



April 23, 2026

Distinguished Colleagues, Friends in the Profession, Allied Organizations, and Students

I am honored to step into the role of President of the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), an organization that has long been a professional home for those committed to advancing landscape architecture education, research, and advocacy. I am sincerely thankful for the confidence my colleagues have shown in me and for the opportunity to serve a community whose work continues to shape the future of our discipline. It is a privilege to take on this responsibility at such an important moment for our field.

During my tenure as President, my priorities will be intentionally grounded in and guided by CELA's strategic plan, reflecting the collective vision and direction set by our membership. These priorities focus on strengthening the value of CELA for members at every career stage, recognizing that faculty are being asked to do more with uneven institutional support, and ensuring that CELA is experienced as essential to professional success. I am equally committed to strengthening scholarly engagement by better connecting research, teaching, and practice so that our work translates into meaningful public impact. Cultivating a strong culture of mentorship will be foundational to sustaining the discipline's health, continuity, and leadership. Finally, I aim to amplify CELA's advocacy and outreach by equipping members with shared messages that clearly articulate the public value of landscape architecture education in addressing climate resilience, community health, public space, and equitable access to design. Together, these priorities reflect our strategic commitments and reinforce CELA's role as a leader in higher education and public engagement.

CELA 2026: Catalyzing Connections

The 2026 CELA conference, themed "Catalyzing Connections," took place in Cincinnati, Ohio, from March 18-21. This year's conference was attended by 467 members of our community. The conference was an important moment for our organization and our field, bringing together educators, researchers, scholars, and practitioners around a shared commitment to advancing landscape architecture education and scholarship. Guided by the conference theme, the gathering emphasized the importance of connection across disciplines, institutions, and communities as a catalyst for meaningful impact. Sessions and discussions highlighted how research, teaching, and practice can be more intentionally integrated through community-engaged, interdisciplinary, and place-based approaches. A notable strength of the conference was its focus not only on outcomes, but on the processes, partnerships, and institutional structures that support sustained and ethical engagement over time.

The conference also reaffirmed CELA's role as a professional home for shared learning and collective leadership. New collaborations were formed, existing relationships were strengthened, and participants left with renewed clarity about the broader societal relevance of their work. I am deeply grateful to the conference organizers, presenters, volunteers, and attendees whose efforts made the 2026 conference such a success, and I look forward to seeing how the connections forged there continue to shape our work. On behalf of the CELA Board, I extend my appreciation to conference attendees, contributors, and organizers.

CLARB CELA Faculty Licensure Program

I am also pleased to highlight the CELA–CLARB Faculty Licensure Advancement Program, an important initiative that supports faculty members pursuing professional licensure. This program reflects a shared commitment between CELA and CLARB to strengthen the connection between education and professional practice by providing guidance, resources, and community for faculty navigating the licensure process. The initiative will be led by CELA President-Elect Bo Zhang, and we look forward to his leadership in advancing this work. I would also like to extend sincere thanks to Past President Taner Ozdil for his vision and leadership in helping establish this program in partnership with CLARB. More details about this year’s application process will be announced later this summer. By supporting faculty licensure, the program advances professional credibility, enriches teaching and scholarship, and reinforces the vital link between academic preparation and practice.

2027 CELA Conference in Denver, Colorado

We look forward to welcoming you to the **2027 CELA Conference**, to be held **March 17–20, 2027, in Denver, Colorado**. Further details, including the call for abstracts, will be released in late summer.

Outgoing CELA Board Members

I would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the following CELA Board members who have recently completed their service to CELA in leadership positions:

Executive Committee Members

- Jun-Hyun Kim, Past President
- Kirk Diamond, Treasurer
- David Barbarash, 2nd VP & Chair of Standing Committee on Awards and Recognition
- Bo Zhang, VP of Research & Creative Scholarship

Regional Directors

- Fionn Byrne, Region 1 Director
- James Schulte, Region 6 Director
- Jessica Canfield, Region 4 Director

New CELA Board Members

I would also like to acknowledge the following CELA members who have been elected into leadership positions and welcome their commitment to service to CELA:

Executive Committee Members

- Bo Zhang, President-Elect
- James Schulte, Treasurer
- Jessica Canfield, 2nd VP & Chair of Standing Committee on Awards and Recognition
- Hong Wu, VP of Research & Creative Scholarship

Regional and Student Directors

- Lynne Manzo, Region 1 Director
- Zhongzhe Shen, Region 6 Director
- Bin Jiang, Region 8 Director

- Ankita Karmakar, CELA Student Director-Elect

Outgoing Track Co-Chairs

- Marc Miller
- Ebru Ozer
- Yiwei Huang
- Sungmin Lee
- Jessica Canfield

2026 CELA Awards

Congratulations to this year's CELA award recipients. It was an honor to celebrate their achievements at this year's conference awards dinner.

- Lifetime Achievement Award: Robert D. Brown
- Academy of Fellows Inductees: Laurie Olin, Chingwen Cheng, Kristina Hill, Laura Lawson, and James Lagro Jr.
- Forster Ndubisi Service Award: Ken Brooks
- President's Award
- Triad Award: Kirk Diamond, David Barbarash, and Bo Zhang
- Excellence in Teaching (Junior Level): Erin Putalik
- Excellence in Teaching (Senior Level):
- Excellence in Design Studio Teaching (Junior Level): Shaun Rosier
- Excellence in Design Studio Teaching (Senior Level): Karen M'Closkey
- Excellence in Research or Creative Works (Junior Level): Jaeyoung Ha
- Excellence in Research or Creative Works (Senior Level): Mathias Kondolf
- Excellence in Service Learning (Junior Level): Matthew Nicolette
- Excellence in Professional Advisory Service: Aan Garrett-Coleman
- Outstanding Educator: Hala Nassar
- Outstanding Administrator: Roxi Thoren
- Fountain Scholar Graduate Winner: David Roscero Cervantes and Julian Stanfield
- Fountain Scholar Graduate Finalists: Fawzia Bhuiyan
- Fountain Scholar Undergraduate Winner: Sabiha Sultana Miahjee
- Fountain Scholar Undergraduate Finalists: Paola Alexandra Luna Castro
- Student Research Award: Joyce Fong
- Student Research Award Honorable Mention: Yue Zhang
- Student Creative Scholarship Award: Ari Bell
- Student Creative Scholarship Honorable Mention: Sraboni Das Meem and Alesha Milsap
- Outstanding Paper Award: Anthony Fettes
- Outstanding Paper Award Honorable Mention: Elisabeth Orr and Vaike Haas
- CELA Academy of Fellows Best Poster Award: Jaeyoung Ha and Sydney Milligan
- CELA Academy of Fellows Best Poster Award Honorable Mention:

Getting Involved with CELA

CELA is, at its core, a member-driven organization, and the strength of our community comes from the many ways our members choose to engage. Beginning this summer, you will see regular updates and new opportunities to participate in CELA's work and initiatives. We look ahead to launching new programs, inviting submissions for conference graphics, announcing the call for conference abstracts, and opening applications for our awards, including the annual CELA Fountain Scholar Program. These initiatives highlight the depth of talent, creativity, and scholarship within our membership, and we encourage you to participate.

We also invite you to connect with CELA beyond our conferences and publications. CELA is active on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook, and your presence there helps extend our collective voice, share accomplishments, and strengthen connections across institutions and regions. Following and engaging with CELA on social media is one simple way to stay informed and connected throughout the year.

As a member-oriented organization, CELA depends on the leadership, service, and volunteer efforts of its members. Serving on the Board or in volunteer roles is an important way to contribute innovative ideas, diverse perspectives, and thoughtful leadership that help CELA better serve its community. We encourage you to consider nominating your colleagues, or yourself, for these roles and to see service as both a contribution to the organization and an opportunity for professional growth.

Together, the Board and our members have contributed to meaningful change across landscape architecture education, research, and practice. This progress is made possible by the dedication of our community. We are stronger through CELA, and we look forward to continuing this work with you. We welcome your ideas and feedback and value your participation.

In community,

C.L. Bohannon, Ph.D., FASLA

CELA President

Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Community Engagement

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture

University of Virginia