

urban studies and planning

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California State University
Northridge

URBS NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Department of
Urban Studies and Planning
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Message from the Chair

Despite one of the most severe financial crises to hit the California State University, the department continues to fulfill its mission of educating many of southern California's next generation of urbanists and planners. While the job market is very tight, the department's graduates benefit from its strong internship program and a wide network of departmental alumni working in the field throughout southern California.

In the last year, two of the department's distinguished alumni returned to talk to faculty and students at CSUN. In April Kurt Christiansen, President of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association and Planning Director for the City of Asuza (BA, '85), spoke on California's planning challenges and in early November, Jaime de la Vega, Deputy Mayor for Transportation for the City of Los Angeles (BA, '91) spoke on contemporary urban planning and politics in Los Angeles.

The department is also pursuing exciting new initiatives. A four year grant from the US Department of Education provides for student exchanges in urban planning education between CSUN and two Brazilian universities beginning in Fall 2010. In Fall 2010 the department also anticipates launching a graduate program as a specialization in the MPA program in the Tseng College of Extended Learning. The urban planning graduate program designed for working professionals and to be completed in two years, will be composed of a core of six public administration classes and six additional classes in the urban planning.

Rob Kent, Ph.D., *Chair*
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Economic Development in MacArthur Park area

A service learning component in the Urban Studies and Planning Department was designed with a focus on conducting a study on strengthening economic vitality of MacArthur Park/Westlake Area in the City of Los Angeles.

The collaboration was between the Urban Studies and Planning Department and two community partners: Los Angeles Housing Partnership (LAHP) and Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA). LAHP is a non-profit affordable housing developer in MacArthur Park area. HOLA is a center that serves the Rampart community with programs in academics, the arts and athletics, to empower inner city youth to advance their lives and revitalize their communities.

The problem identified by LAHP was the loss of business in the area due to problems related to transportation. The Asbury Building, which is one of LAHP's low-income housing developments, accommodates one of those businesses. In the fall semester of 2008, Professor Covington's (URBS 310) and Professor Toker's (URBS 150) students prepared and participated in two fieldwork activities working with HOLA students in the MacArthur Park Area, in addition to analyzing the gathered information for a final report. Councilman Ed Reyes attended the final presentation, which documented the insufficiency of available parking and lack of viable alternative modes of transportation to support the retail businesses in the area.

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Councilman Ed Reyes with the project team at the final presentation.

Pacoima Wash Revitalization

In the spring semester of 2008, in the URBS 450 Urban Problems Seminar course under the supervision of Professor Toker, students worked with the community members of an area in Pacoima (in the City of Los Angeles) surrounded by two highways and two industrial strips. At the end of the semester, students' main conclusion based on the 339 interviews conducted in the neighborhood and a community workshop was that there was a need of public open space and retail businesses.

This work continued in the spring semester of 2009, when the purpose was to articulate the possible activities preferred and needed in a public open space in the neighborhood as part of URBS 450 Urban Problems Seminar.



URBS 450 students facilitating community participation at the community workshop utilizing a design game.



URBS 450 students at the community workshop (in front of Vaughn Charter).

Pacoima Wash Revitalization

URBS 450 students, under the supervision of Professor Toker, took the project one step further to provide the community with more detailed proposals for public open spaces along Pacoima Wash in collaboration with Professor Pontikis of Family and Consumer Sciences Department and his graduate students.

By organizing a community workshop with 33 community members and conducting 158 interviews, students gathered information as to the specifics of open spaces needed in the area. Once again, working with the department's long standing community partner, Pacoima Beautiful, a final report detailing the process and the outcomes was prepared.



URBS 450 students facilitating community participation at the community workshop utilizing an interactive display.



URBS 450 students facilitating community participation at the community workshop utilizing an interactive display.

Community Plan for the Pinoleville Pomo Nation

In the spring semester of 2009, Professor Van Ammers took her fieldwork class (URBS 490) to Ukiah, California, where they worked on a community plan for the Pinoleville Pomo Nation (PPN). PPN is a sovereign Native American nation. Its land area includes Indian Land (the Rancheria, about 99 acres near Ukiah, California), purchased land in Mendocino County under Mendocino County jurisdiction, and purchased land in Lake County, under Lake County jurisdiction.

The students divided the master plan into a needs assessment section, an analysis of issues opportunities and constraints, and then they wrote goals, objectives and policies for community development, housing, infrastructure and land use, drawing by analogy to California's general plan system for structure, from the PPN mission and vision statement and sustainable land use practices to create their understanding of community values, and also from ideas they researched on sustainability. The tribal council authorized release of the information the students gathered in order to assist indigenous planning efforts.

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Logo for Pinoleville Pomo Nation Community Plan created by senior student Christopher Marks.

2008-2009 Department Events

Thanks to donors. The department is extremely grateful to those alumni and friends who have donated to the department over the past year. Insofar as possible, these funds are used to support student activities on and off campus, including support for travel to conferences and participation in workshops and other events.

In May nearly 30 students from Professor Van Ammers' introductory course, The Urban Scene, participated in the Friends of Los Angeles River's "Big Clean-Up" at the Los Feliz Beach in LA where the clean project was initiated 20 years ago.



CSUN Grand Reunion. Professors Kent and de Oliveira hosted the department's booth for its alumni at the CSUN's 50th Anniversary Grand Reunion in April 2009.



Kurt Christiansen, President of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association and Planning Director for the City of Asuza (BA, '85) was a guest speaker.



Judge Gray, a superior court judge from Orange County, and a member of LEAP (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition) visited campus and spoke to urban studies classes on his views that the nation's misguided "War on Drugs" has contributed to urban decay and disinvestment in the nation's cities and metropolitan centers.



Professor Charles Keynejad and a group of his students in Urban Transportation course (URBS 480 – Class 17436) of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning visited the Traffic Management Center of the City of Pasadena, California in the spring semester of 2009.



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2009 Commencement

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning at California State University, Northridge is pleased to note that at the university's spring 2009 graduation ceremonies 41 students received BA degrees in Urban Studies and Planning. The department currently has over 120 majors.

The 2008-2009 Graduation Luncheon of the department was held after the commencement. The recipients of 2008-2009 James Ring Award were Sheela Bhongir and Paul Vargas. James Ring is a distinguished alumnus who graduated from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning in the class of 1972. The monetary award made possible through his donation recognizes these two students for academic excellence and supports their career objectives in Urban Studies and Planning.



Graduating students, (from left) Samantha Piepenbrok, Amy Hertz, David Duran, Jorge Morales with Professor Vrat.



Two graduating students, Anthony Rolf (left) and Kyle Broussard (right) with Professor Covington.

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2009 Graduation Luncheon



Welcoming speech by Professor Kent at the Graduation Luncheon.



Paul Vargas receiving the 2008-2009 James Ring Award.

Service Learning Award recognizes the graduates who have served as executive officers in the Department's Student Association during their senior year. 2008-2009 recipients were Edgar Arroyo and Sevon Baroni.



Edgar Arroyo receiving the 2008-2009 Service Learning Award.

APA-LA Student Symposium

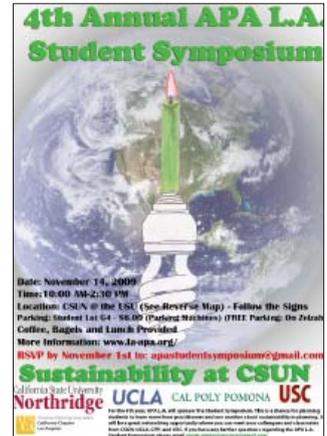
American Planning Association California Chapter Los Angeles Section 4th Annual Student Symposium was hosted by the Urban Studies and Planning Department at California State University Northridge on November 14, 2009. The event was organized by the Urban Planning Student Association.

The event was sponsored by APA-LA, CSUN College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, CSUN Urban Studies and Planning Department, CSUN University Student Union, and APA California Membership Inclusion Program.

Following Dr. Kent's (Chair of Urban Studies and Planning) and Kevin Keller's (APA LA President, City of Los Angeles Senior Planner, AICP) welcome speeches, legislative update was provided by David Snow (APA LA Vice-Director, Richards, Watson & Gershon, AICP).

Greening the Public Sector session included presentations by Michael Woo (Dean, College of Env. Design, Cal Poly Pomona) and Claire Bowin (City Planner, City of Los Angeles, AICP, LEED-AP). Greening the Private Sector session included presentations by Sue Keintz (Housing Director, Community Corp. of Santa Monica) and Patricia Menjivar (Senior Air Quality Engineer, Raytheon Company, LEED-AP).

Tom Kribben (Career Services, USC), Jeffrey Lambert (Community Development Director, AICP), Anna Vidal (City Planning Associate, City of Los Angeles) and Dev Vrat (Senior Urban and Environmental Planner, URS, AICP) participated in the Career Roundtable.



Faculty Work Faculty News Faculty Work Faculty News Faculty Work

Robert B. Kent, Chair of Urban Studies and Planning Department, has recently co-authored "A Midwestern Chinatown? Cleveland, Ohio in North American Context, 1900-2005" *Journal of Cultural Geography* 25(3):305-329. (2008).

"Femicide in Ciudad Juárez: What Can Planners Do?" originally published by Assistant Professor **Teresa Vázquez** in *Progressive Planning* (Spring 2006) has been reprinted by *Annual Editions: Urban Society*, 14th ed. (2009).

Ashwani Vasishth, Assistant Professor, served as the founding Director of the university's Institute for Sustainability during the 2008-2009 academic year. He has published "A scale-hierarchical ecosystem approach to integrative ecological planning" *Progress in Planning* 70:99-132. (2008). Professor Vasishth resigned in Spring 2009 to accept a position as an associate professor of environmental studies at Ramapo University in New Jersey where he and his wife have long-time family ties.

In October 2008, **Euripedes de Oliveira**, Lecturer, successfully concluded an agreement with the Association of Municipalities of Minas Gerais State, Brazil for a "Protocol of Intention" for training of professionals in planning for municipalities in the state.

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The Department of Urban Studies and Planning (URBS) has been awarded a four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's highly competitive Fund to Improve Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) /U.S.-Brazil Higher Education Consortia Program. Led by Professor Euripedes De Oliveira, the "Urban Planning and Sustainability Project (UPSP)" consists of an international partnership between California State University Northridge (CSUN/US), University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass/US), and the Brazilian Federal University of Goiás (UFG/BR), and Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU/BR). Under the supervision of U.S. and Brazilian faculty, students will focus their study abroad on urban planning and sustainability by examining subjects including transportation, environmental policy, comprehensive planning, energy and technology, housing and urban life quality, and urban migration. The project will offer students the opportunity to advance language learning while experiencing U.S. and Brazilian cultures.

Claude Willey, Lecturer, was selected as the recipient of a one month fellowship to participate in a summer institute for University and College Teachers --- sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The institute is titled: "Nature and History at the Nation's Edge: Field Institute in Environmental & Borderlands History" and is hosted by the University of Arizona and led by faculty from that university and the University of New Mexico. Further details on the institute and its activities this summer can be found at the following URL <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~kmorriss/nature/page3information.html>.

Ward Thomas, Associate Professor, has been granted a sabbatical leave for the fall semester of 2009 to pursue work on a book examining the effects of environmental legislation on local industries in Southern California. Professor Thomas also was tenured and promoted to associate professor in the fall semester of 2009.

Kenya Covington, Assistant Professor, presented "Racial segregation and gaps in metropolitan job isolation" at the Cities Futures in a Globalizing World '09 conference held in Madrid, Spain in June 2009. She also served as a session discussant at the 30th annual research conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management in Los Angeles in November 2008.

Zeynep Toker, Assistant Professor, presented "Community, again? Sustaining life outside of home and work in a neighborhood fighting against environmental injustices" at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association in Chicago, March 4-7, 2009. Professor Toker has received an Interdisciplinary Community Learning Project and Research Grant from the Center for Innovative and Engaged Learning Opportunities (CIELO) for Pacoima Project with Dr. Pontikis (Family and Consumer Sciences Department) and a Student Scholar Grant from CIELO in support of MacArthur Park Project with Dr. Covington. Professors Toker and Covington has also received a Judge Julian Beck Learning Centered Instructional Project Grant for MacArthur Park Project. Professor Toker presented the paper titled "Assessing the outcomes of service learning in urban planning courses: A case for a service learning component designed for general education courses" at the 50th Anniversary ACSP Conference, Crystal City, VA.

Henrik Minassians joined the department as an assistant professor in the Fall 2009. Since 2005 Henrik has served as the Director of Public Sector Programs for the Tseng College of Extended Learning at California State University Northridge. He will continue to hold this position and split his time between the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the Tseng College. Professor Minassians holds a Ph.D. in public policy from State University of New York at Albany (2002) and will teach a range of courses including public policy and research methods.

Phyl van Ammers, Lecturer, attended UCLA's School of Public Policy conference on land use law and policy held in January 2009 in downtown Los Angeles at the historic Biltmore Hotel. In February she also participated in a one day course on water law and policy organized by UCLA's Extension Division.

John Dugan, AICP, Lecturer, was appointed Director of Development and Planning for the City of Fresno on September 1st. He formerly served as Deputy Director of Planning for the City of Los Angeles. Professor Dugan will continue on the part-time faculty teaching on-line courses.

Student News

Vidal Marquez won a \$1,000 scholarship for the 2008/09 year in recognition of his academic achievements from the Los Angeles Division of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association. The scholarship award was presented to Vidal officially at the state meetings of the APA in Lake Tahoe in September 2009.

Sheela Bhongir and **Paul Vargas** were the recipients of the James H. Ring Scholarship for 2008/09. Both students received scholarship awards of \$500 in recognition of their academic achievements. This scholarship is named for its founder, James H. Ring, an alumni of the department (1972).

Stephany Stamatis and **Lisa Narcisse** participated in the California Transportation Foundation's annual Educational Symposium for students and professionals in transportation in Santa Cruz, CA in early November 2009. The students were nominated for participation by the department and were guests of the foundation at the event.

Chris Marks (BA in 2009) spent a semester last year as a visiting student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst through the National Student Exchange Program. Over 200 universities in the United States (including Guam, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico) and Canada participate in the National Student Exchange Program. For more information see <http://www.nse.org/>.

As part of the FIPSE grant, **total of nine URBS/CSUN students will receive a stipend of US\$4,000** to spend a semester studying urban planning related topics in the Federal University of Goiás or in the Federal University of Uberlândia in Brasil. Since CSUN does not offer courses in Portuguese language an additional US\$1,000 will be awarded to selected URBS/CSUN students to cover language preparation.

The first group of three URBS/CSUN traveling students will take place in **Fall 10**, and additional groups of three students will be traveling subsequently in Fall 2011 and Fall 2012. The **selection criteria** of students to participate will be held on an equal opportunity basis, and will consider (1) minimum Portuguese language proficiency at intermediate/advanced levels, (2) junior or senior status in urban studies and planning, though other related majors may be considered, and (3) meet academic acceptance from participating universities.

Students interested in participating in the UPSP should contact Professor De Oliveira (euri@csun.edu) and/or Professors Kent, Toker and Covington. In consideration that the first group of prospective participant students have less than one year to advance their Portuguese language proficiency **URBS strongly advises that the students take actions in preparation to selection process which will take place in Summer of 2010.**

Alumni News

Charles Albanese (1982) is a Detective with Boise Police Department, Boise, ID.

Jeffery Allen (2008) works as a researcher for Planning Associates Inc. in Studio City, CA specializing in land use planning, entitlements, and environmental documentation.

At the Kern Council of Governments (KernCOG) in Bakersfield, CA, **Marilyn J. Beardslee**, AICP (1980) works as a senior planner.

The Jakrti Market deep in the Trinity Alps of northern California (Trinity Center) is owned and operated by **Michael Berkowitz** (1974).

Jan Bryant (BA, '06) has received CSUN's Volunteer Service Award for 2009 from the University and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences for her service to the college and department.

Besides her involvement in the Los Angeles Chapter of the Junior Chamber of Commerce where she was recognized in 2008 as the Outstanding Project Leader, **Eva Choi** (2005) works as an assistant planner in the City of Hermosa Beach, CA.

Thomas L. Fox (1972) is employed by Kaiser Permanente in La Mesa, CA as a property manager for Facilities Development and Operations.

The Los Angeles Unified School District employees **Bob Frankel** (2000) as principal real estate agent.

In Seattle, WA, **Jess Harris**, AICP LEED (1988) serves in the city's Department of Planning and Development's lead in the Priority Green Program.

David Hyman (1980) is a member of the North Hills West Neighborhood Council in Los Angeles where he serves as the council's outreach chair.

An alumni from 1975, **Ken Koslow**, is an architect with Killefer Flamming Architects in Santa Monica, CA where he has been involved "with the design and construction of retail centers, educational facilities, and multi-family housing".

Michael Mendez (2001) is the legislative director for the Office of the President of the University of California in Sacramento, CA.

The City of Calabasas employs **Krystin Rice** (2006) as a planning assistant. Krystin is also pursuing a graduate degree (MPA) at CSUN.

In Kennebunk, Maine, **Caroline Segalla** (nee Roldan) (2002) works as an assistant town planner.

Cathy Shuman (2001) has been promoted to a new position with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, she will be posted in Washington D.C. at the Corps' headquarters and will serve as the lead Planner for the North Atlantic Division (NAD) Regional Integration Team (RIT).

Alumni business cards ... please send a couple copies of your current business card to Rob Kent. These are extremely useful in helping our students understand the wide range of career options that an education in urban studies and planning at CSUN can open.

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