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From your AIA|LA Executive Director

## **Reflections from the Annual AIA CACE Meeting**

Every year, I have the privilege of attending the annual Council of Architectural Component Executives (“CACE”) national meeting, a gathering organized by AIA national that brings together AIA component leaders from across the country. This event serves as a platform for discussing overarching organizational matters.

This year, the conference was held in beautiful Atlanta, Georgia and it was three full days of intense discussions and insightful panel sessions. Our conversations covered a wide range of topics, from post-pandemic restructuring and the transition back to in-person events and office work, to the burgeoning influence of Artificial Intelligence and its implications for association management and the architecture industry. The dialogue delved into the core values of AIA, membership dynamics, volunteerism, the future of architecture, and the imperative of diversifying our profession.

CACE also offers an invaluable chance for AIA Executive Directors and management teams to connect with our national leaders. It's an opportunity to learn about the latest developments, the broader agenda, the support we can expect from our national leadership, and their efforts to strengthen local chapters on the national stage.

AIA EVP and CEO Lakisha Woods took the reins in ensuring that AIA remains a trailblazer in innovation and a resounding voice for the architectural profession. She outlined a plan to introduce a new organizational structure (more details coming soon), emphasizing the nurturing of future professionals and the importance of fostering volunteerism. As AIA expands both nationally and internationally, this growth brings both opportunities for advancement and a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of service.

A captivating dialogue occurred between 2023 AIA President Emily Grandstaff-Rice, FAIA, and 2023 AIA Vice President/President-Elect Kimberly Dowdell, AIA. The conversation explored their motivations for becoming AIA members (Kimberly's inspiration stemmed from a mentor) and underscored the vital importance of diversity within our profession. As architecture is inherently representative, our reach should extend to the broadest possible spectrum of individuals.

Emily also shed light on the newly released [AIA Guides for Equitable Practice](#), a valuable guide for implementing equity and diversity within the profession. However, the question arose: what does diversity mean for the over 200 chapters that form the intricate AIA fabric across the nation? Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) hold distinct significance in various geographic contexts, so the challenge is to create a common ground among the 50 states. Emily also highlighted the rising youthfulness of AIA leadership (she herself is the youngest President in AIA history), emphasizing the organization's evolving equity and diversity. AIA's active participation in events like the National Girl Scout Conference and the annual NOMA conference contributes to fostering support and visibility for our profession.

Kimberly previewed her presidential agenda with a clear and concise slogan: More Money, More Members, More Mission – the 3 M's.

**More Money:** Advocating for the value of architecture and fair compensation, demystifying antitrust limitations to openly discuss compensation within legal bounds, and combatting the loss of young professionals due to underpayment.

**More Members:** Recognizing that strength lies in numbers, AIA aims to break the 100k members mark next year (currently standing at approximately 98k members).

**More Mission:** Deepening our commitment to values and fortifying our mission.

As I returned to LA, inspired and motivated, I contemplated the trajectory of the Los Angeles Chapter. Much like AIA National, we are fortunate to have two exceptional women leading our organization: Leslie Sydnor, AIA, as the 2023 President, and Annette Wu, AIA, as the 2023 Vice President/President-Elect. Their agendas focus on reinforcing the Chapter's structure, advancing diversity in the profession, and enhancing member value. I reflected on the incredible community that AIA embodies, encompassing dedicated colleagues who tirelessly work for positive change, and members who contribute their time and resources to create a better future. We're all part of the progressive movement that, despite occasional setbacks, ultimately propels society forward.



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