

## **CELA Track Chair Commitment, Responsibilities and Term Limit**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The CELA Conference Track System was launched in 2008/2009 for CELA's annual conference held in Tucson, Arizona. The system is managed by the Vice President for Research and a structured organization of scholarly experts who provide focused peer-review for research and scholarly works in content areas representing the discipline of landscape architecture. These content areas are called "tracks." Each track can be chaired by one person, or co-chaired by two or three persons. Present CELA tracks are:

- Communication and Visualization
- Design Education and Pedagogy
- Design Implementation\*
- History, Theory and Culture
- Landscape Performance\*
- Landscape Planning & Ecology\*
- People-Environment Relationships
- Research & Methods
- Service-Learning and Community Engagement
- Sustainability\*
- Urban Design
- Film

\* denotes Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System (LA CES) tracks.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Faculty members of CELA full and associate member institutions are eligible to be track chairs. Other non-faculty CELA members may serve as co-chairs with approval of the CELA Board. Past chairs who want to become track chairs again must have had stepped down from the track chair's position for three years.

### **COMMITMENT**

Track chairs' primary tasks include:

- Recruit reviewers to review abstracts and make recommendation on whether the abstract is accepted or rejected for presentation at the conference;
- Organize accepted abstracts into coherent sessions for the conference;
- Recruit reviewers to review full paper manuscripts, manage the review process for their own tracks, and make final recommendations on whether the full paper is accepted or rejected for publication in *Landscape Research Record* (that is, the peer-reviewed conference proceedings);
- Participate in the selection process for The Outstanding Paper Award; and
- Attend the track chairs meeting at the annual meeting.

Track chairs should also:

- Encourage authors to submit their work to their tracks; and
- Update the description of their tracks for relevancy to the discipline and profession.

The timetable below is for a typical CELA conference.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Item</b>
August	Call for Abstracts
September	Abstracts Due
September - October	Abstract Review
November	Decision on Abstract Sent to Authors
January	Full Paper Due
March – April	CELA Annual Conference
May – June	Manuscript Review (for <i>Landscape Research Record</i> )
July	Revision on Manuscript
August	Final Manuscript Submission

(Note: The Outstanding Paper selection process is between September and December.)

### **THE ABSTRACT REVIEW**

**Naming your review team:** Decide who will help in reviewing abstracts. Recruit reviewers that you know you can count on to help you make published deadlines.

**Reviewing abstracts:** Feedback is very important. Reviewers should make an honest attempt to provide useful feedback that will help authors to improve their papers and presentations. In most cases, a few well targeted comments can lead to a good presentation even when an abstract shows obvious flaws. Only on rare occasions is an abstract so void of substance that it should be rejected out of hand. Double-check that reviewer decisions don't conflict. If there are an odd number of reviewers, the fate of the abstract lies with the majority decision.

**Transferring abstracts to another track:** If an abstract has been inappropriately placed by an author in your track, contact the Vice President for Research for assistance in transferring it to the proper track. Conferring with the appropriate track chair prior to making the change is appreciated by both conference staff and the receiving chair; and keep in mind that the reviewers in the receiving track need time to perform their review so please don't request a track change the day before the review is closed.

**Interactive (poster) presentations:** If the reviewer feels an interactive (poster) presentation would be better suited to an abstract, the track chair should carefully review the abstract and comments about the abstract, and make recommendation on the best suited presentation format. The frequent argument received is when an oral presentation is accepted into a poster presentation format. The author often feels such a decision is a downgrade. More justified comments will be appreciated.

### **CREATING SESSIONS**

Track chairs are to create sessions from the accepted abstract in their tracks. Use the [early-bird registration data](#) to decide what abstracts should be grouped first. The conference host will provide the data in early February. Group **four** oral abstracts of similar subjects in one session. Each session should include: Track Name, Abstract ID, Title and Author's Name.

A **panel presentation** is a session that stands on its own. The name of the panel is the name of the session. A panel presentation may be submitted with a single abstract and should include 4 speakers but definitely no less than 3 speakers and no more than 5.

**Interactive (poster) presentations** will be on display, not presented in a session. Do not include interactive presentations in an oral session.

**Note:** Consider establishing a good balance of scholarship maturity in each session—students, junior faculty, and senior faculty.

#### **THE MANUSCRIPT REVIEW**

Authors of accepted abstracts are invited to submit a full paper, typically due in January. Papers that are submitted in time and stratify the conference standard become eligible to enter the peer review for the publication in the *Landscape Research Record*. The track chairs manage the review for their tracks and select high quality papers for review based on the score of abstract review, grammar, completion of study, contribution of new knowledge, format quality, etc. The track chairs then send out selected papers to at least two reviewers who have been recruited by the track chairs.

#### **THE OUTSTANDING PAPER AWARD**

The Vice President for Research notifies track chairs to nominate one best paper from their track. The Vice President for Research reviews the nominations and sends them out to all track chairs for votes. The paper that receives the highest votes is the winner. The timeline for this process is between September and December.

#### **TERM LIMIT**

A track chair's term is three years and can be renewed for one more time (another three years) for a continuous 6-year service.

#### **NEW CHAIR APPOINTMENT**

Outgoing track chairs should inform the Vice President for Research one year before the term expires. Outgoing track chairs may nominate candidates for the Vice President for Research to consider. The Vice President for Research recommends the new chairs to the CELA Board for approval and appointment.

#### **TERMINATION**

A track chair's normal term is described under "TERM LIMIT." However, should a track chair fail to fulfill the commitments described in this document without legitimate or acceptable reasons, the Vice President for Research can terminate the chair's term at any time. For courtesy, the Vice President for Research should prompt the chair of concern ahead of time so that the chair is given chances to correct his/her delinquencies.