



A New Generation of Leadership: USGBC Emerging Professionals

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Imagine having the ability to gather a village of engineers, architects, designers, lawyers, teachers and advocates of green building practices in one place for a week.

The U.S. Green Building Council's Mid-Year Meeting, held in late July, united such a group to discuss the future for high performance buildings and the people who are connected to them. I was lucky enough to get to participate as a member of the Emerging Professionals Leadership Studio, the in-person training portion of USGBC's [Emerging Professionals Leadership Academy](#).

The Academy is an integral part of the goal to build the organizational capacity and effectiveness of USGBC and its [chapters](#). Fundamentally, it provides leadership development to the [Emerging Professional](#) (EP) members of the greater USGBC community. It also strengthens our relationships within USGBC and local chapters. As part of our six month-long leadership training program, we participated in the dynamic conference that was the Emerging Professionals Studio.

There were so many amazing moments in this meeting. The "EP Studio" successfully brought together 43 Emerging Professionals from 34 USGBC chapters and four countries outside the United States. As an attendee, I had the chance to meet with and learn from senior-level USGBC staff, the Board of Directors, Chapter Steering Committee and many others. We had the opportunity to hear from the founders of USGBC; David Gottfried and [Rick Fedrizzi](#), not to mention environmental justice advocate Majora Carter who was recently elected to the USGBC Board of Directors. We also learned about important new advocacy programs, like USGBC's [Center for Green Schools](#), and [Project Haiti](#). It was a privilege to be welcomed into a wonderful group of movers and shakers in the sustainable building world. I quickly discovered I was with my "people."

The Academy directors kept us busy, well informed and well fed. Most importantly, they made the younger generation feel welcome, valued and part of something really big! Key programming included a day-long visioning session for USGBC's future engagement of EPs and a day-long series of training sessions on facilitation skills, grassroots advocacy and exercises in mapping out personal leadership pathways. I took back a wealth of knowledge to share with my fellow Emerging Professionals in NYC, further broadcasting the message. Among my favorite events: Thursday's celebratory "Take 5" event, shared with members of chapters' [Green Schools Committees](#), gave six outstanding EPs the opportunity to share their own innovative projects and experiences. Further evidence of the passing of the torch: The Emerging Professionals Leadership Academy members joined forces with the Green Schools Committees in a lively competition to raise funds for [Project Haiti](#), collecting more than \$3,000 in that one night!

The week's adopted motto, "Be leaders, not victims," was overheard almost constantly as individuals headed back to their chapters refreshed and ready to push the USGBC mission harder and farther than ever before. Perhaps the quote to best summarize that week was from EP Katie Flynn, who professed she rarely uses inspirational quotes: "The best thing about torches is you don't have to put yours out to light another." We hope that message of community and fostering the future generation was conveyed to all of the industrious members of the USGBC.

As an Emerging Professional, it was an honor to participate and have my torch ignited by such a great, important movement and community. I emerged, indeed, inspired and energized for the next generation of high performance building leaders.

[Learn more about USGBC's Emerging Professionals program »](#)
[Video: See what Mariah thinks is the future of green building »](#)

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