

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Zach Peterson, President, PLA, ASLA

Back to School

Once upon a time, in a time before the realities of the pandemic hit on a global scale, I went back to school. This experience was much different from my routine “returns to school,” which generally take place in my head as a re-occurring dream in which I find myself several credits shy of graduation or the legitimacy of my degree gets called into question because I somehow didn’t secure the necessary credits that generally ends up with me waking up with a racing heart and cold sweats.

This time, I was going back to school to teach.

I was asked by the Creative Arts Academy of the Quad Cities (an enrichment program with the Davenport School District), to provide a guest lecture for the 6th Grade Visual Arts Program students to give them exposure to the profession of Landscape Architecture. So I diligently prepared a presentation about the profession, education requirements, what I do in my daily job duties, etc. and I supplemented the lecture with a “chip game” park programming class exercise (special thanks to Confluence’s Cedar Rapids office for supplying the materials) to get the students to think critically about park programming, its relationship with other program elements, and their relationship with the land.



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And so on Wednesday, February 5th, it happened.

After arriving early to set up, I was offered a few words of encouragement from the teacher when the bell rang and the students began to file in. And there I found myself face to face with around 24 sixth grade prying-eyes staring me down, sizing me up, and no doubt silently judging me. (I exaggerate because it was actually 23 sets of eyes if you subtract the gentleman sitting up front who decided that Wednesday, February 5th was the date he needed to catch up on some sleep. I guess classroom norms have changed a lot since I was in 6th grade).

And so I began the lecture.



Figure 1 - An image from early in the presentation before their eyes started glazing over.

Almost immediately the cold sweats began to flow and my heart was racing in similar fashion to my school related nightmares. It is funny how presenting in front of an audience of hundreds of people has less of an effect on me. I tried to keep it visually focused showing pictures of projects, plans, hand drawing, and software technology I use. I also really tried to hammer home how Landscape Architecture is different from landscape design to try to tear down the preconceptions of what we do as professionals (teach ‘em young, right?). The students seemed engaged or polite at the very least but I definitely lost them





when I bogged them down with my slide on state regulations and the licensure process. I really don't know what I was thinking there... KNOW. YOUR. AUDIENCE. That was the defining moment when all 23 sets of prying eyes shifted their gaze from one of engagement and politeness to glazed-over expressions (and quite possibly contempt). I had to recover quickly because I was losing them fast. I forgot what I had prepared in the presentation past that point but I abandoned it in favor of starting the chip game park design activity.



Figure 2 - Project teams busy at work on their park concepts.

The class was divided into groups of 5 and I outlined the site program of required elements and optional elements for them

to incorporate on a printed base map of a park site. I did my best to outline how the unique opportunities and constraints of the project site might impact their decisions about where to place programmatic items. The class as a whole, responded really well to this exercise but I was especially proud of the way they embraced what I instructed them in that good design is a product of a justifiable and defensible rationale behind every move. Each group thought critically about site relationships and gave good responses as to why it makes more sense to locate a drinking fountain near athletic courts, restrooms near picnic shelters, etc., even though groups may have missed the mark by placing structures on steep slopes or in some cases, across the street from the project boundary. We only had enough time for a few groups to pin up their work when the bell rang.



Figure 3 - Providing a desk critique to a project team while working around the sleeping student.





Figure 4 - A project team presenting their concepts to the class. (A little biased towards this one because the girl in the blue sweatshirts is my daughter).

I can't describe how shocking it was that several hours had elapsed seemingly instantaneously. They actually gave me an enthusiastic round of applause (which awakened the sleeping student) and they moved on to their next class. The highlight of the day however was when a student approached me afterward expressing a general interest in the profession. I provided her with some more info on software programs I use, where I went to college, etc.

I would love to have a crystal ball and be able to see if that student ends up pursuing a career in the profession. Maybe, just maybe, my lecture might be an inspirational moment in her career path. If I successfully reached 1/24 students, I consider those some good odds for the profession. The Landscape Architecture Department at Iowa State University has provided similar outreach at the high school level as means of exposing students to the profession thanks to partnerships with organizations such as the Future Farmers of America. In spite of lower enrollment trends in landscape architecture programs on a national level and in spite of a global pandemic, the LA department at Iowa State has reported that enrollment has stayed the same as in the past several years. The College of



Design has seen a slight increase in first-year student enrollment, thanks in part to these initiatives as well as other recruitment efforts.

Education about and exposure are becoming more and more critical in terms of ensuring the long term sustainability of the profession as well as our organization. As professionals, we should be seeking out our own ways of getting our message out to the impressionable masses. The LA Dept. will continue to provide outreach efforts but they are looking for help from practitioners to take on some of these efforts in locales that span the entire State.

True confession: I for one really never quite understood what landscape architecture was until I declared it as my major and started classes at the graduate level. If I had a good understanding earlier in my life, I most definitely would have declared it as my major coming out of High School. Imagine how many people out there may be in a similar situation. ...but first I would highly recommend that they stay awake in class.

TRUSTEE UPDATE

Patrick Dunn, PLA, ASLA

Here in Iowa, it is easy to believe that all the funding for conservation and environmental protections go to the coasts or to the mountains. While much of it may in fact support efforts outside of Iowa, we have an impressive list of recipients.



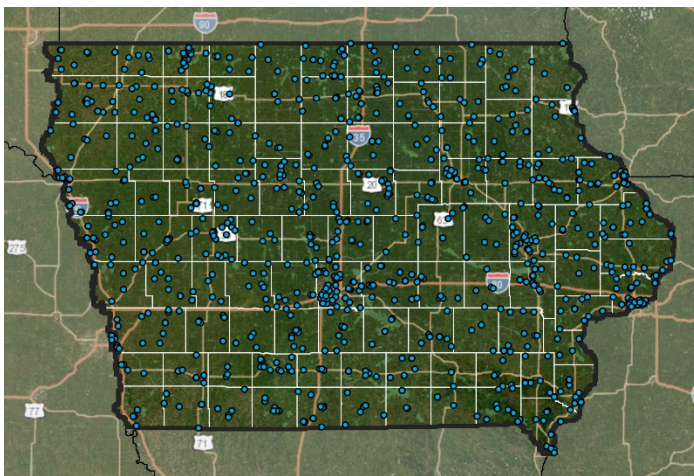
The recent passage of **Great American Outdoors Act** will continue to fund initiative throughout Iowa. Thanks to your support 2,500 members of ASLA's advocacy network sent over 6,200 messages in support of this law, reaching lawmakers in all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. This was truly a momentous task, but ASLA members were clearly up to the challenge.

Please take a few moments to visit the following four websites that have focused articles on the importance of this recent milestone legislation.



(Above) Cane Creek Falls at Fall Creek Fall State Park / TN State Department of Environment and Conservation

<https://www.asla.org/land/LandArticle.aspx?id=58003>



<https://www.iowadnr.gov/about-dnr/grants-other-funding/land-water-conservation-fund>



(Above) Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah | Photo by Ilona Bellotto

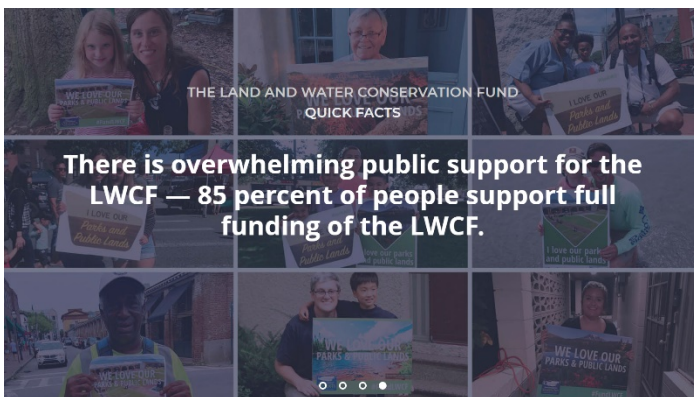
<https://www.asla.org/NewsReleaseDetails.aspx?id=57930#:~:text=The%20new%20law%20permanently%20and,parks%20and%20other%20public%20lands>

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Carl Rogers, PLA, ASLA

Hello Iowa ASLA Members.

I hope you are all well and safe. It is hard to imagine that is the beginning of October and ISU is half way through the fall semester. We continue to practice all the protocols in place at the start of the semester, wearing face coverings, 50%



<https://environmentiowa.org/feature/ame/great-american-outdoors-act>





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classroom density, at least 6 feet of social distancing when around other people, washing our hands, staying home when feeling sick, and conducting virtual meetings. If you have been on campus or are scheduling a visit, it does not look normal. It is pretty quiet but rest assured work is in full swing and students are learning in their respective courses. Faculty continue to teach in one of three ways, on-line, in-person, or hybrid, and based on my experience, it is working. Campus is very safe, with all these protocols, and everyone is doing their part to keep it that way.

The department received great news in regards to the accreditation of both the bachelor's and master's degree programs. If you remember, last March, the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board sent a team of academics, university administrators and landscape architect professionals to the ISU campus. Prior to their visit, the team read the department's self-evaluation report and reviewed an online portfolio of student work from all levels of each program. During the visit, the team met with me, ISU administration including the College of Design Dean, faculty, students, and alumni in the area. It was a jam packed four and a half days. We were fortunate to complete the visit before the university closed and moved to an online learning format due to COVID-19. After the visit, the team wrote a report with recommendations for the board in respect to the two program's accreditation. During the summer, the board voted on accreditation, and I am happy to announce, the two programs received accreditation with the next review in 2026. The 6-year period is the maximum time between reviews. In addition, the team had no additional

recommendations for the BLA program and had two for the MLA program. The two recommendations involved improving the department's definition of research for the benefit of graduate education, and to improve learning outcomes and skills as a stronger part of the graduate curriculum. Both of these recommendations are in line with current department discussion related to the graduate curriculum as well as the department's strategic plan. Thank you to those Iowa Chapter members who took the time to meet with the visiting team.

Finally, be on the lookout for an alumni/department virtual event in the very near future. The faculty feel it is a good time to connect with as many alumni as possible. I was planning on another alumni reception at the ASLA 2020 conference in Miami and since that was cancelled want to still do something that connects all of us together in order to celebrate landscape architecture. If you have any suggestions for program ideas please email me at, rogersc@iastate.edu.

I hope everyone enjoys the fall season and continues to support Iowa State University, this great ASLA chapter and all that is landscape architecture. Take care, and hope to see you soon.

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MICHIGAN AWARDS RECAP

Lara Guldenpfennig, President Elect, PLA, ASLA

I'd personally like to thank the jurors that reviewed the Michigan Chapter submission back in September. The jury included: Michael Gaunt, Patrick Dunn, Zach Peterson, Stacey Hanley, Laura Kessel, Josh Shields, Devon Bloch, and myself. We juried 21 submissions over the course of a 4-hour Zoom session. I can speak for all of us when I say that we really enjoyed the projects that were submitted and were very impressed with their student submissions; there is a lot of talent coming out of Michigan! I'd also like to thank ASLA Colorado for sharing their jurying matrix that they used for Central States – this was a HUGE timesaver and kept the jurying process very streamlined.

IOWA ASLA AWARDS PROGRAM

SAVE THE DATE

Thank you to all the submissions for our 2020 Awards Program. We had 18 submissions total and they were juried by the Michigan ASLA Chapter. Our results are in and they will be announced at our Awards Celebration on Friday, October 23rd from 11:30am - 1pm. With the changes that have come with this pandemic, we've had to roll with the punches these past 200+ days. Although we are missing each other and our vendors, the safety of our membership must remain our highest priority. Please join us on the 23rd by registering at the link below. You will be sent an email with the Zoom information and an online \$10 gift card towards lunch on the chapter! Due to the nature of the awards program this year, we ask that all registrations be individually entered vs. completed as a firm/organization. [Fall Awards Registration](#)



FALL AWARDS CEREMONY

SAVE THE DATE!

October 23rd
11:30-1
Hosted virtually, register at
bit.ly/IAFallAwards

 **ASLA**
IOWA

The graphic features a dark teal background with large, stylized oak leaves in shades of brown and orange. The text is in a bold, sans-serif font, with the main title and date in orange and the details in white. The ASLA Iowa logo is positioned in the bottom left corner.

