ASLA LEADERS E-EXPRESS

January 6, 2016

Governance and Administration

- President Chad Danos, FASLA, will be participating in the American Society of Civil Engineers’ (ASCE) Sustainability Summit in Virginia from tomorrow through Saturday. By invitation only, the focus of the summit will be to develop a roadmap for the civil engineering profession to transform how infrastructure is conceived, designed, and delivered to enable a sustainable future.

- Senior staff met with the Gensler and Akridge team on December 18 to interview and review the bids of three general contractors (HITT Contracting, SIGAL, and Coakley & Williams) for the ASLA Center for Landscape Architecture. Each of the three contractors will make bid revisions based on clarifications and Akridge will follow up with each to obtain a best-and-final guaranteed maximum price. The ASLA/Gensler/Akridge team will meet the second week in January to review final bids. Today, several staff met to review final furniture selections for the Center.

- The Council of Fellows nominations are due to ASLA by next Friday, January 15, midnight PST. Nominations must be uploaded and verified by chapter presidents via the new online submission system. For all instructions, templates, and links, please visit the Council of Fellows website.

- The Constitution and Bylaws Committee met via conference call on December 16 to continue the full five-year review of the constitution and bylaws in preparation for the midyear Board meeting in May.

- The move out of ASLA Headquarters is complete and it’s back to business in the temporary space. Need to contact us? Staff phones and emails are unchanged. Mail should continue to be sent to 636 Eye St. NW, Washington, DC 20001 (with the exception of overnight mail). Want to come visit us in our temporary quarters? We’re at 601 13th St., NW. The redesign of the ASLA Center for Landscape Architects is scheduled to take a minimum of six months. Check the ASLA website and future Leaders E-Expresses for updates.

Resource Development

- Pledges to the campaign for the Center for Landscape Architecture now total $960,027 or 64 percent of the goal of $1.5 million. Contributions to the newly launched Annual Fund total $11,452 to date.

Finance, Meetings, and Business Operations

- ASLA is hosting the external auditors for planning and risk assessments January 18-20 as a part of the 2015 financial audit.
The numbers are in! Peak hotel room nights for this year’s annual meeting were up from 1,800 last year to 2,200 this year, proving that by offering lower hotel group rates, providing registration discounts, and getting the message out early to “book the block” that ASLA can increase its numbers and will have more leverage when negotiating with other cities for booking future meetings. Registration and housing for New Orleans will open in May. Don’t forget to book the block!

Government Affairs

ASLA has joined with other transportation and community planning organizations in sending a letter to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urging them to use their discretionary funding to continue the Healthy Community Design Initiative, which coordinates efforts between the design and planning of communities and addressing health issues. Unfortunately, in the year-end appropriations bill, Congress eliminated the $3 million line-item for this program.

On December 18, ASLA participated in the 2015 Tree Summit that brought together stakeholders from private, public, and nonprofit sectors to discuss best practices for planting trees on private, federal, and District-owned properties, and to improve coordination and collaboration in those efforts. The event included remarks from District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser and Regional Director of the National Capital Region Robert Vogel, as well as workshops to discuss potential obstacles to success. ASLA is also an original member of Canopy 3,000, a short-term public-private partnership that has a goal of planting 3,000 trees on private property and public spaces throughout the District in 2016.

This fall, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a proposed rule that would dramatically ease federal design standards for many neighborhood streets and roads, thereby making it easier for communities to design Complete Streets. During the comment period, which closed December 7, ASLA applauded FHWA’s efforts in removing barriers that may prevent transportation planners and designers, like landscape architects, cities and communities of all sizes from designing and building transportation networks that are safe and accessible for all users. Learn more about FHWA’s proposed revisions to the design of transportation projects and read ASLA’s comments here.

Submissions for all ASLA Advocacy Awards nominations are due no later than February 29. For questions regarding the advocacy award program, please e-mail Government Affairs; phone 202-216-2370.

Save the Date! The annual ASLA Advocacy Day will be held on May 19. ASLA will be hosting a series of webinars prior to the event, which will prepare attendees for what to expect when meeting with federal legislators. Check out the iAdvocate video from last year’s Advocacy Day and share with others to get a jumpstart on your advocacy efforts!

Member and Chapter Services

Final membership numbers are now available for 2015. With growth for the third straight year, ASLA ended the year with 15,323 members, with an overall increase in membership of 0.72 percent. Importantly, the full member category, which accounts for 68.5 percent of ASLA membership, increased by 2.55 percent in 2015.
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- On Monday, chapter leaders received the monthly Membership Minute, which provided tips on how the chapters can build and improve upon last year’s successes. Chapter leaders also received their monthly chapter renewal reports.

- The Emerging Professionals Committee met via conference call yesterday. The committee reviewed the 2015 accomplishments and brainstormed ideas for 2016 committee projects.

- Email renewal reminders were sent to 1,388 members this week.

Public Relations and Communications

- Representatives from all 49 chapters will gather beginning Friday, January 8, in Charleston, South Carolina, for the sixth Annual Public Awareness Summit. Together attendees will design public outreach strategies and tactics for 2016. Also in attendance will be Chris Sanders, ASLA, representing Diversity Summit goals; Communications VP Mike Stanley, ASLA; and California Sierra Chapter Trustee and Council of Fellows Chair-elect Marq Truscott, FASLA.

- For the first time in many years, traffic to asla.org fell last year. In comparison with 2014, unique visitors fell by just over 11 percent to 924,227, and visits decreased by 9 percent to 1.7 million. Total pageviews/video plays, a measure of engagement with the site, decreased by 7 percent, though video plays alone were up 26 percent over 2014. News-related content, meanwhile, saw big increases. *Landscape Architecture Magazine*’s blog is up 20 percent; *The Dirt* grew 8 percent; and *The Field* traffic increased 33 percent. Also, *LAND*’s traffic increased 38 percent after its relaunch in September. U.S. traffic to asla.org now only accounts for 59 percent of the total. China is still number two, but traffic from there and elsewhere overseas fell. Google is responsible for more than half of ASLA’s traffic.

- The web team revamped the Honors & Awards landing page, which had seen falling traffic levels. The new landing page is more visual, and awarded projects are more easily accessible. In anticipation of a fully responsive asla.org, the new page is mobile-friendly.
A press release announcing ASLA’s updated online exhibit, *Designing Our Future: Sustainable Landscapes*, was distributed via various wire services. The Associated Press picked up the story, and Latino Public Radio (Providence, Rhode Island), Local Memphis Live (WATN-TV in Memphis, Tennessee), freelance writer Zach Mortice, and Total Landscape Care have expressed early interest.

*Landscape Architecture Magazine*

- *LAM* Editor McKee is at Columbia University in New York this week to serve as a judge on the National Magazine Awards, sponsored by the American Society of Magazine Editors.

- After 15 years of service at ASLA, *LAM* Managing Editor Lisa Speckhardt will be departing January 22 to join the American Society of Interior Designers as the editor of its magazine, ICON, and its director of communications. A search for a new managing editor has begun.

*Education and LAAB*

- The Call for Presentations for the 2016 ASLA Annual Meeting and EXPO is currently open. An email was sent today to all current, former, and prospective members as well as allied organizations and professionals. The call is also being promoted in Planetizen. That site also listed the ASLA annual meeting as one of “Ten Key 2016 Conferences for Urban Design Professionals.” The deadline to submit a proposal for consideration is January 28.

- The Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System™ (LA CES™) has 220 active providers offering 1,607 courses.

- Yesterday the Committee on Education (COE) leadership held a conference call to kick off planning for 2016, which focused on getting a sense of topics to concentration on in the upcoming year. The COE’s first committee call will take place later in January. Education VP David Cutter, ASLA; Chair Sean Rotar, ASLA; Education Programs Director Susan Apollonio; and Accreditation and Education Programs Manager Kristopher Pritchard participated.

- The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Committee on Recognition accepted the Special Report submitted by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its November 2015 meeting. As previously reported, LAAB was granted a 10-year recognition by CHEA at its January 2015 Board of Directors meeting.

*Professional Practice*

- The PPN Council orientation conference call will be held on Thursday, January 14. Vice President of Professional Practice Hunter Beckham, FASLA, and PPN Council Chair Keven Graham, FASLA, will be leading the call, during which ASLA’s strategic objectives, governance, corporate policies, PPN roles and responsibilities, and goals and action items for 2016 will be reviewed. Managing Director Cahill, Hon. ASLA, Manager Balon, ASLA, and Coordinator Hay will facilitate the orientation.

- One hundred Online Learning tests were submitted in December—the most ever in a single month, beating the previous record of 65. This brings the total number of Online Learning exams taken in
2015 to 451, compared to 178 taken in 2014—an increase of more than 250 percent. Also, 51 LATIS exams were submitted in December, up from 24 exams in December 2014. This brings the total number of LATIS exams taken in 2015 to 243, up from 183 in 2014.

- The PPNs ended the year with 13,143 members. Looking at PPN membership numbers for all of 2015, there was an increase of 621 members, and 15 of the 20 PPNs saw an increase in membership.

**Deadlines and Reminders**

- The *Leadership Calendar* can be accessed on the web.