USU LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS EXPAND HORIZONS IN NEW YORK CITY

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Fifteen students from Utah State University’s Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (LAEP) learned from prestigious landscape architects and explored notable landmarks on a ten-day educational trip to New York City.

Dave Anderson and Caroline Lavoie, associate professors in the LAEP department, led the trip. Anderson said they chose New York City as the destination to expose students to an urban area.

“New York City is an example of how a densely populated place can function,” Anderson said. “It’s very different from the suburban and rural areas we’re used to.”

The group visited a number of open spaces within the city including Central Park, the High Line, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Prospect Park, Teardrop Park, the 9/11 Memorial and the Hudson River Parkway. They also spent time with prestigious landscape architecture firms, observing what landscape architects do on a daily basis.

The landscape architecture firm West Eight is working on a project that involves turning Governor’s Island into a park, which will open in July. The Aggies received a private tour of the work being done on the island by Jamie Maslyn Larson, a USU alumnus and principal at West Eight New York.

According to Anderson, learning about the complexity of cities was beneficial to the students on the trip because it prepares them for a wider variety of careers.

“Cities have layers,” he said. “You have utilities and subways underneath, and huge buildings above ground. It’s more of a challenge to create open spaces. You have to consider how plants are going to grow, how to get water there, how to address drainage, and so many other factors.”

Places like Central Park and the Highline are an important contrast to have in a busy city, according to Sara Jackman, an LAEP student who attended the trip.

“I think I gained a greater understanding of the importance of open space in cities and urban design,” Jackman said. “I loved being able to still be in this busy city, but feel the peace and calm of nature around me. If they don’t have parks and open space, they don’t have anything. The design of such spaces has to be thought through and analyzed to be successful.”

Travel experiences are a requirement for students wishing to graduate with an LAEP degree from USU. The department believes students need to experience projects and innovation from different parts of the country and the world to be prepared for the landscape architecture profession.

For more information about USU’s LAEP department, visit laep.usu.edu.

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