

Executive Committee
Medal of Excellence Nominations
Attn: Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

School of Planning,
Development, Preservation
and Landscape Architecture

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MCRP
City and Regional Planning

MLA
Landscape Architecture

MRED
Real Estate Development

MSHP
Historic Preservation

BLA
Landscape Architecture

Dear Executive Committee:

It is with great honor that I nominate Design Workshop's DESIGN WEEK program for the ASLA Medal of Excellence Award for its outstanding contribution to education. Design Week is a unique partnership between the practice of landscape architecture and the schools where we teach our future professionals. Through the years, Design Workshop has taken teams of design professionals to more than ten universities across the United States engaging more than 1,600 students in week-long charrettes. It is a win-win-win enterprise for the universities and their communities, for the students, and for the profession.

Design Week provides a bridge between practice and academia—an opportunity to learn from one another, to challenge assumptions and open important conversations that will strengthen *our* ability to provide the kinds of leaders necessary to design a sustainable future.

The charrettes are set up as an intense immersion into a "real" design problem. Projects are identified that have relevance to local communities. Design Week charrettes have been conducted at colleges and universities across the nation, including Louisiana State, Cal Poly, the University of Illinois, Penn State and North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University. The students in these programs tackled projects such as the redevelopment of an underutilized rail site in California; the redevelopment of an industrial brownfield site with the preservation of historic industrial structures outside of Chicago, and a multi-use master plan for a site in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, that was bounded by an oil refinery, park, a river and rail yards. Because of the devastation in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Design Workshop and the university's landscape architecture department chose to focus MSU's

on planning and design ideas for rebuilding the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Most recently at Clemson, the project focused on re-envisioning Hilton Head for the next generations.

Led by the Design Workshop "faculty," teams of students at all levels, from freshman through graduate school, and from multiple disciplines like landscape architecture, planning, real estate development, and historic preservation address the problems from analysis through conceptual design. The pace is fast, the hours long, and the expectations are set high. Students often push through their perceived limits to new levels of performance. Community stakeholders and leaders are engaged in the process as well by providing support to students as they conduct research and by participating in critiques and final presentations.

Design Workshop has structured the experience much as university faculty structure a teaching studio—around defined learning objectives. In addition to in-depth analysis, programming, and the design process, other goals such as team building, mentoring, organization and leadership, understanding professional-client relationships, and professional presentation skills are included. All of these are obvious benefits to the students as they move into the professional world. Less obvious in the description above is the enthusiasm and excitement it generates in the students. It is an opportunity to work with outstanding professionals for a sustained period of time, often with one-on-one conversations and critique. Additionally, through the interdisciplinary approach in Design Week, the traditional academic siloes are blurred. It creates opportunities for collaboration between departments—an experience more like the professional world.

Universities benefit in other ways as well. Public universities have a commitment to serve their communities. Design Week provides a venue to spotlight community design problems and offer myriad imaginative solutions that can open community dialogue. It also is an opportunity to strengthen town-gown relationships. The events are celebrated in local news media with a positive spotlight on the profession of landscape architecture as well as the students and their university.

Design Workshop provides this experience pro bono...a generous gift to say the least. Please read the attached testimonials to the value of Design Week...I dare say, that if permitted, we could have contributed 1600+ such letters from the students, some now practitioners, and the faculty who have had the privilege of participating in this event.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Beth McCubbin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Beth McCubbin

Mary Beth McCubbin, ASLA, LEED—AP
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Re: Letter of Endorsement for Design Workshop's Design Week
The Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence

Dear Selection Committee:

"The Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence recognizes significant contributions to landscape architecture policy, research, education, project planning and design, or a combination of these items" is the stated criteria for the medal. This is a letter of endorsement for Design Workshop's Design Week as a candidate for the ASLA 2012 Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence which would recognize the firm's contribution to education.

The North Carolina A&T State University was the recipient of one of Design Workshop's Design Weeks in April of 2005. It was a generous offer from Design Workshop which we gladly accepted. The cost was entirely paid by Design Workshop. This represented a service to North Carolina A&T State University, project client and students. This unquestionable giving of themselves in time, financial resources, expertise, encouragement, access, was much appreciated by all.

The Design Workshop's Design Week is visionary because it offers opportunities to landscape architecture programs that would otherwise be very expensive. It is polarizing with effects on all participants, students and professionals. It is a stimulating process for the students and faculty alike, and is helpful having another way to reach students.

Yes, it was challenging getting 50 students organized and directed toward a common goal. And, for one week, the students were focused on a common goal, one project, all day into the wee hours of the night, missing other classes, this was a rare opportunity.

The leadership Design Workshop offer was invaluable. The students were inspired by the dedication of the firm's professionals. The entire process was engaging, and to see the look on students faces during the week told the hold story.

It was an educational collaborative between the faculty, Design Workshop, and students, but thought provoking to see a nationally award winning firm put so much effort into challenging students. The camaraderie that developed from this collaboration still lives on today. Provocative!

Sincerely,

Perry Howard, FASLA
Program Coordinator

EXPLORE
DISCOVER
BECOME



College of Art & Design

Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture

Re: *Design Workshop's Design Week*

ASLA Awards Jury:

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for Design Workshop receiving an award for their *Design Week* experience, such as was held with the School of Planning, Development, Preservation and Landscape Architecture at Clemson University in the fall of 2011. Design Workshop has brought this experience to 11 other universities in the past year with great success.

We have had our own *Design Week* tradition for over 20 years now, typically in the first or second week of the spring semester, organizing teams of students from all levels of both our graduate and undergraduate programs to compete for prizes on a design project posed by visiting professionals. These professionals come from alumni or notables in the profession or allied professions—sometimes singularly and sometimes in groups—and represent nationally- and internationally-based firms. We and the students find the experience to be transformational in learning about various issues and attitudes shaping professional practice, and the students in particular value working with others with varied skill sets in resolving design problems. The visitors also offer the potential of hiring future interns from the program. Faculty members participate by being team advisors and the professional rotates critique time among the teams, organizes daily Q & A and informational sessions, and gives both public lectures and workshops for the students while present.

Design Workshop has an excellent reputation for professionalism and outreach, and representatives from the firm have organized *Design Week* experiences for us on multiple occasions. Their challenges to the students were well-received and we understand the reaction at Clemson was similar. We understand that Design Workshop has based their experience on the LSU model, so we heartily endorse the continuation by Design Workshop and believe that such experiences should be a regular part of a Landscape Architecture student's curriculum.

Besides the benefit to the students, the public relations value of partnerships with professional firms such as Design Workshop for the program and the university is noteworthy. Public institutions have as their mission public outreach, and representatives from the university and surrounding community often participate by acting as "clients" and advisors, and attend the public lectures. One such experience at LSU led to the University administrators hiring a landscape architecture firm to execute a new campus master plan.

In summary, we enthusiastically support Design Workshop's *Design Week* experience and believe the firm should be recognized for their contributions toward professional education.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Van Cox...". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Prof. Van L. Cox, FASLA
Interim Director

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To whom it may concern,

I have not met landscape architecture professionals that deserve this recognition more than Design Workshop, specifically because of their academic outreach through the Design Week charrette program. Through interacting with Kurt Culbertson, Glenn Walters and Scott Baker during the Clemson University Design Week planning and charrette process in the fall of 2011, I was exposed to the breath of knowledge that they not only possess, but also the knowledge that they are willing to share. It is safe to say that my fellow classmates and I learned as much during those five short days as we often learn in entire academic years. Design Workshop's philosophy of Legacy Design, in conjunction with balancing environmental sensitivity, community connections, artistic beauty, and economic vitality, became the perfect metaphor for the process of Design Week. By encouraging landscape architecture, planning, and real estate development students to work in collaborative teams to address a real world project, we were able to simultaneously account for these diverse and equally important considerations.

In addition to the apparent academic benefit, the experience of Design Week in conjunction with the amazing relationships with the Design Workshop professionals reinvigorated our entire design school, sparking a renewed interest in collaboration and interdisciplinary endeavors. It is evident that this collaborative spirit shapes Design Workshop's professional endeavors, as well as their academic ones. By interacting with students at this formative time, Design Workshop is able to better the profession through promoting collegiality and community within our great collection of complimentary practices.

The ramifications of the intensive five days of Design Week continues to this day, in the form of additional collaborative projects sparked from these relationships down to increased social communication between disciplines. I know that I will be a better landscape architect due to the experience with Design Week, and I hope that Design Workshop is able to continue to have such meaningful impacts on students all over the country. It is a shame that we cannot start every academic semester with so much learning, excitement, and stewardship.

Thanks so much for your time and consideration,

Katie Lloyd

Candidate for Master of Landscape Architecture, 2013
Clemson University



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To whom it may concern,

I am honored to submit Design Workshop for your consideration for the 2012 ASLA nomination. Design workshop has been an influential role model for the landscape architecture students at Clemson University. Last August, the School of Planning, Development, Preservation and Landscape Architecture had the great opportunity to participate in a collaborative design charrette. The charrette was lead by a team of professionals from the Design Workshop firm. One of the main focuses of the charrette was to build strong connections between the students in the real estate, city and regional planning and landscape architecture departments. The firm team was instrumental in fostering tremendous collaboration between the students, resulting in a exciting display of design solutions for the redevelopment of a site on Hilton Head Island, SC. Design Workshop's passion, dedication and inspiration led to the success of the event and generated a creative energy to kick start the semester. Their leadership role in teaching during the work sessions broadened the skills and perspectives of the students, especially myself. It is an achievement that Design Workshop continues to successfully be involved in leading current design students at Universities around the country through educational design charrettes that will help in their current education and in their future careers. For these reasons, they are the ideal candidate for the 2012 nomination. I give them my strongest recommendation for this honor, and I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Johanna Managad

MLA candidate 2012

Clemson University

Jacob H. Jackson

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To whom it may concern:

I would like to submit my recommendation as part of this nomination of Design Workshop's DESIGN WEEK, for The Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence. I had the great pleasure of working alongside Kurt Culbertson and two of his associates during the highly regarded Design Week exercise that took place at Clemson University in August of 2011.

During the week-long charette, Kurt led his staff and over one hundred graduate and undergraduate students from disciplines in Landscape Architecture, City and Regional Planning, and Real Estate Development through an exercise that successfully communicated the principles of Legacy Design. At its conclusion, it was evident that students hadn't merely grasped those principles, but had engaged and applied each method to their final recommendations for the Town of Hilton Head, South Carolina.

It is my understanding that Kurt has previously performed the Design Week exercise ten times at universities such as LSU, Penn State, and Cal Poly before bringing it to Clemson University. Each time he has challenged and positively influenced young minds through a process that Clemson has deemed as "Critical Inquiry," which is the true beginning of any fruitful endeavor.

Kurt's contribution of time and instruction to young people who are about to embark on their professional careers is a distinguished quality of a leader dedicated to excellence which in my opinion is worthy of this prestigious award. Thank you for considering my recommendation.

Sincerely,

Jacob Jackson