JASON WINTERS
AIA National Candidacy

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September 5, 2014

AIA Middle Atlantic Region Members:

When I first became a part of my local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, I not only discovered how the AIA community would help me grow and succeed professionally, but also how I could reciprocate in our efforts to continually improve the value of the architectural profession. I am thankful to my fellow AIA members for instantly welcoming, mentoring, and continuously inspiring me; Being actively involved in our leadership and serving as the President of AIA Maryland is both my privilege and an honor. It is in this spirit that I offer this expression of interest to represent the Middle Atlantic Region on the National AIA Strategic Council.

My professional activities in practice and education are distinct but collectively reflective of efforts that mirror the 2014 AIA Repositioning Report’s priorities to connect, engage, lead, and innovate. I spent my first several years of practice gaining valuable experience with a large firm delivering projects in a design-build capacity. Then after completing graduate studies, I worked on institutional projects for a more traditional midsized architecture firm. Most recently, I started my own practice that allowed me to undertake new challenges and opportunities that typically face sole proprietors and small business entities. This range in scale of professional practice is coupled with a part-time education component that has permitted me to connect with aspiring architects, emerging professionals, and active AIA members. Collectively, all of these activities call for engagement into the AIA through multiple lenses, each providing a unique perspective that represents the celebrated multiplicity and variety of an architect’s services and knowledge base.

I would like to thank Steven Spurlock for his years of service as our Middle Atlantic Regional Director and pledge to work alongside Carl Elefante on continuing to strengthen the standing of architects and architecture as well as a commitment to execute the repositioning efforts of the AIA. I am proud to be considered as your candidate for the Strategic Council, thank you to all members of the Middle Atlantic Region for your consideration and support. This is a very exciting time for change in the AIA as we herald in a new robust professional organization that situates architects as prevalent leaders in all aspects of the built environment past, present, and future.

Sincerely,

Jason Winters, AIA
I believe the successful candidate for this position possesses familiarity with the entire working organization of the AIA. My knowledge of the AIA stems from firsthand experience at all levels. I have been an active member since joining the AIA Chesapeake Bay Chapter and have held leadership positions continuously, serving as chapter president in 2008 and current president of AIA Maryland. I received appointments from 2012 AIA President Jeffery Potter to sit on the AIA National Board Advocacy Committee as well as the AIA National Continuing Education Committee. For over ten years, I have been active in serving at the national, state, and local levels of the AIA in supporting our profession through various roles and responsibilities. Serving in these capacities has given me a holistic perspective towards all levels of our organization and how they effectively interrelate and connect. As a member of the new Strategic Council, this experience enables me to provide effective contributions to serve the diversity and varying scales of our Middle Atlantic Region membership.
An Opportunity for Our Profession

Traditionally architects have been considered creators of content - our design process results in the manifestation of the physical built environment. In the age of information in which we live, an opportunity has emerged not just for the creation of content but also the analysis of content. In Daniel Pink’s book A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future, he describes this condition as the rise of the conceptual age. With advancement in technology, exported production overseas, and an over abundance of information, the future knowledge worker must have more than technical skills or specialized knowledge, they must be able to evaluate content.

Academia has already begun to recognize this shifting perspective. In 2011, the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and the Johns Hopkins University Carey Business School announced a partnership MBA/MA in Design Leadership. The dual degree program seeks the “integration of creative thinking into all aspects of organizational management and development.” The catch phrase ‘creative thinking’ also has presence in the workplace. Dan Roam, author of The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures has worked with the likes of Google, Boeing, Wells Fargo and many other prominent companies. Roam has made a living helping these entities visualize information and think critically about business product, process, and organization. With this evidence of the need for design leadership/creative thinking prevalent in both education and work, there is a tremendous opportunity for architects to participate in this growing sector.

An architectural education is based on cultivating a design process of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. Based on Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy, these areas of learning are the highest level of thinking skill sets in the cognitive realm (Also see A New Professional Development Model for Architects by Emily Grandstaff-Rice, AIA.)

An architect’s analysis of pertinent data, synthesis of quantitative and qualitative information, and evaluation of potential variables place us as leaders of creative thinking and learning in action. If we were to conceive our position as architects not exclusive to the health, safety, and welfare of the built environment, there is no limitation to what, where, or how our talents could be utilized across various disciplines and multiple business sectors in the future.

Positioning for Positive Change

This opportunity demands a change in the perception of architects and the role of the AIA. Our 2016 AIA President Russel Davidson has spoken about this as the need to convey our value as architects to allied professionals and the general public. This year our Regional Directors Steven Spurlock and Carl Elefante, along with the AIA National governing body made an important step forward with the repositioning initiative of the Institute. Looking ahead, we now have to carefully implement this plan assuring that it provides the platform for continued advancement of architects and our professional organization. I believe this effort is imperative to our voice, our relevance, and our value of to society.

Within this context we should thoughtfully consider the urgency and drive for repositioning the AIA. At this year’s convention in Chicago, the new AIA National Board structure approval was described as a key step by AIA President Helene Combs Dreiling: “This new governance structure will make sure the AIA can speak with a clearer voice, move quicker to address its members’ concerns, and better represent its membership, it paves the way for more repositioning the AIA efforts to take root, helping us better serve all AIA members.”

It is clear that our overall mission and identity will remain the same. However, it appears that the time has come for the American Institute of Architects to reconsider how architects fulfill
this mission and how we represent ourselves. No one has questioned our value, our initiatives or our professional standing. But it seems that the world in which we live today is not just about what you do but how you do it. By making sweeping changes to our internal organization, the AIA hopes to create a leadership body that can provide an external shift in the perception of architects and architectural practice. Incoming 2015 AIA President Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA, has clarified this position: “I’m hoping that my leadership will help bring the AIA into a more member-focused future, building greater public engagement and understanding, while also refining the Institute’s leadership structure and operation focus. More than ever, the repositioned AIA will be highly valued and globally relevant in its service to society in building a better world.”

We are at an exciting moment for the AIA and much important work lies ahead. This idea is echoed in the 2014 AIA Repositioning Report as stated by AIA President Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA and CEO Robert Ivy, FAIA: “If 2013 was a year of learning and planning, 2014 is the year of implementation.” From the AIA Progress Report at Convention it is clear that our organization is undergoing a positive change that requires continued guidance and thoughtful governance reaching beyond 2014 into the years ahead.

A Tale of Cautious Optimism

For me, this is a very exciting time to be an active member of AIA leadership. The repositioning effort is not only a necessity to maintain our present standing and relevance as architects; it is also an opportunity to reimagine and reshape the role and perception of the architectural profession for the future. But as of now the repositioning of the Institute is a change in language and structure and it remains to be seen if it will be a change in culture. A change in our AIA culture is a more difficult proposition. In the book Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard, Chip & Dan Heath describe a case study centered around a figure named Jerry Sternin. In the dialogue, Sternin states “Knowledge does not change behavior, we have all encountered crazy shrinks and obese doctors and divorced marriage counselors.”

Just consider the immense efforts taken to simply pass the repositioning resolution. Between two hundred and fifty to three hundred ‘repositioning ambassadors’ were appointed by our national governance to educate and garner support for this initiative. Additionally, a membership conversion guide was published in 2013 to provide further backing for this effort. Organizational restructuring alone does not preclude a shift in perception and attitude. If these initiatives are evidence of the undertaking required to make a change in language and organization structure, imagine the work that lies ahead to successfully change the culture of the AIA.

And yet implementation of repositioning is imperative to our profession so the current task is to determine how we move forward? With our newly formed Strategic Council in place, opportunities for the way in which the AIA approaches the future are in place. In a press release following the Convention in Chicago, Robert Ivy, AIA EVP/Chief Executive Officer stated: “The Strategic Council will give us new ways to confront the future of the profession proactively not reactively.” But the language choice of ‘will give’ verses a stronger position such as dictates/mandates/ensures opens up the responsibility of the implementation of ‘new ways’ squarely on the membership of the strategic council.

This is what makes repositioning so important to our organization. In the past, one might argue that we gave up the education of our emerging professionals to NCARB and/or lost the entire sector of sustainability to the USGBC precisely because of our inability to lead proactively. If we remain defensive in our posture, what portion of our services will slip away next? And along with the idea of content aggregators, what opportuni-
ties are architects and the AIA yielding to other entities in the marketplace?

_A Call to Action_

I believe that advocacy, education, and representation are crucial to the future of our profession and run concurrent with the repositioning efforts of AIA National. With this opportunity to engage AIA National as a member of the new Strategic Council, I will continue to promote advocacy and education of architects while focusing on the changing governance of the AIA and aspects of our representation.

My passion for advocacy began with regular attendance at AIA Grassroots and subsequent work on specific legislative issues with the state of Maryland. Additionally, as part of the AIA National Board Advocacy Committee, our Emerging Professionals Sub Committee spent the year developing a summer advocacy fellowship to provide associate members the opportunity to engage with AIA Advocacy staff regarding legislative action, regulatory reform, and public advocacy. I believe advocacy is important because it is the only way to preserve our voice on pertinent issues that face such as the ability to be registered, to practice, or ways in which others take part of professional architectural services.

The current AIAS Board Advocacy Chair, Stephen Parker, is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Architecture, Preservation, and Planning. In 2013, I was part of Stephen’s faculty thesis committee and spent time with him as an educator but also as a fellow advocate for the AIA and architecture. Stephen and I forged a relationship that shares passion for the AIA and advocacy. We are currently in the final stages of planning for a legislative trip to Capitol Hill in October to advocate to our state legislators in favor of the National Design Services Act of 2014. H.R. 4205 has been introduced to the House of Representatives. Working directly with Amanda Stratton - Manager, Grassroots & Advocacy Outreach at AIA National will help us bring publicity to the event and hopefully further the advancement of the National Design Services Act in the political arena.

Architectural education has also been an important aspect of my professional activities and service to the AIA. For me, architecture is a life long education that ensures that we can maintain our relevance. While I am primarily involved in practice, the past several years have afforded opportunities as a part-time educator at various levels of education for many types of students. With regard to professional education, my work at the AIA National Continuing Education Committee allows me to advance our continuing education of active AIA members. I have spent the past three years on the AIA National Continuing Education Committee. We focus on quality education and its connection to practice. Some activities I have undertaken include the review of convention presentation topics and content, improvement in educational delivery methods, and presenting relevant topics to CEU providers at the AIA Convention Provider Workshop. Overall, engagement with committee work at the national level has imparted me with a clear understanding of the inner workings of our organization, the knowledge of both AIA staff members along with elected officers, and the know-how to get things done.

My mission as a member of the strategic council is to continue to advance the architectural profession and work diligently to fully implement the repositioning of the AIA. With regard to repositioning, I pledge to provide leadership, share knowledge, and foster collaboration amongst members of the Mid-Atlantic Region as well as the national level of the AIA. I will also continue to cultivate and champion positive change that is just now being realized. Though successful enactment of repositioning, we will bring added value to architects and professional practice in the Mid-Atlantic Region. I welcome the responsibility and opportunity set forth with this sense of purpose.
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Approach to Leadership

Through my personal architectural practice, my role as an educator and service in the AIA, I am convinced that strong advocacy and meaningful education are crucial to the future of our profession. My passion for advocacy began with regular attendance at AIA Grassroots and subsequent work on specific legislative issues with the state of Maryland. Additionally, as part of the AIA National Board Advocacy Committee, our Emerging Professionals Sub Committee spent the year developing a summer advocacy fellowship to provide associate members the opportunity to engage with AIA Advocacy staff regarding legislative action, regulatory reform, and public advocacy. Architectural education has also been an important aspect of my professional activities and service to the AIA. While I am primarily involved in practice, the past several years have afforded opportunities as a part-time educator at various levels of education for many types of students. With regard to professional education, my work at the AIA National Continuing Education Committee allows me to advance our continuing education of active AIA members. These interests are coupled with membership/organizational representation to create an interconnected yet diverse approach to leadership.
Jason Winters, AIA, holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Drexel University and a Master of Architecture degree from Syracuse University. He also holds a Master of Liberal Arts degree from Johns Hopkins University. Jason brings over twenty years of professional work experience in architectural practice encompassing a wide range of project types including residential, institutional, commercial, and sacred. This project experience includes activities such as planning, programming, design, documentation, management, and administration. His professional work has been focused on design with an expertise in the field of healthcare architecture. Specifically, this area of practice considers the articulation of the built environment as an opportunity to advance the emotional, social, and physical well-being of its inhabitants. Although this approach originates from extensive research and experience in the healthcare design and construction industry, the work serves as an impetus for addressing multiple facets of our man-made physical environment and the prominent role it can play in all aspects of life. In this context, the relationship and resolution of form, space, and surface seek to capture the healing art of architecture and design while simultaneously creating compelling visuo-spatial narratives that enhance the individual experience.

Early in his career, Jason acquired valuable experience while working for Integrated Project Services near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During this time, he completed various pharmaceutical projects ranging from R&D environments to large scale processing and manufacturing buildings and facility infrastructure projects. This type of work required significant involvement in the design and coordination of complex and highly specialized building systems. As such, these types of projects produced an important knowledge base with regards to building infrastructure, engineering systems, and advanced building technologies. After completing graduate studies, Jason began working exclusively on healthcare projects at CRGA in Annapolis, Maryland. Within a ten year period, he completed hundreds of projects for a wide variety of hospitals and healthcare organizations within the region. These projects provided a broad range of experience in the healthcare industry including outpatient services and ambulatory care to the most clinical services available through healthcare providers. Each area of investigation serves as a valuable source of data at both the macro and micro scale of design, the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the built environment, as well as the local, regional, and international perspectives regarding the delivery of healthcare. It is the careful synthesis of this information that serves as a catalyst for innovative architectural solutions and acts as the basis for an approach to design.

While practicing architecture full time, Jason serves as an adjunct faculty member at two architecture programs including the University of Maryland School of Architecture Planning and Preservation as well as the Architecture and Interior Design Department at Anne Arundel Community College. He is also a long time member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and heavily involved with the organization at the local, state, and national level.
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Background

AIA Experience

AIA National
- Continuing Education Committee  2012 - Present
- Board Advocacy Committee  2012

AIA Maryland
- Component President  2014
- Component Vice President  2013
- Chair Maryland Architects PAC  2012 - Present
- Component Director  2009 - 2011

AIA Chesapeake Bay Chapter
- Chapter President  2008
- Chapter Vice President  2007
- Chapter Treasurer  2006
- Chapter Director  2004 - 2005

Professional Experience

Kezlo Group - Principal  2013 - Present
www.kezlogroup.com

CRGA - Associate  2001 - 2012
www.crga.com

IPS - Designer  1996 – 2000
www.ipsdb.com

Academic Experience

University of Maryland
School of Architecture, Preservation & Planning
Adjunct Faculty  2012 - Present

Anne Arundel Community College
School of Architecture & Interior Design
Adjunct Faculty  2010 - Present

Associations & Activities

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)
USGBC - LEED accredited Professional
ACE Mentor Program – Annapolis Chapter, Board Member and Mentor