



A chapter of the American Institute of Architects

March 22, 2010

Proposed Changes to AIA Bylaws

On March 19, 2010 I attended the Virginias Council Meeting hosted by the Region of the Virginias director Ed Tucker. The meeting was held at the Virginia Center for Architecture in Richmond. Ed is our representative to national AIA board of directors.

Among other things discussed were changes to AIA Bylaws that will be proposed and voted on at the national convention in Miami. The following is a brief description of my understanding of the issues and the pros and cons of each.

Member dues payment plan:

In 2009 members could apply to pay dues in installments rather than in one lump sum at the beginning of the year. This was available on a case by case basis in the case of a hardship due to economic condition. There is a proposal to change the bylaws to allow the Institute to set up an installment payment plan for all members. No specific plan has yet been developed.

Pro: Could lead to increased retention of membership if members are allowed to spread out payments and avoid using credit to pay the full amount at the beginning of the year. It might lead to more successful recruitment of members who are put off by the lump sum payment.

Con: Additional cost to administer such a plan would be incurred by AIA. AIA cash flow would be effected.

International Membership Category:

Currently, Architect licensed in countries out side of the US are eligible for Associated membership and can not use the designation AIA. There is a proposal to allow architects in foreign countries to join AIA as full members.

Pros: It could lead to an increase in membership, larger operating budgets, world wide prestige for AIA members and position AIA as a international organization rather than a national organization.

Con: The designation AIA currently is only available to architects licensed to practice in a state or territory in the US. To the public AIA means an architect licensed to practice who complies with the training and ethical standards of the American Institute of Architects. Allowing architects from other counties to use the AIA designation might create confusion with the public as to the meaning of AIA membership. It could create unfair or unregulated competition between licensed American architects and foreign architects who are not licensed to practice in America. Regulatory requirements to practice architecture vary greatly across the globe; this could dilute the AIA brand. It might be possible that in time American architects would lose controlling interest in the organization if a majority of members are from outside of the US.

Associates as Regional Directors

Currently bylaws allow for one Associate Representative to the Executive Committee. There is a proposal to allow Regions to send an associate member(s) to represent the region on the AIA National Board.

Pros: Expand the pool of candidates for regional directors.

Cons: May dilute the voice of licensed architects in the organization.