



**Urban Land  
Institute**

**Product Councils**

**ULI Product Councils  
Leadership Resource Manual**

**Part 1**

**Council and Leadership Governance  
and Rules**

# ULI Product Council Program Overview

National Product Councils are small, intimate groups of ULI Full Members who are leaders within a certain sector, committed to meeting together for a full day of programming at the ULI Fall and Spring Meetings. Council meetings are opportunities to network and learn in a confidential setting. Meetings often include sharing best practices, guest and member speakers, roundtable discussions, and off-site private tours. In addition to bi-annual meetings, Councils may communicate throughout the year on specific topics of interest, often leveraging opportunities through their engagement with ULI to share their expertise with others in the field.

Councils retain many of the unique features of ULI from its advent, providing intimate settings for relatively small groups of real estate professionals with diverse backgrounds and experiences getting together to discuss cutting-edge issues in their respective disciplines. Council members share mistakes made and lessons learned in a confidential forum often sharing details of how they succeeded – or failed – in various projects. Councils offer information exchange and networking opportunities that can lead to lifelong relationships, both personal and professional. Councils also give back to ULI and impact their professions and the world through significant contributions to ULI's educational mission.

Councils are the cornerstone of ULI and Council membership is among ULI's most prestigious and sought after experiences.

## Purposes

The general purposes of the Council program are:

- ☐ Provide a forum for confidential information exchange on real estate best practices.
- ☐ Provide an industry focus on the major issues of the day.
- ☐ Provide a forum for discussing the priorities of the Institute as they relate to members' businesses.
- ☐ Catalyze industry leaders to contribute to ULI's education and outreach mission.
- ☐ Impact community attitudes and lifestyles regarding development.
- ☐ Support the ethical professional development of the most talented and successful people in the real estate development field.

## Governance Rules

The addition or elimination of a Council requires approval of the ULI Americas Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

Council leadership needs to be nurtured in the culture of ULI, this is also critical for succession planning. To be elevated to Council Chair, a candidate (preferably the current Assistant Chair with council agenda experience) must be proposed by the current Council Chair, vetted with the ULI Americas Executive Committee as a group and approved by the ULI Americas Chair as having the necessary preparation and skills to serve as a Council Chair.

Each Council is made up of no more than 55 total members, 60 with AEC approval. Each member is appointed to a Council for a one year term, renewable up to five years. Even when listed provisionally as

having a multi-year term, each member of a Council serves at the pleasure of his or her Chair. This is to promote member contribution and active participation while ensuring that the Chair will have control over the composition of their Council.

Similarly, all Assistant Chairs and Vice Chairs are appointed by their respective Chair for renewable, one-year terms as council officers.

In addition:

- ☐ Only ULI Full Members are eligible to participate on Councils.
- ☐ ULI membership must be current and Council Affiliation Fees (CAF) paid in full.
- ☐ Council members, upon payment of the CAF, agree to remain on the Council to which they have been appointed through June 30 of the year of their appointment.
- ☐ Council members must attend two out of three consecutive meetings in order to retain their seat, or obtain an excused absence from the Council Chair. Excusable absences are unexpected personal matters such as medical issues.

## **Governing Trustees Affiliation**

Except for Trustees serving as Council Chairs, Assistant Chairs or Vice Chairs, Governing trustees may choose which Council they would like to join and are not required to participate in the Council draft process. Governing Trustees have the same attendance and participation requirements as all other Council members.

## **Finances**

An annual Council Affiliation Fee, determined by the ULI Board of Directors, is required of all who serve on Councils, payable at the start of the fiscal year. If appointment to a Council occurs after the ULI Fall Meeting, one-half the fee specified will be required. If payment is not received by newly appointed Council members within sixty days of their date of appointment, the appointment will not take effect and the Council slot will be filled by another appointment. Any continuing Council member who does not remit the Council Affiliation Fee within 60 days will be dropped from his or her Council.

All funds relating to the operation and activity of each Council are administered through ULI and shall be governed by the provisions for fiscal policy of ULI, as contained in the Governance Manual and as determined by the ULI Board of Directors.

Council Affiliation Fees help defray the costs of Council meetings (continental breakfast, buffet lunch, audio visual, meeting room rentals, tour buses), but do not support Council receptions/dinners. An additional fee will be collected for dinner. Dinner fees vary by council.



## **Council Leadership**

Each Council has a Chair, who heads the council and has primary responsibility for its activity. The Chair is appointed by ULI, typically for a term of 3 years. The Chair appoints a leadership team of three or more members.

Traditionally, the Chair has been supported by an Assistant Chair, and several Vice Chairs. The Assistant Chair has primary responsibility for the meeting, and is anticipated to be the next incoming Chair. The Vice Chairs have responsibility as delegated, which often includes membership/recruitment, assistance with the meeting, etc. See more on traditional council roles and responsibilities below. (It may be helpful to use these designations at least in part, to facilitate communication from ULI and other council leaders. So, for example, communications about the membership Draft would be directed to the Vice Chair of Membership, even if this role was split or shared.)

Recently, some Chairs have expanded leadership teams to distribute responsibilities. In addition, some Chairs delegate planning for individual sessions and events to share the work of planning the day. Experimenting to find the right balance so that the Chair does not take on too much work is to be encouraged. Some councils have found that relying on more junior members for leadership support or day of technical support is mutually advantageous. The junior member appreciates the experience and may have more band width for these activities. Some councils will allow Next Gen or YLG rising stars to guest for the same reasons.

The Council program depends upon engaged volunteer leadership.

ULI has a unique culture and the Council programs thriving depends on ensuring that its leadership understands and embraces this culture. While someone may be a successful leader in his or her business, it does not necessarily mean they have the skills for leading a Council; the leadership skills may or may not be transferable.



## ULI Council Leadership: Responsibilities based on the traditional four person leadership team

### Council Chair

The Council Chair is the “CEO” of the Council and has overall responsibility for all aspects of the Council. Council Chair works with the Executive Team and with the members of the Council to create a successful and high value Council experience. A Council Chair must be focused both on operational issues such as Council day programming, leadership succession and the draft, as well as Council culture issues like trust and openness among Council members, facilitating broad participation and managing Council member satisfaction. The table below highlights the Chair’s primary roles and responsibilities.

Council Chair’s Roles and Responsibilities	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Oversee all aspects of the leadership and work of the Council</li> <li>☐ Selects and Nominates the Executive Team</li> <li>☐ Mentors members in leadership positions to become successful future Council Chairs</li> <li>☐ Identifies replacement Chair prior to their last Fall Meeting in the second year of their leadership term.</li> <li>☐ Attends and participates in ULI Network Chairs activities</li> <li>☐ Attends and participates in ULI Council Leadership meetings</li> <li>☐ Manages Leadership Team with regular conference calls throughout the year</li> <li>☐ Promote an understanding of the goals and work of ULF and seek full Council participation in annual giving</li> </ul>
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Communicates the responsibilities of Council membership to the members</li> <li>☐ Works with Membership Vice Chair on new Council member recruitment and nominations including a focus on inclusivity candidates</li> <li>☐ Submits the Council draft list for appointments</li> <li>☐ Works with Membership Vice Chair to evaluate member participation and satisfaction</li> <li>☐ Communicate to Council Members the responsibilities of Council Membership</li> </ul>
Council Day (Spring & Fall Meetings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Assists Assistant Chair in creating the Council day program: topics, formats, speakers and agendas.</li> <li>☐ Leads each Council meeting</li> <li>☐ Selects a team member to coordinate the Council reception</li> <li>☐ Reviews Council guests requests and submits approved Council guest list</li> <li>☐ Notifies ULI of any approved absences for the upcoming meeting</li> <li>☐ Records attendance at Council meetings and submits attendance records and evaluation forms to the ULI information desk after each Council meeting</li> <li>☐ Reviews with the Executive Team the evaluation results and ULI council rankings after each Council meeting</li> <li>☐ Works with the leadership team to provide potential concurrent sessions to the ULI Program Committee.</li> </ul>

## Assistant Chair

The Assistant Council Chair assists the Chair in the management of the Council with primary responsibility for planning, programming and executing the Council meetings. The table below highlights the Assistant Chair's primary roles and responsibilities.

Assistant Chair's Roles and Responsibilities	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports the Chair and Executive Team in all activities, as requested</li> </ul>
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works with the Chair and the Membership Vice Chair on new Council member recruitment and nominations including a focus on inclusivity candidates</li> </ul>
Council Day (Spring & Fall Meetings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Council day programming is crucial to the success of your Council. Council Day programming is the primary responsibility of the Assistant Chair.</li> <li>Leads the Executive Team to create the Council day program: topics, formats, speakers and agendas.</li> <li>Runs the Council Day meeting in the Chair's absence.</li> <li>Use Council day creatively--i.e., bus tours, walking tours, boat tours, interesting venues not seen by those attending the Fall Meeting or Spring Council Forum--avoiding Mobile Workshop venues if possible. (These projects offer other programmatic opportunities.)</li> <li>Solicits programming suggestions from Council members at the Council meeting</li> <li>Submits the Council Day set-up forms</li> <li>Submits the Council Day Agenda</li> <li>Reviews with the Executive Team the evaluation results and ULI council rankings after each Council meeting</li> </ul>

## Council Membership Vice Chair

While ULI encourages the appointment of a Membership Vice Chair, the Chair of a Council may decide not to have a leadership team member formally assigned to this position (instead appointing three Vice Chairs). In this case, all duties described below will be assumed to be under the direction of the Council Chair by ULI staff.

The Membership Vice Chair has the primary responsibility for recruiting new Council members by working with the Council members and Executive Team. The table below highlights the Membership Vice Chair's primary roles and responsibilities.

Membership Vice Chair's Roles and Responsibilities	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports the Chair and Executive Team in all activities, as requested</li> </ul>
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works with the Council members and Executive Team to identify and recruit industry leaders onto Council.</li> <li>Monitor and use the council membership grid and class sheets to ensure an appropriate balance of different types of key industry leaders as well as to encourage and promote inclusivity.</li> <li>Participate in annual Draft with Council Chairs, Asst. Chairs</li> <li>Encourages and promotes inclusivity in Council membership.</li> <li>Monitors Council Day attendance and participation.</li> <li>Manage guest invitations and procedures at the Spring Council Forum and Fall Meeting. Must be approved by the Chair and submitted to ULI for processing.</li> <li>Assists the Chair with nominations for Council leadership appointments</li> <li><b>COUNCIL OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION:</b> Communicate regularly with Council membership to build a sense of community, especially for new members. Communicate outcomes from council day with members where appropriate.</li> </ul>
Council Day (Spring & Fall Meetings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists Vice Chair in creating the Council day program: topics, formats, speakers and agendas.</li> <li>Works with Chair to invite strong Council membership as guest to Council meetings</li> <li>Reviews with the Executive Team the evaluation results and ULI council rankings after each Council meeting</li> </ul>

## Vice Chair

The Vice Chair is a flexible role design to assist the Leadership Team with any of their duties. The Vice Chair is typically responsible for the Council reception the evening before the Council meeting. The Vice Chair role may be filled by a Council member being groomed for future Council leadership roles or may be filled with an experienced, successful past Council Chair who can serve as a mentor to the current Chair. The table below highlights the primary roles and responsibilities of the Vice Chair.

Vice Chair Roles and Responsibilities	
Leadership	☐ Supports the Chair and Leadership Team in all activities, as requested
Membership	☐ Works with the Council members and Leadership Team to identify and recruit industry leaders onto Council.
Council Day (Spring & Fall Meetings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☐ Assist in planning of Council Reception (if requested by Chair)</li><li>☐ Assists Assistant Chair in creating the Council day program: topics, formats, speakers and agendas.</li><li>☐ Reviews with the Leadership Team the evaluation results and ULI council rankings after each Council meeting</li></ul>

## **Council Leadership Selection Criteria and Terms of Service**

ULI Council Leadership represent the best and brightest of Council membership. Through thoughtful leadership and planning, these members ensure the continued excellence of the Council Program. Council Leadership typically serve one year renewable terms for a maximum of three years in each role. Council leadership are typically identified through their interaction with other Council members, prominence in the industry, ability to dedicate time and resources to the Council, and a deepened commitment and understanding of ULI and its Program of Work. Council Leadership terms typically commence July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

### **Council Chair**

Council Chairs are usually identified for ascension to Chair as early as their assumption of the Council Assistant Chair role, up to three years prior. A successor Chair is formally identified to the ULI AEC by the current Chair in January with a letter of recommendation, biography and list of strengths and weaknesses. After review of the submitted information and all other volunteer leadership submissions across the ULI networks, approval of the new Chair would be announced in March for a term commencing July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Assistant Chair**

Assistant Chairs should be carefully selected as the presumptive Council Chair (pending AEC approval described above) at the conclusion of their current term provided that they have met all of the requirements of the role, have demonstrated their ability to lead during Council day, and have the time and desire to assume the Chair role. For this reason, the Assistant Chair position is usually given to a leadership team member with prior experience either as a Membership Vice Chair or Vice Chair.

### **Membership Vice-Chair and Vice Chairs**

While Councils are encouraged to appoint a Membership Vice Chair, they are free to appoint all other positions as Vice Chair only and informally designate one member of the team to the membership role. Each of these supporting roles within leadership play a vital part in the success and support structure of the Council. Careful consideration should be given by the Chair to those members who interact frequently on Council day, show a desire to contribute to planning and an understanding of what makes a great Council. The proper placement of leaders in these positions provide a framework for success in Council leadership succession.