

THE URBS POST

SPRING 2021

Newsletter of The Department of Urban Studies and Planning, California State University, Northridge

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Full-Time Faculty

Rob Kent (Chair), Ph.D.

Craig Olwert, Ph.D.

Henrik Minassians, Ph.D.

Ward Thomas, Ph.D.

Zeynep Toker, Ph.D.

Mintesnot Woldeamanuel, Ph.D.

Part-Time Faculty

Thomas Bassett, M.A.

Bradley Calvert, M.A.

Euripedes De Oliveira, Ph.D.

Daniel Freedman, J.D.

Paloma Giottonini, Ph.D.

Scott Howard, J.D.

Brettany Shannon, Ph.D.

Diana Varat, J.D.

Dev Vrat, M.A., AICP

David Weintraub, M. A.

Claude Willey, M.F.A.

Staff

Mirna Reyes

(Administrative Coordinator)

Chair's Message



Dr. Rob Kent, Chair, Urban Studies and Planning Department (pictured left).

It's been well over a year now since the Covid-19 pandemic arrived and we moved from face-to-face teaching to

remote/virtual instruction, mostly using the meeting software platform, ZOOM. Despite the dramatic changes in our instructional methods and pedagogy occasioned by the pandemic, students, staff, and faculty adapted remarkably quickly and well. Not that it has been especially easy. But as we finish a second academic year under the shadow of the pandemic, it is clear the department faculty have succeeded in providing our students with a rewarding and meaningful education. And the department's students too have demonstrated incredible adaptability and resilience as they have continued their educations under these challenging conditions.

Faculty have learned a great deal about how to bring our classes to our students in new and exciting ways. Innovation springs from challenges. These new lessons and innovations promise to enhance our students' educational experience in the future. We are looking forward to the coming academic year (2021-22), and a return to campus for students and faculty. While many classes will still be offered only in remote/virtual formats in the fall semester, in-person instruction will be offered in about 30 percent of all classes. At this point, we anticipate that by Spring 2022, a full return to campus will be possible.

Alumni Accomplishments

Governor Newsom Appoints Alumnus to Regional Water Board (January 2021)

Michael Mendez (BA 2001) has been appointed by Governor Newsom to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Dr. Mendez is an assistant professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy at the University of California, Irvine. He is a member of the National Academies of Sciences' Board on Environmental Change and Society. Mendez earned a Master of Public Policy degree in environmental planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and doctorate in environmental planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

Alumnus Awarded the 2021 Dale Prize for a Practitioner. Planning in the Pandemic: Public Health and Social Justice (December 2020)

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Cal Poly University, Pomona, awarded the Dale Prize for a Planning Practitioner Prize to department alum, **Miguel Vazquez, AICP**. The prize is awarded annually to a distinguished planning practitioner. Mr. Vazquez currently serves as Healthy Communities Urban Regional Planner at Riverside University Health System - Public Health in Riverside, California. Congratulations Miguel! For details see [Miguel Vazquez, AICP, 2021 Dale Prize Awards](#).

Alumna Elected to City Council of Santa Monica (November 2020)

Department alum, **Christine Parra**, has been elected to the Santa Monica City Council. Christine also works full-time as the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for Culver City. For more details on her election see [Christine Parra, Los Angeles Times](#).

Alumni Update

Adrian Flores ('19) is an assistant planner with the City of Bell Gardens, CA.

Alen Estrada-Rodas ('13, '17) has just accepted a position as an environmental planner with Place Works in Los Angeles.

Alex Clingman ('20) is an assistant planner for the City of Simi Valley, CA.

Andres Di Zitti ('10) is an operations manager for LA Metro in Los Angeles.

Andy Rodriguez ('12) is a senior city planner for the City of Los Angeles.

Benjamin Levi ('20) is a transportation associate I with LA Metro in Los Angeles.

Beverly Quezada ('19) is a planning aide in the City of Palmdale, CA.

Cali Piccirillo ('19) is a project administrator for Asso Pax Environmental in Ojai, CA.

Chris Marks ('09) is an associate transportation planner with the Alameda County Transportation Commission in Oakland, CA.

Daniel Savala ('11) is the executive director of Del Paso Boulevard Partners in Sacramento, CA.

Donna Rosner ('06) is retired.

Dynasty Machado ('16) is a GIS business analyst at Esri in Redlands, CA.

Evan Sensible ('19) is a project planner with Meridian Consultants in Los Angeles.

Grecia Aceves ('12) is an assistant planner with the City of San Diego, CA.

Hakeem Parke-Davis ('13) is a planning deputy for Los Angeles City Council District 10.

Jonathan Fox ('17) is an assistant planner in the City of Lafayette, CA.

Jose Quintanilla ('18) is an assistant planner in the City of Sacramento.

Jose Tchopourian ('13) is a senior project manager for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians in Highland, CA.

Karen Cervantes Jimenez ('09) is a grant writer and the director of Sebastian's Room in Long Beach.

Mario Alberto Anaya ('15) is a principal planner with the City of Tulare, CA.

Paul Drury ('90) is retired.

Rena Kambara ('07) is a sheriff's deputy for the County of Los Angeles.

Ricardo Meza ('14) is a regional planner for the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning.

Rob Holt ('14) is a planner III with the City of Fresno, CA.

Ryan Holman ('18) is a digital producer for Trigger in Los Angeles.

Sheela Bhongir ('11) is a regional planner with the Tulare County Association of Governments in Visalia, CA.

Tracy Chu ('18) is an environmental analyst for T&B Planning in Irvine, CA.

Yixuan Zhu ('20) is an intern at the Xi'an Land Use Planning Research Center in Xi'an (Shaanxi), China.

Campus Spotlight- New President



In January 2021, the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees appointed Erika D. Beck, Ph.D. (pictured left), to serve as President of California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

Before CSUN, Beck served as president of California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI). Prior to her time at CSUCI, Beck served as the provost and executive vice president of Nevada State College (NSC) in Henderson, Nevada.

Before her tenure as provost and executive vice president, she served as the dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, a faculty member in the psychology department, and chair of the Faculty Senate.

Prior to her service at NSC, she served as a faculty fellow at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and a research associate at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. Beck earned a bachelor's in psychology and a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of California, San Diego. She is also "made in the CSU," having earned her master's in psychology from San Diego State University. *(Source of Photo and Story: csunshinetoday.csun.edu)*

Campus Spotlight: Sierra Annex

The CSU Board of Trustees approved a blueprint design of the nearly \$50 million construction of CSUN's Sierra Annex project in March 2021. The project will construct a new 62,500-square-foot annex located immediately south of Sierra Hall.

The multi-phase project also includes the renovation of the 58-year-old Sierra Hall, which houses the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the College of Humanities. Sierra Hall is the largest and the oldest classroom building on campus and has not had a major renovation since 1963.

The renovation will repurpose the current lecture spaces and address existing campus space issues. The new three-story extension will replace most of the current lecture classrooms in Sierra Hall and is not expected to disrupt academic programs during its renovation stages. *(Source of story: sundial.csun.edu).*

URBS Scholarships Winners

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning awarded the following scholarships to students in Spring 2021:

Urban Studies and Planning Scholarship – Professor Warren Campbell Scholarship

- Nathan Romine
- Roxan Rivas

Urban Studies and Planning Alumni Scholarship Awards

- Sulayman Jawaid
- Martin Gonzalez-Barrios
- Gemma Jimenez Gonzalez

James H. Ring Endowed Undergraduate Scholarship

- Eric Estrada
- Rocio Martinez
- Brian Chun
- Rebecca Swint

James H. Ring Endowed Graduate Scholarship

- Arbyn Olarte
- Elias Salgado
- Steven Martinez
- Madison Dederick

Faculty Achievement

Woldeamanuel, M. G., Woldetensae B. (2021). Riders' satisfaction with public transportation performance: the case of Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit (AALRT), *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*, 38 (1): 79-101.

Faculty Spotlight



Professor Euripedes De Oliveira (pictured left) is no stranger to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at CSUN. Indeed, he has deep roots in the

department and knows it from the perspective of both a student and a professor. Euri attended CSUN as an undergraduate student and received his BA in urban studies and planning in 2000. He continued his education at UCLA earning two master's degrees one in urban planning and the other in Latin American Studies. He returned to CSUN a few years later as a lecturer in the department.

Subsequently, he received a major U.S grant to fund a 5-year educational exchange and research program between CSUN and Brazilian universities. Euri retired from CSUN officially in 2018 but couldn't stay away! He has continued to teach online sections of URBS 150, 310, or 350.

Euri recently completed his Ph.D. in planning, sustainability, and climate change at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass). He continues sharing his research on sustainability and climate change in conferences including the United Nations's Latin America and Caribbean Climate Week".

He lives in western Massachusetts where he also teaches part-time at UMass. He and his husband, Larry, enjoy yoga, bicycling, and gardening. He has served on municipal planning and housing development boards.

When asked about the URBS program at CSUN, Euri quipped “I’ve been around and have been exposed to programs and taught national and international audiences of students from schools in the U.S. east and west coasts, and Central and South Americas. I can say without doubt CSUN’s Urban Studies and Planning department is in the top tier.”

Master of Urban Planning (MUP), Up and Running

The fifth cohort of the Master of Urban Planning (MUP) program students will finish their course work in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning in May 2021. The department will welcome its seventh cohort of students and classes will began in Fall 2021. The Master of Urban Planning program is accepting applications!

Stay in Touch

The goal of The URBS Post is to maintain communication with our alumni, faculty, and students. We love correspondence from our alumni! Please keep in touch with us. We would like to know what you are doing, along with learning about exciting events and accomplishments in your life. Please keep us updated on any changes of home and e-mail addresses.

Internships

We are expanding our internship program. Let us know if your company offers internships and we will share this information with our students.

Donations

Please consider giving: no donation is too small. Donating provides both financial support and encouragement to students. [Visit our Giving Webpage](#) or call Dr. Rob Kent at 818-677-4372. Let us know if you have suggestions on how we can improve our newsletter. We hope to hear from you soon!!

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