



CSLA  
AAPC

90  
YEARS/ANS  
1934-2024

# INTERSECTIONS SUMMIT - SUMMARY

A CSLA-hosted Summit on Education, Accreditation,  
Reconciliation, Diversity, and Climate



June 13-14, 2023

## Meeting Objectives

1. To initiate a discussion between landscape architecture programs, practitioners and the CSLA on Reconciliation, JEDI, and Climate Adaptation
2. To undertake a consultation on the revision of the LAAC Manual of Standards
3. To spur and encourage a community of practice between educators and the CSLA.

## Workshop Agenda

Day 1 – June 13	Day 2 – June 14
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome/Introductions, Land Acknowledgement and a word from CSLA Past President, Chris Grosset</li> <li>2. Objectives of the Meeting</li> <li>3. CSLA Committee Goals:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reconciliation Advisory Committee</li> <li>○ JEDI Committee</li> <li>○ Committee on Climate Adaptation</li> <li>○ Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council (LAAC)</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Universities' Presentations:</li> <li>5. How Reconciliation, JEDI and Climate are Addressed in Education &amp; Discussion</li> <li>6. Land Terre Design Research Network</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome</li> <li>2. Rotating Workshops on issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are the challenges and opportunities to address climate action from education to practice?</li> <li>○ How can we address Truth and Reconciliation in practice and academia?</li> <li>○ How can we address the JEDI gap between practice and academia?</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Reporting on Workshops</li> <li>4. Revised LAAC Standard - Stephanie Rolley</li> <li>5. Rotating Workshops on LAAC:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Addressing Reconciliation in the LAAC Standard</li> <li>○ Addressing JEDI in the LAAC Standard</li> <li>○ Addressing Climate in the LAAC Standard</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Reporting on Workshops</li> <li>7. Next Steps and Ideas to Advance Common Goals and Continue Collaborating (with CSLA Board)</li> </ol>

## Participants

Hosted by:

With invited guests, the Canadian accredited landscape architecture programs at:

**CSLA:**

Chris Grosset (Past-President), Hope Parnham (Manager, Advocacy and Strategic Affairs)

**Reconciliation Advisory Committee:**

Grant Fahlgren (Co-Chair), Naomi Ratte (Co-Chair), Terence Radford

**Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee:**

Gail Schillingford

**Committee on Climate Adaptation:**

Jane Welsh (Chair)

**Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council:**

Heather Cram (Co-Chair), Cynthia Girling (Co-Chair), Margot Long, Trevor McIntyre, Stephanie Rolley (Consultant on Standards Review)

**University of British Columbia:**

Kees Lokman, Madelaine Snelgrove and Nicole Dulong

**University of Toronto:**

Elise Shelley, Emiley Switzer-Martell

**University of Manitoba:**

Leanne Muir, with Anna Thurmayr via videoconference, Smile Singh and Jordan Cantafio

**University of Calgary:**

Mary-Ellen Tyler, Beverly Sandalack, Tracy Berg

**University of Guelph:**

Brendan Stewart, Kelsey Moore and Allison Neuhauser

**Université de Montréal:**

Nicole Valois, Heather Braiden

And candidacy program at:

**Dalhousie University:**

Ed Versteeg, Corey Dawson, Layth Abou

# Rotating Workshop 1 - Facilitated by the CSLA Reconciliation Committee

## Summary of Workshop on Reconciliation

During the first rotating workshop participants discussed how to address Truth and Reconciliation in both practice and academia. Participants were inspired by various projects and initiatives that integrate First Nation culture into ecological design and community work.

### 1. Relationship Building

The participants acknowledged the importance of forming meaningful relationships with First Nations communities and recognized the time required to do so. It was also noted that Indigenous designers are currently overburdened and overworked in trying to respond to calls for their expertise. They discussed the need for more Indigenous professors to apply for positions but noted the need for qualified applicants.

### 2. Curriculum

The discussion touched on the challenges of integrating reconciliation into LA curriculum. Participants noted that a lot of students want to be engaged in projects related to reconciliation, but the challenges are time and curriculum constraints. They emphasized the need to spend more time building relationships and understanding before seeking help and involvement from Indigenous communities.

The issue of assessing quality in the context of reconciliation was also discussed. Participants questioned how to grade lessons that don't fit into standard curriculum programs and how to teach and assess new teachings. They also discussed the importance of taking advantage of Indigenous studies courses and the need for collaborative design thinking that includes interviews and consultations. The discussion also touched on the problem with prescribed processes that don't fit when working in First Nation communities, which can lead to poor outcomes. Participants suggested adjusting the curriculum towards appropriate processes.

### 3. Supports for Students

In terms of scholarships, the discussion highlighted the need for more support for Indigenous students, including financial aid and mentorship programs. The participants noted the importance of creating safe and inclusive spaces for all students and the need for more resources and training for faculty to effectively teach and support Indigenous students.

Overall, the workshop underscored the importance of addressing Truth and Reconciliation in both practice and academia, and the need for more resources, time, and understanding to do so effectively.

# Rotating Workshop 2 - Facilitated by the CSLA Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee

## Summary of Workshop on Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion

During the second rotating workshop, participants delved into the challenges and opportunities surrounding Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in both the professional landscape and academic settings. The discussions were rich, reflecting a deep commitment to advancing these principles in the field of landscape architecture.

**Bridging the Gap** Participants identified a noticeable gap between the academic and professional worlds. On the academic side, there's a struggle with language barriers, especially concerning English and French. This is compounded by students sometimes not fully grasping the depth of JEDI issues. On the practitioner side, the focus often leans towards business metrics like Key Performance Indicators, which can sometimes overshadow JEDI principles.

**Curriculum and Training** The need for a more inclusive curriculum was a recurring theme discussed. Participants expressed that JEDI often feels more like an added assignment rather than an integrated part of the culture. They emphasized the importance of courses that genuinely reflect the values of the profession and the communities they serve. The changing age demographics of students, with younger entrants, also presents new challenges for curriculum design. Additionally, there's a call for more training for faculty to ensure they're equipped to address JEDI issues effectively.

**Representation and Equity in Practice** In the professional realm, there's a recognition of the changing dynamics – from a previously male-dominated field to one that's more diverse. However, challenges persist, such as gender roles in leadership positions. The discussions also touched on the importance of having diverse voices in the field, ensuring that design truly reflects the public realm and serves all communities equitably.

**Student Perspectives** Students voiced their desire for a more inclusive learning environment. They highlighted the importance of feeling that their perspectives are valued and that they have a voice in shaping their education. They also pointed out the need for more funding for JEDI-focused programs and courses. The students emphasized the importance of collaboration and interdisciplinary learning, suggesting that landscape architecture students could benefit from engaging with peers from other disciplines.

**Looking Ahead** Participants discussed potential solutions and ways forward. They highlighted the importance of leadership from both academia and practice in driving JEDI initiatives. There was also a call for more case studies and resources to help disseminate information and best practices. The workshop concluded with a sense of optimism and a collective commitment to continue working towards a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive landscape architecture profession and academic community.

# Rotating Workshop 3 - Facilitated by the CSLA Committee on Climate Adaptation (CoCA)

## Summary of Workshop on Climate Action

During the third rotating workshop, participants engaged in a comprehensive discussion on the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate action. The discourse was marked by a shared commitment to understanding the evolving landscape of climate change and its implications on the profession.

**Educational Insights** Program representatives highlighted the pressing question of ownership: Whose responsibility is it to address climate change? They emphasized the need for students to understand the risks associated with climate change and questioned how these challenges are reshaping the profession. However, there is a limited time available to delve deeply into these complex issues within academic settings. The importance of interlinking various design aspects and breaking down global issues into actionable steps was underscored. The discussion touched on the need for a fundamental shift in values and understanding how these values inform the services landscape architects provide. There is a potential disconnect between academia and practice, with students often pushing boundaries while the profession might be more restrained, sometimes merely ticking boxes.

**Practitioner Perspectives** Practitioners and faculty members brought up the emotional weight of climate change topics, noting the challenge of "ecological grief" where the magnitude of the issues can be overwhelming for students. They advocated for embedding climate change discussions in all classes and emphasized the importance of community connectivity. The discussion also highlighted the potential of field courses as tangible teaching tools for climate change and the need for a regional or watershed perspective in projects. There is a perceived gap between academic theory and practical application, with students often graduating with robust theoretical knowledge but lacking the skills to integrate this knowledge in multidisciplinary teams.

**Student Voices** Students expressed a desire for a more holistic understanding of climate change, emphasizing the need for more interdisciplinary studios and knowledge-sharing platforms. They pointed out the focus on stormwater in their education but felt there was a lack of emphasis on other significant issues like floods and wildfires. Students also highlighted a perceived disconnect between the research produced in academic settings and its application in professional practice. They expressed a desire for more opportunities to influence office culture and practices, especially as junior employees. The students called for more tools to measure the impact of projects on the environment.

In summary, the workshop underscored the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate action in landscape architecture. Participants highlighted the need for a more integrated approach, emphasizing collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and a deeper understanding of the values that underpin the profession. The discussions reflected a collective commitment to ensuring that landscape architects are equipped to play a pivotal role in addressing the pressing challenges posed by climate change.

# Next Steps, Ideas to Advance Common Goals and Continue Collaborating

Summit Participants joined by the CSLA Board of Directors

## Summary of discussion:

- A unanimous call for further collaboration between CSLA + educators + professionals
- Schools need support and resources, and schools/researchers can provide support and resources. Two-way collaboration
- CSLA can help synthesis and disseminate information, for low- capacity organizations, and out to professionals. CSLA can act as a clearing house for sharing information.
- Researchers can help fill a gap needed by professionals.

## Action Items:

- Create a way to communicate, virtually and in-person events. The CSLA Board supports development of a Task Force to address communication across the network, will build on network started with LAND|TERRE.
- Super Studio – there is interest across the country.
- More information needed on funding opportunities (i.e., SSHRC, Mitacs) through research partnerships (schools + researchers + professionals)
- Improve communications regarding pathways to membership and CSLA involvement – include everyone, at all stages of careers, and interdisciplinary.
- DO BETTER. DO MORE.

## Closing Remarks

The CSLA Intersections Summit was a significant event that brought together representatives from the CSLA, its committees, and accredited university programs. The event provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas on critical issues facing the landscape architecture profession and society at large, namely reconciliation, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI), and climate action.

The rotating workshops on reconciliation, JEDI, and climate action revealed the depth and breadth of these issues in both academia and practice. The discussions underscored the importance of integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into landscape architecture education and practice, fostering an inclusive and equitable environment, and taking decisive action on climate change.

- The discussions on reconciliation highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and rights, and the importance of building respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.
- The JEDI workshop underscored the need for landscape architecture to reflect the diversity of the communities it serves and to foster an inclusive and equitable environment in both education and practice.
- The climate action workshop emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change in landscape architecture education and practice and the potential of the profession to contribute to climate solutions.

The event concluded with a strong consensus on the need for continued dialogue and action on these critical issues. The participants agreed on the importance of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action. The insights and recommendations from the summit will guide the CSLA, its members and the accreditation process, in their ongoing efforts to advance these critical issues in the profession and contribute to a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Thank you to all who participated!