

ACE PROJECT NATIONAL FORUM: “DESIGNING CLIMATE-READY EDUCATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROFESSIONALS” hosted by the Waterloo Climate Institute, February 2-5, 2025

INTEGRATING CLIMATE ADAPTATION INTO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Held on Tuesday, February 3rd from 11:30am to 1pm EST

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

This session brought together 60 landscape architecture educators with practitioners to discuss approaches to teaching climate change and climate adaptation more broadly. The very lively discussion facilitated by Prof. Jane Mah Hutton from UWaterloo School of Architecture followed a presentation by Hope Parnham from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) where she shared some of their many resources available for practitioners and educators. The discussion covered curriculum development strategies, teaching challenges, student engagement methods, and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS SESSION:

- **CSLA resources for practitioners and educators:** the Canadian Society for Landscape Architecture (CSLA) has many resources to help build capacity for climate adaptation among practitioners on their [website](#) including recordings of their very popular [webinar series](#) (ongoing) under the current NRCan funded landADAPT program. They also have a [case study series](#) that is useful to educators.
- **Core climate adaptation competencies for landscape architects:** Participants discussed core competencies for practice, including team collaboration skills across disciplines, understanding and using climate prediction data, and carbon accounting (such as calculating impacts of hard and soft landscaping)
- **Climate change is a team sport**—requires understanding different professions' skills and knowing when to pass responsibilities to appropriate team members; interdisciplinarity is essential for community resilience. The challenges for cross-disciplinary collaboration include professional silos, lack of political will, governance impediments, and professional resistance to new practices
- **Landscape Architects do not need to be experts in all areas:** Understanding basic principles of associated disciplines is essential, but practitioners don't need to be experts in all areas—but rather know when and where to draw on others' expertise
- **Policy work offers power to have broad impact at scale**—building codes, municipal bylaws, and provincial policies are places for huge impact; landscape architecture

training provides transferable skills applicable to policy contexts – these are important skills to help students develop before graduation

- **Principles and values rooted in community resilience** – students need opportunities to explore and communicate their values to be able to frame why and how they are making decisions.
- **Best practices for teaching / learning:** giving students practical assignments to design landscapes as well as influence policies, clarify values in group assignments, practice communication skills, develop climate leadership and advocacy, as well as skills and critical thinking.

RESOURCES:

- [ASLA Climate & Biodiversity Action Plan \(2026–2030\)](#)
- [ASLA Climate Action Field Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [CanAdapt group for postsecondary educators](#)
- [Climate Emotions Toolkit \(Climate Mental Health Network\)](#)
- [Climate Venn tool](#)
- [“Cost of Doing Nothing” primer \(ICLEI Canada\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [CSLA educational webinars \(CSLA\)](#)
- [IFLA Climate Action Commitment statement](#)
- [landADAPT \(CSLA\)](#)
- [landADAPT case study series \(CSLA\)](#)
- [Past CSLA webinars \(CSLA\)](#)
- [Regeneration \(global resource hub\)](#)
- Royal Roads Resilience by Design Lab’s [Climate Action Competency Framework \(v2\)](#) for professionals
- *How to Be a Climate Optimist* (book by Chris Turner)

For more information, please contact the Waterloo Climate Institute:
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