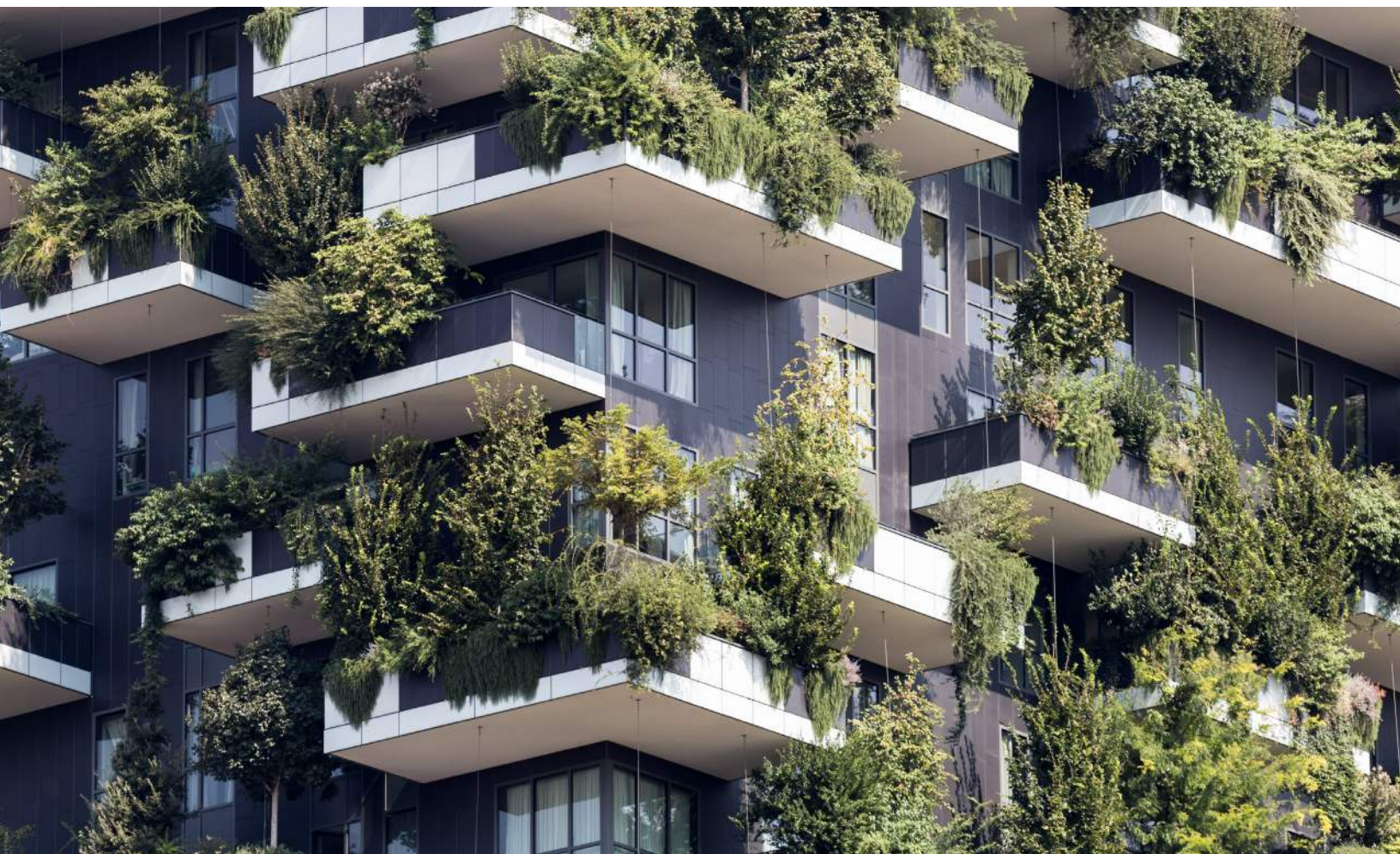


American Institute of Architects

2025 Strategic Council Handbook

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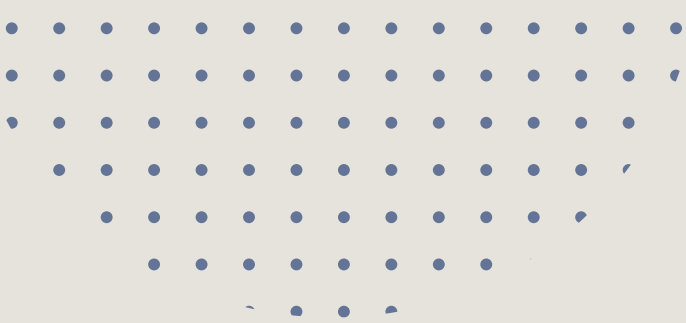


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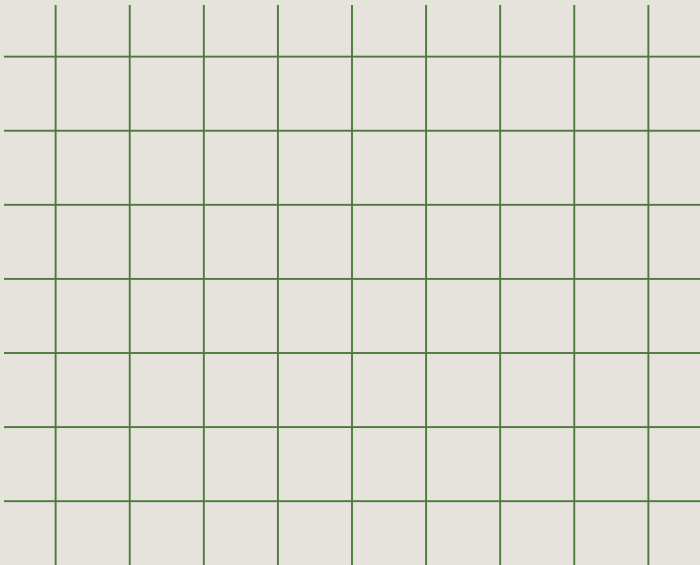
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Welcome Letter

From the Moderator & Vice Moderator



Dear distinguished Strategic Council colleagues,

To our new Councilors: welcome and congratulations on your election or appointment to the AIA Strategic Council. To our returning Councilors: we are excited to collaborate with you again this year!

2025 marks a pivotal year for both the Strategic Council and the AIA. It is the tenth anniversary of the Strategic Council’s formation, and it is time for AIA to make its next five (5) year Strategic Plan. These milestones bring unique opportunities to impact the future direction of the Council and AIA.

Our multifaceted role as Councilors includes visionary foresight studies that propel our profession and the Institute forward and reinforce connections between national AIA leadership and state/territory component leaders. The diverse talents, perspectives, and experiences of each person in this group are essential to our collective work. We encourage you to share your voice throughout the year, ask questions, make connections, and help hold one another accountable as we make impactful recommendations to the AIA Board of Directors that will educate and prepare AIA members for the future.

In the past several weeks, we conducted a Big Think survey to gather a broad range of insights into what the Council should study. Based on those results and conversations with both the current Council and key AIA Senior Leadership members, our work in 2025 will assess the following vital areas:

- Architect of the Future,
- AIA of the Future,
- Digital Architecture,
- Innovative, Equitable and Resilient Practice Models,
- Planetary Health,
- Smart Cities for All, and
- Ten (10) year Valuation and Future Blueprint of the Council.

Across these topics, we will examine the visionary impact each area can make to optimize the business of architecture, transform equity in our profession, and safeguard the health of our planet. Completing the work is just the beginning – we will also champion communication of this vital work as often and as broadly as possible to empower other groups to join us in making tangible change.

We look forward to embarking on this journey with all of you, and we are excited by the possibilities and fun that lie ahead next year. See you all in December!

Sincerely,

Jessica O'Donnell

ABrown.



2025 Moderator
Jessica M. O'Donnell, AIA, NCARB



2025 Vice Moderator
Abigail R. Brown, FAIA

Introduction to AIA

2021–2025 Strategic Plan

It is 2030, and we have met the seemingly insurmountable climate crisis with courageous, creative, and decisive action. People everywhere are united under a common pledge to create an equitable, resilient, regenerative, and carbon-free future.

At the heart of this movement, AIA has energized a global community of professionals to leverage their knowledge and activism to enact positive change through design.

AIA is widely recognized for its commitment to excellence in the education and leadership development of design professionals. Architects have become leaders in our communities, bringing innovative yet practical solutions to the challenges we face. We foster diversity and inclusion in the profession.

AIA has become a catalyst for change, for bold action that develops and delivers solutions to society’s most pressing needs. Architects are positioned at the center of policy discussions surrounding the built environment. AIA has convened broad coalitions to collaborate on solutions. We have generated, curated, and disseminated knowledge that magnifies the transformative impact of design. We have mobilized our members to meet challenges with decisive action. AIA and allied organizational partners generate unity and accelerate progress in the design and construction industry.

AIA is at the center of the world’s most urgent conversations and is acknowledged as the driving force inspiring and empowering architects to improve society and change the world.

- Mission, Vision, 2021–2025 Strategic Plan
- History and Staff & Member Engagement Policy
- Policies & Bylaws
- Governance Structure



AIA Strategic Plan 2021–2025

MISSION

Inspire and empower architects to improve society and transform the world.

VISION

Drive positive change through the power of design and focused activism.

CORE VALUES

Impactful, transformative, visionary, equitable, inclusive, innovative

- GOALS
- Climate action for human and ecological health
 - Advance racial, ethnic, and gender equity

Strategies

MOBILIZE FOR IMPACT

Focus and align programs, services, structures, and resources to develop innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges.

EDUCATE AND PREPARE

Equip members for success: Transform architecture education, expand access to the profession, cultivate a learning culture, and develop leadership.

ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is our currency. Generate, curate, and disseminate knowledge required for success.

BROADEN THE TENT

Collaborate with design, construction, and community stakeholders. Organize and activate grassroots advocates.

Imperatives

EMPHASIZE

Climate action: Build impact by focusing on climate action and positioning architects as community leaders to drive widescale adoption of practical design solutions that will rapidly address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Justice: Work to eradicate racial and gender inequity within the built environment and profession, and dismantle barriers within the AIA, to better reflect the society we serve.

OPTIMIZE

Role of the architect: Optimize architects’ presence and impact by equipping and preparing them to serve as conveners, collaborators, civic leaders, and change agents in developing and delivering solutions to society’s most pressing needs.

CATALYZE

Equity: Foster equity, diversity, and a sense of belonging within the profession, and advance the health, safety and welfare of our communities through design and advocacy for lasting solutions in our built environments.

REVOLUTIONIZE

Research and technology: Leverage emerging technologies and social science to accelerate architecture’s progression to a knowledge-driven discipline and evidence-based, transformative solutions. Harness an intra-/entrepreneurial start-up mentality to foster rapid innovation.

Architectural education: Make architectural education more responsive to emerging trends, more inclusive of underserved audiences, and more oriented toward the future role of the architect

History

With a goal to promote architects and architecture, AIA was founded in 1857 by thirteen (13) architects who met in the office of Richard Upjohn in New York City. Soon after, chapters were established in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston. Today, AIA has over 200 chapters around the world.

In 1898, AIA relocated its headquarters to Washington, D.C., where it remains today. Throughout its more than 150-year history, the Institute has grown to become the largest and most influential network of architecture professionals. Our more than 98,000 members share your passion for architecture and your desire to change the world through the power of design.

Our Staff and Member Engagement Philosophy
We believe that the member-staff partnership is critical to AIA’s success. Our Board of Directors is committed to supporting our members’ professional and personal growth when volunteering for AIA. As an AIA volunteer, we strive to ensure that your time and talent support program development, learning skills, and tools to help you thrive and grow professionally.

We strive to have the right people in the right roles doing the right things at the right times. This is captured in our member engagement philosophy and depicted in the image below. We also believe that this extends to our staff partners. AIA’s professional staff bring specific expertise to AIA that, when teamed with our members, is unparalleled and propels our organization forward.

AIA staff is present at all Council meetings to ensure alignment across AIA; the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is invited to these meetings to foster collaboration and support the Council’s work.

It must be noted that while the Council works closely with AIA staff, individual Councilors, per the [AIA Rules of the Board](#), may not exercise individual authority over AIA employees or AIA’s EVP/Chief Executive Officer.

Policies & Bylaws

Councilors should familiarize themselves with the following rules and procedures of the Board that have a particular relevance to the Council:

Bylaws
The AIA Bylaws represent the official written rules for conduct for the Institute. The bylaws are, in effect, a contract among members, and must be formally adopted and/or amended. AIA’s bylaws provide rules and information regarding offices, membership, meetings, vote of members, board of directors, officers, college of fellows, dues, components, amendments, and miscellaneous items. Please ensure you are familiar with the Bylaws.

Rules of the Board
The Rules of the Board outline the Strategic Council's role in ensuring excellence in AIA and provide detailed operating procedures for its responsibilities.

Fiduciary Duties
The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is a 501(c)6 not-for-profit corporation. As a volunteer, you are now a member of the AIA’s leadership community. Your responsibilities not only include those defined in the job description within this document, but you also have an obligation to act in the best interest of AIA and to disclose any leadership roles or obligations that may be considered a real or perceived conflict of interest.

As a member of our non-profit organization's leadership community, please remember these three (3) fiduciary responsibilities for leaders.

- Duty of Care – Act in good faith, encourage discussion, and make decisions based on the best available information.
- Duty of Loyalty – Act in the organization’s best interests and to enhance AIA’s reputation. Ensure that AIA’s interests drive discussions and decision-making.
- Duty of Obedience – Disclose and discuss any real and/or perceived conflicts of interest that you or other committee members may have. Identify and discuss these (if applicable) at the beginning of each meeting. Ensure that committee members honor confidentiality when discussing AIA’s competitive advantage or sensitive information.

Other Policies
AIA volunteers have a fiduciary obligation to support the actions of the Strategic Council and ensure compliance with [AIA Bylaws](#), [AIA Rules of the Board](#), and [Public Policies and Position Statements](#).

- [Antitrust compliance](#)
- [Attribution of credit](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, & Complaint Policy](#)
- [Terms and conditions](#)
- [Using the AIA designation](#)
- [Public Policy Directory](#)

Governance Structure

The contributions of volunteer leaders are valuable in advancing the AIA’s mission, vision, and strategic goals. In partnership with AIA staff, volunteer leaders shape the resources that support and grow a thriving profession.

Because our volunteers do so much to support AIA, we strive to provide the same support for all AIA volunteers to ensure a meaningful and enriching volunteer experience. The AIA volunteer handbook was developed to inform current and future volunteers on AIA’s governance process. This resource will provide all committee members with the same foundation of knowledge to excel within AIA.

AIA Organizational Structure

In accordance with the bylaws of the AIA, the Board of Directors has the power at any time, for any purpose, to appoint any committee or task force it deems necessary and to delegate to such committee whatever powers such committee may require carrying out its assigned responsibilities. Any committee appointed need not be composed entirely of members of the Board of Directors but must be composed of AIA members in good standing.

AIA classifies volunteer groups in the following way:

- Board of Directors,
- Strategic Council,
- Board-level Committees,
- Member groups,
- Knowledge Communities (KCs), and
- Components.

In addition to these volunteer groups, AIA also recognizes ArchiPAC, AIA Trust, Architects Foundation, and the College of Fellows (COF) as volunteer bodies. These bodies operate within the AIA enterprise but as separate legal entities.

The organizational structure below was created to help volunteers understand how committees and volunteer groups support the Board and align within AIA.



Overview of the Strategic Council

- Role of the Strategic Council
- Council Composition
- Roles & Expectations of Councilors
- Upcoming Calendar Overview
- Digital Platforms
- Best Practices Committee, Elections, and Communications

Role of the Strategic Council

Formed in 2015, the Strategic Council (“the Council”) advances the architecture profession by informing the Board and other AIA bodies about important professional issues and opportunities. Although it is not a governing body of AIA, the Council’s work is vital to AIA’s ability to serve the profession.

The Strategic Council’s responsibilities fall into two focus areas outlined below:

Facilitate communication between AIA and constituencies:

- Represent the interest of constituent members;
- Disseminate information and insight to constituencies about the Institute’s priorities and activities;
- Gather input from constituencies and communicate to the Institute;
- Ensure that its composition reflects and represents the geographic and demographic diversity of the profession.
- Elect At-Large Directors to the Board of Directors.

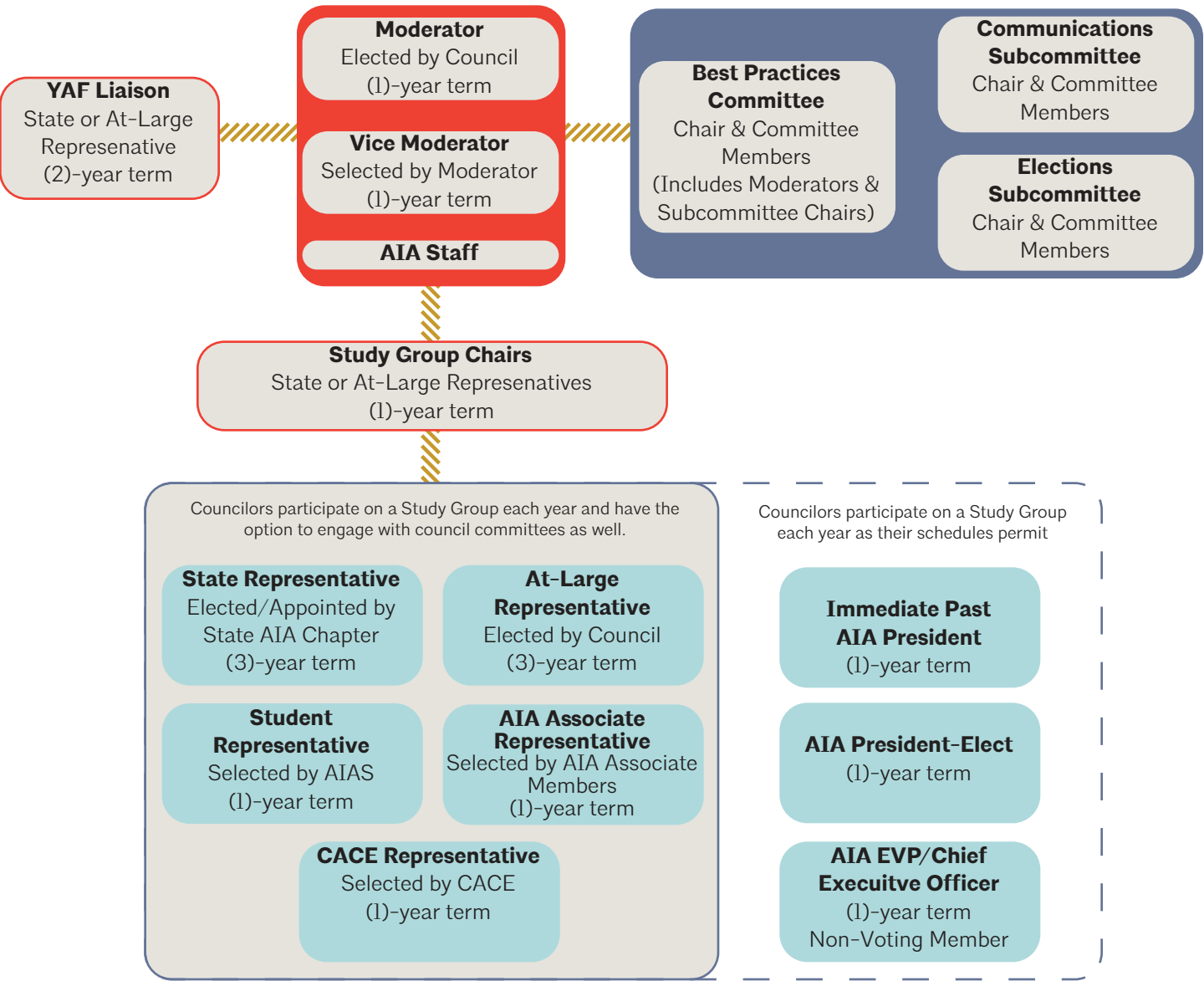
Conduct ongoing environmental scans to identify and monitor issues and opportunities facing the architecture profession:

- Identify long-term and strategic issues for Institute consideration.
- Survey the profession, identify opportunities and threats, and inform the goals, objectives, and strategies of the Institute in order to help guide the Institute’s planning process.
- Develop and recommend public policy positions on behalf of the Institute for consideration and potential approval by the Board.
- Contribute to the AIA strategic planning process.
- Review the Institute’s operating plan and budget and provide its endorsement and/or recommendations for the Board’s consideration.
- Engage in leadership development.

Subject to Board approval, propose such committees, ad hoc workgroups and task forces as it deems appropriate to advance its purpose. This authority shall not apply to standing Board committees, which shall be subject to the sole authority of the Board.

Council Composition

Below is the composition of the Council and a brief description of the positions. Additional descriptions of each position can be found within the following pages.



Moderator

The Council Moderator is elected by the members of the Council, facilitates Council gatherings, and represents the Council at meetings of the board, establishes and ensures the Council’s annual priorities align with the Institute’s needs, and fosters communication across the Institute. The Moderator ensures deliberations at Council events are timely, fair, orderly, thorough, efficient, and directed. The Moderator’s term is one (1) year. For more duties carried out by the Council Moderator, see Appendix A.

Vice Moderator

The Vice Moderator is selected by the Council Moderator. The Vice Moderator provides insight, support, and continuity to sustain and assist the Council in its activities, thereby enabling the Moderator to have greater focus and flexibility in the organization, planning, and direction of the Council as a whole. For roles and responsibilities of the Council Vice Moderator, see Appendix B.

Best Practices Committee Chair

The Best Practices (BP) Committee Chair is recommended by the outgoing BP Committee Chair and selected by the Council Moderator elected for the year the term for the BP Committee Chair will begin. For roles and responsibilities of the BP Committee Chair, see Appendix C.

Communications Subcommittee Chair

The Communications Subcommittee Chair is recommended by the BP Committee Chair selected to serve for the year the Subcommittee Chair’s term will begin. The Communications Subcommittee Chair will coordinate Council communications to improve and increase communication throughout the AIA, including coordination of the Friday Recap, and preparation of template Council reports to be shared by Councilors with their constituency. For more information, see Appendix D.

Elections Subcommittee Chair

The Elections Subcommittee Chair is recommended by the BP Committee Chair selected to serve for the year the Subcommittee Chair’s term will begin. The Elections Subcommittee Chair works with the BP Committee Chair and AIA staff to schedule election timelines and conduct Council elections. For more information, see Appendix E.

State Representatives

- State Representatives are encouraged to attend meetings within their state to engage with membership, solicit input on relevant issues, and understand current concerns. In addition, these engagements are opportunities for Councilors to report to members on the council’s activities and progress.
- States may have additional requirements for state representatives (for example, some state representatives may serve on their state board and on the Council simultaneously).
 - AIA provides a travel stipend which should only be used for travel expenses incurred for attendance at the state’s

annual meeting and/or component meetings within the representative’s home state.

- Each fall, states must notify AIA of their state representative appointments for vacancies for the upcoming year no later than September 19, 2025.

At-Large Representatives

Each year, the Strategic Council may elect At-large Representatives to the Council, who serve three (3)-year terms.

President-Elect and immediate Past President

The President-Elect and Immediate Past President serve on the Council to enhance communication between the Board of Directors and the Council.

AIA Strategic Council Liaison to the YAF

The President-Elect of the AIA appoints a liaison from the Strategic Council to the Young Architects Forum (YAF). The role of the liaison is to advise, support, and mentor the Chair and Vice Chair of the YAF, as well as the members of the AdCom. One (1) key responsibility of the Strategic Council Liaison is to keep the YAF apprised of issues applicable to the young professionals brought up at the Council level, and equally to advocate for the issues and concerns of the YAF to the Council. The liaison shall relay information about the Strategic Council work groups to the YAF and facilitate the integration of Young Architect Representatives into those work groups as appropriate. The AIA Strategic Council Liaison is appointed for a two (2) year term.

EVP/Chief Executive Officer

The AIA EVP/Chief Executive Officer serves on the Council in an ex-officio capacity to inform and offer guidance as requested.

The Council may appoint additional representatives (subject to Board approval) to ensure that its size, composition, and competencies support the Council’s goals of flexibility, diversity, and representation. These representatives, if appointed, serve a one (1) year term.

Terms on the Strategic Council begin at the adjournment of its annual meeting in December during Governance Week. If a Councilor is elected to the AIA Board of Directors, that Councilor’s service on the Council will conclude when Board service begins. If there is a vacancy in any Council position before the Councilor in that position has completed their term, those who selected that Councilor shall select a successor to serve out the remainder of that term.

Any Councilor may be removed with or without cause by those entitled to select the Councilor to that position.

Should a Councilor accept employment with AIA, the Councilor must immediately resign from the Council.

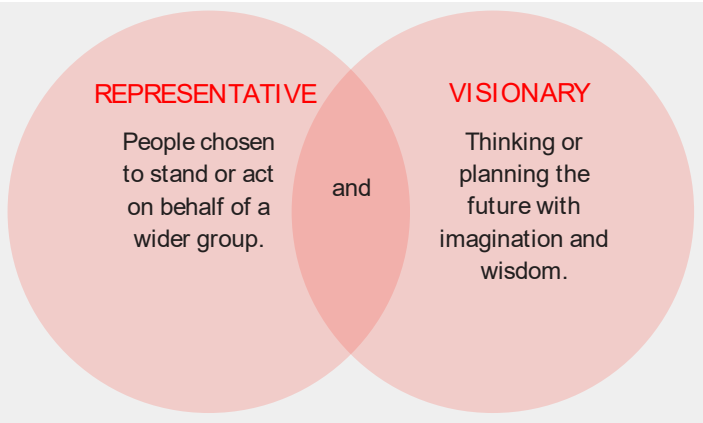
Roles & Expectations of Councilors

Formed in 2015, the Strategic Council (“the Council”) advances the architecture profession by informing the Board and other AIA bodies about important professional issues and opportunities. As a complement to the governing body of AIA, the Council’s work is vital to AIA’s ability to serve the profession.

Council members (“Councilors”) provide a much-needed link to their constituencies and to AIA members in general, seeking input and communicating Council actions. Through this dialogue, they identify issues that are most relevant to the architecture profession and society. Councilors whose actions support and promote AIA’s mission, vision, strategic plan, and policies will advance the overall interests of AIA and its members. In their capacity as representatives, Councilors are engaged within their state components and/or constituent groups to provide connectivity.

Councilors are encouraged to be familiar with Section 6.5 of the [AIA Bylaws](#), which defines the Council’s mission, responsibilities, and composition.

The Council approaches its tasks with an emphasis on an outward and forward-focused vision. In this spirit, the Council focuses on long-term goals and outcomes of AIA’s work rather than administrative or programmatic efforts to achieve those goals.



The AIA Strategic Council is both representative and visoinary.

Participation

Active participation of Councilors is vital to the AIA achieving our strategic goals. We greatly appreciate the generosity of members in volunteering their time and energy. To make the most of everyone's contributions, we aim for full attendance at scheduled in-person and virtual Council meetings.

The Council meets virtually twice a year via Zoom (for ninety (90) minutes) to conduct regular business and share information. Face-to-face meetings may also be scheduled. AIA staff and the Moderator will work together to schedule meetings and share the calendar for these meetings no later than at the Council gathering each December. See the Council Calendar Overview in the following pages for more detailed informatin

The Council’s structure also includes standing committees to which interested Councilors are assigned on an annual basis.

We understand issues may arise that prevent a Councilor from attending every meeting. However, missing more than one meeting per year during your term can significantly impact your ability to fulfill your role.

Councilors are expected to proactively notify the Moderator and/or AIA staff if they are unable to attend a meeting of the Strategic Council. Councilors who are unable to participate in multiple meetings, shall have a conversation with the Moderator about their capacity to continue serving on the Council. In some cases, a joint decision to resign from the Council may be appropriate to make room for another member.

The goal is maximizing the effectiveness of the Strategic Council for the good of the AIA. We aim to collaborate with Councilors to ensure positive outcomes for all.

Mentoring

Outgoing Councilors are expected to mentor and communicate with incoming Councilors to ensure a smooth transition during Governance Week in December.

Council Conduct

The Council expects ethical and businesslike conduct of itself and its members. Councilors are required to execute certain documents, such as the Conflict-of-Interest Policy, for each year of their term. Any conflict in responsibilities—including responsibilities to advocacy or interest groups or member-ship on other boards or staff—must be resolved in the favor of AIA members. Member interests should take precedence over any Council member’s individual consumption of organization services.

Councilors may not speak for AIA unless expressly authorized by the AIA President. When speaking on their own behalf to the press, public, or other entities, Councilors are expected to exhibit and communicate the values and perspectives of the Council’s actions.

Councilors must be able to provide measured volunteer hours during their term not to exceed an average of six (6) hours per month excluding in-person meetings twice a year.

Councilors should demonstrate professionalism, good judgment, and care at all times in handling any information related to the work of the Board and of the Council. Councilors should not disclose information deemed confidential regarding work of the Council or the Board to anyone, including their constituencies, unless the Board has authorized its disclosure. This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law.

Opportunities for Engagement

Councilors may be asked to participate and examine issues deemed relevant by the Board. This may require smaller groups of Councilors to meet via Zoom.

Councilors are expected to serve on one (1) study group to work on a specific topic. In 2025 the study groups will include: AIA of the Future, Architect of the Future, Digital Architecture, Innovative, Equitable & Resilient Practice Models, Planetary Health, Smart Cities for All, Ten (10) year Valuation & Future Blueprint of the Council.

As a Councilor representing the Council on other AIA committees, it is expected that feedback will flow from the Council to these committees (when/if appropriate), and that reports are made to the Council at least quarterly to the Communication Subcommittee Chair to be included to the Council communications to improve and increase communication throughout the AIA.

Engaging Members Locally

Councilors are expected to regularly meet (in-person or virtually, etc.) with their constituencies to gather input and feedback on Council activities, to share available resources about AIA business and opportunities. Bethune Fellows (former Councilors) also serve as valuable resources in this effort.

Engaging with Leadership Exchange Networks

Councilors are expected to attend and engage with the Leadership Exchange Network calls. These are hosted by Board At-large Directors and each state is assigned to a call. Councilors are expected to attend these calls and share reporting responsibilities.

This is an opportunity to share widely the work of the Council with the Council of Architectural Component Executives (CACE), former AIA Presidents, former COF Chancellors state and local component presidents, National Associates Committee (NAC) members, Young Architects Forum (YAF) members, and other constituency groups.

2025 Calendar Overview

The expectation is all councilors have agreed to dedicate time to actively participate in both the baseline and representative commitments outlined below. Additional engagement opportunities are optional ways for councilors to expand their volunteer efforts, but these are not formal charges of the Council. For more information about additional engagement opportunities, contact the Moderator or AIA Staff.

Baseline Council Commitments

Attend Full Council Assemblies
Governance Week
Spring Virtual Meeting
AIA Annual Business Meeting
Fall Virtual Meeting

Participate in a Study Group
Meetings vary from 1/week to 1/month based on the necessity of the study group efforts.

Send Monthly Report to your State Board / Network
Complete the 'by the councilor' portion of the word document and send it off to your board.

Commitment Expectation
Average of 6 hours/month

Representative Commitments

State AIA Chapter Board Meetings
Talk to your CACE representative or current AIA Chapter President about attending meetings if you are unsure.
At-Large Reps: talk to your state and ask about attending as an ex-officio member during your term.

Connect with your Constituency
At Large Reps: determine the best way to open dialogue with your constituency (the perspective or knowledge area you were elected to represent)

AIA Leadership Exchange Calls
1 hour per quarter

Commitment Expectation
1-3 hours/month (varies by state)

Additional Engagement Opportunities

Strategic Council Committees
Best Practices Committee
Communications Subcommittee
Elections Subcommittee

AIA Board Committees
Government Advocacy
Board Knowledge
Committee of Climate Action & Design Excellence
Equity and the Future of Architecture
Finance & Audit
Public Awareness
Candidate Development

AIA Knowledge Communities
21 different areas of focus.
<https://www.aia.org/community/aia-knowledge-communities>

Commitment Expectation
1-3 hours/month (varies by role)

There will be two (2) in-person meetings and two (2) virtual gatherings of the entire Council. There will be a published agenda from the Moderator and Vice Moderator; subgroups of the Council may choose to use these gatherings to share their work to date and seek feedback from the Council.

AIA funds Councilors’ attendance at in-person AIA Annual events such as the AIA Annual meeting (as voting delegates-at-large) held in conjunction with the AIA Conference on Architecture and the AIA Governance week held in December in Washington, D.C.

Other calls may be scheduled on predetermined topics.

2025 Council events:
The Strategic Council is invited to join and engage with other AIA groups. Councilors are expected to attend these events as a vital part of their Council role and participation is funded by the AIA.

Virtual Spring Meeting
March 5, 2025, from 1:00pm-2:30pm ET
The Calendar invitation will be sent after Governance Week.

Annual Business Meeting
June 4, 2025, Boston, MA
Councilors are voting delegates-at-large at the AIA annual meeting and are required to attend. In addition, per the AIA Rules of the Board, the Strategic Council (as a whole) may sponsor resolutions for consideration by the delegates at the annual meeting. (For more information on resolutions, see the AIA Rules of the Board).

Meeting at Conference on Architecture
June 4-7, 2025, Boston, MA
There will be a scheduled formal meeting during this event. Councilors should use this in-person meeting as an opportunity to conduct business. As a reminder, Councilors are sponsored for two (2) night hotel stay, transportation of up to \$750, conference registration, and per diem of \$85 per day.

Virtual Fall Meeting
September 23, 2025, from 1:00pm-2:30pm ET
The Calendar invitation will be sent after Governance Week.

Governance Week
December 3-5, 2025, Washington, D.C.
Governance Week may include:

- Incoming Council Orientation,
- Joint Board of Directors and Council meeting (selection of AIA award recipients),
- Council Assembly, and
- Presidential Inaugural.

As a reminder, Councilors are sponsored for two (2) night hotel stay, transportation of up to \$750, and per diem of \$85 per day.

NOTE: this calendar overview does not include Sutdy Group meetings, Optional Council Connect virtual events, or Study Group report-outs. More information on the timing for those will be provided around Governance Week.

Meeting Agendas and Minutes
AIA uses meeting agendas to ensure that relevant and timely topics of interest are addressed. Meeting minutes are expected to be provided to Councilors within fifteen (15) days of a meeting taking place. AIA prohibits the use of AI for notetaking when appropriate staff will use transcription for note taking.

Expense Reimbursement
Expense reports for transportation, meals, and lodging for AIA travel commitments must be submitted via Concur. AIA Staff Liaisons will assist you with the management and submission of these expense reports. Council members are responsible for submitting ALL receipts and explanation of expenses over \$85 within thirty (30) days of incurring said expense.

Digital Platforms

AIA.org

A roster of the Strategic Council appears on aia.org/leadership.

Strategic Council Community Hub Page

More information specifically related to the work of the Council over the years and opportunities to engage with the current Council is [located here](#).

MURAL

Councilors will be granted access to MURAL.

MURAL is a collaborative tool the Council employs to communicate and share ideas. The Moderator and Vice Moderator will have administrative rights (can create boards); other Councilors will have member rights (can participate on boards).

To foster transparency, all Councilors have access to all MURAL boards so there is an opportunity to stay informed on all information posted to the platform space.

Zoom

Virtual meetings will take place using Zoom. These are coordinated and scheduled by Governance staff.

Best Practices Committee, Elections & Communications

Best Practices Committee

The purpose of the Best Practices (BP) Committee is to maintain and develop best practice guidelines for the Council. It is charged with overseeing the elections process, communicating council work within the Council and supporting Councilor’s communication with their components, and reviewing Strategic Council literature that advises best practices and other responsibilities as assigned.

The Committee is typically made up of:

- The Best Practices Chair,
- The Moderator,
- The Vice Moderator,
- The Elections Subcommittee Chair,
- The Communications Subcommittee Chair,
- The Friday Recap Editor, and
- Two (2) to three (3) other Councilors willing to serve.

Members of the Best Practices Committee also work with the Moderator and Vice Moderator to increase and improve communication within the Council to keep information circulating, to communicate with the Board and other AIA bodies on critical issues and opportunities, and to help inform and connect Council work with the membership at large.

The Best Practices Committee also serves as the Council’s Nominating Committee, seeking candidates for open positions and overseeing the election process. The Best Practices Committee Chair and Elections Chair work together with AIA staff to schedule the election timeline(s) and conduct the elections.

For additional information, see the following appendix sections:

- Appendix C – Best Practices Committee
- Appendix D – Communications Subcommittee
- Appendix E – Elections Subcommittee

Elections

Each year, the Best Practices Committee will ensure that a fair and equitable process for Council elections is developed and distributed to all interested parties. Care is taken to align Council elections with other AIA meetings, such as the fall Board of Directors meeting. The schedule is established by AIA staff in collaboration with the Best Practices Chair and Elections Subcommittee Chair by the end of the first quarter of each year and shared with the Council. For additional information on the Elections subcommitte, see Appendix E.

At-Large Director to the AIA Board

In accordance with the AIA Bylaws, each year the Council shall elect one (1) At-Large Director to the AIA Board of Directors, with the requirement that no fewer than two-thirds (2/3) of the At-Large Directors elected by the Strategic Council and serving on the Board at any one (1) time may be Architect members. Each such At-Large Director serves a three (3)-year term.

- If a State Councilor runs and is elected to the Board, they automatically vacate their term on the Council and their State is obligated to fill the position for the remainder of the term.
- If an At-Large Representative runs and is elected to the board, they automatically vacate their term, without their position being filled for the remainder of their term.

Strategic Council Moderator

To be eligible for the position of Council Moderator, a member of the current Strategic Council must have completed at least one (1) year of Council duties by December of the election year. This position is filled by one (1) Councilor for a term of one (1) year.

- The Council Moderator, elected by Council members, leads Council meetings and acts as the primary liaison between the Council and the Board. Their role involves steering the Council in determining its objectives and direction for the year in accordance with the AIA Board of Directors and the AIA Strategic Plan.
- Upon election, the Moderator may select a Vice Moderator who will work jointly with them through their term. While not prescriptive, the Moderator shall carefully consider the selection of the Vice Moderator as their responsibilities must guide the function and purpose of the entire Council and interface with the Board and AIA staff. Vice Moderator is also responsible to take minutes during Council meetings.
- See Appendix A for additional Moderator responsibilities.

At-Large Representative on the AIA Strategic Council

Each year, the AIA Strategic Council may elect At-Large Representatives, who serve three (3)-year terms. The top three (3) successful candidates of the votes cast will be elected.

- The At-Large Representatives bring diverse viewpoints to the Council that might not be otherwise represented. This may include individuals from allied professions, futurists, educators, and other professionals who would not typically become members of the Council through the standard state election process.
- Consistent with AIA Guides for Equitable Practice and the 2018 Convention Resolution I8-3: Diversity Pipeline and National Representation (requiring the Council to "actively identify, prepare, recruit and encourage a range of ethnically diverse women to pursue election/service on the AIA Board of Directors and AIA Strategic Council”) the Council embraces diversity. To be the most effective Council possible, individuals who bring broad viewpoints, diverse experiences, and talents to the Council, are expressly sought.
- To encourage a wide range of nominees, this call for nominations is shared with the AIA Board of Directors, AIA Strategic Council, component presidents, Council of Architectural Component Executives (CACE), Knowledge Community (KC Advisory Groups), Former AIA National Presidents, and identity-based groups, such as National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), American Indian Council of Architects and Engineers (AICAE), Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAa/e), Arquitectos, World Deaf Architecture (WDA), and Black Reconstruction Collective. Additional groups or organizations may be contacted to promote the spirit of Resolution I8-3.

Campaigning & Voting

The Strategic Council holds three elections each year with the formal Elections Calendar curated by the Elections Subcommittee Chair.

The Council Moderator and the At-Large Director to the AIA Board of Directors elections are held concurrently. The call for candidate submissions is generally in May/April with a submission deadline in mid-late June. With campaigning and voting occurring in July.

The call for candidate submissions for At-Large Representative to the Council is generally in the summer with a submission deadline in August. This is followed by campaigning and voting in September.

For all elections, candidates generally give a three-minute speech to the full council during a special meeting of the Council that aligns with the campaign timeframe for that specific position.

An overview for the campaign process as a candidate is as follows:

- Candidates must submit a complete application during the call for submissions to be considered for the position.
- Candidates must participate in a meeting where candidate speeches are held.
- Once the meeting is over, the candidate will receive a copy of the current Council roster including the name, state, and email address for each Councilor.
- Candidates will have at least one (1) week to campaign.
- Once voting begins, candidates must wait to hear about the results.
- In case of a runoff, the candidates have an opportunity to campaign again.

Voting is by secret ballot.

Nominees for At-Large to the Board and Moderator positions must receive a majority of the votes casted to be elected. In the rare instance that no nominee receives a majority on the first ballot, a runoff election will be held. If none of the nominees receives a majority of the votes casted, the names of the two (2) nominees receiving the highest number of votes cast shall appear on a runoff ballot.

The top three (3) nominees for At-Large Representative to the Council must be elected annually for a three (3) year term.

The Best Practices Chair or the Elections Subcommittee Chair shall announce the results.

In addition to these three elections, Strategic Council members are also voting delegates at the AIA Annual Business Meeting,

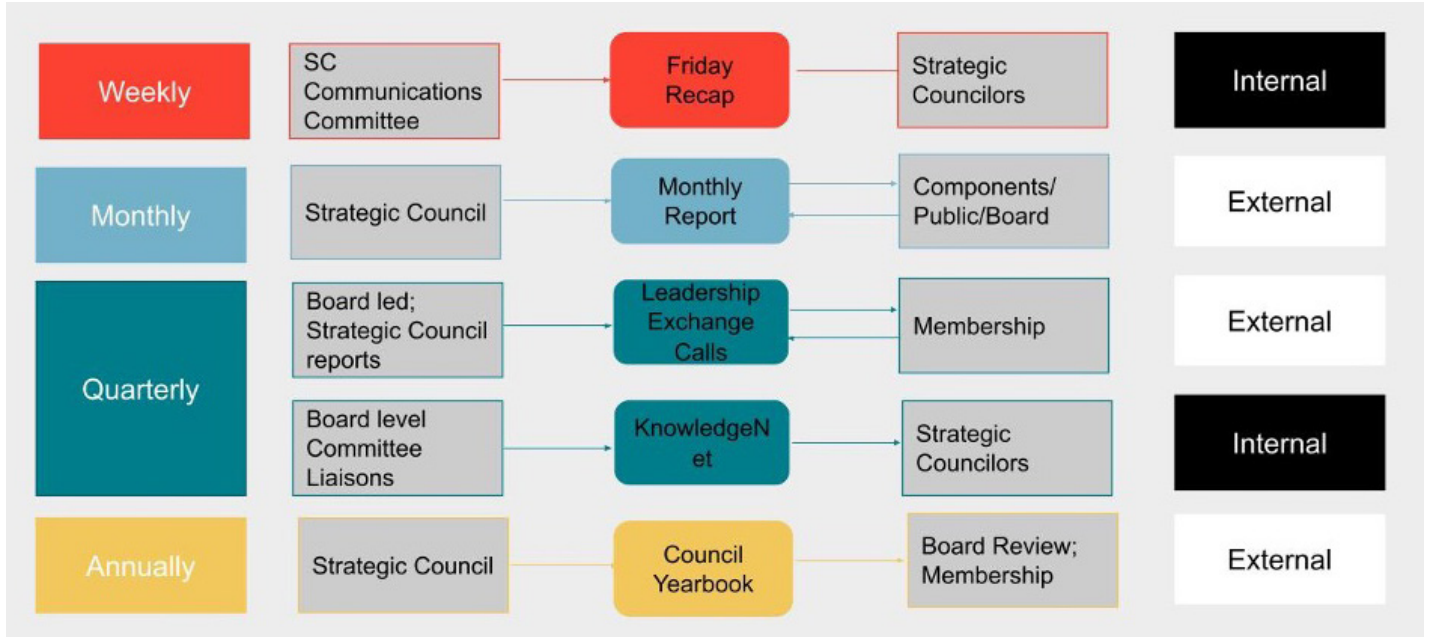
Communications

Council Communications are led by the Communications Subcommittee, in coordination with the Moderator, Vice Moderator and Best Practices Chair. See additional information in Appendix D.

Communications vehicles include the Friday Recap (a weekly update that highlights important and timely information Councilors should be aware of), monthly distributed news for all Councilors to use to update their state constituents, and briefings for the quarterly Leadership Network exchange calls that include information from Council Zoom calls, other information that can be shared with components, and other committees. Distribution of all information will be in coordination with AIA staff through email.

Councilors that serve on other Board Level Committees as representatives of the Strategic Council are encouraged to communicate with their fellow councilors using KnowledgeNet discussion boards on a quarterly basis. Councilors are encouraged to use this resource to communicate news, solicit input or otherwise connect with their fellow council members. The Communications Committee also coordinates with the Moderators to produce an annual Year in Review journal collecting council work and documenting the year.

Council Communication Framework



Staff Contacts, New Councilor Orientation & Agreement to Serve

AIA Staff Contact Information

Primary Point of Contact

Primary Relationship Manager
Muza Conforti
Director, Fellows & Strategic Council
muzaconforti@aia.org

Secondary Point of Contact

Secondary Primary Relationship Manager/
Board of Directors Matters
Caitlin Couture
Senior Director, Governance & Awards
caitlincouture@aia.org

Other Frequent Staff Point of Contact

EVP/CEO
Lakisha A. Woods, CAE
EVP/Chief Executive Officer
lwoods@aia.org

New Councilor Orientation

Orientation for incoming members of the Strategic Council will be held each December at Governance Week (generally, the first or second week of December). The goal of orientation is to provide an understanding of how the Council works, what resources exist to support Councilors, and expectations for the upcoming year.

Information covered at orientation may include:

- Council roles and responsibilities,
- Position descriptions,
- Council and Board Committees,
- Required governance training as representatives of the AIA,
- Calendar (schedule, support, logistics),
- Practices for constituency engagement,
- Review of Council Handbook, and
- The history of the Council and its work.

In advance of orientation, AIA staff will work with the incoming Moderator and Vice Moderator to organize a call for the incoming Council cohort(s) that allows them an opportunity to introduce themselves and get to know one another prior to Governance Week Information covered on this call may include:

- What to expect at Governance Week, and
- Assignment of a Councilor mentor to new Councilors,

Following Governance Week, the Council Moderator and Vice Moderator will coordinate with AIA staff to schedule a follow up conference call with the new Councilors to continue their orientation.

Appendix

Agreement to Serve

AIA volunteer leaders are expected to act in accordance with AIA's mission and vision. Members of the Strategic Council are expected to act ethically and businesslike, avoid any conflict of interest, and represent unconflicted loyalty to the interests of AIA members.

By agreeing to serve with AIA, members of the Strategic Council understand that my time and contributions to the service of AIA are vital to its mission, and therefore, I agree to the terms of service of the committee and/or volunteer group and will adhere to all provided assignments and timelines.

I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to communicate changes in circumstances that may impact my ability to meet this group's service needs.

I acknowledge that violations of AIA policies should be promptly reported to the Moderator of the Strategic Council of the member group and AIA Governance staff.

I further acknowledge that AIA reserves the right to terminate my service on the Strategic Council should I be unable to meet or adhere to the expectations and obligations stated above.

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/9fdcdf2f524a4a7db6115faf94b451e3>

- Council Leadership Roles & Responsibilities
- A. Moderator
 - B. Vice Moderator
 - C. Best Practice Committee
 - D. Communications Subcommittee
 - E. Elections Subcommittee

Appendix A.

Moderator

The Moderator is responsible for guiding the Council in decisions about its function and purpose for the year in accordance with the Board’s vision. The Moderator should not act unilaterally, but instead base decisions on input received from the Council. Where clarification or direction is necessary, the Moderator may solicit input from the Best Practices Committee, the full Council, or other relevant groups of the Council where necessary.

- To be eligible for the position of Council Moderator, a member of the current Strategic Council must have completed at least one (1) year of Council duties by December of the election year. This position is filled by one (1) Councilor for a term of one (1) year.
- The Council Moderator, elected by Council members, leads Council meetings and acts as the primary liaison between the Council and the Board. Their role involves steering the Council in determining its objectives and direction for the year in accordance with the AIA Board of Directors and the AIA Strategic Plan.
- Upon election, the Moderator may select a Vice Moderator who will work jointly with them through their term. While not prescriptive, the Moderator shall carefully consider the selection of the Vice Moderator as their responsibilities must guide the function and purpose of the entire Council and interface with the Board and AIA staff.
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The Moderator will also:

1. Set the overall agenda for the year: Working with the Board, standing committee chairs, other AIA bodies, AIA Staff Liaison and the Council, the Moderator facilitates a conversation among the Council to establish a consensus for the overall agenda and focus for the year.
2. Set overall calendar: The Moderator works closely with AIA staff to assemble a coordinated calendar built around fixed meetings and events, Board meetings, Council gatherings, standing committee meetings, and other calls.
3. Moderator, with assistance from Vice Moderator is responsible for minutes.
4. Develop agendas for Council assemblies and Steering Committee calls: With staff, on a routine basis during the year, and approximately one (1) to two (2) weeks prior to any given meeting, the Moderator will work with staff to develop the specific agenda for Council Assemblies and, if desired, Steering Committee calls.

5. Typically, an outline of areas of interest is reviewed, and a draft agenda is prepared for review, comment, and modification as necessary until finalized.
6. Agendas should be finalized at least two (2) week prior to the meetings, unless otherwise required by advance notification requirements.
 - Face-to-face assemblies require agendas well in advance to ensure Councilors understand what will be required of them and plan their travel accordingly.
7. Approve the internal Nomination of the next Best Practices Chair received from the current Best Practices Chair and/or the Nomination Committee.
8. Facilitate Council activity: The Moderator will work with the Vice Moderator to drive Council activity. Much of this planning will likely take place at or around Governance Week before their term year begins.
9. Recommendation of Councilors for other opportunities:
 - Upon request of the AIA President Elect, the Moderator will recommend Councilors for assignment to committees, task forces, etc.
 - Using knowledge of the Councilors and their commitments, the Moderator may convey the names of Councilors they deem appropriate to serve on committees and task forces outside of the Council.
 - The Moderator may seek others’ advice or make an announcement to the entire Council of the opportunity.
 - Councilors with specific interests are encouraged to share those with the Moderator as opportunities may arise over the course of the year.
 - Attend face-to-face meetings of the Board of Directors:
10. At the discretion of the AIA President, the Moderator and Vice Moderator may be invited to attend face-to-face Board meetings, to report on the Council’s activities.
11. Attend the CACE Annual Meeting: The Moderator may be invited to report on the Council’s activities at the annual meeting of component executives.
12. General Council Support: The Moderator will work with Councilors on any questions or concerns that may arise.
13. Assigning Mentors: The BP Chair and Moderator are responsible for assigning mentors to the incoming class. It is the mentor’s responsibility to reach out to the protege prior to Governance Week to help them better understand Council processes, and generally serve as a resource in welcoming the new cohort.

Appendix B.

Vice Moderator

The Vice Moderator role is highly collaborative with the Moderator, and in cases where the Moderator has competing obligations, the Vice Moderator will fill in as needed.

Primary responsibilities associated with the Vice Moderator role may include assisting in planning Council activities, working with state representatives, and taking minutes during Council meetings. .

In addition to the above responsibilities, the Vice Moderator shares certain responsibilities with the elected Moderator, including:

- review and refinement of research topics and areas of inquiry for the Council;
- co-facilitating Council gatherings;
- participating in various calls related to Council work; and
- participating in standing committee sessions.

At their discretion, the Moderator and Vice Moderator will assign themselves responsibility for attending standing committee calls and other working calls as they are scheduled.

The Vice Moderator will be invited to Board leadership discussions (see above).

Appendix C.

Best Practices

The responsibilities of the Best Practices (BP) Committee Chair may include:

1. Assembling a BP Committee:
Typically, Councilors will continue their service from year to year. Incoming Councilors should be informed of this committee and asked if they are interested in joining.
2. Creating subcommittees:
 - Subcommittees for detailed or task work may be appointed, as needed.
 - Subcommittees may meet via conference calls scheduled outside of Best Practices Committee calls.
3. Scheduling committee/subcommittee conference calls:
 - Monthly calls are recommended to last no more than one (1) hour.
 - Governance staff will assist in scheduling times and dates that do not conflict with other AIA calls.
 - Calls should be scheduled M–F between 8:00am–4:00pm ET.
 - Governance staff will be present on all calls to coordinate efforts and document progress.

4. Attending Council events
The Chair and committee members are expected to attend all Council events and conference calls. Absences from these events should be kept to one (1) meeting annually. If the Moderator or BP Committee Chair feels that these duties are not being fulfilled, they shall have the ability to appoint a replacement to the committee. Attendance of these pre-scheduled meetings (dates will be shared no later than the Governance week) is a vital part of the Council’s responsibilities.
5. Maintaining Strategic Council archives
 - Records of the Strategic Council study groups, elections, and best practices.
 - Reference information compiled from previous Best Practices Chairs.
 - Providing edits to the Council Handbook.
 - Working with Governance staff to archive the data in the current online repository location designated by the AIA, currently KNet (KnowledgeNet).

Appendix D.

Communications Subcommittee

The Communications Subcommittee works to maintain and enhance internal and external Council communications. Using an established framework, committee members manage weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual Council communications within the Council and to the board and membership.

The Communications Subcommittee typically meets for half an hour every two (2) weeks to coordinate and manage the flow of communications. Committee participants, depending on their specific role, may spend two (2)–six (6) additional hours a month creating and distributing communications.

Ideal roles (and responsibilities) of positions for 2025 include:

Chair

- (1) Individual;
- (1) Year term
- Ideally Councilor in their 3rd year

The Communications Chair oversees the Communications Subcommittee efforts and serves on the Best Practices committee.

In addition to facilitating the biweekly Communications calls, the Chair also participates in the monthly Best Practice Committee calls, reviews the monthly reports, and serves on the Year in Review editorial team.

The chair is also responsible for coordinating with the Board committee and KC liaisons to post quarterly reports to AIA Community Hub.

Ideal candidates for this role have served at least one (1) year on the communications subcommittee prior to their year as Chair.

Friday Recap Coordinator

- (1) Individual;
- (1) or (2) Year term
- Ideally Councilor in their 2nd year

This individual is ideally a second-year councilor at the start of their term. The Recap Coordinator collects information distributed to the Council, summarizes, and sends the information to the Council via email each Friday. Information may be gleaned from staff and moderator emails, or relevant news submitted by other Councilors.

Year in Review Journal Editorial Team

- (2) to (3) Individuals;
- (1) or (2) Year term
- Councilors from any year

This team prepares and coordinates the Year in Review Journal, collecting photos and content from Council events throughout the year. These individuals should ideally have InDesign layout or editorial experience.

Monthly Report Curator

- (1) Individual;
- (1) or (2) Year term
- Councilor from any year

The Monthly Report Curator works with the Communications Chair to collect a monthly report from the Moderator and summarize pertinent Council and Institute news in both Word and PowerPoint format. Reports are distributed and posted to AIA Community Hub for each Councilor to share with their components and more broadly.

Appendix E.

Elections Subcommittee

The Elections Subcommittee oversees the Council’s elections. Annually, the Council elects the following year’s Moderator; the At-Large Director to the Board; and the At-Large Representatives to the Council.

The Subcommittee’s responsibilities include advertising of the available positions and/or recruitment of candidates for the above positions; planning the calendar/timeline of each of the elections; and overseeing the elections themselves.
Note: Two (2) of the elections are held concurrently, making planning easier.

Ideally, the Subcommittee would collaborate with the AIA Candidate Development Committee to actively recruit candidates for the Moderator and At-Large Director to the Board positions.

The Council’s elections in 2024 were held in July and September. Preparations for these generally begin two (2) months prior to the elections. The monthly Subcommittee meetings begin approximately in April and conclude approximately in September. Time commitment for the Chair extends throughout the year, as the Chair participates in the monthlyl Best Practices Committee meetings

Ideal committee / subcommittee roles (and responsibilities) of positions for 2025 include:

Chair	Subcommittee Members
(1) Individual; (1) Year term Ideally Councilor in their 3rd year	(2) to (3) Individuals; (1) or (2) Year term Councilor from any year
The Elections Chair oversees the Elections Subcommittee activities; facilitates the Elections Subcommittee meeting calls; coordinates calendar of nominations / campaigning / elections; directs the Council meeting at which candidates’ speeches are offered. Coordinates with the Council’s staff liaison, the Moderator, and Vice Moderator.	These individuals may be a first, second, or thrid year Councilor. The members’ responsibilities assisting the Chair are typically from April through September.
The elections Chair serves on the Best Practices Committee; participates in the monthly Best Practices Committee calls; reports during the calls.	Members should anticipate spending roughly 1/2 hour of prep time ahead of each subcommittee call.
An ideal candidate for this position is a third year Councilor who has served at least one (1) year on the Elections Subcommittee.	

