

Students and Faculty Work Together for Design Charrette

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02/12/2019



Students, professors and guests of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning recently came together to produce creative planning ideas for the City of Layton during the annual LAEP Charrette.

A Charrette is an intensive, collaborative planning and design exercise. This week-long event is held every year during the Spring semester. Department specific classes are cancelled the week of the Charrette to allow every member of the department, students and faculty alike, to take part in the event. Department members are divided into teams, each with a different facet of the study area on which to focus. According to Braden Miskin, a senior in the LAEP department, having so many team members eager to participate resulted in having a wide variety of ideas that complemented one another and blended together very well.

This year's project for Layton City challenged students and faculty with advancing ideas to establish Layton as a meaningful and exciting place for residents and visitors. The Land Stewardship and Users team even joked that Layton was the middle child: often forgotten between Ogden and Salt Lake City, but still valuable with the potential to become a destination city. They noted that helping Layton establish an identity that will make it easily recognizable is a priority. Other teams built on this idea as they shared ideas for ways that Layton can develop its identity.

Alyson Hill, a senior in the landscape architecture program, was able to participate as a co-leader for the Urban Trails and Greenways team. The team laid out a giant map on the floor that allowed them to identify and connect different parts of the city. One such moment included everyone gathering around and using string to better understand the area and to visualize the ideas being thrown around. She says that this exercise was one of her favorite design experiences of the year and "one of the most enlightening moments of the Charrette."

Students presented their plans to Layton city planners, LAEP alumni and other friends of the department at the close of the week. As each team took time to share insights into their area of focus and to provide recommendations for moving forward, the different components came together to create a well-rounded plan.

Seniors in the program, including Miskin and Hill, will build on the concepts developed during Charrette as they continue to work on the project throughout the remainder of the semester for their Senior Capstone Studio. At the close of the semester, they will present a series of polished ideas that entail the best of each team's work in a cohesive plan. Although Charrette week has finished, this is just the beginning for both the Layton project and the seniors as the semester moves forward.





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