

## Professional Diversity Breakout Session

Oct. 11, 2021

What are some ways POASLA members can be exposed to the diversity within the landscape architecture community with the broader goal of expanding the profession in the DMV? *[At the next meeting, Goals #1, 2, and 5 below were selected as this year's top priorities. Work continues on those three goals especially.]*

*Diversity of job sector, age level, firms, expertise, cultural backgrounds and allied fields.*

### Main Goal #1: Engage with students

- Reach out to schools and communities to reach more youth to expose them to landscape architecture as a possible career path and benefit to communities
- Identify 3 schools to focus on.
- Leverage National ASLA events (Minecraft, Dream-Big) for replication in DMV.
- Partner with MD ASLA to do something with UMD students. Also promote events with UMD.

### Main Goal #2: Engage with communities, community partners, and allied organizations to Improve urban environments

- Engage with organizations that already exist and may benefit from involvement of landscape architects
  - **Urban Design Studio**
    - Already have contact there: Kendra Hyson
  - **Neighborhood Design Center**
    - Good for students to get involved or between jobs
    - Call for volunteers
    - Many types of design professions are already involved
  - **Open Architecture DC**
    - Matt J and Annie have been involved and may have contacts there
  - **Anacostia Watershed** boat tour to learn about environmental justice AND a cleanup?
  - **DOEE** and do a water cleanup – 2 hours and sketch walk
- Either through our chapter or ASLA National, we could seek foundation support that would fund partnerships between landscape architects, community groups, and perhaps city government agencies to plan, build, and maintain green, clean spaces in low-income neighborhoods. Many foundations are devoting significant resources to addressing social determinants of health. Perhaps we could find one willing test scalable interventions that improve health by greening the urban landscape. ([NYT article](#); [Boston Schoolyard Initiative](#))

### Main Goal #3: Engage with Public Sector Professionals

- Get a variety of public sector professionals together for a panel discussion
  - Connie has agreed to take the lead on organizing panel session, possibly series
    - Matt Sellers is a potential panelist
    - Dan is working with NPS in SC on African American site
    - Kal- possible volunteer
- Outreach to public sector LAs (members and non-members)

- Matt S will help
- Each county presents what they're doing.
- GAR program

#### **Main Goal #4: Engage with Construction Industry experts**

- Landscape contractors are important in the sequencing of projects
  - Conner has a landscape construction background and found this to be beneficial
- Engage with design/build firms that are already members
  - Surrounds Landscape is design/build. Are they members?
- Site visits- the good the bad and the ugly
  - RHI- Elliot would likely be happy to give a site tour of a newly constructed project. Could bring in the contractor and/or other construction professionals involved in the project.
  - Construction site tour would be very interesting/beneficial but may be harder to organize.

#### **Main Goal #5: Engage with Allied Professionals (e.g. civil engineers, architects, contractors)**

- Where are the handoffs? Where do I (the LA) start my work? How do I work with them?

#### **Main Goal #6: Highlight Professional Diversity of our Membership**

- Gather Data on Members' Professional Diversity
  - Chapter survey of all members to get info on their backgrounds and prof. diversity
    - Could include type of firm, background – use sections of prof. diversity from list
  - Connie suggests ExComm call all 350 members to get their info
- Promote diversity graphically on our website and elsewhere
  - Could lead to PR, a campaign
- Invite interaction by various people with diverse backgrounds and expertise (for meetings, programs) throughout the year

#### **Main Goal #7: Highlight Career Paths (to help firms recruit entry level and help job seekers)**

- Identify various paths
- Jobs fair: Different types of firms could introduce themselves briefly. Invite students, emerging professionals to attend. Could be virtual/in-person
- Are landscape laborers interested in advancing into LA? Become an LA through on-the-job training

#### **Main Goal #8: Increase Members' Exposure to Diversity**

- Coordinate possible events with groups, e.g. Black LA Network ([BLAN](#)), Nat'l Org. for Minority Architects ([NOMA](#)), Asian American group, Korean group, etc.
- Invite interaction by various people with diverse cultural backgrounds (for meetings, programs) throughout the year
- Create a scholarship with Jennifer Horn's as a model, giving preference to people of color, and promote idea to local firms [or use existing Ballard]

#### **Main Goal #9: Increase Number of Residential LA Firms in Membership**

- Work with National to increase number of residential firm features in LAM and elsewhere (especially smaller firms)