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President's message: Five strategic priorities - by Melissa Fish-Crane

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Happy New Year! I am thrilled to be representing the IREM Boston Metropolitan Chapter this year as president.

Although there is much hope on the horizon, COVID-19 has altered just about everything, from the way we work, to how we live and interact with each other. While the pandemic has left its mark on the real estate industry, forever altering the way so many businesses and organizations will operate in the year to come, our chapter is poised to nimbly shift with the times – proactively embracing the necessary tools, leveraging resources, enacting cost-saving measures – to stay competitive, maintain and strengthen connections with our membership base and preserve our status as a thought leader in the year to come.

To that end, IREM Boston will endeavor to leverage its solid foundation, strong code of ethics, best practices and formidable reputation to build a future of sustained success, while attracting local real estate management professionals and simultaneously creating a pipeline for sustained membership, engagement and growth. In 2021, we will have five strategic priorities.

First, we will embark on a public relations campaign to grow chapter membership, promote professional designations and enhance the awareness of IREM and its benefits.

This campaign will inform communities about the benefits of an IREM education and what our chapter specifically does, demonstrate the changes we've implemented to continue to offer services throughout the pandemic, provide greater exposure and visibility to support existing members and attract new members, and showcase the knowledge and expertise of the members.

Second, we will leverage virtual and remote learning capabilities. In 2021 our chapter will aim to not

only promote the previously well-known rigorous standards and benefits of IREM's education tracks within the local real estate and management community, but also further endorse its delivery in the virtual classroom.

Third, we will endorse and utilize the IREM Foundation. The IREM Foundation scholarship program provides tuition assistance for up to three certification courses, which means fewer economically disadvantaged members paying out of pocket, and more IREM members earning certifications, purchasing products, attending events and giving back to the association overall.

Fourth, our chapter will seek to promote and grow our educational programs on the local level by offering education opportunities to smaller management organizations that may not have the access to training resources that are critical to sustain the long-term professional growth of their workforce.

Finally – and most importantly – we will focus on diversity. While diversity is, and always has been a core value, our chapter still has work to do. As a chapter, we recognize that diversity, inclusion and equity create our strength, and we embrace and value those differences, while providing an equal opportunity environment for all members, vendors, and staff alike. In 2021, we will build upon the successes of 2020's Diversity Committee, as we continue to make meaningful and thoughtful changes within our local chapter

I am excited to start the year officially at our January 20 IREM Boston Annual Forecast Virtual Luncheon, where we will welcome our keynote speaker, Elliot Eisenberg, Ph.D., of Graphs and Laughs, LLC. We'll also install our new members and recognize our past president at this time (for more information or to register, visit www.iremboston.org). But I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank Kelley Hannon, for her 22 years of dedication. Throughout that time, she's guided us – providing stability while helping us create and nurture long-lasting relationships. I am so looking forward to working with her this year.

As we enter into 2021, we do so with a sense of gratitude and optimism. Best wishes in this new year.

Melissa Fish-Crane is the 2021 president of IREM Boston and Principal & COO at the Peabody Properties.

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