



Southern California Chapter

1st Quarter 2025 Newsletter & Updates

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Carson M. Leonard, MBA, Candidate

In this edition of our Chapter newsletter, we're excited to feature Carson, a passionate soon to be licensed and designated appraiser who has made impressive strides in the real estate appraisal field. From an early interest in house hunting with his parents to pursuing a career in real estate appraisal, Carson shares insights on the path that led him to success. From his academic achievements to navigating the challenges of networking and licensing, he offers advice for young professionals and future appraisers. Join us in learning about his journey, accomplishments, and aspirations, as well as his thoughts on the evolving appraisal field.

When did you start appraising and why?

- My interest in real estate began when I was 8 or so house hunting with my parents and watching flipping shows on TV. When I started thinking of career paths to take, I found out about appraisal through Charles Baker, a relative of mine. I liked the idea of getting exposure to a wide array of different properties, and the ability to window shop. So naturally, I majored in Business/Real Estate/Finance. I started appraising with Charles in-between my sophomore and junior year of college.

What are some of your accomplishments so far?

- Since the beginning of my career, I have earned a bachelor's and master's in business/real estate finance, am in the process of getting my certified general license and have passed my demonstration report and comprehensive exam for the MAI designation. I am also currently serving as the SoCal chapter eastern branch 1st advisor.

What are some challenges you have faced?

- A lot. The number one challenge I've faced is networking, even having had a mentor already. I never realized how important it is in this industry. I've faced challenges with unknown nuances in the licensing and designation process. I had to find out a lot of things the hard way, for example, that the supervisory appraiser has to have passed the supervisor course prior to training.

What excites you about the career?

- A few things. First, being able to be the expert in the room, and have others come for

your opinion, which is fun. I can be in a career where my honesty and integrity are valued. I am also excited about the opportunities that lay ahead as older appraisers retire.

What are your future aspirations?

- I am unsure now what exact path I will take, but I hope it involves earning the MAI designation and gaining exposure to as many property and assignment types as possible. I hope to continue volunteering with the institute and make a positive impact on the profession.

What do you see changing in our field?

- I see the increased use of AI, along with most other professions. I think what makes us as appraisers most valuable is the verification process. I think that will continue to be a big value proposition to users of our services going forward.
- I see demand for our services being relatively stable, with shrinking supply as older appraisers retire.

Do you have any networking tips for other young professionals?

- Don't be afraid. It's exciting to see someone new take interest in our profession. Meet other appraisers and ask lots of questions.

What advice do you have for others in similar shoes?

- Do as much as you can as soon as you can. You don't have to be licensed to start completing items for designations. I like to think of everything as just a big project. It's not a matter of if you can do it or not, it's just going to take some work.

Before I go, I'd just like to extend an invitation to all to connect with me via Linked In or give me an email or text. I would love to help others avoid my mistakes.

We are excited to announce the launch of our Chapter Sponsorship Program! This initiative offers a fantastic opportunity to support our chapter while gaining visibility within our community.

If you're interested in becoming a sponsor or would like more details, please reach out to Lianna, our Executive Director at Lianna@sccai.org or any of the executive board members and/or chapter committee members.
We look forward to partnering with you!

Save the Dates:

- Please join Ernie Lopez, Chapter President on Sunday at CicLAvia —Koreatown meets Hollywood! https://www.ciclavia.org/ciclavia_koreatown_meets_hollywood25
Date: Sunday, April 6, 2025/ Time: 9am-4pm - meeting place & time to be announced later. This Ciclavia event will connect Hollywood, East Hollywood, Melrose Hill, and Koreatown. Interested? Please email Lianna or Ernie directly. See you there!

- We will again have a Holiday Bowling event on December 6th or 13th. Stay tuned for more information. There is also an opportunity to sponsor this event. Please reach out to Lianna, our Executive Director at Lianna@sccai.org



EASTERN BRANCH

***Alex Liu, MAI
Eastern Branch Chair***



Thank you to Bill Jones, MAI, AI-GRS for welcoming Charles Baker, SRA, AI-RRS to a virtual Eastern Branch meeting to speak on a timely topic "The Appraisal of Fire Damaged or Destroyed Properties for Insurance Purposes". This event was put together in short order in response to the Palisades and Eaton Fires that occurred in January. Issues specific to valuation professionals working in areas impacted by the fires were covered, including client

relationship management, fees/turn times for this type of work, and the review process. Charles Baker, SRA, AI-RRS has extensive experience in appraising fire-damaged/destroyed properties for insurance purposes. Thank you Charles for providing timely, relevant information in an accessible format at no cost to our members.

Future events include the following:

Inland Empire Market Trends Seminar. This annual event will take place on Thursday, June 5th, starting at 8:00 a.m. at the Doubletree by Hilton Ontario Airport. Please visit the SCCAI website for registration details.

A joint event hosted by the Eastern Branch, the Northwestern Branch, and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) California Chapter on construction and environmental issues related to the recent wildfires is in the planning stages. Look for further announcements on this virtual event.

A webinar on artificial intelligence (AI) for appraisers. This is also in the planning stages with fellow appraiser colleagues outside of our Chapter.

If you have any ideas that you would like to see covered by the Eastern Branch or would like the Eastern Branch to host an event in your area of the Inland Empire, please reach out to any or all of the following 2025 Branch members:

Eastern Branch Members:

Chair Alex Liu, MAI (714)307-6249 alexliu714@yahoo.com

Vice Chair Julian Uribe, Candidate (909) 509-2898 julian.uribe@cbre.com

1st Advisor Carson M. Leonard, MBA, Candidate (818) 281-5370
cmleonard09@gmail.com

2nd Advisor William Jones, MAI, AI-GRS (909) 240-3700 wejpasadena@hotmail.com

3rd Advisor Damian Albrycht, MAI (213) 977-8750 damian.albrycht@ey.com

SOUTHERN BRANCH

Jason Borras
Southern Branch Chair



The Southern Branch is excited for another year of insightful events, professional networking, and discussions on key valuation topics. Our leadership team - Chair Jason Borrás, Vice Chair Stephen Lee, 1st Advisor Maria Luisa M. Storti, SRA, 2nd Advisor Michael Tachovsky, and 3rd Advisor Ryan Neal Young, SRA are committed to fostering a collaborative environment for our members. This year, we have an exciting lineup of events, including a joint virtual Wildfire Disaster & Fire Presentation with the Northern CA Chapter, a CoStar update on Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac for residential and multifamily, an Upper Deck Golf event at Angel Stadium in December 2025, and an exclusive tour of the Intuit Dome. We look forward to engaging with you throughout the year!

Southern Branch Members:

Chair: Jason Borrás, Affiliate

Vice Chair: Stephen Lee, Candidate

1st Advisor: Maria Luisa M. Storti, SRA

2nd Advisor: Michael Tachovsky, Candidate

3rd Advisor: Ryan Neal Young, SRA

NORTHWESTERN BRANCH



Norman Chung, MAI, AI-GRS Northwestern Branch Chair

Northwestern Branch did a zoom call on 1/24/2025.

Attendees: Jose Hernandez (Vice Chair), Carlos

Andrade (1st Advisor), Daniel Lee (2nd Advisor), and

Norman Chung (Chair). Topic: discussed the upcoming joint seminar with Eastern Branch and RICS California Chapter in April 2025.

Potential 2025 speakers:

- 2 speakers from Partner ESI
- Gary Martinez, CCIM from Ashwill Associates
- Juan Huizar, CCIM from Sage Real Estate Group
- Lawrence Yun from NAR

Northwestern Branch Members:

Chair: Norman Chung, MAI, AI-GRS

Vice Chair: Jose Hernandez, Candidate

1st Advisor: Daniel Lee, MAI, AI-GRS

2nd Advisor: Carlos Andrade, MAI

3rd Advisor: Kevin E. Apor, MAI

Elimination of Bias and Developing Cultural Competency – with Real World Relevance

April 9, 2025

8:30AM - 11:30AM PST
Virtually- Via Zoom

Register [Here](#)

This class is sponsored By:



2025 CLASSES / EVENTS

04/09/2025
Federal and California Statutory and Regulatory Law
Virtually
[REGISTER HERE](#)

04/24/2025
Complex Valuation Course
Santa Ana, CA
[REGISTER HERE](#)

04/28/2025
Advanced Market Analysis Highest & Best Use
Santa Ana, CA
[REGISTER HERE](#)



EDUCATION COMMITTEE
2025 Chair:
Alden M. Katagihara, MAI, MRICS

Aloha SCCAI members! I am Alden Katagihara, the 2025 Education Committee Chairperson. I have been working with our past Education Committee Chairperson, Michael Comstock, for the past two years and I know I have big shoes to fill! Thank you for all your hard work and leadership, Michael! This year's education committee consists of Matthew VanEck, Carlos Andrade, and myself. Together, we hope to provide SCCAI members with appealing educational classes, in beneficial locations, to allow our chapter to flourish and to promote in-person engagement amongst our members. With that in

mind, the education committee would love to hear from you! If there's a specific class, topic, or location for in-person classes that interests you, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Upcoming in-person classes include "Complex Valuations" on April 24th at the Caltrans Building in Santa Ana. This class will be taught by Randell Bell, PhD. We are also offering "Advanced Market Analysis and Highest & Best Use" from April 28th to May 2nd at the Veros Real Estate Solutions offices in Santa Ana, and will be led by Rick L. Carlile, MAI, SRA. On May 29th at the Doubletree Hotel in Ontario, Sandra Adomatis, SRA will be teaching "Valuation Overview of Accessory Dwelling Units." And last but definitely not least, Jacinto A. Munoz, Jr. MAI, SRA, AI-GRS, AI-RRS will be teaching the 2024-2025 7-Hour National USPAP Update Course at the Crowne Plaza in Ventura on June 24th. Also, if you missed the 31st Annual LA / OC Market Trends Seminar, which took place in January, the speaker presentations are posted on the chapter website (www.sccai.org).

Finally, please keep in mind that the Southern California Chapter encourages members to take advantage of the Mason-Thornton Scholarship Program. The sole purpose of the program is to award financial scholarships to Designated Members and Candidates in good standing for courses presented by the Chapter leading to a professional designation in the Appraisal Institute. The chapter website has links to applications for this scholarship program as well as additional national scholarship opportunities. Please make sure you visit the website to learn more about these opportunities.

Thank you for your support

Appraisal Institute Government Relations Report

Charles Baker, SRA, AI-RRS

California GRC Chair 2021-2026

March 13, 2025



Committee Activity

The California Government Relations Committee held an in-person meeting on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at the offices of California Advocates. In attendance were committee members Carole Laval, John Maus, Neil Lefmann, Kevin O'Harra, Alex Lui, Brent Johnson, Ben Kunkel, Melissa Bach, Ron Garland, Ariana Arredondo, Janine Kraus, Steven Salmon, along with Mike Belote & Cliff Costa of California Advocates, and Scott Dibiasio with the Appraisal Institute.

BREA Update

As of February 13, 2025, there were 7,924 dues paying licensees, down 69 licensees from January 1, 2025 and down 794 licensees (9.1%) from January 1, 2024.

Once every five years, state regulatory boards are subject to a sunset review period. This process allows the Legislature, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the boards themselves to discuss the performance of the boards and make recommendations for improvements

This year, the BREA is up for Sunset Review, a process every licensing organization in California is required to go through every five years. In November 2024, the BREA

A few observations from the report:

- 70% of the Bureau's revenue comes from appraiser license renewal fees. However, the number of renewals is diminishing by 50 to 60 per month.
- Bureau Chief Jemmott reports that the bureau needs to do a better job of creating new licensees as existing demographic trends foreshadow continuing declines in renewals.
- Demand for traditional appraisal services is declining and will continue to do so. While the report highlights the need to attract new appraisers to the industry, it is silent on a projected timeline for stabilization.
- The major thrust of the report cites appraiser recruitment as the antidote for avoiding or demurring a slide into financial paralysis.
- License renewal fees have declined 30.5% from FY 2020-21, however the number of licensees has only declined about 20%.
- A third of the bureau staff has left over the past 3 years resulting in new license application processing times taking as long as 80 days, however that number has dropped since.
- There are 1,357 open standards violation investigations but only 1,023 cases have been closed during the period FY 2020 through FY 2024.
- The Sunset Review document is optimistic that the legislature will approve a fee limit increase for BREA.

To the extent our committee can provide assistance, statistics, stakeholder input, and advice, we will do so. We've met with bureau chief Angela Jemmott on two occasions and have offered our feedback on everything from PAREA, FRT's, demographic survey, the FAIR Appraisal Act, AB924, etc. We will continue to engage with the bureau chief going forward during this challenging time.

Eminent Domain Fee Reimbursement

California Code of Civil Procedure – CCP S 1263.025 states:

1263.025.

*(a) A public entity shall offer to pay the reasonable costs, not to exceed **five thousand dollars (\$5,000)**, of an independent appraisal ordered by the owner of a property that the public entity offers to purchase under a threat of eminent domain, at the time the public entity makes the offer to purchase the property. The independent appraisal shall be conducted by an appraiser licensed by the Office of Real Estate Appraisers.*

The \$5,000 reimbursement figure has been in effect for several decades and is significantly deficient to cover actual costs for appraisal services. The committee believed the time is right to push for an increase consistent with a property owner's 5th amendment rights to just compensation. In fact, adjusted for CPI, the fee should be \$15,385 now.

To that end members Steve Salmon, Ron Garland and Michelle Bach, together with Mike Belote and Cliff Costa, drafted language to revise the fee cap, as follows:

1263.025.

*(a) A public entity shall offer to pay the reasonable costs, not to exceed **eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) in the case of total property acquisition, or fifteen thousand (\$15,000) in cases of less than the acquisitions of the total property**, five thousand dollars (\$5,000), of an independent appraisal ordered by the owner of a property that the public entity offers to purchase under a threat of eminent domain, at the time the public entity makes the offer to purchase the property. The independent appraisal shall be conducted by an appraiser licensed by the Office of Real Estate Appraisers.*

(b) For purposes of this section, an offer to purchase a property "under a threat of eminent domain" is an offer to purchase a property pursuant to any of the following:

(1) Eminent domain.

(2) Following adoption of a resolution of necessity for the property pursuant to Section 1240.040.

(3) Following a statement that the public entity may take the property by eminent domain.

Assembly member Tom Lackey has agreed to sponsor our bill. We are in the process of gathering letters of support from the legal community to help usher the bill through with a deadline to submit final language of March 23, 2025. We are guardedly hopeful it will pass this year.

2025 WIN COMMITTEE



Ariana Arredondo, MAI
WIN Committee Chair (Women's Initiative Committee)

Dear Colleagues,

It is a privilege to be the 2025 SCCAI WIN Committee Chair. I am glad to be joined by Linda Whittlesey, SRA, and Jennifer Hsu, MAI in this effort to support the advancement of women within our Chapter.

Women are not well represented by numbers in appraisal. In the absence of localized statistics, I invite you to privately reflect on the composition of the spaces that we occupy. Consider the ownership and management of the firm you work at and perhaps the attendees at the last in-person USPAP course that you took. If on the procurement or review side, study the appraisers you have on your agency or bank's pre-approved panel. We can reflect on the last person that we took a chance on with a mentorship, referral, trainee supervisory offer or partnership opportunity. Many of you have shared with me privately about these topics. The good news is that the SCCAI Chapter, and our WIN Committee, offers a lively forum to engage in. I emphasize that all of you are warmly invited to join our meetings and our events.

These first few months of 2025 have presented challenges for many of us in the Southland. It has been a season of regional environmental disasters, sudden job insecurity for certain government appraisers, with an abrupt stop to many inclusive initiatives. In our SCCAI Chapter, we can contribute and keep good focus by helping to meet our clients' needs. I cannot think of a single client who wouldn't want every bright mind at the table to attend to their complex valuation needs. We need problem solvers. And right there, the reason for this committee's work is quite clear.

Our professional networks can be powerful, and we are blessed with reliable support and encouragement from exceptional colleagues within our chapter. Ongoing support, however quiet or public, is a testament to the long-run value of this organization. We are the home chapter to the 2025 National President, Paula Konikoff, JD, MAI, AI-GRS. Coming up behind her is a cohort of extraordinary women who are making strides in profession and are leading on behalf of SCCAI in their respective ways, whether in a formal capacity at LDAC (Jan Kelly) or by speaking up directly to national leadership about what is needed to finalize designation (Kelly White).

Thank you, and I look forward to reporting back on good progress. -Ariana

Invest in Your Future – Apply for a Mason – Thornton Scholarship Today!

The **Mason – Thornton Scholarship Committee** would like to remind all **Southern California Chapter Appraisal Institute (SCCAI) Members** that valuable financial assistance is available to those pursuing their professional designations.

Through the **Mason – Thornton Scholarship Fund**, **active Candidates** in good standing can receive up to **75% of the total course fee** (Yes, you read this right, 75%!!!! 😊) for required courses leading to their designation. Whether you are taking **in-person, synchronous, or online** courses, this scholarship is designed to help ease the financial burden and keep you on track toward achieving your professional goals. This includes in-person classes anywhere in the country!

How to Apply:

- ☐ **Eligibility:** SCCAI Members with active Candidate status in good standing
- ☐ **Coverage:** Up to 75% of course fees for required designation courses
- ☐ **Application Deadline:** Submit your application at least **30 days prior** to the course start date
- ☐ **Where to Apply:** Applications are available on the **Chapter website**
- ☐ **Contact:** Send completed applications to **Lianna**
- ☐ **Pre-requisites:** None—just be an awesome person seeking to achieve **one of the four most epic designations in the world!**

Now is the perfect time to invest in yourself by investing in your career and continue working toward your designation! Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity for financial support. For more details and to access the application, **visit our website today!**

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