



LAF *Case Study Investigation* Program

Application Instructions: CSI Research Fellows

The Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) is pleased to announce the call for CSI faculty Research Fellows for the 2021 *Case Study Investigation Program* (CSI).

This document provides background information and instructions on the materials needed for a faculty member to apply for the 2021 CSI program, which runs from February 3 to August 4, 2021.

The full set of application materials must be submitted by 11:59pm EDT on November 1, 2020.

For more information about CSI, visit: <http://www.lafoundation.org/csi>. Please contact LAF Program Manager Megan Barnes (mbarnes@lafoundation.org) with questions.

***Case Study Investigation*: CSI Research Fellows**

LAF's *Case Study Investigation* program is a unique opportunity for select faculty members with demonstrated interest or expertise in landscape performance. The CSI program allows faculty members to sharpen research skills, build relationships with leading landscape architecture firms, collaborate with peers, and gain exposure in the growing field of landscape performance. Participating students have an unparalleled opportunity to interact with practitioners and gain hands-on experience while receiving substantial training to build research and quantitative skills and gain a deeper understanding of the design and evaluation process.

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OVERVIEW

The *Case Study Investigation* (CSI) program is a unique research collaboration and training program for faculty, students, and practitioners. Through CSI, LAF funded faculty-student research teams work with leading practitioners to document the impacts of exemplary, high-performing landscape projects. Teams develop methods to quantify the environmental, social, and economic benefits of built projects and produce Case Study Briefs for LAF's [Landscape Performance Series](#).

Faculty and design firms apply to CSI in partnership to produce a case study of a specific built landscape project.* Each research team is led by a faculty CSI Research Fellow and supported by a student Research Assistant. The academic team interfaces with a Firm Liaison, who provides information about the project goals, design, design and construction process, and intended performance. Clients, site managers, and other project stakeholders may also contribute data and insights.

The CSI program runs annually from February to August. During the spring, faculty-student teams work with firm liaisons to develop the research plan and case study narrative. Site visits and field data collection are primarily conducted during the summer. The academic teams use this information to craft the performance benefits and document the project in the online [Case Study Brief](#) format. Throughout this process, LAF provides training, iterative feedback, and opportunities for interaction among teams. Final case studies undergo a peer review process and are published to the *Landscape Performance Series* in the fall.

Applicants are responsible for understanding any limitations and adjustments that will be necessary to complete their CSI work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on both universities and CSI projects. The application form requires that applicants consider the below factors and explain how they plan to successfully participate in the CSI program under the current circumstances.

- Site performance. The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought many changes in the way the built environment is used and the benefits it offers. Evaluating a project during this unique time offers opportunities and limitations for understanding site performance. It is important that applicants have considered this and can speak to it in the application.
- Site access. Because ground truthing is an important part of the performance evaluation process, it is preferable that CSI Faculty Fellows and Student Research Assistants are located geographically near their site or able to travel to it. This year, it is understood that CSI Faculty Fellows and student Research Assistants may be in different locations so that only one member of the research team is able to visit the site.
- Site operating status. If a prospective CSI project site is not open to the public/its typical user group at the time of application due to the COVID-19 pandemic or related circumstances, we recommend that the project not be submitted for CSI this year.



- Faculty and student status. Due to uncertain academic schedules and circumstances at many universities regarding virtual and in-person learning, faculty and students should be prepared to undertake CSI work during the entire period from February 3 to August 4 under shifting circumstances if necessary. Aside from site visits, all CSI work may be completed remotely.

**LAF may be able to assist in matching prospective CSI Research Fellows with prospective firms/projects based on geographic proximity, common interests, and relevant expertise. Potential applicants wishing to be matched should contact LAF well in advance of the application deadline to discuss.*

PROGRAM GOALS

The CSI program is highly collaborative and helps to bridge the gap between research and design practice. By investing in this research, LAF is generating much-needed information and precedents to evaluate performance, demonstrate value, and make the case for sustainable landscape solutions.

The *Landscape Performance Series* database of over 150 case studies is used by designers, students, researchers, journalists, policy-makers, and advocates.

Because resources (including time, expertise, and funding) are often limited for performance evaluation, the CSI program seeks to identify valid, defensible, and replicable metrics and methods that can be used within a short timeframe by non-experts with limited resources. This makes the 6-month CSI program an ideal testing ground for new methods.

As a training program, CSI is an important impetus in moving the landscape architecture discipline toward designing every project with specific performance objectives, documenting project goals and design intent, routinely collecting performance data, and integrating landscape performance in design education.

ELIGIBILITY

Faculty Research Fellow: Candidates must hold a faculty, adjunct, or visiting instructor position at an accredited institution of higher learning. Candidates are not required to be employed within a landscape architecture department, although it is preferred. Candidates will be considered from related fields including but not limited to: urban design, planning, ecology, architecture, or engineering. If candidates hold a position within a landscape architecture department, the degree program itself does not need to be accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB).

Student Research Assistant: A prospective Research Assistant must be a currently-enrolled graduate student, PhD candidate, or undergraduate student in special cases. The student's anticipated graduation date should not fall within the CSI program timeline (February to August 2020). While having only one Research Assistant is encouraged, more than one student may be nominated with the understanding that only one student stipend will be provided by LAF; it may be divided as determined by the research team.



STIPEND

Faculty may apply to produce one or two [Case Study Briefs](#) through the CSI program. Funding is awarded to academic teams based on the number of projects/case studies:

For one case study

CSI Research Fellow honorarium: \$500
Student Research Assistant stipend: \$4,500
Maximum F&A: \$600 (LAF's Indirect Cost Policy limits overhead to 12%)

For two case studies

CSI Research Fellow honorarium: \$1,000
Student Research Assistant stipend: \$9,000
Maximum F&A: \$1,200 (LAF's Indirect Cost Policy limits overhead to 12%)

EXPECTATIONS

Faculty Research Fellow: CSI Research Fellows provide the knowledge base for preparing case studies, expertise in quantifying landscape benefits, and academic rigor. Specifically, the faculty Research Fellows:

- Lead the CSI team collaborations among faculty, students, and practitioners
- Work with firms to identify the performance benefits of select landscape projects
- Develop methods to quantify environmental, social, and economic benefits and coordinate on-site research
- Oversee the case study preparation process
- Coordinate with LAF staff and serve as LAF's liaison to the university for administrative matters
- Manage the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process through the university (where applicable)
- Participate in CSI program webinars and iterative case study reviews
- Present their work during the CSI Finale Webinar in August

CSI Research Fellows are expected to devote 1-5 hours per week from February to May and 5-20 hours per week from June to August to fulfilling the above responsibilities. The exact time commitment depends on the number of case studies (1 or 2), previous experience, the strength of the research assistant, and the availability of information.



Student Research Assistant: Each CSI Research Fellow selects a currently-enrolled student to participate in the CSI program as a Research Assistant and work under the Fellow's direction. Students do not apply directly to the CSI program.

The student should have strong critical thinking, project management, fact finding, and quantitative skills and must be available to participate for the duration of the CSI program. Students should have completed a Research Methods course prior to the start of CSI; master's or PhD students are preferred. The student should also have excellent communication skills and professionalism to work collaboratively with firm liaisons, project stakeholders, and LAF staff. The Student Research Assistants:

- Gather project information from design firms, clients, site managers, and other sources
- Assist in identifying potential performance benefits and methods to quantify them
- Conduct or assist with on-site research including site observations, measurements, and surveys
- Manage quantitative data and perform calculations
- Develop the Case Study Brief(s) and Methods Document(s) for deliverable deadlines
- Participate in CSI program webinars and iterative case study reviews

Student Research Assistants are expected to devote 5-10 hours per week from February to May and 20-40 hours per week from June to August to fulfilling the above responsibilities. The exact time commitment depends on the number of case studies (1 or 2) and the student's experience and ability.

SELECTION PROCESS

Each year, 5-8 research teams and 10-12 projects are selected for the CSI program through an open, competitive process.

Faculty and design firms apply to the CSI program in partnership, but submit separate applications. Faculty may apply to produce either one or two project case studies with the corresponding design firm(s). Design firms apply with one or more projects and may partner with different faculty members for different projects.

Teams are selected for participation in the CSI program based on their potential to generate high-quality, compelling case studies with a range of quantified environmental, social, and economic benefits. CSI Research Fellows and student Research Assistants are evaluated based on their experience and demonstrated interest in landscape performance evaluation. Projects and firms are evaluated based on the quality of the project and availability of information to document performance. Additional consideration is given for projects that have a strong "Before/After" image pair that showcases the transformation of the site. Evaluators also consider the strength of the team relationship and commitment to the CSI process.



Additional consideration will be given to teams and projects that have the potential to produce case studies with a strong narrative, goals, and benefits related to: (1) climate change and resilience, and/or (2) diversity, equity, and inclusion.

All applicants will be notified of a decision by mid-December.

APPLICATION PROCESS

LAF uses SlideRoom as its online application platform and will only accept applications submitted through this system. All application materials must be submitted by 11:59pm EDT on November 1.

Visit <http://lafoundation.slideroom.com> to use the system. Once you have created an account, scroll down to select the appropriate application type (CSI Research Fellow or Project Proposal), and click “Begin” to start the application process. You may save, edit, and review your work prior to submitting. An application fee of \$5 (USD) must be paid through SlideRoom when the application is submitted.

APPLICATION CONTENTS

Prospective CSI Research Fellows and design firms apply as a team, but submit separate applications. The CSI Research Fellow application requires the name of the proposed firm liaison(s) and project(s), and the Firm/Project Proposal requires the name of the proposed CSI Research Fellow. All submissions must adhere to guidelines and deadlines in order to be considered. Additional materials will not be reviewed.

CSI Research Fellow Candidates

- Applicant Information and Experience
- Proposed Project/Design Firm Partnership
- Research Assistant Information
- Case Study Critique
- Verification of Time Commitment and Accessibility
- Curriculum Vitae
- Department Head Form (<https://www.lafoundation.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/CSI-2021-Department-Head-Form.pdf>)