

IIDA

MID-AMER

Every year, the Mid-America chapter spends quality time reflecting on our goals as a board. In 2024, these discussions shone a light on a desire to invest meaningfully in our design community. Through our generous sponsors and engaged membership, our chapter had enough funds to achieve our yearly programming with excess. As a board, we chose to spend the money on a valuable part of our membership: students.

Mid-America's four campus centers and six active campuses form a rich talent pool that grows into our cities' (Kansas City and Wichita) emerging designers. We found it only fitting to create a program that could support these students during their education while preparing them to grow into professionals. The Mid-America Chapter Scholarship was born from this idea; the program provides a direct way to make an impact on a future interior designer.

By 2025 the board's idea began taking shape. Our chapter's proximity to the Kansas City Architectural Foundation (KCAF) presented a unique opportunity. "Since being founded in 1984, KCAF has awarded more than 170 architectural scholarships amounting to over \$400,000 granted to students from the metropolitan area... KCAF is a charitable corporation (501 (c) 3)," (aiakc.org). Working with KCAF would allow our chapter to fund a scholarship in our name, while relying on the foundation to assist us in managing investment funds, advertising, and awarding the scholarship.

With this information, IIDA got to work. The board reviewed our yearly expenses, our ability to invest a lump sum, and our goals for a successful scholarship. This resulted in the desire to create an endowment. Our investment would not only use excess funds meaningfully, but it would allow for continued and sustainable contributions to our chapter's emerging designers.

Additionally, we would be offering the first KCAF scholarship designated for interior design students. While there had been opportunities for ID students to qualify for scholarships from KCAF, they were also open to other design disciplines or open only to women. The board felt strongly that our endowment should provide the opportunity for support to any student member in our chapter enrolled full-time in a bachelor's or master's degree who had completed at least 3-years of their program.

In June of 2025, the endowment became a reality. IIDA Mid-America invested a total sum of \$38,000 that would support an annual scholarship award to a student of our choosing. The selection would be made by the Scholarship Committee, comprised of the Past President, VP of Campus Relations, VP of Membership, and VP of Advocacy. The application process was made possible thanks to our 2025 Catalyst Grant which funded a website and brand refresh, including a scholarship application page to support the endowment.

On August 25th, 2025, Mid-America awarded the first scholarship to Sammie Skinner, a fourth-year student from K-State. We are proud to have completed our first award, and even prouder to continue the IIDAMA legacy of supporting students through annual awards in the years to come.

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