Scholarships are important. They contribute directly to student success by helping to cover the costs of tuition, books, and simply living expenses while they pursue their degree. Scholarships also contribute to the long-term success of our students in other less direct ways. They help build the student’s confidence and indirectly encourages them to apply for other scholarships. Further, when cited on a student's resume, a scholarship also sends a positive message to potential employers about the applicant's abilities and work ethic. For these reasons, the Department inaugurated the annual “Alumni Scholarship” which has been generously funded by alumni donations. Last spring the Department awarded two Alumni Scholarships of $1,000 each, and this spring we again hope to offer at least two scholarships. We need your help to do so. Please consider donating to the department to support the Alumni Scholarship fund. No donation is too small. Every bit helps!

Dr. Mintesnot Woldeamanuel, Urban Studies and Planning Professor, spent Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 in Ethiopia as part of the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program. As a U.S. Fulbright Scholar, he taught courses to urban and regional planning Ph.D. students in Addis Ababa University. He also served as lead thesis advisor for master’s students. He gave guest lectures, seminars and workshops to six universities outside of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. “Sharing my knowledge and experiences with Ethiopian students and professionals is the most humbling experience I ever had,” Woldeamanuel said. He was working on a research project that seeks to understand the challenges of the Light Rail Transit (LRT) system in Addis Ababa city from riders’ perspectives. “I was born in Addis Ababa, so this gives me an opportunity to get back to my origin and give back,” Woldeamanuel said. “The LRT was opened in 2015 in order to meet the ever-increasing travel demand in the city. My students and I collected data from riders and the adjacent communities, and we gathered air quality data at several stations. Through the analysis of the data, we hope to learn the challenges of the rail system and propose some solutions to the Rail Authority to better improve the rail transit service.” Based on the findings of the research, he is co-writing journal papers with graduate students and professors from Addis Ababa University. The first paper will be presented at Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Conference in January 2020. Dr. Woldeamanuel is also writing a book on urban issues in rapidly growing cities by taking Addis Ababa as a case study.

The 2019 Masters of Urban Planning class developed the Chatsworth Resiliency Plan. Through archival research, interviews, public meetings and on-line surveys, the students worked with the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council to identify green infrastructure, good jobs and infrastructure management as good indicators to increase Chatsworth's resilience. The final plan developed 13 recommendations for the neighborhood and city to pursue to increase and improve the safety, environment, and community connections needed for a resilient neighborhood. The recommendations are developed consistent with the Resilient LA Plan, but focus on Chatsworth.

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CSUN has begun planning for a much-needed renovation of Sierra Hall, home to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. The project is intended to modernize the building and upgrade the facilities to contemporary standards. In anticipation of this project, all open lecture classrooms in Sierra Hall will be relocated to a new building, dubbed Sierra Annex, to be located on the grassy lawn adjacent to Sierra and Manzanita Halls.

Once classrooms have been moved to the Annex, Sierra Hall will be renovated with a focus on the capital renewal of the facility. Sierra Hall will be renovated in phases while it is occupied, with one desired outcome being a rational reorganization of space. The university expects to break ground on the Sierra Annex in early 2021 and if all goes well occupy the building in Spring 2023. It is hoped that the funding for the renovation of Sierra Hall will come from the passage of a statewide bond issue on the March 2020 ballot to build and modernize educational facilities in the state.

The California Transportation Foundation (CTF) is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to supporting the transportation industry and its members. Through donations from individuals, corporations, and other organizations the CTF provides a range of services to the transportation community. These include career development, transportation recognition awards, forums, and financial assistance to transportation workers who have been injured or died on the job.

The CTF also places a strong emphasis on supporting students across the state. It offers many scholarships as well as the annual Transportation Education Symposium each fall to a select group of undergraduate students. Regularly over the last ten years, students from the Department who have a special interest in transportation have been selected to attend the CTF Education Symposium and some of those have successfully competed for scholarship awards from the organization. Last year Carly Hollas (’19) received a scholarship from the organization. In Fall 2019, two students from the Department, Jaclyn Rackerby and Davis Moreno, attended the symposium as guests of CTF. The Department is very appreciative of the support the CTF has provided over the years to our students.
The Department of Urban Studies and Planning graduated its third cohort of the Masters of Urban Planning (MUP) program in May, 2019. The fifth cohort of students began in the Fall of 2019.

The Master of Urban Planning program will be accepting applications for the Fall 2020 semester. Priority admission deadline is: **March 6th, 2020.**

Carlos Contreras (‘06) is an associate planner with the Community Development Department for the City of Thousand Oaks, CA.

Andres Di Zitti (‘10) is a manager for transportation operations with LA-METRO.

Vanessa Faul (‘17) is a transportation planner with the California Department of Transportation (District 5) in San Luis Obispo, CA.

Samuel Gutierrez (‘12) is a planner in the planning and community environment department at the City of Palo Alto, CA.

Eric Haack (‘05) is a strategic planner at Access Services in Los Angeles County.

Kendall Irvin (‘17) is a planning technician for the City of Santa Clarita, CA.

Larry Jenkins (‘15) is a community development analyst at the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Jim Kingsley (‘74) is retired in Fallbrook, CA.

Susana Martinez (‘17) is an assistant planner with the City of Huntington Park, CA.

Jorge Martinez (‘13) works for LA-METRO where he is a transportation planner focusing on service planning and scheduling.

Raquel Menanno (‘18) is an assistant planner for the City of Eureka, CA.

Ricardo Meza (‘14) is a contract auditor for Promotion Plus Inc. Sign Co. in Southern California.

Molivann Phlong (MUP, ‘18) is a homeless program representative for the California Department of Housing and Community Development in Sacramento, CA.

Jose Quintanilla (MUP, ‘18) is an assistant planner in the Community Development Department for the City of Sacramento, CA.

Donna Rosser (‘06) is a senior planner in the Department of Environmental Services for the City of Simi Valley, CA.

Miguel Vazquez (‘01) is a healthy communities urban regional planner at Riverside University Health System in Riverside, CA.

Joel Weise (‘79) is retired in Bowen Island, BC, Canada.

Toker, Zeynep

Olwert, Craig
(2019) “Resilience planning at the neighborhood scale” Urban Affairs Association (With Zeynep Toker and Alessandro Rigolon) April 25, 2019


Urban Studies and Planning Lecturer Dev Vrat has over 30 years of urban land use planning and environmental compliance under his belt and is currently a planning consultant. He was formerly a Senior Urban and Environmental Planner for AECOM Corporation, an engineering, design, and construction firm. He is also a former Assistant Director of the Santa Barbara County Resource Management Department where he managed six planning and environmental divisions. His areas of interest include Sustainability, General Plans, Environmental Review, Public Involvement Programs and world travel. He has managed preparation of general plan elements, coastal plans, community and specific plans, transit oriented development plans, campus plans, transportation plans, park and open space plans, urban design guidelines, capital improvement plans, public participation programs, interactive websites and public infrastructure finance plans. He has provided independent technical review of U.S. military base master plans and design guidelines. He has managed the preparation of university and medical campus master plans and EIR/S’ for major energy projects. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and sits on the California State Board of the Association of Environmental Professionals. Professor Vrat is also certified by the National Charette Institute.

Ian Donaldson, our department’s Office Assistant for the last 3 years, moved back to his hometown in Portland with his wife in October. Best wishes, many thanks and bon voyage!

Monica Haboush
Richard and Maxine Simon
We love correspondence from our alumni!
Please keep in touch with us. We would like to learn about the exciting events and accomplishments in your life. Please consider keeping us updated on any changes in contact information, so we can stay in touch.

Internships
We are always looking to expand 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 gift is too small. Your support provides both financial support and encouragement to students. Information on ways to give can be found at: https://givenow.csun.edu/ or by calling Dr. Rob Kent at 818-677-4372.

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