1. **Repositioning the AIA for the Future**

The AIA is undergoing a transformation that is unprecedented in its history. In response to a wide-ranging study of its organization and operations nationwide, the AIA is realigning its structure to provide consistent levels of service to all members. While these changes are positive demonstrations of the organization’s commitment to increasing member value, for many in the profession (especially newly licensed professionals), the cost of membership is a significant barrier. How can the AIA increase penetration of AIA membership, including currently underserved constituencies, those on the path to licensure, those in non-traditional practice, and those not subsidized by their firms?

AIA must aspire to be the home for everyone with a passion for design! Our value proposition must align with the needs of all constituencies in order to increase penetration of membership. As the design and real estate marketplace continues to evolve, AIA must embody a new paradigm. Our programs, communications, and actions must cast a wide net so all are welcome. A bigger tent for AIA is essential in this time of change and increased complexity.

AIA’s brand image impacts how members perceive value. Our print and electronic communications platforms should focus on a wider band of the profession. We need to shift perceptions – architecture needs to be more about community and less about monuments. Sharing examples of design excellence is important to the mission of AIA. Yet, for increased penetration of membership other aspects of practice should receive more exposure. Stories that celebrate collaborative delivery with industry partners, for example, send an inclusive message. Messages relevant to broader constituencies reinforce AIA as a home for everyone.

Architects in non-traditional practice are essential to successful design outcomes. They include colleagues like corporate architects, government architects, code officials, builders, real estate professionals, developers, program managers, and others. AIA has an opportunity to feature the work and careers non-traditional practitioners. We will gain their loyalty and foster better perceptions of the breadth and depth of our profession.

AIA’s brand image has the potential to better engage architecture students. Now that Hanley-Wood makes the electronic version of *Architect* magazine available to students at no cost, AIA will benefit through sharing the full range of career opportunities available to graduates. Further, we must share compelling stories about AIA’s value to those on the path to licensure – like our recent positive influence on IDP reporting. Sharing messages relevant to all Emerging Professionals will result in greater engagement.

The affordability of AIA membership presents a barrier for many in our profession, particularly among Emerging Professionals. Yet, membership is best viewed as an investment in one’s future. Like any investment, members will evaluate cost and benefit. AIA must continually assess its programs and make adjustments so we effectively serve evolving member needs. The concept of stepped dues for AIA membership is worthy of consideration as a way to mitigate the initial financial barrier. As early-career architects become established and as AIA evolves its value proposition in alignment with their needs, AIA’s penetration will increase and membership will flourish.

In summary, there are three action items to increase member penetration that need our attention. They are:
1) Refine AIA’s brand image to shift perceptions;
2) Feature the work of architects in non-traditional practice to foster broader perceptions of the architect’s role;
3) Engage with architectural students to share the full range of available career opportunities.

2. Increasing Public Awareness of the Profession

The AIA has committed significant resources towards iLookup, a three-year public awareness campaign of architecture in communities. While we can all agree in the general value of the effort, direct benefit to individual members is more difficult to quantify. How would you define and measure the value of this campaign?

The purpose of the initial phase of the iLookup campaign is to inspire people about the importance of the architect’s life’s work and enlighten them about the purpose of what we do. The target audience will change as the campaign evolves over the next three years. It is my hope that a future phase of the campaign will target the public at large, sharing the benefits of what architects do every day – namely to enable people, organizations, and communities to realize their aspirations through design.

To measure the value of this initiative, it’s important to establish baseline perceptions at different periods, both pre- and post-campaign. Cross sections of the target audience should be surveyed before, during, and after each phase. Changes in audience perceptions should be tracked and assessed; this information will enable future efforts to be tailored for greater effectiveness.

To maximize effectiveness, AIA’s public awareness initiative must also incorporate local actions that complement the national campaign. In California, for example, there are significant differences among various cities and sub-regions of the state that must be factored into the approach. Local campaigns should utilize options tailored to specific markets and involve a broad media strategy including broadcast, social media, blogs, targeted email, and published editorials.

To be most successful, AIA’s public awareness campaign needs to appeal to the emotions of the target audience. For example, the ad in the December 2013 New Yorker magazine that highlighted how AIA architects helped families to look forward after the Hurricane Sandy disaster revealed a higher purpose of design to which everyone aspires. Going forward, we must be clear about the demographic AIA strives to reach and the messages they need to hear.

In summary, there are several action items with regard to AIA’s public awareness campaign that need our attention. They are:
1) Track pre-and post-campaign metrics;
2) Implement local initiatives that complement the national campaign;
3) Achieve clarity of the target audience and message.

3. Ensuring Equity in the Profession

The Institute has long identified diversity and inclusion as a strategic goal for the profession. However, the rate of impact has not been significant enough to advance the ratio of underrepresented populations within the profession, with the greatest disparity being evident in leadership and ownership positions. Delegates to the 2015 AIA Convention will be asked to consider a Resolution to develop an ongoing program to assess data, set a plan of action, track progress, and report on results. Given the myriad of programs and initiatives currently underway, there’s a very real fear this research will sit on the shelf. What is your sense as to why there isn’t greater equity within the profession and how would you ensure this call for equity moves to the forefront within the Institute’s agenda?

As leader of a large interdisciplinary firm, I know the value of a diverse workforce that includes, for example, people of color, different ethnicities, gender equity, and those in non-traditional roles. Our profession must reflect the profile of the society in which we live and work. Besides being the
right thing, diversity is also good for business. Study after study demonstrates that organizations with diverse leadership are more successful by several measures. With the Department of Labor forecasting a significant skilled labor shortage, our industry is already being impacted. Design firms that embrace policies that lead to greater diversity will attract and retain a talented workforce essential for their success.

There are, of course, many reasons for the lack of diversity in our profession. Outmoded cultural norms and values exist in many firms and schools of architecture. A lack of information and understanding also contributes to the issue. While our profession has many excellent role models for underrepresented populations, we need even more mentors. Further, the increasing debt burden of graduates makes it difficult for many to pursue a career in architecture. More schools of architecture need to offer the five-year BArch program. Partnerships with community colleges would make elective courses available at lower cost. Regarding the challenges of gender equity, there are notable publications on the topic like Sheryl Sandberg’s “Lean In.” Of particular importance are several excellent industry-specific reports including, “Best Practice Recommendations for the Design Profession,” by Iowa Women in Architecture and “The Missing 32% Project.” These are valuable resources that deserve to be broadly disseminated to members and firm leaders.

With the concurrence of the AIA Strategic Council and Board, if elected, I would initiate a Presidential Diversity Initiative similar to that of the American Bar Association. I would see to it that the diversity and equity issue moves to the forefront of AIA’s agenda. We will apply financial and staff resources to achieve a better understanding of the diversity issues unique to architecture. We will develop meaningful information and actions so that members and firms can implement cultural change.

In summary, there are several action items to ensure equity in our profession that need our attention. They are:
1) Initiate a Presidential Diversity Initiative.
2) Shift the culture in architecture schools.
3) Reduce student debt burden through institution partnerships and more BArch programs.
4) Share diversity strategies that enable firms to implement cultural change.

4. **Empowering the Next Generation to Meet the Challenges of the Future**

As the future of the profession, the challenges facing emerging professionals must be addressed. There are increasing distractions and alternatives that are adversely impacting the pathway to licensure and the downstream consequences to meeting public demand and project delivery. **What one thing can the AIA do to affect a cultural shift among Emerging Professionals and encourage all involved in the delivery of architectural services to stay connected with the organization?**

Rather than AIA attempting to affect a cultural shift among Emerging Professionals, AIA must actively engage with this group and engage with their needs and aspirations. In turn, we must transform our organization so it has greater relevance for new leaders. The old paradigm of “architect as hero” is being replaced by a new paradigm of “architect as collaborator.” The delivery of design and construction is evolving toward a more integrated model, and AIA must respond accordingly. To encourage all those involved in the delivery of design services to remain connected with AIA, we must listen to their needs, remove barriers, and offer programs of high value. AIA must be responsive to the changing marketplace and address the needs of a broader spectrum of practice.

As AIA’s Strategic Council and Board develop a new strategic plan for the Institute, goals and tactics that increase the organization’s value for Emerging Professionals are of high importance. This strategy needs to drive AIA’s brand identity, programs, and financial commitments so that we achieve desired outcomes.
Our profession has a bright future because Emerging Professionals have vision and passion about new ways for architecture to serve society. Vision and passion combined with business savvy will lead to success. That’s why I believe AIA should establish a Leadership Institute. This institute would develop skills in areas like finance, negotiation, communications, marketing, branding, and risk management. This program would be largely implemented at the local level through the profession and academic leaders working together. It would empower Emerging Professionals for greater success and create AIA connections that last a lifetime.

In summary, there are three actions to help empower the next generation to meet future challenges that need our attention. They are:

1) Shift AIA’s culture to be more responsive to the needs of Emerging Professionals.
2) Offer programs and networking opportunities tailored to a broader spectrum of practice.
3) Establish an AIA Leadership Institute focused on Emerging Professionals.

5. Advancing the Value of Design
Enhancing the practice and the prosperity of architectural firms is a high priority of the Institute; employees of AIA firms will clearly benefit from this effort. However, fundamental to this priority is the need to construct a business case for design. How can AIA best proceed with building a solid business case for the “value of design”?

To advance the business case for the value of design, architects must communicate through language commonly understood by business and community leaders. Leaders who retain architects are accustomed to the language of metrics. Metrics will enable us to most effectively build a solid business case for the value of design and show that design is a strategic asset.

Clients are increasingly requesting proof of measurement that demonstrates buildings meet stated objectives. As leader of a progressive firm, I hired a full-time PhD researcher several years ago to conduct scientifically-based research on the performance aspects of design. Criteria such as operational efficiency, air quality, temperature, comfort, acoustical privacy, visual privacy, energy, and sustainability can be measured and compared to industry benchmarks. In hospital settings, for example, the reduced frequency of medical errors in well-designed environments has been documented. In such cases, design is a strategic asset to the client resulting in positive financial outcomes. My firm believes in freely sharing our research and innovations through published books, blogs, and seminars for the benefit of the entire design industry.

The public at large responds to the value of design differently from business leaders. While CEOs and CFOs may prefer hard data that demonstrates a building’s performance, others are often more responsive to compelling stories. An opportunity for future phases of AIA’s public awareness program is to communicate the positive impact of well-designed environments on human health. Virtually all building types have the potential to improve and maintain the health of people. Other benefits of good design on the quality of life abound, with interesting stories to be told.

As we build a solid business case for the value of design, it’s important to convey that design excellence embodies both the measurable and the immeasurable. This duality is the essence of our craft and the reason we architects love what we do!

In summary, there are several actions to build a solid business case for the value of design that need our attention. They are:

1) Communicate the value of design in terms of benefits and metrics.
2) Conduct original research on design outcomes and share it broadly.
3) Communicate in language readily understandable by our different audiences.
4) Celebrate both the measurable and the immeasurable!