The University of Georgia’s College of Environment & Design has just been ranked number one in the nation for Landscape Architecture Sustainable Design Practices and Principles, according to Design Intelligence magazine. The announcement was made in the organization’s most recent issue, America’s Best Architecture & Design Schools. The publication also recognizes UGA-CED with three other top-five rankings. These include skills assessment categories in Communications, Design, and Research and Theory. UGA is ranked sixth in the nation overall for its Landscape Architecture programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

As noted in the Design Intelligence report, licensed landscape architects in the U.S. consider issues of design quality as well as sustainability/climate change to be the profession’s highest priorities. Therefore, UGA’s national rankings of number one in Sustainable Design Practices and Principles, and number three in Design hold great significance and value for students, alumni and the CED’s reputation. These accolades also complement the award winning Office of Sustainability at UGA, and its director Kevin Kirsche (BLA ’98, MLA ’08).
Additionally, according to the national dean’s survey portion of the report, UGA’s landscape architecture undergraduate program ranks fourth in the U.S. by peer education leaders. “It is imperative that society embrace sustainable design practices as we begin to address challenges created by unprecedented environmental transformation and economic turmoil. I am very proud that our CED faculty and students are leading the nation in this realm of landscape architecture education. Environmental design at the University of Georgia has an enduring legacy of excellence and we are glad to be recognized formally by Design Intelligence magazine,” commented Daniel Nadenicek, Dean of the College of Environment & Design.

In recent years, UGA-CED spearheaded a professional degree enhancement initiative for students to graduate with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accreditation. Since 2007, the College has offered LEED test preparation as part of its curriculum, which provides graduates a definitive marketing advantage when going into private and public practice. The sustainability course is now open to all University students in addition to those pursuing majors within CED. Students from Ecology, Law, Business, Interior Design, and Public Administration have completed the course. To date 44 students have successfully graduated with LEED AP designation, and 96 have achieved the LEED Green Associate credential. Professional firms maintain that this accreditation is extremely valuable when weighing candidates for hire. Innovation and resilience continue to be two of the main motivational factors in the College’s response to current environmental design challenges and economic instability.

Faculty research supports and enhances the sustainability curriculum, and several faculty members, including Associate Professor Alfie Vick (MLA ’98), are recognized authorities on various aspects of green building and sustainable site design. The Sustainable Sites Handbook edited by Meg Calkins and published by Wiley is the official reference publication to compliment the Sustainable Sites Initiative Rating System in conjunction with the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and the United States Botanic Garden. Alfie Vick served as the lead author, while Assistant Professor Jon Calabria (BLA ’92) along with three others were co-authors, on the water chapter, dealing with stormwater management, rainwater harvesting, and wastewater treatment from a sustainable sites perspective.

Alumni of the UGA program have successfully applied the knowledge and experience gained here in careers at the forefront of sustainable site design. This includes positions in landscape architecture and planning firms, government agencies, and green building non-profits such as the US Green Building Council, the Center for Neighborhood Technology and the Southface Energy Institute.

UGA’s College of Environment and Design is one of the oldest programs of its kind in the U.S. and consistently ranks among the top ten schools. The College offers Bachelors’ degrees and well as Masters’ degrees in Landscape Architecture, and graduate degrees in Historic Preservation and Environmental Planning. Graduates of the Bachelor’s five year professional program receive an in-depth and cross-disciplinary degree that emphasizes hand and
computer graphics, site engineering, horticulture, storm water management and environmental design for sites ranging in size from residential to public space and regional site planning.

For further information, please see the College's web site at www.ced.uga.edu or contact Gregg Coyle, head of the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program at 706-542-4718 or gcoyle@uga.edu.