

## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Lara Guldenpfennig, President, PLA, ASLA

I truly can't believe we are at the end of December, and subsequently, the end of 2021. This year has brought on new challenges for all of us and reiterated the importance of **Nature** in our lives. As Landscape Architects we have been called to create places of respite for, remembrance and renewing our communities' connections to the outdoors. If the ongoing pandemic has taught us anything, it's that **we matter**.

When I stepped into the President-Elect role at the beginning of 2020, I really didn't know what I was getting myself into. Quite honestly, staying on as President-Elect for a second year, I still wasn't sure. After attending the Chapter President's Council Meeting and the Conference on Landscape Architecture in Nashville just a few weeks ago, I have figured some things out. My goal for this upcoming year is to reconnect our members, both professionals and students, in a few ways. If CPC showed me anything, it's that the **Iowa Chapter is the gold standard of what other chapters are striving for**. I'll even use the word blessed to describe it. Not only do we have an amazing group of professionals and firms in our state, but we also have an amazing Landscape Architecture program at Iowa State taught by some of the most engaging and knowledgeable faculty. I know this isn't rocket science and that I'm preaching to the choir, however, the basis of our chapter and its success comes from this connection with the students.

Over the next few months, we'll be creating an **Emerging Professionals** committee to spearhead monthly gatherings for our newest members. It is so important to build up these relationships as young members begin to grow in their careers, become licensed, and move through



### IT'S NOT A FIREPIT.

It's roasting marshmallows.  
It's compiling stories and s'mores.  
It's late nights with good friends.  
It's reconnecting with a spouse.  
It's a quiet escape.

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the day-to-day tasks of being Landscape Architects. I've tasked our newest Member-at-Large and Associate Member-at-Large, John Aceto and Dani Hodgson, with this very idea. Whether the gathering is focused on reviewing sections of the LARE, conversing with 5<sup>th</sup> year students about what your experiences have been to this point in your careers, or meeting up after a stressful week in the office to unwind, our young members need to have this connection.

In addition to our emerging professionals, we have a need at the academic level to promote all our students, **especially those who identify as women**. After spending two afternoons at the studio review sessions the first week of December, there is a need for diversity among our reviewers. Writing this as a mom of two very active daughters, as a wife, and as a Landscape Architect, this group of students need US. I'm challenging my fellow colleagues to attend a review session, a portfolio review, a desk-crit in the middle of a project – any amount of our time that we can give will be so appreciated by students and staff alike. I'm also challenging the firms in our state to give your female employees the opportunity to connect with these students knowing this is a worthy cause **their firms should strive to support**.



While in Nashville, I attended a discussion with the Women in Landscape Architecture Professional Practice Network with students from the LA program at Iowa State. They are hungry to make connections with other women in our profession throughout the state. While attending the President’s Dinner, it was inspiring watching Eugenie Martin installed as our new President of ASLA and having Emily O’Mahoney installed as President-Elect. For the first time, in its 122-year history, ASLA has a woman President AND President-Elect. **One Hundred Twenty-Two Years.** Also honored was Darwina Neal, who received The ASLA Medal, our society’s highest honor. She began her career as the third woman employed by the National Park Service and became the first woman president of the society in 1983. Magdalena Aravena received the 2021 Emerging Professional Medal for her advocacy efforts in attracting more diverse practitioners into the field. We’ve got our own set of movers and shakers coming out of Iowa and I’m excited to see what they can achieve.

In the past, the chapter has attempted a **Mentorship Program**, with little progress. I know that we are all busy and that the definition of busy is different for all of us, however, the success and growth of our field in Iowa is contingent upon keeping these amazing students within the state upon graduation. Our success is also dependent on our interaction at the **primary and secondary education levels.** In September 2021, ASLA spearheaded the [‘Dream Big with Design’](#) initiative to showcase our profession to PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade students by connecting Landscape Architecture to the many worlds of Disney. I recently attended their follow-up webinar, [‘Keep Dreaming Big with Design’](#), hosted by Chip Sullivan, that was intended for the high school crowd and, I can honestly say, I haven’t been more pumped to be in this field after watching. Both recordings are available for the

chapter to use throughout classrooms in Iowa. I would encourage all our members to connect with a local school whether it be one in your neighborhood, one your own children/nieces/nephews/grandchildren attend, or even your old stomping grounds.

On a final note, I hope that this holiday season brings memories and moments that you will cherish for a lifetime. My sincere thanks to all the members in the chapter and my fellow Executive Board for believing in my abilities to lead the chapter this upcoming year. I look forward to reconnecting with many of you and, in the meantime, if you have any ideas you’d like to discuss, please feel free to email me at [lguldenpfennig@snyder-associates.com](mailto:lguldenpfennig@snyder-associates.com). Happy Holidays.

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## TRUSTEE UPDATE

Michael Gaunt, PLA, ASLA

Thank you to everyone who attended the National Conference in Nashville last month, it was a huge success and we are so grateful to a return to some semblance of “normal” as we continue learning how to cope with Covid. As the Chapter Trustee, I attended the annual Board of Trustee meeting just prior to the conference. These annual meetings allow us time to discuss the business end



of the society itself and set governance guidelines and policies. This year had quite the agenda and I'd like to fill you in on some of the highlights that were discussed.

### Policy recommendations to the Biden-Harris Administration

In 2021, ASLA developed a set of policy recommendations to be included in legislature relating to infrastructure and environmental issues. With the passage and signing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, significant investments will be made to the nation's transportation, water, renewable energy, and broadband infrastructure. Overall, this includes 13 recommendations sent by ASLA's Government Affairs team to congressional leaders.

For more information on the passage of the act and how it will affect the profession, check out the link on here:

[Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#)

### Member Recruitment and Retention

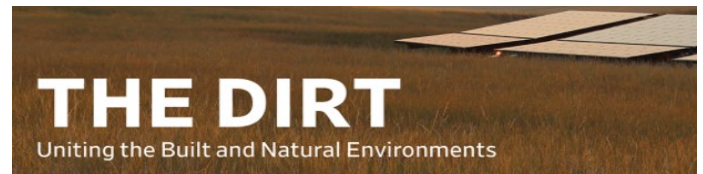
ASLA would not exist without the strength of our membership and the engagement with local chapters throughout the US. ASLA has been working extensively to better understand the needs of the members, as well as what it is that gets members engaged and active through both direct and indirect evaluation of member interests. The categories that ASLA will focus on can be primarily grouped in the following:

- Professional Licensure
- Climate related issues
- Business Development / Enhancement

Look for opportunities and information from ASLA in the coming months in these areas.

### ASLA Strategic Plan 2022-2024

The national conference also saw the unveiling of the new ASLA Strategic Plan. This comprehensive plan has been debated, edited, and scrutinized over many months. ASLA is an extraordinarily diverse group of professionals and there were many lively debates about wording and phrasing. This document represents the best of ASLA's collaborative nature to bring differing opinions to a consensus. See Zach's article below for additional details.



As always, I continue to urge you to bookmark the page for The Dirt from ASLA. There are so many exciting things happening in our profession these days and most of it is distilled into articles found there. Check out the latest from [The Dirt](#).

This past year has continued to be quite the roller coaster ride that many of us were hoping would be over by now. It's not, but we appear to be getting there. It's with optimism for a return to some semblance of normal that we slowly move into a post-pandemic time-period. There were so many lessons from the Covid pandemic that will be making their way into our future designs and our way of thinking about public spaces. Now is the time for our profession to lead the way for safer, more open, and more inclusive public spaces.

*"A doctor can bury his mistakes, but an architect can only advise his client to plant vines." Frank Lloyd Wright*





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## NEWS FROM THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY 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 the holiday season is upon us and with that ISU is on winter break. The fall semester ended with final studio reviews the week of December 6-10. All year levels in both the BLA and MLA programs participated in reviews. Thanks to all the chapter members who made the trek to Ames; students always appreciate feedback from professionals. The Savanna program completed a more normal fall semester, being able to travel north and west from South Dakota to Colorado, and travel south from Missouri to Texas. We were all thankful for this program to hit the road again and introduce second-year BLA students to landscapes throughout the Great Plains and the Midwest.

Third, fourth, and fifth year BLA students completed some really great work with sites in Dyersville, IA (3<sup>rd</sup>), Minneapolis, Minnesota (4<sup>th</sup>) and Cambridge, Iowa (5<sup>th</sup>). First year MLA students completed a project on the ISU

campus, and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year MLA students worked on a Bison Farm north of Ames near Story City. It was exciting to see students explore ideas, concepts, and issues current in landscape architecture, from flood mitigation, urban redevelopment, trauma informed design, garden and native plant design, to sustainable farming and agritourism. There is so much to be excited for within our great department.

34 students (undergraduate and graduate) made the trip to Nashville, Tennessee for the ASLA conference. It was really great to see the group of students walking around the Music City Center, attending educational sessions, as well as cruising through the Expo. The Alumni Tailgate was on the Saturday evening of the conference, and, let me tell you, it was well attended. With ASLA sponsoring student membership and registration, and programs across the country sponsoring student travel and accommodations, the attendance at the tailgate was at an all-time high. I really enjoyed the conference, attended some great sessions from using GIS to analyze park equity in large cities, to learning about the Cleveland Waterfront. I have to say the content of the most recent conferences has really upped its game and makes attending it well worth it! It was great to see many of our Iowa Chapter members at the conference.



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Hope to see more of you next year in San Francisco. Students have already begun to ask if they can attend it next year.

We have some exciting things happening in 2022. The department is currently searching for two new faculty members. We hope to hire these new hires by the end of the spring semester. One position's focus is on field based learning/pedagogy with a primary responsibility in championing the Savanna program into the future. The other position seeks new faculty who have a keen eye and expertise in ecological design related to landscape architecture. We see both of these positions helping with shaping the future of our program and aiming at meeting the goals of our strategic plan. All faculty in the department seek to make our mark as the leaders of the green and blue environments within the College of Design and Iowa State University. I hope everyone enjoys the holiday and winter season. Peace to you and your families and thank you for your continuing support of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Iowa State University. I am truly thankful for this great ASLA chapter and all that is landscape architecture. Keep in touch by emailing me, [rogersc@iastate.edu](mailto:rogersc@iastate.edu). Take care and hope to see you soon.

## CLOSING NOTES

Zach Peterson, PLA, ASLA, Past-President Iowa ASLA

With the conclusion of the National Conference in Nashville, I am officially "out to pasture" as Chapter President. But unlike real retirement, I will not be moving to Florida with the need to hike my pants WAY up, but rather, I will be involved as Immediate Past President and still be an Iowa resident. As I get accustomed to this new role and, despite the prospect of facing another Iowa winter, I am reinvigorated after attending the National

Conference. This year's conference was much more than a booze fueled, bull-riding, karaoke-singing, country music listening, mullet-observing, and barbeque-eating whirlwind; (I even have some of it documented on film for future blackmail purposes). It was the opportunity to see and meet with our fellow professionals for the first time in TWO years!

Given the uncertainty of the pandemic in 2020, I give the ASLA a lot of credit for putting on ReVision, however, meeting in a virtual setting just wasn't the same. I am one who needs a greater connection beyond what staring at a computer monitor for several days straight can provide. What was missing last year was the human scale that only in-person interaction can provide. The ability to experience different places and document different takes on the built environment. The ability to socialize in unique settings, network outside of a video chat room, and meet our sponsors in-person (as well as thank them for their generosity). The ability to experience the products featured on the Expo floor from a multi-sensory standpoint and browse the latest and greatest book selections in the bookstore without being limited to a few online sample pages.



Along with the euphoria of being able to get out of the house and experience the conference from a more humanistic perspective, the highlight of the trip would have to be when I forced myself to wake up “early” to attend the General Session on Saturday Morning. Entitled, “Finding Our Future,” the keynote session was the debut of the highly anticipated Strategic Plan that ASLA National Staff and the Board of Trustees have been diligently working on behind the scenes since Torey Carter-Coneen, ASLA CEO was hired on to lead the organization into the new decade. Torey took to the stage to deliver his address as if the year was 2030 and he was reflecting upon the accomplishments of the profession during the last decade. This futuristic approach struck a chord with me as we as designers are optimistic futurists and the future “made possible” by this initiative is intriguing.

The plan calls on the ASLA to enhance the delivery of its services by “Empowering our members to design a sustainable and equitable world through Landscape Architecture.”

The plan calls on our organization to achieve this mission by following five distinct focus areas:

1. **Community** – Build a welcoming and inclusive community that provides a place for members, partners, and supporters to connect, learn, and grow.
2. **Connection** – Enable change through collaboration and effective partnerships.
3. **Innovation** – Leverage the best practices developed by and for our members to keep us and the profession at the forefront of innovation.
4. **Scale** – Make the investments necessary to bring to bear the power of our membership and our profession.
5. **Voice** – Provide a platform to elevate expertise and the collective impact of our members.

If you haven’t had an opportunity to read through it yet, I invite you to click on the link to review the document in its entirety: [Strategic Plan 2022-2024](#)

The vision presented is bold, but the goals are not so lofty that they are unrealistic. The result envisions an elevated profession that is also understood in the public eye. Landscape Architecture will become, among others, a household name; an official STEM designated profession; a leader at the table taking on challenges from a local-to-global scale. Our expert knowledge of the intimate relationships between the natural and built environment will be highly valued and sought after. Working together with a repurposed ASLA fund, our profession will also be able to “put our money where our mouth is” so to speak in delivering and executing global, social, and environmental change.

As I look back on my Presidency, by a total fluke of fate, I will have the distinction of having served during what will undoubtedly go down in history as a great period of transition within our organization. The aftermath of a global pandemic has only increased the urgency of this transition. As I hand off the baton to Lara, I am confident she will be able to lead our chapter in concert with this exciting new vision in the year ahead.

