

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITH FACULTY AND STUDENTS

The Department of Landscape Architecture has a long tradition of community service and service-learning. We recognize the value for our students to engage real world projects under the guidance of faculty members as part of their educational experience. We also believe that the community clients with whom we partner gain valuable insights into working with landscape architects and planners, as well as the importance of design excellence and considerations that go into creating place appropriate solutions.

The Department receives numerous requests for design and planning assistance from communities, organizations and individuals. We have developed an application process to determine if an assistance request is appropriate to be handled by students and faculty within the Department and how it might be accomplished.

This document outlines the categories of Design Assistance, how projects might be accomplished, how they are selected, costs and other requirements. We ask that you read this before submitting an application.

Project Selection Criteria

Although the DLA receives numerous requests for assistance, we are able to accommodate only a limited number of requests each year. Projects are selected based on a number of factors, which include:

- *Appropriateness:* Does the proposed project match the academic goals of a particular class, studio, and/or graduate student? Does the project match faculty interest and expertise? Is the project appropriate to be accomplished by students and faculty within an academic program or does it belong in professional practice?
- *Relevance:* Is the proposed project relevant or instructive beyond the specific site or community?
- *Timing:* Can the project be planned into the academic cycle? Can the project be completed within the available timeframe?
- *Organization capacity:* Does the applicant have sufficient organizational capacity to manage the proposed project and to follow through on recommendations?
- *Funding:* There are costs associated with all community service and service learning projects. Depending on the project scope and how it is accomplished, these costs will vary. We request \$500.00 as a minimum financial commitment to cover the expenses of most projects. If we believe the costs will be greater and cannot be handled by the Department, we will let you know during our initial discussions.

How Projects Are Accomplished

There are a number of ways that our students, staff and faculty have worked on service-learning or community service projects. Outlined below are the most common approaches. We can talk with you about which would be most appropriate for your project.

1. Design Studios

- *Scope and duration of work:* Faculty partners with a client to develop projects that address identified issues and desired outcomes while providing an opportunity for students to engage their academic work through problem-based service-learning activities. Projects vary in scope and in time of engagement depending on project needs and academic learning objectives (typically from

2 to 4 weeks for most site projects, up to a full 15 week semester for more comprehensive, larger scale projects).

- *Timing:* Faculty conduct projects during the fall and spring academic semesters, and for special funded projects as a summer studio. Most faculty members require several months lead-time to prepare for a studio project and integrate it in their teaching schedule. Most projects cannot be accommodated within the semester a project request is received.
- *Distance:* These projects are generally, but not always, limited to work within the Central New York geographic region. Out of region projects are possible, but will require additional logistical planning.
- *Cost:* The community partner is asked to cover travel expenses, materials, reproduction, printing and mailing costs, and administrative costs. Depending on project location, scope and duration costs typically range from \$500 to \$750. There is no charge for the student or faculty time given to the project during the fall or spring semesters. Additional costs may be incurred for summer projects for student and/or faculty support.

2. Graduate Capstone and Thesis Research

- *Scope and duration of work:* This approach is generally focused on a specific design project or research question robust enough to engage a student for an extended time. One student and an advising faculty mentor and committee will work with the community client on the project or research question over the course of one to two semesters depending on degree requirements.
- *Timing:* Projects, partnerships and research proposals can take a minimum of 6 months to develop, and as such require advanced lead time to set up.
- *Distance:* These projects are generally, but not always, limited to work within the Central New York geographic region. If the work is carried out over the summer, students may be able to relocate during that time and take on projects across the state.
- *Cost:* The community partner is expected to cover the student's expenses incurred during the project (see above, studio costs). Some communities also choose to compensate the graduate student through a tuition waiver and/or stipend. There is no charge for the faculty advisor's time.

3. Independent Study

- *Scope and duration of work:* Similar to capstone and thesis research, this work is generally focused on a specific design project or research question, typically being smaller in scale or having more straightforward needs and required outcomes. However, it may involve more than one student, undergraduate and/or graduate level, working with an advising faculty mentor for a shorter time frame (typically within one semester).
- *Timing:* Projects, partnerships and research proposals can take a few weeks to a few months to develop and carryout. At times, though not always, these projects can be more quickly incorporated within a semester a request is received.
- *Distance:* These projects are generally, but not always, limited to work within the Central New York geographic region. If the work is carried out over the summer, students may be able to relocate during that time and take on projects across the state.
- *Cost:* The community partner is expected to cover the student's expenses incurred during the project (see above, studio costs). There is generally no charge for the faculty advisor's time.

4. Community Based Design and Planning Projects

- *Scope and duration of work:* Center for Community Design Research (CCDR) faculty, staff and students work with communities to organize and facilitate planning and design processes that engage community members in the identification and investigation of issues and questions important to the community's future. The outcomes and products of these partnerships may include site design studies, master plans, or vision plans which provide frameworks and action

steps to guide change. Duration of projects varies depending on scope but generally range from one to four months.

- *Timing:* Scheduling and preparation for community based planning projects generally requires several months lead-time.
- *Distance:* These projects are generally limited to work within the geographic region but can be undertaken with communities outside of Central New York.
- *Cost:* For some projects, the CCDDR will coordinate with other faculty to organize community engagement projects through design studios. For projects not appropriate to general design studios, the CCDDR will meet with community representatives and develop a proposed scope and detailed cost estimate in response to specific community requests. Grants to fund all or a portion of some community based planning studies may be available through several state agencies and local foundations.

5. Cultural Landscape Preservation Technical Assistance

- *Scope and duration of work:* Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation (CCLP) faculty, staff, and students may offer owners or other stewards of historic landscapes assistance on addressing technical preservation issues. This assistance is offered for specific issues, such as replacement species for historic plant material or review of proposed improvement plans, and not for generating new research, planning, or design. The duration of the work is generally counted by the hour.
- *Timing:* Requests for technical assistance will be answered as soon as possible, pending other CCLP work.
- *Cost:* For nominal technical assistance requests requiring less than one day of time, there will be no charge. More advanced requests may involve costs, especially if a site visit is required. Such costs will be determined based on the specific request.

Design Assistance Categories

In general there are three ways that students engage in community service or service-learning in the Department of Landscape Architecture. The first is to work with an individual faculty member (using Approaches 1 – 3 above), the second is through the Center for Community Design Research (Approach 4 above), and the third is through the Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation (Approach 5 above). The approach appropriate for your project will be determined in discussion with you or your organization based on a combination of factors including the project topic and scope, faculty interest and availability, and in some cases, student interest. Some projects involve a combination of one or more of these categories.

1. General Department/ Individual Faculty Landscape architecture students gain knowledge and skills over a series of courses and studios as well as independent study opportunities under faculty guidance. Faculty members in the Department have different areas of experience and research interests. See the Department website at www.esf.edu/la/ for more information about the profession of landscape architecture, the program of study at ESF and faculty members. Projects can be completed for private, public, not for profit entities where the outcomes match academic objectives and serve to inform clients and stakeholders of possibilities for their sites. Projects will be at a conceptual or schematic level as work will not typically reach advanced levels ready for construction (see Use of Design Studies, below).
2. Community Design Partnership with the Center for Community Design Research The CCDDR is an outreach program based in the Department of Landscape Architecture and is committed to working in partnership with communities to address real-life planning and design issues through an inclusive, participatory process that requires a commitment of time and resources by both the community and the CCDDR faculty, staff and students. The mission is to educate our students in design and planning, and to provide community leaders and citizens with new tools, knowledge and techniques to help build strong, sustainable communities.

The CCDR works with a variety of organizations, associations and agencies. Projects must be in the public interest. The CCDR generally does not work with private property owners or on individual private properties that are not part of larger community projects. For further information, visit the CCDR website at www.esf.edu/ccdr.

3. Research and Design Partnership with the Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation

The SUNY ESF Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation, based in the Department of Landscape Architecture, supports the education of landscape architects and students in related professions as best stewards of the cultural environment. The Center brings together interdisciplinary expertise from across ESF, the National Park Service, state parks and historic preservation offices, and other partners to address challenges in preserving our landscape heritage. Service learning provides students with opportunities to apply their education to actual cultural landscape preservation projects, while allowing the CCLP to advance the protection and enhancement of historically significant landscapes.

The CCLP may work with a variety of project sponsors, from individual property owners, to not-for-profit organizations, municipal governments, and federal or state agencies. In addition to short-term technical preservation assistance, the CCLP will consider projects that involve cultural landscape documentation (inventory and mapping), analysis and evaluation (applying the National Register criteria), and/or treatment (conceptual-level planning and design according to the Secretary of the Interior Standards). For most projects, it is recommended that historical research and documentation be completed by the project sponsors prior to seeking assistance from the CCLP. The CCLP does not provide advanced design work or construction documentation.

For additional information on the CCLP, visit <http://www.esf.edu/cclp/>.

Use of Design Studies

Project reports and design studies produced by the staff and students working through the Department are prepared under the guidance of qualified faculty members. However, design studies generated by students through the Department of Landscape Architecture should not be used for construction. After working with the DLA/CCDR/CCLP, individuals or organizations that intend to construct site improvements should retain a professional landscape architect for consultation and preparation of necessary documentation for construction.

Memorandum of Understanding

If selected, the applicant will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DLA, the CCDR or the CCLP which will include the goals of the project and expected outcomes, the responsibilities of the applicant and of the DLA/CCDR/CCLP.

Applying for Assistance

If you would like to apply to work with students and faculty in the Department, please fill out and return the Design Assistance Request application to:

Maren King
Department of Landscape Architecture
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
One Forestry Drive
Syracuse, NY 13210-4721

If you have questions, please contact Maren at 315-470-4721 or mfking@esf.edu.