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City Tech Professor Receives American Institute of Architects National Excellence Award

Brooklyn, NY—April 27, 2015—Two years ago, after Hurricane Sandy ravaged the Northeast, Illya Azaroff, AIA, an associate professor in the Department of Architectural Technology at City Tech, founded the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Regional Recovery Working Group (AIARRWG) to re-imagine a more resilient and sustainable region. Last month, Azaroff's Recovery Working Group, which includes former City Tech students and architects from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, received the AIA National Component Excellence Award for Knowledge Sharing Initiatives at the Grassroots Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. This is the first time the award has been given.

“This very strong effort brought together various players to the table in a symbiotic manner with a collective vision and shared goals. I am not aware of any such other strong showing of organizational achievements lead by the AIA, specifically to assess a post-disaster situation, to the extent of what occurred with Sandy,” said a representative of the jurors of the category.

The AIA Regional Recovery Working Group, led by co-chairs Illya Azaroff, AIA (AIANYS/NY) and Justin Mihalik, AIA (AIANJ), highlight the importance of sharing resources, fostering broad collaboration and engaging a full spectrum of stakeholders to aid in the recovery of communities and the region post-Super Storm Sandy. Government officials, architects and planners participated in a series of tri-state conferences he co-organized to discuss resiliency strategies in preparation for storm surge and other environmental disasters.

Azaroff's vision of the important role that architects have to play in disaster response has opened up many opportunities for them and shown the public the role architects play in planning for and responding to a wide range of risks. In his current role as National Advocacy Director for Young Architects Forum he continues to work with AIA New York State (AIANYS) on these issues.

Locally Azaroff co-founded and co-chairs the AIA New York chapter's Design for Risk and Reconstruction Committee, with Lance Jay Brown (City College) which has led AIANY's efforts, both before and after Super Storm Sandy, to re-imagine a more resilient and sustainable region. He has helped organize dozens of panels, lectures and workshops that have provided valuable information to the public and engaged the architecture community in planning for and responding to disaster.

In addition, Azaroff has been recognized as one of the nation's leading experts on resilience by the federal government. He was invited to participate in a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Disaster Recovery Workshop organized by the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response under the Obama Administration to contribute to the National Disaster Recovery Framework development. Azaroff is one of 12 non-government experts invited and the only architect out of more than 60 participants.

Azaroff is the founding principal of +LAB Architect PLLC in Brooklyn. +LAB actively embraces new and traditional technologies to enhance building practice and inform design trajectories. He is also the recipient of the 2014 Young Architects Award from the American Institute of Architects.

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About City Tech (New York City College of Technology)

City Tech, of The City University of New York, is the largest four-year public college of technology in the Northeast and a national model for technological education. City Tech has an enrollment of more than 17,000 students in 24 baccalaureate and 27 associate degree programs. For more information, visit www.citytech.cuny.edu.