1. Repositioning the AIA for the Future:

We must map a strategy to help the hiring public and private sectors understand the value of our services. The AIA’s advocacy campaign must be more than the typical public announcements of the past featuring cool looking buildings. We need to target all segments of building ownership, corporate, government, institutional, entrepreneurial, etc. The Institute and its members need to clearly define the critical importance of early architectural thinking in the decision making process. I believe that we have been discounting the value of our own services and have acquiesced to allow developers to claim much of this conceptual planning effort. As a result major decisions are made prior to our involvement and our role and ability to contribute are often limited.

This is an educational undertaking as much as it is advocacy. Our clients often don’t understand the full scope and potential of our services and would benefit from a “tutorial” on why, how and when to engage with our profession. Our profession must hone and promote its skills of pre-project services to help the client develop a vision. We have been challenged by others who have inserted themselves in the process and relegated the architect to the role of a subcontractor without a direct relationship to the end user.

If we can move beyond “order taking” and become conceptualizers helping our clients dream of new and more beneficial environments we will have a bigger impact on their businesses, communities and lives.

The Institute should mount a marketing campaign for the profession convincing the client that their first call should be to an AIA Architect. We must make a compelling argument with specific business reasons, examples and testimonials. The channels for this message should be in targeted print and electronic business media as well as mailings to key decision makers.

2. Advocating for Energy, Water & Resource Efficiency Design:

The AIA has a long history of advocating for energy efficiency which goes back to the 1980s when it launched a certificate program called “Energy in Architecture.” It was an impressive harbinger of the sustainable design movement. Since then sustainability has been an integral part of our profession. The AIA has a robust continuing education system which can be leveraged to help firms enhance their knowledge and skills in sustainability.

We should strengthen our public position on sustainability increase our offerings for sustainable education to the membership. The practitioner should be made aware of the business advantages of steeping the core of their practices in sustainability principles. The IGCC is a big step toward mainstreaming green design. I believe that the study of the environmental and human impact of buildings and policies has implications for psychological health in ways that we are just beginning to
understand. This new frontier may mean more professional education and/or consultants, in some cases, but it should ultimately enhance architecture’s value to the public. We need the courage to explore new frontiers of design influence for the profession and enhance the AIA’s environmental efficacy through public promotion, professional education and research.

3. Resourcing Firms for Practice and Prosperity:

The initiatives that I mentioned in my answer to question number one will go a long way to helping firms adapt to the new landscape. Additionally, the Institute can sponsor programs and webinars focused on new strategies of practice. These sessions can address innovations and services with the help of research from universities and business schools. One benefit of the Board Repositioning Initiative is that AIA’s proposed Strategic Council could establish a “future practice committee” that could serve as a think tank and or clearinghouse for new ideas around professional practice, services and tools. I can envision such a committee collaborating with global professionals, hardware and software experts, etc. to benchmark the best methodologies and opportunities for advancement of our profession.

4. Improving the AIA Organizational Structure:

Restructuring of the AIA’s organization is already being welcomed by the proactive steps of some regions and components. This issue is both a structural change as well as a change of thinking at all levels. The components have always shown initiative to varying degrees. Repositioning requires a paradigm shift regarding who is expected to deliver what services. The Member Resource Task force is already working on this issue. It’s most important that the members receive prompt, valuable and consistent service across the entire Institute.

It’s not merely enough to channel funds to the components. We have to leverage the collective knowledge and best practices developed across our global institutional network. Our guidelines must recognize that membership needs may vary from component to component due to size, regional economics and practice specialties. Therefore, we should provide some flexibility in setting standards but make sure that they appropriately target the general needs of the component constituencies.

5. Empowering the Next Generation:

I have respectful confidence in the capabilities of the next generation of architects and have seen emerging professionals exhibit impressive demonstrations of leadership, insight, and wisdom. I believe
BATES, William

that the next generation has entered the field with their eyes wide opened and their skills sharpened. We need to provide mentoring and leadership opportunities for all emerging professionals. I believe that the Institute can best help them by strengthening the architect’s position and influence in the general business world. We can do this through public advocacy but also by assisting those emerging professionals with business acumen to explore alternative career paths. These new career trajectories have the potential to pay huge dividends in the future by providing enlightened clients for those architects who remain within the profession’s main corridors of practice. Over the years I’ve had the opportunity to work successfully with professionals who completed architectural school and went on to become developers, contractors, bankers, politicians and corporate executives. They become great partners and clients understanding the true value of our profession and are willing to allow the architect a broader role in their business development plans. We need to embrace these architecturally educated allies as ambassadors for the profession.