CSUN

Master of Urban Planning

Explore. Learn. *Practice*.

Graduate Student Handbook

Welcome

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning prepares students, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, for professional careers in urban studies and planning. We provide a broad-based educational experience, set in the context of the social sciences that develops informed, thoughtful and able individuals prepared to contribute to society. The Department faculty supports this mission through teaching, research, publication, and community outreach.

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About the Program

Overview

The Master of Urban Planning provides a broad-based education in urban planning, especially as it is practiced in the State of California, where a wide range of state laws and mandates have created a unique planning environment that is distinct in its practice from much of the rest of the United States.

The degree's curriculum is thoroughly grounded in both the academic and applied dimensions of the profession. Classroom experience emphasizes key theoretical aspects of urban planning, while practical exercises and field experiences demonstrate how planning problems are addressed at the local and regional levels. The 36 credit-unit master's degree in urban planning is designed to be completed in two calendar years. The degree program is cohort driven with new class cohorts beginning each year in the fall semester. Once a cohort starts, no other student will be accepted into the cohort.

This degree is designed especially to serve the needs of working students and professionals. Classes are scheduled for evenings and Saturdays and take place sequentially over the course of the two year program. Through assignments and field experiences around the Los Angeles metropolitan area, students will receive as much exposure to different professional planning environments as possible.

CSUN Dept. of Urban Studies & Planning

About the Program

Goals

The master of urban planning degree program has three principal goals. Program graduates will a) have a solid understanding and a working knowledge of the principles, theory, and history of urban planning as practiced in the United States and specifically in California; b) will have expertise in the use of current methods and techniques used in urban planning research and practice; c) will demonstrate the knowledge of current professional practice in planning and the ability to conduct professional quality urban planning work and report writing.

Student Learning Outcomes

Principles, Theory, and History

Graduates will know the basic principles, applicable theory, and history of urban planning as it is practiced in the United States and more specifically in the State of California. This will include the ability to contextualize the economic, social, and political factors which affect and often dictate urban planning practice at the local and regional level.

1. *Explain the basic principles and techniques of urban planning research and practice from a U.S. perspective*
2. *Describe principles of urban planning and their application.*
3. *Describe the principles and applied aspects of sustainable development*
4. *Explain economic and social factors affecting urban planning.*

Methods and Techniques

Graduates will understand and utilize key methods utilized in urban planning research and practice. These will include the use of quantitative data and its analysis, qualitative research techniques, and the application of these techniques to a field research project in urban planning. Graduates will also learn the use of visual communication tools needed for data gathering, its analysis, and its eventual presentation in graphic format.

1. *Devise and carry out the fieldwork required to plan effectively.*
2. *Demonstrate a plan of action to engage communities in the definition of their planning interests and concerns.*
3. *Explain the importance of negotiation in the planning process and provide hypothetical strategies.*

About the Program

Student Learning Outcomes (continued)

Professional Practice

Graduates will understand the key elements of professional planning practice including comprehensive planning and the creation and updating of the General Plan; the function and practice of zoning; the role of specific plans, community plans, and special overlay districts; the use of environmental impact analysis in planning and specifically the role of the California Environmental Quality Act; the role of politics and negotiation in the planning process; and the ethical responsibilities of planners in the exercise of their professional responsibilities. Graduates will also demonstrate the ability to conduct a field project using applicable research techniques to address a practical planning problem in a local community. Finally, all graduates will successfully complete a capstone project which will validate their understanding and ability to produce professional planning documents and reports.

1. *Explain the content of comprehensive plans and zoning.*
2. *Explain the content of environmental impact analysis and its role in environmental decision-making.*
3. *Apply the most current tools used to create, implement, and monitor comprehensive plans and zoning.*
4. *Describe regulatory approaches in the United States which are directly transferable to an international context.*
5. *Demonstrate vision and leadership skills.*
6. *Integrate environmental and social aspects of planning with management practices.*

Advisement

During the fall and spring semesters Professor Zeynep Toker serves as the department's graduate advisor. During the summer, Professor Rob Kent assumes these duties. In all cases, please register for advisement appointments in advance in the department office at SH 220 or call 818-677-2904.

Program Requirements

Applicants are considered for admission to CSUN when they meet both university and individual department eligibility requirements. To be considered for admission to CSUN as a graduate student in a master's program, applicants must meet the following university and department requirements.

University Requirements

Applicants must have a four-year baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution; be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended; have attained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 in all units attempted as an undergraduate, independent of when the degree was granted, **or**, have attained a minimum grade point average of 2.5 in the last 60 semester/90 quarter units attempted from all post-secondary institutions attended. The entire semester or quarter in which the 60/90 units began will be used in the calculation.

Department Requirements

Hold a baccalaureate (bachelor's) degree from an officially accredited university or college. Applicants from a wide variety of academic backgrounds will be accepted, but those with bachelor's degrees in the social sciences, engineering, design and architecture are often best prepared for graduate study in planning.

Have an overall GPA of 3.0 or greater for courses taken in the bachelor's degree. Postgraduate coursework is included in the calculation only if it is standard academic offerings at the upper level (third year/junior level or above). Nonstandard credit offerings (professional training, CEU courses, non-degree or other professional credit) are not included in the calculation. Students may also qualify for admission if their GPA in the last 60 semester credit hours of the bachelor's degree exceeds 3.25.

The **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)** is not required for application to the program. However, students with an overall GPA of less than 3.0 may be considered for admission to the program if they have a GPA of over 2.5 and pass one section of the GRE exam (verbal, quantitative or analytical) with a score at the 50th percentile or higher.

Applicants who do not meet the specified GPA or GRE requirements may be considered for admission if they can demonstrate other personal or professional experience that provides strong evidence of a commitment to planning (e.g., planning employment, service on a planning commission, etc.).

Program Requirements (cont.)

Courses Required for the Degree

Thirty-six credits of required coursework are needed to complete the master's degree. The courses and the respective distribution of these credit units are as follows:

- *URBS 610 Contemporary Urban Planning in the United States and California (3)*
- *URBS 615 Principles and Practices in Urban Planning (3)*
- *URBS 620 Seminar in Comprehensive Planning (3)*
- *URBS 630 Sustainable Development and Environmental Impact Analysis (3)*
- *URBS 640 Seminar in Planning for Communities and Local Economic Development (3)*
- *URBS 650 Policy Analysis and Implementation in Urban Planning (3)*
- *URBS 660 Planning Law (3)*
- *URBS 670 Visual Communication Skills for Planners (3)*
- *URBS 680 Quantitative Analysis in Urban Planning (3)*
- *URBS 685 Qualitative Research in Urban Planning (3)*
- *URBS 690 Field Project in Urban Planning (3)*
- *URBS 698 Professional Project (3)*

In order to complete the master's in urban planning degree program successfully, the student must:

1. *Complete all twelve required courses.*
2. *Earn a grade of C or better in all courses.*
3. *Maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 in the program.*

Program Requirements (cont.)

How to Apply

Submit a formal application to the program at CSUN through *CAL STATE APPLY*

Submit official transcripts in unopened, sealed envelopes sent directly from each educational institution attended to CSUN CSUN Admissions and Records

CSUN - Admissions and Records
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330-8207

Submit the following supporting documents to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning to mup@csun.edu or our office at:

Department of Urban Studies and Planning
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330-8259.

- A current resume
- Two letters of recommendation, preferably one from a professional reference and the other from an academic reference. These letters must be submitted by the recommending parties directly to the department mailing address above or to mup@csun.edu by the deadline
- A Statement of Purpose, between 500 and 1,000 words, explaining the reasons why the candidate is seeking the master of urban planning degree and how it will contribute to his or her personal and/or professional growth and success
- Copies of all unofficial transcripts

For more information, visit: http://www.csun.edu/social-behavioral-sciences/urban-studies-planning/applying-master-urban-planning-program/

The Application Process

University-Level Admission Requirements for International Students

International applicants to CSUN are required to submit the following:

1. Complete the "International Online Application" at CSUMentor.

2. A $55.00 (US currency) non-refundable processing fee payable to CSUN must accompany your application.

3. Results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or other graduate examinations are required by some graduate programs. Scores must be sent directly to CSUN from the testing agency. Use CSUN school code 4707.

4. Affidavit of Financial Support (.pdf) and bank statement. Both pages of the financial affidavit and the bank statement may be emailed to your International Admissions advisor.

5. All OFFICIAL academic records including certificates, degrees or diplomas in original language of issue.
Do not fax academic records. Applicants who have studied in the U.S.are required to have the institution(s) in the U.S. send official transcript(s) directly to CSUN.
6. Official English translations of all academic records including certificates, degrees or diplomas. Do Not Fax translations.

7. Send Official transcripts and translations directly to:
CSUN - Admissions and Records
Attention: International Admissions
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330-8207 U.S.A.

8. Submit a copy of your passport information page with documents.

9. Results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or other acceptable test. Scores must be sent directly to CSUN from the testing agency. Students may be exempt from the TOEFL or other English language exam if they have graduated from an accredited U.S. college or university.

The Application Process

CSUN Intensive English Program and Conditional Admission

An Intensive English Program (IEP) is offered through CSUN's Tseng College of Extended Learning. The International Admissions Office works closely with the IEP office to offer "conditional admission" to academically eligible students enrolled in the IEP. Admission to the university is guaranteed once the student has completed the English language requirement (TOEFL or other acceptable test).

International & Exchange Student Center

The International and Exchange Student Center(IESC) provides services to newly admitted and continuing international F-1 and J-1 visa students, Fulbright students and participants of the study abroad program and National Student Exchange (NSE). For more information please visit http://www.csun.edu/international/ or visit their office in Bayramian Hall (BH150).

Upper Division Writing Proficiency Examination

All CSUN graduate students earning a degree are required by the CSU to satisfy the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) prior to full classification. Graduate students who completed an undergraduate degree at any CSU since 1982 have automatically met this requirement because they were required to demonstrate writing proficiency in order to graduate. All other graduate students have been required to take the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE) and score an 8 or higher.There are three paths to satisfy the GWAR requirement.

Students can:
1. Demonstrate that they earned an undergraduate degree at a CSU since 1982, or
2. Take the UDWPE and earn a score of 8 or higher, or
3. Take the GRE-A and earn a score of 3 or higher.

Graduate programs with existing requirements of higher GRE or UDWPE scores may continue to enforce those requirements.

The Application Process

Admission Status: Classified or Conditionally Classified

Knowing your classification status is vital as you begin your graduate degree. The two types of admission classifications are:

Conditionally Classified Status

Students who do not meet all admissions requirements may be accepted as conditionally classified students. In most programs, students must achieve full Classified standing prior to completing more than 12 units of graduate course work. Conditionally classified students are typically prohibited from enrolling in culminating experience courses.

Classified Status

To be granted classified status, students must have all of the following:

1. A 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher of all work taken as a CSUN graduate student.

2. Hold an undergraduate degree (or its equivalent for international students) froma regionally accredited institution.

3. Score at or above the 50th percentile on any one of the threesubject areas of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or a score of 4 or better on the GMAT. Some graduate programs may waive the GRE/GMAT requirement if a student's undergraduate cumulative GPA is 3.0 or higher.

4. Pass the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE). Students who have fulfilled the Upper Division Writing Exam at another CSU campus may submit official notification of a passing score. See the "Policies" section in subsequence pages for additional information

Additional Note on GRE/GMAT Exam

Normally, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) should be taken prior to submission of ones application for a graduate program. Undergraduates should take the examination during the last semester of their senior year. GRE scores are only valid for 5 years. Applications for the GRE
may be obtained from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) at www.ets.org. Applications for the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), which is required of the graduate programs in Business, are available at www.mba.com.

Additional Policies

For specific policy information regarding the following:

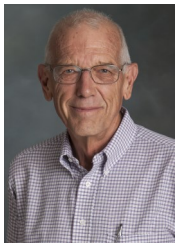
- Steps to Graduation
- Duration Policy
- Academic Probation
- Disqualification
- Withdrawals
- Student Conduct and Ethics

As well as many more, resources please read the full CSUN New Student Handbook at the following address:

http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/New%20Student%20Handbook%2031416-revised.pdf

CSUN Dept. of Urban Studies & Planning

Faculty / Staff



Dr. Robert Kent, Department Chair
Ph.D. Syracuse University (1983), Geography
Specializations and Research Interests: Urban and Regional Planning, Development Planning, Cartography/GIS, Latin America.

Dr. Mintesnot Woldeamanuel, Associate Professor
Ph.D., Hokkaido University (2007), Urban and Environmental Engineering/ Planning
Specializations and Research Interests: Urban Planning, Transportation Planning, The interaction among transportation, land use and the environment, travel behavior analysis.

Dr. Zeynep Toker, Associate Professor and Graduate Advisor
Ph.D. North Carolina State University (2004), Community and Environmental Design
Specializations and Research Interests: Community Participation, Research Based Urban Design, Housing and Gender in Planning, Research Methods.

Dr. Ward Thomas, Associate Professor
Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles (1997), Urban Planning
Specializations and Research Interests: Economic Development, Public Policy Analysis, and Environmental Planning.

Dr. Kenya Covington, Associate Professor
Ph.D. University of Maryland Baltimore County (2003), Public Policy
Specializations and Research Interests: Social and Urban Planning, Social and Economic Equity in Urban Spaces, Poverty.

Faculty / Staff

Dr. Henrik Minassians, Associate Professor
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Faculty / Staff

Dr. Abhishek Tiwari, Lecturer
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Scott Howard, J.D., Lecturer
J.D. Southwestern University School of Law (1976).
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Mirna Reyes, Administrative Support Coordinator

Ian Donaldson, Administrative Support Assistant

Student Resources

Academic Resources

The Learning Resource Center enables students to improve their academic performance through a variety of learning programs including workshops, one on one and group tutoring, and supplemental instruction classes. The center offers services specific to graduate students as well, providing help with abstracts, seminar papers, theses, research projects, and dissertations. Additionally, workshops are offered on topics such as APA and MLA research formats, organizing the Literature Review, proofreading techniques, and writing Personal Statements.

Financial Resources

The University's Division of Student Affairs offers a Financial Aid Basics guide to help students apply for financial aid, estimate the cost of attendance , secure grants or work study jobs, and more. For information on grants, loans, work-study and other financial aid resources, visit http://www.csun.edu/financialaid. Resources are also available for calculating tuition and fee amounts, fee payment schedules , and installment payment plans.

The Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) at California State University, Northridge designs, administers, and supports programs that deliver access and retention services to CSUN students. EOP provides services to historically low-income, educationally disadvantaged, first-generation college students; a population that not only reflects the diversity of CSUN's feeder communities but also the diversity of the University itself.

In addition to grants and loans, several scholarships are available to students, including, but not limited to, The Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and the Association for Women in Architecture Foundation Scholarship Awards. For more information on scholarships, visit:
http://www.csun.edu/financialaid/scholarships.

Career Center

The Career Center at CSUN offers career exploration and advisement along with job-search strategies to students and eligible alumni. By providing guidance on choosing a major and advice on how to make decisions, set goals and plan, the Career Center helps students advance on their career paths.

Student Resources (cont.)

Health Resources

Health specialists at the Klotz Student Health Center are ready to welcome you at your next appointment. Klotz physicians are board-certified in family medicine, internal medicine, sports medicine, gynecology and a variety of other areas. Here you will find specialists in physical therapy, chiropractic services, massage therapy, acupuncture, optometry, podiatry, dentistry, and women's and men's health. All Klotz Student Health Center services are provided at little or no cost to currently enrolled students. CSUN student fees include a health fee that pays for the services provided by the health center.

University Counseling Services provides a variety of free short term counseling services to students, including individual counseling, crisis intervention, groups and workshops, and psychiatric consultation. In an effort to provide high quality professional services to students, UCS now offers an innovative program specifically tailored to provide quick and useful tools to help our busy CSUN students. After meeting with a counselor for the initial Intake appointment, most students are enrolled into the RIO (Recognition, Insight, and Openness) workshop series. At the completion of RIO, students have the opportunity to meet with their Intake counselor to review their experience in RIO and discuss goals and resources for their continued growth.

Campus Life

Housing

CSUN's Student Housing and Conference Services Department provides information about applying for student housing and sample housing rates. Student Housing exists to promote individual development, academic success and conscientious citizenship among future and current residents through its facilities, services and programs. Student Housing also provides the resources students need to foster respectful and responsible living in a learning environment.

Housing tours are available. Please call (818) 677-2160 to schedule a tour.

Student Recreation Center

The Student Recreation Center is a 138,000 square foot facility for exercise and leisure activity that promotes lifelong health and wellness. The eco-friendly has got it all – the most up-to-date equipment, a friendly and welcoming staff, group exercise classes, and an intermural sports program!

University Student Union

The University Student Union (USU) at California State University, Northridge is a student centered non-profit organization that works to expand the college experience through various programs, services, employment, and involvement opportunities. The USU also organizes and promotes a variety of student events, from lectures and discussion groups, to comedy shows and festivals. For event schedules, visit: http://www.csun.edu/usu/events.

Valley Performing Arts Center

Located on the campus of California State University Northridge,The Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC) offers a vibrant and diverse performance program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family and international events that will serve to establish VPAC as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley and further establish itself as one of the top arts companies in Southern California. The award-winning 1,700-seat theatre was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and was recently cited by the LA Times as "a growing hub for live music, dance, drama and other cultural events.