

Architect license board faces review

Stories By LIZ BUTCHER
Of the Emerald

An estimated 75 percent of the state's landscape architects, several of their clients, and numerous members and students of the University's landscape architecture department will converge on the city of Salem today to attend a hearing determining the fate of the

Landscape Architect Examiners, scheduled to terminate July 1, 1980.

Members of the board and its licensees will be among supporters for continuation of the board, while the major opposition will be found encapsulated in a formal report by the Legislative Research Office, which has been in charge

strated public need for the licensing of landscape architects and there would be no significant danger to the public health, safety, or welfare if the (landscape architect) statutes are repealed. Therefore, the staff recommends that the Legislative Assembly take no action to reenact (them)."

This recommendation is based

Also, the profession in changing so much, says the report, that none of its common definitions accurately reflect it any longer, and licensees are voluntarily using other titles to describe what they do. Thus, it concludes, title licensing seems superfluous.

Asserting that the exam's requirements and low passing rate might indeed have this effect, and that "this burden of higher prices" outweighs any social costs that could arise in the absence of licensing, the report finds "no economic justification for licensing landscape architects."

The interpretations of these findings have two sides, however. Most of the state's landscape architects agree that the profession is changing, but the problem of its definition is neither new, nor warrants eliminating its licensure.

Says Ron Cameron, landscape architect of the local firm Ruff, Cameron, Lacoss, and Associates, "The public and most of the people who use our services are absolutely unaware of what our major objectives and skills are. Therefore, they are in a much greater need for the licensing protection than, say, an architect."

The fact that landscape architects are using different titles, asserts Bob Lacoss, of the same firm, "is because they're fighting a stereotype in the public mind of what a landscape architect is."

But the title regulation still ensures the public that the bearer has the skills and education necessary.

Although there are critics of the test among the profession, its difficulty is more often seen as an upholder of standards than a barrier.

And the report's statement that landscape architecture schools are not preparing students for the test must be met with a reminder that one to two years of work experience are required before it can be taken for the specific purpose of allowing the candidate to gain necessary technical and design knowledge.

Concerning the economic impact of licensing, the report itself states, "Landscape architect license fees are small in comparison to the value of work performed and, therefore, have little impact on consumer costs."

Even this, however, is an analysis of short-run costs only, one which ignores both long-run and social costs. In the context of these two, licensing is deemed even more necessary, according to Cameron and Lacoss.

"Our profession is not dealing with short-run, easily identifiable costs, says Cameron. "Our major emphasis is going to be on the nebulous, long-term things which probably in a few years won't be nebulous at all."

Sunset law to affect 44 boards

The Oregon Sunset Law will put state boards and commissions to rest as they outlive their usefulness in an effort to check "mushrooming bureaucracy."

Oregon's law affects 44 occupational and professional licensing boards, specifically those comprised of non-state employees. Every two years, the law states, several of these boards will cease to exist unless renewed by the legislature.

To determine if renewal is justified, the law requires that each agency be "thoroughly" reviewed by a joint interim committee. This committee, or task force, is charged with determining whether an agency has demonstrated a public need for its continued existence, using the 15 guidelines set down by the law.

These guidelines address everything from the efficiency with which complaints received by an agency are processed, to economic impact of certain regulations and the extent to which the state's power needs to be associated with a particular regulatory board.

Basically, sunset review follows the same pattern for each agency. The Legislative Research Office assists the task force by providing an analysis of each board; this is formulated through a multiplicity of surveys, interviews, and observations.

Within this analysis a staff recommendation for

or against the board's termination appears, along with several secondary recommendations suggesting improvements should the agency be renewed.

Upon completion, a public hearing is held in Salem, where this report and other testimony are discussed.

"The burden of proof rests with the board," said Allan Green, Legislative Research director, and so the board's participation in this hearing is of vital importance to its existence.

Some time after this hearing, the task force drafts its decision concerning the board's renewal, which will take the form of a recommendation to the 1979 Legislature.

The first nine Oregon agencies affected by sunset legislation will terminate on July 1, 1980 unless renewed. Their reviews will be completed by the end of this year.

These nine boards and the month their reviews will be completed are: The State Board of Landscape Architect Examiners, April; the Auctioneer's Licensing Board, May; the State Board of Watchmakers, June; the boards regulating television repair persons and landscape contractors, May or June; the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the State Racing Commission, the Board on Police Standards and Training and the Board on Teacher Standards and Training, August.

profession's state licensing board and perhaps that of the profession, itself.

This is the first sunset review hearing to be held as a result of the 1977 Legislature's enactment of the sunset law. (See story this page.)

At the hearing, the Joint Interim Task Force on Sunset will listen to opposing testimony concerning the renewal of the State Board of

of analyzing the board since last November.

This report holds undeniable weight in the task force's decision-making process, and this is what has the state's landscape architects disturbed. Its final draft, mailed to licensees only last week, contains the following primary recommendation:

"The Legislative Research staff concludes that there is no demon-

on a number of findings, some of which the state's landscape architects find controversial and even misleading.

First, the report makes the distinction that Oregon landscape architects are regulated by a title act, not a practice act, i.e., unlicensed persons may practice their skills providing they refer to themselves by another name, such as landscape designers.

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The Following Guidelines Should Be Followed When Submitting A Work:

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2. Each entry must have an entry card and jury card filled out; the entry card must be returned to the Forum by April 21 (Friday). Jury cards should be attached to the works. Cards are available in Suite 2, EMU.
3. Pieces must be brought to Room 167 EMU between 3 and 4 pm Saturday, April 22. The works will be juried and rejected works should be picked up between 5 & 6 pm Sunday.
4. The pieces may be picked up after the show on Friday evening, April 28, between 6:30 & 7:30 pm.