



Memorandum

Date: July 14, 2026

To: AIA Members

From: Caitlin Couture, CAE, Vice President, Governance and Awards, and Corporate Secretary

Subject: Outcomes from the AIA Annual Business Meeting

Executive Summary: 2026 AIA Annual Business Meeting

Delegates gathered in San Diego for the opening day of AIA26. President Illya Azaroff reported membership above 101,000, no dues increase for the coming year, and a major chapter investment: 25 years of secured Chapter Sustainability Funds plus \$2 million in new Activation Funds to scale local initiatives nationally. Treasurer Lisa Kennedy, FAIA, confirmed AIA's strong financial footing, a clean FY2025 audit, reserves exceeded, \$8 million in added component payments, and a \$25 million board designation for future support alongside a commitment to pursue new, non-dues revenue. EVP/CEO Carole Wedge, FAIA, highlighted architects' ~\$700 billion economic impact and previewed the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan update. Two task forces reported progress: the AI Task Force released foundational guidance and a soft-launched AI Toolkit, while the Governance Task Force presented restructuring recommendations, including a new Knowledge Advisory Forum, to improve role clarity and decision-making. To learn more about the [key takeaways from the 2026 AIA Annual Business Meeting](#).

The following questions were raised by Delegates from the floor of the meeting. The questions and responses have been summarized to ensure clarity.

Summary of Question/Comment	Response
Asked whether the new AI educational resources and toolkits would be available free of charge, noting that AIAU courses often require payment.	Resources developed by the AI Task Force will be published on AIA.org and promoted through AIA communications, including the weekly <i>AIA Architect</i> newsletter, as they become available. The new AI courses will be included as part of the AIAU subscription.

Has AIA considered developing its own AI model or shared knowledge platform that members collectively own and train?

AIA is not planning to build or train our own AI model. Instead, we are exploring AI-powered tools that can securely leverage AIA's and our partners' research, knowledge, and resources to help members discover insights, answer questions, and stay informed about emerging trends related to designing, building, and operating high-performance buildings.

Requested greater clarity regarding the Strategic Activation Fund, specifically the evaluation criteria, selection process, and expectations for successful proposals.

The Strategic Activation Fund is intended to support initiatives that advance AIA's strategic priorities and demonstrate measurable impact for members and components. Proposals are evaluated based on strategic alignment, expected outcomes, scalability, and organizational readiness. Additional guidance on criteria, timelines, and the review process will be shared with components as future funding opportunities are announced.

What additional strategies, resources, or support can National provide to help chapters increase member engagement, volunteerism, and leadership participation?

National will continue to provide engagement toolkits, volunteer recruitment resources, leadership pathways, and peer-to-peer sharing opportunities for components. We are also exploring new approaches to connect members with meaningful volunteer experiences and leadership opportunities that align with their interests and career goals. Successful practices identified across chapters will be shared more broadly. Attendance at the [AIA Leadership Summit](#) is also encouraged by current and future elected leaders.

Commended the Governance Task Force and encouraged continued focus on clarifying governance roles and improving collaboration.

The Governance Task Force will continue to advance recommendations throughout the summer to provide detailed recommendations to the AIA Board of Directors in September 2026. AIA members are encouraged to continue to submit feedback through [Governance at AIA | The American Institute of Architects](#).

How is AIA reviewing and responding to the NCARB Practice Overlap Guidance, and what is the organization's position on this?

AIA is actively reviewing the [NCARB Practice Overlap Guidance](#) and engaging with members, chapters, and partner organizations to understand its potential implications. Our focus is on protecting public health, safety, and welfare while supporting the value and distinct expertise of architects. We will communicate our position and advocacy strategy as that review is completed.

Does AIA intend to establish formal policy or guidance regarding architects' participation in immigration detention centers, consistent with the profession's ethical responsibilities?

AIA recognizes the importance of this issue and its connection to the profession's ethical responsibilities. We are evaluating member feedback, existing ethical frameworks, and potential policy implications. Any future guidance will be developed through established governance and policy processes.

Asked whether National could convene chapters to share best practices on chapter financial management, including real estate ownership, foundations, investments, and governance.

This is an area where peer learning can provide significant value. National will explore opportunities to convene chapters to share successful approaches related to financial management, reserves, foundations, investments, facilities, and governance. Our goal is to help components learn from one another's experiences and strengthen long-term sustainability. The CACE Annual Meeting and [AIA Leadership Summit](#) are events where this content and conversation can take place.

Asked whether National could provide more structured mentoring and leadership development opportunities specifically for chapter presidents and presidents-elect.

Strengthening chapter leadership remains a priority. National is exploring additional mentoring, onboarding, and peer-network opportunities for chapter presidents and presidents-elect. We want local leaders to have access to practical tools, experienced mentors, and stronger connections across the component network.

Asked what National is doing to address the aging membership demographic and the financial impact of increasing Emeritus membership on chapter revenues.

AIA is closely monitoring demographic trends and their implications for membership, engagement, and component finances. Efforts are underway to strengthen recruitment and retention across all career stages while continuing to recognize the contributions of emeritus members. We will work with components to better understand and address the long-term financial impacts of these trends.

Asked whether National could better tailor resources and toolkits for small and rural chapters and leverage AI technologies to customize support.

National is committed to developing resources that reflect the unique needs of small and rural components. We are exploring ways to use AI and other technologies to deliver more personalized support, reduce administrative burden, and improve access to relevant tools and information. Component feedback will continue to shape these efforts. We also have a staff member dedicated to supporting volunteer-led chapters. We will reach out to brainstorm ideas and have continued dialogue with this constituency.

Asked how National plans to help state and local components communicate dues increases when National dues remain unchanged, ensuring members understand the value provided at each level.

We will partner directly with CACE and our component network to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling value message to members. We will also provide supporting resources and communications tools that help components explain the distinct value delivered at the national, state, and local levels.

Asked whether AIA is measuring and reporting Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions associated with operations and business travel.

Annually, AIA makes contributions to planting trees in DC's underserved communities as an offset, as well as to the Carbon Leadership Forum, a longtime AIA partner for policy, education, and resources to offset AIA's business travel.

Asked how AIA should respond to architects who choose not to join because

AIA should respond by listening first, acknowledging concerns, demonstrating how member feedback informs its

they feel the organization or its communications do not represent them.

work, and reinforcing the tangible value of membership.

Communications should emphasize that AIA is shaped by its members and offers many [opportunities to get involved](#), influence its direction, and strengthen the profession, while serving architects across diverse perspectives, practice types, and career stages.

Urged AIA to make architectural student debt a major advocacy priority and become the central resource for addressing the affordability of architectural education.

This remains a priority for AIA. To learn more about our [Federal policy issues](#).

Raised concern over the rapid growth of data centers, urging AIA to develop advocacy and policy quickly enough to influence legislation.

AIA recognizes the growing impact of data center development on communities, infrastructure, energy systems, and the built environment. We are monitoring policy developments and evaluating opportunities to support member engagement and advocacy on these issues. Our goal is to help ensure architects have a voice in shaping responsible and sustainable outcomes.

Asked whether AIA could explore alternative international membership structures, dues models, and payment mechanisms to better serve members outside the United States.

AIA remains committed to serving members around the world. We will continue evaluating opportunities to improve the international member experience, including potential enhancements to membership structures, payment options, and engagement models. Feedback from international members will help guide future improvements. In addition, the International Membership Task Force is currently evaluating enhancements to our global efforts, including the cost of participation.

Asked how AIA plans to address the impending knowledge loss associated with retirements and aging membership.

Capturing and sharing professional knowledge across generations is an important priority for the profession. AIA will continue promoting mentorship, communities of practice, and opportunities for experienced architects to share expertise with emerging professionals. These efforts help preserve institutional knowledge while strengthening the future workforce.

Recommended that the Revenue Task Force produce best practices for dues parity and messaging across the national, state, and local components.

We appreciate this recommendation and believe that consistent messaging about the value of dues is important across all levels of the organization. The Revenue Task Force will have the opportunity to consider best practices and recommendations that support clearer communications and stronger alignment.

Asked how National can help chapters continue diversity and pipeline initiatives

AIA remains committed to expanding pathways into the profession and supporting a strong future talent pipeline. We will continue sharing resources, partnerships, and successful

in states where legislation has limited DEI programs at public universities.

strategies that comply with applicable laws while helping components engage students and emerging professionals. Our focus is on ensuring the profession remains accessible, welcoming, and resilient.