ASLA LEADERS E-EXPRESS

April 16, 2014

Governance and Administration

- President Mark Focht, FASLA, recently attended the Central States Conference, which is a gathering of the Arkansas, Great Plains, Iowa, Oklahoma, Prairie Gateway and St. Louis Chapters. He closed the conference by presenting an overview of ASLA initiatives and participating in the presentation of the conference’s 2014 awards. The meeting took place in Omaha.

- President Focht also attended the Pennsylvania-Delaware Chapter 2014 Annual Meeting at Nemacolin Woodlands Resort in southwestern PA, where he was the general session keynote speaker with a green infrastructure-focused presentation. He also participated in the chapter awards presentation.

- A press release was distributed last Thursday about how ASLA headquarters earned the ENERGY STAR rating and helped Washington, D.C., rank second on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) 2014 list of top U.S. cities with the most ENERGY STAR® certified buildings. ASLA also participated in EPA’s national campaign to promote the release of the new ENERGY STAR findings. CFO Mike O’Brien and Special Assistant Keith Swann were interviewed by the local NPR affiliate WAMU and EVP Nancy Somerville, Hon. ASLA, PR and Communications Director Terry Poltrack, O’Brien, and Swann hosted representatives from EPA and EPA’s public relations firm. The Washington Post also mentioned ASLA in its story about the EPA announcement.

- The Board Performance Task Force met via conference call to review the task force recommendations that will be implemented at the midyear meeting. Next steps include drafting a trustee commitment form for review and discussion at midyear.

- Pre-midyear BOT webinars will be held Tuesday, April 22, and Thursday, April 24, at 1 p.m. EDT. VPs from PR & Communications, Professional Practice, Education, and Membership will present department updates and initiatives along with their directors.

- The green roof was visited recently by Carl Kelemen, FASLA, and his students from Philadelphia University. EVP Somerville and staff from Landscape Architecture Magazine (LAM), Professional Practice, Fellows scholarships, awards, and Finance presented to the students the various programs within ASLA. The visit was finished with background information and the benefits of the green roof as well as a green roof tour, which is where all the presentations were given.

- “ASLA March Madness,” ASLA’s in-house staff training program, finished up with a peer-to-peer workshop in Microsoft Excel led by Professional Practice Manager Deborah Steinberg, ASLA. Hot topics included formatting, charting, and creating pivot tables. Participation has improved with greater than 50 percent staff involvement. This, and the other workshops, provided an excellent learning experience for all involved and opportunities to collaborate on specific issues.

- Preparations for the midyear governance meetings are in full swing.
Finance and Business Operations

- Associate Finance Director Zandra Miller, Hon. ASLA, has announced that she will be leaving at the end of April. Miller has been with ASLA for almost 30 years and everyone wishes her the best. During this time of transition, Samantha Corvino from audit firm Watkins Meegan will shadow Miller over the next weeks to assist with the transition.

- The Meetings and Special Programs Department has been moved to the Finance and Business Department. Meetings Director Joyce DePass now reports directly to CFO Michael O’Brien. Associate Meetings Manager Mas Tadesse moves to Finance, as well, and continues to report to DePass.

- The March 2013 financial results are available. The review process starts with the VP and chairs call on Friday, followed by the full committee call on April 24.

- The Finance and Investments and Member Services Committees are finishing the review of the dues structure and will be making recommendations to the Executive Committee today.

- The Society’s financial audit continues with a conference call today with Finance VP Finance David Lycke, FASLA, Audit Committee Chair Ryan Collins, ASLA, and the members of the Audit Committee to finalize the draft financial statements.

Government Affairs

- ASLA Needs To Hear From You! Chapters are encouraged to send out the ASLA 2015-2016 Federal Priorities Survey to their members. Recently, President Focht sent out a “Call For Issues” asking ASLA members to tell ASLA what federal policy issues are important to them, as the ASLA Advocacy Department prepares for the new 114 Congress (2015-2016). Include this survey in your chapter newsletters or in other chapter releases. Currently, only 260 members have completed the survey. Questions? Please contact Federal Government Affairs Director Roxanne Blackwell; phone, 202-216-2334.

- Advocacy Day RSVPs—ASLA Government Affairs staff has sent the final list of Advocacy Day participants to Advocacy Associates staff who is working to schedule congressional meetings for our advocates. If you have not confirmed your attendance at ASLA Advocacy Day by filling out the ASLA Advocacy Day RSVP Survey for CPC or the ASLA Advocacy Day RSVP for BOT, please contact Government Affairs Manager Mark Cason immediately.

- Manager Cason attended several events in recognition of Water Week 2014. These events included the 2014 U.S. Water Prize Awards Ceremony and Reception, hosted by the U.S. Water Alliance, which recognized the achievement of four prize winners in sustainability, water quality, and efficiency. Other events included a congressional hearing, hosted by the newly established Congressional Clean Water Caucus, on the latest technologies water resources entities are using to advance greater water efficiency and drive economic prosperity. The final event was a reception, organized by water resources organizations, to thank Representatives Donna Edwards (MD), Jim Moran (VA), and Bob Gibbs (OH) for their work on broad water issues as congressional champions.
Legislative Analyst Leighton Yates participated in a discussion, by teleconference, with members of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK) focused on legislative priorities relevant to transportation. The coalition has decided to begin developing a position in favor of many ASLA advocacy priorities such as the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill and its programs, which include the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Also included in the discussion were the Safe Streets Act and the New Opportunities for Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Financing Act. It was also discovered that Senator Mark Udall (CO) is expected to reintroduce the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act this spring.

Analyst Yates attended a hearing held by the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the House Appropriations Committee concerning the fiscal year 2015 budget request for the National Park Service (NPS). NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis was present to provide testimony on the NPS priorities which included the agency’s centennial anniversary initiative, backlogged maintenance, and conservation of public land. Additionally, Director Jarvis briefly addressed use of the National Mall, competitive Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants as well as urban parks funding.

Federal Government Affairs Director Roxanne Blackwell represented ASLA at U.S. State Department meeting on revising the U.S. tentative list of future World Heritage Nomination Sites. This working group, which includes the American Society of Civil Engineers, American Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, the Society of Architectural Historians, ASLA, and many other groups, will begin meeting regularly to prepare a list of sites suitable for the 2016 U.S. World Heritage List.

Director Blackwell and Manager Cason participated in a conference call hosted by coalition partner, American Rivers to discuss the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) latest actions related to stormwater regulations. The call highlighted EPA’s recent announcement to “defer” further work on its long-stalled effort to update the nation’s post-construction and municipal stormwater regulations. Participants also discussed the impact of the agency’s decision at the local, state, and national levels, and possible options for future advocacy.

Publishing and Resource Development

Advertising contracts for Landscape Architecture Magazine now total 81 percent of the annual budget goal. This continues to pace well ahead of sales as of the same week of 2013. The sales team reports anecdotal evidence that the economic recovery is gaining traction, with increased advertising buys by veteran advertisers and a number of significant new advertiser purchases as well.

EXPO and sponsorship sales increased to 72 percent of the annual budget goal. This is virtually even with sales the same number of weeks ahead of the 2013 meeting.

The annual meeting and EXPO website is being re-designed from a Wordpress platform to facilitate the integration of functions from the registration, exhibit, and continuing education vendors.
- *Architectural Record* magazine agreed to provide a complimentary full page ad to promote the annual meeting and EXPO and McGraw-Hill Sweets has joined as a Media Partner for the meeting. Houzz.com is planning a large exhibit and will also partner with ASLA on promoting the meeting to its 16 million monthly users.

- The professional awards jury convened last weekend to review 596 submissions received out of 614 entries. Winners have been notified and staff are compiling jury comments to share with the non-winners in the next couple of weeks. The professional and student awards will be announced at the end of September to coincide with the October issue of *LAM*, the annual awards issue.

- JobLink postings continue to be strong, with highs in the past month of over 80. The average for the year is over 50 postings, the highest it has been since early 2009.

**Membership and Chapter Services**

- Today’s membership total is 15,374 (see details below):

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<th>MEMBER CATEGORY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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</table>

- The ASLA retention rate continues to climb. The 2013 renewal cycle closed on March 31; the 2013 retention rate was 81.84 percent. This compares to 80.92 percent in 2012; 80.30 percent in 2011; 79.01 percent in 2010; 77.28 percent in 2009; 78.31 percent in 2008; and 76.08 percent in 2007 (see chart below).
Chapter correspondence included: the April Leadership Link (the topic was Leadership Link: Identifying Leaders in your Chapter); the April Membership Minute (the topic was National Landscape Architecture Month; the monthly chapter membership renewal reports were distributed with an update on the CFO’s 5% Challenge standings; and, the 2014 first quarter new member survey was sent to the 554 members with valid emails who joined ASLA between January 1 and March 31.

Email Reminders to “Renew Your Membership” were sent to the following open renewal periods with valid emails: 164 members with a January 31 expiration date (90-day grace period concludes on May 1) and 491 members with an April 30 expiration date. The “Staying Connected” email was sent the 192 December 31 non-renewals whose membership lapsed on March 31.

The Join ASLA PowerPoint was updated for 2014 and posted to the Chapter Operations Workbook and the asla.org/join page.

Director Drobins Fles facilitated the St. Louis chapter’s strategic planning session on April 11 and 12.

Billing reports were completed and invoices were mailed to:
- Membership first renewal (6/30/14) – 1,055 members
- Membership second renewal (5/31/14) – 1,046 members
- Membership final renewal (3/31/14) – 370 members
- Firm Finder first renewal (6/30/14) – 4 firms
- Firm Finder second renewal (5/31/14) – 1 firm
- Firm Finder final renewal (3/31/14) – 1 firm
- LAM subscription first renewal (6/30/14) – 126 subscribers
- LAM subscription second renewal (5/31/14) – 104 subscribers
- LAM subscription final renewal (3/31/14) – 90 subscribers.
Public Relations and Communications

- A press release was distributed widely on April 8 celebrating the relaunched Career Discovery site as well as the new Tools for Teachers hub. The sites, planned as part of National Landscape Architecture Month (NLAM), have thus far received 2,200 and 367 pageviews, respectively.

- Included in the new Career Discovery pages are two videos, “Why Be a Landscape Architect?” and “Personal Paths,” that tell the stories of participants at the 2013 Diversity Summit. They can be downloaded for use in awareness and recruitment efforts.

- Senior Communications Manager Jared Green attended UN-Habitat's World Urban Forum in Medellin, Colombia, and wrote several posts for The Dirt: Medellin’s Social Innovation; Cities Can Undo Inequality if They Start Planning; and Cutting the Super Block Down to Size, thus far.

- Vote for us! ASLA is running second in the People Voice Webby Awards after being nominated as a finalist in best in category for associations. Share the link with all your social channels, and wish us luck. Voting closes April 24.

- Columbus Business First (Ohio) is creating a slideshow of the EPA’s top cities and will include a photo of ASLA’s green roof.

Education Programs

- The Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System (LA CES™) has 189 active providers, slighting down from the same week of 2013. Currently, 833 courses are active; an increase over last week. There is one new application pending review.

- The ASLA Committee on Education (COE) held its monthly conference call this week. In an effort to streamline the COE activities this year, the committee has created three subcommittees to work on STEM, Landscape Architecture Program Recruitment, and Crossroads between Practitioners and Students.

Professional Practice and Information Technology

- During the first two weeks of the NLAM initiative by the Archives and Collections Committee, ASLA has received eight responses about collections of works and archives from the chapters and landscape architecture programs, as well as 30 responses from the ASLA Fellows updating the ASLA Fellows Database.

- On April 8, Pop Up Adventure Playgrounds: The “How and Why” of Creating Community-Based Free Play Online Learning webinar was presented by Joy Kuebler, ASLA, and Melissa Leopard, and was viewed by 40 attendees. The recording will be added to the current catalogue of presentations within the next week. The next presentation in the Online Learning series is “SketchUp 2014 Improvements, Scripts, and Plugins,” presented by David Leonard, ASLA, Daniel Tal, ASLA, David Burdick, and Mark Harrison, and hosted by the Digital Technology PPN. The presentation will be on
Tuesday, April 22, at 1 p.m. EDT. It will offer 1.0 PDH (LA CES/ HSW) and cost $40 for ASLA members and $165 for non-members.

- **Recent Professional Practice Network activity:** the Sustainable Design and Development PPN finalized its April post for *The Field*—an [interview with April Philips, FASLA](#) on the latest in urban agriculture—and discussed guidelines for reviewing proposals for Online Learning webinars and potential candidates for the PPN officers group. The Urban Design PPN sent out its inaugural monthly news brief on April 8. This new tool will help keep members informed of urban design activities and projects around the world, and will include news items, event announcements, and information on other relevant opportunities.

- The Women in Landscape Architecture PPN is preparing a set of interview questions to send out to a diverse set of practitioners with varying levels of experience for a series of interviews on *The Field*. The group also discussed plans for a speed-mentoring event for this year’s annual meeting.

- As of March 31, the number of PPN Online Learning tests submitted in 2014 was 18. Twelve LATIS exams were submitted in March, bringing the total submitted in the first quarter to 40, compared with 61 LATIS submitted in the first quarter of 2013.

- The current number of PPN members is 12,222. This is an increase of 25 members from last month, and an increase of 23 since the beginning of 2014. Also, compared to 2013 numbers, membership is 32 members higher. Four PPNs continue to have over 1,000 members: Parks and Recreation, Residential Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, and Sustainable Design and Development (SDD). The SDD PPN remains the PPN with the most members, with 2,164.

- In the past week a new virus, the Heartbleed bug, has surfaced and has impacted cybersecurity via email and Internet websites. ASLA will continue to monitor the potential impact of this virus and will take all necessary measures and precautions to avoid compromising any ASLA data. The ASLA IT team, Member Services, and Communications have confirmed that the following ASLA systems are not at risk:
  - Outlook email both accessing locally and remote via the Internet
  - VOIP Cisco phone system and Cisco routers and switches
  - Dell SonicWall firewall (protects ASLA network servers)
  - ISG Web for [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org) online purchases
  - WordPress – *The Dirt* and *The Field*.

**Deadlines and Reminders**

- The [Leadership Calendar](#) can be accessed on the web.