

# urban studies and planning

2010 issue



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

The past year has been a productive and promising time for the department. In the summer, the department office and faculty offices were relocated to a common location in Sierra Hall in renovated offices. This new arrangement will enhance faculty and student interaction.

In conjunction with the Master's of Public Administration Program in the Tseng College of Extended Learning, the department launched a MPA with a specialization in urban planning. This program fills a clear need in the region and the first cohort of 32 graduate students began the two-year program in August 2010.

The past year also saw the initiation of the federally funded academic exchange program with two Brazilian universities, led by Professor Euripedes Deoliveira. In the fall semester three Brazilian students came to CSUN to study, while simultaneously three students from the department travelled to the program's partner universities in Goiania and Uberlandia for a semester of study. The program also supports collaborative work between faculty. Brazilian faculty visited CSUN in the spring of 2010 and three departmental faculty travelled to our partner universities in Brazil in October 2010.

Despite challenging times in the state of California, the department is prospering ... a new department office, a new master's program, and an international exchange program, all bode well for the department's future.

Rob Kent, Chair  
*Department of Urban Studies and Planning*

## URBS & Brazil

The Urban Planning and Sustainability Project (UPSP) successfully moves into its third year. The UPSP exchanged its first cohort of URBS and Brazilian students in fall 2010. The URBS students Sheela Bhongir, Kristopher Fortin and Wasiu Animashaun had their firsthand learning experience of the Brazilian urban life and natural environment while attending lectures and field work courses of urban and environmental planning, and Portuguese at UFG and UFU. The Brazilian students Ludmila Rodrigues (Federal University of Uberlândia "UFU") and Thalyta Rego and Lorene de Oliveira (Federal University of Goiás "UFG") took URBS fall courses with Drs. Toker and Covington, and Prof. Dev Vrat. A very excited second CSUN cohort of 3 students has been selected and they are in their pre-trip mode learning Portuguese. **URBS majors or minors are encouraged to apply for the third CSUN cohort of students that are expected to attend the Brazilian universities in fall 2012.**

In pursue of the UPSP programmatic initiatives Drs. Kent and Toker joined Prof. De Oliveira in a visit to the Brazilian universities UFG and UFU in October 2010. The Brazilian counterparts reciprocated the visit with meetings held at CSUN by the URBS in November 2010. Hence Dr. Toker and Prof. De Oliveira have engaged in joint research with their UFU and UFG colleagues.



Left: Dr. Kent, Kristopher Fortin, Professor DeOliveira on UFG campus; top right: Kristopher Fortin, Dr. Toker, Sheela Bhongir on UFG campus; bottom right: Wasiu Animashaun, Dr. Toker, Professor DeOliveira on UFU campus

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## Edendale

Students of Urban Studies and Planning Department analyzed the actions to withdraw public stairs and to create a process so that the City Art Commission may decide on the artistic merit of large murals on private walls before issuing a permit.

The analysis was conducted under the supervision of Professor van Ammers in URBS 460 (Law and Planning) and URBS 490 (Field Work) courses during the Fall semesters of 2009 and 2010 and Spring semester of 2010.

The Silver Lake Echo Park Elysian Heights Community Plan ("Community Plan") emphasizes the words "links" and "linkages." However, beginning in about 1980, the City Council withdrew some of these stairs from public use and allowed only the adjacent property owners or their tenants to use them.

The Community Plan also recognizes the neighborhoods' public murals as distinctive features that should be preserved. The City Council, however, proposes Art Commission review of new murals as well as of some existing murals, and this review means private property owners will need permits, they will have to pay for those permits, and the Art Commission will have the power to decide whether the larger works have artistic merit.

An informational document was prepared for the Echo Park Improvement Association and the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council. The report determines that the City Council of Los Angeles has undone and is continuing to undo aspects of the Community Plan, which is the design developed by the residents of Silver Lake and Echo Park.



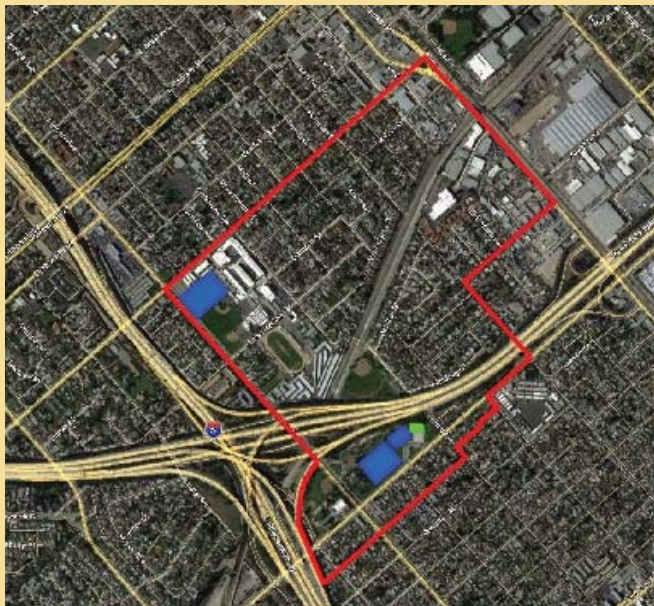
# Community work

## Pacoima Wash

Approximately four miles of channelized concrete, the Pacoima Wash has served the residents of the Northeast San Fernando Valley as an unsightly flood control tributary while simultaneously dividing dynamic communities between Pacoima and the City of San Fernando.

Students of URBS 440 (Community Based Urban Design) in the fall semester of 2010 under the supervision of Dr. Toker collaborated with the non-profit organization Pacoima Beautiful, to produce design guidelines for development along and around the Pacoima Wash.

Mobility category includes design guidelines addressing circulation of pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles. Mobility category also includes design guidelines addressing connection between two sides of the Wash through bridges. Social activities are addressed by design guidelines for playgrounds, picnic areas, community gardens, and dog parks. Athletic recreation activities include sports fields, exercise courts, and skate parks. Landscaping category includes design guidelines addressing street furniture component with statements related to benches, recycling/waste containers, restrooms, lighting, public art, and signage, and plants component.



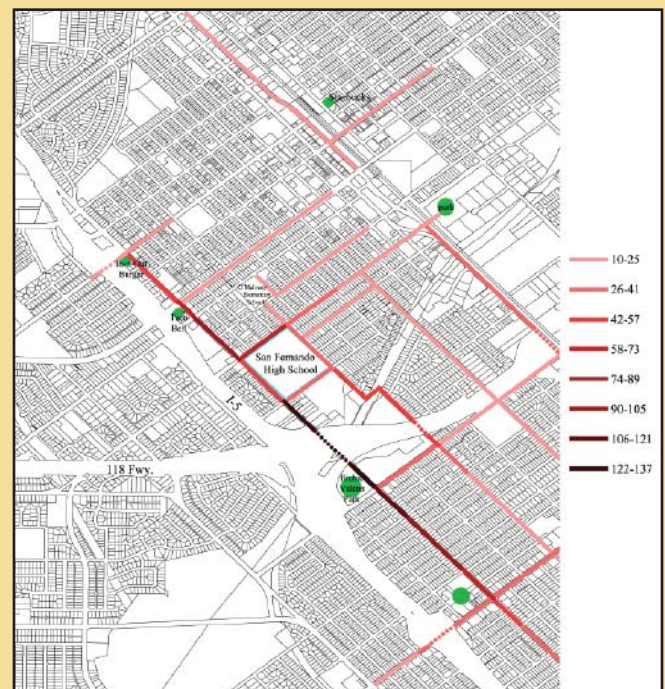
2 mile segment from San Fernando Rd to the Pacoima Spreading Grounds. Approximately 1/4 mile radius from the Pacoima Wash

## Pacoima/San Fernando

The border between the City of Los Angeles and the City of San Fernando runs through the one mile radius area around San Fernando High School. Located close to the intersection of two main principal arterial roads, ease of accessibility for automobiles rather than walkability has been the priority in this area. However, as the pedestrians, San Fernando High School students have to navigate on these streets on a regular basis. This project, as a collaborative effort between URBS 450 (Urban Problems Seminar course) in the spring semester of 2010 under the supervision of Dr. Toker and San Fernando High School, addresses this problem.

CSUN students conducted mapping exercises with 391 high school students. Analysis of the mapping exercise showed that the section of Laurel Canyon Boulevard between San Fernando Mission Boulevard and Van Nuys Boulevard is the most used street by the San Fernando High School students. The map below shows the number of students who identified those paths.

The street was redesigned by CSUN students implementing the walkability criteria - to make the street safe, easy and pleasant to walk for the residents.



## 2009-2010 Department Events

### "Planning the Multiethnic City"

The fall semester course of "Planning the Multiethnic City" (URBS 250) had a different setting. The new part time faculty, Dr. Ali Farassati invited several guest speakers from different ethnic background to share their experience of shaping the City of Los Angeles with their respective ethnic communities.

The first guest speaker was Dr. Mark Wild, author of the course textbook, "Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles" and a history professor at CalState-LA. "Running a Multiethnic City" was the topic of speech made by Mr. Anthony Coroalles, city manager of the City of Calabasas. Mr. Kenneth Moye, Senior Planner with City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) introduced his agency, its history, source of funding, community involvement and various projects to improve disadvantaged neighborhoods mostly lived by ethnic minorities. "Little Tokyo and History of Japanese-Americans in Los Angeles" was the topic of Ms. Karen Yamamoto's presentation. Ms. Yamamoto is a Senior Planner at the CRA in charge developing the Little Tokyo. History of Filipino-Americans in Los Angeles was the topic of another CRA senior planner's presentation, Mr. Gerald Gubatan. Los Angeles Chinatown and the History of Chinese-Americans were covered by Ms. Bibiana Yung, Senior Planner with the CRA and Dr. Pauline Wong, Executive Director of the Chinese-American Museum.

### "Urban Scene" field trip

URBS 150 classes under the direction of Professor van Ammers took field trips to downtown Los Angeles on the Orange Line to the Red Line to Union Station. They saw the line outside of Union Station that used to be the boundary of Old Chinatown, crossed Los Angeles Street to the State Historic Park, and visited the Avila Adobe (1817), the Pio Pico House, the first fire station (1886), and the Chinese History Museum. They then walked to the Bradbury Building, through Grand Central Market, to the top of Bunker Hill on Angel's Flight (Built in 1901). They visited the atrium in the Central Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library, walked through the Biltmore hotel lobby, and entered the subway station at Pershing Square for the return journey.

On another of Professor van Ammers' field trips URBS 150 students met at the corner that was once the great silent film western star Tom Mix's "Mixville," possibly the model for Disney's Frontierland in Disneyland. They climbed "Silverlake's Stonehenge" -- a hill studded with concrete pediments for the old Red Car trolley line -- along the Red Car right-of-way, under the 2 Freeway overpass, up Redbud Street and stood at the house with the cow to look down at the freeway confluence below. They returned by climbing the Alta Vista municipal stairs over the hill and back down to Glendale Boulevard. Mack Sennett's "the Keystone Cop," Charlie Chaplin, Theda Bara and other silent screen stars once motored down Glendale Boulevard.

## 2010 Commencement

Commencement for graduating students in the College of Social and Behavioral Science was held on May 19, 2010 in front of the Oviatt Library at CSUN.

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning at California State University, Northridge is pleased to note that at the university's spring 2010 graduation ceremonies 45 students received BA degrees in Urban Studies and Planning. The department currently has over 100 majors.



From left: Professor Vrat, Vahe Parsekhian, Thomas Chaffee, Misak Sevlian, Mark Kleckner, James Katalbas, Paul Leonard, Elizabeth Van Houten, Erica Rodriguez, Guillermo Quintero, Humberto Quintana, Andres Rodriguez, Theo Edwards, Shuheil Kubota, Sarmen Antanesian, Armen Dalyan, and Dr. Toker.



From left: Albert Ramirez, Brett Papazian, Paul Vargas, Theo Edwards, Elizabeth Van Houten, Sarmen Antanesian, Humberto Quintana.

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## 2010 Graduation Luncheon

Following the commencement, a reception was held for URBS graduating seniors at the Odyssey restaurant located in Granada Hills. Dr. Kent, Chair of URBS, gave opening remarks and wished our graduating class success in their future endeavors.

The James Ring Award, which recognizes juniors for academic excellence, was awarded to Arsen Dervishian and Carlos Hernandez.

The Service Learning Award, which recognizes graduates who have served as officers in the Department's Student Association during their senior year, was awarded to Misak Sevljan, Agavni Sharapkhanyan, Raith Robinson, and Noah Muhlstein.



Misak Sevljan (on the left) and Arsen Dervishian (on the right) with Dr. Kent.



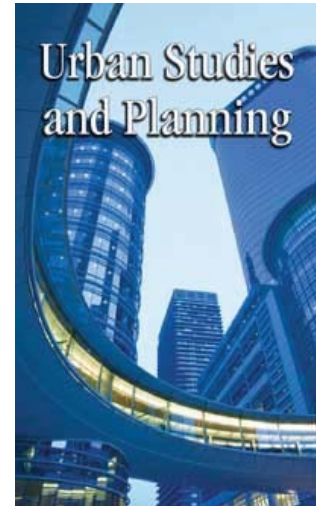
Carlos Hernandez receiving the 2009-2010 James Ring Award from Dr. Thomas.

## MPA - Urban Planning Track

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning, in collaboration with the Master of Public Administration program at CSUN, launched the graduate degree in Public Administration with a specialization in Urban Planning in Fall of 2010.

The program may be completed as a graduate certificate only or taken as an option to complete the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree. This 15-unit, interdisciplinary graduate certificate in urban planning is designed for students and working professionals in such fields as urban planning, urban design, environmental planning, social welfare, public administration, and law.

The program is offered in a cohort format in which students proceed through the course of instruction as a group for the two-year duration. The unique features of the cohort format includes a predetermined course schedule, guaranteed enrollment, sequential presentation of courses, an interactive group learning environment, and utilization of faculty from not only both the URBS and MPA departments but also senior practicing professionals who work in the field of urban planning and public administration.



Those students seeking to earn the graduate credit certificate in Urban Planning need to complete only five courses, listed below:

1. Contemporary Urban Planning in the United States and California
2. Seminar in Comprehensive Planning
3. Sustainable Development and Environmental Impact Analysis
4. Seminar in Planning for Communities and Local Economic Development
5. Field Project in Urban Planning

Students interested in earning a full master's degree in Public Administration with a specialization in urban planning must complete the courses above in addition to core courses of the MPA program and the comprehensive examination as the culminating experience.

For more information please visit:

<http://tsengcollege.csun.edu/urbs/urbs.html> for the graduate credit certificate in Urban Planning and;

<http://tsengcollege.csun.edu/mpa/mpa-courses.html> for the graduate degree in Public Administration.

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## Campus News



Chaparral Hall

Chaparral Hall is the newest addition to the science buildings at California State University, Northridge. With 90,000 square feet, Chaparral Hall is a four story building that has labs both for instruction and research, offices for faculty, and large lecture rooms. This green building uses energy saving techniques such as energy saving light controls which automatically lower the lights depending on the occupancy of the class room. All the rooms in Chaparral Hall use fluorescent lights. By opening its doors to students for the Fall 2009 semester, this new building provides space for students taking math and science classes.



Valley Performing Arts Center

The Valley Performing Arts Center is a magnificent 166,000 square foot multipurpose concert hall that is being hailed as a landmark of the San Fernando Valley that opened its doors to the public in January 2011. This multipurpose concert hall has 1,700 seats including a 178 seat black box theatre and food services; an accommodating environment that attendees will enjoy. The facility is also the new home of CSUN's campus radio station KCSN-FM. Academic spaces serve the students of Cal State Northridge's music and theater arts programs. All of this was done with energy efficient, cost effective and sustainable design kept in mind. The Valley Performing Arts Center is seeking to obtain a LEED Silver Certification from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC).

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Student Recreation Center

CSUN'S Hydrogen Fuel Cell Satellite Plant is an ideal model of Cal State Northridge's pursuit of using energy efficiency around the campus. This satellite heating and cooling plant uses hydrogen fuel cell technology during peak hours to generate environmentally sensitive and cost effective electrical power. The carbon dioxide produced by the fuel cell power is redirected to a simulated rain forest environment and to the biology green house which are both located only a few feet from the one megawatt fuel cell. This technology not only allows for cost effective energy for the campus but has also created an opportunity for students and faculty to study carbon sequestration by plants and carbon dioxide enrichment of agricultural plant development.

Although still under construction, the Student Recreation Center is already building a reputation of excellence. Located east of the University Student Union, Inc., the 100,000 square foot center is being built to cater to CSUN student, faculty and staff athletic needs. The facility will include a number of different areas for sports and exercise including rooms for rock climbing, a gymnasium, an indoor jogging/walking track and an outdoor pool. The center will also house administrative offices. This spacious recreation center has incorporated sustainability into its design, allowing it use energy efficiently. Building information modeling (BIM) was used to make aspects in HVAC, architecture, and structure as efficient as possible. It is because of the endeavors to be sustainable the Student Recreation Center's building envelope, lighting and HVAC systems will surpass California Title 24 energy conservation requirements by 20 percent. With a projected opening of 2011-2012, the Student Recreation Center is being highly awaited by students, faculty and staff alike.



Orange Grove

The Orange Grove at Cal State Northridge has been renovated to provide a quiet and relaxing environment for those visiting the campus. A new Orange Grove Walk has been created to provide access from Lindley Avenue to the University Club and parking structure. The pond that existed at the Science 5 site and the campus observatory have been relocated to the Orange Grove. Benches are distributed throughout the location and there are several walking paths to allow visitors to enjoy the scenery and tranquility.

## Faculty News

**Rob Kent**, Chair and Professor, was invited to College of Liberal Studies at Louisiana Tech University, in Ruston, Louisiana in May 2010 where he delivered a university lecture on "Sustainability in Latin America: Alternative Perspectives" to approximately 200 students and faculty members.

**Ward Thomas**, Associate Professor, recently published "Do environmental regulations impede economic growth? A case study of the metal finishing industry in the South Coast Basin of California." The Economic Development Quarterly, Vol. 23, (4), pp. 329-341. (2009).

**Zeynep Toker**, Associate Professor, was invited as a guest lecturer on Urban Health and Sustainable Urban Form and then as a reviewer of final projects for PAHO Mega Cities 2010 class in the Design Matters Program at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA.

**Henrik Minassians**, Assistant Professor, presented "Performance Measures and Its Pitfalls: What Can we Learn from a Southern California Public Agency," Chattanooga, TN in March 2010.

**Kenya Covington**, Assistant Professor, participated on the team that created the methodology for the Healthy Neighborhood Index. The overall index was determined by collecting and reporting data in six areas for 2006 and 2009. The results in Park Mesa Heights on economics, education, health, housing, criminal justice and civic engagement are compared to outcomes for 5 other local jurisdictions within Los Angeles. Results of the Healthy Neighborhood Index will be released by the Los Angeles Urban League in early Spring.

CSUN students in URBS 490C under direction of **Phyl Van Ammers**, Lecturer, received a "Student Project Award" from the Los Angeles Section of the American Planning Association for Spring 2010 for their plan of the Pinoleville Nation (Indian Reservation) in Northern California.

## Alumni News

**Edgar Arroyo** (2009) is an assistant planner with the City of San Fernando.

At Moorpark College in Moorpark, CA, **Andrea Ehrogott** (1995) is a geography and GIS instructor.

**Brad Kesner** (1988) is a senior vice-president with Stone-Miller in Los Angeles, CA.

**Todd R. Stokes** (1999) is a Lieutenant in the Glendale Police Department.

The director of community development for the City of La Canada-Flintridge is **Robert J. Stanley** (1981).

In Oregon, **Marion J. Thompson** (2004) is a senior planner for the City of Roseburg.

**Gerry Guzman** (2005), a member of the department's alumni council, is also the district director for the assembly-member for 39th Assembly District in Arleta, CA.

**Usher I. Barnum** (1987) is a Commander in the United States Navy in San Diego, CA, where he serves as deputy comptroller for COMNAVAIRFOR.

In Boise, Idaho, **Charles Albanese** (1982) is a detective with the Boise Police Department.

**Please keep the department informed on your professional and personal news. If you have a moment, send along a couple copies of your current business card to Rob Kent, department chair.**

## Alumni News

**Kristi G. Lopez** (2007) graduated from the University of Southern California in May 2010 with masters in social work.

**Phillip E. Ricks** (2005) is a project manager for the Los Angeles County Olive View-UCLA Medical Center.

Certified as a short-sale specialist, **Julie Newman** (1996) is a realtor with Pinnacle Estate Properties in Northridge, CA.

**Mayra Arambula** (nee Hernandez) (1994) is employed as a property manager in Southern California.

**Jess Harris** (1988) works as a land use planner for the city of Seattle, WA

Planning Associates Inc. in Studio City, CA employees **Jeffrey Allen** (2008) as an Assistant Planner.

A senior environmental specialist, **Gwynneth L. Doyle** (2002), works for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO).

In Ventura, CA, **Jane Farkas** (2003) works as a planner for Sespe Consulting Inc.

After 38 years as a facilities and property manager for Kaiser-Permanente in Southern California, **Thomas L. Fox** (1972) reports that he plans to retire in the near future.

**Michael E. Johnson** (1993), AIA, is the vice president of the PGA TOUR Design & Construction Services in south Florida.

The transportation/GIS manager for the City of Palmdale is **Michael Behen** (1991). He also completed his Masters in Public Administration at CSUN in 2007.

The supervising appraiser for the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office is **Peter Thomas** (1985).

**Mark R. Edwards** (1998) was recently elected as the treasurer for the Board of Homeless Health Care of Los Angeles.

A member of the department's alumni council, **Donna Rosser** (2006) works for the City of Simi Valley as a planning technician in the Department of Environmental Services.

With an MPA and MURP from California State University, San Bernardino and California Polytechnic University, Pomona, respectively, **Randy Floyd** (1989) now works as the executive director for the Antelope Valley Transit Authority.

**Christopher Brown** (2005) works as an associate project manager II for Hogle-Ireland Inc., a land planning and development consulting firm.

Sun Microsystems employs **Joel Weise** (1979) as their principal engineer and chief technologist for security.

**Joseph Heredia** (2000) works for the Building Department of the City of West Hollywood as a contract planner.

**Johnny Wiley III** (2004) works in an after school program that serves 56 schools throughout the City of Los Angeles.

**Kasra Davar** (2008) serves as a firefighter for the City of Los Angeles.

**Mike Sedel** (1973) is employed as the city manager for the City of Simi Valley.

**Bonnie Barrio** (2008) is currently working on her masters of Urban Regional Planning at California Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Senior regional planner and zoning enforcement investigator, **Michael M. Besem** (2001), works in the planning department of the County of Los Angeles.

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