



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST

109 Hills North
University of Massachusetts
111 Infirmary Way, Ofc 1
Amherst, MA 01003-9328

Landscape Architecture
and Regional Planning

voice: 413.545.2255
fax: 413.545.1772

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you to express my support for the academic excellence recognition of the Career Discovery Program at the Harvard Design School. I was the Program Coordinator of Career Discovery for two years, from the fall of 2000 to the summer of 2002. As the Program Coordinator, I was responsible for advertising, brochure distribution, organizing the graduate student teaching component, and assisting the Director with the admissions and financial aid process.

I believe Career Discovery is the best education that the GSD offers—not only for the Career Discovery students, but also for the graduate student instructors who participate. The program is based on a partnership between graduate students and Career Discovery students. Graduate students are unbelievably lucky to test their knowledge and teaching skills on students of all ages, who come from all over the world to learn from them. The program is extremely well-rounded, giving students a thorough introduction to technical drawing (a recent breakthrough addition to the program's curriculum, by Jeff Klug, the Director), as well as the design studio. In the landscape architecture discipline, the design problems that the students are given are realistic, using the Cambridge and Boston area as their laboratory. Moreover, once in design school, Career Discovery students are often one step ahead of their fellow classmates, having already become familiar with the studio process and being exposed to various professionals and real-world projects. Career Discovery can be considered a recruiter for the profession of landscape architecture. There are an overwhelming number of Career Discovery alumni who attend BLA, BSLA and MLA programs throughout the country and the world—all inspired by the profession of landscape architecture through their experiences at Career Discovery.

During my first summer with Career Discovery, although I was on the administrative end of the program, I somehow became immersed, nevertheless, in the studio experience, and especially the landscape architecture portion. Whether it was the enthusiasm of the graduate student instructors, or the camaraderie I found between the Career Discovery students and myself, I seemed to always be sitting in on reviews, organizing and participating in panels, and attending fieldtrips with the landscape architecture students. I quickly realized that I no longer wanted to be coordinating the program, but I wanted to participate as a student—and moreover, I wanted to apply to graduate school for landscape architecture.

I am currently in my second year of the MLA program at UMass Amherst and extremely happy. I still remain in contact with many of my fellow Career Disco graduate student instructors and many students. I believe Career Discovery is a model for the way design schools should be organized, with dedicated teachers, real-world problems, and a well-rounded curriculum. I have heard that other schools, like the University of Maryland, have picked up on the success of Career Discovery and have started their own summer programs. I believe this is a positive thing—and I hope that more graduate schools, especially those without undergraduate components recognize the potential to give their graduate students this kind of unique teaching experience. I cannot say enough positive things about Career Discovery—I will always look fondly upon the two years I spent at the GSD, and not because of all those famous designers—but because of all the wonderful graduate students, Career Discovery students and administrators that I worked with. They all helped me find my career path in landscape architecture, and I will always be grateful for that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren M. Todd".

Lauren M. Todd
245 Lincoln Avenue . Apartment 1 . Amherst . MA . 01002