It has been a productive and exciting spring semester in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at CSUN. Three new instructors joined the department’s line-up in spring 2018, Yvette Lopez-Ledesma, Vic Parsekhian, and Arminé Chaparyan. In February, the Urban Planning Students of Northridge, hosted the 12th Annual Los Angeles American Planning Association Student Symposium. Approximately 300 participants attended the event. The department awarded three James H. Ring Graduate Scholarships for 2018. Please join me in congratulating Molivann Phlong, Tracy Chu, and Philip Neumann on this honor. Each awardee will receive a $1,000 scholarship. Finally, the department anticipates approximately 35 majors and 15 graduate students will receive their degrees at the spring graduation ceremonies to be held in May!

The Urban Planning Students of Northridge (UPSN) were excited to know it was CSUN’s year to host and sponsor the 12th Annual APA LA Student Symposium. UPSN officers took this event seriously and made it happen through diligence, devotion, and dedication! The event started off with Mike Sonksen, a spoken word poet who captured everyone’s attention and conveyed powerful emotion through his poem about Los Angeles. Following breakfast was the housing panel, which consisted of Jonathan P. Bell, Adriana Aguilar, and Laura Rathbone. This panel was passionate as most of the speakers shared intimate stories about their clients or people they have worked with, and their challenging circumstances. The environmental panel consisted of former URBS professor Alessandro Rigolon, Davi de la Cruz, and Yvette Lopez-Ledesma. During lunch, keynote speaker Kurt Christiansen, president of the national APA and URBS alumnus, discussed what the APA offers to working planners and students in planning school. The last panel of the event was transportation, where Israel Marin, Karina Macias, and Christopher Tzeng discussed transportation projects and their career development. Many guests and students asked questions and it was great to see engagement between the speakers and guests. UPSN was delighted to see that the event was a huge success and everyone enjoyed themselves!

In 2017, the California Homebuilding Foundation (CHF) inducted Mr. Paul T. Johnson of Rancho Mission Viejo, CA into the California Homebuilding Foundation Hall of Fame. With his induction, Mr. Johnson, an alumni of the Urban Studies Program (’78) at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) established the Paul T. Johnson Endowment to support students from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. As noted by the CHF, “Mr. Johnson’s generous gift to the Foundation confirms his commitment to helping students within the building industry and we are confident it will be appreciated most by those who will benefit from Mr. Johnson’s endowment.” At the Rancho Mission Viejo Company (RMV) Mr. Johnson is responsible for the design and implementation of all community development. He oversees all aspects of urban design, development, construction, builder land sales and administration, as well as the development and operation of the Community Master Maintenance Corporation and Community Services Organization. The department is thankful and honored by Mr. Johnson’s commitment to CSUN students in establishing this scholarship.
California State University, Northridge students have a new way to get around campus. LimeBike is changing the way people access the CSUN campus on a daily basis by interconnecting local transit hubs, businesses and living communities with the campus itself. LimeBike is a bike share program available to all CSUN affiliates. The initiative stems from the university’s Climate Action Plan, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by improving campus energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy production and increasing the use of carbon-neutral transportation options (such as biking) by campus users. LimeBike comes at no cost to CSUN and minimal cost to users. LimeBike delivered 400 bicycles to campus, launching a rental program that CSUN officials hope will provide easier, cheaper, faster transportation to class and around town. The bikes are available to check out and return from any existing campus bike rack, and unlike car-sharing programs, there is no membership fee required. The rental fee is 50 cents per half hour, and there’s no time limit. Students, faculty and staff need only download the LimeBike app to their smartphone, create a profile, and then scan a bike’s individual QR code with the phone to check it out. Students, faculty, and staff also can take the bikes off campus — to shop, go to work, or just get some exercise. Once a rider locks a bike, it stops charging, no matter where it’s parked. However, once locked, the bike becomes available to the next user — thanks to GPS. The bikes sport tamper-proof bolts on the wheels to deter theft, as well as automatic lights for riding at night. “This is a pilot program,” Eriksson said. “We are the first in the CSU or UC systems to do this.” LimeBike also has launched programs in several universities and cities around the country.

**Faculty Publications**


**Community Partners: Northridge Neighborhood Council**

The Northridge Neighborhood Councils (Northridge East, Northridge South and Northridge West) and the large umbrella group Northridge Vision, which includes representatives from the Northridge Beautification Foundation, Sherwood Forest Homeowners Association, CSUN, Councilmember Englander’s office, and the Northridge Chamber of Commerce, have been great community partners by helping our students develop good projects over the past several years and helping them to get implemented. Several department classes, including URBS 490C (Field Work), URBS 440 (Urban Design), and URBS 690 and 698 (Field Work and Professional Project), have worked with these partners. The graduate students are working on a Resiliency Plan for Northridge and CSUN this academic year, and have hosted several meetings to get feedback from Northridge. This plan will be finalized by the end of the semester. Last academic year the students designed a plan: CSUN & Reseda: One Great Street. This looked at physical design improvements to connect the CSUN campus to Reseda Boulevard and the Northridge partners helped make the design successful. Past efforts with the undergraduates have included a redesign of the Reseda Boulevard corridor; creating an entrance park to Northridge Vision at Reseda and Parthenia; relocating the Northridge Metrolink stop to be on Reseda Boulevard; creating a report on the State of Northridge; and identifying opportunities to increase the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in Northridge South neighborhood. Don Larson and Chris Sales have been integral in the success of these projects and have used them to demonstrate to officials the changes that could benefit Northridge. With their support, they have established the Northridge Beautification Foundations Scholarship for our department, a $1,000 scholarship given to award community service, with Northridge-focused service preferred.
Alumni

Grecia Aceves ('12) is a plan review specialist in the Development Services Department of the City of San Diego.

Victente Arellano ('15) completed his master’s in urban planning in 2017 at Columbia University. He is currently an assistant district manager for the Manhattan Borough president in New York City.

Jeff Brown ('03) is the assistant parking manager for the City of Glendale.

Claudia Culling ('74) is a retired. She served previously as senior assistant city attorney in Los Angeles.

Claudio DeLorenzo ('11) is a foreman at the Flemming Group and is also the proud father of twins.

Joseph Fiss ('89) is the planning manager for the City of Moorpark. He recently completed a master’s of science in organizational leadership from Quinnipiac University.

In the City of Santa Clarita, Ramiro Fuentes ('09) is a project development coordinator in the capital improvement projects division.

In Salinas, Adam Garrett ('13) is an assistant planner for the city.

Besides serving as the assistant to the city manager in Bakersfield, Christopher Gerry ('05) also serves as the acting city clerk.

At ACCO Engineered Systems, William Henderson III ('93) is operational controller and assistant treasurer. He has worked for the company for 25 years.

In Santa Barbara, Alejandro Jimenez ('15) works as a planner for the county.

Paul Leonard ('10) is a community planner for the Federal Government. He is assigned to NAVFAC SW.

Ashley Mercury ('16) is a community outreach coordinator in the Facilities Services Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

Ricardo Meza ('14) is an assistant planner with the City of Oxnard.

John Moreno ('93) is a senior environmental planner with Cardno, an environmental engineering company.

Lauren McCune ('17) works for LoanDepot, where she is a public relations specialist.

Junaid Rasul ('11) recently accepted a new position as the Public Information Director for the Los Angeles Police Department.

In Ventura County, Mike Rodriguez ('01) is the regional manager of Ventura County Behavioral Health.

Josh Rubenstein ('16) is the membership sales and service director at the downtown YMCA in Los Angeles.

In Santa Barbara, Andrés Di Zitti ('10) is a financial consultant at Axa Advisors in Los Angeles.

Martha Tello ('08) is a labor relations analyst for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

At METRO-LA, Richard Torres ('07) specializes in senior safety.

Linda (Barnes) Vanais, AICP, ('90) is a high school teacher with the San Diego Unified School District. She incorporates planning issues and projects in her class curriculum.

At the City of Los Angeles, DeJanae Williams ('14) works as a transportation engineering aide.

Masters of Urban Planning (MUP), Up and Running

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning will graduate its second cohort of the Masters of Urban Planning (MUP) program in May, 2018.

The department also accepted its third cohort of students and classes began in Fall 2017. 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 application deadline is Thursday, May 31, 2018.

Thank You!

Thanks to our generous donors. Their donations help support students’ participation in professional activities like workshops, conference attendance, field trips and site visits.

Jaime Delrio ('12)
Elliot and Joyce Edelson
Monica Haboush ('86)
David Hyman ('80)
Andrew Kent ('14)
Kenneth Koslow ('74)
Vahe Parsekian ('10)
James H. Ring ('71)
Larry Thompson ('73)
Joshua I. Van Gundy (BA, '11; MPA, '13)

Many thanks to the following alumni who volunteered to assist in the Mock Interview Exercise for the department’s internship course for fall semester 2017. The mock interviews were held in November 2017 and 12 students participated in the interviews.

Edgar Arroyo ('09) – planner at the City of Beverly Hills
Mike Ascione ('06) – planner at the City of Santa Clarita
David Canlas ('14) – evangelist at Youth Policy Institute
Carlos Contreras ('06) – planner at the City of Maliba
Andres Di Zitti ('10) – transportation planner at METRO-LA
Carlos Hernandez ('11) – transportation planner at the City of Los Angeles
Julie Newman ('96) – real estate agent

Student News

2017 Ava Doner Undergraduate $10,000 Scholarship Winner: Vanessa Faul

Vanessa Faul, an Urban Studies and Planning major won the 2017 Ava Doner Memorial Scholarship for $10,000. The scholarship was established in 2000 by the Los Angeles Chapter of WTS to encourage women to pursue career paths in transportation or a related field. Vanessa was born in Germany and moved to Los Angeles when she was 16 years old. In her native Germany, she went everywhere by public transportation or bicycle. When she arrived here, she saw a car-based culture that presented a very real, visceral challenge. She learned quickly, and set her sights on making permanent change. She looks to WTS-LA to help facilitate that change. Congratulations Vanessa!!

Felix Mory named CSUN’s Big West Man Scholar Athlete of the Year 2017

Department major and CSUN athlete (golf), Felix Mory, received the Big Ten’s Student Athlete-Scholar award for men in March 2018. Each school in the Big West Conference names two of their student athletes who have the best combination between athletics and academics. Felix was chosen for CSUN. He was recognized in an award ceremony in Anaheim. Great job, Felix!
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 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!!

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.