1. Repositioning the AIA for the Future

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?

First, (continue to) select leaders with a demonstrated personal commitment to underserved constituencies who are able to reach out and relate to a wide variety of people. Look beyond the governance changes to a deeper transformation of the Institute. The one year “Culture Collective”, which I helped lead, was just such an effort, and resulted in actionable plans for improvements to academic preparation for practice, firm culture, and knowledge sharing for example. In addition, we must continually prove the AIA’s relevance, and that membership is more valuable than gourmet coffee or million channel cable packages. For licensure track members, this would include ARE programs that, in relation to purchasing materials, registering for webinars, etc., AIA associate membership is essentially free. Regardless of professional aspirations, AIA’s continued support of the National Design Services Act demonstrates a commitment to emerging professions and underserved communities, both rural and urban.

For all members and prospective members, increasingly transparent budgeting and easily understood fiscal data (which I encouraged as a member of the Finance and Audit Committee and will make a critical priority as your treasurer) is key; the expenditures pie chart should look a lot like the member goals pie chart. Finally, people may not realize that many firms that don’t “subsidize” AIA membership are simply giving their employees the choice of what to do with available funds. Having said that, I do support a graduated dues program, like those proposed by the California Council, the Western Mountain Region, and Texas to ease newly licensed architects into the full dues structure. Also, I would be remiss if I did not mention that although national dues are the same for everyone at a given membership level, the added burden of state and, sometimes, local dues varies widely and can significantly impact members, but especially those earlier in in their careers. At the risk of offending my good friends in California, that’s one place to start.

2. Increasing Public Awareness of the Profession

How would you define and measure the value of this (public awareness) campaign?

I am not an expert in measuring the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns but I believe we can follow metrics laid out by the consultants and the staff dedicated to the project. No plan will magically elevate individual architects and their architecture; on the contrary, much of the benefit will accrue to members who use the campaign as an opportunity to engage current and potential clients in face to face discussions about the value of architecture and architects. What I have heard so far indicates that many of these opportunities have presented themselves, ranging from family members to cab drivers to clients. More formally, the campaign’s success can tracked by specific changes in use and numbers in the following areas:

- **Informing** – this involves MyAIA and is wrapped up in the success of the Digital Transformation
- **Mobilizing** – how is the Component Communications Network utilized and what do the components then report?
- **Engaging** – is there an increase in the number of AIA members placed through the Speakers Bureau?
- **Convening** – how are industry partners engaged and how enthusiastically do they participate?
- **Enlisting** – are we able, through the campaign, to work with influencers and spokespeople, potentially outside of the profession, who help deliver our message?
- **Involving** – are members informed and connected through policy campaigns?
3. Ensuring Equity in the Profession

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?

I think reasons range from fewer role models for women and minorities to public education that often leaves minority (and other) students ill equipped for post-secondary study of any kind, much less a challenging course of study like architecture. Part of the answer, therefore, is providing an education system that prepares all students intellectually for life in the 21st century and supports families in teaching students the value of character and hard work. For the last three years, I’ve served on the board of directors of a charter school that is doing just this for a largely Hispanic and African-American student body.

The goal, in my mind, should not be to increase the number of women and minorities in the profession. The goal should be to (re)create a profession that is attractive and financially viable for a broad range of people. I am not one for setting quotas, lowering standards, etc. simply for the sake of change or getting everyone in the tent. I am one for removing unnecessary barriers and proactively looking for ways to generate quicker results. I recently read an article in Dodge’s Daily Journal by mechanical engineer and author Brent Darnell in which he advocates three specific initiatives: 1) “Provide education and information”, largely through personal and institutional outreach, to women and minorities to create a dialogue and “shift the industry image from one of exclusion to one of inclusion.” 2) “Provide meaningful training for all the white guys”, not training to meet legal requirements, but “training that creates true understanding and trust.” 3) Provide meaningful training for all women and minorities,” so they have “the tools they need to navigate [the] maze of white males.” None of these ideas reduces the level of intellectual rigor or personal discipline required to practice our increasingly complex profession. On the contrary, they make success in the profession more attractive and attainable for women and minorities, who we (the white guys) need in order to, in Mr. Darnell’s words, “move the industry forward and create a whole new industry that is inclusive, diverse, and sustainable” and to “create more successful projects and better profitability.” Count me in as one who is trainable and wants to train.

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

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?

As I said during the Grassroots candidate forum, architecture is a tough profession, and the ARE must remain tough. But ... the AIA, at all levels, must advocate for continuing and increasing relevance in the ARE and continue to work with NCARB to remove unnecessary barriers and, along with ACSA and NAAB, provide a logical, relatively seamless path to examination and ultimate licensure. We should see reporting of these efforts and the information and mechanisms on the transformed, member-specific MyAIA.

5. Advancing the Value of Design

How can AIA best proceed with building a solid business case for the “value of design”?

We should work with the Hanley Wood to increase the emphasis on the “business” case for each building that is featured in “our” magazine and include client evaluations in design award submittals. We should provide data for project performance (over time) demonstrating effectiveness of appropriately compensated good design. This data could be featured in the “public” section of the new website created as part of our “Digital Transformation”. And, since we are AIA, we must, in our own practices with our own clients, all design in ways that truly enhance each client’s long term bottom line (be that financial or otherwise). AIA National can help us tell the story and provide case studies and other information that helps all of us make the point. And, as iLookup continues into its second and third years, a key part of the message must be that designers, and specifically AIA architects, care first and foremost about being good stewards of our clients’, and our planet’s, resources.