



*Advocating, advancing, and evaluating quality education in Landscape Architecture*

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Board Members

March 21, 2023

Educators

Weimin Li, Ph.D., ASLA  
California State Polytechnic University

Daniel H. Ortega, ASLA  
University of Nevada Las Vegas

Allan Shearer, Ph.D., FASLA  
University of Texas at Austin

Johanna Barthmaier-Payne, ASLA  
Department Head  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
Rhode Island School of Design  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Practitioners

Erin Degutis, ASLA, RLA  
SWCA Environmental Consultants

Dale Jaeger, FASLA, PLA  
WLA Studio

Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA, PLA  
LAAB Chair

Dear Professor Barthmaier-Payne:

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) at its February 9, 2023, meeting granted accreditation for a period of six (6) years to the course of study leading to the professional MLA degree at Rhode Island School of Design. This status is subject to review of an interim report to be submitted by December 1, 2024, together with annual reports and maintenance of good standing.

Public Representatives

Derrek Niec-Williams  
Howard University

Patty Reece  
The Volland Store

David N. Yellen  
University of Miami School of Law

The interim report should provide an update, with documentation demonstrating compliance when necessary, on each Recommendation Affecting Accreditation (RAA) in order to demonstrate compliance, or steps towards compliance, with the respective standard. In accordance with LAAB policy, programs have up to two years to resolve their RAA(s). Upon receipt of the two-year Interim Report, the LAAB will accept that the RAA(s) have been addressed or, if not, the program will be given two more years to resolve the issues. A second Interim Report will be due to the LAAB on or before four years from the receipt of this Accreditation Action Letter. If the RAA(s) are not successfully resolved or, in the case of longer term issues, substantial and verifiable progress has not been made at that time (after four years from this Accreditation Action Letter) then the program may be moved to provisional status, it may be suspended, or in some cases the program's accreditation may be revoked.

ASLA Representative

Kona Gray, FASLA  
EDSA

Accreditation is awarded on a time-certain basis. The six-year period of accreditation ends December 31, 2028. Accordingly, the MLA program at Rhode Island School of Design is next scheduled for a review during the fall of 2028.

CELA Representative

Roxi Thoren., ASLA  
LAAB Chair-Elect  
Pennsylvania State University

In making its decision, LAAB considered the program's self-evaluation report, the visiting team's report, and the program's response to the report.

CLARB Representative

Christine Anderson, ASLA, PLA  
LAAB Secretary  
Mark Thomas

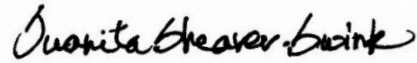
Director

Kristopher Pritchard

Enclosed is a list of recommendations affecting accreditation (to be responded to in the interim report via the process laid out above) and an Interim Reporting template. This list was developed by LAAB from the materials reviewed during the meeting.

On behalf of the visiting team, I would like to thank you for the hospitality extended to them by the faculty, staff, and students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juanita Shearer-Swink". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light gray rectangular background.

Juanita Shearer-Swink, FASLA  
LAAB Chair

Enclosure

cc: Crystal Williams, President

**Rhode Island School of Design**  
**MLA Program**  
**LAAB Meeting**  
**February 9, 2023**

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendations Affecting Accreditation**

1. Develop and approve a long-range Strategic Plan for the Landscape Architecture Department and its MLA program, involving the faculty of the Landscape Architecture Department in concert with the institutional leadership (Standard 1).
2. Review and update the website for the Landscape Architecture program/department to ensure that it provides clear and direct access to program information as specified in the LAAB “program disclosure” requirements (Standard 1).
3. Resolve the degree nomenclature that the Department has described as hosting two distinct MLA degree programs, i.e., MLA I and MLA II, to instead conform with the LAAB requirement of single accredited MLA program (e.g., one MLA degree with two tracks) (Standard 1).
4. Continue current endeavors to make improvements and adjustments in the content, sequencing, and cross-course integration to make the curriculum more effective and make more efficient use of student time and energy (Standard 3).
5. Enhance alumni support and involvement from the professional community in the program which could include the creation of an advisory board, the establishment of mentorship programs, opportunities for fundraising activities to support the program and expand scholarship, and other creative ideas to stimulate involvement (Standard 6).
6. Develop better records of alumni and systematically communicate with them (Standard 6).

**Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board**

**Interim Report**

**Submitted By:**

**Submission Date:**

**Section 1.**

**Name of Institution:**

**Name of Department:**

**Name of Program:**

**Date of Decision Letter:**

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**Section 2.**

**Recommendation Affecting Accreditation:** (Copy/paste verbatim the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation identified in the Decision Letter that is the subject of this Report and attach the Decision Letter. If Decision Letter identified more than one (1) Recommendation Affecting Accreditation, complete an Interim Report for each Recommendation.)

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**Section 3.**

**Action Taken by Program:** (Describe the action taken by the Program to address the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation identified in Section 2 of this Report. Attach any appropriate documentation that supports the action taken by the Program)

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**Section 4.**

**Prior Action Taken by Program:** (If applicable, attach any prior Interim Report related to the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation described in Section 2 of this Report)