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# Report

from the Strategic Council

**From:**

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**To:**

AIA Hawaii

**Mission:** *The AIA Strategic Council advances the architectural profession by informing the AIA Board and other Institute bodies about important professional issues, opportunities, and threats. The Council has an outward and forward-focused vision with an emphasis on long-term goals and outcomes.*

**What Does the Strategic Council Do?** To learn more about the role and activities of the Strategic Council, click [HERE](#).

## From the Councilor

In addition to the news from the Council, I'm adding some news from the AIA Government & Public Policy (GaPP) team.

### Lawsuit Filed over the Planned Renovation of Kennedy Center

AIA has joined a broad coalition of eight preservation and architecture organizations in filing a lawsuit in federal district court in Washington, DC regarding proposed work at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This action responds to public statements indicating the building could be taken "down to the steel" during a two-year closure beginning July 4, 2026, raising concerns that irreversible changes might proceed without the required public review and professional input. The lawsuit asks the court to halt any further demolition or fundamental redesign activities until the government completes the required public review and consultation processes.

AIA's involvement builds on AIA's long history in preservation advocacy, from the creation of the Committee on Conservation of Public Architecture in 1890 to recent calls for transparency and adherence to review processes in the White House ballroom project. AIA will share updates and opportunities for engagement as the case progresses. More information on this case, including FAQs, can be found on AIA's dedicated [AIA legal action page](#).

### Professional Federal Designation of Architecture

As part of the Architecture Organizations Alliance, AIA sent letters of endorsement to the cosponsors of two bills to restore graduate and professional student loan limits. The bills respond to caps imposed after recent federal changes that eliminated Grad PLUS and narrowly defined "professional" programs, cutting

students in architecture from the federal tools they rely on to complete accredited degrees. Restoring access to loans will help the architecture workforce, reduce delays in delivering housing and critical public projects, and keep students from being pushed into higher-risk private loans. The bills that AIA is currently supporting to correct this issue include:

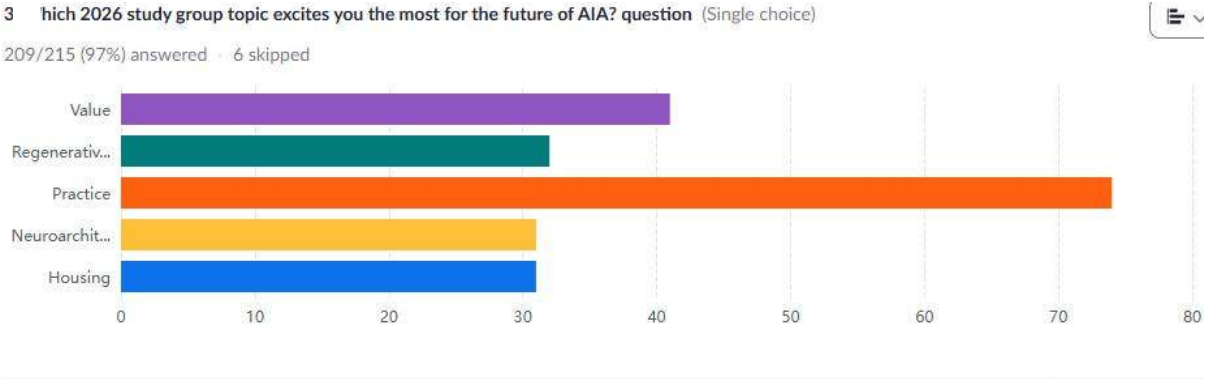
- H.R. 6574, which removes the distinction between graduate and professional student, making the cap the same for everyone.
- H.R. 6718, which codifies architecture as a professional degree alongside other licensure-based fields, ensuring students can access the federal loan limits they need to complete their education, or
- H.R. 6677, which restores the loan structure that existed before recent arbitrary loan caps were proposed.

You can participate in congressional outreach on the issue of professional designation by signing up [here](#).

## From the Moderator

Our study groups continue to advance the early stages of their work. Many groups are connecting with Knowledge Communities and member groups within the AIA Ecosystem. We have also invited AIA Senior Leadership team members to each study group to help identify potential connection points and resources within AIA to assist with the study group efforts. We met with the Governance Task Force and then we held an internal meeting to further discuss the impacts of those recommendations for the Council.

On the March AIA Leadership Exchange Calls, Councilors shared the attached slides to give an overview of our work and ways each of you can engage with the Council or review work from previous years. The upcoming AIA Call for Volunteers will also include applications for the At-Large Representative on the Strategic Council position as well as the At-Large Director to the AIA Board as voted on by the Strategic Council. Leadership Exchange Call attendees participated in a short zoom poll to identify which 2026 area of study excites you most for the future of AIA. Those results are as follows:



Options	Responses 
Housing	31/209 (15%)
Neuroarchitecture	31/209 (15%)
Practice	74/209 (35%)
Regenerative Design	32/209 (15%)
Value	41/209 (20%)

We are excited to share that there will be three sessions at AIA26 directly related to work from the 2025 study groups:

- 6/10 at 10am (WK109) **Climate in your Corner: Making the Case to Clients** with 2025 Climate Responsive Design & Leadership group members Matt Green, AIA (Texas Rep), Corey Squire, AIA (At Large Rep), and Tim Lock, AIA (2025 Maine Rep)
- 6/11 at 2:30pm (WK106) **Why Research Matters: From Intuition to Evidence for Resilient Practice** with 2025 Resilient Practice Model group members Tom Hysell, FAIA (Minnesota Rep and Leah Bayer, AIA (2025 California Rep)
- 6/11 at 1pm (SE211) **AI and Digital Architecture: Equity, Business and Wellbeing in Practice** with 2025 Digital Architecture group members Wellbe Bartsma, AIA (Nevada Rep) and Mike Daly, AIA (2025 Maryland Rep).

Looking forward, we are gearing up for our April virtual assembly and formalizing our study group updates to the AIA Board for their April meeting.

**Jessica M. O'Donnell**, FAIA, 2026 Strategic Council Moderator

*Special thanks to our Moderator-Elect **Matthew Barnett**, AIA, and our **committee chairs** who help guide the Council's work: **Galen Lif**, AIA (Best Practices Committee Chair), **Marc Mondor**, FAIA (Communications Chair), and **Shannon Christensen**, FAIA (Elections Committee Chair).*

## Strategic Council Study Group Updates

Below are snapshots of work in progress. We welcome insights, comments, and questions on these topics and encourage readers to reach out to their state representative on the Council or any of the Councilors.

### HOUSING

Coordination with the AIA Housing and Community Development Knowledge Community (HCD KC) and the AIA Government Advocacy Committee (GAC) is ongoing as this study group refines their specific area of work for this year. The group is reviewing the 2025 AIA Housing Summit brief and plans to hear from key guest speakers during Q2.

### NEUROARCHITECTURE

Subject matter experts Dr. Carmen Simon and Tye Farrow were guest speakers during study group meetings. The group is wrapping up their Q1 research effort and will soon transition to their Q2 effort of synthesizing this data into key points and relevant concerns for AIA and AIA members.

## **PRACTICE**

The [Career Development](#) subgroup is reviewing career development stages to determine if there is a universal model in the profession, which may lead to potential resource creation opportunities. This group will connect with the Project Management Knowledge Community (PM KC).

The [Business](#) subgroup is engaging with four industry futurists for insights on potential business models being developed. Upcoming meetings with the National Associates Committee, Young Architects Forum and internal Council study groups are being organized.

## **REGENERATIVE DESIGN**

Q1 efforts to define the term 'regenerative design' for AIA were incorporated into AIA Leadership Summit workshops with the Knowledge Community leaders. The group is transitioning to its next area of focus: increasing awareness and update of regeneration as a critical element of good design (not just a buzzword).

## **VALUE**

The [Protecting the Profession](#) and the [Public Messaging](#) subgroups are collaborating with AIA Public Affairs to identify potential blind spots and ways to amplify current initiatives and toolkits.

The [Pay Equity](#) subgroup is exploring the Florida fee calculator & list of basic services to see if this could be shared as a resource to help other states enhance existing calculators or develop new ones.

# Institute news

## **2027 DECLARED CANDIDATES FOR AIA NATIONAL OFFICE**

13 members have declared their intent to pursue the offices of At-large Director, Secretary, or President-elect at the AIA Conference on Architecture & Design 2026.

More information about the candidates, including their biographies, can be found [here](#).

## **AIA STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030**

This plan was presented during the 2026 AIA Leadership Summit and is organized around four interconnected goals – PACE – that reflect what members told the AIA mattered most: practice, advocacy, climate, and equity. It is designed to help architects succeed—with strong careers, resilient firms, and a profession equipped to shape a rapidly changing world.

The plan, as adopted by the AIA board of directors in March, as well as additional supporting documents can be found [here](#).

## **AIA STRATEGIC PLAN ACTIVATION FUND FOR AIA COMPONENTS**

The [AIA Strategic Plan Activation Fund](#) is a \$2 million investment over five years (2026–2030) designed to empower components to bring the new [AIA Strategic Plan](#) to life. Individual projects may receive up to \$20,000. To ensure there are enough funds to go around each year, only one proposal will be selected per AIA component. Multi-year initiatives are strongly encouraged. Funds may not be used to hire new staff or increase the compensation of current staff.

## **AIA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT: CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS**

We're seeking bold, engaging proposals for CE sessions that explore visionary leadership and professional growth at every career stage. We're also accepting proposals for guided walking tours and wellness activities that encourage movement, connection, and engagement with place.

Get tips and answers on the submission guidelines during office hours on 3/31/26 and 4/6/26. [Submissions](#) are due April 21.

## Upcoming events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Link</b>
May 15	AIA Town Hall	Virtual	<a href="#">Registration</a>
June 10-13	AIA Conference on Architecture & Design 2026	San Diego, CA	<a href="#">Registration</a>
November 1-3	Women's Leadership Summit	Kansas City, MO	
December 9-11	AIA Governance Week	Washington, D.C	

For more events, visit the AIA events page at: <https://www.aia.org/community/events>

### Feedback

*We value your input! If you have questions or ideas for the Strategic Council, email us at [StrategicCouncil@aia.org](mailto:StrategicCouncil@aia.org).*

*To learn more about the work of the Strategic Council, please visit the [Strategic Council webpage at AIA.org](#).*