



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

University Council

October 10, 2025

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2025-2026

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the College of Environment and Design to offer an Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation will be an agenda item for the October 17, 2025, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost Benjamin Ayers

Dr. Marisa Anne Pagnattaro

# PROPOSAL FOR A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

**Date:** September 18, 2025

**School/College/Unit:** College of Environment and Design

**Department/Division:** Historic Preservation Program

**Certificate Title:** Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation

**CIP:** 30120102

**Effective Term:** Fall 2026

**Which campus(es) will offer this certificate?** Athens

**Level (Undergraduate, Graduate, or Post-Baccalaureate):** Undergraduate

## **Program Abstract:**

With the inception of academic programs in historic preservation in the 1960s, the discipline spread across the nation. The University of Georgia initiated courses (1973) and created a Master of Historic Preservation (MHP) degree program (1982) which has equipped students with the skills to play pivotal roles in the dynamic fields of cultural resource management, preservation planning, and preservation advocacy. Over the past 10 years the MHP program has proactively created an Undergraduate Minor, and worked with affiliate undergraduate programs (such as History, Anthropology, Classics, Interdisciplinary Studies and Landscape Architecture) to create Double Dawg pathways for study.

The College of Environment and Design (CED) has been a national leader in historic/cultural landscape research, management, and education since the 1980s, with numerous graduates acquiring skills by working with faculty well-known for their expertise in the field. In 2010, as faculty retired and were strategically replaced with new faculty experienced in cultural landscape work, the College established the Cultural Landscape Laboratory, providing students with hands-on opportunities with institutions such as the National Park Service (NPS) and private historic sites. In 2012, a Graduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation was approved. These efforts resulted in employment of students in the National Park Service, state historic preservation offices, and private cultural resource management firms across the country.

A cultural landscape is a geographic area shaped by the long-term interaction between human activities and the natural environment, reflecting the values, history, and culture of a particular people and place. Conservation of historically significant cultural landscapes (as defined by the National Register of Historic Places per the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966) is an intent to retain as many of those ecological and cultural layers as possible for future generations to experience. The process of cultural landscape conservation has been defined by the National Park Service (the federal agency designated responsible for historic preservation definitions and processes in the United States) since the late 1980s to broadly identify, inventory, analyze, evaluate and conserve historically significant cultural landscapes. This process has been broadly accepted for use inside the National Park Service as well as by state, regional and local authorities and well as private citizens responsible for historic properties. Cultural landscape conservation has occurred across the world since the early 1900s and is supported by UNESCO and ICOMOS.

Continuing the strong tradition of cultural landscape education, the proposed undergraduate certificate program represents a response to society's continued interest and need for assistance in the effort of protecting historic and cultural landscapes. While developed by the historic preservation program, the focus of the proposed certificate is relevant to the concerns and interests of not only the programs housed in the college (historic preservation, environmental planning, and landscape architecture) but also affiliate programs. No

other landscape architecture or historic preservation program in our nation offers either a graduate or undergraduate certificate in cultural landscape conservation.

## **1. Purpose and Educational Objectives**

The Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation is designed to equip students with foundational concepts, principles, and analytical and management skills essential to successful cultural landscape conservation practice. Students will learn how to identify, record, assess and manage cultural landscapes, as well as ways to guide decision-makers on cultural landscape conservation practices. The developed skills will connect classroom knowledge with practical experience for community benefit.

Specifically, the Educational Objectives of the Program are to:

1. Introduce the concept of landscape stewardship.
2. Develop within students an awareness of the contribution that historic and cultural landscapes make to the quality of environments and to the quality of life available to the general populace.
3. Foster an understanding of the value of historic and cultural landscapes as well as the problems and opportunities related to the protection and perpetuation of these landscapes.
4. Provide the knowledge and insight needed to advise individuals, groups, and government units in the identification, protection, and perpetuation of historic and cultural landscapes for the use and welfare of society.

*How does this program complement the mission of the institution?*

Consistent with a shared concern for the wise use of available resources, this certificate directly supports the University of Georgia's mission by providing an area of specialization that bridges natural and cultural resource protection. By engaging students in applied projects, the program enhances experiential learning and prepares graduates to make meaningful contributions to professional practice, thereby fulfilling the University's commitment to fostering leaders who serve their communities and professions.

## **2. Need for the Program**

Over the past century, the professional and academic field of historic preservation has evolved from a focus on individually designed buildings to embracing collections of buildings in historic districts, vernacular and ethnographic resources, historic interiors, and most recently cultural landscapes. As a reflection of that national evolution, given the M.H.P.'s location within a college that has two of the largest and most respected landscape architecture programs in the country, it was natural that an expertise in historic landscapes would emerge. Indeed, CED and its faculty have long been known as pioneers in the history and management of cultural and historic landscapes. Thus, the need to prepare professionals to identify, assess, protect, manage, restore, and interpret historic landscapes has emerged from this progression.

Two higher education audiences have been identified for cultural landscape conservation education: graduate and undergraduate students. In 2012, CED created a path for graduate students pursuing another discipline to acquire a graduate certificate in cultural landscape conservation. At that time, most cultural landscape education, occurring in just 3-4 peer institution landscape architecture programs across the country, was focused on the graduate level.

Since that time, the topic's audience expanded to include undergraduates and historic preservation programs at peer-institutions. There has been consistent and increasing interest by undergraduate students in cultural landscape education, specifically here at UGA. As such, this proposal is intended to capitalize on the interest of that undergraduate audience. The undergraduate certificate, like the graduate certificate, will educate professionals going into the field. It is expected that some undergraduate students will pursue advanced education in related cultural resource management fields such as historic preservation, archaeology, museum management, history and landscape architecture.

There are no specific occupations defined as Cultural Landscape Conservation/Studies in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics categories; the closest occupations that can provide insight into need include Historians, Archeologist/Anthropologists and Landscape Architects, the discipline mostly closely aligned with the field of cultural landscape conservation.

*Table 1. Occupational outlook for job titles related to Cultural Landscape Conservation. (Bureau of Labor Statistics website, October 6, 2025)*

| <i>Occupation</i>             | <i>No. of Jobs 2024</i> | <i>Job Outlook 2024-2034</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Historian                     | 3,400                   | 2%                           |
| Archeologists/Anthropologists | 8,800                   | 4%                           |
| Landscape Architects          | 21,800                  | 3%                           |

It must be noted that within the field of historic preservation, whether it is practitioners who have expertise in historic interiors, ethnographic resources or cultural landscapes, each of those areas of expertise encompass important portions of the overall number of historic preservation practitioners. That is the case for the specialization in cultural landscapes.

Both public and private employers want undergraduates and graduates trained in landscape history, conservation, and management. The National Park Service has led the way, employing specialists in this field in both regional and national offices for over 45 years.

Many state preservation agencies also employ individuals who emphasize cultural landscapes in their work. Likewise, private contractors need individuals to write Historic (or Cultural) Landscape Reports and other studies in which cultural landscapes, rather than buildings, are the focus. Further, over the past 40 years, the field of archaeology has developed specialized techniques for looking at gardens and other cultural landscapes, and archaeological firms require individuals trained in cultural landscapes to give background for excavation. In short, cultural landscape studies is a well-established field within preservation and programs are needed to supply its needs.

It should be noted that discussions between academics and landscape architecture practitioners over the past 18 months, along with leaders of the cultural landscape programs of the National Park Service, have revealed a continued and somewhat urgent demand for graduates trained in cultural landscape research and management. In summary, this certificate proposal is a continued effort to meet the needs of students and the public at large.

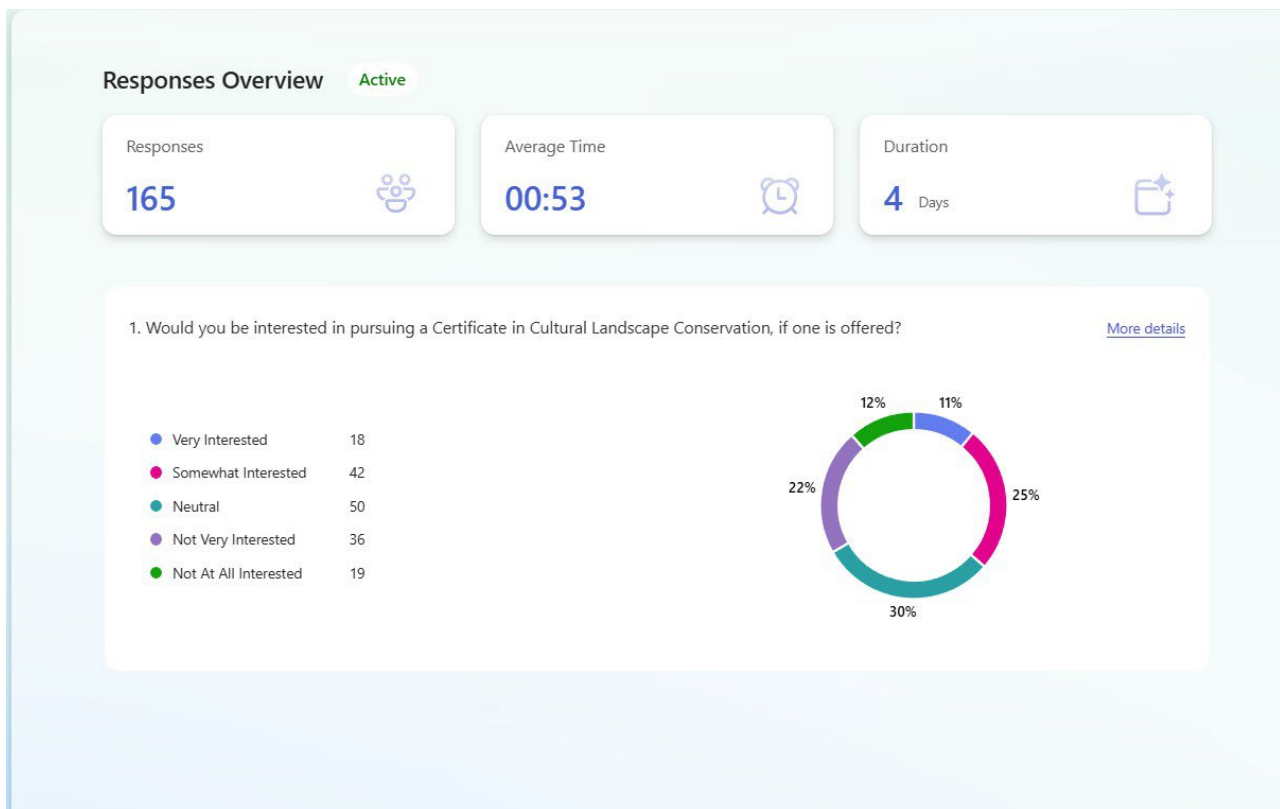
*In addition, provide the following information:*

- a. Semester/Year of Program Initiation: **Fall 2026**
- b. Semester/Year of Full Implementation of Program: **Fall 2026**
- c. Semester/Year First Certificates will be awarded: **Spring 2028**
- d. Annual Number of Graduates expected (once the program is established): **5-10**
- e. Projected Future Trends for number of students enrolled in the program: **It is reasonable to expect that within five years, a minimum of 10-15 students will be enrolled in the certificate.**

### 3. Student Demand

The CED polled students in the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (B.L.A.) program, as they are a primary audience. Of 165 students surveyed, 36% expressed either a highly likely or somewhat likely interest in the certificate. The data show that, from the moment of its inception, this certificate is likely to have a pool of more than a third of B.L.A. students likely or very likely to enroll, even before significant work has been done promoting the program. The B.L.A. program has expanded dramatically in the last five years. In 2021, there were 180 students with a B.L.A. major; by spring 2025, that number had grown to 258. The faculty estimate that the pool of students likely to join the certificate, given the polling, is about 90 students, even before expanding beyond the primary audience.

Although the poll focused on B.L.A. majors, based on recent enrollment in many of the cultural landscape related courses, the faculty anticipate interest from programs within other colleges across campus, including Anthropology, History, Geography, and Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management.



b. Provide evidence that demand will be sufficient to sustain reasonable enrollment.

Given the existing demand from students enrolled in the B.L.A. program, a major which has seen dramatic growth in enrollment in the last five years, the faculty feel that demand from these students, and from students in allied disciplines, will be enough to sustain enrollment in the proposed certificate program.

- c. To what extent will minority student enrollments be greater than, less than, or equivalent to the proportion of minority students in the total student body?

The extent of minority student participation is anticipated to be equivalent to the proportion of minority students in the total student body.

#### **4. Program of Study**

- a. Specific course prefixes, numbers, and titles:

This certificate requires completion of five classes for a total of 15 hours.

##### **Required Courses (6 hours)**

HIPR 4030/6030, Principles and Practice of Historic Preservation (3 hours)  
HIPR 4480/6480, Introduction to Cultural Landscape Conservation (3 hours)

##### **Electives (9 hours)**

EDES 4610/6610, Vernacular Architecture (3 hours)  
HIPR 4120/6120, Historic Site Interpretation (3 hours)  
HIPR 4330/6330, Introduction to Cultural Landscape Documentation (3 hours)  
HIPR 4340/6340, Cultural Landscape Inventory and Assessment (3 hours)  
HIPR 4360/6360, Landscape Materials Conservation (3 hours)  
HIPR 4400/6400, Southern Garden History (3 hours)  
HIPR 4440/6440, Historic Landscape Management (3 hours)  
HIPR 4460/6460, Rural Preservation (3 hours)  
HIPR 4850/6850, Selected Topics in Heritage Conservation (1-3 hours)  
LAND 2310, Introduction to Sustainability (3 hours)  
LAND 2510, History of the Built Environment I: Landscape (3 hours)  
LAND 4400/6400, Plant Communities of the Southeast (3 hours)  
LAND 4360, Advanced Landscape Ecology (3 hours)

The intent is that at least 3 of the 5 courses will have service-learning components, so that students can work on real-world cultural landscape conservation projects with resident communities. As interdisciplinarity is crucial to understanding cultural landscapes, depending on the real-world project and community within which it resides, minimally 1-2 other disciplines will be engaged in that real-world project process. Each course will take a different approach at fulfilling the intent.

Advising and mentorship for certificate students will ensure they have a coherent course of instruction and experience.

- b. Identify any new courses created for this program

No new courses are being created for the program. Courses in cultural landscape conservation already have modest but consistent demand. The faculty believe that giving students a coherent pathway will significantly increase demand in these already-existing courses.

## 5. Model Program and Accreditation

- a. Identify any model programs, accepted disciplinary standards, and accepted curricular practices against which the proposed program could be judged. Evaluate the extent to which the proposed curriculum is consistent with these external points of reference and provide a rationale for significant inconsistencies and differences that may exist.

The proposed Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation is modeled after the CED's existing Graduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation. There is no accreditation standard for cultural landscape conservation programs. Although there are some peer landscape architecture and preservation programs that offer a *single course* or *periodic project work* in cultural landscapes, there are no other university models that compare to UGA's cultural landscape curriculum.

The CED Cultural Landscape Conservation certificates are informed by two standards: one formal and one informal.

Formally, the NPS created *Professional Qualifications for Historic Preservation Professionals* which defines education and/or experience requirements for Archeology (prehistoric, historic), Architectural History, Conservation, Cultural Anthropology, Curation, Engineering, Folklore, Historic Architecture, **Historic Landscape Architecture**, Historic Preservation Planning, Historic Preservation, and History. In that document, "*Historic Landscape Architecture*: the practice of applying artistic and scientific principles to the research, planning, design, and management of both natural and built environments with specialized training in the principles, theories, concepts, methods, and techniques of preserving cultural landscapes."

Further, the minimum professional qualifications in historic landscape architecture are a professional degree in landscape architecture or a State license to practice landscape architecture, plus one of the following:

- a minimum of two (2) years full-time professional experience applying the theories, methods, and practices of Landscape Architecture that enables professional judgments to be made about the identification, evaluation, documentation, registration, or treatment of historic properties in the United States and its Territories;
- Products and activities that demonstrate the successful application of acquired proficiencies in the discipline to the practice of historic preservation;
- Such graduate study or experience shall include detailed investigations of cultural landscapes, preparation of cultural landscape research reports, and preparation of plans and specifications for preservation projects.

### *Closely related fields:*

- Landscape Architecture is the typical professional bachelor's degree, which is awarded after successful completion of a four-year or five-year undergraduate program. However, the bachelor's or master's degrees in Landscape Architecture may not always include historic preservation course work.
- While the standard Landscape Architecture degree program addresses all general aspects of landscape architectural practice (including design, planning, construction specifications, and professional practice), additional training is needed for Historical Landscape Architects. They may need training in landscape research, documentation, analysis, evaluation, and treatment techniques. This additional training is achieved through additional course work and/or professional experience."

Note there are no qualifications standards for Landscape Historians or Cultural Landscape Studies.

Informally, cultural landscape academics in CED have been in consistent conversation over the years with the NPS Cultural Landscapes Program and their historical landscape architects regarding their perception of desired skillsets for entry level cultural landscape conservation professionals. The variety of existing cultural landscape courses offered by CED, some on the books since the 2012 establishment of the Graduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation, have been honed over time to reflect those constantly evolving desired skillsets.

The proposed undergraduate certificate also aligns with interdisciplinary and experiential learning model of the UGA Land Conservation Clinic (<https://www.law.uga.edu/courses/land-conservation-clinic>). Like the Clinic, this certificate emphasizes applied, real-world projects that integrate academic knowledge with community service, supporting the University's broader mission as a land-grant and service-focused institution.

Additionally, the certificate draws on accepted curricular practices with disciplines such as historic preservation, landscape architecture, planning and conservation. Nationally recognized programs in these fields emphasize applied learning and interdisciplinary collaboration, elements which are central to this certificate. The certificate's inclusion of cross-disciplinary expertise reflects best practices endorsed by organizations such as Past/Forward and the National Council of Preservation Educators, the American Society of Landscape Architects, American Planning Association, and numerous land conservation organizations.

*Consistency and Distinctions:*

The proposed curriculum is consistent with the standards noted above with its integration of research, documentation, analysis, and management, as well as its desire for application of knowledge for skill building. A key distinction of this certificate is the deliberate inclusion of multiple disciplinary perspectives in the real-world project work that influences the field of cultural landscape conservation. The certificate reflects both the land-grant mission of UGA and the evolving demands of the field for graduates who are prepared to work collaboratively across disciplines and engage directly with community and conservation projects throughout Georgia, the region and country.

- b. If program accreditation is available, provide an analysis of the ability of the program to satisfy the curricular standards of such specialized accreditation.

Not Applicable

## **6. Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental methods and processes involved in cultural landscape conservation.
2. Explain the key practices, and principles related to historic research, character-defining features identification and evaluation,
3. Describe the essential legal and regulatory considerations that affect cultural landscape conservation approaches.
4. Identify and evaluate the diverse career paths within the cultural landscape conservation field.
5. Apply foundational knowledge and interdisciplinary skills to analyze and solve practical problems related to cultural landscape conservation.
6. Develop and propose creative, viable solutions for cultural landscape conservation.



## **7. Assessment and Admissions**

### *Assessment:*

The learning outcomes for the Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation will be assessed through the successful completion of all required coursework, including 2 core courses (6 hours) and an additional 3 electives (9 hours) from the approved list. To ensure competency, all courses applied toward the certificate must be completed with a grade of “C” (2.0) or higher. In addition to coursework, the program will gather indirect assessment data through alumni surveys and employment placement surveys to measure how well the certificate prepares graduates for careers in cultural landscape conservation and related fields.

### *Admissions and Retention:*

Admissions to the certificate program is open to any undergraduate student in good academic standing at the University of Georgia.

## **Documentation of Approval and Notification**

**Proposal:** Undergraduate Certificate in Cultural Landscape Conservation

**College:** College of Environment and Design

**Department:** Historic Preservation Program

**Proposed Effective Term:** Fall 2026

School/College:

- Director of the Historic Preservation Program, Dr. Scott Nesbit, 9/17/2025
- Dean of the College of Environment and Design, Dr. Sonia Hirt, 9/17/2025