



# URBS NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning

## URBS Gets New Chair

Rob Kent, formerly Chair of the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Akron, assumed duties as the Chair of Urban Studies and Planning Department beginning in August 2008.

He succeeds Dr. Peter O. Nwosu, who served as the Interim Chair following Dr. Tim Dagodag's retirement.



Rob Kent

Rob Kent served as chair of the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Akron in Ohio for eight years. He has also served as a short and long-term urban and regional planning consultant for USAID in Peru, Bolivia, and Pakistan and worked as a Latin America content expert for Microsoft Corporation and others. His research interests include urban and regional planning and development, Latin America, human geography, and cartography/GIS.

Recent publications have included papers in Journal of the American Planning Association (2000) and Planning Research and Practice (2006) as well as a book, Latin America: Regions and People (Guilford Press, 2006).

## URBS Graduates 45 Students

A total of 45 Urban Studies and Planning students joined more than 10,000 graduates who have completed their degrees at California State University, Northridge during 2007/2008 academic year. This figure represents the highest number of graduates in the Urban Studies and Planning Department's five year history, and the Department's expanding contribution to the region's urban planning needs. As a part of this event, the Department held its first Graduation Reception and Awards Ceremony.



Some of the Urban Studies and Planning graduates at the Commencement Ceremony.

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# Department Hosts Climate Change Conference

Focus the Nation is an educational initiative that had organized a National Teach-In on January 31, 2008. The Department of Urban Studies and Planning sponsored this event at which faculty from various departments and a number of students participated.

More on the event can be found at:  
[http://www.csun.edu/csbs/departments/urban\\_studies\\_and\\_planning/news\\_and\\_events/global\\_warming.html](http://www.csun.edu/csbs/departments/urban_studies_and_planning/news_and_events/global_warming.html)  
and at:  
[http://www.csun.edu/csbs/departments/urban\\_studies\\_and\\_planning/news\\_and\\_events/climate\\_change\\_agenda.html](http://www.csun.edu/csbs/departments/urban_studies_and_planning/news_and_events/climate_change_agenda.html)



Provost Harry Hellenbrand making opening remarks (from left Dr. Helen Cox, Dr. Kristy Michaud and Provost Harry Hellenbrand)



Panel Discussants (from left Dr. Helen Cox, Dr. Kristy Michaud and Prof. Debi Prasad Choudhary)



Attendees of the Climate Change Conference

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## CSUN Plans Greening Project

URBS is working with the Provost's Office on a "Greening Project" designed to strengthen sustainability practices within CSUN. Led by Dr. Ashwani Vasishth, this campus-wide initiative has four broad areas:

- Establish a multi-college Institute for Sustainability - to serve as the umbrella to coordinate and organize CSUN's research, teaching, and implementation efforts to green the campus.
- Initiate a footprinting protocol - to assess impacts campus operations have

on the environment, in terms of carbon emissions, resource consumption, waste generation, water footprint and other ecological variables, as well as offer on-going research, teaching, and service opportunities for faculty and students across the campus.

- Reorganize the undergraduate curriculum and initiate a Graduate Certificate Program, focused around issues of sustainability,
- Form a stakeholder-based Campus Task Force to direct sustainability-related activities and events on campus.

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# Department Holds its First Graduation Reception and Awards Ceremony

On May 19, 2008 Urban Studies and Planning Department held its first Graduation Reception and Awards Ceremony at the University Club. Attended by most of the graduates with their families and friends, and all of the faculty members including the former Chair of the Department, Dr. Tim Dagodag, the event was memorable.

During the Graduation Reception and Awards Ceremony, students were acknowledged for their academic distinction and service.

The recipient of 2007-2008 James Ring Award was Scott Cher. This monetary award made possible through the donation of James Ring, who is a distinguished alumnus, recognizes a student for academic excellence and supports their career objectives in Urban Studies and Planning.



Former Chairs, Dr. Nwosu and Dr. Dagodag with the recipient of the James Ring Award. (from left Dr. Nwosu, Scott Cher, and Dr. Dagodag)

Service Learning Award recognizes the graduates who have served as officers in the Urban Studies and Planning Department's Student Association during their senior year.

2007-2008 Service Learning Award recipients were Max Franco, Yasmein El Hussainy, Dana Jones, Martha Tello, Jodie Solorio, Phil Neumann, Indika Boteju, and Vista Ezzati.



Former Department Chair, Dr. Nwosu with the attending recipients of the Service Learning Award. (from left Max Franco, Vista Ezzati, Dr. Nwosu, Jodie Solorio, and Yasmein El Hussainy)

Achievement Award recognizes the graduates on the Dean's List. 2007-2008 Achievement Award recipients were Jessica Miller, Nick Piro, Bonnie Barrio, Max Franco, Kasra Davar, Alex Balkin, Vista Ezzati, Eliana Sanchez, Arax Kotcharian-Lanman, Laurie Van Wagenen Trishia Pascobillo, Scott Cher, and Jodie Solorio. Faculty members presented the Achievement Awards to the graduates.



Dr. Thomas presenting the Achievement Award to Max Franco.

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# Department Works with Communities: 2007-2008 Community Service Learning Projects

- During the fall semester of 2007, in URBS 412 Grant Writing course, Dr. Thomas linked students with non-profit community based organizations to assist them with writing grants, including Antelope Valley Partners for Health, Alicia Broadus-Duncan Multipurpose Senior Center, and Meet Each Need with Dignity (MEND).

- In the spring semester of 2008, the URBS 490 Field Work course (under the supervision of Professor van Ammers) investigated enforcement of environmental permits and enforcement of the City of Los Angeles storm water ordinance on Branford Street in Pacoima. Professor van Ammers also attended Big Time, hosted by Pinoleville, a community of Pomo Indians in Mendocino County to give a talk on land use law.



The first house built in Pacoima.

- Dr. Covington took her URBS 416 Urban Housing class to downtown Los Angeles to learn about affordable housing development. The Los Angeles Housing Partnership, Inc. (LAHP) offered to direct a tour at one of their nineteen affordable housing projects.

The LA Housing Partnership is a nonprofit corporation, which was established in 1989 to produce and preserve affordable housing for low-income individuals and families in Los Angeles County.

The class met during the scheduled meeting time at the Bryson Apartments at 2701 Wilshire Blvd. This project is comprised of 81 affordable housing units and a youth center occupies the basement. Upon arrival several of the LAHP personnel greeted the class. Dr. Covington was particularly happy to see Matthew Valdez, one of LAHP's current staff because he is alumni of CSUN and a former student of Dr. Covington's. Mr. Valdez led the class on a tour of the entire building; students even had an opportunity to go through a tenant's apartment.



LA Housing Partnership: Bryson Apartments (2701 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA)

# Department Works with Communities: 2007-2008 Community Service Learning Projects

• In the spring semester of 2008, Dr. Toker received a Discipline-Oriented Community Learning Project & Research Grant for URBS 450 Urban Problems Seminar course. With the support of this grant community members were involved in the process of planning for redevelopment of a site in Pacoima, which is located in the northeast San Fernando Valley.

Students organized two community workshops and conducted more than 300 interviews to help the community have a say in shaping their built environment.



URBS 450 Second Community Workshop in Pacoima: Students getting ready for the community members.



URBS 450 Second Community Workshop in Pacoima: Students and community members.

With the help of the community partner, Pacoima Beautiful, the class was able to utilize the resources within the community, such as Vaughn Street Elementary School and Pacoima Community Center, not only as venues to hold the workshops, but also to reach out to different sections of the community. This project was another example of the long standing partnership between Urban Studies and Planning Department and Pacoima Beautiful.



URBS 450 Second Community Workshop in Pacoima: Students and community members.

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# Department Goes International

## **GOIAS, BRAZIL:**

Professor De Oliveira is the Director of International Special Programs. In the past year he has advanced processes toward the consolidation of a contract between CSUN and the state of Goias, Brazil, which will enable a cohort of Brazilian planning professionals to attend five workshops, in policy and urban planning, offered by the Department.

In Fall 2008 Professor de Oliveira took the CSUN delegation to visit Goias to advance the partnership. The delegation included Stella Theodoulou, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Dean, Henrik Menassian, Tseng College Extended Learning Director, and Professor De Oliveira as representative of URBS. Brazilian hosts included the lieutenant governor, state secretaries and mayors from the State of Goias.



Reception at the Goias State Emerald Palace (from left Aladi Teixeira, Goias State Official; Prof. De Oliveira; Silmara Vieira, Superintendent of SEC of Goias; Dean Theodoulou; and Henrik Menassian)

## **CURITIBA, BRAZIL:**

Professor de Oliveira worked with the Brazilian Consulate and LACRA to host the worldwide known urban planner Jaime Lerner who came to give a speech on September 27, 2007, at the Council Chamber of the Los Angeles City Hall.

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# URBS Takes Steps to Revise Curriculum

In Fall, 2007, the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (URBS) held a retreat off campus to discuss the design and substance of the URBS curriculum and to develop a 5 year "course-rotation" plan to support SOC build and departmental advising. In Spring 2008, the department dedicated several of its pedagogy meetings to discuss the URBS curriculum. The Curriculum Committee was given the task of leading the discussions.

Following extensive discussions, faculty unanimously approved the following: a curriculum model that gives students the option of choosing either a general curriculum

model or a model with three tracks. The three tracks are Urban and Regional Planning; Housing, Community, and Economic Development; and Sustainability and Environmental Planning. The department will move forward with the agreed upon curriculum revisions starting in fall 2008. The Curriculum Committee is developing a timeline for approving and implementing the modified URBS curriculum starting in the fall 2008 semester. The URBS curriculum currently offers a minor in urban studies and planning. In the Department's discussions of curriculum revisions, there was little time devoted to a discussion of the minor.

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# URBS 2007-2008 Faculty Work

- Professor De Oliveira attended the “Southern California Brazilianist’s Association” annual meeting, held by in May 10, 2008 at UCLA. He presented a topic discussing programmatic offerings from USA higher education institutions to Brazilian localities.

- Professor De Oliveira attended CSUN Faculty Retreat 2008. He led a workshop titled “International Educational Exchange: A Case Study of Goias, Brazil.”

- Dr. Thomas focused much of his research efforts on a Faculty Fellowship received from The John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation. The title of the project is: “Can We Breathe and Be Economically Competitive? Air Quality Regulations and Technological Innovation in the Fabricated Metal Products Industry in Los Angeles.” In this research, Dr. Thomas is exploring the effects of environmental regulations on the economic competitiveness of firms and industries. He presented preliminary findings of his research at the annual meeting of the Urban Affairs Association held last April in Baltimore, Maryland.

- Dr. Thomas published a paper in the December 2007 issue of the journal, *Interdisciplinary Environmental Review*. The paper, “Environmental Regulations and the Diffusion of Clean Technologies in the Dry Cleaning Industry,” examined how dry cleaners in the South Coast Basin of Southern California are adopting alternative technologies to perchlorethylene, a chemical linked to cancer.

- Dr. Toker presented the findings of her research titled “Women in Academia: City Planning Departments in the United States” at the 29th Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) Conference held in May 2008 in Vera Cruz, Mexico.

- Dr. Toker attended the UCLA Extension’s 22nd Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference held on January 25, 2008 as the Hagman Conference Scholar.

- Dr. Toker presented the progress of the community participation project in Pacoima

(part of URBS 450 Urban Problems Seminar) at CSUN’s 1st Annual Community Engagement Faculty Symposium on April 9, 2008.

- Dr. Covington and Dr. Toker received Julian Beck Learning – Centered Instructional Project Award: Creating a Service Learning Component for Lower Division General Education Courses Offered in the Urban Studies and Planning Department.

- Dr. Covington published a paper in the 2008 Special Issue: Child Care and Economic Development of the International Journal of Economic Development titled “Evidence of Dynamic Geographic Shifts in Metropolitan Child Care Markets Over the 1990s.”

- Dr. Covington presented a paper titled “Towards Parity: Job Isolation of the Poor and Non-Poor over the 1990s” at the Association of the Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Conference in Milwaukee in October 2007.

- Dr. Covington was a Discussant on the Panel Welfare Program Participation at the 29th Annual Research Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, held in Washington, DC. in November 2007.

- Dr. Vasishth organized the initial CSUN Greening Project meeting on June 6, 2008. A summary of the project is at: [http://www.csun.edu/~vasishth/CSUN\\_Greening\\_CFP.htm](http://www.csun.edu/~vasishth/CSUN_Greening_CFP.htm).

- Dr. Vasishth presented a paper titled “Using the Levels-of-Organization Concept to Establish Context and Consequence in Planning Depictions: The Case of Goods Movement in Southern California” at the Association of the Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Conference in Milwaukee in October 2007.

- Dr. Vazquez published a paper titled “Is the New Urban Planning New?” in *Planners Network*, Winter 2008 as a response to “Can We Reinvent Planning by Cliff Hague?”

- Dr. Peter O. Nwosu, Interim Chair, will spend the 2008-2009 academic year as an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow.

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## URBS NEWSLETTER

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