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?

Our dues structure should reflect the fact that people work in many different situations, at various stages of life, and in a wide range of capacities. The cost of belonging is one factor, but program quality and relevance are the keys.

Let’s do more to address the interests and concerns of people working in public service, professional education, and corporate design management—and let’s intensify our support for recent graduates taking the licensing examination.

I support *Resolution 15-2, “Graduated Membership Dues”* and I will ask the national board of directors to do so. Also, we should connect with the *thousands* of foreign students who graduate from US schools of architecture and then return to their native countries to practice. This will pay dividends well into the future.

Despite recent realignments, the AIA remains a result of incremental development rather than deliberate design. We have hundreds of chapters, sections, regions and state organizations, each with different bylaws, governance setups, financing mechanisms, and staffing schemes. This is part of our heritage and diversity—and it may be part of our strength.

Still, over time, some AIA components have forged far ahead, while others lag. Real value lies in achieving high levels of performance *throughout* the Institute. The AIA must be an organization to which all members of our profession belong—the primary force in education, practice, regulation, and public policy. Reasonable, tailored membership costs are vital to reaching a larger market—but *relevance* and *influence* are also tickets.
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 media consultants say they designed the first stages of the media campaign to get Americans—from senior business leaders and elected officials to ordinary citizens—thinking about architecture and, somehow, “buzzing.” Overall, the charge is to position AIA members in the public eye as professionals who create value, produce great buildings, and design strong communities.

That’s a good mission. The AIA should be doing everything it can to stimulate demand for our work. But we must target more sharply defined audiences—specific client groups, key policymakers, those with greatest influence on building decisions. I’ve worked extensively in France, which has an active national architecture policy. The country takes great pride in buildings and townscapes. Every mayor in every little town and village knows about the national architecture policy, and is bound to adhere to it. This serves clear public interests. It certainly helps architects.

We tend to measure anecdotally: “Oh, my grandfather said he saw the AIA ad on Sunday morning television,” or, “I told my cabdriver that I was an architect, and he said he heard the AIA radio spot—and now he wants his son to be an architect!”

Fine—but this isn’t rigorous measurement. The AIA’s advertising consultants have provided some measures. They reported that the social media phase of “iLookup” hit millions of potential viewers. But isn’t it pretty difficult to know what that means, or how it benefits anyone? Media spending can probably never be tracked directly to upticks in design commissions. Media consultants are better able to measure general perceptions (likely to be favorable), along with name recognition (which can’t hurt).

Architects have a pretty good idea of what’s on the public radar, and we tend to sense when we’re having an impact. Let’s continue to aim the force of our 83,000 members at issues in mass transit, conservation, housing, infrastructure, disaster mitigation, health, social equity, and growth. These are quality of life issues, where architects can influence public discourse and public policies.

As president-elect in 2016, I want to put forth an “Agenda for Building a Greater America” during the US Presidential elections, to address national opportunities for better communities and buildings. When politicians are discussing the value of architecture and design on the national stage, insisting on quality, we’ll know we’re succeeding.
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?

Every person deserves *social* equity. Business equity is something we earn, or acquire. Let’s help to create more opportunities to earn equity for those who are not well represented today in architecture. AIA membership *should* reflect our country’s true demography, and our place in a multi-cultural world.

With facts about our actual makeup, we can be more confident that we’re aiming at the right issues, measuring whether we’re having impact. These are the purposes of Resolution 15-1, “Equity in Architecture,” which I support completely.

Sustained action is another matter. Practice is not easy for anyone. The AIA must help practice to be more profitable—more attractive as a business and career path. Diversity and equity best flourish in firms that are profitable and positioned to succeed. This means staying focused on the main issues affecting practice, including meaningful return paths for people who have left practice for extended periods, and attracting a real demographic mix to practice ownership.

It is encouraging that we consistently place value on equity, on inclusion and diversity. Let’s help architecture achieve these ends. Our profession is open to new ideas and approaches. We welcome all who have something to offer and wish to serve.

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 to among emerging professionals and encourage all involved in the delivery of architectural services to stay connected with the organization?

The AIA must ensure that *all* institutions of our profession—the academicians, the regulators, and the accreditors—contribute to meeting our profession’s broad aims and resolving its deepest problems. Improving the path to licensing and aiding emerging professionals are not issues only for the AIA and practitioners—they also belong to the schools and to the licensing bodies.

The AIA can take cues from research into young professionals and associations. Three basic findings: First, decisions to join are influenced mostly by peer behavior and word of mouth. Second, satisfaction is directly related to meaningful opportunities for personal engagement and effective communication. Third, young professionals become most motivated when they are asked directly to serve and to lead. We should do more—and do better—in all three areas.
In the International Union of Architects, a body representing architects all across the globe, I helped establish the Young Architects Commission. I appointed a recently-licensed US architect—Joseph Lai AIA, from Maryland—to lead the group, which has members from five continents. Such investments have significant value.

The AIA is an organization created by architects, for architects. Its basic purpose is to stimulate the demand for our work, while improving practice conditions. Diversity and inclusiveness are part of ensuring a stronger future, where licensing will remain at the core of practice and of an AIA membership with much wider reach.

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”?

Clients and users are our best advocates. Everyone in practice has to provide value, every single day. Let’s make a national effort to identify representative, highly persuasive clients who can help us document what design can deliver.

More than ever, we work on existing buildings and in established communities. We know that when our work helps clients to achieve more of their aims, everyone is better off. Clients are more diverse than ever, and we have to match them. Work is won today by firms that are nimble, technically adept, and communications-oriented. The globalization of capital means the globalization of development and architecture.

Let’s use these market factors as filters to identify projects that show how and why design produces value and sustains it. Facts count more than opinions, so let’s emphasize evidence-based approaches. Let’s engage the best universities to perform the research with us, making sound cases—especially for use in business schools. The “Agenda for Building a Greater America” that I want to advance as president-elect, during the 2016 US Presidential elections, is a way to promote the value of architecture.

We have to address **fees** in the context of **value**. AIA advocacy programs must overcome a systemic reluctance to tackle legitimate fee issues. Government agencies and major clients cannot cap fees unreasonably, accept lowest bidders, ignore lifecycle costs and environmental impacts, or cast aside “design” as frivolous and too expensive. Appropriate and fair fees are essential to providing the value of design.