From the Desk of Burton Roslyn, FAIA-Candidate for 2017 National Secretary

Response to AIA California Council
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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?

In addressing a shift in focus and change in culture, our first task is to define the trends impacting upon the profession. We then must position the Institute and our members for success.

- As projects become more complex we are pressed to look at increasingly collaborative business models for successful delivery in a profession historically rooted in the vision of individuality. As part of this effort, we need to provide an understanding of “Smart Collaboration”, what characteristics we seek in a team will vary by project and delivery approach.
- The Institute needs to develop and provide the tools required to flourish in this new environment.
  - We need to provide educational content and Toolkits which will help current and future practitioners understand the nature of economic models and practice formats.
  - We need to redefine our practice manuals to provide support and understanding of changing firm structures and cultures.
  - We need to provide education which creates an understanding of Architecture as a Business
  - We need to create an understanding of economics and capital markets both as they relate to our clients and our own firm management.
  - Changing Project Delivery Models have a significant impact on the Scope of Services required, the Economics of a Project and, by extension, the vitality of an office. We must be prepared to research, analyze and understand this impact to better address it in our contracts. This requires additional education and practice tools focused on these areas.
- In addition to the above, the Institute needs to be a strong advocate for equitable fees for public work, a driving force for many of our members.
- These advocacy efforts need to also include development of mechanisms to provide greater access to public work for our small practitioners, including development of partnering requirements.
- Oft times overlooked, but of significance is the potential role the Institute can play in both educating and helping to provide access to “Capital Markets”, vital to a firm’s success.

We can accomplish much of the above with tools already utilized for educational programs. We must modify channels, such as greater use of Webinars, Workshops, Newsletters, Blogs and Toolkits, focused on these issues and create better programmatic agility to give our members the most up-to-date information. In addition to this transformation, we need to encourage resource sharing amongst components to ensure access for all members.

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 advocacy efforts need to focus on the benefits of Collaborative Project Delivery.
  - These efforts need to be coordinated at the Federal, State and Local levels. Our conversations need to be robust and forceful. They need to be supported by factual data on delivery success both in terms of schedules and cost.
- We need to be strong advocates promoting the importance of using licensed professionals.
- We are trained as problem solvers with broad expertise and are therefore uniquely qualified to deal with the regulatory impact of “Alternative Project Delivery” and the impact of “Sustainable and Environmentally Sensitive Design”.
- We need to provide tools to our local components to effectively advocate on a grassroots level, bringing the message to policy makers on all levels.
- Work with policy and decision makers in all levels of government to show successful methods of delivery within the confines of regulatory oversight and provide recommendations on how to improve the process.
The AIA has given us the resources to implement these campaigns. Now we need a leader to design and instruct our members, from the chapters all the way to the Board of Directors on how to best achieve real results. I will receive opinions and advice on these programs, better suiting them to all components nationally and internationally, to affect policy makers and legislators.

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?

Our outreach efforts must be focused and broad based. We need to develop a pragmatic approach, one that recognizes the lack of true understanding of our societal role. In addition to a Nationally Focused Public Relations Campaign we need to recognize the value of local “Boots on the Ground”, we can do this by developing the following:

- Local Centers for Architecture, storefronts used to expose the general public to architecture. We need to foster this development by providing “Seed Money” and Grants designed to provide financial support for startups. We need to provide resources on “Best Practices” for the creation and successful operation of these centers.
- We need to provide support through training for the development of Advocacy Workshops for our members and the general public. These efforts will create a greater understanding of the value architects provide to the built environment and its impact on the socioeconomic success of our communities.
- We need to create a visible cadre of “Citizen Architects”, who through their Civic Engagement elevate the public understanding of our role and the value we provide.
- Prepare the next generation of architect to become a “Citizen Architect”.

Outreach efforts must show the value of the profession to the general public. The general public has a generic version of what we are, who we are and what we do. We need to show the otherwise. The PR campaign by AIA is a start, a jumping-off point, but we need to recruit all members to engage in informing the public about what we do.

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?

I would propose the creation of a matrix and toolkit for practitioners, identifying the critical issues for their practice. Using that matrix, we could identify and indicate areas of member value added by membership in the institute.

As examples:
- Provide Continuing Education which illustrates the skill development AIA provides to members vs non-members.
- Create Networking opportunities to provide interaction with similar sized firms facing similar issues and also a base for expansion and partnering on larger projects.
- Create Peer groups to discuss issue resolution - how are others dealing with an issue.
- Provide Practice guides & workshops to support educating the public on the value of licensed architects and to them the value of AIA.
- Provide Advocacy Support for specific local issues & broader impact issues of import to every practitioner.
- Create a forum for discussion of difficulty in breaking into public-sector work as a part of the Institute’s conversations with public agencies at all levels and aid members in this pursuit with appropriate practice aids.

To accomplish this, we must work with our local and state chapters to create leadership development programs & training sessions, developing both firm and institute leaders. Identify those traits which foster the development of leaders by helping to:

- Develop a Toolkit for Leadership Skill development drawing upon experience of current leaders;
- Encourage local components to promote the value of architecture and architects;
- Provide ongoing one on one mentoring & support to developing leaders;
- Provide Education Tools, Advocacy Tools, Component Team Work & Resource Sharing;
- Provide Webinars, Workshops, Newsletters and Blogs.
The institute can also encourage and support creation of Centers for Architecture as a basis for providing outreach exposure to the public. Educating non-architects to our value is a significant part of the value we can provide to our membership.

National, through existing programs, has many of the resources though existing program initiatives already in place for education and resource sharing. Using this framework, I would implement these ideas, collaboratively, to install them as actionable programs.

We need to develop a structured plan to accomplish these goals and it should be the role of the Secretary to provide both the oversight of evaluation of effectiveness and a vehicle for conversation at all levels to ensure effective communication of issues for components and members in meeting the standards for delivery of Member Service and Value.

These programs need to be ongoing and self-sustaining as benefits to our members.

The Secretary needs to be the Advocate for our Membership

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