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?**

**Response:**

This is a central question. There are two sides to the answer. First, members and prospective members **must perceive the value** of the AIA. Secondly, the **AIA must deliver**. Period.

Studies of associations show that value, not cost, is the driver for membership. I know of professional associations who are the primary game in town for their constituency that have costs less than 1/10th of what we pay. And they still have members complain about cost. We’re told that the value proportion sells, not lower costs.

However, I believe in graduated costs. We need to establish and maintain a very low entry expense. We should consider fewer cost and membership barriers to architects serving in the public sector and the academy. Fortunately our many components have the freedom to locally determine their own budgets in addition to AIA National. These local choices create situations where membership in one city costs double what it is in another. Self-choice is good. Hopefully it is fully responsive to local priorities.

One great example is a recent move by the **Dallas AIA to create a price break for associates**. Their experience is that membership rose, mitigating loss of revenue.

Over the past couple of years, valuable work was done by the Member Service Resource Task Force which resulted in new standards for services to be provided by components. The comprehensive guidelines are our new benchmark for baseline services. Our next step should be a relook at costs of services and how to suggest realignment of membership fees to best attract and retain the next generation of architects.

Second, **AIA must deliver value**. I want my members to believe that the AIA is there for them for whatever they choose in order for them to be the best they can be. I have learned in my AIA leadership roles of the extraordinary range of who we are and what we want. Today I believe we have more professionals in non-traditional roles than ever before. We move out of and back into the profession more than before for many lifestyle, business and family reasons.

The **challenge for us as AIA leaders is for AIA to be the resource for the knowledge, advocacy, or services** desired by this vast and changing membership. For example, I know from being Chair of AIA’s Board Knowledge Committee of the extraordinary delivery of value that our two dozen Knowledge Communities provide. The majority of our members belong to at least one, and the leadership women and men of each one are sharing fabulous intellectual capital that create value.
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?**

**Response:**

We should value this initial campaign in the perspective of the total outreach campaign steps now planned. We must get survey samples of the first campaign from various audiences to get accurate feedback on their perceptions.

The axiom is “You can’t improve what you can’t measure.” First, I have heard the presentation for the proposed next steps in this campaign which includes revising messages for different media. I think it’s critical that we **get feedback on this first campaign message, not only from our varied members, but our target market – the public.** We can improve the next steps if we take stock of the audience feedback. The value of the first message is a “perceived” value, and we must survey reasonable sample sizes to understand what benefit it likely has had. The right questions must be asked.

I have heard many opinions so far. Some love the look, the elegance, the simplicity. So do I. It gets your attention. It feels good. One comment that deserves attention is that the message reinforces the stereotype that architects are poetic but not practical. But you can’t redirect the public’s perception of the value we architects bring in one 20-second sound bite. My hope is that we turn heads in the right direction from a series of messages.

We are often criticized for talking to ourselves but not engaging with the public. **We can’t let the campaign feel good to us and not change the minds of the public.**

Quick story. In my state today we have a bill just introduced in our legislature to save money by giving ownership of the A/E documents used for public work to the public entity we worked for, who then can allow any other agency statewide to use those same plans again, for free. We are taking this issue head on and surely will prevail. This is what happens when our work gets commoditized. Once again this reveals a lack of appreciation for the value of what we do.

A final note. This campaign cannot be successful by itself. We must also personally be better messengers. My goal is to **use this campaign material as a backdrop to our local personal efforts** to communicate out value to the public. Speakers. Programs. Publicized articles. Letters to the editor.

There are **no limits** to what we can achieve if we are activists.

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?

Response:
The answer is uncomplicated. As an institution we must make a conscious and publicized decision to promote the value of equity. Inequity is neither fair nor smart. To be successful today each of us in leadership ought to utilize the full potential of what our colleagues have to offer.

Clearly there is an imbalance today in gender and cultural representation in leadership and business in our profession. This imbalance is resetting quickly. Half our students today nationally are non-white. In many schools over half are women. I sit on the Executive Committee of the Board of the College of Architecture, Design, and Construction at Auburn University. We track the numbers. Access and support for students of all walks of life are supported. And the outcome at graduation is breathtakingly diverse. And success follows. The academy gets it. Our firms are catching on. Our recent AIA Firms of the Year celebrate diversity. We must continue to reward the model.

Virtually every other segment of society has similar imbalances. However, I am proud to say that our current and next tier AIA leadership truly understands the rich potential of unbridled participation by every segment of architects regardless of gender, demographics, geographies, race or culture.

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?

Response:
The one thing that we can do is to proportionately include our next generations in current decision making and leadership. We have elevated their voice. We need to listen and support them. They need to feel like we care, they belong, and they have a future. My mantra is to “pay it forward”.

An example: Two years ago as the Board Knowledge Committee Chair I hosted a conference for several days which included the leadership of all our many Knowledge Committees. They represent the best thinking on every project type and every project interest area of our profession. Our very first order of business was a call to action chaired by Josh Flowers, AIA and Matt Hart, Assoc. AIA. The subject was incentivizing acceptance and inclusion of the next generation of emerging professionals in a useful way in the operations and programs of each KC. Josh and Matt developed an MOU with half the KC’s with conversations started on the rest. The good news is that without exception all these smart leaders wanted to find a way to make this inclusion effort successful. Last year at the next conference we did this again.

My point is that specific action at every opportunity is needed, not lip service. It’s about our willingness to seek out and include the voices and goals of our “next” generation in every program we have.

We can also show that we care. The Denver AIA is a great example. It has an extensive training program for professionals in the ARE licensure pipeline. More than just holding classes, it also
includes a social component. Most important, practitioners from firms around town give their time and energy to help teach and mentor. They are “payng it forward”.

My firm is recognized as an “Intern Friendly” firm in my state. It’s the smart way to run a practice, develop a future, and connect with a broader public. All our younger professionals are civically engaged and are locally recognized in civic leadership programs. They are creating their future the way they chose because they are empowered to do so.

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”?

Response:
This last question is the one I hear more than any other from my conversations with colleagues around the country. Our members have shown extraordinary willingness to support the organizational, service, and marketing goals for AIA. But what they want leadership to achieve—yesterday—is help with all of us getting a fair deal in the marketplace.

We have competition and we must meet it head on. When for several years I chaired AIA’s ArchiPAC, our federal advocacy effort, I introduced the phrase “If you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu”. Most of the issues then were business case issues that we fought for.

We must first decide this is a priority. Right now it is, but we can’t backslide. Second, we must create tools. Third, we must teach our members.

Several “tools” are in the works. The Small Firm Roundtable (SFRT) is about to release its Toolkit, now called AIAKinetic. It is a fabulous new set of guidelines for the majority of practitioners in our profession. I coauthored the “Advocacy” portion which articulates the strategy to drive positive change through the value of design. Another tool is the collection of data from examples of evidenced based design in healthcare work. AIA must summarize the best business case data possible so that each of us can use it in the marketplace. However, our contract documents are still defensive. And we are reluctant to take on fair compensation.

We must educate our members so that they can make the best case for themselves. Example: After we passed the IgCC I did a series of outreach lectures in a dozen states. As I did a 2-hour regional broadcast to thousands of colleagues I went beyond the “how to” and discussed key business issues: how to assume leadership which involved greater risk, how to mitigate unreasonable expectations, and how to get paid for additional work responsibility and risk. The response was enormous. We have lost ground for many reasons. As a three decade practice owner this subject to me is a core challenge we must overcome.

We can regain leadership if we speak up, develop the tools, and teach our members what they need to know.