Response to Q1 - Positioning the Profession for the Future

The AIA is well positioned to support members to network and pursue opportunities in the current recovering market. This support happens at all levels of the Institute and, based on input from the Repositioning interviews, connecting our members is actually one of the things the AIA does very well. Looking ahead, however, recovering from the effects of the recession and capitalizing on the opportunities that are in front of us requires a strong commitment to centering our networking efforts to achieve new goals – connecting and enabling members, at all levels, to pursue new opportunities.

As Vice President I will work to define and develop programs that build upon our already established and effective initiatives such as our Knowledge Communities and AIA’s Strategic Alliances Initiative. Working on the foundations of such programs, new opportunities can be identified and leveraged to enable networking, at a much greater level than before, which leads to opportunities. I offer the following outline of ideas as a start:

- **AIA National**
  - Develop and provide tools that enable firms to work more effectively in the new paradigm. Equipping firms with tools derived from best practices such as Integrated Project Delivery and Lead Design & Construction Principles delivers the value that our clients look to AIA Architects to provide.
  - Focus on communicating the value of design to the public and the benefit it has on lives, communities, businesses and our environment. The Institute must develop and adopt a Long Range Communication Plan, fund it and rigorously sustain it as a foundational element of what the Institute does for its members and the profession – now and well into the future. This initiative would result in an informed public and a greater understanding of the value of design.

- **AIA Regional**
  - Focus on building alliances with the Academies. Architects and EP’s themselves are in the best position to network and build relationships with the Academies to identify obstacles to licensure and develop innovative teaching and training opportunities. Engaging our architectural schools in this fashion fosters the connections that lead to opportunities and new ways to practice.
  - Focus on building alliances with Licensing Boards. Again, Architects and EP’s are in the best position to influence and affect the changes needed to address practice and licensing issues in their region.

- **AIA Local Components**
  - The AIA happens at the local level where members network and connect almost on a daily basis. Resources from National AIA and best practices from components across the Institute must be channeled and shared to the benefit and education of all members.

Response to Q2 - Repositioning the AIA for the Future

There are many things which the AIA does well – very well in fact – for its members and the profession: Advocacy, Codes, Standards and Accessibility Resources, and Fellowship to name a few. However, one of the clearest issues from the 30,000 points of data that came out of the Repositioning effort, was the inefficacy of the Institute’s communications policy. In fact, some responses challenged the notion as to whether a cohesive policy actually exists.

Communications is a tough issue which the Institute must address. It represents, in my opinion, the most important aspect to work on as part of the Repositioning because it represents the area where the highest return on our investment of time and money will be realized. As Vice President I will work to advocate for the adoption of a Long Range Communication Plan because of the tremendous value it will bring the AIA, both in the short and the longer term. Short term results will create
a greater awareness of the value of our profession and create opportunities for employment and career advancement. Long term the profession will be seen as indispensable.

The specifics to achieve this, as I see them, are as follows:

1. The Institute must develop and adopt a Long Range Communication Plan, fund it and rigorously sustain it as a foundational element of what the Institute does for its members and the profession – now and well into the future. This cannot be a short term effort that sunsets once immediate results are realized. A Long Range Communication Plan for the Institute – on behalf of its members – represents a commitment and an investment to educate, inform, influence and lead over the long haul. Putting governance in place that will ensure this is an important first task to cementing this commitment.

2. A Long Range Communication Plan must be designed for both immediate and long-term returns. Incremental milestones and progress must be demonstrated to the members – as well as the value of the effort. In this respect, work that is currently being done by the Metrics for the Profession Task Force – of which I am a member is in the process of identifying the means and measures by which to measure progress.

3. A Long Range Communication Plan must address both internal and external audiences and stakeholders. In this duality, the value of what the AIA does must be communicated effectively to both the members and an even wider range of public stakeholders. This approach will achieve the best results by focusing first on our membership because we are all part of the body that pays dues and expects value for our participation. Simultaneously, however, campaigns to educate the general public can be initiated to raise awareness and value of the profession.

4. A Long Range Communication Plan is not a rebranding effort, it is not a new logo, nor is it the application of a new font or type style. It is a focused plan with clear objectives and metrics that must demonstrate its effectiveness.

5. One area where immediate results can be realized is a streamlining and reorganization of the Institute’s website. Simplicity, clarity and user friendliness would benefit both members and visitors alike, and such an effort should be coordinated at all levels of the Institute. In fact, one suggestion I would make is to coordinate the redesign of the website to mesh with broadcast and social media efforts. For example, the current AIA ad being run on National Public Radio directs listeners to visit AIA.org. My idea would be that there would be a special section of our homepage waiting for any listener so inclined to enter the address into their browser with information and content directed solely at educating the visitor about the broader aspects and value of what AIA Architects do for their communities and clients. This special section would be situated on the National, and all Regional and Local Component websites.

In my view, a singular focus and effort in the area of communications would address many of the other issues identified by our members as part of the Repositioning: Communicating the value of the Institute to members and the public alike can effectively address component structure and coordination issues, engaging emerging professionals, prioritizing initiatives, passive reactiveness, and organizational effectiveness.

Response to Q3 - Member Resources

Our experienced members have much to offer based on years of experience and insight. The perfect storm of the recession and increasing change in a technology-based services delivery environment has impact the careers of many of our peers. Providing support and assistance to them is an important task, however, that has been pushed to the side while the Institute dealt with providing basic services to the wider membership in general. With a wider economic recovery on the horizon, now is the time for the Institute – at all levels – to assess what specific support our “Re-emerging Professionals” need to compete.
The AIA is uniquely positioned in this regard; key strategic relationships with software developers and continuing education providers can be leveraged to develop the training and connections necessary to provide our experienced members with the skills and tools needed to work in a technology-based environment. The AIA could effectively negotiate volume level discounts for such training.

Another timely and certainly much needed approach to equipping seasoned professionals with the skills to complete is the through the mentoring process. EP’s are digital natives and have much to offer while at the same time are looking for experience and career advice. Mentorship in this regard becomes a two way street where both parties teach and learn. Relationships are built and through them, opportunities result. EP’s bring fresh perspectives and, with recent academic experience, can influence and shape R&D efforts that serve the profession and balance seasoned practitioners.

Response to Q4 - Organizational Structure

It is clear to me that in response to both the Repositioning study and the blossoming economic recovery, what the AIA does and how it delivers services to its members must be re-evaluated. In this regard the Repositioning provides a good starting point. At the Repositioning meetings at local components that I have attended, the two central themes that arose from the discussions focused on communication and providing more support to local components for member activities. In fact, both aspects were seen as synergistic – resources for programs to communicate, to the public, how AIA Architects deliver value to everyday places, spaces and people engage both members and the public.

As outlined in my platform statement, I have long believed that the AIA happens at the local level. Allocation of resources, financial and intellectual, must be directed where they will realize the highest value and return. As Vice President the “value test” I will apply to ideas and initiatives regarding organizational structure and services delivery will be this: How does it delivery value to our members at the regional and local components? If it does not deliver value, the idea is likely not a good investment of either our time or our money.

One example of an initiative of this sort involves the suggestion that I developed, along with my fellow Regional Directors from California – Michael Malinowski, AIA, and Julia Donoho, Esq., AIA – was the Component Innovation Grant. It was a response to put resources into the hands of our members at the local component level to create innovative programs that address the recommendations of the Repositioning initiative, especially where such funds support programs that can be replicated by other local components. The AIA committed $250,000 as a result of this suggestion. It was borne out of the precept that Repositioning is all about the members.

Lastly, the Member Services Resource Task Force has been working over the past year identifying the needs and obstacles to building a stronger component network. The Task Force will deliver an update to the Board on June 18th and, as I see it, this will just be the start of moving toward improving and delivering services to members at the component level. This groups work and recommendations will continue through the rest of this year and into the next. As Vice President I will work with this Task Force to ensure that no small actions are proffered. Now is the time to deliver value to members at the local level – which we ourselves can create as well. It is time to try, measure, evaluate and adjust to create a more effective and responsive organizational structure for delivery of services to AIA members.
Response to Q5 - Emerging Professionals

Mentoring has been an essential part of our profession for centuries; apprentices, interns, emerging professionals – whatever moniker applied at the time – were given formal training and introduction into the profession by a seasoned practitioner. Through this process, individuals aspiring to become architects would learn and acquire the skills to practice on their own one day. Additionally, the craft and nuance of the profession were passed on from generation to generation. The need for formal mentoring is no less important in current times, but with the budgetary constraints and speed required by today’s practice, mentorship winds up truncated, if not eliminated altogether. This is not a sustainable way to maintain the relevance of the profession.

Both experienced professionals and EP’s benefit from mentor/mentee relationships. So do our firms – small and large. As Vice President I will work to develop a culture of mentorship throughout the Institute and enhance (i.e. fund) the programs that are already in place. Mentorship is truly a win-win proposition that is effective and appropriate.

Active mentorship – at all levels of the AIA – is vital to our profession’s sustainability and relevance. I have advocated and promoted the engagement and mentorship of Ep’s, in my firm – Lionakis – and in the AIA, throughout my career, since becoming Principal in 1998. That was when I felt I had finally reached a point where I had something to offer – both as a practitioner and as a mentor. The following are examples of my efforts, which will serve as a guide in my role as Vice President:

- **As a Practitioner**
  - I have served as an IDP mentor to EP’s over the past fifteen years

- **At Lionakis**
  - I instituted the Athens Leadership Program where EP’s and future leaders participate in a twelve-week course to learn about all aspects of operating our multi-discipline, 180 person firm. The program culminates with a community service project designed and implemented by the participants. Participants are paired with Firm Principals in mentor/mentee relationships and I have served as a mentor to two Athens classes.

- **AIA Central Valley & California Council**
  - Instituted the appointment of Associate and Emerging Professional Directors on the Board.
  - Participated in the formation of the AIACC Academy for Emerging Professionals.

- **National AIA Board**
  - I created and implemented the AIA Board Class of 2013 Fellowship for Emerging Leaders, which raised $5,000 to bring five EP’s – AIAS, Associate AIA, YAF – to the Denver Convention. Utilized Twitter to solicit “Tweets of Interest” at #2013FEL.