

As was the case in most of the land grant universities in the United States, landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin began in the College of Agriculture. Instruction in landscape design and planning dates back to 1888, when a course incorporating "principles of ornamental planting and the art of laying out gardens and pleasure grounds..." was offered in what was then the Horticulture and Economic Entomology Program. As early as 1908, representatives of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association explored with University officials the possibility of establishing a chair in landscape design for John Nolen, the renowned landscape architect from Massachusetts who at that time was working on several important projects in Wisconsin. Although financial situations at the University did not enable Nolen to join the faculty, instruction in landscape design and planning became formalized in 1915 when Professor Franz Aust joined the Department of Horticulture. Aust developed new courses that included "School and Home Grounds Decoration" (1917), "Farm Forestry" (1919), and "Rural Development" (1921). He also initiated a series of Extension publications on landscape architecture; was active in "The Friends of Our Native Landscape", one of the state's first environmental advocacy groups; and helped initiate the first known interdisciplinary courses in the U.S. that combined human ecology and landscape planning.



By 1926, Landscape Architecture had become a distinct degree option within the Department of Horticulture. Shortly thereafter, G. William Longenecker, a 1929 Master's graduate of the Wisconsin program, joined Aust in teaching landscape architecture. Under their leadership, the program flourished for the next three decades. The learning experience, in the early years of this period, was often highlighted with guest lectures by such notable individuals as Jens Jensen and Frank Lloyd Wright; the use of native plant materials was emphasized; and teaching and public service activities focused upon the traditional landscape architectural domain of parks, residential properties, and institutional grounds. Professor Longenecker became the first Executive Director of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in 1933, and contributed much time and effort to its design, development, and management.

While still a program in the Department of Horticulture, Landscape Architecture moved into the 1960s with growing enrollments and a greater diversity of courses. In 1964, a separate Department of Landscape Architecture was established with Professor Longenecker serving as its first chairperson. Faculty size grew to enhance the quality and scope of the program and two years later, in April 1966, the undergraduate design and planning degree received initial accreditation by the American Society of Landscape Architects. That year the Department hosted the annual meeting of the National Council of Instructors in Landscape Architecture (the precursor of CELA). It also became a part of the new School of Natural Resources within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. This was followed, in 1967, by the development of a new undergraduate "Natural Resources" degree option to provide students with more courses in the natural sciences (this program is not accredited by the ASLA). (The undergraduate degree is now accredited by the American Society of Landscape Architects.)

Significant changes and innovations occurred as the Department approached the 1970s. Among these were the move to new facilities in the remodeled ground level of Agriculture Hall, and the development of the Environmental Awareness Center under the direction of Professor Philip H. Lewis, Jr. The decade of the 1970s saw a rapid growth in enrollment in all degree programs offered by the Department—particularly the accredited undergraduate design and planning program—and the expansion and

diversification of the faculty. Responding to needs identified by several studies of the profession, the Department added faculty with advanced training in art, architecture, and urban and regional planning as well as in non-design disciplines—e.g. geography, plant ecology, social psychology, and computer science—in order to add their expertise to the more traditional aspects of the instructional program. Members of the faculty became recognized nationally as a result of their publications, teaching innovations, and contributions to regional design, recreation planning, historic preservation and landscape history, native plant design and plant community restoration and management, aesthetic assessment, and land information systems.

As the Department entered the decade of the 1980s, the rapid growth pattern of the previous fifteen years was slowed, in part because of limited resources and because the Department began to concentrate on nurturing the ideas initiated during the 1970s. At the same time, it moved from a period of intellectual development and experimentation into one of stabilization and maturation. This is not to say that innovation and exploration of ideas were a thing of the past, but rather that scholarship and instruction had begun to achieve sophistication and depth as well as breadth. During this period, the Department went from 15 permanently assigned tenure-track faculty and 6 to 8 graduate Teaching Assistants, to 13 faculty and 4 student assistants. Enrollments in the accredited undergraduate design and planning program were changed from 45 students entering the sophomore year to 30. Symbolic of its developing intellectual maturity was the Department's organization of the 1980 Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) conference, which, for the first time in the organization's history, emphasized research and a scholarly paper presentation format. Another milestone occurred in 1981 when Faculty in the Department initiated Landscape Journal, the first refereed journal in North America devoted to landscape architectural research. The following year departmental faculty provided critical leadership for establishing the College's Land Information and Computer Graphics Facility.

In 1989, a comprehensive review of the Department's programs was conducted by a national team of experts. Their report made the following observation:

The DLA (Department of Landscape Architecture) has a highly visible undergraduate program and a sound interdisciplinary graduate level program. Several members of the Faculty are well known nationally. Four have received national awards from peers in their profession in recent years. (Cooperative States Research Service Report, 1989).

In 1997, the Department experienced a major change when the Deans of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the College of Letters and Sciences decided to make the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) a cross-college academic unit. This action resulted in the transfer of four faculty members from Landscape Architecture to URPL, although two of the members continued to teach in the accredited program. The Department subsequently reduced the number of applicants it admits into the design option from 30 to 22 students. Since entry into the program is now so highly competitive, there has been a commensurate increase in student quality. Each year virtually all of the students who graduate secure employment in landscape-related positions throughout the state and nation.

During the 1990s, the Department also became known for numerous research projects that it conducted for the National Park Service and other federal and state agencies. The Department continues to maintain a presence in state, county, and local landscape design and planning issues and is giving increasing emphasis to the entire Upper Great Lakes region.

Negotiations began in early 2016 to join the Landscape Architecture Department with the Urban and Regional Planning Department to form a new department in the College of Letters and Science. Previously, Landscape Architecture was housed under the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Urban and Regional Planning was jointly administered in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Letters and Science. These departments initially requested permission to plan to restructure in March 2016 and were engaged in an intensive planning process ever since the College of Letters and Science and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences approved permission in April 2016. On December 6, 2016, the College of Letters & Science approved the request unanimously; the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences approved the request on December 20, following a public hearing on December 9. The implementation of the new department, the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture, began July 1, 2017. The Landscape Architecture Department and the Urban and Regional Planning Department dissolved into programs within this new department. The transition of the CALS undergraduate major in Landscape Architecture into an L&S degree environment will begin Fall 2018. The Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture brings together dispersed resources to generate new knowledge and provide academic programs around urban and regional sustainability to improve the livability, economic vitality, and health of communities and their surrounding natural environments.

Although the nation and world are now looking to the future with concern and even trepidation, the Landscape Architecture program will continue to emphasize the many exciting challenges that lie ahead for the profession and discipline of landscape architecture. Whatever the future may bring, the Department will strive to serve the citizens of Wisconsin and the entire world during the twenty-first century.