



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE  
CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD  
PUBLIC PROTECTION THROUGH EXAMINATION, LICENSURE, AND REGULATION

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GOVERNOR

SUMMARY REPORT

CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Education Subcommittee Meeting  
March 4, 2005  
Sacramento, California

Subcommittee Members Present

Richard Zweifel, Chair  
Christine Anderson  
Linda Gates  
Steve Lang  
Heidi Martin  
Alexis Slafer  
Karina Verhoeven

Staff Present

Doug McCauley, California Architects Board (Board) Executive Officer  
Mona Maggio, Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC) Program Manager  
Mary Anderson, Examination Analyst  
Justin Sotelo, Enforcement/Special Projects Analyst

Guests Present

Larry Rohlfes, Assistant Executive Director, California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA)  
Steve McNeil, Lecturer, University of California, Davis, Landscape Architecture Program

A. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 11:05 a.m. LATC Examination Analyst Mary Anderson welcomed and introduced members of the Education Subcommittee and thanked them for their participation. Ms. Anderson then turned the meeting over to Chair Richard Zweifel.

Mr. Zweifel gave a brief overview of the Subcommittee's role and charge, which is to evaluate California's eligibility requirements for the licensing examination to ensure that applicants have appropriate education and experience prior to taking the examination. The education and experience requirements are found under California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 26, section (CCR) 2620. The Subcommittee is to also evaluate the examination and licensure requirements of neighboring and larger licensing jurisdictions (for

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landscape architect candidates) and those of other design profession boards. Finally, the Subcommittee will present its findings and recommendations to the LATC regarding possible amendments to CCR 2620 in late 2005.

Mr. Zweifel asked guest Larry Rohlfes, Assistant Executive Director of CLCA, to introduce himself. Mr. Rohlfes stated that he had attended the first Subcommittee meeting, with respect to its current charge, on October 8, 2004. (See agenda item K Adjournment for additional public comment).

Mr. Zweifel reminded the Subcommittee of how important it was to keep the overall charge in mind while reviewing and discussing the individual tasks and assignments.

B. Approval of October 8, 2004 Education Subcommittee Summary Report

- **Steve Lang moved to approve the October 8, 2004 Education Subcommittee Summary Report.**
- **Alexis Slafer seconded the motion.**
- **The motion carried unanimously.**

C. Review Work Plan

Mr. Zweifel gave a brief overview of the Subcommittee's work plan and tasks assigned to members and staff. He suggested that the Subcommittee begin by having each member report on his/her assigned task(s) and then later review the task chart for any necessary additions and/or modifications.

D. Review and Discuss Eligibility Requirements for Examination and Licensure

Linda Gates and Justin Sotelo were assigned to this task. Ms. Gates stated that in reviewing the examination requirements of previously identified states, a number of them accept non-landscape architecture degrees towards fulfilling the education component. She addressed the fact that the LATC does not accept non-landscape architecture degrees; however, there are many paths to examination and licensure through the existing educational programs in California.

It was noted that, as a result of a telephone conference call on February 2, 2005 between Ms. Gates, Mr. Zweifel and LATC staff, Ms. Gates requested that staff compile a list of degrees held by recent applicants whose applications for examination were denied based on not meeting California's education requirement (a degree or extension certificate in landscape architecture). At the meeting, staff provided the Subcommittee with that list which included the following degrees: Environmental Design; Ornamental Horticulture; Landscape Horticulture; Environmental Planning; Landscape Design; Architecture; and Urban Planning. In addition, the list provided other examples of how applicants have failed to meet the examination requirements in California.

In reviewing the Board's Table of Equivalents for architect applicants, it was noted that educational credit is granted for designated related degrees and unrelated degrees. In addition, the Board has a list of undergraduate 4 year degree programs equivalent to a BA, BS or an AB in Architecture. This list was obtained from universities throughout the United States with other titles that may satisfy the related degree requirement.

The Subcommittee directed staff to obtain additional information from other jurisdictions regarding the acceptance of related degrees and degrees that are comparable to a landscape architecture degree. Some members expressed their concern that unrelated degrees may not provide the body of knowledge necessary for the examination; however, it was also noted that related degrees may provide some of the necessary knowledge and that acceptance of these degrees might make the profession more accessible. If acceptance of related degrees is eventually recommended to the LATC by the Subcommittee, it was agreed that the Subcommittee should be very specific when identifying which related degrees to accept.

Ms. Gates also noted that a few jurisdictions accept teaching and/or research towards fulfilling the examination requirements; however, the LATC does not. After discussing, the Subcommittee felt that the LATC should not grant credit for teaching and/or research.

Ms. Gates indicated that a number of states allow candidates to sit for the examination with experience alone; however, after discussing this matter, Mr. Zweifel stated that the sequence really has to do with education as a preparation and the minimal competency review provided by the examination and the California Supplemental Examination (CSE) tests ability. The examination is the test of minimal competency. There is a correlation between related degree body of information and examination body of information. There is a connection with preparation for the examination and material covered in the examination based on what is happening in the landscape architecture practice world. The Subcommittee believes that an education is important and therefore has declined to recommend allowing candidates to qualify for examination with experience alone or holding a non-related degree. Reviewing related degrees would open access to the profession without diminishing the importance of education.

It was also noted that CLARB's Standards allow candidates to take the multiple-choice sections of the examination with: a Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) or Canadian Society of Landscape Architect Accreditation Council (LAAC) accredited undergraduate degree in landscape architecture; an accredited graduate degree in landscape architecture; an accredited degree in architecture, plus one year of experience under a landscape architect; an accredited degree in engineering, plus one year of experience under a landscape architect; or, a bachelor's degree in any subject, plus three years of experience under a landscape architect.

Also, a number of states allow candidates to sit for the multiple-choice sections of the examination after completing the applicable education requirements. After discussion, the Subcommittee was open to considering this option; however, additional information would be required in order to determine whether or not this would be beneficial to candidates. Staff was directed to contact jurisdictions in Region V and larger boards about their process, how it works and any issues that may have been or are of concern. Staff will also inquire as to what type of education (accredited degree, non-accredited degree, related, non-related,

associate), how long they have been allowing candidates to sit for the examination prior to meeting the full requirements, what sections they allow to be taken this way, and whether there is any connection to pass rates. In addition, staff will determine if they have less education, is a certain number of years or credits of training/experience needed prior to taking the multiple-choice sections.

It was noted that the former Board of Landscape Architects (BLA) previously granted credit for partial completion of a landscape architectural degree program; however, the current requirements only recognize completion of a degree program. It was also noted that the Board recognizes partial completion of various degree programs (i.e., architecture degrees and related degrees). The Subcommittee had a general interest in granting credit for partial completion of a degree program; however, they would need to take a closer look at how credit is determined. Some members were uncomfortable with increasing the number of avenues towards licensure, as the importance of an education becomes less important. It was noted that, with a degree, there is more assurance that completed course work will result in increased examination success. However, if credit for partial completion of a degree program is considered, the Subcommittee emphasized the need to ensure that more than just general education courses were being acquired by applicants.

It was also noted that in comparing the Board's requirements with those of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), the Board is much more flexible; NCARB prefers that candidates hold an accredited degree. The question was raised as to whether that presents a problem with reciprocity. The Board's reciprocity candidates have to meet California's requirements (examination/licensure requirements) when coming in from other states. Most states are more strict than California, so it is rare that candidates does not meet the requirements. In addition, reciprocity candidates must either have 3 years of holding a license or have completed the Intern Development Program (IDP).

Doug McCauley stated that some research has been done regarding examination success (for architect candidates) and that there is a difference in pass rates between candidates with accredited degrees in architecture and other candidates. He also stated that the majority of California candidates qualify for the examination through the traditional route (by holding an accredited degree in architecture and having qualifying work experience).

Although California offers flexibility in terms of satisfying the education requirement for examination/licensure, Mr. McCauley noted that the California architect license is perceived as a valuable license due to California's supplemental examination and IDP.

Mr. McCauley explained that the IDP national program is a structured means of gaining experience where the practice is broken down into 16 different training areas. Specified within each training area are the different skills, applications, and activities where candidates need to gain experience and the amount of experience required. It is a time-based program which means candidates must work a specific amount of time to receive training/experience credit. There are also restrictions on where you can gain experience and time spent in a particular setting. This is a bit of a problem due to feasibility of students during summer break. Under the current system, if you are under 10 weeks in a full time setting (i.e. 9.5 weeks) the experience does not apply towards the IDP.

The Subcommittee also discussed the need to create a candidate/employer brochure that discusses preparation for examination/licensure and experience needed in order to be successful on the examination.

Once created, this brochure would be provided early on to candidates who would be responsible for seeking out avenues to gain the appropriate experience and to employers to assist candidates in gaining the appropriate knowledge to be successful on the examination.

Staff was directed to collect information from CLARB, the Board, and other jurisdictions regarding the type of information and/or outline they provide to candidates in order to prepare for examination. This could assist the LATC in creating something similar for landscape architect candidates.

It was noted that Landscape Architect In Training (LAIT) programs are an avenue towards licensure that a few jurisdictions utilize; however, the Subcommittee indicated that there does not seem to be a demand for this type of program in California. The Subcommittee expressed its concern that this option could allow individuals to sit in the LAIT position and never pursue licensure. The Subcommittee felt that California should not consider an LAIT program at this time.

Based on all discussion above, staff was directed to present possible examination eligibility options for California applicants at its next meeting.

E. Review and Discuss the Comparison of California Associates Degree Programs in Landscape Architecture

Prior to the meeting, a matrix of curricula from the associate degree programs at Southwestern College, Mesa College, West Valley College and Modesto Junior College was provided to Alexis Slafer and Steve Lang. The matrix outlined the courses and units from each program. In addition, the proposed associate degree program curriculum at Reedley College was provided to Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang.

Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang were assigned to review and evaluate each program's curriculum to determine if they were comparable and appropriate for the one year of educational credit that is currently granted for completion of one of the programs. The courses at each program were examined, as well as the total number of units required for graduation. To assist with the evaluation, Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang referred to the curriculum areas identified in CCR 2620.5 (pertaining to extension certificate programs - History, Art, and Communication; Natural, Cultural and Social Systems; Design as a Process in Shaping the Environment; Plant Material and Their Application; Construction Materials and Techniques; Professional Practice Methods and Computer Systems and Advanced Technology) as a guideline to follow. These areas are in alignment with the LAAB Accreditation standards. In addition, a list of critical areas of study was developed and the units in each of those areas were calculated. They included: Introductory Courses; Graphics; Design; Plant Identification; Construction; Science and other. The curricula were also evaluated in terms of essential information needed upon graduation and what could be learned through work experience.

When considering the Education and Training credits, there was concern about minimal education. With the five year experience requirement, the students should continue to learn and build upon the basic foundation. The evaluation gave more weight to the knowledge and skills that were taught in particular classes that would be more difficult to learn outside of school, while professional ethics and values might be best learned in the work environment.

The evaluation of the programs revealed the following:

- Southwestern College and West Valley College appeared to have the most complete programs
- Mesa College and Modesto Junior College did not have an introductory course or courses in construction
- Some of Southwestern College's construction courses seemed to focus too heavily on installation skills rather than design
- If courses were added to the Mesa College and Modesto Junior College curricula, that would bring the programs into parity with the other schools
- Mesa College, West Valley College, and Modesto Junior College do not offer any courses in Professional Practice Methods or Computer Systems & Advanced Technology
- None of the programs offered courses in Professional Ethics and Values; however these issues might be best learned after the degree is earned
- Modesto Junior College and Reedley College do not offer a Planting Design course
- Mesa College and Reedley College do not offer a course in the Natural, Cultural, & Social Sciences

The overall curriculum appears appropriate for credit. There are some gaps in knowledge areas and units required for graduation, there is concern that the one year of educational credit earned is too high. When the University of California (Berkeley and Los Angeles) Certificate Programs are compared to the Community Colleges, the results are more revealing. The curriculum of the three year Landscape Architecture Certificate Program at UC Berkeley Extension consists of a total of 63 units, including 20 required courses and one elective. The four year Professional Certificate program at UC Los Angeles Extension consists of 131 required units and 12 units of electives. Graduates from either of these programs earn two years of educational credit. With this information as a reference, Southwestern (42 units) and West Valley (48 units) should earn one year of credit. It does not appear appropriate for Mesa (23 units) or Modesto (26 units) to receive the same full year of credit.

CCR 2620.5 (j) states the Extension Certificate program "shall consist of at least 90 quarter units or 60 semester units." It seems appropriate that if that number of units gives two years of credit, to receive one year of credit the programs should have at least half that amount; that is 45 quarter units or 30 semester units. All the schools reviewed are on the semester system.

Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang recommend that either the schools with "low units for graduation" receive less credit or they improve the curriculum, and increase the number of units required for graduation.

Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang suggest some consideration be given to other areas that are addressed in the 2004 Rules and Regulations; 1) Should the program director be a landscape

architect? 2) Should the program be administered as a discrete program in landscape architecture? 3) Should all schools earning credit meet the instructional personnel requirements regarding a professional degree in landscape architecture and/or half shall be licensed by the Board as landscape architects. The LATC does not review nor approve the Associate degree programs.

Both of the UC Extension programs participate in the Self-Evaluation Report and Site Visit in their process of being certified for two years of credit, only one more year than the community colleges. The Subcommittee does not recommend that the LATC take on the responsibility of reviewing the curricula for the Associate degree programs.

Based on the requirements for the Extension Certificate Programs, the Subcommittee should reconsider the amount of credit currently provided to the Extension Certificate Programs.

The community college curricula are consistent, even though they are at different levels. If the units earned for graduation are the criteria that are the basis for decision-making, then the community colleges curriculum are comparable; even though two schools are short in total landscape architect driven units. Finally, when comparing the units to years of credit earned, then the one year of credit should be earned for 36 or more units.

It was suggested that perhaps the role of the LATC be to educate the programs that there is a professional license that can be obtained from the degree along with training/experience and perhaps the focus be to provide the programs with an outline of what a candidate needs to know in order to be successful on the examination.

During the discussion, the question was raised as to who verifies and/or oversees the information provided by or required of the community colleges. Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang requested staff research who is responsible for evaluating Associate degree programs as well as other schools within California who may offer an Associate Degree in landscape architecture or something similar.

F. Review and Possible Action on the Draft Outline of Proposed Associate Degree Program in Landscape Architecture from Reedley College

Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang were asked to review the proposed associate degree curriculum for Reedley College and compare it with the other associate degree programs previously identified. There was some concern about a non-landscape driven course (Agriculture and Natural Resources AGNR 40) in the proposed curriculum at Reedley College. Ms. Slafer and Mr. Lang also suggested that the program may want to add a Planting Design Course, as well as a course in the Natural, Cultural and Social Sciences.

Staff was directed to send a letter to Reedley College reiterating that the LATC does not accredit associate degree programs and that an associate degree in landscape architecture would receive one year of educational credit. In addition, notify them of the concern of the non-landscape driven course, AGNR 40 and suggest that their proposal may want to include a Planting Design Course as well as a course in Natural, Cultural and Social Sciences and include a copy of the examination pamphlet for information.

G. Review and Discuss Comparison of Education, Experience and Examination Results of a Sampling of Current California Licensees

Christine Anderson and Karina Verhoeven were assigned to this task. At the October 8, 2004 meeting, it was decided that the files of the last one hundred licensed landscape architects in California be reviewed in order to compare education, type and amount of training experience, and examination success. The files of the last one hundred-one licensees were retrieved and a matrix was developed and provided to Ms. Anderson and Ms. Verhoeven prior to the March 2005 meeting. Ms. Anderson stated that while she and Ms. Verhoeven were reviewing the information, there were additional items that would be beneficial to the analysis. Staff provided the date the degree was issued and the type and length of experience earned (i.e., under a landscape architect, architect, civil engineer or holding a C-27 landscape contractors license) at the time the candidate first submitted an application for examination.

It was noted that the majority of the candidates followed the traditional path for qualifying for the examination with an accredited degree in landscape architecture and two years of training/experience under a landscape architect. The analysis also showed that, in general, candidates who received their training/experience under a landscape architect were more successful with the examination, particularly with sections C and E. However, Ms. Anderson stated it should be noted that 95 out of 101 candidate files analyzed had qualified for the examination with this type of experience, making it difficult to draw conclusions based on the few candidates who followed a less traditional route.

Candidates with two years of training/experience were most successful passing Sections A, B and D while Sections C and E were passed more easily by candidates with an additional one to two years of training/experience.

Candidates who attempted Section A, B and D within five years of graduation were generally successful in passing, while those who attempted Sections C and E 10 years or more after graduation generally passed these sections with fewer attempts.

It was also noted that due to California requirements, the LATC does not have data about individuals who take the examination directly out of school. Ms. Anderson requested that staff obtain data from other member board jurisdictions and look specifically at candidates who are outside of the traditional route and review their pass rates.

Staff was directed to begin tracking all candidates from this point on with the information that is provided on the matrix. The Subcommittee suggested that the LATC eventually share this information with other member boards as it may be of interest to them as well.

It was noted that some member board jurisdictions have a time limit for candidates to pass the examination. The Landscape Architects Practice Act provides for inactive applications to be purged after five years, however this has never been implemented. The Practice Act indicates if after five years a candidate wanted to pursue licensure, they would have to apply and meet current requirements. The LATC does have candidates that have pursued examination/licensure after years of being inactive. The Subcommittee felt that this option should be considered and that five years would be too short of a time limit and that 10 years



seemed reasonable. The Subcommittee also asked whether the “time clock” starts when a candidate first applies or when they actually pass the section. Staff indicated that two states found a problem with starting the time clock when a candidate first applies. Those two states are in the process of changing their regulations to start the clock after the section is passed. Candidates would only lose the section that is older than 10 years.

The Subcommittee directed staff to check with member board jurisdictions to inquire about their process, how long it has been in place, how it works and if there are any known problems.

#### H. Review and Discuss Landscape Architect Registration Examination Pass Rates and Pass Rates of Candidates Who Do Not Hold a Degree

Ms. Gates and Mr. Zweifel were assigned to review the charts containing pass rate information that was prepared by staff. These charts compared California candidate results with results from a national control group. The control group included candidates with degrees in landscape architecture and two to five years of experience under the supervision of a landscape architect. It was noted that California performs slightly below the control group numbers provided by CLARB; however, California pass rates are improving. It was noted that there are not any clear signs as to why the control group performs better; however, what the LATC can do is provide information to candidates to help them be more prepared for the examination. The candidate brochure discussed earlier will aid in this process.

It was also noted that in reviewing the individual section pass rates received from CLARB reinforces the need to review the related degree option for eligibility based upon the closeness of examination pass rates when compared along with related degrees.

#### I. Review and Discuss Landscape Architecture Body of Knowledge (LABOK) Study Report

It was noted that Ms. Maggio attended the CLARB Spring Meeting in February 2005 where the LABOK Study Report was briefly discussed. CLARB stated that once the 2005 Task Analysis has been completed, they will compare the LABOK Study and the Task Analysis which will help in developing or redeveloping the examination questions, if necessary. The results from the Task Analysis will be available at the CLARB Annual meeting in September 2005.

Mr. Lang and Mr. Zweifel were assigned to review the LABOK Study Report and provide a brief summary. Mr. Zweifel stated that the Study was more of a sample of what the landscape architecture profession is, compared to the Task Analysis. He also indicated that educational and practice communities were involved with this report. He stated that the study is comprehensive in subject matter as it pertains to the practice world but does not necessarily pertain to health, safety and welfare issues. Looking at the sample questions, it was clear that the report was more comprehensive and quite different than the Task Analysis. Mr. Zweifel also indicated that the methodology was different. In accessing the body of knowledge, the questions were broken down into 8 areas. The sample size was a licensee population of 200. It is an organizational collection and the conclusion is not complete.

In discussion, this will be helpful in determining the sequence of timing to be eligible to take the examination.

J. Select Future Meeting Dates

The Subcommittee will meet on June 17, 2005 in Sacramento.

K. Adjournment

Larry Rohlfes, Assistant Executive Director of CLCA, stated that their members are state licensed landscape contractors who perform a significant amount of design build work. There is a small portion of members who would like to become landscape architects. These individuals may have a bachelors degree in Ornamental Horticulture or Environmental Horticulture and have been providing design/build services for years, but are unable to sit for exam because they do not hold a degree in landscape architecture. Mr. Rofles hoped that the Subcommittee would consider proposing to the LATC a means for landscape contractors to sit for the examination and CSE without having to meet the current requirements. Mr. Rohlfes stated that CLCA members do understand the balance of education and experience necessary for protecting consumers, but they would like to make sure that the LATC is not overly restrictive with its requirements, as it relates to landscape contractors in California.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.