive range of voices
- Engagement across multiple publics
- Education that supports inclusion and cultural competence
- An inclusive and a welcoming environment within all our association activities
- IGs as the Heart

What is an Interest Group (IG)?

A designated, formally recognized entity for ACSP faculty and students with a common concern or research base. While under the ACSP 501c3 umbrella, IGs have elected leadership and their own bylaws. Their purpose is to encourage discussion, collaboration, and advance specific interests within planning academia.

The Four Designated Interest Groups

FWIG

Faculty Women's Interest Group

GPEIG

Global Planning Educators Interest Group

POCIG

Planners of Color Interest Group

QT-IG

Queer and Trans Interest Group

ACSP Groups vs. Affiliated Organizations

Formal & Informal ACSP Groups

Interest Groups (Formal):

- Formal structure, elected leadership, and missions.
- Officially designated by the ACSP Governing Board.
- Eligible for ACSP funding.
- Leaders serve as liaisons and must submit semi-annual reports.

Working Groups (Informal):

- Informal groups for casual discussions.
- No elected leadership or bylaws.
- Not funded by ACSP.

Partner or Affiliated Organizations

ACSP collaborates with several external organizations, appointing representatives to their boards or working on joint initiatives. These include:

- GPEAN (Global Planning Education Association Network)
- AESOP (Association of European Schools of Planning)
- PAB (Planning Accreditation Board)
- APA (American Planning Association)
- IACP (International Association for China Planning)

Management Pillar 1: Special Events



Community Events

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Event Planning

Leaders determine events for the annual conference, such as proposed sessions, business meetings, or social gatherings. ACSP staff assists with adding these to the conference app.

Webinars & Outreach

Interest Groups are encouraged to host webinars and outreach events throughout the year. Coordinate with ACSP staff for scheduling and promotion to the wider community.

Management Pillar 2: Fundraising

Policy

External fundraising must be directed through the official ACSP Donation Portal, ensuring funds are designated to the correct Interest Group.

Funding Sources

The primary source is ACSP's general fund. Other avenues include collaborating with ACSP Committees (e.g., Committee on Diversity) or seeking external grants.

Past Successes

IG funding has successfully supported specialized research workshops and paid for publication fees for edited volumes.

Management Pillar 3: Organizing Sessions

Organizing sessions for the annual conference is a key activity. It's important to be aware of the rules and timelines.

Session Options & Deadlines

Panels or workshops are not guaranteed due to limited space. Starting in 2026, non-reviewed session submissions will have the same deadline as all others (Feb 17 - Apr 1) with no extensions.

The Rule: No Schedule Changes

Once the conference schedule is published, it is final. Sessions will not be rearranged. Speakers may be substituted in a timely manner if needed.

Co-Organization Encouraged

IGs are encouraged to co-organize sessions with other groups like GPEAN, AESOP, APA, and at different conferences to broaden reach and collaboration.

Management Pillar 4: Managing Meetings

Annual Business Meetings

ACSP provides space at the annual conference for your business meeting. This is the time to elect new leaders, discuss bylaws, and set goals for the upcoming year.

Collaboration is Key

Coordinate with other IGs or ACSP Committees to ensure initiatives do not overlap (e.g., mentorship workshops). ACSP will be creating a shared online calendar to help with this.

Management Pillar 5: ACSP Mentorship Ecosystem

All interest groups engage in mentorship. ACSP provides a wide range of support for both faculty and students.

Faculty Support

- Year-round mentoring and writing workshops.
- Tailored programs for women, faculty of color, LGBTQ+ scholars, and global educators.
- Leadership development through the Chairs Academy.

Student Support

- Pre-Doctoral workshops for underrepresented students.
- Support for doctoral students on dissertations, publishing, and the job market.
- Peer mentoring and professional development via the Student Network.

Management Pillar 6: Awards

Joint ACSP/IG Awards

These are subject to ACSP policies. IGs manage the award committees to select winners. The submission deadline is June 1, and winner selection is due by the first week of August.

Examples

- FWIG: Marcia M. Feld Leadership Award
- GPEIG: Gill-Chin Lim Awards
- POCIG: Edward Blakely Award

Internal IG Awards

These awards are created and managed entirely by the Interest Group. This includes the application process, decision-making, and promotion of winners.

ACSP does not have oversight of these awards and does not provide funding for them.

Management Pillar 7: Community Input

Periodically, ACSP will invite your IG to provide feedback on topics like conference locations. In most cases, you do not need to formally survey your membership for this.

Consider an Annual Member Survey

Some groups have found success with an annual survey. This can provide invaluable information to the IG board on member needs, identify key research issues, and inform ACSP Governing Board policy decisions.



Management Pillar 8: Sustaining Community

Delegation: Use Ad Hoc Committees

Use IG ad hoc committees to distribute the workload and prevent burnout, especially for tenure-track faculty or students on the IG board. Delegate tasks like event planning, newsletter development, or specific research projects to your members. Leadership doesn't need to do it all!

Best Practices for a Healthy Community

Vibrant

Regularly promote member successes and plan varied engagement events (virtual and in-person).

Supportive & Inclusive

Establish clear, zero-tolerance guidelines for non-inclusive behavior and promote mentorship across career stages.

Active

Ensure timely communication via listservs and forums to keep members engaged and informed.

Management Pillar 9: Institutional Knowledge

Ensuring a smooth transition of knowledge is critical for long-term success. New leaders should take proactive steps to get up to speed.

1

Connect with Past Leaders

Seek an orientation or 'coffee talk' with previous leaders to gain historical context and understand the group's evolution.

2

Review Archives

Review past budget requests, bi-annual reports, research, and publications. Send new materials (newsletters, minutes) to ACSP for archiving.

3

Verify Operational Access

Ensure all leaders have access to shared digital storage (e. g., Google Folders) and know how to use the group's official Listserv/Google Groups.

4

Plan for Succession

Implement strategies for running smooth, transparent elections and actively recruiting diverse board members.

Governance: Finances

External Funding

- ACSP doesn't have oversight of external funds raised by IGs.
- Funds can be held in an external account or hosted by ACSP.
- If hosted by ACSP, you can inquire about the balance anytime.
- ACSP has software to help accept donations.
- Receipts can be submitted to the ACSP Bursar for payment anytime.

ACSP Funding

- Funding possibility is assessed annually via the ACSP budget.
- If funds are available, proposal invitations are sent once per year (late spring).
- Proposals must be for non-recurrent initiatives supporting the ACSP Strategic Plan.
- Projects must be completed within the fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

Examples of What Is/Isn't Fundable by ACSP

What Will NOT Be Funded

These expenses could be paid using the IG's externally raised funds.

- Personal compensation (salary, stipends, honoraria) for members.
- External website hosting (ACSP provides pages).
- Food, beverage, or entertainment for events.
- General IG operational expenses (merchandise, supplies).
- Recurring expenses like software subscriptions.

What MIGHT Be Funded

Requires an accepted proposal.

- Workshops/training that align with ACSP priorities.
- Honorarium for invited non-ACSP member speakers.
- Creation of special reports or white papers.
- Support for research activities (e.g., student assistance for data collection/analysis).

Governance: Making Public Statements

ACSP is currently developing a formal policy on making public statements. In the meantime, there is a strict requirement for any statement an IG chooses to make.

Required Disclaimer

If an IG feels strongly about making a statement, it **MUST** include the following disclaimer:

"The opinions and views expressed in this content are the opinions of the designated author and do not reflect the opinions or views of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning or any of its members."

Key Handbook Sections



Navigate the ACSP Handbook for detailed policies and procedures.

- Page 12: Interest & Working Groups - Defines group structure and general scope.
- Pages 19-22: Association Budget Preparation - Outlines financial oversight.
- Pages 64 & 69: Funding Request for Studies or Initiatives - **CRITICAL** section on proposal components for new project funding.

Key Working Timeframes

Funding Requests

Invitations sent in late spring; funds available July 1 if approved.

Biannual Reports

Due Feb/March and Aug/September. Reminders will be sent.

Governing Board Meetings

Twice per year (Spring virtual, Fall pre-conference).

Conference Sessions

Proposals due in May. Watch for invitations.

Award Committee Confirmations

Confirm your committee members with ACSP by February.

Award Submissions

Firm deadline of June 1 for all ACSP-level awards.

Role at ACSP Board Meetings

- IG leaders are invited participants but are non-voting members of the Board.
- This structure avoids potential undemocratic imbalances as more IGs are formed.
- The Governing Board meets one day prior to the conference; members cover their own expenses.
- You are encouraged to participate in all discussions to stay informed and provide input.
- Your reports are typically assigned to the Consent Agenda and are not presented orally unless clarification is required.

Leader Compliance & Risk Management

Review Handbook Pages 62-64

- **Avoid Apparent Authority:** IG leaders cannot speak on behalf of ACSP, sign contracts, or expend unapproved ACSP funds. Authority rests with the ACSP President and Governing Board.
- **Data & IP Rights:** ACSP retains rights to use data from any ACSP-funded research.
- **Publication Rules:** Funded projects must acknowledge ACSP support and give primary publication consideration to the Journal of Planning Education and Research (JPER).

Your Dedicated ACSP Staff Support Team

ACSP staff are here to support IG operations, but are not IG staff. They will help announce your events, but not organize them. When in doubt, ask Donna Dodd what staff can and cannot help with.

Donna Dodd - Funding & Governance

ddodd@acsp.org. For expense management, policy interpretations, and official funding submissions.

Damien Raimondi - Web & Communications

damien@acsp.org. For IG webpage updates.

Nicole Smith - ACSP Channel Communications

nicole@acsp.org. For social media and newsletter submissions.

Camden Miller - Conference & Events

Camden@acsp.org. For conference meeting space, sessions, and event logistics.

ACSP Newsletter

news@acsp.org. For elevating webinars or other news in the weekly newsletter.

Questions?

Immediate Actions

- Review the full ACSP Handbook.
- Review your specific Interest Group's Bylaws.
- Schedule a 'coffee talk' with past leadership.

When in doubt...

Email Donna Dodd! She will provide or research answers, and can direct you to the right person.