



## **2017 Candidates for National Office:**

### **Responses to Questions from Member Stakeholder Groups**

April 2017



Candidates for national office were invited to submit responses to questions from various membership stakeholder groups. Those responses appear below.

For more information on the candidates' platforms, please review the [2017 Official Delegate Information Booklet](#).

Please contact Institute Secretary Bruce Sekanick, FAIA ([bruce@phillips-sekanick.com](mailto:bruce@phillips-sekanick.com)), with any questions. Thank you!

## 1. ENGAGING MEMBERS

**As the AIA implements the recommendations of the repositioning initiative, members in the Institute's 19 regions are perfectly poised to sharpen awareness of the challenges facing the architectural profession, and to help find creative solutions and innovative practices. The AIA, and especially the next generation of architects, needs its members to be fully engaged if we all are to have an opportunity to succeed. How would you propose to engage more members in the AIA's initiatives?**

<p><u>PANETTA</u>: This has been a central tenet of my participation on the national Strategic Council over the past two years. I have taken on the task to inform the over 4,200 members in the Western Mountain region that I represent about the activities, initiatives, and priorities of the Strategic Council and Board of Directors, and continually seek their feedback and potential involvement in those opportunities. I have also held regular meetings with regional leaders to hear what issues and opportunities are being addressed by the local chapters and elevating those priorities to the awareness of the national leadership bodies. If elected as Treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors, I will continue to sit on the Strategic Council and press for both bodies to continue to keep membership informed, and to generate as many opportunities for feedback and participation as possible through the Institute's national committees and centers, and at outreach events at Grassroots and the annual Conference on Architecture.</p>	<p><u>BATES</u>: The recent shift in political climate has been a catalyst for membership engagement. We can capitalize on this energy by rallying AIA's multi-generational membership around the Institute's long standing core values and purpose. The profession's future hinges upon our ability to educate our public and clients of these values. AIA's national, state and local levels must work together toward this goal.</p> <p>Given that the trend is to shift more infrastructure support and responsibilities to state and municipal governments, architects will have an opportunity to play a larger role in shaping the future of our communities. We can engage our members by encouraging them to seek and secure key positions of influence.</p> <p>We can build a national strategy to ensure that architects have an impactful and creative voice in regional decision-making and policy-making that affect our natural and built environments. Our creative guidance at the macro level of sweeping community solutions will allow us to solve larger more complex problems than otherwise possible when designing one building at a time. The profession will benefit from more rational project scopes, budgets and expanded services. Like-wise, our communities and society will benefit from richer, more holistic policies and design solutions.</p>
<p><u>GRANDSTAFF-RICE</u>: AIA members cannot engage in a shared future if they are not interacting with the organization. There are three elements of building increased member engagement: leveraging the face-to-face, positive work of AIA components; developing effective communications; and strengthening the value proposition of being an engaged AIA member. Local AIA components are integral. They have a front row seat to the innovative and creative solutions in their communities. They are often the first interaction members have with the organization and serve as a connection between local issues and the core values held at the national level.</p> <p>Members have more opportunity today to connect with the organization through technology. Leveraging social media aside traditional media enhances our reach with all architects. I have seen practitioners connect and collaborate with each other through online communities. It is great to see peer groups and networks forming. The AIA can either help create these connections or get left behind.</p> <p>Members want to be part of something that helps them be better architects. Building member engagement hinges on a value proposition—is my involvement worth the effort? The answer must be yes if we are to build a stronger community.</p>	<p><u>HART</u>: <b>I believe in drawing people into engagement rather than pushing them to be involved.</b> To do so we must have a compelling, catalytic, and relevant vision. What is the AIA's singular, unifying idea? It is just the right time (as this question so rightly observes!) to act boldly. It is time to assert our domain—architects build community (look at what the American Society of Civil Engineers has accomplished in asserting their domain over infrastructure <a href="http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/">http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/</a> ).</p> <p><b>All architecture is local.</b> Let's celebrate what's best in our communities and challenge and inspire our cities to respond by mobilizing our membership to engage in AIA initiatives right where we live. To enlist architects in a cause is a much more compelling impetus to action than to enroll them in an organization. And who doesn't want their own community to increase in vibrancy, livability and resiliency? I have no doubt as the AIA gives voice to this cause and reveals the possibilities, we will see renewed, sustained and highly effective engagement from existing members and new ones—making our communities stronger along the way. We can align all the things we do well under the idea that architects build community.</p>

## 2. UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF SMALL PRACTITIONERS

**Given that small firm practitioners are a key membership demographic within the AIA, support of these firm members and practitioners is important to the continued success of the AIA. The needs of small firms are many times different from that of medium and larger practices. How would you propose that the Institute better understand and support the needs of this membership group?**

BATES: The Small Firm Roundtable has been an important element in helping the Institute understand the challenges of the Small Practitioner. One advantage of our recent repositioning is the ability of the board and Strategic Council to ensure that they have representation from all paths of professional practice. I would encourage those small firm representatives to propose initiatives that the Institute could implement to help strengthen their practices.

As we rebound from the Great Recession, it is important that the AIA provide value for all of its members. AIA can help by lobbying for legislative and zoning changes that will make it easier to design safe and healthy buildings while being more profitable. The challenges facing our components vary greatly depending on whether they support sparse rural or dense urban regions. We have to tailor our membership services to address those different needs. Our ability to protect the public health, safety and welfare is often limited by arcane or inconsistently administered building codes. These limitations often put small firms in direct competition with interior designers, builders, engineers and contractors. This dilemma varies from state to state and challenges the AIA to leverage its PACs and legislative lobbying networks to level the professional terrain.

HART: As a Director in a sizeable firm (320 people), I recognize that our nine offices function much like smaller firms in smaller communities. Our offices offer highly personalized client service within our communities where our people are leaders and engaged citizens. But we are also strengthened by our connectedness.

**I wonder if this is analogous to the role the AIA can play in connecting smaller firms to do together what they could not accomplish apart.** The Small Firm Exchange (SFx) has done impressive work offering networking opportunities, leadership development and knowledge sharing. As a board member, I would advocate for resourcing more innovation in these activities.

It is important, though, we not see our smaller firms solely in the light of needing support. These firms have much to offer as well. They know how to be nimble and can incubate and innovate. Often times, they are on the cutting edge of practice and design. We could all benefit from a robust interaction of this group with the rest of our membership. What if, for example, we connected the work of SFx with the Large Firm Roundtable (LFRT)? The possibilities in an exchange like that excite me.

GRANDSTAFF-RICE: Small firms are the lifeblood of the architecture profession. But I often hear that many small firm owners feel the AIA is out of touch with their day-to-day needs. The diversity and range of small firm practices across the country makes providing a one-size-fits-all solution unrealistic. The AIA can best support small firms by providing a connection to other practitioners, tools for growing prosperity and knowledge, and ensuring that the AIA supports a range of practices from large to small to everything between.

Engaging small firm practitioners is key for the AIA to better understand and support their current and future needs. First, leverage existing networks such as the Small Firm Exchange and their work with the Small Practice Practitioners, CRAN, the Kinetic App, and collaborations with Houzz. Second, develop and support frameworks that allow small firms to learn from each other in all aspects of their business. This will drive the future and ensure small firms will always have a place at the AIA through increased prosperity, innovation, and influence.

PANETTA: This is an area that should be of great importance to the Institute, and has been recognized as such through the multiple resources being provided to members who are small firm practitioners. Such programs as the Center for Practice, Member Constituency Groups like the Small Firm Exchange/Roundtable (SFx), and practice-relevant research and surveys as well as strong support for the 2017 AIA Contract Documents are just some of the ways the Institute is offering its members support. I would also stress the need for small firm advisory groups to provide regular feedback on these offerings so that the Institute can nimbly adjust to the changing needs of our small firm practitioners. If elected Treasurer, I look forward to working closely with Institute staff to ensure the investments into the recently re-organized budget portfolios of Workforce and Prosperity are hitting their metrics and truly yielding the results that are intended to support our members in these areas.

### 3. RESOURCING THE PROFESSION

The AIA has made a clear statement about the importance of diversity and equity in the future health of the profession. Attracting an inspired, skilled, and diverse workforce is perhaps the biggest challenge facing the profession. The Equity in Architecture Commission has outlined 11 specific recommendations for action, one of which is focusing on creating a significant shift in firm culture. If AIA is to succeed in strengthening the profession by attracting the next generation to it, all members from around the globe must play a central role. How can the AIA support this change and how can the Institute ensure adequate resources are focused in this area?

<p><u>GRANDSTAFF-RICE</u>: As Chair of the Equity in Architecture Commission, I began with the most important recommendation when presenting last year: for the Board to make Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) as a core value. It is also no accident that the AIA 2017 EDI Statement references the international implications twice:</p> <p><i>The American Institute of Architects, as part of the global community, champions a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession of architecture to create a better environment for all. Achieving this vision has a direct impact on the relevance of our profession and the world's prosperity, health, and future.</i></p> <p>The AIA can best support the EDI recommendations by keeping this work in the public eye, ensuring continued funding, and striving for full implementation within three years. Work is already underway with a new Board-level committee tasked with implementation. To better attract a skilled, inspired, and diverse workforce, we need to raise awareness as architecture professionals of the business case for a more diverse profession—greater creativity, employee retention, cultural awareness, and improved prosperity. Leadership today recognizes that equity, diversity, and inclusion as a critical part of doing business. I am proud that the AIA now recognizes this as well.</p>	<p><u>HART</u>: <b>The Zen archer is not immediately focused on the target.</b> This eastern discipline focuses its practitioners on posture, breathing and presence. When the archer is centered in those respects the likelihood of precisely hitting the target rises dramatically. In other words, in contrast to a more western approach focused on hitting the target, the Zen archer is as concerned with HOW she does what she does as she is with WHAT she is trying to accomplish.</p> <p><b>Strong firm culture, or “how we do things around here”, asserts that HOW we do things can be as important as WHAT we do.</b> Questions of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are perhaps the best evidence of this. Until our firms truly reflect society, we will not be as relevant or effective as we could be. Until we remove the barriers that prevent an equitable, diverse and inclusive profession we won't live into our fullest possibilities.</p> <p>The Commission identifies creating guides for EDI practice and a firm assessment tool measuring engagement with EDI principles. These measures are focused on HOW firms conduct themselves. As a board member, I would be fully supportive of resourcing these and other measures.</p>
<p><u>PANETTA</u>: As the Voice of the Profession and a resource to its members, the AIA needs to clearly promote the fact that the more culturally diverse and inclusive a firm can be, the potentially more successful and impactful it can be as well. A way to do so could be to create a repository of best-practice firms who demonstrate that the more inclusive and accommodating the culture of their firms are, it directly leads to more meaningful and recognized work. Having the AIA continue to publicly recognize firms that best demonstrate these types of values and continually produce distinguished architecture, such as this year's AIA Architecture Firm Award winner, Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects, is a very public way to validate support for firms that encourage a diverse, inclusive, and dynamic firm culture. The AIA must also continually be cognizant of our internationally-focused firms and members, both those based here in the United States as well as those oversees. Maintaining a globally-focused strategy for supporting and providing member services will be vital in helping maintain the future health of the profession.</p>	<p><u>BATES</u>: While serving on the Equity in Architecture Commission and the Board I was proud to advocate and vote for the Board's endorsement of those recommendations. They have already been prioritized in the national 2017 budget and have the strong support of both our President and President-elect. If we want the profession to thrive, it is important that the historical, cultural and institutional ceilings that have artificially restricted diverse upward mobility be removed. The profession's future talent pipeline can only be filled if it proactively invites diversity. Surveys show this pipeline to be notoriously leaky due to our grueling studio and office culture. The profession must change this paradigm to stem the defection by researching new modes of practice that offer a more reasonable work-life balance.</p> <p>If elected I would wholeheartedly commit to the continued advancement of this critical initiative. Long-term commitment and support is important since this is not a goal that can be achieved overnight.</p>

#### 4. ADVOCATING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Paris Agreement brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort. With this Paris Agreement in place and with a strong emphasis on the need to address the concerns and focus of the New Urban Agenda, how do you see the AIA, its components and its members, becoming stronger advocates and recognized leaders in their communities to meet these challenges?

<p><b>HART: Architects draw people together.</b> Often we do this with physical places and structures. But whether building is the object or not, we know how to listen and assess with empathy, explore and test with imagination, and build consensus and advocate with resolve. Design thinking applies well beyond the property lines of our next project. We know how to make big ideas real in the world.</p> <p>Both the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda offer the opportunity for architects to be real leaders. Design thinking equips us to be valuable well beyond buildings. We can be society’s treasured conveners on a number of fronts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic services</li> <li>• Discrimination deterrence</li> <li>• Cleaner cities</li> <li>• Resilience measures</li> <li>• Humane treatment for displaced persons</li> <li>• Sustainable connections between business and civil society</li> <li>• Livability and prosperity</li> </ul> <p>I love the phrase in this question referring to our components and members leading and advocating “in their communities”. That, to me, is the key. I go to greater lengths in responding to Question 1 establishing my conviction that with empathy, imagination and resolve, <b>architects build community</b>. I want to be a part of a board that communicates openly, thinks deeply and acts boldly toward that end.</p>	<p><b>PANETTA:</b> I think the challenge for the AIA will be to distill down the many facets of both the Paris Agreement and New Urban Agenda into manageable areas of focus that its members can specifically address at the local level. For instance, identifying very specific steps AIA Architects can take in the planning and design of their buildings and their communities to reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions per the Paris Agreement. Or how AIA Architects can design structures that best adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience. Having the AIA provide focus is especially important to the multi-faceted program of the New Urban Agenda to address the myriad of important issues such as cleaner cities, resilient design, and promoting safe, accessible and green public spaces. I’d propose the development of an Environmental Advocacy task-list and how-to guide for members to reference to help them make both an individual and collective impact in support of these two extremely important global accords.</p>
<p><b>BATES:</b> A sustainable and resilient built environment is fundamental to the Institute’s Core Values. Climate change is the most serious threat to society’s existence and one which the architect has an imperative responsibility to address. If EPA is weakened, as currently proposed, it will be incumbent upon our profession to double its efforts to educate the nation about the benefits of our 2030 Challenge. This will require a collaborative effort at every level of the Institute’s organization as well as help from our collateral partners, including more research from the academic sector.</p> <p>We can demonstrate our leadership by identifying the most vulnerable communities and proactively holding well publicized Design Assistance Team problem-solving events around the globe. At the state level AIA components must ensure the architect’s ability to play a role in disaster recovery by encouraging the adoption of “Good Samaritan” laws. We must also continue to train architects in FEMA disaster recovery procedures. Likewise, the AIA must take a stand and make its collective voice heard in the halls of legislatures across the country. Its also imperative that we target positions of influence that will allow the “citizen architect” to inform and steer public policy toward an intelligent and global approach to climate change.</p>	<p><b>GRANDSTAFF-RICE:</b> Architects are uniquely positioned to advocate for sustainability with our creativity, knowledge, and influence. As professionals, we understand how the choices we make create positive change. I am energized by the recent COTE advocacy effort spearheading a letter on preserving and protecting vital programs of the Environmental Protection Agency signed by 775 firms representing 48 states including my Boston-based firm Arrowstreet. This is a great example of how a national committee can mobilize architects across the country to have collective impact. There are many AIA members recognized as sustainability and resilience leaders on the national, state, and local level, but this is only a fraction of the over 90,000 AIA members. There is more work to do.</p> <p>Part of the issue is an awareness gap within AIA membership about how COP21, the New Urban Agenda, and the 2030 Commitment impact an architect’s day-to-day work. How can AIA members better leverage design and user engagement as strategies towards creating a more sustainable, resilient future? While continued external advocacy at the federal, state, and local level must continue, the AIA and components must not let up on educating its own members and leading our shared future.</p>