



## ASLA Florida Chapter President | President's Message

June 2016

Recruiting future professionals into our profession has become a very hot topic lately. Due to a variety of factors, enrollment in landscape architecture programs has been steadily declining for several years, leaving our profession with a shortage of qualified candidates to fill job openings nationwide. Florida employers are currently seeking to fill almost 100 openings for landscape architects, according to a search on [indeed.com](http://indeed.com). The future is bright for our profession, but we may not have graduating professionals entering the work place to fill openings in the current market and certainly not the future, if trends continue.

What is ASLA doing to improve this situation? This February, the Florida Chapter executive committee, including a representative from Florida International University, met with the University of Florida Landscape Architecture Advisory Board in Gainesville to brainstorm. We learned the following:

- There are considerable challenges facing enrollment into the landscape architecture programs, including admissions requirements, cost of education, the time required to get a degree in landscape architecture, and limited program choices.
- Scholarship opportunities are limited in those that are specific to landscape architects.
- Parents are driving students to professions with a perceived higher earning potential.
- School-age students are not aware of the profession at that critical time when they are deciding on a school and a degree program.

The Florida Chapter is working with the two university programs to continue the dialogue to address some issues where we can affect change:

- Our Palm Beach Treasure Coast Section Chair, Nicole Plunkett, started an initiative to develop career discovery programming for school-age children called [Future Landscape Architects of America](#). The Florida Chapter is full backing this with a dedicated committee and will be rolling out more soon. Please take a moment and [watch this video](#) to learn more about FLAA. Email [flaa@flasla.org](mailto:flaa@flasla.org) if you would like to volunteer.
- The Chapter will start a scholarship fund for Florida students to attend a Florida landscape architecture program. Stay tuned for more on this later...
- The Chapter will continue to invest time and effort to partner with representatives from both university landscape architecture programs and dedicate time and effort to promoting our profession to school-age students to aid in recruitment.

We need your help. A nationwide 2015 ASLA survey of graduating students asked **"How did you first learn about landscape architecture?"**

- **16%** - talking to a landscape architect who was an acquaintance, family, or friend.
- **Less than 3%** - from a landscape architect that visited their school.

Of all of the respondents that graduated in 2015, **less than 20% interacted with a landscape architect**. We cannot rely on books and guidance counselors to recruit new professionals – we are the best equipped to communicate our message and the best advocates for our profession. Please consider getting involved to help us spread the message and achieve our lofty goals.

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