

# ACSA Candidate for Second Vice President (4-year term)

Luis F. Rico-Gutierrez, Iowa State University

## Candidate Statement

The world needs more bold dreamers who aren't afraid to imagine the future—not just more architects but more voices and different perspectives. Over twenty-five years, ACSA has been a community where I've found others who share my fundamental belief that architectural education must advance with dignity and demand inclusion, amplify silenced voices, embolden creative expression, and foster critical thinking. I've engaged deeply with many of you through multiple roles - from co-chairing the 2017 National Conference in Detroit to leading international conferences in Spain (2018) and Mexico (2024), serving on scientific committees, and participating in critical discussions about the future of architectural education. Today, I step forward as a candidate for Second Vice-President to support ACSA in meeting the challenges and opportunities before us.



My motivation stems from one powerful word: **access**. This fundamental principle aligns perfectly with ACSA's mission to empower faculty and schools to educate increasingly diverse students, amplify our impact on the discipline, and create knowledge to advance our profession. **Access** for students from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to pedagogies that empower them to dream audaciously. **Access** for all members of society to sustainable, dignified, and beautiful environments. **Access** for faculty to multiple venues to express their scholarship and embrace new modes of inquiry.

While a candidacy is fundamentally a conversation about the future, you need to understand how my past experiences inform how I can work with you to move our present forward:

- **Ensuring Access follows Passion:** At Iowa State's College of Design, through strategic investments in recruitment and student support, we've increased diverse representation in our first-year class from 10% to 24%. Our "Design Closet" initiative removes financial barriers for projects and presentations, ensuring that passion—not economic circumstances—determines success. This builds on my earlier work at Carnegie Mellon University, where I established UDREAM, credited with increasing minority representation in Pittsburgh's urban design profession by 400%.
- **Advancing Environmental Justice and Community Development:** At Iowa State, we've built strategic partnerships bringing architecture, design, planning, and art expertise to support local governments and communities across the state. This work expands on my experience founding the Remaking Cities Institute at Carnegie Mellon, demonstrating how academia can transform communities through scholarship and engaged practice. Together, these initiatives create a model for how design education can directly impact community development and environmental justice at both urban and rural scales.
- **Breaking Disciplinary Silos:** Today's complex challenges require the ability to work productively across knowledge domains. *Epistemological agility*—the capacity to frame and re-frame problems through multiple lenses and combine ideas in original ways to serve broader social, economic, and civic purposes—has reshaped our foundations program and most of our junior-year studios. In them, faculty from multiple departments collaborate in developing complex problem statements that highlight the necessary interaction between students from different disciplinary and experiential backgrounds to provide appropriate solutions.
- **Building Global Partnerships:** Despite being Iowa State's smallest college, we lead in international engagement, sending more students abroad than colleges many times our size. By strategically investing in resources and programs, we've made international experiences accessible to students from all backgrounds, transforming their understanding of architecture's role in a global context.
- **Leading Complex Organizations Through Change:** As Dean of Iowa State's College of Design, I've led an incredible group of faculty, staff, and students in the process of developing and pursuing a vision that encapsulates our shared ambitions. This experience in strategic planning and organizational transformation would serve ACSA as it redefines its relationships with key partners like AIA, NAAB, NCARB, and AIAS, as our collective work advances architectural education's broader mission.

As ACSA embarks on its 2024-25 strategic planning process, I believe **access**, central to my past experiences, must be at the center of our conversations—access to resources necessary to create new pathways into architectural education, develop equitable learning cultures, and advance environmental justice through scholarship, pedagogy, and transformative practices. As a member of ACSA's leadership team, I commit to being available, listening, asking questions, providing support, and facilitating interactions that advance our collective mission.

Toni Morrison said, *"There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear... I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge—even wisdom. Like art."*

As we stand at this crossroads, I invite you to take this next step with me. Let's ensure that every student, every faculty member, every professional who isn't afraid to imagine a better future finds in ACSA not just an organization, but a home. With all my energy, experience, and hope for our shared future, I am ready to serve, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to do so.

## Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae—Luis F. Rico-Gutierrez

### EDUCATION

Present-1997 Carnegie Mellon University Ph.D. (ABD), Research area: Computer supported collaborative design  
2015 Harvard University Certificate, Institute for Management and Leadership in Education  
1997-1996 Carnegie Mellon University, Master in Building Performance  
1988-1987 "Rafael Leoz" Foundation (Madrid) Graduate degree, Modular design and the isotropic space arrangement  
ITESM (Queretaro, Mexico), Bachelor degree in Architecture

### EMPLOYMENT

2009-Present Iowa State University, College of Design, Dean  
2009-2001 Carnegie Mellon University, College of Fine Arts, Associate Dean  
2009-2006 Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture, David Lewis Director, Remaking Cities Institute  
2006-2001 Carnegie Mellon University, Studio for the Creative Inquiry, Chair, Steering Committee  
2004-2001 Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture, Associate Head  
2009-1996 Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture, David Lewis Director, Remaking Cities Institute  
1996-1993 ITESM (Queretaro, Mexico), Department of Architecture, Faculty Member  
1993-1991 Fundación Rafael Leoz (Madrid), Architecture Department, Manager

I'm an architect passionate about the critical contributions that the arts and design can make to improve the quality of our lives. I believe that the knowledge required to address our most pressing challenges can only be constructed through a deliberate balance between poetic and pragmatic forms of practice. In this context, designers and artists are creative catalysts, visionaries, provocateurs, and iconoclasts who study the past and question the context to imagine the future.

My success as a faculty member and administrator is linked intimately to the success of my team. It would be disingenuous to claim sole responsibility for the professional accomplishments listed in here. As leader, my role is to ask questions, provide support, and facilitate interactions that can further our collective mission.

**CURRENT LEADERSHIP AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY:** As Dean of the College of Design at Iowa State University, I lead seven departments offering accredited professional degrees, with 150 faculty and staff serving 2,200 students. Our innovative organizational structure emphasizes collaboration while maintaining distinct disciplinary identities, resulting in a 98% placement rate within six months of graduation.

**INNOVATION IN EDUCATION:** Created new programs, including Industrial Design, Interdisciplinary Design, Master in Real Estate Development in partnership with the College of Business, and most recently, a Bachelor in Game Design. Helped establish the \$84M Student Innovation Center as a hub for creativity and fabrication. Launched a robust social entrepreneurship initiative featuring interdisciplinary studios where students and faculty address complex community and environmental challenges. Created the Iowa Mayors Design Workshop, where students and faculty collaborate with domain experts and extension specialists to help Iowa communities reimagine their future.

**COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY:** Implemented strategic initiatives that increased diverse student enrollment from 10% to 24%, including the creation of a DEIB strategist position and establishing partnerships with regional support groups for marginalized communities.

**RESEARCH EXCELLENCE:** Strengthened the college's research culture through strategic investments in the Institute for Design Research and Outreach (IDRO), expanding staff support for pre- and post-award services. These efforts have yielded \$8.9 million in external funding from the National Science Foundation, Iowa Economic Development Authority, and Department of Transportation, among others. Faculty have secured prestigious awards including National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships and Getty Foundation "Keeping It Modern" Grants.

**GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT:** Expanded international programs reaching 50% of graduating students in the college (over 75% in Architecture) through partnerships in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including management of our Rome program hosting 120 students annually.

**PREVIOUS ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP:** At Carnegie Mellon University, I served as Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Associate Head of the School of Architecture. I co-founded the Remaking Cities Institute to bridge academic and community needs through research and studio teaching. Additionally, I established the UDREAM program (Urban Design Regional Employment Action for Minorities), securing \$500,000 in funding. As a result, Pittsburgh saw a more than 400% increase in underrepresented minority representation in the architecture and urban design fields.

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP:** My extensive involvement with ACSA includes co-chairing the 2024 International Conference in Mexico, the 2018 ACSA Deans Summit in Spain, the 2017 ACSA National Conference in Detroit, and serving on multiple committees and initiatives. I've chaired multiple UNESCO-UIA Validation Committees for architecture programs in Germany, Turkey, the UAE, and Egypt. Recently, I participated as a member of the Scientific Committee for the 2023 UIA World Congress. Additional service include Board of Trustees membership for the California College of the Arts and participation in the Large Firms Roundtable Dean's Forum.

**RECOGNITION:** These contributions have been recognized through multiple awards including: appointment as Senior Fellow of the Design Futures Council (2017), selection as one of America's top 25 most admired educators by Design Intelligence (2016), the Andrew Heiskell Award for Technology Enhanced Learning in International Education (2003), First Prize for my students in the J.P. Morgan-Chase Community Development Competition (2005), and the Borrego Dorado nationwide award for Educational Innovation in Mexico (1997).

**PERSONAL JOURNEY:** My journey spans three continents - from Mexico, where I earned my first degree, to Spain, where I worked in academia and the non-profit sector; back to Mexico, where I started teaching, and to the United States, where I've dedicated myself to design education. These global perspectives enrich my understanding of the diverse ways design can serve society and inform my collaborative approach to leadership.