

## **CLARB through times of COVID**

By Marc Chapelle, PLA

Perhaps many of you are vaguely aware of the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Board (CLARB). Perhaps even fewer know that that they are our industry's recognized and preferred tool for tracking all things professional for our collective accomplishments, licensures, and educational endeavors through council record-keeping.

Like any other organization, 2020 was a crazy time of adjustments and modification to procedures. Thankfully, we Landscape Architects are flexible and adaptive to change. Who knew, "you're on mute" would be the new catch-phase!

The structure of the Board was in a state of change at the beginning of 2020 with Presidential and Leadership Advisory Committee elections, a renewed focus on Diversity & Inclusion, possible headquarters office changes afoot, and CLARB's Strategic Policy 'Rethinking' added to the mix. The plans for an in-person gathering to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CLARB in New York City were put on hold. In its place was a call-in format in the fall, to take care of necessary administrative business, with hopes of a future face-to-face meeting later in 2021. There is still uncertainty, as CLARB is still surveying the meeting preferences as of early January, 2021. My suspicion is that 2021 will bring yet another digital conference.

"Nurturing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the landscape architecture regulatory ecosystem" is one of CLARB's guiding principles. A tall order when inclusion is that much harder at a digital distance. More so when it comes to administering our professions' national L.A.R.E. exams by proxy. For those of you who endured last summer & fall's testing schedules, thank you for rolling with the new and evolving process of remote proctoring and exam results.

CLARB's long-term goal is to provide up-to-date, accurate data both on and for its members, and to seek greater participation by our community of practitioners. As a part of that effort every 5 – 7 years licensed landscape architects across America are asked to assist in crafting analysis of the tasks critical to performing our jobs for the health and safety of our communities. This year CLARB was planning on conducting a nation-wide Job Task Analysis (JTA) survey. With COVID, this exercise has been postponed until Spring of 2022. The JTA is foundational for credentialing of educational programs, and for vetting competency through our national exams. What are our core knowledge areas of current and future landscape architectural practitioners? This research is vital to our industry to stay current and relevant.

CLARB is not an organization that looks inwardly from their offices in Washington DC. It is populated by and comprised of Members and Executives from all the landscape architectural licensing boards from across America and Canada. CLARB strikes strategic alliances with other professional associations and regulatory groups like those that overseeing architecture, engineering, and surveying, and through groups like the the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Board (FARB) that advocates for excellence in the regulation of professions, and The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) that helps keep the public safe and the professionals on par with one another through clearly articulated levels of qualification, evenly applied state to state.

All this to say that CLARB is watching out for you the practitioner, not only by monitoring State and Federal legislative concerns, but also state-to-state equity in qualifications and performance metrics. So, the licensed professional from Oklahoma, Maryland, or Nevada are equivalent in minimum competency levels.

May COVID make us a better profession and teach us to better ourselves with new found and hard-earned flexibility for 2021!