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Anthony P. Schirripa, FAIA

Candidate for At-Large Director

Response to California Council Questions

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

   Repositioning is intended to increase member services and the value proposition of membership. When we achieve success, AIA members will be better prepared for practice because they have the tools available to them and have added measurable value to their projects. The added value to clients will allow for higher income. Annual dues are about 25-30% of revenue, like any business, if we reduce revenue in one area, we must add it in other places. One of my goals is to expand AIA continuing education to include “Institute Certified” coursework that will expand member’s knowledge, allowing the added skills to increase their revenue. Members can pay a nominal amount while non-members would pay a significantly higher amount. This approach will drive up non-dues revenue which may permit the AIA to consider lowering dues for emerging professionals. It also has the potential to significantly expand membership.

   National dues are only one part of a 2 or 3 part structure. National dues are consistent, States and local Chapters vary widely. We need to encourage a more uniform structure across the country and not create the perception of a penalty based on where someone chooses to live or work.

   I am also in favor of expanding membership categories in recognition of the complexities of today’s architectural practices who must attract and retain many different types of professionals— they should also have a place at the AIA table.

   Currently, when new members join at graduation, they are given the first 18 months of membership without charge, I propose to then slowly raise the dues over the next 42 months so that full dues take effect 5 years after graduation.

   Dues are currently paid in full in December, I propose that we allow a monthly installment payment via electronic deposit or credit card.

   If we are truly adding value to our member’s practices, they will be commanding higher fees/compensation so that the value of membership will be tangible and viewed as a worthy investment that carries with it a significantly higher return.

2. **Increasing Public Awareness of the Profession**

   The campaign is also intended to promote the added value of an AIA Architect in addition to wide public recognition. We can measure success any number of ways: wide recognition of the tag lines of our ads; significant social media buzz creating word of mouth spreading of the value of architects; the general public will gain a deeper understanding of what we do; it drives increased business to our members leading to higher revenue. It should also drive young people to choose a career in Architecture.
3. **Ensuring Equity in the Profession**

We have made significant strides in expanding the diversity of our profession, but clearly, more work needs to be done.

AIA needs to expand its focus beyond the college level and direct resources to the K-12 education sector, and particularly in communities that have a large portion of their student body included in under-represented populations. I will use the New York Center for Architecture as an example—they have a robust Learning by Design Program that taps both public funds from the NY City Department of Education and private sector donations. The program trains teachers to introduce design into their teaching methodologies by drawing upon a talented pool of architects, engineers and design educators who work directly with teachers and students to bring the built environment alive through interactive project based teaching methodologies. By exposing young people to design, we will perhaps attract them to become part of the profession and if not that, then certainly an educated future client as to the value of design.

Another factor which could discourage young people from pursuing a career in architecture is the traditionally low paying entry level salaries. When a young person is considering college and in some cases the daunting costs, they will look to choose careers that have much higher income. My goal of providing increased partnerships between, AIA, the Academy and member firms is to strengthen the experience needed so that students are better prepared for the rigor of real practice and consequently provide the mechanism for firms to raise starting salaries. And by focusing on expanding our continuing education platform, higher knowledge will yield higher salaries.

Attracting women to the profession is rising but we must alter the culture in firms that rewards only long service and generating new business with ownership. Women who leave the workforce to raise their children should not be penalized for the choice. Their life experience is worth more than any leadership training program could provide so that experience should be celebrated and embraced. Technology platforms today are robust enough to permit remote work allowing people (both men and women) who are raising families to stay engaged actively in the profession and with their firms contributing to their growth & success, while they devote the time they need to their families.

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

AIA must provide value to members: by harnessing its knowledge base and making it available to all members, Professionals of every generation will be able to access that information and strengthen their ability to deliver services and be successful in terms of their effectiveness as a practitioner and in their ability to earn higher incomes.

By devoting resources and programs to streamline and simplify the experience requirements for ARE candidates, it will allow them to achieve licensure sooner but without sacrificing the rigor required to be great Architects. By minimizing the timeframe, young people will be able to focus on passing the A.R.E and not being distracted by life because it is taking so long to complete the current IDP program.
5. **Advancing the Value of Design**

The Institute must become the repository of research and performance metrics for all project types. We must be able to prove to clients that we can design a better project that will meet or exceed their goals. We must develop tools and systems that will allow architects to design better buildings by measuring their performance—not just for life cycle costs or energy consumption but does it improve the lives of people who will use the building. For an office building—does it provide for the efficient use of space and does the workplace support and improve the performance of the business; for hospitals does it promote faster healing and more effective care by the medical staff caring for patients; for schools that support learning and in ever increasing needs, for the safety of the children who are in the facility for 5-8 hours per day.

Larger firms have a significant body of work to gather this information and make it available within their firms. Smaller firms and sole practitioners have more limited resources to draw from. Accordingly, AIA needs to be in a position to bridge the information gap.