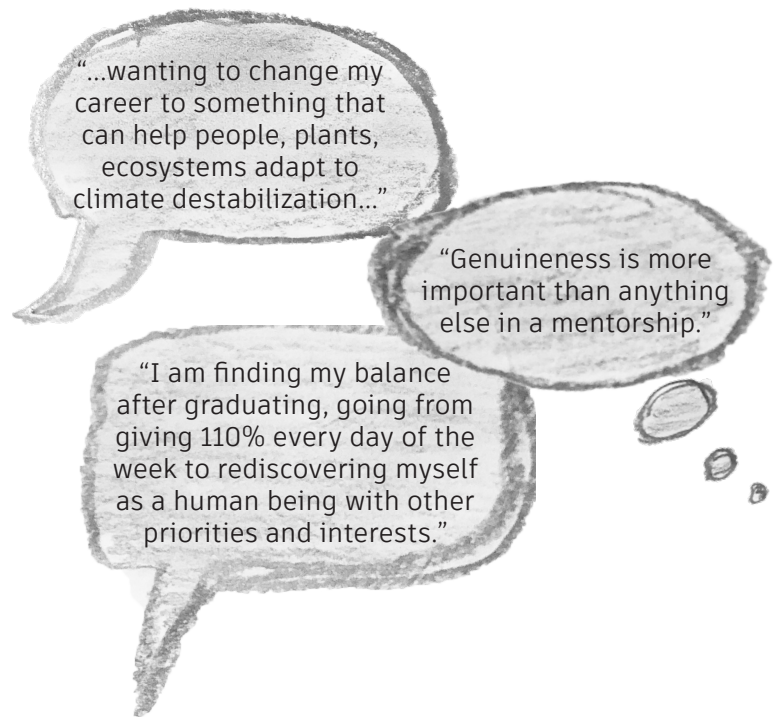


Approaches to the Entry Level: Exploring Possibilities for Years 0-5

Friday, November 11, 2022
1:30-3:00pm
FRI-C06

What does it mean to be an “entry level” designer today, at an inflection point that calls us to reconsider collective social and ecological responsibilities and modes of working?

This session frames years 0-5 as a foundational time for self-advocacy, questioning the breadth of practice, and new forms of mentorship.



Learning Outcomes

Interrogate assumptions about who constitutes the entry-level workforce to expand our understanding of what emerging professionals are able to contribute and what counts as “qualified experience.”

Hear from landscape designers across the entry-level spectrum about their expectations, aspirations, and questions during the transition from academic learning to professional design practice (and sometimes back again).

Identify methods for incorporating questions, reflection about shared values and ethics, and self-advocacy from emerging professionals as an integral component of practice, made especially urgent by hybrid work environments.

Explore innovative mentorship models and practices that center relationship-building, and consider how various mentorship methods might play a role in adapting to an increasingly diverse entry level workforce.

Speakers



Leah Kahler, Assoc. ASLA
Senior Designer, Reed Hilderbrand

Leah's work as a landscape designer is motivated by a passion for justice-oriented storytelling, in, of, and through landscape, especially in rapidly shifting ecologies like her home region of the Gulf South. She graduated with a Master in Landscape Architecture from the University of Virginia, following her undergraduate studies in anthropology and urban studies. Leah was named a 2021 National Olmsted Scholar finalist and awarded the ASLA Certificate of Merit, as well as the LAF Honor Scholarship in memory of Joe Lalli. Leah also teaches representation and design thinking courses at the Boston Architectural College.



Jane Lee, Assoc. ASLA
Landscape Designer, Miridae

Jane's interest in landscape stems from her love of stories, and she sees the design process as a way to increase mutual understanding among humans, other species, and the material world. Originally from Northern California and a first-generation Korean-American, she looks forward to building upon these roots as a designer at Miridae, a Sacramento-based landscape architecture and construction firm. Jane received her MLA from the University of Virginia and a BA in English from Harvard College. She currently serves on the UVA School of Architecture's Young Alumni Council and is passionate about supporting student advocacy efforts.



Carlin Tacey, ASLA
Landscape Architect, Timmons Group

Carlin is a landscape architect with Timmons Group out of Richmond, VA. She aims to create thoughtful and engaging landscapes in the region she calls home with projects spanning from the Ridge and Valley to the Virginia Tidewater. Previously, she worked with Waterstreet Studio as a landscape architect, MVVA as a designer, and Booz Allen Hamilton as a community planner and consultant. She graduated with an MLA and MURP from Virginia Tech and holds a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Virginia. Carlin has also served as adjunct faculty at Virginia Tech in the planning and landscape departments teaching visual representation courses.

Session Outline

Introductions (15 minutes)

- What does it mean to be “entry level” in landscape architecture today?
- What are the speakers’ career paths and how have their respective experiences motivated them to examine this question?
- Why is this an important conversation to be having right now?

Three Entry Level Perspectives (30 minutes)

Bridging school to career

- What are the reasons and experiences that compel individuals to pursue landscape architecture? Do these motivations stay the same or change over time?
- What questions do current students have about professional practice? What are things designers wish they had known when first looking for a job?
- What are methods for creating a framework of self-reflection prior to jumping into a career search?
- What are ways to broaden awareness of all the possible post-degree paths in the discipline, and beyond?

“You’re hired!” Now what?

- What are the building blocks of a mutually generative entry level experience?
- How can prior experiences (both lived and professional) be welcomed into professional practice?
- What roles do identity and issues we care about play in our work as designers?
- What role does landscape architecture play in our lives? How are ideas about “work/life balance” changing among current entry level designers?
- How can entry level designers advocate for their own professional development goals and ensure they are seeking out a variety of mentorship relationships?

Navigating the “Messy Middle”

- What networks and interactions (remote, hybrid, or in person) do designers rely on to continue to grow and feel connected to the profession and peers?
- What are examples of meaningful mentorship interactions? What are important qualities of mentorship to entry level designers?
- What role does mentorship play in bridging academia and practice?
- What are some of the modalities of mentorship and how can we build a larger network?
- How can mentorship be reframed as a multi-way and multi-generational communication exercise?

Discussion (45 minutes)

- Breakout groups and guided discussion
- Report back
- Closing

- *Work Won't Love You Back* (book by Sarah Jaffe)
- "Mentoring As Transformative Practice: Supporting Student and Faculty Diversity" (article in *New Directions for Higher Education*, Number 171, edited by Caroline S. Turner)
- "The Evolution Of Hybrid Work Environments: Balancing Benefits Of In-Office Collaboration And Working From Home" (article in *Forbes Magazine* by Jason Korman)
- "Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding" (article in *Educational Technology* by Dr. Serhat Kurt)