

2011 ASLA Board – Midyear Meeting Actions

- 1) Amends International Membership Qualifications;**
- 2) Full Membership Criteria Stand**

At this spring's midyear meeting of the ASLA Board of Trustees, following a year of research and discussion at the national and local levels, the board took action on two membership qualifications issues.

The first action changes the international membership determining criteria from place of residence to country in which a landscape architecture degree was earned or in which the individual is permitted to practice. A related second motion opens the honor and privilege of Fellows eligibility to International Members, including the use of the FASLA designation.

The second action maintains the current criteria for full membership as ASLA explores, in consultation with the Council of Landscape Architectural Registrations Boards (CLARB), adopting a universal designation for licensure.

"This was the first reappraisal of membership criteria in several years, prompted by advances in the profession's standing," says Jonathan Mueller, FASLA and president of ASLA. "As such it was done with all due diligence and lots of lively discussion. The board is confident that it has arrived at the right decisions."

To ensure that both issues received careful and thoughtful review, a process and timeline for gathering data and input were defined. The Member Services Committee took the lead on the international membership actions, and the Licensure Committee did so regarding the review of full membership qualifications.

Information and input on membership requirements and categories were gathered from other national and international design and planning professional organizations. The ASLA membership was surveyed to gather information on member demographics and attitudes regarding membership qualifications.

In March, the committee reports and membership survey results were distributed to the Board of Trustees and the Chapter Presidents Council. Also in March, a series of BOT/CPC webinars was held to present the information and provide an opportunity for questions and clarifications prior to chapter-level discussions on both issues.

Following the webinars, chapter leaders were requested to review and discuss both issues at the chapter level. Conference calls with the BOT were held on May 3 and 4 to hear the results of chapter discussions and to identify any additional questions or information needs prior to the midyear meeting.

International Membership

Under the previous criteria, international membership was determined by place of residence. That meant that an International Member living in, for example, Paris would lose his or her international status upon moving to the United States, becoming instead an Affiliate Member, a title more specific to vendors and consultants. Also, International Members were not eligible for Fellows status.

In addressing international membership, the Member Services Committee recommended amending the bylaws to read: "International Members shall be landscape architects who earned a degree in landscape architecture, or are recognized by a government entity to practice landscape architecture, outside North America." This change clarifies the previous language, which read only "residing outside the limits of the Society," and allows for the membership status to remain intact despite place of residence.

The committee further proposed opening the honor and privilege of Fellows eligibility to International Members and allowing those honored as such to use the "FASLA" designation.

At their meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to accept both the Membership Services Committee recommendations.

Full Membership Criteria Review

The successful attainment of licensure in all 50 states also raised the issue of reexamining criteria to determine whether licensure should become a requirement for full membership. As part of the research into this proposal, in addition to the input provided by the member survey and local and board discussion, ASLA membership lists were cross-referenced with state rosters of licensed landscape architects, and additional relevant information was pulled from the ASLA membership database. The Licensure Committee reviewed and analyzed this information and data, discussed pros and cons of the licensure question, and developed recommendations.

The board endorsed the Licensure Committee's recommendation that current criteria be maintained to ensure a diverse and open organization and to remain true to the Society's stated purpose: "The purpose of the Society shall be the advancement of knowledge, education, and skill in the art and science of landscape architecture as an instrument of service in the public welfare. To this end the Society shall promote the profession of landscape architecture and advance the practice through advocacy, education, communication, and fellowship."

In recognition of the successful campaign to have licensure laws in all 50 states, the board also accepted the committee's recommendation that ASLA identify a universal designation for licensure, similar to engineering's PE designation. The board instructed staff to work with CLARB and come back with a recommendation at its fall annual meeting.