

Question 1 priority issues.

These are really substitute questions and deserve a great deal of discussion and consideration. Having served at AIA in leadership for many years I've seen successes and struggles, I have also witnessed the depth of resources we have created.

We are facing the greatest challenges of our time. The effects of climate change and impacts on our communities are extraordinary. To act on climate demonstrates social responsibility to our communities. There is no profession better positioned to lead at this moment. As architects and the AIA, we must work towards long-term mitigation through sustainability and reduce the immediate impacts of climate through adaptation. These are two sides of the same coin and if done well, a sustainable, resilient and equitable future can be achieved. Architects play a key role in leadership, demonstrate through our work, how to secure that future. To get there, we must have an institute that supports and strengthens components, following through on our mission that improves the day-to-day practice of every architect. In fact, I think we all agree that all politics are local, all disasters are local, and all responses must be local. That means that each component must be strong enough and supported to be seen as the natural leaders in their communities. In essence, AIA is a community partner to advance long-term strategies to achieve a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future through policy, advisement of governing bodies and partnering with community stakeholders. Locally the AIA should be a key partner in creating substantive resilience as we rethink our communities to meet these challenges.

AIA national has many resources created by volunteer members over the years specific to this question. Greater accessibility to those resources is needed along with a "how to implement" strategy. All too often these great resources remain hidden due to poor communication or when they are available they lack a roadmap for implementation. If we are to follow through on our mission of achieving a resilient, sustainable future, as well as improving the day-to-day practice of our members, we have to do the hard work to unlock the potential of these great resources. Additionally components all across the country have produced extraordinary programs and resources that rarely get shared horizontally. What I mean by that is that cross collaboration of components, must be supported in a new type of networking, that truly shares the power of our 98,000 members. If you are solving issues across California then certainly the folks in North Carolina want to know about it and vice versa. Structurally the AIA has capacity to share that information if we rethink our model with strengthening components as the goal, along with information accessibility for member support.

Question 2 value of design.

It is the role of the institute to give greater voice to its members. That can be in a number of ways. The greatest way to communicate is through the success stories of our members, the product of your work, and the impact that it has had on the lives of people throughout the communities we serve. Over the years we have seen several campaigns such as the blueprint for better, and America by design, that is expanding to global markets where our members work. These are great venues to communicate, however communicating local stories to the public, for purposes of advancing how we are seen in society, is extraordinarily important. Not just in the marketplace, but in the eyes of the public and governing bodies for purposes of advocacy. We are an essential and integral part of society that holds a unique position in creating a sustainable, resilient, healthy, and equitable, built environment. Our work solves some of the greatest issues that are community face often untangling competing interests. I believe that we should be telling those stories that demonstrate success beyond the building. We have an enormous amount of material through local awards programs, the COTE top 10, award categories that touch each sector, that can be brought forward demonstrating our value. Furthermore, it's the testimony of people using the buildings rather than us, that becomes the powerful statement to the world. Supporting local campaigns highlighting your work is where the national body can improve.

Question 3 the economy.

We are in the greatest economic transformation of our time. It is the role of AIA national is to broaden the path of economic development for the profession, and opening doors for us all. Every component across the AIA is a registered not for profit. I believe that the national organization must offer two essential programs aimed at making components stronger by leveraging not-for-profit status in their local markets.

The first is a program suggested by component leaders across the US. A “How to run a not for profit program” should be developed and delivered annually for board leadership, especially un-staffed components. Understanding the power of your not-for-profit status as it relates to partnership and funding opportunities is really important as our economic transformation is getting underway. This program would allow component boards to hit the ground running every year and build on operational wisdom and partnerships.

The second program AIA national should develop to support components is a “grant partnerships” service. The program would demonstrate successful partnerships and assist in identifying natural partners in each components geographic area. These partnerships can unlock funding for communities and open opportunities for AIA members. Current federal funding looks favorably at teams of community organizations, partnered with professional societies, such as AIA, and local governments. The IRA inflation reduction act, is a great example, along with identified justice 40 communities and the recently released CDRZ community disaster resilient zones. All of these have enormous funding opportunities for architects and communities across the US. The “how to” opens doors and broaden access to members is needed. In other words, the federal government has recognized that our communities need substantive transformation to create a resilient, sustainable, future and they are putting a great deal of funding to improve everything from infrastructure to building performance. We are at the beginning of this transformation and the US will be investing billions of dollars in climate adaptation for our communities. Globally, the United Nations/world bank 2022 economic report forecasts \$500 billion needed on an annual basis for community adaptation by 2030. To unlock that funding communities will need organizations like the AIA, and our members, to assist in procuring funding, and following through on the projects needed to achieve their goals.

Question 4 encouraging engagement, member voice.

First and foremost, as an organization, we must to have a foundation of TRUST, built through transparency, communication, and member support. If we truly follow through on that foundation, then duplication becomes less of an issue. I also believe that creating a platform to share successes across the AIA, component to component, opens opportunities and reduces duplication. Building on successes from California components to be shared with components in Texas and Iowa, and vice versa, will leverage our collective knowledge. The culture change is a horizontal model versus a top down model. Components, being the most powerful element of the AIA and the national body facilitating, by gathering and sharing information to reduce duplication and promote greater success.

I also believe that we should leverage technology that identifies individual members expertise and preferences. This is not difficult to do, it would unlock and streamline communications to each individual member as well as identify the expertise of members to specific needs. Identifying the right members for specific advocacy efforts, or advisory roles to governing bodies or any number of opportunities. The technology exists and should be implemented to better serve our members leveraging the true power we have as a 98,000 member body.

Question 5 practice.

Change our model to match our mission. It’s the mission of the AIA to improve the day-to-day practice of architects, to be the best you can be. I love that mission and I think we all agree it is the mission of any member services organization to support members to be the best they can be.

Our current model does not put members and components front and center. The AIA as a national institute should be in a supporting role to follow through on that mission. Small firms must feel the backing and resources of our 98,000-member community, connect the deep knowledge of large firms and resources that we collectively produce. Resources must be accompanied by “how to” use and implement. It is not enough to produce materials or gathering sources without explanation. The same support is needed in member resources and component resources. It’s not enough to produce them without serious support for implementation that leads to success.

Finally, as the largest professional design organization in the world, we must also leverage that power into collective bargaining. How does the national body work with software manufacturers to lower pricing for all members? Can we begin to look at other opportunities such as health insurance for smaller practices? Collective action to enhance practice is needed.