



9 December, 2021

Distinguished Colleagues and Our Friends in Allied Organizations,

I am, once again, excited to inform you all of the many new undertakings and initiatives currently occurring in the organization in my third letter to you as the President of the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA).

### *The 2022 Annual CELA Conference*

The CELA Standing Committee on Conferences and Events has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to organize the 2022 CELA Conference. We are extremely excited for what is in store and also to see everyone again at the the (mostly) in-person CELA conference. The conference will be held from March 16-19, 2022 at the [Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa](#) in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico. Nestled on 550 acres of land between the Sandia Mountains and the Rio Grande River, this venue was selected for its Native American cultural heritage, inspirational landscape, and unique environment.

With a conference theme of 'Evolving Norms: Adapting Scholarship to Disruptive Phenomena,' the conference will showcase past landscape architecture norms and how they have altered in response to societal change. We also have several amazing opportunities for in-person attendees for the conference, including field trips to Santa Fe, Mesa del Sol, the UNM Campus, and the J.B. Jackson Home in La Cienega. We also have several workshops planned, including a Drone Workshop. If you prefer to stay local, the resort offers many perks for relaxation and socializing. We will also offer a convenient shuttle between the Albuquerque airport and the resort for all in-person attendees.

There appears to have been high anticipation for this event this year as the CELA had 388 abstract submissions. After the first round of the double-blind peer review, 361 of these abstracts were selected. These submissions are first-round-acceptance and acceptance-pending-revisions (264 Oral, 15 Panel, 49 Poster, & 9 Film) with around a 93% acceptance rate. Only a limited number of virtual options were offered for presenters this year, with 24 selected

as virtual presentations in the first round. Virtual presentations were selected based on scholarly merit, reviewer scores, and track chair recommendations.

In January, after the second round of review is completed, the accepted presentation authors will be notified about additional details regarding the presentation format requirements and registration details. The newest CELA Research Tracks of ‘Resilience and Climate Action,’ ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,’ and the ‘Evolving Norms’ theme track all performed well in regard to submission rates, so we are excited about the future of these tracks. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the CELA Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship, the CELA Standing Committee on Research and Creative Scholarship, all abstract reviewers, and all CELA Track Chairs for their hard work behind the scenes in ensuring the high quality of accepted abstracts and their efforts on composing Landscape Research Record (detailed later in this letter).

### *Frederick Law Olmsted & Green New Deal Superstudio*

In addition, to celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted (FLO), the recognized “father of landscape architecture,” we distinguished all abstracts that focused on FLO and will be categorizing them into specific FLO-related oral sessions. Further, we also have a unique keynote panel planned for the conference which focuses on Olmsted, providing a discourse on the positives and negatives of his contributions to the field.

During the conference, we will also be reflecting on the Green New Deal Superstudio, CELA’s joint initiative with LAF and ASLA. The yearlong initiative ended in June 2021 as an open call to explore decarbonization, jobs, and justice from a designer’s perspective and give form to what this movement-led vision could mean for the future. The initiative attracted some 3,000 participants in 180 studio courses from over 90 universities in 39 states and 10 countries, as well as hundreds of practitioners from across the design disciplines. We will be highlighting presentations related to this initiative in order to celebrate important contributions to creating solutions to the climate crisis.

### *LRR v.10*

Finally, be on the lookout for *Landscape Research Record* (LRR) Volume 10, from the 2021 virtual conference, which is nearly complete and will be published online in January. We are looking forward to receiving your paper submissions for the LRR 11 review process! Be sure to make your submissions before January 17. The LRR v.10 “Best Paper Award” has also been selected and will be announced in March 2022 at the conference in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico.

I would also like to notify the membership that, since its first volume, the **average acceptance rate for LRR currently stands at around 46%**. In this sense, the peer-reviewed online publication LRR has evolved into a high-quality repository for landscape architecture-based

research. Thank you all for continuing to submit and helping to grow this journal into what it is today.

### *Amazing Changes to Landscape Journal*

Not only has LRR grown in its stature and quality over time, *Landscape Journal*, under the new leadership of James LaGro, Jr., is undergoing immense positive transformation as well. Since LaGro began as the Editor-in-Chief of *Landscape Journal*, about forty manuscripts have been considered for publication. Half of these manuscripts' authors live in North America, while the other half live in Europe, Africa, or Australasia. **He has single-handedly significantly decreased the turnaround time of manuscripts submitted to *Landscape Journal*; now well-written manuscripts that conform with the journal's submission guidelines can be peer reviewed, returned to authors for minor revisions, and then copy-edited and published – all within a 12-month window!** Manuscripts that do not meet these standards, of course, take longer to navigate the review and revision process.

In the coming months, LaGro hopes to achieve three main goals. First, he will ensure that *Landscape Journal* has a diverse and engaged editorial board. He plans to appoint new members, along with a new Associate Editor for International Scholarship. Second, he will provide space in the journal for essays and policy briefs, in addition to traditional research and review articles. These new article types may be attractive to educators, scholars, and practitioners who wish to reflect on their work, speculate on practice trends, or comment on future opportunities for both the discipline and the profession. Third, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Press, LaGro will be striving to make the journal's scholarship as widely discoverable as possible. International abstracting and indexing services will play a critical role in this effort.

### *Advancing the CELA DEI Initiatives*

I would also like to update the members on several initiatives involving increasing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). First, the CELA Task Force on Nominations and Professional Relations (NPR) has been tirelessly working with the CELA Standing Committee on Diversity and Recruitment to increase awareness of CELA positions openings and ensure a diverse and broad pool of nominations for said openings, as well as foster and enhance linkages between the CELA and landscape architecture professionals. The CELA President, CELA President-Elect, and CELA Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Recruitment have been having bi-monthly meetings alongside members of the LAF, LAAB, CLARB, landscape architecture professionals, and other outstanding members and organizations to help identify DEI-based issues within educational and professional procedures and develop strategies to overcome existing DEI barriers within these processes. Also, the CELA is developing a partnership with Dumbarton Oaks to help support the Mellon Initiative in Urban Landscape Studies. The initiative seeks to support an interdisciplinary program in urban landscape studies with a focus on "Democracy and the Urban Landscape: Race, Identity, and Difference." We have donated funding to support this initiative and are working to develop continual funds to support it in the future.

As an addendum, we have also gathered an immense amount of information on the strategies that different landscape architecture programs are using to increase DEI in their respective universities. We obtained this information through an internal survey through the CELA Standing Committee on DEI. **In link below, I am sharing the raw data on the Top 5 Strategies from each respondent.** I have made the responses anonymous and hope that you all can utilize this as a grab bag of ideas to increase DEI within your programs. We have posted this document on the CELA website as an administrative resource to design programs: <https://thecela.org/dei-strategies/>.

Finally, I am proud to announce that the **annual CELA Fountain Scholarship for BIPOC landscape architecture students has now been fully endowed** and the funding for this award is now continually provided on a yearly basis. We are now working to extend this funding pool in various methods to increase the award amount and offer awards at both graduate and undergraduate levels in the future. We have also expanded the applicant opportunities to include all CELA member schools (not only accredited programs) as well as PhD students. We are now accepting applications for the scholarship through December 31. Learn more about the program at <https://thecela.org/cela-fountain-scholar-program/>.

#### *A Reminder about the new CELA Surveys Program*

The CELA is has launched a new undertaking to assist researchers in conducting national surveys. **The 'CELA Surveys' Program** allows CELA members to post links to academic-related surveys, for research purposes, which are distributed to other CELA members via the organization's membership list. For a small fee, researchers can utilize the CELA to distribute surveys to other landscape architecture faculty. The program is now established, so please apply here if you wish to use the CELA for your research survey purposes: <https://members.thecela.org/surveys>.

#### *New CELA Award for Excellence in Professional Advisory*

Don't forget that the call for CELA Faculty, Student and Professional Awards is now open. Please submit your nominations by December 31! Below, I am providing the full list of awards, but I would like to highlight here a new award, the first CELA Award for professionals.

**The CELA Excellence in Professional Advisory Award** honors professional advisory board members who have played a significant role in the development, alteration, and continual updating of landscape architecture programs both nationally and internationally through program and curricular support as well as expanded opportunities for student mentorship. Professional advisory boards provide extremely valuable insights for the day-to-day operations of landscape architecture administration. The members of these boards act as the primary linkage to the professional world for faculty and students, allowing graduates and teachers to

keep up with what the market demands. These boards create a broad network which allow for programs to receive feedback on the current professional climate in which to curate their curricula as well as a network for students who can link into it for job opportunities, internships, portfolio and resume advice, and mentorship for entering the professional world. Since all accredited landscape architecture programs have Professional Advisory Boards, the CELA feels that this new award is a small gesture that will help incentivize and support these individuals for all that they do.

Learn more and apply for the Excellence in Professional Advisory Service at <https://thecela.org/professional-awards-nominations/>.

#### The Full List of Available CELA Faculty Awards:

- Excellence in Design Studio Teaching (Junior or Senior Level)
- Excellence in Teaching Award (Junior or Senior Level)
- Excellence in Research and/or Creative Works Award (Junior or Senior Level)
- Excellence in Service-learning Award (Junior or Senior Level)
- Outstanding Administrator Award
- Outstanding Communications Award
- Outstanding Educator Award

Please apply here for all faculty awards: <https://thecela.org/faculty-nominations/>.

#### The Available CELA Student Awards:

- Creative Scholarship Award
- Research Award

Please make your student submissions here: <https://thecela.org/student-nominations/>.

#### *Moving Forward*

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank everyone involved with CELA for all of their hard work. The Track Chairs and the CELA Vice President of Research & Creative Scholarship have been diligently working behind the scenes to make decisions on abstracts. We sincerely appreciate all abstract and full paper reviewers for the CELA. Your service is invaluable to the organization year in and year out. I would also like to specifically recognize the Regional Directors here for all of the work that they do to gather information for the CELA. They recently surveyed programs within the CELA membership and gathered intel on 1) How to promote more involvement from CELA members and 2) How to encourage more members to submit abstracts to the CELA conference. I will be responding to the feedback from the questions in my next letter.

We have achieved much already this year and will continue to strive to accomplish more. I am confident that, with a continued spirit of synergy, the CELA will move forward its vision of a world shaped by landscape architects, and that we will continue with our mission to support educators to advance the profession.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the members within and outside of the CELA Board who have worked so hard to get us to this point. There are too many to name, but you know who you are.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions and/or suggestions.

Respectfully,



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and

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