



## **Alcibiades "Alkis" Tsolakis**

College of Art & Design, Louisiana State University

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February 22, 2023

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

Dear Board of Trustees,

Landscape architecture needs strong articulate champions in our relationships with allied professionals, without the walls of the academy, and in the larger community. The State of Louisiana is extremely fortunate to have such a champion in Alcibiades Tsolakis. Since his arrival on the campus of Louisiana State University, Alkis has honored the great tradition and quality of the university's academic program and worked tirelessly to continually lead the program to new heights.

He plays an integral role in improving the Robert S. Reich School of Landscape Architecture, navigating the channels of the university to ensure the success of the effort, cultivating donors, and building the case to university leadership. The creation of the Max Conrad Lecture Series, the remodeling of aging studio space, the establishment of a recruitment center, and the renovation of the courtyard of the design building, all benefitted from his leadership.

In a state university where funding is often subject to the whims of an unpredictable legislature and changing administration, he has fought to maintain and actually increase funding to the program, finding efficiencies, and inventing new ways to increase collaboration across design disciplines and other university programs. He has made sure that the university community knows that landscape architecture is the best academic program on campus and is celebrated by all.

He is a visible Dean and cheerleader for the program, constantly networking with alumni and engaging the many graduates of the Reich School to ensure that any ideas or concerns they have been heard and acted upon. Most importantly, he understands the importance of the sense of community treasured by all students and alumni of the program and though the program continues to evolve in response to the contemporary needs of our environment and society, he has maintained the commitment to excellence begun by Robert S. Reich over sixty years ago. A modest man whose only concerns are for the well-being of his students and faculty and for the quality of landscape architecture education, I can think of no one more deserving of Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

Thank you for your consideration.



Kurt Culbertson

Principal/Chairman Emeritus

February 27, 2023

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

RE: HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

I am writing to endorse the nomination of Dean Alcibiades “Alkis” Tsolakis for honorary membership of ASLA and to solicit your endorsement.

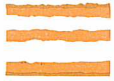
Since Dean Tsolakis arrived on the LSU Campus, he has continually advocated for Landscape Architecture within and outside the University. Under his leadership as Dean of LSU’s College of Art + Design, he has encouraged numerous faculty, students, and alums to embrace leadership opportunities within the Landscape Architecture community. In that time, he has bolstered the Director of Landscape Architecture as President of CELA, three faculty members as ASLA Vice Presidents, a student as National Student Representative to the ASLA BOT, and alums as ASLA President. In addition, last year, Dean Tsolakis helped the LSU students champion the hosting of LABash for the fourth time in the University’s history.

Dean Tsolakis embodies the spirit by which we recognize non-landscape architects whose achievements and actions influence the profession of landscape architecture, and it is most fitting that he be awarded the distinction of honorary member.

With Best Regards,



Chad D. Danos, FASLA, PLA  
DDG – Associate + Landscape Architecture Lead  
ASLA Past-President



Dear Selection Committee for ASLA Honorary Membership:

I am writing to endorse the Honorary Membership nomination of Alcibiades Tsolakis (Alkis), Dean of the LSU College of Art & Design (COAD), which houses the Robert S. Reich School of Landscape Architecture (RRSLA). Dean Tsolakis has distinguished himself not only in his leadership and management of the COAD, but across the entire university and in the larger community. He has been a powerful advocate for design and art as critical components of any place. I have served under many deans during my twenty-seven years, and none holds a candle to him.

Alkis has been described as a Renaissance man. A native of Athens, Greece, classically trained in the cradle of civilization, he is literally a citizen of the world. He recently initiated an exchange program with a university in Senegal, and annually teaches drawing in the COAD in Paris program. Alkis is an architect and sculptor by training, but has an innate understanding of the discipline of landscape architecture and urban design. He has promoted the strengths of the RRSLA, supported its national eminence, and worked hard to ensure that faculty are well supported in their research, and that the national and international alumni group is communicated with and engaged. He has focused a renewed emphasis on the quality of the built environment of the campus, particular the COAD, commissioning a mural in the COAD building honoring the career of Professor of Architecture Julian White, the first African American faculty member at LSU. He was able to work with Professor Emeritus Jon Emerson FASLA, original designer of the building's courtyard, to adapt it to changing student patterns and computer use, adding a performance space, food service, and sculpture. The popularity of the space exposes students from many disciples to place-making at its best.

Alkis is a visionary, a problem-solver, a powerful yet conciliatory communicator, and a master of carrying big ideas to completion. Early in his LSU career, at a time when the Board of Regents was opposed to new PhD programs, he conceived a degree called the Doctor of Design in Cultural Preservation. He proposed a curriculum that crossed COAD disciplines—landscape architecture, architecture, fine arts and art history) to focus on the cultural resources of Louisiana—its rich and diverse historic built environment, its early involvement in preservation and cultural resource management, and its collection of museums. The Doctor of Design was so compelling that it was approved, and recently graduated its first student.

Alkis embodies the creative process, and makes the world of art and design visible, tangible, and experiential as a heart of the campus landscape. Because of his tremendous contributions to the field of landscape architecture at LSU, and his advocacy for collaboration with the associated arts, I cannot think of anyone more deserving of being tapped as an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Turner, FASLA

Professor emerita

Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture



February 21, 2023

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

It is a pleasure to nominate Dean Alcibiades “Alkis” Tsolakis of LSU’s College of Art + Design for Honorary Membership in ASLA. His accomplishments, informed by his cross-disciplinary, multi-cultural, and international educational philosophies, have inspired LSU’s design students, thereby providing notable service to the profession by educating future landscape architects.

Until my recent retirement I worked with Dean Tsolakis since his arrival on campus in 2013 as a faculty member of the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture and subsequently as Associate Dean for Research and Development. Reinforcing the advantages and values of cultural diversity, Dean Tsolakis has had a profound impact on students in ways that have propelled the College’s curricula, faculty, and students into the contemporary international arena, exposing them to a wide range of cultures and contemporary issues. The results have been remarkably successful in modernizing curricula, increasing the enrollment in all units (landscape architecture, studio arts, interior design and architecture), expanding students and faculty diversity, and re-defining the College’s culture. With limited resources, he has established a direction that has substantially increased student enrollment (over 40%) and diversity (over 30%), thereby raising the profile and impact of the College.

A native of Greece with degrees in architecture from University of Pennsylvania (BArch) and University of Oregon (MArch), Dean Tsolakis previously originated and led architecture programs at the American University of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates) and Drury University (Missouri). At LSU, he has initiated CoAD’s Doctor of Design in Cultural Preservation, one of the few such programs in America. Expanding student horizons, he has secured exchange agreements with similar programs at the University of Grenoble (France) and at Mendel University, Brno (Czech Republic), and in progress are efforts to establish an exchange program with design programs in Senegal. Several years ago the Government of France recognized his work with French institutions with the prestigious *Ordre des Palmes Academiques*. CoAD has an on-going fall semester in Paris, and each college unit has regular domestic and foreign field trips. Under his direction CoAD initiated the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a collaborative that explores shared design and environmental issues with collaborators in countries in the Caribbean Basin.

We all recognize the design professions in general – in particular landscape architecture – are focused on increasing minority involvement; this can only happen when academic programs become more successful in recruiting, retaining, and graduating members of under-represented communities. Under Dean Tsolakis’s leadership, the College secured funding from the Hearst Corporation to support minority (as defined by the US Census) students in each CoAD unit for their critical first two years. The grant, spread out over five years, resulted in scholarship aid for 20 students who have now all graduated and are working in design offices throughout the country. One of the landscape architecture student recipients, from an African-American family of limited resources, came into our program over the objection of his parents, who associated landscape studies with lawn-mowing and other negative connotations. This scholarship kept him in school, and while he struggled at first, ultimately he blossomed into one of our program’s best students. He is now working at one of the country’s leading offices.

Another illuminating insight into Dean Tsolakis's effectiveness is the fact that he is fluent in multiple languages (not only English, but also classical/modern Greek, Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, and, most recently, Wolof) and converses with students in their native language. His office door is always open, and he regularly circulates in hallways and studios, conversing with students and faculty by name. Through his encouragement, studios on all CoAD units focus on issues of cultural inclusion, environmental equity, and community engagement, thereby exposing students to physical and social situations with which they are often not acquainted. In addition, he spearheaded efforts to recognize architecture professor Julian White, LSU's first African-American professor, with a 30' mural in the College's main building and recently (2022) led efforts to name the building in his honor.

Dean Tsolakis realizes that all design disciplines should be collaborative, and he supports multi-cultural, cross-disciplinary studios, programs, and curricula that expose design students to different disciplines, introducing students in an academic setting to the realities of professional work as well as contemporary life. This philosophy had quietly created the framework which guides faculty hires and defines each unit's direction. Currently in progress are two initiatives that characterize his inter-disciplinary philosophy: one is a cross-disciplinary graduate program housed in Interior Design that will focus on health care and involve faculty/student participation all four College units. Another curriculum under development is a unified first-year undergraduate studio that will expose students to a common design language as well as to the specifics of each unit's discipline (landscape architecture, studio art, interior design, and architecture) allowing students the best academic fit with the College. Recognizing that curricula issues are the responsibility of the faculty and not the academic administrators, Dean Tsolakis's leadership style is to establish an atmosphere for open discussion, to encourage debate of the possibilities and opportunities, and then to leave decisions and resolution of details to faculty.

Individually these accomplishments may seem relatively minor, but collectively, they have resulted in creating a cross-disciplinary atmosphere of acceptance and diversity, thereby enhancing learning experiences for all. DeanTsolakis presents an inclusive, inspiring, international perspective that has brought success to its graduates, recognition to the College, and enthusiastic support from alumni. In addition, his steadfast advocacy for College units has proven effective in the face of increasingly troubling financial realities of public funding for higher education and the current administrative focus on STEM disciplines over arts, humanities, and design curricula.

Having been a professor and academic administrator and having served as ASLA's past Vice President for Education, I've had numerous conversations with academic and professional colleagues about the educational challenges in today's reality of higher education. Dean Tsolakis has successfully met these challenges, and his leadership is a model for academics facing similar challenges. Recognition by ASLA with Honorary designation would be an acknowledgement of his contributions to educating the next generation of landscape architects and of the external importance, value, and benefits of cross-disciplinary approaches that have made positive changes in the design professions.

Thank you for your consideration.



Lake Douglas, PhD, FASLA  
Professor Emeritus, Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture

February 22,2023

Honorary Memberships Nominations  
C/O Honors and Awards/ASLA  
636 Eye St. NW  
Washington DC, 20001-3736

Dear Board of Trustee Members

Re: Nomination of Alcibiades Tsolakis as Honorary ASLA member.

It is rare that one interacts with an allied professional in a way that greatly impacts your path and journey as a Landscape Architect. This has certainly been the case for me, as a proud and dedicated alum of The Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture at Louisiana State University. Alkis arrived at LSU in the early 2000's, as our new Dean of the College of Art and Design. Alkis immediately grasped the historical significance of the School of Landscape Architecture at LSU, and its legacy of excellence established by Dr. Robert S. Reich. As chairman of the Alumni Advisory council for the school, I was involved in many efforts to advance the school's legacy and ensure its positive future. Alkis, although trained as an architect, understands the importance and significance of interdisciplinary collaborative efforts.

His support was crucial in advancing alumni driven efforts, such as the school naming after Dr. Reich, the Max Z. Conrad Lecture Series, and the Neil G. Odenwald Endowed Professorship. Most recently, Alkis was crucial in our family's commitment to fund the Carbo Landscape Architecture Recruitment Center as the College of Art and Design. Alkis was also pivotal in securing the funding of the LSU Studio Art Complex, after sitting in State Legislature purgatory for 35 years. Currently, Alkis is the longest serving Dean in the LSU system, and is leading many exciting progressive initiatives within the LSU system, Most significantly, the potential formation of the LSU campus conservatory. The conservatory will advance improvements and preservation of significant campus landscapes, The conservatory will also engage leading firms in the field to collaborate with academic units on campus, such as the RRSLA, architecture, horticulture, agriculture, biology, civil engineering, and others. This potentially transformative effort for the LSU/BR campus was born from a long incubated concept that Alkis has embraced and fostered, and is about to happen, due to his efforts.

These many accomplishments, and his stable leadership during difficult financial and economic times is more than ample evidence of his commitment to the profession of Landscape Architecture. I appreciate very much your consideration for him as an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Carbo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jeffrey Carbo, FASLA  
CarboWorks