

PLANNING & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



PLANNING & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

This newsletter is for alumni and friends of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

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uwalumni.com/news-stories/alumni-notes.

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends of PLA,

Our department demonstrates inclusive and resilient paths to the future. Consider Darrel Morrison's career integrating human/natural landscapes, Julia Schilling's new work *Shift* transforming relationships to space, John Bryson's insightful and prolific career in public administration, and PhD student Justice Castaneda's work producing prospects for good government and the underserved as the executive director of Commonwealth Development, a shared confidence? Embracing forward-looking opportunity.

Undismayed by COVID, the department merger, or reaccreditations, PLA's first chair, Ken Genskow, deserves a standing ovation. We are operationalizing the vision and strategic plan established under his guidance. Our vision is that all individuals are engaged in a vibrant learning community, where ideas, experiences, and perspectives are supported, nurtured, and developed to their highest levels. We elected this vision and every day we set it before us, as aspiration, as challenge. Our terrific faculty, staff, and students make this vision real.

We are dedicated to learning opportunities that enable students to innovate in promoting justice and resilience in the community. Recent reaccreditation visits affirm the unique role our signature programs play in integrating practice and theory in the service of society. If you are local, please allow a student to shadow your practice, and no matter where you are, please share your time and financial support to advance new learning opportunities.

Finally, a big thanks to Sam Dennis and Dan Rolfs who are currently leading the alumni organizations in a process of organizing one PLA alumni group that, among other things, will help produce a five-year celebration for the department next fall. See you in the fall of '22!

Alfonso Morales

Chair and Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

WI ASLA STUDENT ORG UPDATE

The WI ASLA Student Chapter kicked off the fall 2021 semester with its first in-person gathering since spring 2020 with cookies and a sketch crawl to Allen Centennial Garden. The opportunity to socialize and get to know new students outdoors, away from meeting on a virtual platform, was a refreshing welcome after a long social isolation.

The main focus of this semester was preparing for the National ASLA Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, November 19–22. Students who attended the conference were busy planning their itinerary, travel, and housing plans with assistance from their advisor Eric Schuchardt and department financial specialist Pat Cunniffe.

UW–Madison PLA sent 25 BLA students to Nashville to attend the conference, prepared with their résumés and portfolios, ready to interview with firms, network, attend sessions/the expo, volunteer, and make a strong presence at the alumni tailgate.

The 2021–22 WI ASLA student organization officers are:

Tiara Wuethrich—President

Maggie Raedeke—Vice President

Olivia Mayne—Secretary

Thea Bergerson—Treasurer & Marketing

Emma Wenman—Social Media Director

WISCONSIN STUDENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Greetings, fellow Badgers! After more than a year of virtual meetings, the Wisconsin Student Planning Association (WSPA) is glad to safely share space in Music Hall. We are working hard to advocate for current and future graduate students and to provide students with ample opportunities for social and professional development as we train for our futures in the planning profession. On behalf of WSPA, I would like to thank our alumni for their unending support of the department and students. Throughout the arduousness of the last year and a half, we were still able to make meaningful connections with each other through alumni mentorship programs, lecture series, panels, and other networking. Your lived examples and ample advice have helped all of us look toward a brighter future and given us a stronger sense of the multitude of impactful paths one can take with a degree in planning. We look forward to what the next few years will bring and how we can grow together as a community of planners as our world settles into its new normal.

Thank you again for your continued support, and On, Wisconsin!

Madalyn Grau

WSPA Chair



UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR ALUMNI E-NEWSLETTER

Email info@dpla.wisc.edu or visit dpla.wisc.edu/alumni/ to subscribe to our alumni e-newsletter and you'll receive a few bonus email newsletters throughout the year in addition to our annual printed newsletter.

Update Your Info

We want to make sure we have correct contact information for you. You can update your contact information online at uwalumni.com/services/update-info. If you haven't done this recently, we may not have access to your email address.

Badger Bridge

Badger Bridge, created by the Wisconsin Alumni Association, is a networking website for alumni with tools to help you to reconnect with fellow classmates and employ or mentor graduating students. Leverage your professional network by joining Badger Bridge at badgerbridge.com.

Alumni Notes

Share your story! Submit a professional or personal update online at any time at uwalumni.com/news-stories/alumni-notes. Or, just email them to us at info@dpla.wisc.edu. Your update may be showcased in the next issue!

Visit Us

Visits might be different from what we are used to, but when you are in the Madison area, please let us know! We'll see if we can arrange a safe visit at Music Hall or Agricultural Hall, conversations with students, a campus tour, or another interaction that suits your interest. The department and our students always enjoy connecting with alumni. If you're interested, contact any of us directly, or send a message to info@dpla.wisc.edu.

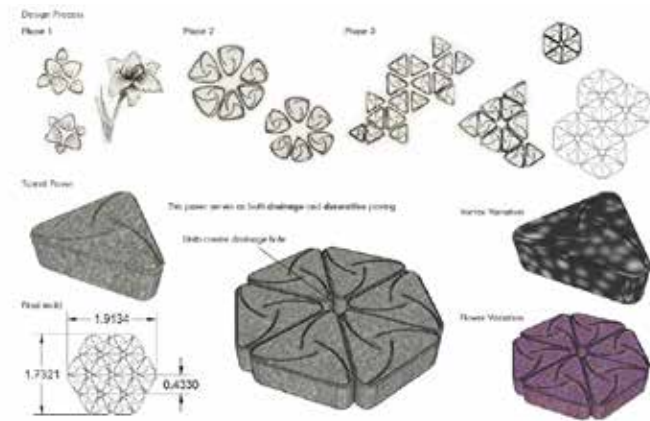
UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

TIARA WUETHRICH (BLA '22)

My biggest accomplishment so far this year is being the president of the WI ASLA Student Chapter! However, last year I had an even greater achievement in winning the KOBRA paver competition held in early October 2020. In my design of a paver mold, I drew inspiration from a daylily's radial symmetry and used that not only for the shape but for the variations such as color and material. Presenting this design to the jury was a proud moment for me, even though I only spent about two days on it (the project turnaround was fast)! I believed in my design process and the technicalities that I considered, and I think the jury began to believe in it too.

Hopefully I get to travel to Germany this spring break as my reward for winning the competition—that will be so exciting. I was also excited to travel to Nashville with my friends and peers and experience what the profession of landscape architecture has to offer.

Planning for the Nashville trip, doing class work, and making progress on my senior capstone project are my priorities right now, but I spend my free time on other things such as my friends, fitness classes, and football games/tailgates (finally!).



DO YOU HAVE UPDATES TO SHARE?

Send them via Alumni Notes at uwalumni.com/news-stories/alumni-notes, OR send them to the department via email at info@dpla.wisc.edu.



MANPREET KAUR SANDHU (MS URPL '23)



I returned to graduate school seeking tools and answers. I joined the La Follette School of Public Affairs as a master's student, then quickly realized the tools for change-work I sought would be further supplemented through the urban planning master's degree. It was in Kurt Paulsen's Housing and Public Policy course in the spring of 2019 when the intricacies of housing policies brought me to the realization that I too am a product of busing through the greater American housing system. Coupled with Dr. Carey McAndrews's Land Use and Transportation courses, as well as Revel Sims's Planning Theory and Gentrification courses, I found grounding in the core planning principles that made my world bigger.

Coming from an advocacy and activism world, I am most interested in bridging the social and planning realm and engaging the planning world in a more constructive and intentional way that thinks of those traditionally outside of public participation. I am a student of social movements—from the lessons in organizing for workers' rights alongside long-haul truckers and community placemaking efforts in renaming a park, to generous mentors like Dolores Huerta or Ivan Evans at UC San Diego whose courses in political sociology, violence and society, social movements, and environmental sociology contextualized my observations of the world and inspired me to study ethnic studies alongside political science.

I came to the urban planning program seeking answers to a set of questions (which has since astronomically grown!):

- What does planning look like for immigrant and refugee communities?
- What does planning mean to English limited proficiency communities? How would I master and explain core planning issues in multiple languages?
- How am I building a toolbox to be solution-oriented in addressing planning issues throughout California's disinvested communities (in the Central Valley)?
- If I leave California for grad school, how do I make the most of it?!

These questions drive my motivation to engage in new scholarship and with my peers who have rich experiences in diverse and dynamic subfields of planning. The people in our urban planning department have made my world bigger while becoming my community and home away from home. We've experienced a global pandemic together that has motivated and challenged us to be thoughtful planners-in-training—in every classroom discussion, assignment, and adventure. We have experienced impossible circumstances while holding hope as future planners. I can sense immense gratitude in our cohort every day.

Some of my most important planning frameworks are inspired by my peers. My URPL peers make classrooms feel both global and hyper-localized, fostering rich and challenging discussions in learning from each other—whether it be James Hughes's dedication to non-car modes of transportation, food systems from Catie DeMets, centering non-Western planning practice with Sara Husen, international planning perspectives from Eyad and Oussama, shared out-of-state comparisons with Madison Yurubi, outdoor classrooms from Noah, renewed vision(s) for one's hometown through Seb and Madalyn, community-centered health and wellness in planning from David Salmon, and so many countless conversations had on the daily in Music Hall that spur innovating thoughts that hone my training as a future planner. This camaraderie encouraged me to join WSPA as the professional development chair and take our learning beyond the classroom with peers.

The COVID-19 pandemic also offered a unique opportunity to practice URPL course concepts in real time while I worked with community-based organizations that helped design culturally competent 2020 Census advocacy plans throughout California, conducted community mapping and surveying, implemented housing security and rent relief programs, and (now) lead California redistricting advocacy efforts.

Looking forward, I know I will always find a home in my advocacy communities in California's Central Valley—I seek to hone my planning knowledge and practice to better serve as a thoughtful planner, hoping to bind rich local and oral histories within communities of color at the margins of equity and access. For now, I am studying spatial distributions of working-class communities of color in Fresno, California, through housing policies for my professional project. I plan to continue exploring where planning and social issues meet, particularly when considering racial and economic justice as they intersect with environmental justice in the realm of planning.



PAULUS MUSTERIS

This fall marked a return to in-person classes and events, and it is exciting to be back on campus with students and colleagues! Our classrooms are full, our labs are humming, and the frisbees are flying again on Bascom Hill. The university's COVID-19 protocols are continually adjusted based on the shifting state of the virus. With safe behavior and a campus vaccination rate of more than 90 percent, I am hopeful that we will successfully navigate the fall and winter.

There is much good news to share. UW-Madison welcomed our largest-ever freshman class, with more than 8,400 new students arriving in early September. In October, we celebrated the conclusion of the wildly successful All Ways Forward campaign, which raised \$4 billion for UW-Madison, and \$652 million for the College of Letters & Science. Annual giving, too, is on track this year, mirroring strong pre-COVID giving trends. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to alumni whose unwavering support through the hardest of times enabled us to emerge stronger and ready to meet future challenges.

We have great news on capital projects to share. The Wisconsin legislature has approved funding for a new academic building for the College of Letters & Science. Departments and classes currently housed in the deteriorating Humanities Building will be relocated to a modern, interactive, and world-class space that will transform the student learning experience.

A new building for our School of Computer, Data & Information Sciences is also underway, paving the way for this powerhouse new unit to meet a global need for students trained in computational thinking, big data, AI, and related fields.

Finally—our highly anticipated new Chemistry Building should open in 2022, and the impact on our STEM programs will be profound.

It feels great to look forward to so much. As always, a heartfelt thank you for all you do to support L&S. It means the world to us.

On, Wisconsin!

Eric M. Wilcots

Dean of the College of Letters & Science
Mary C. Jacoby Professor of Astronomy



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2021

The end of the spring 2021 semester once again saw PLA students—along with families, friends, faculty, and staff—gather together to celebrate the graduating class of 2021. While campus held an in-person ceremony for graduates at Camp Randall, department commencement ceremonies were held virtually. The department ushered one PhD in urban and regional planning, 11 master of science in urban and regional planning, five master of science in landscape architecture, four bachelor of landscape architecture, seven bachelor of science in landscape architecture, and four bachelor of landscape and urban studies graduates into our alumni community. We were able to look back at the relationships, memories, and achievements that were created during the years spent together.

The MS URPL students participated in a virtual project forum,

giving quick presentations on their professional projects. Zhixuan Wu, Collin Mieras, and Amy Fottrell were recognized for their outstanding projects. Andrew Busker received the Chair’s Leadership Award, and Maria Jose Davila Martinez was recognized for community service and as the ACIP Outstanding Student. We are incredibly proud of the achievements of the entire 2021 MS URPL class.

The Wisconsin American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) presented five awards to graduating bachelor and BS landscape architecture students. Congratulations to finalists Darius Bottorff and MacKenzie Keen, Merit Award-winner Amelia LaFond, and Honor Award recipient Martin Rose. The class of 2021 produced incredible work while in school, and we are excited to see what they do next!

AWARD FINALISTS



Amelia LaFond, Amy Fottrell, Andrew Busker, Collin Mieras, Darius Bottorff, MacKenzie Keen, Maria Martinez, Martin Rose

PLA ALUMNI REORGANIZING FOR THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Full means homecoming and welcoming the energy of the alumni to be. Next year will be the fifth anniversary of our department, and the 50th anniversary of the planning program, and we are laying the groundwork for a big celebration. In that regard, Dan Rolfs (MS URPL ’01) and Sam Dennis (DPLA Professor) have been working together for three months to establish the new alumni association, which will include the alumni of both programs. This new organization will be light on administration and operate in support of ALL PLA program activities (ALL PLA is discussed elsewhere in the newsletter—a departmental initiative to provide a variety of learning opportunities congruent with professional development).

Dan and Sam will be working with the current alumni boards (the MS URPL Alumni Relations Council ARC and LA Alumni Advisory Board) to finalize the bylaws of a newly merged joint Planning and Landscape Architecture Alumni Council (PLAAC). In the coming months, the two alumni boards will meet to discuss the bylaws and work toward a formal merger. Once the new bylaws are finalized, both alumni boards will meet to approve the bylaws and then to formally create the new alumni organization and dissolve the legacy organizations.

The goals for the coming year of the alumni organization will be to:

- Finalize the creation of the new organization;
- Hold events that connect alumni to each other and to students;
- Connect students with resources to enhance their time at the UW;
- Plan for the celebration at the beginning of the fall 2022 semester; our vision is:
 - A Friday gathering of ALL students, faculty, alumni, and staff;
 - An all-department event at one of the UW’s fantastic sporting events;
 - A Saturday tour of one of Madison’s many landmarks; and/or
 - A Saturday evening banquet to celebrate the work of the department, students, faculty, staff, and alumni;
- Create an alumni-sponsored scholarship program for the department (details are TBD).

This will be a lot of work, but it can and will be done. We are Badgers, and hard work never scares us.

On, Wisconsin.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Kenneth Smith (MS URPL ’18) has an article published in the spring 2021 issue of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*: “The Long Shadow of the Cold War: Milwaukee’s Civil Defense Program,” based on research from his undergraduate capstone project. It was while researching his capstone that he came across the book *Making Milwaukee Mightier: The Politics of Growth, 1910–1960* that first exposed Ken to urban planning. Ken’s history degree informed his thinking as a grad student and continues to do so to this day. Interestingly, Ken was a TA for current MS URPL student Noah Bloedorn (’23).

Devon Hamilton (BSLA ’17) has been involved with food justice and sustainable agriculture and has started his own business, Grillin’ 4 the People. G4TP was inspired by Devon’s time at UW–Madison. Devon, along with his grill, would provide spaces where students of color could gather, unpack, and organize. With G4TP Devon continues to create spaces to build and support community through food.

Darrel Morrison (MSLA ’69) was selected to receive the 2021 Scott Medal and Award. The alum and current PLA honorary faculty associate and former faculty member in the Department of Landscape Architecture has also published a new book, *Beauty of the Wild*, in which Darrel tells stories of the people and places that have nourished his career as a teacher and a designer of nature-inspired landscapes.

Allen L. Kracower (BSLA ’63, MSLA ’65) served as the special assistant to the regional administrator of U.S. HUD, and in 1970 started his own practice, Allen L. Kracower & Associates, Inc. He is now retiring at the age of 81 after 50 years in business. Allen was a planning, zoning, and real estate consultant and planned over 100,000 acres of property for various land uses, including commercial, recreational, residential, aviation, industrial, among other uses. He provided consulting services to government, religious institutions, and the private sector, and planned small as well as properties in excess of 1,500 acres in the Chicago metropolitan area. He served as a planner and real estate consultant and advised private and public clients on highest and best use, reasonable probability of rezoning, conventional zoning, municipal planning, fiscal impact, real estate development, TIF, annexation, and other planning and zoning matters. During his career, Allen testified as an expert in zoning and land use matters before numerous planning and zoning commissions throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. He also testified in the trial courts of Cook, DuPage, McHenry, Will, Kane, Lake, and Boone counties, and in U.S. Federal Court. Precedent to private practice, he served as a special assistant to the regional administrator of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for five years.

SKY VISION BY MARY ELLEN GABRIEL



SAIKI DESIGN

For commuters going to and from campus and the UW Hospital and Clinics, the Highland Avenue underpass never beckoned as a place to linger. Like many such conduits, it was a concrete no-man's-land, dreary during the day and downright grim after dark, especially for those walking home from work in winter.

Where most people saw nothing but a place to hurry through, one person saw interconnectedness, and the possibility of light in the darkness. Julia Schilling (BLA '15) worked with multiple partners and collaborators for seven years to bring *Shift*, Madison's latest major public art project, to fruition. Her goal: to create the opposite of a dark, undesirable tunnel by improving safety, enticing walkers, and bringing beauty into an unlikely place. In April, the city unveiled two 70-foot panels made from perforated weathered steel, spanning each side of the underpass beneath Campus Drive. Punched-out patterns forming "circle packing" algorithms sparkle when hidden LED lighting comes on, transforming the underpass into a "bright, intricate, sky-like place," in Schilling's words.

Pedestrians and cyclists interviewed by local news outlets expressed delight, calling the installation "attractive," "really well done," and "well worth the money."

"People seem to stop and look closer, or even snap a photo,"

says Schilling, who has lurked at dusk to watch people's reactions. "The space feels safer and more inviting now."

Schilling worked with the Regent Neighborhood Association (RNA), 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Inc., the Madison Arts Commission, and the City of Madison Engineering Division on a vision that met goals for safety and connectivity, while also improving the aesthetics of a chilling space.

For any designer, the unveiling of a finished project is a poignant moment. For Schilling, it was especially meaningful. She started working on *Shift* as an undergraduate pursuing a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture at UW-Madison. Her professor, Sam Dennis, assigned students a service-learning project to enhance the pedestrian experience for two underpasses between the Regent neighborhood and campus. The class assignment was in response to a real need: the Regent Neighborhood Association had been calling for public art to improve the two underpasses at Highland and Walnut Avenues, and the City of Madison's "University Corridor Plan" recommended the same.

"It was an interesting challenge, because planting design was off the table, since nothing can grow beneath the underpasses," says Schilling. "One aspect of landscape architecture that Professor Dennis often emphasized was how places can affect

health and wellbeing. That really resonated with me. How can a place—a landscape—help people feel better?"

Highland Avenue leads directly to UW Hospital and Clinics, and as she worked on her proposal, Schilling pondered how to make that link feel more inviting. "I knew light had to be a driving force in the design, so that's where it all started," she says.

Her linked circles of light echo patterns in nature—"things like cell structures and cross-sections of bones and plant stems," she says. Movement was also integral to her vision. The "accordion" design of the panels was meant to allow travelers to experience the shifting imagery differently depending on whether they are biking, driving, or walking.

Along with other undergraduates, Schilling presented her proposal to RNA board members and residents in March 2014. Thrilled that her design was selected as the most promising, Schilling worked on *Shift*, with Dennis as her mentor and guide throughout her junior and senior years.

After graduating in 2015, Schilling returned to Dennis's Environmental Design Lab as a post-baccalaureate fellow, with *Shift* still taking shape. She continued to consult with community partners on the project, including RNA, UW Hospital and Clinics, and campus planners.

Community-based design is an integral part of the student experience in the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture, with dozens of projects in the works across the curriculum.

"Students engage with the public many times during the semester," Dennis says. "They attend neighborhood meetings, research community plans and initiatives, and facilitate community design workshops."

But Schilling's long-term involvement was quite unusual. "I have never seen this happen in my 22 years of teaching landscape architecture," Dennis says. "Often the community partner will continue to work on the student project, but it's rare for a project to be implemented with the original student still involved. This project was successful both from the high quality of the community-student engagement, and from Julia's strong commitment. Her passion carried it forward."

Schilling says the experience was invaluable and she draws from it every day in her role as a landscape designer with Saiki Design in Madison, where she's been employed for the past six years (she's been working from her home in Milwaukee during the pandemic). She is currently taking her Landscape Architecture Registration Exams and says much of the *Shift* process relates directly to what is needed to be a registered landscape architect.

"I learned firsthand that public process and fundraising take time and that when working in the public realm, patience and gratitude are essential," says Schilling. "The most important part of my job is to help others visualize how a place can be different from what's there now, and why that change is worth the effort and the investment."



BRUCE RICHTER

FIVE YEARS OF PLANNING & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



ALFONSO MORALES

July 2022 will mark five years of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture within the College of Letters & Science at UW–Madison. The previously separate departments of Landscape Architecture and Urban & Regional Planning have long histories on campus extending over 60 years, and those interested can read more at www.dpla.wisc.edu/about-pla.

In almost five years together we've established a community built around common interests in land use, design, community food systems, public health and welfare, social justice, environmental protection and restoration, community and economic development, and their intersections with growth, development,

and spatial and social change. These shared interests and the relationships between the two fields are well illustrated by the fall 2020 combined URPL 912 Planning Workshop and LA 563 Regional Design Studio course taught by Assistant Professor Edna Ledesma, herself a MArch and PhD, which brought senior landscape architecture and second-year MS URPL students together to work on a project with the Fondy Food Center and Farmers Market to revise the Fond Du Lac and North Area Plan in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Students visited Milwaukee (during COVID) to explore the potential transformation of the farmers market as a new urban anchor through planning and design visioning. The efforts of the class were rewarded by being selected for a Wisconsin ASLA Merit Award.

As we move closer to our five-year anniversary and beyond we will continue to preserve the integrity and strength of individual programs while integrating the two halves of the department by creating more opportunities for collaboration across all five programs. Further, we hope to achieve our goal of housing the entire department in a single space on campus.

We are looking forward to a five-year celebration with current students, alumni, faculty, and staff at the start of the fall 2022 semester!

OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

Consider supporting DPLA students through internships, mentorships, or other experiences. Email info@dpla.wisc.edu with your information.



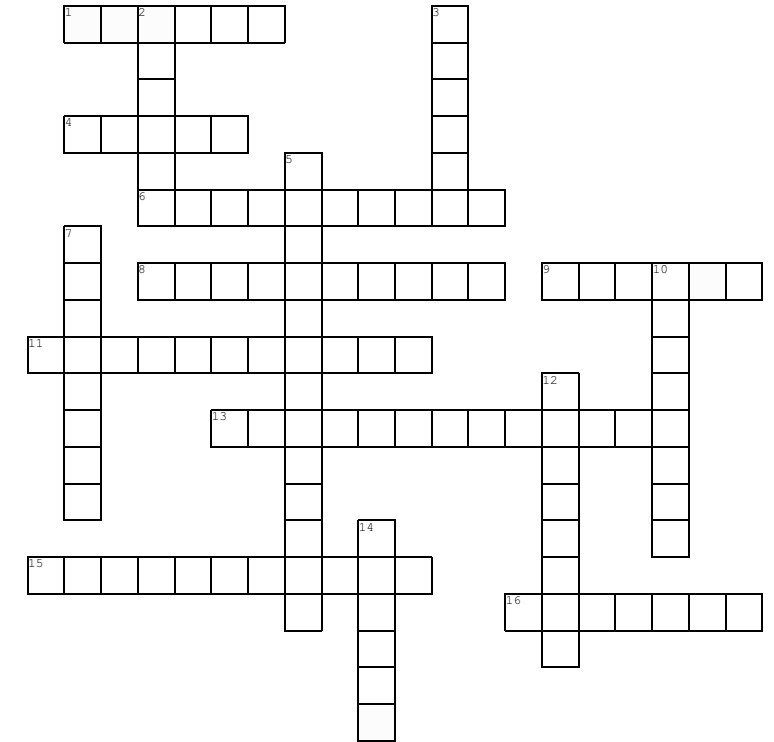
Professor Jim LaGro was named editor-in-chief of *Landscape Journal*. In this role, Jim will encourage scholarship from a broad range of authors. In addition to original research articles, he would like to include review papers that synthesize the literature and articulate important issues for the profession and discipline, including different practice types, educational pedagogies, and research methods. Reflective and speculative essays and increasing the number of practitioners who write for *Landscape Journal* are also on his list of goals.



Assistant Professor Edna Ledesma is taking the 2021–22 academic year off from teaching as part of her participation in the Nellie McKay Fellowship. The fellowship is named for Nellie Y. McKay, who served on the UW–Madison faculty 1977–2006, during which time she coedited *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* with Henry Louis Gates Jr., and created a space for the study of Black literature and Black feminist thought. Edna will spend the year focusing on her research on the development of the smart, green, and just 21st century city, particularly the cultural landscapes of immigrant populations and microeconomies, and the development of a new understanding of city place.

Edna also transitioned to lead the Kaufman Lab and farm2facts.org when Alfonso Morales became department chair. The two partnered with a variety of other colleagues and community partners to win some \$2 million in research grants in 2021. More about that work in the months ahead.

CROSSWORD



Questions

ACROSS

- 1 | The outlying district of a city (typically residential)
- 4 | UW–Madison mascot
- 6 | Tower clock building home to DPLA
- 8 | The state of being crowded and full of traffic
- 9 | Underground transit for mass mobility
- 11 | Dividing land into pieces that are easier to sell or develop
- 13 | Used to address urban decay in cities
- 15 | Regenerating and conserving built heritage of an environment
- 16 | A public or private road

DOWN

- 2 | Look up toward Abraham Lincoln on this hill
- 3 | Low-density development spiraling outward from urban centers
- 5 | Ease with which public spaces can be utilized
- 7 | A commemorative structure
- 10 | The native fauna or flora of a region
- 12 | To develop or upgrade tech within existing infrastructure
- 14 | Planning for land use

HOW DID YOU DO?

Check your answers after December 20, 2021, at: dpla.wisc.edu/puzzles/2021puzzle

WI ASLA

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