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Architects: Building the Future

Research Assessment 1

This year in ISM, my topic will be architecture. As I look at this topic for a possible future career, there are many things to consider. The first thing to determine was what the job title of architect really means. An architect is a person who designs and plans the construction of a building. The building could be anything from a house, to a fire station, to an elementary school. It is the architect's job to determine what the purpose of the building is and to design it so that the task being performed there can be done with maximum efficiency.

The things being done inside the building are not the only things that need to be efficient. The building itself should also be efficient. One of the big focuses in architecture today is to make the building environmentally sustainable. Because of this, there is some important terminology for architects to know such as geothermal heating and cooling (the regulation of heating and cooling in a building using the sun and the ground under the structure), and environmental sustainability (the building's use of natural resources even out with natural processes so that it would not eventually overuse the earth's resources). Environmental sustainability can be accomplished by installing solar panels, using geothermal heating and

cooling systems, and capturing and treating its own water. Of course this may not always be the most affordable option, but architects continue to look for ways to build “green architecture,” and will continue to in the future. Because of this trend in seeking ways to make buildings more environment friendly, this means that there will continue to be more jobs for architects in the future. There is always room for improvement.

According to the American Institute of Architects’ online Salary Calculator, as of 2017, entry level architects (usually not yet having a license) in the United States make about \$45,210 annually. In the West South Central region (including Texas) entry level architects make approximately \$46,460 annually while in the Middle Atlantic region (including New York where I plan to move after college) they make about \$45,040. An architect with about five years of experience and often a license makes about \$67,920 per year compared to the West South Central region where they make \$65,600 and the Middle Atlantic where the mean annual salary is \$70,760. And finally, a project manager with eight years of experience or more and a license makes about \$85,710 nation wide. Project managers in the West South Central region make approximately \$86,260 annually and those in the Middle Atlantic make about \$88,070. As one can see from the data, pursuing a career in architecture does not always mean living solely off of ramen in a shoebox apartment. Of course, entry level architects do make substantially less than professionals who have been in the practice for years, but having the proper education and a license can certainly help.

According to the the American Institute of Architecture, one must have a bachelor’s degree in Architecture to be a project manager, but at many firms, having a bachelor’s degree in Architecture is required to be considered for a job position. Having a license is also important. In

my experience, many of the universities with highly ranked architecture programs prepare their students to be able to take the licensing exam right out of college. These universities are also the ones that have higher job placement rates.

We know that life does not always work out the way we plan. What happens if architecture turns out to not be “the thing” for me? What else might I like to do? Other job positions that are related to architecture include interior design and civil engineering. Interior designers are the ones who handle the aesthetics inside the space architects create. They design and plan so that the flow of the rooms make sense and make the inhabitants feel comfortable in their environment. Civil Engineers are like architects in the fact that they design structures, but they do more work with bridges and roads whereas architects handle buildings.

Becoming an architect is not an easy process, but it is something I truly have a passion for. To me, going through the years of school and studying to take the licensing exam would be worth all of the hard work. Architects are building the future and I want to be a part of it.

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