

SAT-B07 - Growing the Profession by **Diversifying** the Student Body



Saturday, October 21, 2017
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Room: 406

Overview:

How does a diverse faculty and student body shape our profession?

This session will discuss how we can move the needle towards increased diversity within our profession and how you can be a part of this change.

Let's start by supporting the universities on attracting a body of students that is as diverse as the clients and community our profession serves.

Resources & References:

- *How Diversity Makes Us Smarter*:
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

- *ASLA Diversity Summit*: <https://www.asla.org/diversitysummit>

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the need for more diversity based on demographic changes. Explore the obstacles of identifying and encouraging minority students to pursue landscape architecture.
2. Live in someone else's shoes: Develop an understanding for navigating the profession as a minority designer.
3. Learn existing recruitment strategies and new approaches to increase diversity in landscape architecture.

- *Mirroring the Nation: Landscape Architecture and the Future of the Profession*:
<https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/AboutJoin/MirroringTheNationOfficial.pdf>

- *Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity*:
<https://oied.ncsu.edu/divweb/building-future-faculty->

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Melissa Henao-Robledo, Moderator

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Melissa currently serves on the City of Austin Design Commission which provides advisory recommendations to the city council to assist in developing public policy and to promote excellence in the design and development of the urban environment. Building upon her Masters of Landscape Architecture degree from North Carolina State University, Melissa has practiced Landscape architecture and taught in the Landscape Design Continuing Education Program at Austin Community College. Melissa has also participated in the National ASLA Diversity Summit, served as the Chair for the Central Texas ASLA section, and served as the AIA Austin Latinos in Architecture Chair.



Luis G. Hidalgo, Panelist

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Raised in El Nacimiento de los Negros Mascogos, a community founded by Native Americans in the state of Coahuila Mexico, Mr. Luis Hidalgo became the first male member from his community to receive a college degree. He received his bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from Texas A&M University as well as various honors and awards. Professionally, Mr. Hidalgo has gained experience in project management, design, and construction administration at Benkendorfer+Associates, a Landscape Architecture firm in Austin, TX. He also enjoys networking and volunteering for local communities. Mr. Hidalgo believes that everything is possible when there is discipline, perseverance and dedication.



Ailyn Mendoza, Panelist

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Ailyn is the Director of Customer Experience at IrisVR, a NYC tech startup that develops virtual reality software for architecture, engineering, and construction. Prior to IrisVR, Ailyn worked as a designer and project manager at various landscape architecture firms, including Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, DLANDstudio, and Raymond Jungles. As a minority professional, she has been involved in diversity initiatives for landscape architecture, including the ASLA's National Diversity Summit in 2016 and 2017, and CLARB's Foresight Sessions. She holds an MLA from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University and a BLA from Florida International University.



Roberto Rovira, Panelist

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Roberto is principal of Studio Roberto Rovira, Associate Professor, and Landscape Architecture + Environmental and Urban Design former chair at Florida International University. As a landscape architect with a design, engineering, and fine arts background, his teaching, research, and creative work explore landscape architecture in public space and the intersection of technology and the natural world. Roberto has been recognized nationally and internationally for his work as an educator and professional, and was selected as one of eight 2015 Emerging Voices by the Architectural League. His work ranges from environmental installations and competitions, to art commissions and landscape architectural projects.

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Questions:

What does professional diversity mean to me? To my firm?

How can I be a resource for incoming minority students?

Session Notes:

"For those of us in relatively more privileged positions, for whom the path has been easier, we must build our awareness of the struggles others with relatively less privilege face; acknowledge and absorb how exhausting the suppression of self is; and utilize our position to advocate, to protect, and further the conversation. It is so much less risky for those with greater privilege to do so. This is the only way large-scale change...will occur"

-Jennifer Brown