



AIA Townhall—May 1, 2024, FAQ

Responses to questions related to 2024 resolutions have been provided by the resolution sponsors in preparation for the Annual Meeting on June 5, 2024. Questions about the resolutions should be directed to the resolution sponsors. The 2024 resolutions can be found in the Official Delegate Handbook.

Resolution 1:

- 1. There are various guidelines addressing healthcare facilities and design. Does this resolution need to be addressed in those publications?**

This resolution begins the policy work by the AIA Board to recognize high-level direction and communications related to architecture's impact on health and wellbeing. Future editions of existing model codes and standards, such as the Facility Guideline Institute's publications may reference the work that emerges from the AIA in this space.

- 2. Has the great work of Richard Jackson and Esther Sternberg work been referenced in this area?**

As part of its 2023 study, the Strategic Council's 'Wellbeing' area-of-study consulted multiple public health scholars. Some of these scholars were also part of the AIA's previous 'Design & Health Leadership Group', which published work in the mid-20-teens, but the AIA disbanded the DHLG subsequently. Drs. Jackson and Sternberg's influence was evident in the DHLG, and they are close colleagues of two of the 2023 subject-matter-experts.

We anticipate that these two luminaries and others will be both referenced and consulted as the AIA's policy is shaped into actions.

- 3. Has the ACSA signed on to specifically revising the curriculum to incorporate health and well-being education?**

The intent of this resolution is to shape the AIA's advocacy agenda, which will afford the AIA the research and data to coordinate with both the ACSA and NAAB.

If the resolution is adopted and the advocacy direction is set, we anticipate the AIA to have robust discussions with both ACSA and NAAB.

- 4. Will E&O insurance companies cover the Health and Wellbeing Policy should there be a related issue arising from a client lawsuit?**

If the resolution is passed, this is expected to be a matter of discussion with insurers to clarify the various risks that have been heretofore overlooked. However, the sponsors assert that just because a matter has been historically overlooked, does not reduce the risks or their effects. Some attorneys have knowledge of the existence of health and wellbeing-related research and its potential applications. This resolution is a prudent, proactive step to protect the profession.

5. How will the health and wellbeing research requirement be implemented into degree programs?

The intent of this policy is to initially shape the AIA's advocacy agenda with ACSA and NAAB. The results of those discussions may influence ACSA's and NAAB's requirements over time.

There are several schools of architecture across the U.S. they have already embraced health and wellbeing research into their curriculum, such as Texas A&M, Clemson, and University of Kansas.

6. Will the code of ethics regarding health & well-being be a canon, ethical standard, or rule?

Since the AIA's National Ethics Council was specifically mentioned in the resolution, members of the sponsorship team have reached out to the N.E.C. Chair as a matter of courtesy. However, as of this writing, they have not responded directly to the resolution. The work of the resolution will enable AIA's Board to develop the details of this policy. As such, we expect they will work with the N.E.C. to coordinate how this goal is integrated in the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

7. Why isn't this language tied to our current Health Safety & Welfare language rather than a separate resolution?

The Strategic Council's 2023 research referenced that architects discuss Health, Safety, and Welfare, yet definitions of Health are often unclear. The Council found that most continuing education programs relate to building occupant safety (emergency door hardware or maximum windowsill heights to facilitate fire department access) – which are necessary. However, the discourse is silent about the health and wellbeing aspects of the same building components of architecture, such as the health benefits that views to nature that windows might afford, etc.

The study findings recognized that research related to the latter was largely overlooked or ambiguously referenced, despite the related benefits and clarity that some research demonstrates. It was important, therefore, to provide focus on this content for the benefit of our clients and the public.

Resolution 2:

1. How does this align with the AIA Strategic Plan?

The intent of this resolution is to align the AIA Strategic Plan with other AIA documents (e.g. Code of Ethics) that have a more inclusive definition and identification of EDI and historically discriminated underrepresented groups.

2. Please list the new groups we are trying to include. Are there groups that are currently excluded?

The following new groups are being proposed for adding religion, national origin, age, disability, caregiver status, gender identity, and sexual orientation. These groups align with what is listed within the AIA Code of Ethics and align similarly to many University DEI group lists.

3. Does AIA cover this similar language currently in its policies and procedures or code of ethics?

Yes, the additional groups being proposed for addition align exactly with Section E.S. 1.401 of the AIA Code of Ethics

4. What other standards did you use? Were you interested in going beyond what's currently included in the AIA Code of Ethics?

I spent time researching the groups listed by universities and other large companies. The list seemed to be most comprehensive but could be expanded if someone identifies a discriminated group that is not included.

5. What is it about the AIA and Architectural licensing process that discriminates against any minority or other groups?

Increasingly, architects and design professionals will be called to lead efforts in finding solutions to many of our society's most pressing issues. To meet these challenges, we must have the talent, passion, and creativity of a diverse cohort of students, professionals, and leaders.

The Guides for Equitable Practice, done in partnership with the University of Washington, the University of Minnesota, and The American Institute of Architects' Equity and the Future of Architecture Committee (EQFA), are a vital part of AIA's long-term commitment to lead efforts that ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture—that the architecture profession is as diverse as the nation we serve.

6. Does the resolution name an accountability party to uphold inclusivity standards?

It does not, but it seems within reason for the AIA Equity and the Future of Architecture to take point on this.

- 7. Why can't we just say "underrepresented groups" instead of trying to name them all? It seems we are setting ourselves up to tackle this every year.**

This approach detracts from the goal of EDI. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to expect this list to be changed or updated occasionally. If it is overgeneralized, it lessens its effect.

- 8. Has the AIA Board's Equity and the Future of Architecture Committee been consulted on this resolution?**

The Equity and the Future of Architecture Committee has been asked to comment on the proposed resolution.

Resolution 3:

- 1. This information talks of nine strategic members being added to the board. The language of the resolution only provides for three to be elected.**

The term on the Strategic Council is three years. The resolution therefore calls for the initial terms of the nine members selected to serve the first year this is enacted of which five members would be selected for a two-year term and four members for a one-year term, with rolling reselection of two-year terms thereafter.

- 2. Has it been considered that by adding additional members to the board we are somewhat going backward to the previous board model?**

At the time the board had 40-50 members, the membership was in the 60,000 range. The AIA membership is now at 96,000. We are not proposing as large as in the past, but with the increase of members it does warrant a board of at least 21 with representation across the country and by state chapter size.

- 3. What research has been completed to assess the “right” number of members to add?**

Discussions with former presidents, chapters’ leadership and executive directors who have knowledge of board size representation.

- 4. How councilors are “voted in” is not consistent across components. Some aren’t voted on by a larger membership, and some aren’t even a state board position. Would this resolution lead to a more consistent requirement for how strategic councilors are elected?**

Yes. When the regions were dissolved, there were no set requirements except for initial terms. This will in fact assist the state chapters in both the election process as well as the requirements and duties of a state strategic council representative.

- 5. How was the Strategic Council engaged in the creation of this resolution, if at all?**

Due to the limited amount of time to put forth this proposal, we did not have the opportunity to engage the council. There were only 3 weeks from the opening of the resolution window to submission. Instead, we reached out to chapter leadership and executives for input.

- 6. How does this resolution support or take into consideration recommendations from the Members’ Voice Task Force report from a few years ago?**

The Member’s Task Force report was not mentioned to us for consideration in this process. We were not informed in any discussions nor was it ever mentioned by the Resolution Committee as a consideration. This question had us looking for the report –

nothing available on aia.org or through Google search specifically for AIA.

7. The council should be focused on forward-facing activities and not board day-to-day - could the resolution be changed to add the Council Moderator and Vice Moderator only to the board?

We are concerned that we create good representation for all parts of the country and all sizes of chapters/components. Further, there should be enough votes on the board to carry the voice of the membership and to apprise the membership of decisions under consideration by the Board. The current board make-up does not achieve this; adding the Council Moderator and Vice Moderator only to the board would not necessarily bring about the desired change.

8. For those nine to be effective, they would have to be active with the board to vote. Are those councilors expected to be active members of both bodies? This could be a strain on a volunteer leader as they balance the two. Especially given the main visionary charter.

The intent is that those Councilors serving on the board during their term would serve in lieu of participation in a working group that all Councilors are involved in. In other words, their serving on the board would be their working group.

9. Would a potential Board expansion, a change to the current model, or other ways to address the underlying concerns and goals around representation and transparency be better addressed in our next strategic planning process instead of through a resolution?

We are confident that the Strategic Council is well-equipped to select 9 individuals best suited to serve on the board, ensuring effective representation of concerns from small, medium, and large chapters, as well as diverse geographic regions. We do not believe that a 21-person board is too unwieldy for a membership of 96,000. It might be that this could subsequently be adjusted in strategic planning if unintended consequences develop but this resolution would make a difference more immediately.

10. Are strategic council state reps financially supported by their states? Would becoming a board member mean they are supported by national? Are the terms for strategic council reps the same as a board member for term requirements?

Every state handles the support of their Strategic Councilors in their own way. We would propose that these members are supported in the same way that the current national board members are. The terms for Strategic Council representatives are defined in the resolution, staggered for yearly turnover similar to other terms currently employed.

11. If there is a desire to increase the board size and representation, should there be an alternate path that does not involve the Strategic Council?

Strategic Councilors are generally elected by their chapters; they are tasked with being

forward-looking for the organization and being the voice of the membership. As opposed to inventing a new way to field the best representation, this seems the most appropriate, democratic, and efficient route.

Resolution 4:

1. Why not include the annual Leadership Summit in this resolution as well?

This resolution is a starting point for improved access that prioritizes the two major events hosted by the AIA, as well as the two events that are tied to the new revenue sharing components.

2. What would the impact be on the AIA Budget if these conferences had a virtual option?

When speaking with conference industry organizers (PCMA), it was stated that virtual platforms can cost \$10-100k, however they can be monetized and advertised in a way that offsets the additional cost. Sponsorships can vary from a presenting sponsor who owns the entire livestream, to selling off pieces of the live stream, to building virtual-only content to monetize. By offering virtual tickets, there is an opportunity to increase revenue by expanding sales to people who otherwise wouldn't go in-person for various reasons.

3. Is there research that shows that virtual attendance offers an equivalent experience to in-person attendance?

This study (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8527193/>) found that while virtual options were not able to replicate 100% the in-person experience, the overwhelming majority of respondents found virtual to be an enjoyable experience and would join similar events again. Virtual options result in expanded access to lower-income people, disabled people, caregivers, and those who may simply have scheduling conflicts.

4. Why is this resolution not broadened to enable every AIA conference?

This resolution is a starting point for improved access that prioritizes the two major events hosted by the AIA, as well as the two events that are tied to the new revenue sharing components.

5. Would attendance cost virtually be the same as in person?

Historically speaking, virtual tickets are cheaper than in-person tickets.

6. Revenue sharing between National & state / local components has been changed to include a portion of the sharing will be based on the number of component members attending the annual conference and women's leadership summit. How would that formula be impacted by virtual options?

A virtual attendance option would allow state/local chapters to still capture revenue sharing, in instances where it would be difficult to send members in-person. For example, AIA Hawaii, AIA Alaska, and other chapters that are located far away would no

longer be affected disproportionately by this change.

7. There is also substantial research that an increase in digital meetings and isolation is associated with a decrease in mental health. Are we concerned that attendance would diminish?

No. Also, this question does not consider the mental health of those who cannot attend these events.

8. Has there been any study on the impact of this on those who attend in person?

It is assumed that those who would like to still attend in person will do so. This is simply giving those who cannot attend in person an option to still attend the conference and/or summit.

9. With the way that conference tours sell out so quickly indicating their popularity and importance to attendees, how would the virtual attendance account for the tours?

Virtual tours are an option and have been successful in the past.

10. Is the intent to have content simultaneously shared/ delivered? What role does AIAU play in delivering virtual content that is produced at these AIA events?

The intent of this resolution is to provide a virtual platform that is delivered simultaneously. This results in the most equitable and inclusive outcome. While replaying recordings is helpful, it does not allow for any interaction or engagement of virtual attendees.

11. Can AIA Conference material be captured and offered as part of an AIAU-type virtual conference of select material that ties together a common theme? I do think this also offers equitable access to professional content for our members, particularly younger emerging professionals.

Capture material and future recordings do not allow for any interaction or engagement for those who cannot attend in-person. Because of that, non-livestreamed content (with chat functionality) could not be considered equitable.