

**Department of Landscape Architecture  
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment  
University of Kentucky**

**Strategic Plan  
2017 – 2022  
(edited October 13, 2020)**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Landscape Architecture program is to provide a broad-based education that instills the ability to think critically, fosters creative problem solving, develops a theoretical foundation for landscape architecture, and an understanding of technologies. An emphasis on teaching, research, and public service will facilitate human habitat design which appropriately responds to environmental, social, and aesthetic issues. (3/11/2010)

The mission of the Department of Landscape Architecture has three components:

- To educate students who will use critical thinking, creative problem solving, and technological proficiency to contribute to societal and environmental sustainability in landscape architecture and related professions.
- To produce research that contributes to the thoughtful and sustainable design and management of places for human habitation.
- To engage communities with service, research, and teaching that helps them become more supportive and sustainable places for human habitation. (8/25/2011)

## **Goals and their Achievement from the 2011 Strategic Plan**

**1. *Diversify the composition of the faculty and diversify faculty effort.***

The department substantially met this goal in terms of greater gender balance and more balanced assignments of faculty effort.

**2. *Redesign the undergraduate curriculum to promote coherence in its structure with the greatest value for students' investment of time and resources.***

The department redesigned the undergraduate curriculum in 2012, with implementation in 2013. The program shifted from a five-year to a four-year program, with emphasis on engagement in the BSLA curriculum in the first year.

**3. *Enrich the undergraduate curriculum with a formalized program of travel, internships, and research experiences.***

The department now requires international study and either a professional internship or formal research experience as a component of the BSLA degree.

**4. *Increase the quantity and diversity of undergraduate enrollment.***

Student diversity and gender balance are improved, but growth in enrollment is a continuing effort.

**5. *Develop a design assistance center that will coordinate student-faculty teams with requests for design assistance from communities.***

The department created and filled an extension faculty position in community design in 2012 and an extension program manager position in 2017. Along with other faculty/student community design engagement, the department is well-organized in design assistance.

**6. *Obtain additional physical space for instruction, research, and engagement efforts.***

Studios have seen significant improvements in quality of furnishings and technical equipment. Space for research and community engagement efforts is still an issue for the department.

**7. *Strengthen ties to the professional landscape architecture community.***

The department has developed effective new interactions with its professional community. Examples include collaboration on the state chapter ASLA annual meeting, frequent professional guest speakers in courses such as LA 105 and LA 490, the formal internship program, and faculty service. This service includes the state chapter ASLA, national ASLA, the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board, and the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture.

## **Purpose of this Plan**

Progress on the 2011 Strategic Plan created substantive change in many aspects of the department. The current plan focuses on consolidating those improvements and making refinements to the curriculum and the work of students, staff, and faculty that will lead to higher levels of excellence. The 2017 plan also recognizes the substantive progress still needed in the area of undergraduate enrollment and department space needs.

## **Goal 1. Increase the quantity, quality, and diversity of undergraduate enrollment.**

The department has had a long-standing target for enrollment of 25 students each year in the entering class of the Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture degree program. Because faculty assignments have shifted to greater proportions of research and service effort and the department is involved in courses that teach more non-landscape architecture majors, that number may be inappropriately high. The Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board's standard for student/faculty ratios in studios is 15:1, which the department has routinely justified exceeding through the participation of members of the professional community who assist in studios. This suggests that a target number of entering students each year of 20 may be more reasonable, with 25 as a cap.

Diversity in the student body has increased somewhat in recent years. From the 2012-13 academic year to the 2016-17 academic year, minority enrollment has grown from 10 to 16% of the student body and female enrollment has grown from 22 to 31% of the student body.

## **Objectives**

1. Expand on-campus recruitment efforts aimed at exploratory students or those wishing to change majors.
  - Target increased enrollment opportunities in UK Core and unrestricted enrollment courses led by LA faculty such as LA 111 and LA 105.
  - Increase informational contacts with advisors to exploratory students in CAFE and other colleges.
2. Expand off-campus recruitment efforts, particularly those aimed at high school students.
  - Capitalize on the opportunities of the Academic Common Market by recruiting in Tennessee and Alabama, and exploring opportunities in Delaware.
  - Act on opportunities to present to high school student groups and encourage continued interaction.
  - Participate at events such as GSA, GSP, Counselor Conferences, GEAR UP, and other summer camps and conferences.
  - Target off-campus events and visits that have the potential to share landscape architecture educational and career opportunities with minority and female students.
3. Continue tracking the results of recruiting activities and linking them to decisions about future recruiting opportunities.
  - Refine target market areas through continued geospatial analyses of enrolled students' home locations.
  - Evaluate past recruiting venues based on associated follow-up contacts and enrollments.
4. Publicize and promote the undergraduate landscape architecture program as an attractive educational and career choice.
  - Maintain current and engaging content on the department website, Instagram, and other social media accounts, as appropriate. Connect with other accounts and sites related to landscape architecture.
  - 
  - Promote student work and awards in order to drive interest in Landscape Architecture with prospective students and beyond.

## **Progress Indicators**

- The department enrolls 20 new students each academic year, with at least 12 of those students coming directly from high school.
- Achieve 40% or greater female student enrollment in the program. Maintain or increase ethnic/racial minority enrollment to meet or exceed Kentucky's demographic mix.
- The department website, Instagram account, and other media platforms are widely accessed by non-current students.

## **Goal 2. Continually refine the undergraduate curriculum to promote student success.**

The department's last strategic plan focused on the transition to a four-year program. The plan emphasized the re-arrangement of studio content and development of enrichment experiences that would cause the four-year curriculum to deliver as much or greater value as the five-year curriculum.

The department is graduating its last five-year cohort in May 2018, completing the transition to the four-year BSLA. With three years of course delivery since the beginning of the transition to the four-year program, areas of the curriculum that could use strengthening or adaptation are apparent. In addition, students' comprehension of the curriculum structure and good advising to help direct their course selections and involvement in enrichment opportunities have additional importance with the shortened time to completion.

### **Objectives**

1. Ensure that the department offers students consistent and accurate advising.
  - Clarify learning outcomes for each course so that student experiences productively build on each other.
  - Reinforce academic roadmap/plan of study from LA 105 throughout the curriculum.
  - Make a re-useable presentation(s) that describes the curriculum and explains the BSLA program's design.
  - Enhance our advising system to be more proactive and consistent.
  - Become a National Association for Academic Advising (NACADA) member to learn more best advising practices for students while continually networking with UK advisors to learn about current practices.
2. Strengthen specific elements of the curriculum.
  - Prepare students for professional practice with strengthened learning in technical competence, regulatory requirements, and environmental ethics.
  - Continue design implementation course sequence redesign.
  - Consider topical studies changes to increase relevance for students and capitalize on faculty interests.
3. Serve non-majors through involvement in UK Core and other educational opportunities beyond the BSLA.
  - Consider additional opportunities for Landscape Architecture to contribute to UK Core and the CAFE exploratory major.
  - Continue existing cross-listing and explore additional ones as appropriate
  - Investigate ways to develop a certificate and/or minor.
  - Investigate feasibility of online and/or hybrid courses.
4. Continually evaluate and improve enrichment experiences.
  - Identify additional ways to prepare students for internships, employment, and/or for placement in graduate school.
  - Establish a "living directory" of past and potential internship opportunities, including UKLA alumni contacts. Maintain the existing database for students interested in graduate school.
  - Establish a moving 3-year planning calendar for international experiences.
  - Strategically incorporate domestic travel learning opportunities in conjunction with studios/courses.

### **Progress Indicators**

- Students consistently complete the curriculum in the planned sequence, benefitting from the intended connections between courses.
- Students are intellectually, ethically, and technically prepared for their next steps in academia or professional work.
- Students are able to make choices about internships and international study experiences that match their interests and finances.

## **Goal 3. Increase quality and quantity of space for students, staff, and faculty.**

The department has an adequate volume of instructional space in the ES Good Barn for the operation of studios, but challenges endure in the maintenance of the quality of that space. Leaks, heating and cooling issues, and insect infestations create a level of challenge that is manageable but requires vigilance. Furnishing the studios with basic working furniture and digital equipment has been the responsibility of the department.

Resources for furnishing and equipment come largely from salary savings and other non-recurring financial sources.

Faculty and staff offices are in the Agriculture Science Center (ASC), where the volume and quality of space are both challenges. The Department of Landscape Architecture has added an extension program manager, extension project student employees, an academic coordinator, and a post-doctoral position without commensurate increases in the volume of space available.

### **Objectives**

1. Improve quality of existing space in the Good Barn, including the following:
  - Rethink and repurpose use of the small spaces in the barn.
  - Improve aesthetics to barn stairwell and entry area in the barn. Create space upon entering as a gallery of rotating student work.
  - Create space for a student “lounge” for collaboration and study.
  - Reserve space for faculty use in each studio and/or in a concentrated location.
2. Improve the public appearance of Landscape Architecture’s outer office and the Horticulture conference room.
  - Post awards won by students and faculty/staff members and update wall art to better exemplify landscape architecture.
  - Make conference room improvements including paint, new blinds, artwork, and a general cleanup for meetings with student/parents, faculty in other departments, and potential community clients.
3. Acquire additional space or improve the organization of space for long-term use for faculty and staff.
  - Develop a plan for departmental space in the ASC and act on improvements identified in the plan.

### **Progress Indicators**

- Studio furnishings are in new or sound condition by the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year.
- Student lounge and barn entry are complete by the end of the 2017-18 academic year.
- A plan for improvements in the ASC is in place by the end of the 2017-18 academic year with continuing progress on the plan and faculty workspace in the Good Barn is available by the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year.

### **Goal 4. Strengthen networks that will aid landscape architecture students’ access to future academic and professional opportunities.**

The Department of Landscape Architecture has a tradition of strong ties to its professional community. For many years, faculty members’ participation and leadership in the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) primarily sustained this connection. More recently, the department and its students have collaborated with the state chapter of the ASLA to organize and attend its annual conference. The department tracks alumni activities and regional alumni frequent participate in studio reviews, host students for office and site visits, and speak to students in courses. As the department continues to mature, it should strengthen these networks to develop greater opportunities for students’ transitions into their future endeavors.

### **Objectives**

1. Promote stronger student connections to the profession of landscape architecture throughout their education.
  - Continue the recent graduates regional speakers program and the office visits in LA 105 and expand to multiple speakers and firm visits throughout students’ time at UK. Make it possible for each student to have at least one firm visit each year and one guest LA lecturer each semester.
  - Continue to grow existing state chapter ASLA connections as mentorship opportunities, research collaborations, and student participation at the state ASLA conference.
  - Promote internships with wider geographically located firms, not just the national-level competition internships or the firms of regional alumni. Develop a range of internship types beyond private practice firms to include environmental advocacy, quality design-build practice, and other opportunities for students with diverse interests.

2. Strengthen and promote connections to allied disciplines within CAFE, Design, and other colleges.
  - Continue collaborations with School of Interiors and TFISE and explore opportunities for engaging School of Architecture and Historic Preservation Program in future Design Week efforts.
  - Explore the possibility of a team-taught Plants course that combines aspects of design and horticulture.
  - Facilitate informal, non-curriculum-based opportunities for students and faculty from different disciplines to gather and get to know each other.
  - Explore opportunities to partner with the College of Design on developing a lecture series and/or inviting individual speakers on a regular basis (annually; fall and spring semesters) that highlight cross-disciplinary design collaborations.
  - Pursue opportunities for LA students to utilize COD and CFA fabrication spaces and College of Engineering laboratory
    - Consider different options for creating cross-disciplinary learning opportunities that engage Architecture, Interiors, Historic Preservation, and possibly other majors that could include studios, off-campus learning opportunities, and international study
3. Promote Alumni and Student interactions
  - Augment the current program of educational speakers at the state chapter ASLA conference with a reinstated guest lecture series with one to four major talks per year and invite regional professionals to attend.
  - Establish an Alumni Advisory Board to help faculty and students focus on emerging disciplinary issues and to support the department's networking efforts.
  - Establish an Alumni Fellow Award to bring in distinguished alumni to interact with students and exhibit the alumni's body of work.
  - Create a more available record of Alumni. This documentation would contain where alumni are currently working, advanced degrees they have attained, have they accepted interns, and other notes of interest. This would help with the selection process of Alumni Fellows, placement for interns, and the establishment of the Alumni Advisory Board.
4. Educate students early about graduate school opportunities.
  - Clarify the value of graduate degrees for academic and practice careers, including MLAs and a variety of other graduate degrees that can augment the BSLA.
  - Trips to nearby graduate programs, visiting speakers from schools, visiting speakers from our program who have a graduate degree, and increased student participation at CELA, EDRA and similar conferences are all methods to increase exposure.

### Progress Indicators

- Graduating students have had a steady course of experiences in which they learned from contact or work with professional landscape architects and are well-prepared for professional practice or graduate school.
- Continued engagement in inter-departmental dialog to partner with allied disciplines on studios and special programs, including Design Week, guest speakers, and curricular collaboration.
- Alumni support is strengthened with an Alumni Advisory Board meeting at least once annually, the department annually names up to three Alumni Fellows, and alumni documentation is enhanced and available to faculty.

### **Goal 5. Increase the culture of achievement and professional enthusiasm in students of the BSLA program that leads to high professional expectations and recognition.**

Students frequently submit entries to design awards at the state level in landscape architecture and planning and additionally participate in academic conferences and presentations. The department would like to encourage broader participation in competitive activities leading to recognition. In addition, raising the general level of expectation for student work is a goal of the department.

### Objectives

1. Build shared student and faculty expectations for high quality student work.
  - Use collective exhibition, critique, and discussion as a way of evolving shared high standards.
  - Increase the emphasis on external professional evaluation of student work and communication of professional aspirations through guest critics from landscape architecture and related professions.
  - Regularly involve all faculty along with external reviewers in outcomes evaluation.

2. Develop faculty agreement on standards for studio culture and consistently communicate and model those standards.
3. Encourage competitive attitudes in students.
  - Encourage increased participation in design competitions, academic presentations, awards programs, honor societies, and scholarship programs.
  - Develop and/or organize a suite of departmental awards and scholarships and imbed them into celebrations of student achievement that also recognize students for becoming members of Sigma Lambda Alpha and other honorary groups.
  - Recognize faculty and staff achievement in conjunction with student recognition.
  - Acknowledge competitive achievement connected with department-wide collaborative projects.

#### **Progress Indicators**

- Shared department standards are communicated through communal end of term studio reviews each semester, and are reflected in syllabi
- External reviewers – academics and practitioners – are involved in end of semester or other significant design reviews, and in annual learning outcomes assessment.
- Students regularly enter the ASLA student design awards and other awards programs, participate in design competitions, are recognized as LAF Olmsted Scholars and similar opportunities, and these achievements are recognized annually by the Department of Landscape Architecture.

#### **Goal 6. Raise the institutional and extramural stature of the LA faculty and staff by strengthening academic and professional accomplishments that gain regional and national recognition.**

As faculty members' roles have broadened in the department beyond the concentrated teaching loads of 80%, external funding and peer-reviewed scholarly contributions have become increasingly important.

#### **Objectives**

1. Achieve a sustained level of peer-reviewed scholarly work by LA faculty.
  - Continue supporting a range of peer-reviewed scholarly work in journals, extension publications, exhibitions, books, and other venues.
  - Encourage LA faculty to seek and publicize various forms of recognition that will raise the stature of the faculty.
  - Initiate and continue widely distributed reporting of LA faculty work/outcomes/impacts.
  - Review statement of evidences to ensure that faculty evaluation captures the range of appropriate faculty contributions and their impact.
2. Achieve a sustained level of external funding/resources for the scholarly work of LA faculty, staff, and students in research, design, engagement and other forms of scholarship.
  - Continue applying for external funding and resources for scholarly work.
  - Seek collaborations with people and agencies with whom LA faculty have not previously worked.
3. Support faculty and staff recognition through nomination for competitive awards for projects and professional achievement.
  - The department faculty and staff seek competitive awards and nominate projects and professional achievements where relevant on a yearly basis.
4. Support and achieve a strategic distribution of licensure and certification in appropriate disciplines among both the faculty and staff.
  - The department encourages and supports licensure and certification of faculty and/or staff in appropriate disciplines through distribution of effort for professional development.

#### **Progress Indicators**

- The department creates a concise annual report highlighting activities, projects, and publications and posts the annual reports on the website with a news blast to alumni and state professionals, among other groups.

- External proposals and funding through UKRF are broad-based across the faculty, though levels may vary.
- The department regularly nominates faculty and staff for appropriate professional awards.