1. **POSITIONING THE PROFESSION FOR THE FUTURE**

The impact and duration of the economic downturn has impacted the design and construction industry in ways we are just starting to realize. While by all accounts the tide has turned, the architectural profession has yet to fully recover. Firms that have “survived” the recession are now looking ahead toward a very different future, one where they will potentially have to change their business practices, and refocus their energies to be successful in a new economy. At all levels, how can the AIA support members to network and pursue opportunities in a recovering market?

Nothing is as constant as that which is change, and our profession must work more aggressively to not only remain abreast, but also organize more strategically to proactively cultivate change itself.

While a modest “turn around” in the economy is apparent, and the professional outlook appears more promising, there is still no guarantee that full recovery is imminent. At best we remain cautiously optimistic while simultaneously examining new modes of operating. Large, small and sole practitioner firms alike must network through the AIA to discuss and identify models beyond traditional practice and licensure methods, and expand tools and resources necessary for a growing market. Members, as firm owners, employees and consultants can affiliate with either the Large Firm Roundtable (LFRT) or Small Firm Roundtable (SFRT), each providing a cohesive network to share best practices and discuss various advocacy agenda. Perhaps a Sole Practitioner Roundtable (SPRT) might also be useful? These affinity groups offer an arena to identify resource needs, discuss a broadened definition of architectural practice, and outline market penetration strategies appropriate to respective firm size and types. AIA National, along with its affiliates can collaborate to collect and gather data on business trend and industry forecasts, analyze market conditions, and speculate on growth patterns, thus better preparing and informing members for future scenarios. On a three year cycle LFRT, SFRT, and SPRT Summits could convene, bringing together members from diverse regions and include selected representatives from allied organizations, as well as the academy and industry to discuss methods and distribute results of forward-thinking business and practice models, generating definitive, measurable outcomes for future professional growth.

As the value of design becomes more recognized and business growth and development improve, articulating an evidence based design vocabulary and well directed research agenda will influence the business practices and diversify opportunities in a 21st century marketplace and economy.
2. REPOSITIONING THE AIA FOR THE FUTURE

The success of the Repositioning requires our collective energy to shift our perspective about what the AIA can do to serve members, advance the profession, and provides a tremendous opportunity for change. If you could make only one change to the AIA as part of the Repositioning Initiative, what would that be? Please be specific in the details and explanation of why.

Component connectivity through coordinated collaboration provides the conduit for celebrating design in support of our service to society.

AIA’s Repositioning Initiative is a major commitment and undertaking, charging us to reflect on our history and legacy, challenging us to re-focus on what we have before us, and compelling us to re-discover the great potential to transform the AIA. Its four key thematic areas of connecting, engaging, innovating and leading outline our essence, purpose and mission as a visionary member organization. Central to member value are the institution’s local and regional components – the AIA nuclei so fundamentally critical in orchestrating and sharing the story of our organization. The local components are the heart, soul and backbone of this institution. Beginning with, through and around our local and regional components is where repositioning the institute can prosper, offering members the services, tools, resources and experiences vital to the success of the AIA. Local components also provide our best connection with the public and community, thus reinforcing our service to society.

A continued challenge – and responsibility - is to communicate and celebrate design in ways that our local communities and the public can easily understand, comprehend and relate to.

The Member Service Resource Task Force has been working diligently over the last two years to assess component networking and identify areas of improved component structure and resources, and its first major report is due shortly. In concert with Repositioning, the timing is right to identify actions and prioritize needs, and define outcomes and deliverables for both staffed and unstaffed components. Various resource incentives and support, initiated in part though the Innovation Fund should be expanded in ways encourage greater member participation, instilling leadership opportunity, and expanding our knowledge platform – all in support for member development and enrichment. Specifically, I envision a growing and expanding connection between local and regional components and Knowledge Communities at a local level, leveraging opportunities for knowledge delivery, resource sharing and information exchange.

3. MEMBER RESOURCES

While the economic climate has been challenging for all in the design and construction industry, it has been especially difficult for “seasoned” professionals who are often
times unable to compete in today’s technology-based delivery environment. How is the AIA positioned to support these experienced members?

**Make members matter through empowerment - being further informed, better equipped, and increasingly capable to adapt to changing conditions.**

We owe every member, emerging or emerged, young or “not so young”, re-emerging or seasoned, every opportunity through all stages of one’s career. Educational programs can grow, be scaled from introductory to advanced, and strengthened by aligning our Knowledge Communities with local Components as a natural and convenient way to harness already existing resources. Central in this discussion is expanding our continuing education platform through increased relationships with the academy and industry. Through mentoring, seasoned professionals can become more educated and fully engaged in “lifelong” learning (see #5 below).

Both nationally and locally, components have developed successful networking and education sessions, and these should be shared and emulated, as each provides relevance to diverse component types and sizes. Various programs specific to sustainability, health and design, technology literacy, and focused building types among others already exist, particularly with through our knowledge networks. The Technology and Architectural Practice (TAP) has a robust knowledge sharing platform and Technical Design and Building Performance (TDBP) is centered on the building sciences. The AIAKnowledgeNet is an underutilized resource that can easily be promoted more. The AIA can expand its Communities by Design outreach to involve more of our membership in the RUDAT and SDAT programs, thus elevating member ownership and outreach, and increasing design recognition into the community.

Multiplicity of interests, talents, and expertise add value and enrich both design process and product. Within this array is an opportunity to examine membership attrition and explore membership expansion, and also evaluate certification and credentialing. While the value of licensing must be maintained, recognizing areas of specialization can reinforce interdisciplinary efforts and focused learning opportunities. Expanding membership offerings to include allied disciplines and organizations, academic memberships, and even public member categories will strengthen our membership and enhance its diversity.

**4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

While all can agree that a revitalized, relevant, and robust AIA to lead and support the profession is critical, there is still uncertainty whether the AIA has the will to make the significant and substantive changes necessary. In view of the findings of the Repositioning Study, what recommendations would you make about the AIA’s current service and delivery model to the membership?
With creative and efficient re-alignment and direction, service and delivery can be converted into one of supportive collaboration and visible integration, resulting in governance that is neither bottom-up nor top-down, but rather an ACROSS and THROUGH proposition – dynamically fused and focused – serving our members who in turn serve society.

Effective governance and organizational structuring of any group is necessary to maintain its strength and vitality, positively serve its membership, and secure its future. Regular self-examination, especially in a vacillating environment, is essential, and must be centered on the ability to communicate effectively and govern efficiently.

First and foremost – the AIA needs to be efficient and transparent, while being supportive of, responsive to, and connected with, its members. Whatever it does, however it acts, whatever its size – efficiency and transparency are key. Following this, we must be, agile, resilient and strategic. A national board must be structured and organized to allow for visionary discussions in ways that develop consensus, build on the organization’s strengths, and allow dialog to evolve more from a proactive agenda vs. a reactive one. The board must be more inclusive and diverse both in its membership as well as with its alliances and collaborators.

Holding true to the values and needs of the members, regional representation, and structuring around the intellectual capital of our membership must be upheld. While bold steps around a re-organization of our national governance model and board size are inevitable, issues of leadership continuity, governance methods, technology, resource allocation, and insourcing/outsourcing balance will need careful and meticulous scrutiny. In addition, focusing on a changing global population and demographics; healthy, livable and sustainable communities; licensure and areas of specialization; research and knowledge delivery; practice trends; and advocacy and future leadership are key areas to address. A National Strategic Plan should regularly assess, prioritize and develop our initiatives around these themes.

5. EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

Across all levels of the organization, members lament the lack of engagement of emerging professionals both in practice and within the AIA. The decline of a culture of mentoring within firms and the profession is blamed for the correspondingly low numbers of new licensees. What can the AIA do to affect a cultural shift to among experienced professionals and encourage all involved in the delivery of architectural services to stay connected with the organization?

Nurturing and mentoring is about caring and sharing. Without this, our profession’s future has little to offer; with it, there is nothing but promise and hope.
There is no more essential and critical necessity than guiding and nurturing our students, associates and young architects as tomorrow’s leaders. As both a small firm practitioner (beginning my practice in California) and a professor and administrator in a university setting, I fully understand how educating both the public, practitioner and emerging professional is a key and central element to a sustainable future – both in the way we shape our built environment and deliver our services, but also in how we develop our organization and assure its future success. Traditionalists and Baby Boomers are now being replaced by the X Generation and Millennials, and learning from these emerging professionals provides the organization insight on new ways to think, act, network, communicate, and deliver. We not only teach to – but importantly – are taught by them. Cross mentoring opportunities add value to the emerging professional, emerged and re-emerging - as well as the academician – resulting in one of the wisest investments for our future.

The Boyer Report was one of the most influential studies assessing the relationship of the academy and professional community, and how our collaborative roles could combine to offer a new paradigm for architectural inquiry. It emphasized that education of the public and deeper engagement at all school levels broadens the awareness, vision, and ideals of the architectural profession and what it has to offer. It underscored the need to increase connection to community and public service, and provide greater local and neighborhood presence. Through an increased connection among the five collaterals - AIA, AIAS, ACSA, NAAB, and NCARB – we can focus on cross-fertilizing and cultivating ideas at all levels, revealing and identifying a set of definable goals and common outcomes centered on a collaborative knowledge agenda, diversification of educational requirements, alternative/parallel career path exploration, and lifelong learning and mentorship. Each of these can help educate the public, provide leadership growth, improve practice and design outcomes, and strengthen our presence and value both within the profession and to the community.