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Dear Students, Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

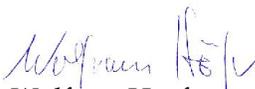
Our department has evolved into an intellectual center for landscape architecture and environmental planning, with a very strong focus on providing excellent education for our students and contributing to an open dialogue about pressing environmental and social concerns.

It is an indicator of a successful and well established department that leadership roles are passed on from on faculty member to another. It is with great pleasure that I accepted the honor to follow Laura Lawson as Chair. It is with even greater pleasure that I am able to pass the leadership of the graduate program to Kathleen John-Alder, our new Graduate Program Director. Because Kate is such an exceptional designer and innovative thinker in the field, the graduate faculty expressed great confidence that Kate will be able to grow and further develop our MLA program. The whole Department is excited about Laura's leadership as Dean for Agriculture and Urban Programs and I am looking forward to continue working with her as an active member of our faculty.

We face a critical moment in time in the Landscape Architecture profession. The role of urban plazas, neighborhood parks, or community gardens as places where people of diverse backgrounds can still meet, interact, and possibly learn about each other, is becoming even more important. There is a trend that the welcomed diversity within our communities is more and more turning into self-selected segregation. Groups stay among themselves, watch their own news – even the open forum of the internet is becoming an echo chamber. This unfortunate development makes open spaces and public parks even more important for a just and stable society.

As educators we are obligated to prepare the next generation of landscape architects and environmental planners, who are able to rise to the challenge of designing, improving, and preserving public spaces. I look forward to working with all of you to achieve this goal.

Kind regards,



Wolfram Hoefler