

## What does the AIA do for me?

I see this question- usually asked on websites and in blogs- and quite often the responses are critical with one common theme: the AIA does nothing to neither help my practice nor help me get more work- the AIA does not market its members.

This is a true statement.



The mission of AIA Cincinnati is as follows: "AIA is the professional organization of Registered Architects who work to create, improve and sustain the communities where we live, work and play. We do this through high-quality design, which identifies and communicates your dreams for better homes, parks, offices, schools, museums and other private as well as public buildings. AIA Architects are the voice of the profession, who strive for excellence, while looking to the future." In essence, the Chapter is an organization of many individuals that work hard to make the world around us a better place to live.

## VALUE

AIA tries to focus on the big issues- public awareness of the profession, providing continuing education opportunities to the members, advocating for the profession at all forms of governments and agencies, develop and provide contracts and small business support- just to name a few.

While we jump at the opportunity to write editorials for the local papers, or receive coverage for our debate and charette programs, or even get the winners of Design Awards published; it is through the actions of each of our Members that we have the largest ability to promote the profession to the general public. This is the intangible strength of the Chapter and its Members.

As with any organization, you get out of it in proportion to what you put into it. Those that get the most out of it have volunteered their time and ideas to enrich the Chapter and lead the profession in new directions. That is the marvel of bringing together a number of people with a collective and inspiring goal. It gets results.

Further, this is a diverse profession with many different interests. With that in mind, we have tried to develop programming that is just as diverse. Our evening Chapter events have tried to focus on the innate passion that we all have for the profession and pondering the legacy that we will eventually leave behind. Our lunch meetings focus on three key themes: Collaboration, Enterprise & Regulation.

The AIA provides its members with the knowledge and tools they need to expand their career and the profession as a whole.

Each of these items could be further devoted to in an entire President's Message of their own. So, with the limited space remaining, I would like to focus on just three new initiatives that are under way:

## VISION

One program that I am extremely proud of being part of initiating is VISION. AIA Cincinnati is launching VISION to serve and engage with a largely underserved demographic of architects in Cincinnati, architects licensed less than ten years.

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This program is a rigorous educational program for young architects in Cincinnati. Similar to the Young Professionals Institute sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects, Vision's core purpose is to support emerging architects and architectural firms in Cincinnati with programming that addresses professional advancement, firm development, and community outreach. It is a year-long leadership program that meets once a month and is designed especially for architects and includes seminars, workshops, keynote speakers at AIA Cincinnati chapter events, professional networking opportunities, exposure to community leaders and issues, a group service project, panel discussions moderated by local AIA Fellows, monthly presentation and discussion forums, and a framework for structured mentoring.

The sessions will begin in November 2010 and the class is limited to 16 participants. The application and enrollment process will begin in September. If you know a young leader that you feel would benefit from such a program, please send me an email.

## DESIGN

With all that is going on within the Chapter and the community at large, we still need to find time to also have fun. The AIA Cincinnati Committee on Design is doing so with a Postcard Campaign.

The Committee wants to start a community dialogue by asking what **design is...**

Postcards will be handed out throughout the community- to design professionals and the general public. These postcards are a blank canvas for everyone to define design in their own terms. Once collected, the cards will be on display in a number of areas within the city.

You can find more information here: <http://www.cincinnati.designcommittee.com/home>

## REFLECTION

We the Board craft Chapter policies and develop events based on what we perceive to be important to the Members. We gather this information through one on one discussions and informal surveys of what is occurring in other communities.

Our Membership Task Force has been working for a number of months developing a survey to gather more critical information and where the Chapter should be headed in the future. In order to better serve the members (and future members) we are looking for your opinion. Please take a moment to complete the survey located here: <http://fs19.formsite.com/Hixson/form167694499/index.html>

Back to the original statement. Yes, AIA Cincinnati does not market its members to the public in the form of advertisements or commercials. It does promote the profession through the activities that it does and through the action of its individual members as ambassadors to the profession, in other words- You.

Respectfully,

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2010 AIA Cincinnati President

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“Advancement only comes with habitually doing more than you are asked.”  
- Gary Ryan Blair, author