

ASLA Medal Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

February 7, 2020

Re: The Nomination of Diana Fernandez Bibeau for the ASLA Emerging Professional Medal

Dear Honors and Awards Committee Members:

Every once in a great while, you see an idea or project whose beauty grabs you deeply and whose message speaks powerfully to some greater ambition; so much so, it gives you goosebumps. That is what I felt when, as a juror in 2013, I opened an ASLA Student Award submission entitled “Above Below Beyond”, a project celebrating and building advocacy for an abandoned railroad right-of-way in Philadelphia. The work of a multi-disciplinary team of three from Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania, including Diana Fernandez Bibeau, the project foreshadowed many of the themes that are central now to my own practice and broader landscape discourse today: community engagement, ecological transformation, the promise of equitable access to parks and advocacy and communication as tools for urban transformation.

The project would win the **Award of Excellence in Communications** that year and introduce me to an incredible talent I am happy to say has become a friend, colleague, collaborator and a constant inspiration. At the Awards Ceremony, I shook Diana’s hand and offered her a job on the spot, so taken I was by the project and its strong point of view. It would take another couple of years and a few more chance encounters for her to agree and join me at Sasaki. It would take no time at all of working together and seeing her light up the profession to realize the true transformational power of her passion and vision. Over the years, she has provided me with language to understand difference, design ideas to make diversity tangible, and, in her advocacy, leadership, and public presence, no shortage of goosebumps.

It is with great pleasure I, along with a team of collaborators and, we are sure, the good will of hundreds of supporters in the profession, nominate Diana Fernandez Bibeau for the inaugural ASLA Emerging Professional Medal. This letter provides a framework for understanding the incredible contributions - in academia, in practice and in the context of landscape architecture as a profession - that Diana has made in her first decade of practice as well as the great promise of the intellectual seeds she continues to plant.

Grounded in Place, Eyes Wide Open - The Dominican Republic

Background and Immigration to the United States, 1990-2008

Diana was born into a large family in a small village in the Dominican Republic - a place of great natural beauty and rich cultural heritage but also economic and infrastructural challenges. She remembers her early life in “the ghetto” with no running water or electricity. When she was 6-years-old, her family moved to the United States where her parents would

work hard and support her pursuit of an education, and later, academic excellence. This background is never far from her mind and is often invoked as a lens into her work ethic and also her love and commitment to landscape architecture.

In her words:

“I am from an immigrant family. My experiences shaped me into the professional and individual I am today. As a landscape architect, you need to have these perspectives, you need to understand what people are experiencing every day and give those perspectives a voice. We need to engage with multiple perspectives and design for the diverse people that we serve.”

Diana Fernandez - Leading By Example, Ambler

Diana excelled in high school and became the first in her family to attend college, choosing Temple University in Philadelphia to both stretch her wings and be close to her family. It was at this time that Diana became a young mother as well, giving birth to daughter Kayla in 2007.

A Community Leader and Excellent Student - Temple University

Bachelors of Science in Landscape Architecture, 2008 – 2012

Diana’s time at Temple University set the stage for a career to be marked by ambition, excellence and achievement. While studying at Temple - and *being a new mother* - Diana served as a member of the **Landscape Architecture and Horticulture Society** and as its president from 2010 to 2012 . Upon graduating, she received a coveted **Campus Leadership Award** - an acknowledgement of leadership at the university level.

While completing her degree, Diana received four ASLA student awards, including a **2011 ASLA Student Honor Award in the Analysis and Planning Category** and, as mentioned, the **2013 ASLA Student Award of Excellence Communications Category** for “Above Below Beyond,” an exhibition of student design work she created with fellow Temple alumnus Amy Syverson and University of Pennsylvania graduate Susan Kolber. Following on their work, plans for the Viaduct Rail Park caught fire, a first phase eventually being supported by a \$3.5 million state grant.

In her words:

“My experience as a designer allowed me to work and develop partnerships with some of the most underserved communities in Philadelphia. I am fortunate that my experience empowers me to advocate for more culturally sensitive design strategies such as the use of bright and colorful play equipment, instead of lighter taupe colors, to reflect the vibrancy and effervescence of the community in Philadelphia.”

Diversity in Design; Designing for Diversity, Medium

First Steps in the Profession - Sikora Wells Appel

Apprentice and Landscape Designer, 2012-2015

Upon graduating, Diana started her professional career with an entry-level position at Wells Appel (now Sikora Wells Appel). Diana joined the firm because of its commitment to public work and to be mentored by her late professor and firm founder Stuart Appel. For Diana,

this position allowed her to start seeing the profession in action, addressing issues that she cared deeply about.

In her words:

“They are huge public space advocates in urban environments. We were able to work with communities and I feel we were able to change lives for the better by creating great public spaces. Public spaces are so critical, particularly in urban environments where they provide an oasis for everyone. Public spaces are one of the most democratic spaces in a city – they can be used by everyone and should never be denied from anyone.”

- Diana Fernandez - Leading By Example, Ambler

At Sikora Well Appel, Diana’s focus on public work and a process welcoming of diverse voices led her to projects with in economically-challenged neighborhoods and, often, with deep youth engagement. Her project work included the **Roosevelt Plaza Pop-Up in Camden**, New Jersey, the **William Dick Schoolyard** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the **Collazo Park and Recreation Center**.

It was also during this time that Diana took on the added work of engaging with the profession outside of the office environment. She became a member of the national **ASLA Emerging Professionals Committee** in 2013, eventually becoming its chair from 2014 to 2016. Furthering her commitment to the profession, Diana sat on the ^annual Meeting Committee for the **ASLA Pennsylvania Delaware Chapter** in anticipation of the 2015 conference.

An Emerging Leader Solidifies Her Craft - Sasaki

Associate and Landscape Architect, 2015-2020

Never one to shy away from big challenges, Diana joined Sasaki in 2015 with the hopes of engaging large and complex urban problems. At Sasaki, her work has expanded to include working with more interdisciplinary teams, creating thought leadership for the firm’s public portfolio and projects that can serve as proof of concept for her theories of the value of community voice, diverse experience and design heterogeneity in practice.

Diana is currently working on a project to revitalize the **Wilmington Waterfront Promenade** for the Port of Los Angeles. Sasaki previously completed the Wilmington Waterfront Park on a 30-acre brownfield site. Upon completion the Waterfront Promenade, just south of the Waterfront Park, the neighborhood of Wilmington will be connected with the Pacific Ocean.

In her words:

“The Port of Los Angeles is one of the largest ports in the United States. This is the second phase of development for a larger master plan, a collaboration between multiple consultants, the Port of Los Angeles and the Wilmington community. For the community, which is predominantly Hispanic, this is their only window to the water. We have an opportunity to advocate for environmental justice, public infrastructure and public space. The project presents a lot of challenges and a lot of opportunities

to revitalize the waterfront purposefully to create equitable, world class public spaces for the community.”

- Diana Fernandez - Leading By Example, Ambler

More recently, Diana successfully marketed and is leading the design for the site of a statue commemorating famed social justice reformer **Fredrick Douglass**. Diana assembled the team that was selected by the Frederick Douglass Sculpture Committee (FDSC) and the City of Boston to design for this exciting new chapter in creating space for diverse narratives. Working alongside a broader team of local community members, artists, and city representatives, Diana and team’s work is challenging inequity by celebrating blackness and reclaiming space in the Boston neighborhood of Roxbury.

Diana’s commitment to and advocacy of issues of equity, diversity and inclusion extended far beyond the project work. During this period, Diana became a champion for such issues on the national stage, quite literally. Following on her participation in the **ASLA’s Diversity Summit** in 2015, Diana went on to deliver an **ASLA Keynote** as part of a panel called **“Designing for Diversity / Diversity in Design”** at the 2016 Annual Meeting. Inspired by her passion and intelligence, both the Florida and Texas chapters invited Diana to reprise the discussion as part of their annual conference. Diana is also a frequent speaker at universities nationally and on panels at the **Annual Conference on Landscape Architecture**.

In her words:

“Landscape architects have incredible power and influence in ensuring our public realm is representative of people of all backgrounds, and not rooted in Eurocentric and Anglo ideals which no longer present relevance to our increasingly diverse constituents. The time is now to question and explore our design identity as a profession and re-evaluate the values systems in place to envision and create a just and equitable world for all.”

**- Black in Design Conference: Reflections from Two Women of Color
The Field**

Diana also created new content for the profession related to these issues as well. In 2019, she was named a **2019-2020 Landscape Architecture Foundation Fellow for Innovation and Leadership**. With the LAF Fellowship, Diana is building on the current movement of landscape architecture toward incorporating social, cultural, and linguistic knowledge as critical aspects of the design process. This most recent step in the discipline’s progression of innovating practice models, she believes, must include new models of knowledge sharing. Diana is gathering and illuminating resources and language that can speak to and guide more inclusive forms of public park making, continuing to promote the design of landscapes that truly reflect the collective experiences of the people who inhabit them.

In the fall of 2019, she interviewed, wrote and published an article called **“Get Real” in Landscape Architecture Magazine**. Covering the work of Vicki Estrada, FASLA, the writing deftly covers a range of topics, including a timely discussion of Estrada’s intersectional identity (as transgender and latina) as a lens in practice.

At the same time, she dedicated her skills to a number of national committees, serving on the **Landscape Architecture Magazine's Editorial Advisory Committee** from 2016 to the present, the **Leadership Development Committee** from September 2015 to the present, and the **Finance and Investments Committee** from 2016 to the present.

In her words:

"This is a field that is incredibly driven by people's will, their stories, their dreams, to see what these spaces will become. Some of these concepts might take years, even decades, to come to fruition, but I have a chance to take a small part in fulfilling those dreams. What we do as landscape architects, all of these skill sets, it is an incredible powerhouse for change and I am so optimistic that we will make the world a better place."

- *Black in Design Conference: Reflections from Two Women of Color, The Field*

In closing, I can think of no better person to receive the ASLA's first-ever Emerging Professional Medal. Diana is the embodiment of the best of our profession. Her push for inclusion, excellence and engagement is not something that is asked of her - it is something that is born of her and her will to be an agent of change. Her emerging impacts span across academia, practice and the profession. She is a role model for young professionals everywhere and a unique voice for women and practitioners of color in particular.

I would be happy to discuss this nomination and provide any further documentation of Diana's exceptional value to our profession and worthiness of this honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina Ford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gina" and last name "Ford" clearly distinguishable.

Gina Ford, FASLA
Co-Founder and Principal
Agency Landscape + Planning

Nominee Contact Information

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+1 617 923 5322

Cc: Mark Focht
Kona Gray
Michael Grove
Lucinda Sanders
Breeze Outlaw





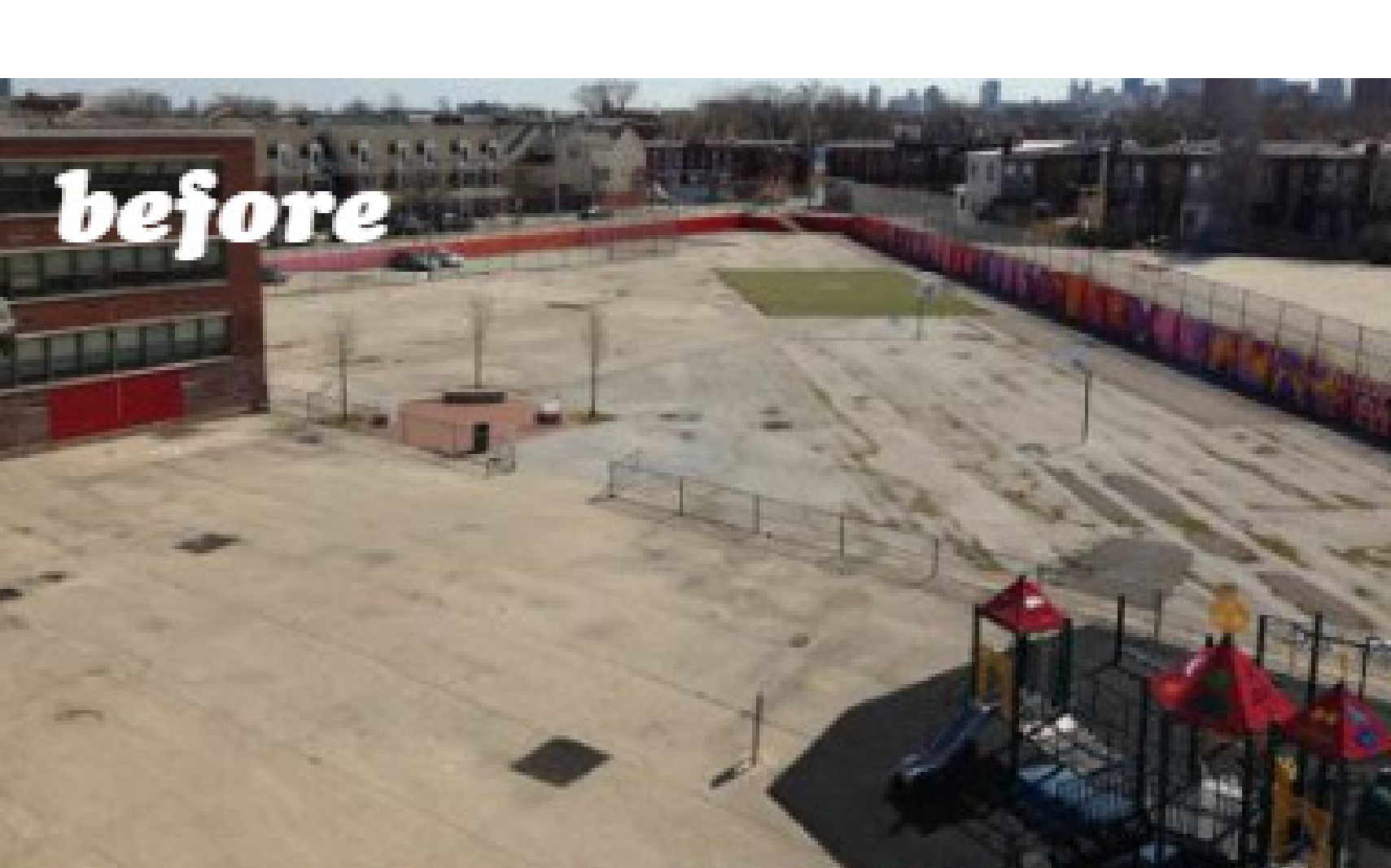
Above Below Beyond

ASLA Student Award of Excellence in Communication (2013)

Diana Fernandez Assoc. ASLA; Susan Kolber Student Affiliate ASLA; and Amy Syverson Assoc. ASLA

Diana Fernandez Bibeau

ASLA Emerging Professionals Medal Nomination



The William Dick Schoolyard
The Trust for Public Lands Parks for People Program
Early Career Work Sample from Sikora Wells Appel

Diana Fernandez Bibeau
ASLA Emerging Professional Medal Nomination



The Wilmington Waterfront Park

The Port of Los Angeles

Recent Work Sample from Sasaki

Diana Fernandez Bibeau

ASLA Emerging Professional Medal Nomination

SEAMOS REALISTAS

EL MUNDO DE VICKI ESTRADA SE HIZO MÁS GRANDE POR SU TRANSICIÓN HACE 13 AÑOS, Y SU TRABAJO A MEJORADO.

POR DIANA FERNÁNDEZ, ASLA

FOTOGRAFÍA POR BRIAN KUHLMANN

VICKI ESTRADA, FASLA, abrió Estrada Land Planning en 1985, y en el transcurso de casi 35 años, la empresa ha trabajado en proyectos de planificación y arquitectura paisajística que han ayudado a definir la ciudad de San Diego. Su trabajo como planificadora y defensora de la comunidad durante las últimas tres décadas fue el compromiso de la comunidad antes de que existiera el “compromiso comunitario”, y su huella se puede ver en todas partes de los parques, calles, comunidades y tránsito de la ciudad. Le pedimos a Diana Fernández, ASLA, asociada de Sasaki, que entrevistara a Estrada sobre su carrera y su vida, y lo que siguió fue una conversación muy sincera y amplia sobre género, representación, identidad y hacer paisajes que no fingen. *(Esta entrevista ha sido editada y condensada).*

DIANA FERNÁNDEZ: Tengo mucha curiosidad por saber qué te trajo a la arquitectura paisajística. A menudo siento que todos los arquitectos paisajistas hemos tropezado con el campo de alguna manera.

SAN DIEGO
Vicki Estrada, FASLA, ha trabajado en importantes proyectos de planificación que han dado forma a la identidad de la ciudad.





One Pulse Memorial Competition
MASS Design
Ongoing Work at Sasaki

Diana Fernandez Bibeau
ASLA Emerging Professional Medal Nomination

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636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

February 7, 2020

Letter of Endorsement: **Nomination of Diana Fernandez, ASLA**
ASLA Emerging Professional Medal 2020

Dear Honors and Awards Committee Members:

I am very pleased to offer this letter of endorsement for the nomination of Diana Fernandez, ASLA for the 2020 ASLA Emerging Professional Medal. I can think of no emerging landscape architect better deserving of this honor.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Diana for over a decade. We met when she was an undergraduate student in landscape architecture at Temple University where I co-taught Professional Practice. Diana was a clear standout among her classmates. She was quiet, yet inquisitive, thoughtful and bright. She regularly participated in discussions and consistently produced high-quality work. While an undergraduate, she won a national ASLA Student Award.

What really caught my attention, though, was Diana's 'back story'. She was a Latina single mother raising a young daughter while attending school full-time, working part-time and serving the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture and her classmates as President of the ASLA Student Chapter. Diana did it all well.

During the semester, Diana asked if I would work one-on-one with her as she thought about her career. This began a conversation, and friendship, which has lasted over a decade. Diana is extraordinarily bright, thoughtful and engaging. She cares deeply about inclusion, diversity and justice.

As you can read from the nomination and letters of endorsement, Diana has done much in just a few years of practice. She has had a remarkable impact on landscape architecture and emerging professionals. Her service to ASLA (national speaker, emerging professionals'

committee member, Vice-Presidential candidate) and LAF (Fellow) are but some of the ways she is already 'giving back' and advancing the profession.

We still interact regularly. Now, though, I listen more than talk. I am fascinated, inspired and deeply impressed by Diana's intellect, passion and commitment. I can think of no better "individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and considerable contribution to the profession of landscape architecture, the prospective recipient's community, and/or a firm or design team; early in one's career".

Thank you for giving serious consideration to the nomination of Diana Fernandez, ASLA for the 2020 ASLA Emerging Professional Medal.

Mark A. Focht, PLA, FASLA

Deputy Commissioner / Chief Operating Officer

New York City Parks and Recreation

ASLA Past-President, 2014

7 February 2020

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636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Letter of Endorsement for Diana Fernandez Bibeau

Dear Honors and Awards Committee Members:

Throughout my career, I have met many ambitious and motivated young professionals – landscape architects who believe that our profession’s purpose is to bring good into the world. Diana Fernandez Bibeau rises above the crowd. Her passion, dedication, and empathy allows her to shine brighter, work harder, and cultivate a culture of collaboration that is extraordinary. Five years into her tenure at Sasaki, Diana is thriving. She is one of our brightest emerging design voices, and her professional growth is nothing short of remarkable. Diana’s project leadership abilities, corporate citizenship at the firm, and contribution to the profession at large are unequaled.

Project Leadership

In her time at Sasaki, Diana has helped to transform our practice, encouraging us think beyond traditional understandings of community engagement and evolve such that embracing diversity and fostering equity is part of our core ethos. Diana’s unique personal and professional experiences have provided her with a skillset unlike many others. Her leadership on projects around the country in cities including Pittsburgh, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and Lakeland, Florida have brought a unique perspective, often resulting in a bold change to the design that the team had previously overlooked. Her acute ability to understand how marginalized and underrepresented communities respond to, interact with, and celebrate public space is a direct result of her background as a second generation American with parents who immigrated to Philadelphia from the Dominican Republic. This insight inspires her teams to rethink how to create culturally appropriate and significant landscapes – not through the traditional toolkits of public meetings and constituent feedback, but by a deep analysis of the tangible elements that make people from various cultural backgrounds relate to public space differently.

Corporate Citizenship

Diana’s tenacity and drive compel her to work through various solutions, approaching problems from many angles. She does this while embracing the team around her, and encouraging others to contribute and have a voice. This type of leadership is unique, and extends far beyond project work. Diana’s contribution on recent projects had led to more nuanced design thinking. At the Wilmington Waterfront Promenade at the Port of Los Angeles, she has been an advocate for social justice in a historically marginalized community. At Bonnet Springs Park in Lakeland, Florida, she identified strategies to make the park more accessible for and inclusive of minority neighborhoods adjacent to the park. Both of these projects would not have been as powerful without Diana’s influence. Diana has also guided the firm into new territory, championing projects that have the potential for significant social impact. Recently, she led the site design for the Sasaki / Mass Design Group entry for the Pulse Memorial Competition in Orlando, which presented a healing experience for survivors of the tragedy and noted by the jury as the most

compelling and sympathetic landscape ideas from all of the entries. In Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, she is collaborating with a diverse team of artists and community leaders on the Frederick Douglass Memorial to immortalize the abolitionist after racist mobs assembled after his speech at Tremont Temple. Most importantly, Diana models her values in her daily interactions. She has collaborated with nearly everyone at the firm, all of whom all agree that Diana adds much more to the work than can be described in words. This is because Diana's contribution isn't simply professional, it's personal. She is one of the most empathetic, supportive, and intellectually curious people I have ever worked with, and is a natural teacher, mentor, and friend.

Contribution to the Profession

Diana's advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion extends far beyond her project work or her internal efforts at Sasaki. She has also been one of the most effective recent voices on the national stage. In 2016, Diana was featured alongside Kona Gray, Lucinda Sanders, Mark Rios, and Ron Sims in a general session titled "Designing for Diversity / Diversity in Design" at the ASLA annual conference in New Orleans, where she discussed the often messy topic from a very personal and relatable perspective. She participated in the 2015 ASLA Diversity Summit, and has written multiple articles on the importance of diversity in the profession, including one published in "The Field" reflecting on the Black in Design conference at the Harvard. In the November 2019 issue of Landscape Architecture Magazine, Diana interviewed Vicki Estrada, reflecting on her career and how issues of gender identity and ethnic heritage influenced her work. She also currently serves on Landscape Architecture Magazine's Editorial Advisory Committee, the ASLA Leadership Development Committee, and the ASLA Finance and Investment Committee. Her recent selection in the 2019-2020 cohort of the Landscape Architecture Foundation's Fellowship for Innovation and Leadership will allow her to further develop her voice and provide valuable thought leadership to the profession. Her topic, "Heterogeneous Futures: A Framework for Ecologically and Culturally Diverse Landscapes" evolves the conversation of diversity beyond metrics by attempting to get at the root of the issue from the perspective of what we as landscape architects do best – physical design. Her research is already yielding valuable insights on how the collective experiences of people inhabiting public space may encourage us to reconsider the traditional design theory. Diana's visibility also extends far beyond the profession. Through her work with communities and with students, Diana is an inspiration for young people of color who are either unaware of landscape architecture as a career path, or don't see many people like them reflected in the profession.

It is with unbound belief in Diana as a model for the direction the profession should be heading that I recommend her for the inaugural ALSA Emerging Professional Medal. I have every confidence that she will continue to support the next generation of landscape architects, and inspire all of us to become more awakened practitioners.

Sincerely,



Michael Grove, ASLA PLA
Chair of Landscape Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Ecology
Sasaki



OLIN

ASLA Medal Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: The Nomination of Diana Fernandez Bibeau for the ASLA EMERGING PROFESSIONAL MEDAL

3 February 2020

Dear Honors and Awards Committee Members:

Diana Fernandez Bibeau is an outstanding candidate for the ASLA EMERGING PROFESSIONAL MEDAL and she bears the utmost serious consideration by the jury for selection as the recipient of this prestigious honor. Let me tell you what I know from the inside. And here, I am not referring to being an insider, but rather I am referring to Diana's inside spirit which, those who know Diana will understand, passionately radiates to the outside. Very simply, Diana is undertaking one of the most complex issues of our time: social justice, equity, and inclusion. Through her intense personal experiences and interests she is taking a deep dive into the meaning of those words and helping landscape architects to grasp the implication of the interpretation of those meanings in our work. She, of anyone I know, is the future spokesperson who can sound the clarion and mobilize the profession into transforming the world into a more loving and inclusive place. Now that is exceptional leadership.

I have had the opportunity to work alongside of Diana in two unique situations allowing me to get to know her inner mind and the depth of her heart. First, during the 2016 ASLA Annual Meeting and Expo in New Orleans, I worked alongside of Diana as one of five keynote speakers in the general session called *Designing for Diversity/Diversity in Design*. Second, I am a co-facilitator for the 2019-2020 Landscape Architecture Foundation's *Fellowship for Innovation and Leadership* where I have the honor to be guiding Diana, one of six fellows to be selected out of an extremely competitive field of emerging, mid-career, and senior fellows. These two encounters tell a story of Diana's fortitude.

As we prepared for ASLA's keynote address, Diana and I had an interesting exchange which bears paraphrasing here because it became a springboard of sorts for each of us. Diana was advocating for a recognition of the diversity for the population for whom the designs are prepared and, she was advocating for much needed diversity within the design pool. While I agreed, I was advocating that we all try to understand that, underneath our differences, at the very core, we are the same – we want to be respected and loved. It was one of those moments where at first it seemed we were speaking in opposition to one another, but profoundly, our instincts merged. The growth for each of us in that moment was monumental, escalating the urgency to address diversity in our profession because empathy - not just knowing by saying the right thing, but truly feeling and sensing the concerns of another - is an essential cornerstone to be able to work with diverse communities. That moment was one of those rare instances where mentorship occurred up and down. Mentorship doesn't always happen upwards, but Diana's passion and interest in holding a deep conversation makes her an astonishingly natural mentor and leader to those who are senior to her in years and experience as well as to her peers and emerging professionals. People believe and trust her, which is a foundation of leadership.



Diana was selected as a 2019-2020 Fellow for the Landscape Architecture Foundation's *Fellowship for Innovation and Leadership*, and she is pushing this dialogue even further by asking how well the profession is addressing our ability to design in diverse environments. It seems to her that what many practitioners and clients are doing, while well intended, may be falling short. In the best version of engagement, the community shows up and is given a sense of participation. In its worst version, engagement becomes a box to check from which clients and designers move on. Diana knows we are capable of so much more and she is giving voice to potential through her original research. Diana's foresight is unique and her optimism is infectious. She came to LAF with the following proposal:

Heterogeneous Futures: A Framework for Ecologically & Culturally Diverse Landscapes

Historically, the profession of landscape architecture has innovated practice models through distinct periods, such as the national replications, modernism, and landscape ecology movements. Today, the natural progression for our profession is to enable social, cultural, and linguistic knowledge to be an integral part of the design process. This project seeks to gather these realms of knowledge through case studies and a book manuscript to promote truly resilient landscapes that reflect the collective experiences of the people who will inhabit the spaces.

I can report with confidence that at the seven-month mark of the fellowship, Diana is progressing her research where I am confident she will conclude this phase of her work in a way that will stir audiences. In addition to her rigor as a researcher, she is a moving storyteller. The profession needs diverse representation and individuals who can give voice to experience. I can think of no one better who is an emerging professional to host this conversation and drive it full force into the next decades.

Encourage her spirit to shine. Let her help the profession be even better than it already is. By presenting this award to Diana Fernandez Bibeau, ASLA will be signaling that the concerns Diana is espousing are of immediate and urgent concern to the world. I unequivocally recommend that Diana Fernandez Bibeau be awarded the ASLA EMERGING PROFESSIONAL MEDAL.

With respect,

Lucinda R. Sanders, FASLA
CEO and Partner



February 3, 2020

ASLA Medal Nominations

c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Emerging Professionals Medal – Letter of Recommendation for Diana Fernandez Bibeau

Dear Nomination and Selection Committee:

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit this letter on behalf of Diana Fernandez Bibeau in regard to her efforts to advance the profession through diverse voices. She has positively contributed to awareness of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, one of the most important topics for our Society and Humanity, from the point of view of an emerging professional landscape architect. This letter demonstrates how she cultivated a strong relationship with ASLA during the 2014-2015 Diversity Summits, challenged herself to share her experiences on a national level at the 2016 Annual Meeting in New Orleans and expanded her responsibility through outreach to Chapters in Texas and Florida during 2017. Diana is an inspiration as well as a model for the future of Landscape Architecture.

In the role of an advisor, I was fortunate to meet Diana during the Diversity Summit in 2015 held at the ASLA National Headquarters in DC. As a returning participant, her ability to share thoughtful dialogue related to the struggle of becoming a landscape architect with her peers was memorable. She spoke about being a young mother juggling parenting, education and work with limited support. She also presented the issue that the Hispanic Community had formed a cultural misrepresentation of the profession that landscape architects are simply “gardeners” and this realization resonated with the entire group. Her collaborative spirit inspired the team to identify specific solutions such as *Partnerships, Mentorships, Pilot Programs and Tool Kits*, which are extrapolated into action items memorialized in the 2015 Diversity Summit Report. These ideas have been refined and are part of ASLA’s resources available to all members.

As a member of the Annual Meeting Education Advisory Committee, I was asked to explore the subject of “Diversity in Design” as a General Session topic for the 2016 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The subject was very relevant at the time, and we believed the panel necessary to bring awareness to the profession needed to be diverse from the aspect of gender, race, geography, cultural heritage and experience. I immediately thought that Diana would represent us well as a panelist and she accepted the opportunity. After several months of preparation and excruciating dialogue regarding how to present this polarizing subject to a broad audience, the day to present arrived. Diana’s contribution was motivating. I will never forget her passionate expression when she stated; “I love my ghetto” in front of a packed house of professionals. Her work in underrepresented communities gave insight towards the most effective ways to provide landscape architecture for everyone. There is no doubt she expanded awareness of the profession to people who did not see someone that “looked” like them as a design professional. She was the star of the session and I was immediately convinced, she would be a leader in our profession.

So, after the high of delivering a powerful General Session, I assumed the euphoria would fade away, however the spirit was just getting started. Our group of panelists moved the dialogue forward at the 2016 Annual Meeting “Continuing the Conversation” opportunity on the Expo floor where Diana answered tough questions from the audience. However, I was totally surprised when we were both invited to speak about the topic for the ASLA Texas Chapter in April of 2017. There were over 600 attendees at the conference and our education session on Diversity in Design had standing room only. In her portion of the presentation, Diana investigated the idea of *Urban Spaces and the Matter of Black Lives* by Darnell Moore of New York from The Just City Essays with an audience from Texas!!! That was a bold step toward expressing that everyone relates to being included and belonging to a

community. In the essay Darnell writes about seeing a white woman comfortably jogging in his Brooklyn “hood” meaning the neighborhood has finally become a place to for everyone. However, this brings concern to him as well providing a lens into the feeling he realizes that Black Lives Matter too and it should not take a change in demographics to make a place acceptable. The audience embraced the conversation and we had several participants wanting to learn more. They agreed that everyone should feel safe in the spaces we design as Diana so eloquently expressed.

Shortly after the Texas conference, the Florida Chapter confirmed that Diana and I would be the General Session Key Note speakers for the 2017 Florida Chapter Conference on Landscape Architecture for over 700 attendees in July. It was amazing to see how the topic was catching on around the country. I must give credit to Diana’s message as it resonated with so many and the word had now spread from New Orleans to Austin and now Boca Raton in the community of Landscape Architects and guests in attendance. However, the conversation in Florida became personal. I noted that Diana adjusted the message to focus on the future. She spoke about her daughter and the next generation that will experience our designs. This showed me a sign of maturity in my opinion that she was transcending from mentee to mentor. Her contribution was summarized in three ways to get involved including *Pipeline Investments, Design Practice and Education*. She was able to succinctly put the topic into tangible outcomes by introducing the importance of investing in future, proving the business case for diversity and expanding the appeal of the profession to diverse students. I believe we all walked away with a renewed sense of responsibility to the future of the profession.

During the years of my career, I have been positively influenced by my heroes in the profession as a young designer and have been able to pay it forward by positively influencing young designers as well. However, it is such a remarkable feeling when someone you mentor inspires you in return. Diana is one of our best. She has taken on the responsibility to get involved with ASLA and spread the joy of landscape architecture across the country. It is my privilege to recommend Diana Fernandez Bibeau as I am convinced, she is deserving of this honor because of her extraordinary leadership and meaningful contribution to the profession of landscape architecture in the early stages of her career. I can’t wait to see what she accomplishes next.

Best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kona', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Kona Gray, FASLA
Principal

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February 4, 2020

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RE: Nomination endorsement to ASLA Emerging Professional Medal for Diana Fernandez

Dear Reviewers,

This nomination endorsement to the ASLA Emerging Professional Medal is to highlight the exceptional leadership, contributions, and influences to the landscape architecture profession that Diana Fernandez has demonstrated thus far in her career.

Diana's dedication to the landscape architecture profession and the design profession is undeniable. She has elevated her practice and become a transformational leader. Through the LAF Fellowship for Innovation and Leadership, she is exploring and developing a design framework centered on ecological and cultural diversity in landscapes. This framework goal is to enable social, cultural, and linguistic elements to be part of the design process that will foster holistic resilient landscapes for all. By embracing her truth, that space is for everyone, she creating design practice models that are setting new precedents for the future of design excellence. I have witnessed the rigor and intention of Diana's thought leadership and its implementation in her work like the Wilmington Waterfront Park, LA and Frederick Douglass Sculpture Plaza, Boston. She illustrates leadership from the process to practice through the integral elements of understanding the social and cultural nuances of how space is used to manifesting heritage via materiality, color, and texture.

Diana is a colleague that leaves a lasting impression and leads by example. She demonstrates empowerment as a practitioner and designer. She holds a strong sense of responsibility for advocating diversity and equity within the profession and design. She has been leading myself and others in designing a memorial plaza that manifests

heritage and legacy. Through this process, together, we are developing a framework that illustrates the possibilities of design language ability to lead diversity and equity in public spaces. She has been a leading member of Sasaki's diversity committee to ensure consistency in inclusive practice implementation throughout the firm. In addition, she serves on the executive committee for the Boston Society of Landscape Architects.

Diana's interest in embracing the differences in people and places fuels her drive to explore and expand what landscape can mean through projects, processes, and research. Her value to the profession is received by communities and stakeholders in need of design and planning. Through authentic engagement with people, she designs to center underrepresented narratives and embrace biodiversity. She consistently is demonstrating and exploring alternatives to design excellence and practice that will truly lead to a better world.

I cannot think of a more deserving emerging professional to recognize for their leadership, contributions, and overall impact in landscape architecture. I can attest that much of my early success as an emerging designer is because of Diana's continuous support to be my true self and show up for what is right. For the three years that I have known her, I am grateful to call her a mentor and a friend.

Regards,



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