



**The American Institute of Architects**

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Happy New Year! Hello 2020!

In looking ahead, it's important to look back and express gratitude for a job well done and acknowledge someone who has set AIA Michigan on a path that will serve us well into the future.

Thank you to Kristen Nyht for serving as AIA Michigan president in 2019. One of Kristen's initiatives was and continues to be broadening the awareness and understanding of how fundamentally important diversity, equity and inclusion is for maintaining and strengthening a healthier organization. She first explored the idea of creating a Women in Architecture committee for AIA Michigan, drawing on the highly successful national programs as a resource. Upon further discussion, feedback from the board, and direction from the Strategic Planning Committee her initial idea has evolved into the creation of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. Kristen has agreed to chair this committee and begin the work that will serve as guide for how we can make better and creative decisions as an organization. She has begun forming the committee and is looking for people who are interested in learning and implementing this knowledge to benefit AIA Michigan, its members and the many programs we implement. Please contact Kristen Nyht at [kanyht@gmail.com](mailto:kanyht@gmail.com).

In 2019 AIA Michigan and our Strategic Planning Committee completed the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Thank you to the committee members from 6 of our components who helped create the initial document that the board refined and has implemented. As the Chair I appreciated the feedback I received from the various components and their members, who encouraged the committee to make sure the plan also set immediate goal dates and tactics. The Plan is posted on the AIA Michigan website. For your information I have included 20 goals and tactics we have set for 2020, the link to that follows.

Briefly, I would like to comment on the AIA, its relevance, and the opportunities we have ahead of us. I do think that now is not the time we need to pull closer. I think the AIA, especially at the national level will continue to need to be decentralized and diverse, rather than centralized and inaccessible. I think the repositioning effort recognized where much of the value is in the AIA. The value is experienced first at the local component level, and then at the state level. Your involvement is where you will receive most of the value, where relationships are developed while trying and learning new things as you participate in programs. This may involve working on "neighborhood" projects that are meaningful to you and that benefit the community. AIA Michigan has an important role to play as well, whether acknowledging the economies of scale to successfully advocate for the profession, or to advocate for society through environmental and sustainable priorities at the state level. This serves us well for certain programs like the health care conference, and affiliate programs like NOMA and supporting farsighted programs like the Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program. I think our opportunities and successes lie in how well we are willing to collaborate and acknowledge that some programs are just more meaningful done at the local component level, but that not all the components have the resources to create the programs their members could benefit from. AIA's role is to lead, educate and empower. When, we do creative work, we inspire those inside the profession and those outside the profession in setting an example for future generations to do even greater creative things. I encourage you to get involved in something locally that you really care about. If you are at a stage in your career where it's tough to commit to something, pick one thing to focus on for a month or two. I had



many years where I could not commit to our local board, or even a committee. At times, it meant just showing up for an event, and at other times I committed to helping with an event or project. These small focused things kept me connected, even though at times it felt like a thread. There is so much meaningful work we get to do. We need experienced architects mentoring, and we can all get better at communicating and clearly advocating. Together, we can create the future of dedicated, courageous, and inspiring architects.

Lastly, I would like share how honored I am to be serving in this role. I have been the beneficiary of many years of good relationships that my Dad formed when he was President of the Michigan Society of Architects, AIA Michigan's previous namesake. My Dad has always been supportive of me as an Architect, guiding me but also allowing me to find my way as I developed my own strengths, skills, and interest in this fulfilling profession. I hope to continue supporting and creating opportunities where architects in AIA Michigan feel that they are connected and supported.

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So, take a few minutes to reflect on your individual paths as AIA Michigan Architects and acknowledge the paths that gave us our way to the future, like my Dad did, like Kristen did and is doing, and what we hope to do for you.

Norman Hamann, Jr., AIA