

Editorial

SINCE THE INCEPTION of university teaching in landscape architecture in the early years of the twentieth century, educators have had to meet several, at times competing, objectives. On the one hand, landscape architecture has been, and continues to be, a vocational discipline. It grew from practice, and its programmes in universities continue to be accredited by professional organisations. We must therefore ensure that our teaching is up to date and relevant to society. On the other hand, having entered the halls of the academy, we must meet high standards of scholarship and research if we are to achieve and maintain academic credibility. At the same time, our students increasingly demand individual attention to their specific perspectives and expectations. Meantime, government funding agencies seek every opportunity to reduce expenditure on education, which means that fewer of us must try to achieve more and more.

Such tensions are common worldwide, it would seem. In this inaugural issue of *Landscape Review* we present four contrasting essays that each deals with a different aspect of contemporary landscape architectural education and research in the Asia-Pacific region. In our lead article, Douglas Paterson provides an overview of recent Canadian research in landscape architecture. He places landscape architectural research within a broader context of global environmental, experiential and cultural crises. In doing so, Doug both demonstrates the diversity of research needs and opportunities in landscape architecture, and reveals the richness and vitality of the contemporary Canadian schools.

Byoung-E Yang introduces an explicit regional perspective. Although building upon a long indigenous tradition of design, landscape architectural education in Korea was initially based heavily upon western, particularly American, practice. One of the challenges educators now face, in both teaching and research, is how best to adapt such practice to meet the emerging demands for design responses specific to Korean culture and ecology.

The interplay between western cultural practice and indigenous ecology and culture provides the primary focus for David Yencken's essay on Australian landscape research. Here, the challenges are subtly different. As David puts it, 'There are complex and shifting shades of interwoven relationships involving the people and the land—among the original (Aboriginal) occupiers, the children of European and other settlers, and more recent migrants'. David argues that for Australian educators, the challenge of research and publication is not only that it should be undertaken, and undertaken to a high standard, but that it should address and inform the emergence of a distinctively Australian way of living.

Our fourth contributor, Jusna Amin, provides a refreshingly candid perspective upon contemporary landscape architecture in Indonesia. As with the Korean experience, western practice was a major influence in the initial development of education programmes, but its relevance to the contemporary needs of Indonesian society and culture is now being reappraised. In particular,

Jusna examines the problem of matching educational programmes to evolving social needs.

There are some common themes in all four contributions. In each, I discern a sense of sober reflection—of pessimism even—as the apparently limitless opportunities of the 1960s and 1970s give way to the pressure of competitive educational and professional markets in the 1990s. Landscape architectural education grew on a wave of environmental activism and enthusiasm, but as other established disciplines and professions have come to embrace environmental values and skills, we have lost much of our uniqueness and our earlier competitive edge. Politicians and communities still misunderstand the contemporary focus of landscape architecture and seem reluctant to broaden their vision from traditional areas of park and garden design.

Similarly, within the universities, there has been a change in the attitudes of administrators towards programmes that, whilst small by university standards, and initially lacking in established academic credibility, were nonetheless politically and socially valued. Although willing in earlier times to support such programmes, they now adopt a more uncompromising stance. Student numbers, refereed publications, and external research grants are the universal currency of academic performance and credibility, without which we will fall by the wayside.

So the challenges are clear. Each of our contributing authors has identified needs particular to their own country but, in doing so, express several distinctive themes. First, if as landscape educators we wish to remain within universities, we must meet university standards of research and publication. As Doug Paterson and David Yencken argue, this alone will ensure the intellectual vitality of our discipline. At the same time, if we are to continue to attract students and community support, Byoung-E Yang and Jusna Amin remind us that our educational programmes must remain relevant to contemporary vocational needs. Underpinning both the needs of research and of teaching is the theme which this journal intends to pursue; that is, the interplay of global and regional influences. As David Yencken suggests, it is precisely this interplay that can provide the stimulus and excitement needed for quality teaching and research.

In future issues of *Landscape Review* we will be pleased to publish situation reports from other countries around the Asia-Pacific region, and potential contributors are encouraged to contact the editor with proposals.
