

THE URBS POST

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

Spring 2020

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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 DeOliveira, Ph.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, Admin. Support Coordinator
- Charity Tolefree, Administrative Assistant)

Lab Assistants

- Wyatt Hambrick
- Eric Lara
- Finn Murphy

Chair's Message - URBS and COVID-19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has made this semester a challenging one for the department's students, staff, and faculty. Since mid-March no classes have been held on campus and all face-to-face instruction has been moved to remote modalities (email, phone, Zoom etc.). Simultaneously, work and family life also have been upended as the established routines of our lives are shaken and transformed. Despite the abruptness and magnitude of these changes, students, staff, and faculty have proved themselves adaptable and resilient. This is not to say there have not been difficulties in making this dramatic pivot on such short notice, but by-in-large teaching and learning are proceeding well, and our students are moving forward expeditiously toward completing their degree programs and graduating. While the immediate future is unknown, I am confident that the department's students, staff, and faculty will face this time and its uncertainties with flexibility and determination. Rest assured that through it all department faculty will continue to offer the highest quality instruction, career guidance, and support to our students.

Urban Studies and Planning ranked #10

URBS has been named among the top 25 Most Affordable Bachelor's Degrees in Urban Planning for 2020. The rankings are determined by Great Value Colleges using data collected from College Navigator regarding tuition, as well as program information gleaned directly from each institution's official website. The methodology used to determine placement is based primarily on tuition, but also considers things like program flexibility, customization within the degree program both in content and format, and an overall "wow" factor which highlights each program's unique offerings and sets it apart from the pack. For programs that have limited online availability, institutions are ranked based solely on tuition cost. CSUN's Urban Studies and Planning program, which placed 10th, was selected not only for the program's affordability, but also for the institution's overall outstanding reputation, its faculty's excellence, and the unerring commitment to providing students a high-quality education and in doing so, giving them the necessary tools to achieve future career goals. The full article and the rating and ranking methodology can be found here at the [Great Value Colleges \(website\)](#)

Campus Spotlight – CSUN's Operations Affected by COVID-19

We are living in uncertain times. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, CSUN turned to virtual instruction in the middle of spring semester through the summer term with a possibility that the virtual learning will continue into the Fall semester. As of this writing, a final decision has not been made for the Fall 2020 semester. The university is closely monitoring the situation based upon the public health guidance from local and state authorities. CSUN's campus remains open to

maintain essential operations including, but not limited to, Student Housing and related food service, the Klotz Student Health Center, Information Technology in support of virtual and alternate learning modalities, maintenance of laboratories conducting research, fiscal and payroll services, and ensuring the physical safety and security of campus. Limited face-to-face student services is continuing to be available, as well as offered virtually. While dealing with the pandemic, our colleagues are helping the effort of tracking the COVID-19 spread. CSUN geography professor Steven Graves and the Center for Geospatial Science and Technology director, Danielle Bram, have created interactive maps that track the virus' progress county by county on the national level, and neighborhood by neighborhood in Los Angeles County. The map is available at [Center for Geospatial Science Technology](#). Hoping to get a better grasp on how COVID-19 is impacting people at the local level, the maps are tracing the number of cases in different neighborhoods.

Northridge Beautification Foundation (NBF) -- Community Partner

The NBF is a community non-profit organization based in Northridge but with a reach that spans much of the San Fernando Valley. The organization grew out of a collaboration with the San Fernando Rescue Mission in 2017. Headed by a dynamic and indefatigable director, Don Larson, the NBF has engaged in many community developments projects specifically in the Northridge area. In addition, its "Clean Streets Clean Starts" program has successfully engaged in work and community clean up campaigns on Lankershim, Van Nuys, and Victory Boulevards. The NBF also has generously funded scholarships for CSUN students who demonstrate commitment to local community development in the Los Angeles region.

Thanks to our Donors

- Jeffery Allen
- AnaLisa Campos
- Samuel Dominguez
- Kristopher Fortin
- Monica Haboush
- Jose Jimenez
- Christopher Kalbaklian
- Ken Koslow
- Barbara Merino
- Robert Myman
- Julie Newman
- Richard and Maxine Simon
- Peter Thomas
- Sonja Tristan

URBS Awards Scholarships

Congratulations to the 12 recipients of department-sponsored scholarships in Spring 2020. All awardees received a \$1,000 scholarship. Generous donations from department alumni and friends make these scholarship awards possible.

Alumni Scholarship

- Stephanie Banuelos
- Martin Gonzalez-Barrios
- Erik Lara Mora

Northridge Beautification Foundation Scholarship

- Roxan Rivas

James Ring Graduate Scholarship

- Philip Hirrel
- Suray Nathan
- Nathan Romine

James Ring Undergraduate Scholarship

- Brian Chun
- Whitney Heller
- Gemma G. Jimenez
- Yesenia Mateo
- Joseph Palma

Alumni

Rawan Al Jamal (BA '14, MUP '17) is an associate transportation planner for Caltrans District 7 in Los Angeles.

Jeffrey Allen (BA '08) is a senior project coordinator at Kimberlina Whettam & Associates in Los Angeles.

Mario Anaya (BA '08, MPA Cohort 70, Urban '15) is a principal planner for the City of Tulare.

Jordan Barbakow (MUP '17) is a senior associate for funds development at Strategic Development Solutions in Los Angeles.

Sheela Bhongir (BA '11) is a community associate with Lyft in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Alex Bratcher (BA '03) is a landscape supervisor for the State of California in Los Alamitos.

Laurie Brightwell (BA '08) is a fire inspector for the Burbank Fire Department.

Analisa Campos (BA '14) is a recycling specialist with the County of Riverside in Riverside.

Sergio Carvajal (BA '14) is a transportation planner with Caltrans in Los Angeles where he works in project management and programming.

Freddy Carrillo (BA '06) is an associate planner in the City of Moorpark.

Carlos Contreras (BA '06) is a senior planner in the City of Thousand Oaks.

Hakeem Park Davis (BA '13) is a planner with the City of Los Angeles. This year, he received the "Trailblazer Award" from the city, recognizing exemplary city employees.

Sam Dominguez (BA '18) is a planning technician in the Community Development Department in the City of Camarillo.

Joseph Fiss (BA '89) is the assistant city manager for the City of Ojai.

Jonathan Fox (BA '17) is an assistant planner for the City of Lafayette.

Michael Frost (BA '91) is the deputy director of Public Works for Marin County.

Noor Hooshmand (BA '17) is a GIS analyst/software engineer with AMS Associates in Walnut Creek.

Karen Jimenez (BA '09) is the founder of Sebastian's Room in Buena Park.

Nadar Khalil (MUP '19) is a staff planner with Meridian Consultants in Los Angeles.

Carly Laddusaw (nee Hollas) (BA '19) is a transportation program monitor with the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Aeronautical Division in Nashville, TN.

Kristi Lopez (BA '07) is a policy analyst/district representative for Office of State Senator Anthony J. Portantino (California).

Vidal Marquez (BA '10) is an assistant planner for the City of Orange. He serves as Chair of the American Planning Association's Latinos and Planning Division for the 2020-2021 term.

Jorge Martinez (BA '13) is a transportation planner with LA Metro in Los Angeles where he works on service planning and scheduling.

Rogelio Martinez (BA '16) is a planner for Kern County in Bakersfield.

Jonathan Palacio (BA '00) is an associate transportation planner in the Regional Planning Department of Caltrans District 7 in Los Angeles.

Sofia Ramirez (MUP '19) is a mental health counselor at the San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center in Van Nuys.

Enrique Rubalcava (BA '14) is a designer with PBK in Oxnard.

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

Christopher Smith (BA '92) is the principal at BEI Services in Torrance. He also serves on the program committee of the Urban Land Institute in Los Angeles.

Morgan Spadone (Minor '17) is the founder and producer of PreViz Studio in Woodland Hills.

Matt Waterman (BA '07) a real estate broker and investor at Pegasus Investments in Encino.

Liza Wright (BA '13) is a GIS analyst in the Department of Regional Planning, County of Los Angeles.

Faculty Achievement

Dr. Mintesnot Woldeamanuel's book "Urban Issues in Rapidly Growing Cities: Planning for Development in Addis Ababa" is published in February 2020.

Faculty Spotlight

Brettany Shannon, Ph.D., is an urban planning and development scholar who studies how people use digital communications for urban and social placemaking. Her research agenda is broadly defined. That is, she looks at how people can and do use media arts to foster community engagement and participatory placemaking, as well as how real estate developers use websites, social networks, and the constituent media for marketing or to reinforce power. Dr. Shannon believes digital communications hold promise in that they engage with such planning phenomena as identity, participation, and process, and uphold context as a decisive factor in all. But her research reminds us that technology is a social production, and that just as we extol the virtues of the information age, planners must not forget planning's complicated history owes in large part to its uncritically technophilic tendencies. In support of her research, she studies community planning, the cultural economy, cultural landscapes, digital media, media

arts, public space, the public realm, and the history of planning. Dr. Shannon received the 2016 John Dyckman Award for Best Dissertation for her thesis, *Avoiding Middle-Class Planning 2.0: Media Arts and the Future of Urban Planning*. Her co-edited volume on authenticity in community development, *Planning for AuthenticITIES* (Routledge) was published in summer 2018.

Master of Urban Planning (MUP), Up and Running

The fourth 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 2020. The department also accepted its sixth cohort of students and classes began in Fall 2020. The Master of Urban Planning program is now accepting applications for the Fall 2020 cycle! **The application deadline is Thursday, May 29, 2020.**

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. Information on ways to give can be found at the [College of Social and](#)

[Behavioral Sciences Giving Website](#) 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!!

Contact Us

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