

Giving Thanks

Zach Peterson, President, PLA, ASLA

It can be argued that I spend a little too much time on social media. For an introvert such as myself, it is a relatively safe form of arms-length social interaction (if you manage to avoid talking politics). One of the latest trends is the “10-year Challenge” where people are encouraged to post a photo of themselves from 10 years ago compared to a current photo. This particular challenge got the wheels of introspection going as the most recent Thanksgiving weekend marks the anniversary of a significant milestone in my life.

It was 10 years ago that I packed up my car, said goodbye to my wife and not quite two-year-old daughter and moved from Colorado back to Iowa to start a new job with the City of Davenport.

I was just another nameless casualty of the Great Recession. I had officially lost my job at Design Studios West the previous Memorial Day weekend. Since my resume and educational background was not terribly diverse outside landscape architecture and planning, I found myself not only lacking the marketable skills but also the experience required to secure a job outside the profession. With the shadow of foreclosure growing bigger each day, I made the difficult decision to expand my job search geographically and as a total fluke looked up the job postings in my hometown of Davenport, IA. With jobs scarce elsewhere,



the city was looking for a Planner II and the rest shall we say is history.

And so, 10 years later, I have a lot to give thanks for. I am thankful to the City for taking a chance on me instead of one of the 144 other applicants who also applied for the job. I am also thankful for Iowa, a place that I initially turned my back on, for welcoming me back with open arms and providing my family and me with continued opportunity. Also, I thank the Iowa Chapter of ASLA for welcoming me into the organization as I begin my tenure as Chapter President.

Today’s existential question: How are you thankful in your profession? Are you lucky enough to have found your passion in life like me? Are you at least cognizant of the people/circumstances that got you to where you are today? Have you personally given thanks? Along similar lines, are there people/places that have made you feel welcome along your career journey?

A year ago, in Philadelphia at my very first CPC meeting, I heard ASLA President, Shawn T. Kelly give a talk about the importance of saying thanks and welcoming people into/within our organization. His words still resonate with me. It is as simple as taking the time to thank our amazing sponsors for their commitment to our organization of by welcoming/bringing new members into the fold. Last month at the CPC conference in San Diego, ASLA leaders unveiled a plan to grow membership from



14,000 to 18,000 members by 2025. Building upon a foundation of being thankful and welcoming should make this goal achievable, but it is ultimately up to the existing membership base to find additional ways of providing value to make the organization more attractive to prospective members. In closing, thank you for being a member and if there are ways to make your membership more welcoming, please don't hesitate to ask.



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Public Relations Update

Nate Byro, Public Relations, ASLA

During the past few months, I transitioned into the Public Relations Chair for the Iowa chapter. I would like to thank Garret Munch for all the hard work he has done during his time as chair. A very special thanks for the efforts of organizing our most recent Park(ing) Day in collaboration with Iowa State University! This day could not have been possible without Garret, and many others drive and determination.

This past month I had to opportunity to attend ASLA National in sunny San Diego with the support of the chapter to make connections and learn about experiences from other chapters. This was a great experience for me to become acquainted with how other chapters have viewed this role and gained knowledge of different techniques they have found helpful. Some highlights from the conference included an inspirational opening session

from Gina McCarthy, former Director of EPA. The day was packed full of great educational sessions. That evening, Iowa State University hosted a reunion event to celebrate 40 years of the College of Design. Sunday featured Pat Dunn, trustee for the chapter as one of the speakers during the day.

As always, if you know of any interesting articles, content, or professional advancements that you think should be shared, please let me know and let us know if you know someone who recently received their license. Send us your photos from ACE Mentoring or other outreach events. We need your help in developing content representative of the entire chapter. If you are interested in getting involved with our public relations committee, or if you have any comments, thoughts, or feedback, please reached out to me at nbyro@rdgusa.com.

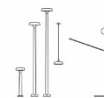
Over the next few months, we will be developing a framework for how our chapter handles public outreach and social media. We will reflect on how these tools can be used as avenues to advance the four parts of our Strategic Plan:

- Advocacy & Awareness
- Member Services & Support
- Shaping the Future of the Professions
- Governance & Management

Expect more to come in the coming months, as we work through the wave of ideas!



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NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Carl Rogers, PLA, ASLA

Where has the fall semester gone. Just like that we are in the last week of classes. If you have a chance and the time, you are invited to the College of Design for Fall Semester Final Reviews. Here is a peak at the schedule this week.

- Savanna, Heidi Hohmann, Michael Martin and Joan Chen, Friday Dec. 13, 8am-12pm
- LA301, Hans Klein Hewett and Michael LeClere, Wednesday Dec. 11, 1:00-5:30pm
- LA402 Sungduck Lee, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 1:00-4:30pm
- LA402 Ben Shirtcliff, Friday, Dec. 13, 1:00-6:00 pm
- LA404 Chad Hunter, Friday, Dec. 13, 1-4:30pm
- LA601 Tom Neppl, Friday, Dec. 12, 1:00-5:30pm
- LA603 Mimi Wagner, Friday, Dec. 13 1:00-5:30om
- LA605 Caroline Westort, Thursday, Dec. 12, 9:00am-1:00pm

The BLA and MLA programs are up for accreditation and the LAB visit is scheduled for the beginning of March 8-12,2020. We are writing the self-evaluation report where we look at the programs and discuss our strengths, challenges, opportunities and see where we meet the accreditation standards. If any alumni are interested in reading a draft of the report and the standard for Alumni, Practitioners and Outreach, please speak with me this evening or email me in the near future.

The department is increasing its recruitment efforts in order to make the profession and program more visible. Incoming students to ISU and the College of Design, simply, do not know the details about landscape architecture. The department has seen a small decline in enrollment, and we recognize more needs to be done to raise the visibility of landscape architecture. Our strategy is to reach out and speak about the value of landscape architecture education and the power of it as a professional career. One way we have done this is

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partnering with Iowa high school advisors for Future Farmers of America program. This program's principles of dealing with conservation and the environment align directly with the mission and goals of landscape architecture. We have reached out to 88 FFA advisors across the state and shared the values of landscape architecture. We also offered to present landscape architecture and speak with high school students about all the career possibilities. Now, we can't do this alone as a university department. So, we partnered with Iowa Chapter of ASLA, where members, across the state of Iowa are now connected with the FFA advisors in their area and are beginning to coordinate visits and presentations. We received 36 responses from FFA advisors and this Fall we have already made 5 presentations in local high schools. A month ago, I visited Gilbert High School, and as part of the landscape design and maintenance class, introduced a small-scale garden design project to students. These students are working on finalizing this project with their teacher over the next several months. If you know of a local high school teacher or curriculum that would benefit from an introduction to our profession, I encourage you to reach out and connect with that high school. Believe me, an email, phone call, or conversation is all it takes to get your foot in the door and potentially interest the next landscape architect.

In October we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Travelling Savanna Studio. The department invited alumni to the ISU



campus for three decades. The first, hosted by the IA-ASLA chapter, was a Friday evening happy hour. Thank you, IA-ASLA chapter, for your support. It was great to kick off the event at Torrent Brewery and fun to see people return to Ames. On Saturday we gathered in the afternoon to listen to alumni share stories and impact regarding their Savanna experience. What great stories and value shared by alumni who spoke about the impact Savanna and their ISU degree continues to have on their career. In the evening we gathered at Gary and Joan Hightshoe's for what proved to be the bonfire of all bonfires!!!!!! Hickory Park provided a great meal and we all enjoyed the company on a fabulous fall evening. The department will not wait another 20 years to celebrate Savanna as well as all the department has to offer. Thanks to everyone for making a memorable weekend!

Continuing the celebration theme, the department, along with the College of Design and the ISU Foundation, hosted an Alumni Reception at the Rustic Root in San Diego as part of the ASLA conference. It was a great venue and great to connect with alumni from the past three decades. No matter what year an alumni graduated, it was great to connect with everyone and learn what everyone has been up to since ISU. The ASLA conference was also a fantastic program with great educational sessions and one of the most motivating opening sessions I have attended in a long time. Gina McCarthy, an environmental health and air quality expert, and now Professor of the Practice of Public Health in the Department of Environmental Health at Harvard University, gave a captivating keynote address about climate change and how landscape architecture is the leading profession to realize new world focused on minimizing the effects of global warming.

I wish everyone the best as the holiday season gets rolling. Please feel free to reach out to me and you are always invited to come visit us in the College of Design.

Best,
Carl



Upcoming Dates!

Winter Social: January 14, 2020. 5:00pm-7:00pm at Pole Position Raceway

Free to attend for ASLA Iowa Chapter Members and SSLA Student Members. Guests \$10 at the door. Racing available for your own additional purchase of \$15 per race. Refreshments provided. Please RSVP at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/asla-iowa-2020-winter-social-tickets-84656372489>

2020 ASLA Iowa Spring Conference and Elwood Lecture: Wednesday March 25, 2020. 8:00am-7:30pm at Iowa State University- Memorial Union Gallery Room

