School & Program Updates

Jason Peschel, SDC Director

Greetings! Now is a wonderful time on campus where we celebrate student accomplishments via capstone events, mixers, and graduation ceremonies. It is a chance to reflect on how quickly time passes knowing that this year’s graduates were new students not so long ago. It is also a time to relish in the amazing opportunity our faculty have to impact their future in a positive manner. I continue to be impressed with the students capabilities and/or accomplishments while having the utmost respect for the faculty as they prepare students for the future. GO COUGS!

Steve Austin, Interim LA Program Head

Spring greetings from the Palouse! Jolie has been on sabbatical this semester so I’m sitting in for her. Here are a few highlights from this semester:

Abundant congratulations go to the Class of 2024, whose first design studio happened online during the pandemic.

A multitude of thanks are bestowed upon all who participated in the senior portfolio review in Seattle. Copious thanks as well to Site Workshop, Design 24/26, the Baumwelt, Peg Staeheli, and the Woodland Park Zoo for sponsoring the Spring Celebration at the Zoo. Over 100 family members, alums and professionals turned out to give our seniors a great send off. Special thanks to alum and LA Board member Katie Bang for her help in planning the event.

Faculty Michael Sánchez has been promoted to Scholarly Associate Professor. He also serves WASLA as Eastern WA member at large.

Faculty Kate Kraszewska has received significant grant funding for her research. She also finalized the establishment of, and is the Director of, WSU’s Water Grass and Ecology Lab.

Faculty Marcus Owens will be presenting at the Environmental Design Research Association Annual Meeting in Portland and beginning a fellowship with the Manhattan Institute.
Sophomores worked with the Confederated Colville Tribes to create an outdoor learning landscape and story walk with learning opportunities about native plants and animals in Inselchxin, the local Salish dialect.

Juniors partnered with local stakeholders in Seattle to examine the Lake Washington Shipping Canal and its context, with students creating master plans resulting in ideas ranging from an imagined UFO crash landing site to a tomten studded tidal forest.

Senior LA students utilized the Hanford Reservation as the context for their Capstone projects. Ideas ranged from land art expressing the temporal dimensions of radioactive materials to nature based solutions to remediating toxic landscapes. Concurrently in their urban planning class, the seniors worked in Tri-Cities to imagine possible solutions to urban heat island effects exacerbated by the climate crisis.

The Design-Build course continues to develop the Kelly Ward Memorial Pathway and Plaza on WSU’s campus. This year the students designed and are in progress of crafting a memorial sign, entry arbor and planting design for the plaza. This project is funded by the WSU Campus Landscape Advisory Committee.

We are grateful to landscape architecture practitioners and community partners for their time and insights this semester.

The LA Excellence Fund helps support student activities. Thank you for your support!
Design build in action.

Juniors in Seattle.

Senior portfolio review in Seattle.
LA Professional Advisory Board Notes

The LA Professional Advisory Board (LAPAB) met in Pullman in late March. Along with meeting with students from across cohorts, the board discussed strategies for bolstering communication, celebrating student achievements, and encouraging students to take advantage of scholarship opportunities. To this end: check out WSU LA LinkedIn and page 1 of the newsletter.

The Board has amended the bylaws to create a Junior Board Member position intended to be filled by a student or emerging profession with the intent of diversifying representation. The SDC Central Board and LA Board will meet in-person on the Westside in the fall.

Our Community Design Team, with members from the student chapters of the ASLA and the National Association of Minority Landscape Architects, worked with WSU Spokane and the Spokane Teachers Credit Union to create design ideas for the entrance to the WSU Medical School.