Practitioner Capstone Advisor Program

Attn. MASLA Members
Subject: Practitioner Capstone Advisor Program

The MASLA Executive Committee in coordination with the Landscape Architecture Department of CDES would like to announce the third annual Practitioner Capstone Advisor Program, intended to strengthen capstone projects for third year MLA students. This program is intended to be complimentary to the existing CDES Mentor Program, but be primarily focused on the student's Master thesis or capstone project.

A committee of faculty advisors is required for all students; however, the attached list of students that have requested the assistance of a landscape architecture practitioner in order to gain additional perspective from the professional world and to further strengthen their project. Students have provided a short project description at the *end of this document*.

Please consider being part of this program. It is an opportunity for you to be involved with the MASLA community and promote relations between the academic and professional worlds. It is also a chance to get acquainted with the emerging graduates of the MLA program as well as to contribute input on some very interesting projects. Time commitments will vary based upon the relationships established between students and advisors. An introductory session will be scheduled sometime in early February and subsequent informal meetings can be planned on an individual basis.

If you are interested in being involved, please indicate & prioritize **two projects** that you are interested in. Advisors and students will be paired based upon student needs and professional involvement in this program. Effort will be made to appropriately distribute advisors to students based on similar interests and project types.

Please consider and reply by **Friday, February 22nd**. Each practitioner advisor will be assigned a project/student as soon as possible and give notice of this as well as the date/time of the introductory session. Replies should be made to Ryan Barker, MASLA Student Chapter Co-President, **bark0166@umn.edu**

Thank you for your interest. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Ryan Barker
MASLA Student Chapter Co-President
bark0166@umn.edu

Andy Schilling - *Title Pending*
My Capstone project is looking at the future role and spatial functionality of the farm in the midst of current agricultural 'sustainability' practices, energy production, agrotourism, community supported agriculture, etc. I am looking at a farm in southwestern Minnesota (near Redwood Falls) that is a size representative of a national average -sized farm. The area is experiencing double-digit population loss, aging farm operators, and recent developments in wind energy production, corn ethanol production, and power generation through biomass burning. I would like to investigate and design what a farm would look like when diversified enough to take advantage of new ideas in energy production (cellulosic ethanol), include community, local foods, and natural habitat. In the end the farm would become demonstration site for people to consider a sustainable future of agriculture.

Brett Hussong - *Heron Lake Watershed – Connecting the Rural Landscape*
The project is located within the Heron Lake Watershed District in Southwestern Minnesota. It is focused on solving non-point source pollution from agricultural practices due to the rapid drainage of storm water by field tile and dredge ditches. The project should help create a process that lessens the effects of non-point source pollution due to agricultural practices throughout the Heron Lake Watershed District as well as to provide a framework to decrease storm water intensity and increase groundwater recharge for other regions throughout the U.S. I propose slowing down storm water through a series of bio-retention ponds in individual landowners' fields and drainage ditches. In conjunction with the bio-retention ponds and ditches, I plan to develop an experiential and recreational trail system through part of the sub-watershed to connect adjacent cities.

Xuan Lu - *Wanquan stream channel rejuvenation*
As the streams play an important role in both the ecological health and open space quality of our living environment, varied endeavors are done in the last decade to restore, rehabilitate or redesign the devastated streams to enhance the ecological functions of the living system, recover the historic landscape and regenerate waterfront space for the people. While a lot of successful stream restoration projects are done in the natural setting and some waterfront design projects are carried out in urban settings, stream rehabilitation are still hard to achieve the multi goals of ecology, history, aesthetics and recreation in highly urbanized areas with utilitarian constrains, limited space and stressful environment. The selected stream for the project is running through a historical meaningful, ecologically deteriorated and highly development stressful area in the former historical garden district of Beijing. The sensitive location of the project in is intriguing. The design will try to transform the channel into a green infrastructure and a new strategy for landscape urbanism. The theory and techniques for the project will be a mix of restoration ecology, river morphology, water quality, urban design and landscape architecture. It will contain both theoretical concepts and innovative techniques.

Jenny Salita – *Title Pending*
I hope to do a new master plan for George Town (a small town of roughly1000 people in the Bahamas). After talking to town officials they are hoping for a Martha's Vineyard type of design that would move the water commerce away from the town center, have a road to transport goods that bypasses the town, and to make the town into a more 'picturesque tourist destination'. Ecological considerations are that this town is on the ocean and is at risk of tropical storms, ocean levels rising, flooding. Sustainability issues include more natural shading with native planting; vegetative buffers along the coastline, possible alternative energies/reuse options???

Laura Baker – *Title Pending*

My capstone site is located under and adjacent to the series of 394 bridge underpasses west of downtown Minneapolis. Part of my site is owned by the City of Minneapolis and is currently used known as Linden Yards. The city uses the space as storage and for concrete crushing and recycling. My research and design will be focused on how to weave this marginalized space back into the urban fabric. The site is currently home to a number of homeless camps throughout the year, and I am interested in designing the space with its current use in mind. In other words, instead of pushing the homeless out of one of the last undeveloped places in Minneapolis, how can their needs be met on a more flexible and permanent basis? I want to illuminate the space, both physically and psychologically, to the issue of marginalized and hidden places in the post-modern city

Mitchell Cookas – *Title Pending*

I am going to create a design framework, with specific components, for the regional area influencing the community in Rushford, MN. The structure is going to outline my proposed design interventions which aim to decrease surface runoff and reduce the negative impacts linked to flooding events. The interventions will vary in scope because the issues must be addressed at site, local, watershed, and regional scales. Adjusting the land-use within the region is critical to my design framework. Rushford exists within the "Driftless Region" which is now abundant with agricultural and cultivated land. Cultivated land tends to eliminate wetlands, increase runoff, and amplify the potential for flooding. My design framework will enhance the hydrological integrity of the region and decrease the potential for floods. I will propose design interventions including: constructed wetlands, floodwater storage ponds, filter strips, rain gardens, and adjust the land-use within the region.

Robin Lee – *Title Pending*

To investigate how the use of naturalistic landscape design within this urban setting can benefit the surrounding community- both human and wildlife. I will create a set of documents that will describe my vision for a naturalistic plant design throughout the site. I am proposing that a committee be organized to oversee the implementation of the project using volunteer help. Documents will direct plant placement and implementation in a fashion that can be clearly understood by a volunteer coordinator. (Perhaps using an interactive planting plan)

Ryan Barker - *Urban agriculture and Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes within a redeveloped ~70 acre portion of North St. Louis.*

In response to the bleak public health data that was published in 2004 by the Saint Louis Department of Health, the 63106 zip code of St. Louis is in need of major rethinking. The area holds the still-vacant 34 acres of the past Pruitt-Igoe apartment buildings, as well as a 5-block 34-acre area of the St. Louis Place neighborhood (immediately across the street from the Pruitt-Igoe site) that is now about 75% vacant residential land. In the 2001 5th Ward Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan, interest was sparked in creating a continuous open space linking the schools to the south of Pruitt-Igoe with the linear St. Louis Place Park neighborhood to the north. Is there also a way to respond to the health conditions of the area by creating a space that emphasizes food security, job training, and a healthy way of living within the city, while also creating an aesthetic space allowing for continuous travel throughout the zip code? Is there a need to worry about the prices of inner-city foods, produce in particular, which could occur due to increases in fuel prices/shortage of fuel supplies?

Sylvia Yordanova – *Title Pending*

In the 16 acre territory of Franconia Sculpture Park I would like to explore ideas of site-specificity considering site's history and characteristics of the local community. Part of the concept is including wet land restoration and introducing former species from the hard wood forest based on the history of the site. A "loop" type of layout will enable visitors to examine the exhibit of sculptures and experience transition between different spaces. I would like to create different spaces in order to provide diversity of surroundings for the different sculptures, separate and frame the pieces, and provide different experiences for visitors. To separate the spaces, specific varieties (with sculptural features)will be considered and plants will play major role in creating spaces, enclosure and sculptural background for the art in the park. Avoiding "too many colors" of the majority of the plants, but accenting with specific ones would contribute to the harmonious incorporation of the art into the environment. I would like to create areas for longer visits – assuming the distance of the park from the Twin Cities area, - for working or visiting artists/others or visitors, programs, events, fairs, lectures, recreation, as well as indoor spaces would be created- such as visitor center, art library, art gallery, restaurant etc.