ASLA
WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Chapter of the
American Society of
Landscape Architects

1818 Milton Ave.
Suite 100
Janesville, WI 53545

www.wiasla.com
@WIASLA

WI ASLA Mentorship Program

MISSION

The WI ASLA Mentorship Program is intended to inspire and empower UW-Madison Landscape Architecture Students through personalized mentoring to support their growth within the industry. The program consists of meetings and events throughout the school year. To accommodate varying levels of interest, mentors and mentees may be grouped into smaller, diverse cohorts comprising of students from different stages within the program, fostering increased participation and engagement.

- Goals
    - Enhance students' professional development.
    - Assist students in establishing personal and professional goals.
    - Build deeper relationships between Student ASLA and WI ASLA.
    - Build deeper relationships between students at different stages within the program.

LESSONS LEARNED

As the mentorship program has grown, we've continued to learn what helps create the most successful mentor-mentee experience. Based on feedback from past participants, here are a few takeaways:

- **A 1 mentor : 2 mentee ratio works best.** We strive for this ratio each year, but it depends on having enough mentors volunteer.
- **Encourage mentees to take the initiative.** Having mentees schedule meetings and drive conversations helps build confidence and professional skills. Before wrapping up each meeting, be sure to schedule your next one.
- **Take advantage of existing events.** UW-Madison Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture, WI ASLA, and ASLA Student Chapter events provide great opportunities for mentor-mentee connections.

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RELATIONSHIP & EXPECTATIONS

A mentorship is a dynamic partnership built on guidance, mutual learning, and trust. Mentors offer expertise and a roadmap while encouraging autonomy. Mentees bring enthusiasm and seek guidance to navigate challenges and grow. It's a symbiotic relationship fostering professional and personal development through shared aspirations and mutual respect. This program is organized by the Mentorshop Coordinator at WI ASLA and the Student Coordinator at UW-Madison Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture. This is not a job placement program.

- WI ASLA Mentorship Coordinator duties:
  - Create, distribute & advertise application for matching process to both mentees and mentors.
  - Communicate opportunities for group activities with participants.
  - Facilitate mentors as needed.
- UW-Madison Student Coordinator duties:
  - Assist in scheduling events.
  - Facilitate mentees as needed.
- Mentee Requirements:
  - UW-Madison Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Undergraduate Students and prospective BLA students.
  - Commit to mutual respect and open and sincere communication.
  - Establish a reasonable schedule.
  - Set clear expectations for each meeting.
  - Be on time – communicate ASAP if you need to reschedule or cancel.
  - Discuss & document your goals and progress.
  - It is the mentee's responsibility to reach out to the mentor coordinator and/or student coordinator via email if you have any questions or concerns about the program.
  - ***Ultimately the mentee is responsible for maintaining the relationship with the mentor.***
- Mentor Requirements
  - Landscape architect, landscape designer, and/or planner with professional experience.
  - Commit to mutual respect and open and sincere communication. Be open-minded to new ideas and receptive to feedback. Ensure confidentiality.
  - Be engaged and actively listen during meetings. Reflect concerns mentee is sharing.

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- Be a source of information and encouragement.
- Discuss benefits of being connected to ASLA and how that has supported your career.
- While mentee is responsible for initiating ongoing meetings, encourage a check-in schedule to follow if they do not initiate. Make sure they are still interested and taking advantage of the program.
- Set clear expectations for each meeting.
- Be on time – communicate ASAP if you need to reschedule or cancel.
- It is the mentor's responsibility to reach out to the mentorship coordinator via email if you have any questions or concerns about the program.

STRUCTURE & TIME COMMITTMENT

Like most things in life, the value of mentorship reflects the effort you invest. Active participation from both mentors and mentees leads to a more meaningful and rewarding experience. **Past mentors have reported spending an average of about one hour per month on the program.** The following suggestions can help you make the most of the program:

- Connect at least once every 2-4 weeks
- Respond to emails, phone calls, and text messages within 48 hours.
- **Take advantage of mentorship opportunities**, including:
  - Mentorship Kick-Off Social
  - Parking Day
  - ASLA National Conference
  - WI ASLA Field Session(s)
  - Student Chapter Meeting(s)
  - Portfolio Review
  - WI ASLA Annual Meeting
  - UW Career Fair
  - WI ASLA Spring Conference
  - Jensen Longenecker Banquet and WI ASLA Professional Awards Reception
  - Mentorship Wrap-Up Event

CONTACTS

- **Mentorship Coordinator:** Abbie Moilien, amoilien@saiki.design
- **Student Coordinator:** Eric Schuchardt, ejschuchardt@wisc.edu