AIA California Council Questionnaire

The deadline for submitting responses is April 25. Total response no more than four pages.

1. RESOURCING THE PROFESSION for prosperity.
   It is clear the profession is changing and successful architects will have to modify their business practices and refocus their energies in this new economy. This will require a cultural “shift” of the AIA to resource firms and actively increase the prosperity of the profession. How can the AIA prepare architects and emerging professionals to respond to trending issues such as the changing marketplace, new economic models, and the increasing complexity in design requirements and the regulatory environment?

Recently, I read a series of letters between Julia Morgan and William Randolph Hearst. Over the period of a year, the architect renegotiated her contract, from one that provided architectural services at estimated cost of 6% - to one that covered the actual cost of services - 6.5% - plus the cost of the architect’s time, profit and overhead, an additional +2%. WOW! A California architect ended up earning 8.5% on a $5.4 million dollar contract for Hearst’s country home in San Simeon, in an era when Frank Lloyd Wright received 5.5% for a $155k country house on the east coast – Fallingwater. Let’s call it the 2% the “Morgan factor” and let’s all ask for cost of services plus a Morgan factor. **We must all be so bold!**

In this post-recessionary economy, many architects are saying that they are doing more work for less money. This has got to change, and it is us, the architects, that have to change it. We have to talk differently, charge differently, and promote our work differently. This is not something that AIA can wave a magic wand and shift. We need to ask the deep questions. Take the strong actions. We need to live, act, market, and talk differently about our work.

What the AIA can do is help us to all move together in a new direction by facilitating the discussions that need to happen for us to find a new pathway, and providing all members the tools of change. We need more business savvy. The AIA can provide more CEU’s that give us the business education that makes us prosperous. We need to come out of school believing in a prosperous future. The AIA can work with ACSA and NAAB to get the accredited curriculum to include training in how to charge for services to have a prosperous life in architecture. We need to understand the shifting marketplace and new technologies, faster. The AIA can bring us the most forward thinking trend analysis sooner. We need to communicate the value of design. The AIA can help us with the media coverage and the metrics that help us persuade customers about value. We need to charge differently for our services. The AIA can provide the tools for more diverse fee models.

The AIA has been listening and is moving to respond to our concerns. The AIA formed a Prosperity and Practice committee, and made prosperity a key strategic initiative of our 5 year strategic plan. In 2015, AIA initiated the Culture Collective to see how we can all be part of the solution. The AIA is our partner in advancing our success. We can move the culture of the building industry in a new direction, together.

AIACC Responses by: **Julia Donoho, AIA, Esq.** | Candidate for Secretary | 2017-2018
2. **INFLUENCING our clients and our communities.**

Clients are looking for a more predictable outcome in the building process and thus, collaborative project delivery models are becoming the norm. Some would argue the legal and regulatory environments are not supportive of this change. How can AIA best advocate for a regulatory framework that will enable architects to be successful leaders in the design and construction industry?

Our license counts for something. Architects enhance the value of our license in the community and the profession by standing up for the return on investment that it brings. When architects are part of the team, from beginning to end, leading the design thinking, Clients win on all three fronts – money, time, and quality. It is important that we stand up for the architect’s role as a project leader from beginning to end.

The AIA can play a big part in this equation by advocating for stronger practice acts that make the architect’s role crucial from feasibility to move-in. It is time to advocate more strongly for whole services, and the importance of design thinking leadership from beginning to end to protect outcome. Piecing projects apart to save fees generally leads to problems that are more expensive. This is an HSW issue, emphasis on the “W.” If contracts and regulations prevented severance of CA from the package of services, clients would have a better product at the end. Let’s get some solid research on the table in front of legislators that show how much “W” suffers when architects’ involvement is pieced apart.

Financially, there is a big disconnect in real estate, financial, and insurance institutions in their valuation of properties and estimation of replacement costs. They leave us out of the equation. Authorship by award winning architects rarely adds value to a property. Construction loans and insurance adjuster’s estimates do not include architectural services. If they do, architects are shown as subcontractors to the GC.

This area is ripe for the AIA to dive into and really create some great benefits for members and building owners. If we look at other professions like law and medicine, they have steady streams of income from insurance regulations. The AIA can help architects by advocating for regulations that allow real estate valuations to place a premium on award winning designs, that help owners afford architectural services by including them in their construction loans, and by insisting that insurance adjusters include architectural services as a separate cost from construction, as necessary for rebuilding after a disaster.

3. **OUTREACH to our communities.**

The AIA has made a significant commitment and investment in public outreach efforts. How can the AIA leverage this initiative and empower both local components and individual members with the tools to be integral players in their local communities?

The new public outreach campaign is gaining real traction. People are seeing it and noticing. They are proud to come tell their architect friends they saw a commercial about architecture.
To increase the reach of this initiative we can tailor it to have a roll out at national, state, and local levels with the ability to adjust for the regional or local markets. If we start with the idea in mind of creating a multi-tier roll-out, the value of what we are creating can go much farther.

The new advocacy training conference that will occur this summer “Speak Up” is going to provide the training for any architects to gain the skills they need to be an advocate in their community. The purpose of separating it from the Grassroots Leadership Conference is that the advocates among our ranks are not always the leaders in our chapters. Sometimes they are heavily involved in the community but not interested in serving on their local chapter board.

Speak Up will be open to any AIA members who believe they can make a difference in the world, engaging in the electoral and legislative process at the national, state, or local levels. Speak Up’s attendees will receive training from top political and policy experts on how to push legislation, develop policy messages and raise money in workshops and interactive role-playing exercises. Some attendees also will head to Capitol Hill to meet with their elected representatives and advocate for the AIA’s policy agenda.

4. Enhancing MEMBER VALUE.

AIA’s recent Member Needs Survey indicated a strong connection between member engagement and member value. For many members who access the organization primarily at their local component, providing opportunities to demonstrate member value is challenging given the ongoing struggle for resources. How can the AIA support local components’ efforts to increase member awareness to engage the organization?

The new service delivery model with accreditation of components to ensure a more consistent member experience is a great step forward to make sure the resources that we have are properly distributed. And, I believe that National could be a distributor of things that local chapters can provide to members. For example, National could create Architecture Week planning tools, organized by chapter size, that show examples of what various chapters are doing with timelines for planning and checklists to ensure community awareness (i.e. how to time press releases, etc.)

The new digital transformation is another opportunity to engage members so that they have awareness of local, state, and national issues. A coordinated news delivery system that incorporates information, events, and opportunities from all levels of the organization and delivers it to the members in a way that corresponds to their involvement is going to really change how architects understand their place in the profession and the organization. It is hoped that fewer emails will mean more attention to the main email message.

Finally, the new governance model may seem to an average member to just be a change in some structure that has no consequence for their lives and practice. In reality, it has created a whole new resource for them and the Institute. Now, if a member has an idea about something that might beneficial to change about the Institute, the concept can be sent up to the Strategic Council to be vetted by architects from all around the country. It used to be they would write a
resolution or suggest a bylaws change and it would maybe sink or fly, without a lot of gray in between. Now, ideas can be developed further to become a clear direction with broad support for implementation, and they can move forward more strongly to become something that benefits everyone in the Institute. This is our path to continuous improvement.

5. CLOSING

To all of the members of AIA California Council - Thank you for inviting us to share some thoughts. It has been such an honor to serve California the last three years. It has been an enlightening experience and I have become a leader, an agent of change, and a consensus builder. All through the history of my involvement with AIA, in my local component, on the AIACC board, and on the National Board and Strategic Council, I have worked for continuous improvement. Now, I would like to serve as Secretary to be of service to members so that all voices are heard and that ideas move upward through the Institute to gain broader support for successful implementation.

It is a core mission of the Institute to govern with excellence. I take this responsibility seriously, and have prepared myself for the position of Secretary by studying it carefully. I chose to run for this position in 2014, and served in 2015 on the Secretary’s Advisory Committee and as Secretary on my local school board. I have worked on four different sets of bylaws over the last year, studied the requirements of parliamentarian certification, and spent the time to observe carefully the challenges and demands of the position. We have some challenges ahead with the transition to accreditation of chapters and achieving consistent service delivery. I am ready to help facilitate solutions.

Thank you,

Julia Donoho, AIA, Esq.