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The new year brings changes to the top of Gensler's D.C. office

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Gensler has promoted Lisa Amster to co-manager of its D.C. office, the latest in a flurry of changes the international architecture firm has made to its leadership structure in D.C. and nationally.

Amster, who has worked on high-profile projects for the firm including the Washington Post's new headquarters at One Franklin Square and Intelsat's move from Van Ness to Tysons, will join Jordan Goldstein in overseeing the District's largest interior design firm and second-largest architecture firm based on Washington Business Journal research. Her new post became effective Monday, as did several other changes affecting Goldstein and Gensler co-CEO Diane Hoskins, among others.

Amster, a 58-year-old Potomac resident and mother of two, credited Hoskins for creating an environment that welcomes women, not only among its ranks but also within its leadership. While she has grown comfortable as a manager overseeing Gensler's firmwide nonprofit practice, a role she's held for the last two years, Amster said she is excited about the new lens her new position provides to help foster Gensler's growth in D.C.

Amster has been with Gensler for much of her 35 years in the industry. She has helped the company grow its nonprofit practice locally with clients like the Cato Institute and PBS. She said Hoskins had initially supported her interest in working with the D.C. area's nonprofit community when none of the District's other architecture firms she had approached were willing to take the chance.

"I peddled my idea to a half a dozen firms in town, and she was the only one who said, 'Hey, that's an interesting idea,'" Amster said. "I have been very lucky, I have worked over the past 15 years at Gensler, in a place where, if you have something you're passionate about, they let you explore it."

Hoskins also first approached her about stepping into the new role leading Gensler's D.C. office.

Also among the local changes, Goldstein has been promoted to co-managing principal of Gensler's southeast region, which is comprised of eight markets, including Atlanta, Baltimore and Charlotte. He will share the position with co-regional managing principal Ken Baker. Hoskins, who had been serving in that post, will focus more exclusively on firmwide growth as Gensler's co-CEO. Jeff Barber, meanwhile, has yielded his role as co-managing director in D.C. to Amster and has been promoted to design leader for the southeast region.

While Goldstein will continue to serve as co-managing director in D.C., the new post will enable him to extend the firm's relationship with locally based clients, such as MRP Realty, as they expand their footprints to markets like Philadelphia. He will share the southeast regional post with Ken Baker, who retains his post as co-regional manager of Gensler's southeast region.

Goldstein has helped to grow the firm's D.C. office as co-managing director in the past eight years, including recruiting architects Phil Esocoff and Amy Weinstein to help beef up its mixed-use development practice. The office has also pushed into new arenas, including sports business, highlighted by its plans for D.C.'s failed bid to host the 2024 Summer Olympics.

"This is allowing us to really expand the perspective of opportunities we have here as our clients look to expand," Goldstein said.

Gensler also named five new principals in its D.C. office, bringing its total to 28. Among them are: Bob Peck, who leads Gensler's government practice area and previously served as head of the General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service; Sumita Arora, media practice area leader; Laura DeBonis, technical director and design realization leader; Francisco Gonzales, studio director; and Tom Shen, studio director.