



What Is Advocacy Day?

Once a year, landscape architects from around the country gather in Washington DC to meet with their state's delegates in the Senate and the House of Representatives to discuss, highlight, and bring forth issues which are relevant to the profession. Prior to Advocacy Day, ASLA's Government Affairs staff arrange meetings with every state's respected representatives, and as a participant, you are asked to attend the meetings and share your experiences. These representatives depend on education from us, their constituents. Democracy is only effective when willing participants (also us) take part in the process.

The purpose of Advocacy Day is to highlight landscape architecture as it pertains to laws and regulations at the federal and state levels. It is also pertinent that landscape architects are at the forefront of issues that impact our industry and our environment. An additional goal is to request that specific bills be either introduced in the House and/or Senate, or cosponsored, giving more support to legislation which protects the work we do and the places where we do it. Brittany Dixon, Student ASLA and Kira Sargent, Associate ASLA (left to right) above, can be seen speaking with Representative Pressley of Massachusetts' Office.

Why We Care?

There are 215 bills which ASLA is currently tracking because they deal with occupational licensing. There are 113 bills which specifically call out Landscape Architecture. When legislators are not educated to what landscape architects do and how we contribute to the health, safety, and welfare of the public, they are less likely of understanding that we are not tradesmen. We are licensed professionals who undergo rigorous training in school and after graduating to ensure we are qualified to perform incredible feats.

Beyond maintaining licensure, advocacy is how we get legislators like Senator Deb Fischer of Nebraska, among others, to aid us in our efforts to care for the environment. Senator Fischer, after meeting with landscape architects from Nebraska, introduced the Water Infrastructure Flexibility Act into session in 2017. The bill has now passed with bipartition support and will increase resources for green infrastructure projects which involve dams, levees, and stormwater systems.

This is a big win! It's specifically a huge deal because it reinforces that we are capable of great change, as long as we take part in the process of democracy!

A big reason **why we care** is that we have a voice. As associate and student members, the American Society of Landscape Architects is a group that represents us and speaks on our behalf to the government and to other organizations. Many times we forget that we need to make sure what the Society is speaking with our ideals and objectives in mind. To hold the organization and our representatives accountable, and to make sure messaging is on brand, we need to take an active part in both ASLA and government.

Taylor Fehmel, Student ASLA, (left) can be seen doing just that as she addresses the office of Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana in the image above.



ASLA members meeting with Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska

What's Next?

- #1) Sign up for iAdvocate. It's the easiest way to email, tweet, or write a letter to your reps., letting them know what you think and how you feel.
<https://www.asla.org/iAdvocate.aspx>
- #2) Read ASLA's statement on the Green New Deal.
<https://www.asla.org/land/LandArticle.aspx?id=55006>
- #3) Volunteer for an ASLA Committee! These committees are the first step in the process to make substantive change in the organization. Make your voice heard.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C23XQM5>
- #4) Watch the West Wing! It's just so good! (Recommended, not required)

Chair's Appeal



My name is Kene Okigbo. I serve as chair of the Associate Advisory Committee. Apart from creating this newsletter, among many other goals and objectives, we report to the Board of Trustees and ASLA Executive Committee on matters which are important to emerging professionals and associate members. We have this platform and avenue to make a difference within the organization because we took advantage of the opportunity in joining a committee. At times it's difficult to see what you can do to be more involved and make your voice heard. The most simple next step is to click the link below that reads "Committee Applications." You can read about the 24 different committees which need new and diverse voices - your voice. These committees are the fire that catalyze change and action within the American Society of Landscape Architects.

4 years ago, I was asked to step up as the Emerging Professionals chair of the Nebraska/Dakotas Chapter. Since then I have participated in the Diversity Summit, Advocacy Day, Spring Meeting, and the Conference on Landscape Architecture. I assumed positions on the Public Relations & Communications Advisory Committee, Honors & Awards Committee, and the Associate Advisory Committee. Service on these committees started as an opportunity to expand my network. They have since become the way I recharge and bring new inspiration to my work. They have taken me to Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and soon San Diego. Volunteering my time and talent has been an investment in the organization which I see my peers and myself recouping already. I strongly request that you consider making the same investment.

Sincerely,

Kene Okigbo, ASLA

What We're Reading

ASLA's Statement on the Green New Deal

[How Cities Design Themselves](#)

What We're Listening To

Design Chatter: Henry Gordon-Smith
Urban Agriculture

Ask Me Anything (AMA):
Allyson Mendenhall, ASLA
June 19th @ 3PM ET

Looking Ahead

Committee Applications
Due: July 12th, 2019

Associate Advisory Committee
Nominations Due: July 12th, 2019