



## Minutes

### CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD Landscape Architects Technical Committee Meeting

April 21, 2023  
Sacramento

#### Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC/Committee) Members Present

Jon S. Wreschinsky, Chair  
Pamela S. Brief, Vice Chair  
Andrew C. N. Bowden  
Susan M. Landry  
Patricia M. Trauth

#### California Architects Board (Board) Members Present

Ronald A. Jones, Board Vice President

#### Board and LATC Staff Present

Laura Zuniga, Executive Officer  
Nicholas Barnhart, Examination Coordinator  
Kourtney Fontes, Special Projects Analyst  
Coleen Galvan, Communications Analyst  
Jane Kreidler, Administration Manager  
Drew Liston, Board Liaison  
Marccus Reinhardt, Examinations & Licensing Manager  
Stacy Townsend, Enforcement Analyst

#### Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Staff Present

David Bouilly, SOLID Moderator  
Robert Calvert, Ph.D., Research Data Specialist, Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES)  
Melissa Gear, Deputy Director, Board and Bureau Relations  
Karen Halbo, Regulatory Counsel  
Michael Kanotz, LATC Counsel  
Heidi Lincer, Ph.D., Chief, OPES  
Ruxandra Nunn, Research Data Specialist, OPES  
Bryce Penney, Television Specialist, Office of Public Affairs  
Matthew Wainwright, Legislative Analyst  
Levi Winegar, Research Data Analyst, OPES

### Guests Present

Cheryl Buckwalter, Association of Professional Landscape Designers  
Alejandra Cervantes  
Adriana Garcia  
Jessamyn Lett, American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)  
Tracy Morgan Hollingworth, ASLA  
Robinson Ngo  
Kevin Pfeiffer  
Melissa Ruth, ASLA  
Camille Thoma-Fill

#### **A. Call to Order – Roll Call – Establishment of a Quorum**

LATC Chair, Jon Wreschinsky called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and Vice Chair, Pamela Brief called roll. Five members of LATC were present, thus a quorum was established.

#### **B. Chair's Procedural Remarks and LATC Member Introductory Comments**

Mr. Wreschinsky announced that webcast is available for anyone interested in participating by joining the WebEx meeting as outlined on the meeting agenda. He thanked Ronald Jones for attending the WebEx meeting and reminded members that votes on all motions will be taken by roll call. Mr. Wreschinsky thanked Trish Rodriguez for her work as the former LATC Program Manager. Susan Landry thanked Ms. Rodriguez for her service and wished her well in retirement.

#### **C. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

Mr. Wreschinsky invited members of the public to address the LATC. There were no comments from the public.

#### **D. Update from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)**

Melissa Gear shared that the DCA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee is working on updates to the strategic planning process, and recently developed an informational DEI fact sheet which was distributed to board leadership. She announced that DCA employees can register for three DEI courses available in June.

Ms. Gear reminded the Committee members of the required 2023 board member trainings and explained that DCA's boards and bureaus will not be allowed to conduct meetings virtually after July 1, 2023.

She explained that a new federal law took effect in January, enabling service members and their spouses who had professional licenses in another state to practice in California within the same professional discipline and at a similar scope of practice if they are required to relocate to California due to their military orders. She added that DCA is collaborating with Agency on implementing the new law and

will share that information when available. Ms. Gear advised that staff should contact DCA Legal Affairs if the LATC receives an inquiry from a service member or spouse regarding this new law. She also announced that DCA submitted the 2021-22 Annual Report to the legislature and the report is now available on its website.

#### **E. Review and Possible Action on November 4, 2022, LATC Meeting Minutes**

- **Andrew C. N. Bowden moved to approve the November 4, 2022, LATC Meeting Minutes as presented.**

**Susan M. Landry seconded the motion.**

There were no comments from the public.

**Members Bowden, Brief, Landry, Trauth, and Chair Wreschinsky voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed 5-0.**

#### **F. Program Manager's Report – Update on Committee's Administrative/Management, Examination, Licensing, and Enforcement Programs**

Laura Zuniga shared that the business modernization system is undergoing security fixes and a release date should be announced soon. She reminded the members of the upcoming Board and LATC meeting dates. She shared that student outreach presentations were held recently at UC Davis and UC Berkeley. Ms. Zuniga mentioned that the LATC Program Manager, Assistant Executive Officer (AEO) and Regulations Manager positions are vacant.

She explained that management and the Committee Chair met with building officials regarding Business and Professions Code section 5659 (Inclusion of License Number – Requirement) to discuss implementation of the proposed amendments. She reminded the members that the Committee is also pursuing a statutory change to increase LATC's fees. She added that DCA's Legislative Affairs Division (LAD) is working with Business and Professions Committee staff to implement the change in a larger bill along with other DCA programs that also need fee increases. She provided an overview of LATC's regulatory proposals and examination program activity.

Mr. Wreschinsky asked when recruitment for the LATC Program Manager position would begin. Ms. Zuniga explained that recruitment is already in progress for the AEO and Regulations Manager positions. She added that the LATC Program Manager position might be filled after the AEO is selected, to include the new AEO in the hiring decision.

Andrew Bowden asked how many candidates are affected by the LARE format change. Nicholas Barnhart, Licensing Coordinator, explained that approximately 200 candidates have completed current LARE Section 1 (Project and Construction Management) and not Section 4 (Grading, Drainage and Construction Documentation). Patricia Trauth asked how the LARE transition information is being

provided to candidates. Mr. Wreschinsky explained that the information was added to the LATC website and that new candidates are being informed of the LARE transition.

## **G. Review and Discuss 2023 Legislation**

### **1. Assembly Bill (AB) 342 (Valencia) Architects and Real Estate Appraisers: Applicants and Licensees: Demographic Information**

Ms. Zuniga explained that AB 342 would allow the Board to request demographic information from architect candidates and licensees and report the information annually.

### **2. Senate Bill (SB) 372 (Menjivar) Department of Consumer Affairs: Licensee and Registrant Records: Name and Gender Changes**

Ms. Zuniga explained that SB 372 would require all DCA boards to update a license record if it receives government issued documentation demonstrating the person's name or gender has changed. Ms. Landry asked if an alias would be listed for licensees who have submitted a name change request. Ms. Zuniga explained that an alias would not be listed, and that any enforcement data tied to the license would still be available online.

### **3. SB 544 (Laird) Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: Teleconferencing**

Ms. Zuniga explained that SB 544 would enact additional changes to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act so that boards would have the ability to continue meeting virtually with one physical meeting location open to the public.

## **H. Discuss and Possible Action on 2022-2024 Strategic Plan Objectives to:**

### **1. Conduct a Review of the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (LARE) and Linkage Study to Determine Areas Not Covered in the LARE that Need to be Covered in the California Supplemental Exam (CSE) to Ensure the CSE Reflects the Content that is Unique to California**

Ruxandra Nunn, OPES Research Data Specialist, presented an overview and results of OPES' recent review of the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards' (CLARB) LARE. She stated OPES found that the LARE meets psychometric standards and that it was properly developed using subject matter experts. She added that the LARE is appropriately linked to an Occupational Analysis (OA), and that California licensed landscape architects were well represented as respondents to CLARB's OA survey. Ms. Nunn explained that the passing rates of all LARE forms from 2019-2022 are consistent with industry standards. Ms. Nunn shared that OPES recommends for CLARB to stop the use of educators in the examination validation process and increase participation of subject matter experts licensed five years or less to ensure an entry level prospective is maintained. She added that CLARB should publish passing rates for first-time test takers so that comparisons to repeat test

takers can be performed, and closely monitor performance data of remote proctored examinations. She also suggested that CLARB update its test preparation resources to increase fairness to candidates.

Ms. Nunn shared that OPES also performed a linkage study to compare the CLARB OA to the recently completed California OA. She explained that the linkage study determined that the LARE adequately assesses most of the knowledge required for entry level landscape architectural practice in California, except for California laws and California-specific professional practice. She added that the areas that are not adequately assessed by the LARE are covered by the California Supplemental Examination (CSE).

Mr. Wreschinsky asked how California should address the issue of remote proctoring of the LARE. Ms. Nunn explained that CLARB offers in-person proctoring to all candidates and that many candidates choose the in-person proctored option. Mr. Bowden asked how LATC should proceed with OPES' recommendations for CLARB. Ms. Nunn explained that the Board can provide a copy of the OPES report to CLARB, however, the Board can not force CLARB to make any changes. Heidi Lincer, OPES Chief, added that the Board is encouraged to provide the OPES report to CLARB.

Robinson Ngo asked if the CSE will stay the same after the LARE is reformatted. Ms. Nunn confirmed that the CSE test plan will stay the same until the next California OA is performed. Michael Kanotz, DCA legal counsel, added that public comment is not an opportunity to ask questions and is intended for individuals to offer their views.

## **2. Identify and Analyze the Causes of Low Pass Rates Among California Exam Candidates in Comparison to National Pass Rates to Determine Areas of Concern and Develop a Plan of Action to Decrease Deficiencies**

Dr. Robert Calvert provided an overview of the OPES evaluation of LARE pass rates. He reminded the Committee members that OPES completed a similar review in 2021 and found no significant difference in pass rates based on a candidate's gender, degree type, or pathway to licensure. He explained that the current analysis of LARE pass rates focused on the school that each candidate attended to determine possible causes of the discrepancies between California and national pass rates. Dr. Calvert presented national data provided by CLARB representing candidates who graduated from specific California schools and attempted a section of the LARE between 2020 and 2022. He stated that recent data does not show a meaningful difference between California and National pass rates; however, when broken down by school, some candidates perform significantly better than others. He noted that graduates from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly, Pomona) contribute a greater portion of the average number of attempts per LARE section while simultaneously having lower pass rates. Dr. Calvert explained that differences in pass rates are not necessarily bad and that there is not enough information available to explain why differences exist among the California schools. He added that the analysis of LATC data showed modest improvements in pass rates for all institutions and the pattern for Cal Poly, Pomona is like other California schools.

Pamela Brief asked why data from the University of California Extension Certificate programs was not included in the pass rate analysis. Dr. Calvert explained that there was a small sample size of candidates who attended those programs and that there were discrepancies between the candidate data collected by CLARB and LATC. Ms. Brief asked if the repeat testing data related to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Extension Certificate program was based on data collected by LATC. Dr. Calvert confirmed the data came from LATC records. Mr. Bowden asked if demographics contribute to the pass rates. Dr. Calvert confirmed that a candidate's background contributes to their examination pass rates, however, demographics were not evaluated as part of this analysis. Ms. Trauth asked if candidate demographic information is available to the public. Dr. Calvert explained that demographics by university are available; however, demographics related to examination candidates and passing scores are not available. Ms. Lincer added that all DCA programs are discussing DEI to determine how to collect and use demographic data. Mr. Bowden asked if Cal Poly, Pomona had been notified of the pass rate analysis. Ms. Zuniga confirmed that staff made Cal Poly, Pomona aware of the OPES analysis.

Dr. Calvert presented pass rates of candidates who completed all four LARE sections within the past five years and explained that the data for candidates who attended Cal Poly, Pomona indicates an examination completion rate of 77 percent, which is similar to other California schools. He further explained that each school serves a specific population, and it is encouraging to see that licensure is achieved for a high percentage of candidates from all schools. He added that there are many factors that contribute to differences in pass rates and possible causes include differences in candidates, curriculum, and quality of work experience. Dr. Calvert concluded that California pass rates are close to national averages and that schools serve different communities and commonly have different pass rates. He added that there is no evidence to explain the difference between Cal Poly, Pomona and other institutions. He recommended that LATC continue to evaluate pass rates after implementation of the new LARE format and explore other avenues of data collections for evaluation, which may include demographic information.

Ms. Landry shared that when she attended Cal Poly, Pomona the curriculum was oriented toward grading, drainage, drawings, and irrigation whereas other programs were very theoretical with an emphasis on written reports and more aligned with the current examination. She expressed that the examination format is moving away from drawing and that differences in the way people think and learn can impact pass rates. Mr. Bowden noted that the requirements to be accepted at each program are different. Dr. Calvert added that some schools give people a chance who would not have a chance somewhere else and while candidates from a specific school have lower pass rates, most candidates eventually pass all LARE sections and obtain a license. Mr. Bowden added that LATC does not want to do something that would impact a school's ability to attract students.

Mr. Wreschinsky stated that information presented clarifies issues that LATC has been looking at over the years and suggested that LATC also consider the level of experience that a candidate has when taking the LARE. He added that since candidates will be able to take the LARE after graduation, pass rate discrepancies between schools may increase. He suggested asking CLARB for national data on pass rates based on education, training experience, and demographics. Ms. Lincer explained that CLARB provided all school related data by LARE section, and that CLARB does not have demographic data. Ms. Brief asked if LATC could determine how curriculum and demographics impact pass rates. Dr. Calvert explained that would depend on LATC's scope of power. He encouraged LATC to discuss the pass rate analysis and admittance policies with Cal Poly, Pomona to better understand candidate backgrounds. He reminded the members that candidates who attended Cal Poly, Pomona are passing at a reasonable rate. Ms. Brief asked if LATC should have similar concerns about UCLA Extension. Dr. Calvert responded that the small sample size of candidates who attended UCLA Extension does not provide enough information to demonstrate a concern. Ms. Brief asked what information is needed to include UCLA Extension in the pass rate comparison with other California schools. Dr. Calvert explained that he can cross-reference the data provided by CLARB and LATC to confirm the pass rates of candidates who attended UCLA Extension.

Ms. Landry suggested that LATC confirm if the program at Cal Poly, Pomona is more graphic oriented and inquire about the method of teaching. She opined that having a written and multiple-choice test is not inclusive. Ms. Lincer reminded the members that LATC can explore any differences in curriculum among schools. She explained that it is easier to compare data from multiple-choice examinations than from practical examinations and that tests have moved away from those other methodologies because they are more time and labor intensive to develop and score. She added that practical examination questions are simulated with the use of computers. She suggested asking CLARB if the LARE addresses all necessary skills identified by their OA. Ms. Landry opined that changing the exam would address DEI needs and better align with the profession. Ms. Lincer noted that the upcoming changes to the LARE are probably reflective of changes in the industry identified by CLARB's OA. She suggested asking any questions pertaining to the LARE administration directly to CLARB. Ms. Trauth suggested that LATC determine which schools include AutoCAD in their curriculum. Mr. Wreschinsky asked if demographics and detailed work experience information are collected on candidate applications. Mr. Barnhart responded that demographics are not collected by LATC and explained that the LATC Certification of Experience form collects information related to the licensee who supervised the experience.

Melissa Ruth commented that LATC could consider how California licensed landscape architects are training candidates for licensure.

Alejandra Cervantes agreed with Ms. Landry that candidates have different learning styles and test-taking abilities. She stated that some of the language

and formatting used in the licensure examinations can be confusing for candidates who learned English as their second language. She shared that there are groups who research how to format tests and help students prepare for tests so that they are more inclusive for all learning styles and language backgrounds.

#### **I.\* Presentation on American Society of Landscape Architects Diversity x Landscape Architecture Program**

Ms. Ruth and Jessamyn Lett presented an overview of the recently established ASLA Diversity in Landscape Architecture subcommittee which aims to proactively help landscape architects in the region be more educated, aware, and accomplished in achieving DEI. Ms. Ruth provided a summary of demographic data collected by ASLA and highlighted recent subcommittee meeting activities. Ms. Lett suggested that LATC consider collecting demographic data on landscape architects and set DEI specific goals to make sure there is not bias in the testing process. She also suggested that LATC provide examination application information to candidates in other languages.

Mr. Wreschinsky thanked Ms. Ruth and Ms. Lett for the presentation and stated that LATC wants to better support licensees and candidates. Ms. Landry and Ms. Brief thanked the presenters and commended the progress they are making for the profession. Ms. Brief shared that DEI is being worked into LATC's strategic plan and suggested that the subcommittee continue to communicate with other California ASLA chapters.

#### **H. Discuss and Possible Action on 2022-2024 Strategic Plan Objectives to:**

##### **3. Research the Economic and Consumer Protection Impact of Re-Establishing the Landscape Architects Board or Establishing a Merged Board with the California Architects Board to Provide Better Representation, Strengthen the Distinction Between the Two Entities, and Increase Efficiency**

Ms. Zuniga stated that the full Board has not yet discussed this LATC objective and suggested the next step could be to have a discussion with the Board and add to the next Board agenda. Mr. Wreschinsky commented that LATC has done a lot of positive work related to the issues raised in the 1996 Joint Legislative Sunset Review Committee Findings and Recommendations. Mr. Bowden commented that the profession has changed since the 1996 report. He noted that the costs to operate a merged board could be spread over a larger number of licensees and possibly reduce the license fee. He added that establishing a merged board would possibly shorten approval processes by removing the need to have both LATC and Board approval. Ms. Trauth shared that many states have blended boards and noted that efficiency and costs should be considered when exploring the opportunity of a merged board. Ms. Landry agreed and stated that re-establishing a separate board would not address the issues around efficiency and program costs. She said she would



like to learn more about what it takes to establish a merged board and how it would affect efficiencies, program costs, and representation. Ms. Brief agreed that further discussion and investigation into the merged board concept is needed and that establishing a new single board does not make fiscal sense. Ms. Zuniga commented that staff have made the current system work well and agreed with Mr. Bowden that there are inefficiencies from having duplicate public meetings and having items go through both LATC and the Board for approval. She added that most other states have combined boards rather than stand-alone boards for architects. She suggested that the LATC Chair meet with the new Board President to discuss further and possibly add to the next Board meeting agenda. Mr. Wreschinsky added that they would need to determine how a merged board would represent issues unique to landscape architects. Ms. Landry agreed that Ms. Zuniga and Mr. Wreschinsky should meet with the Board to determine logistics of forming a merged board and a possible meeting schedule. Mr. Wreschinsky asked how the change would affect the Board structure. Ms. Zuniga explained that the Board could consider creating a new advisory committee focused on issues related to landscape architects. Mr. Wreschinsky agreed to discuss the possibility of a merged board with the Board President and Vice President. Ms. Landry asked staff to research the licensing board structures of other states.

Tracy Morgan Hollingworth suggested the Board consider adding seats for landscape architects.

#### **J. Review of Future Committee Meeting Dates**

Mr. Wreschinsky provided an overview of upcoming meeting dates and shared that he plans to attend the virtual Board meeting on May 19, 2023.

Ms. Landry said that she plans to apply for reappointment to LATC. Mr. Bowden said that he is entering his grace period. Ms. Morgan Hollingworth shared that two San Diego based licensees have applied for Governor appointment to LATC. Ms. Trauth said that she has applied for reappointment to LATC.

#### **K. Closing Comments**

Mr. Wreschinsky thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

#### **L. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

*\* Agenda items for this meeting were taken out of order to accommodate presenters of items. The order of business conducted herein follows the transaction of business.*