The Department of Urban Studies and Planning is flourishing.

The department currently boasts approximately 70 undergraduate majors, 20 undergraduate minors, and 30 master of urban planning graduate students. Spring marked a major milestone in our history, when the first class of 15 Master of Urban Planning degree recipients graduated in May 2017. The Master’s program has proved to be a strong draw for the department and a third cohort of 16 new graduate students began the program this fall. The new academic year brought a number of personnel changes to the department. Mirna Reyes joined the department as its administrative support coordinator (office manager) in December 2016. In May 2017, the department also bid farewell to two faculty members, Kenya Covington and Alessandro Rigolon, who accepted positions at other universities. As the summer waned and the fall semester began, the department welcomed several new faculty to its roster. These include Andrew Jared (Planning Law and Sustainability), Edward Huang (Los Angeles), Manraj Bhatia (Graphic Communications for Planners), and Diana Varat (Planning Law).

Our department’s alumni Kurt Christiansen, FAICP was elected as President for American Planners Association (APA). He will assume office on January 1, 2018. Kurt is the economic and community development director for the City of Azusa, California. Previously, he served as community development director for Yorba Linda and development services director for Sierra Madre. He served as president of APA’s California Chapter, vice chair of the Chapter Presidents Council, and a member of the APA Governance Committee and the Membership Committee. He also served as the co-chair of the local host committee for the 2012 APA National Planning Conference in Los Angeles. He is a member of the California State University, Northridge, Urban Planning and Studies Department Alumni Council. Kurt was an honoree at the 2012 CSUN Volunteer Service Awards ceremony. He graduated from CSUN in 1985 with a bachelor’s degree in Urban Studies and Planning and completed a Master’s degree in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1991.

Mirna Reyes joined the Department of Urban Studies and Planning in December 2016, as the administrative support coordinator. She graduated from California State University Northridge (CSUN), with a major in sociology in 2007. Her professional background includes over 15 years of working in the in the non-profit sector, providing administrative and community development services. In her free-time, she enjoys meditation, traveling and learning about different cultures. She also mentors youth on higher education opportunities, resources and quality access.
CSUN Sustainability Center

The Associated Students (AS) at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) has designed and constructed a new 10,000 square-foot Sustainability Center. The new AS Sustainability Center is a multi-functional space, serving primarily as an expanded central collections location for campus recyclables. It also serves as the public face and administrative hub of the Center for its programs and services. In addition, it is the home of the administrative offices of the Institute for Sustainability and a focal point for the University community for educational programs, services and issues related to the environment and sustainability. The CSUN Sustainability Center was devised as a space with lofty green building goals and served as an educational opportunity for future students. According to Catherine Kni-azewycz, Director of Design and Construction, the structure will be a zero-net-energy building, meaning that solar panels will be the main source of electricity. The Sustainability Center features a courtyard for recycling and seminar rooms for educational programs about sustainability. The building also includes administrative offices, shower rooms and a composting toilet.

Faculty Publications


Community Partners: The City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles has long been an important community partner for the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. This has been especially true with respect to the Planning Department as well as the planning staff employed independently by the city councilmembers in district offices. For instance, recently several students interned in the planning offices of the Van Nuys Civic Center. These include Jennifer Sanchez (’15) in Spring 2016, Manuel Elizarraras (’17) in Fall 2016, Christina Nguyen (’17) in Spring 2017, and Alvaro Barragan in Fall 2017. City planners, Elva Nuno-O'Donnell and Adam Vallani, have done a superb job supervising and mentoring these interns. The city also provided many other internship possibilities. Many students have also found rewarding planning internships working in the district offices of Los Angeles City councilmembers. Alumni Patricia Steur (’03), Claudia Rodriguez (’05), Andy Rodriguez (’10), Diana Yedoyan (’13), Sergio Carvajal (’14), and all interned in councilmembers district offices. Others have interned in related agencies – for example, Dang Nguyen (’17) in the Department of Transportation and Humberto Quintana (’10) in the Mayor’s office. Many CSUN graduates also pursued their careers with the City of Los Angeles in planning and related fields. These include Aleta James (’82), John Strickland (’91), Anna Vidal (’92), Victor Takayama (’02), Claudia Rodriguez (’05), Andy Rodriguez (’10), Alisha Marshall (’12), Aida Karapetian (’13), Hatim Fatehi (’14), Ruben Rubi (’14) and Olga Ayala (’17).
The Department of Urban Studies and Planning graduated its first cohort of the Masters of Urban Planning (MUP) program in May, 2017. Congratulations graduates!

The department also accepted its third cohort of students and classes began in Fall 2017. Now we have a total of 34 students in the graduate program.

The Master of Urban Planning program is now accepting applications for the Fall 2018 cycle! The priority application deadline is Friday, March 2nd, 2018.

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU to our alumni who volunteered to help on MOCK INTERVIEWS on April 27, 2017.

Mike Ascione
David Canlas
Freddy Carrillo
Kurt Christiansen
Carlos Contreras
Yvette Lopez
Christopher Palmer
Christopher Smith
Humberto Quintana

THANK YOU to our alumni who helped on SPEED MENTORING on April 19, 2017.

Michelle Aragones
Mike Ascione
Carlos Contreras
Andres Di Zitti
Isaiah Ford
Yvette Lopez-Ledesma
Andy Rodriguez
Christopher Smith
Marisol Zamar

The Urban Planning Students Association elected new officers in Spring 2017.

Samuel Dominguez (President)
Cinthya Guzman (Vice President)
Ariel Jones (Treasurer)
Martin Hernandez (Secretary)
Linda Mendez (Social Media Manager)

William Cabrera (Event Coordinator)
Jared Magsanoc (APA Student Rep)
Areli Perez (Fundraising Coordinator)
Haley Harleman (Neighborhood Council Liaison)

Our undergraduate students Raquel Menanno and Erlyn Gonzalez presented their research on the Los Angeles River Revitalization at the American Planning Association (APA) conference in New York City in May 2017.

Our graduate students Alvin Estrada and Jordan Barbakow presented their research at the annual Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) conference at Palm Desert on May 17, 2017.

Samuel Dominguez was the recipient of the 2016/17 James H. Ring Scholarship Award. He received a scholarship of $1,000 in recognition of his academic achievements. This scholarship is named for its founder, James H. Ring, an alumnus of the department (1972).

Ariel Jones received a $2,500 scholarship awarded from the California Association of Professional Employees (CAPE) in May 2017. This scholarship was established by CAPE to support undergraduate students in Urban Studies and Planning at CSUN.
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: https://givenow.csun.edu/ or call 818-677-4372.

Let us know if you have suggestions on how we can improve our newsletter. We hope to hear from you soon!!

If you would like to send us information for upcoming issues, or if you have any questions, contact the Newsletter Editor, Dr. Mintesnot Woldeamanuel at mintesnot.woldeamanuel@csun.edu; phone: 818-677-7246 or the Chair of the Department Dr. Rob Kent at rkent@csun.edu; phone: 818-677-4372.