



# LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Teaching Landscape Architecture students online is not about looking good in front of a camera, delivering a scripted lecture, and talking at a tiny camera lens, it's about developing meaningful relationships.

Standard lecture approaches when taken from a classroom setting and sent through the virtual environment sometimes leave a bad taste in the mouth, resulting in both students and lecturers feeling disconnected. The LA Program seeks to address this challenge and build connections which are key to student success and make learning and teaching enjoyable. The relationships between students and instructors affects everything from student satisfaction to their capacity to take risks and excel, to a sense of personal efficacy and sustained curiosity.

Recent research on student engagement in online learning has shown the need to focus on the quality and variety of such relationships. Online, it is important to establish a strong teacher presence to motivate students and ensure they feel cared for. Hearteningly, the research also found that students did not see online platforms as the main barrier to meaningful interaction.

The LA Program will build meaningful relationships online through a variety of methods and approaches beyond extended lectures such as small-group tutorials, 1-on-1 video sessions, virtual group discussions, and other interactive-based videoconferencing. Additionally, more regular BrightSpace communications, concise and actionable feedback, and instructor participation in online chats and discussions.

As educators and students, we need to be willing to experiment: this will be unsettling for both staff and students at times, who have become comfortable in their respective roles. But we both must now think seriously about relationships and, perhaps, be more open and vulnerable in the learning and education experience. In the early moments, it will be glitchy and awkward and imperfect. But these changes may in fact revitalise university education, and make it a better reflection of the knowledge exploration and learning experience.