

'SLIVER' LININGS

Zach Peterson, President, PLA, ASLA

Here we are in the waning weeks of the 2020 calendar year and what a long, strange, sometimes painful trip it has been. I can't help but feel the sting of a year lost as president of the Iowa Chapter as we don't have many tangible accomplishments to celebrate as the year comes to a close.

And yet, I can't help but feel optimistic about the year to come. COVID 19 vaccine trials have come back as 95% effective and now approved for immunization treatment which may mean that the trials of the past year may soon be a thing of the past. The icing on the cake is that BOTH my alma-mater football programs are ranked in December. Let's just say this hasn't happened in a long time, possibly never at the same time. (UPDATE: Only one of my alma-maters remains ranked in December. I'll still take it.)

I recently attended the Fall Chapter Presidents Council (CPC) meeting and reVISION, the re-vamped National ASLA Conference from the comfort/prison of my home office. They both served as an introduction of sorts to Torey Carter-Conneen, our organization's new CEO. After



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some soul searching, the ASLA national leadership made the difficult decision that changing times meant that a change in leadership was necessary in order to ensure the relevancy of the organization and lay the groundwork for the future.

I was immediately impressed. Torey's career and personal background will bring much needed and more diverse perspectives to our organization and I found his easy-going personality engaging and more importantly, accessible.

The work ahead for him and our organization won't be easy. We as designers like to talk a big game about integrating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion into our work but how is this truly possible when the typical cross section of design professionals is anything but? And how do we effectively engage perspectives different from our own when many of the key players are so disillusioned that they do not see a benefit in sharing their thoughts out of fear or mistrust? The irony of this issue was not lost at our Fall CPC meeting where chapter leaders from across the country (spoiler alert: only slightly more diverse than the makeup of the Iowa Chapter leadership) were tasked with coming up with strategies to better engage underrepresented groups within the





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profession within our breakout groups. It was a difficult conversation, akin to throwing darts at a board to try and develop our own educated guesses as to what is missing from a system we have really limited experience or frame of reference.

It may be a rough start, but I am glad that the ASLA recognizes these issues and are a willing participant in the discussion moving forward. These difficult conversations at a professional level can only lay the groundwork for a stronger, more inclusive organization and will hopefully generate results that can transcend the profession and do their part to tear down the invisible barriers that have framed our polarized society.

Happy Holidays and Cheers to a fresh start in 2021!

TRUSTEE UPDATE

Patrick Dunn, PLA, ASLA

It has been an honor to serve as your Trustee for the past 3 years, and I am excited to pass the baton to Michael Gaunt, who is well positioned to hit the ground running. During my tenure, I came to realize that my passion to serve the Iowa Chapter is not in Washington DC or at Board of Trustee meetings within the National Conference on Landscape Architecture... It is right here in Iowa.

Recently, the Iowa Executive Committee accepted my request to continue my tenure as the Iowa Fall Conference Organizer/Facilitator. Over the last few year, this role has been incredibly fulfilling for me, and I plan to build on recent Fall Conference successes.

A foundation of our Fall Conferences has been to feature both seasoned (that's the pc way of saying it) Iowa based Landscape Architects and aspiring students from Iowa State University. You can look forward to these folks bookending this fall's conference, and for lots of enlightening information in between.

Thanks for all your support over the last few years Happy Holidays!

Michael Gaunt, PLA, ASLA

Having served as President of the Iowa Chapter in the past, I'm looking forward to now serving the Chapter at the national level. There are many critical issues our society is facing and our profession is uniquely poised to advocate solutions and directions. Already, ASLA is a vocal proponent for the United States rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, maintaining our National Parks and



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Lands, and even fostering discussions related to social equality and justice.

It's an honor to serve as the Chapter Trustee for the next three years and I look forward to working with an outstanding Executive Committee.



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NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Carl Rogers, PLA, ASLA

Greetings IA-ASLA Chapter Members!

I don't know about you, but I am ready to close the door on 2020. It has been a roller coaster of a year! I suspect the year, and pandemic, have affected all of you from your professional life to your personal life. I hope that you have all managed to stay safe and healthy. No one thought we would be experiencing what we have this past year and it has taken so much effort to get through it. Thankfully, here at ISU and in the Department of Landscape Architecture, we have worked together to make the best of what we faced. So, I would like to share some reflections on positive outcomes for this past year.

First, in the spring semester we successfully moved 20 courses, taught in-person, to all online instruction in just 10 days. This was accomplished because landscape architecture faculty are committed to delivering the highest quality and accessible course content to our students. We didn't get everything right but we managed to complete the semester, advance current students in their course of study, and graduate a cohort of 27 BLA students, and 5 MLA students.

Next, over the past summer, faculty prepared fall courses for three different teaching modalities; on-line, hybrid, and in-person. This past fall semester was very different on-campus with it looking pretty quiet and empty by design. There are a number of success stories all throughout the curriculum in both the BLA and MLA programs. One such example is Savanna Studio where we weren't able to offer the traditional Savanna Studio that travels all through the Midwestern region. What faculty were able to do, is recreate the same experience using Ames as the anchor for understanding landscape systems and landscape architecture. All-in-all, I think it was a successful semester introducing landscape architecture students to a hands-on, outside learning experience. This one example, goes to show, how faculty are creative, innovative, and able to adapt to a different environment.

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I know that you faced challenges this year as you completed your work promoting and advancing landscape architecture. Thanks for all you do and for your continued support of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Iowa State University. In the end, as I reflect on the year, I realize that we do live in a wonderful world, and when you take time to explore your own close to home world, you see its amazing connection to our life. I wish you all the best over the holidays and into the New Year. Let's hope that 2021 provides us an opportunity to connect and move forward in a positive way. Take Care, stay safe, and wear your mask!! Go Cyclones!

PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

Nate Byro, Public Relations Chair, PLA, ASLA

2020 has been a year that has emphasized the importance of outdoor space, especially public open space. This year has shown a multitude of ways this space can be used: outdoor recreation when gyms close, places of gathering and protest, places to dine, and places to escape. We hope the world has come to cherish this outdoor space and will continue to appreciate the places we create.

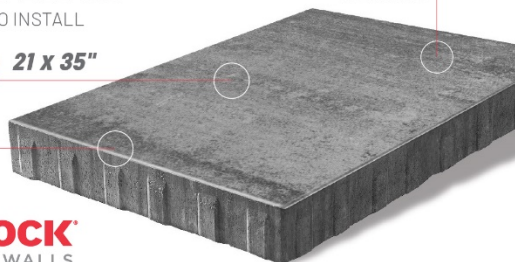
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First, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new and returning Executive Committee. We look forward to another year of change and are excited to see what this ExComm will produce!



The chapter is tracking the following events for public showcase and engagement this next year. We hope to be able to have our legislative breakfast on the morning of March 16th. This was one of our first professional outreach items that we had canceled last year and are hopeful to be able to get out in front of our legislators to emphasize the importance of licensure. As always, April will be World Landscape Architecture Month. This is a month-long celebration of the works of landscape architects in shaping the world around us. ASLA National has yet to announce the theme for this year's event, but we look forward to sharing more information with you as it comes forward. One of the major events during April that the chapter has participated in during the past is the Mayor's Annual Ride & Run in Des Moines. If the City decides to host this event this year, we look forward to volunteering again and showcasing Landscape Architecture to the participants.



We remain hopeful that we will be able to partner with Iowa State University this upcoming year for the Park(ing) Day Celebration! This past year more than ever, it has been apparent that our public open space is vital to our health and livelihood. We hope to bring back this celebration with excitement this upcoming year. Stay tuned for more information.



As always, if you have anything of interest to be shared on our social threads, or if you would like assistance with an op-ed or other public communication, please reach out! If you are interested in joining the Public Relations Committee and helping develop our content, we will gladly welcome you! Send an email to iaaslapr@gmail.com or reach out to us through the Contact Us portion of the website.

