Happy Anniversary Department of Urban Planning

It’s Our Big 4-0!

From the Chair

Greetings from Marvin Hall! And welcome to the second digital addition of our annual UBPL newsletter. Our shift into the digital world coincides with a rather significant anniversary we are commemorating in 2014-2015. This year marks the 40th year of our Urban Planning program. Plans are underway for a spring 2015 celebration event in which we hope many of you can participate. Please be on the lookout for more information.

I would like to thank everyone who sent in Alumni News. It is exciting to see the good and varied work our graduates are doing. These 13 news contributions represent alumni in nine different states! All of you make us proud in the ways you have expanded your career horizons and applied your planning skills. An important part of my role as chair is in recruiting new students, and being able to share your success stories is so helpful in showing these prospective students that their grad school investment will be a good one.

The 2013-2014 academic year was both busy and productive. The faculty has been prolific, as always, and welcomed Assistant Professor Ward Lyles, who is a terrific new colleague. Ward began at the same time as 22 enthusiastic and talented first-year students.

Our student body now includes two Fulbright Scholars. Profirio Fernandes Xavier, from East Timor, joined us in January 2014, and Galyna Korniyenko, from Ukraine, began the program this fall. All our international students bring very interesting and valuable perspectives to the program, and help us realize the global needs for good planning practice.

On the “business” side of things, our program received a two-year extension on our Accreditation due to the progress we are making. In addition, we combined the Land Use and Urban Design and Environmental specializations to create a new study area called, “Sustainable Land-Use Planning.” A short article in this issue explains this exciting new addition to our program.

Last March, Dean John Gaunt announced he would be stepping down at the end of the Spring 2015 semester. Dean Gaunt has led the School of Architecture, Design and Planning for 20 years, so this will be a momentous change. I am serving on the search committee to select a new dean, as is Wayne Feuerborn, chair of our UBPL Advisory Board.

In closing, I wish all of you happy and productive days ahead. We all appreciate hearing from you, and having the occasional surprise alumnus visit, so please don’t be a stranger!

—Stacey Swearingen White, Chair
The Sustainable Land-Use Planning specialization: a new frontier

Professors Jim Mayo and Bonnie Johnson were the dynamic duo behind the Department's Land-Use and Urban Design specialization. But with Jim's retirement in the Spring of 2013 the department not only lost an admired member of the faculty, but also the "urban design" half of the team.

And, with the hiring of Assistant Professor Ward Lyles, who like Chair Stacey White, has expertise in environmental and sustainability planning, it has seemed an opportune time to re-evaluate the specializations offered by the Department.

The new Sustainable Land-Use Planning specialization combines the talents of Johnson, White, and Lyles and allows the development of a strong and relevant area of specialization for students.

The combination leverages the Department's existing research and teaching strengths on sustainability. Further, incorporating the term “sustainable” more overtly into the specialization's title provides a broad and timely unifying theme that will be useful for attracting and retaining students and preparing them to be effective in practice. It also offers the opportunity to more directly focus students' attention on equity and livability issues in addition to economic and environmental issues. Johnson learned more about incorporating sustainability into planning by attending the American Planning Association's Planners Training Service program on "Comprehensive Planning for Sustainable Communities" in Boston this summer.

What happens to “urban design”? Students interested in urban design can still take classes offered by the Architecture Department. We will continue to offer UBPL 735: Site Planning, but it has been renamed “Site Planning and Design”. It focuses on the site planning process, basic design principles, and the implementation of site design standards through regulations.

Here is the basic program of study for a Sustainable Land-Use Planning student:

**Theory and Policy**
- UBPL 765: Sustainable Land Use Planning Methods Intro
- UBPL 738: Environmental Planning Techniques and/or UBPL 735: Site Planning and Design
- UBPL 773: Sustainable Land Use Planning Implementation

**Supplementary Courses**
- UBPL 730: Plans and Planning Processes;
- UBPL 764: Real Estate Development;
- UBPL 762: Sustainability and the Future of the Built Environment
- UBPL 760: Historic Preservation Planning
- UBPL 816: Politics and Planning

Teaching undergrads in a new class, “Sustainability and Society”

Last fall, I began teaching a 200-level course called “Sustainability and Society.” My motivation for doing this was to introduce KU undergraduates to the basic ideas of urban planning through the lens of sustainability. Our hope is that some will take more of our undergraduate courses and eventually join our program. At the very least, they will have some understanding of planning and its essential role in promoting a sustainable future. The course meets three separate goals within the new "KU Core," which replaced the University's longstanding General Education requirements.

While it is too early to evaluate the results of this effort, I can say that I very much enjoy interacting with students at the start of their college experiences. Fall 2013 enrollment was 44, of whom eight then enrolled in Ward Lyles’ UBPL 300 course, Planning the American City. Fall 2014 enrollment is at 95 students, which has allowed me to hire one of our second-year students as a GTA. With input from Ward, I am going to try Team-Based Learning this year, and will use a classroom response system called Top Hat where students can respond to questions via their cell phones. Wish me luck, and stay tuned! —Stacey White
Class projects show students’ versatility, ingenuity

Walking, biking on 9th Street, Lawrence

Last Spring, students in UBPL 757, Transportation Planning Implementation taught by Clyde Prem of Olsson Associates, assisted by KU doctoral student Fred Combs, took on a class project for the City of Lawrence. The project prepared recommendations to improve walking, biking, transit, and vehicle travel on 9th Street from Centennial Drive and east to Sunset Drive and gave the students experience in what it is like to work for a client in a consulting environment. They examined the corridor and assessed what could be done to make it more accommodating for bicyclists and pedestrians, and improve access to public transit. The students met with the city staff, had a public meeting, and produced a final report that was well received by the City, the Lawrence-Douglas County MPO, and Lawrence Transit.

What happened when KC’s housing bubble popped?

The UBPL 716 Community and Neighborhood Revitalization course taught by Prof. Kirk McClure examined the impact of the housing bubble on a neighborhood in the greater Kansas City area. The class examined census data from 2000, 2009 and 2012 at the tract level to identify the rise and fall of housing prices and household income. They also examined the mismatch between housing production and household growth. Sadly, they found that the production of housing units was much greater than the formation of households. This surplus production seems to be accelerating the decline of the older, inner-city neighborhoods.

Hey, Spencer Museum of Art! Get Your Game Face on!

Students in UBPL 735: Site Planning taught by Assoc. Prof. Bonnie Johnson tackled how to get football fans to stop by the Spencer Museum of Art on the day of the game or for future visits. Students put together posters with their proposals for evaluation by the museum staff and public at an open house held on May 6. Some ideas were very ambitious like Trey Maevers’ outdoor amphitheatre, which he proposed for a space between the stadium and the museum. Matt Buchanan suggested an ingenious field of waving wheat stalk sculptures. Others were very doable like Melissa Deboer’s arts-on-carts, which would use golf carts to take arts and activities out to tailgaters. Jonathan Curth proposed “guerilla art” advertising about the museum that would be displayed around the stadium and in town.

Strategies for Protecting the Hillsdale Lake Watershed

The Hillsdale Lake watershed, located in southwest Johnson and northwest Miami Counties is urbanizing rapidly. Students in UBPL 739: Issues in Growth Management, also taught by Assoc. Prof. Johnson, examined the ways in which stormwater runoff contributes to water quality problems for the Hillsdale Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) Committee. After touring the watershed with Robert Wilson from K-State Research and Extension, the students used the EPA’s Water Quality Scorecard to evaluate the ordinances and plans of the cities and counties in the lake’s watershed. These include Edgerton, Gardner, Spring Hill, and Wellsville. The students then devised strategies that could help protect and improve the lake’s health and water quality. These included low-impact design, green infrastructure, adequate public facilities, urban service areas, compact development, conservation areas, greenbelts, and green infrastructure planning. On May 8 their posters and booklets were unveiled at an open house for the WRAPS committee, stakeholders, and the public to show how each strategy works along with examples and success stories.
First impressions: it was a very good year!

Assistant prof. Ward Lyles helps a student in his Quantitative Methods class.

I have loved my first year in the KU Urban Planning department here in Lawrence! Certainly the biggest highlight has been working with and getting to know my colleagues and students, from whom I’ve already learned so much. I feel truly fortunate to be a part of this community. A few of the teaching, research activities I have enjoyed and benefited from the most include the following:

Teaching
While ‘stats anxiety’ often can be a barrier to learning statistical topics like sampling, distributions, and significance tests, we took a Team-Based Learning approach in UBPL 741: Quantitative Methods in the fall of 2013 that enabled the students to learn with and from each other. Believe it or not, the first year masters students and I had a lot of fun at the same time that we learned how to be better consumers and generators of the kinds of quantitative data we use as planners.

Teaching Principles of Environmental Planning (UBPL 565/765) to graduate and undergraduate students was also a very rewarding experience. Professor White, who has taught the class many times previously, provided a great deal of help and materials that allowed the students and I to consider the broad scope of environmental issues planners need to account for in their work and to do so from a psychological perspective that directly addresses how to change individual and group behavior for positive change.

Finally, in the spring, two dozen undergraduate students and I used the Team-Based Learning approach to familiarize ourselves with planning history and emerging topics in American cities in UBPL 300: Planning the American City. It was incredibly energizing to see planning topics come to life for young people as many of them thought rigorously about why the places they live are built the way they are - the implications of planning decisions - for the first time.

Over the summer I participated in the Provost Office’s Oread Project, which, with the support of the Center for Sustainability, fosters greater incorporation of sustainability in teaching at KU. I gained lots of new contacts on campus and lots of great ideas to use in 2014-2015.

Research
I’ve been fortunate both to build off of my previous work as a post-doc at UNC - Chapel Hill and start new collaborations here at KU. Much of my first year’s research efforts consisted of submitting and negotiating the peer review process for manuscripts on better planning for natural hazards that I’d previously started. Three papers I coauthored on state and local natural hazard mitigation in response to the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 were published - in the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters, the Journal of Planning Education and Research, and Landscape and Urban Planning.

A more methodologically-oriented paper on how to evaluate the quality of plans was also published in the Journal of Planning Education and Research. I have three more papers on these topics in the peer review process (and one soon to be submitted for review) and I am hopeful that I will be able to report on their publication next year!

Collaborations
I’m excited about new collaborations and projects that are getting underway. Professor Bonnie Johnson and I - with the assistance of six talented Urban Planning students and the generous support of the Institute for Policy and Social Research here at KU - have analyzed more than 90 staff reports written by local planners from cities across the country.

Somewhat surprisingly given the centrality of staff reports to the work of planning, there is little research on the topic. We are currently analyzing this rich data set and look forward to sharing our findings about the variation in approaches to staff reports around the nation and what we’ve found to be best practices.

It is also great to be working with a couple of urban planning masters students to analyze a set of climate change adaptation plans (also with the support of IPSR). We will try to better understand how planners and other stakeholders are involved in these emerging efforts and if and how the plans are being integrated with other plans, like comprehensive plans and natural hazard mitigation plans. This work builds on a New Faculty General Research Fund grant I received from KU this spring and is aimed at developing a proposal for a major research project for submission to the National Science Foundation or other funding agency in the next couple of years. —Ward Lyles
Department of Urban Planning sends 10 grads down The Hill

Congratulations to our latest extraordinary University of Kansas Masters of Urban Planning recipients:

December 2013: Jay Decker; Lingling Li; Sha Li; Yue Li, and Xuan Zhang

May 2014: Matt Buchanan; Mike Knight; Wei Li; Jacque Lumsden, and Zach Nelson

Kansas Chapter APA Symposium, Sustainability: Doing it the Kansas Way

On March 28th, the Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association in conjunction with the University of Kansas sponsored the symposium, “Sustainability: Doing it the Kansas Way.” Forty-five planners and planning students from across the state came to Lawrence to hear about how to create sustainable communities that are more equitable, economically viable, and environmentally sound. At the symposium, Prof. McClure presented “The Sustainability of Housing Markets in Kansas.” We toured the LEED library under construction in downtown Lawrence, community gardens and urban agriculture projects, and green infrastructure projects on campus like the bio-swale on West Campus and the pervious pavement parking lot just west of Murphy Hall.

Kansas City Alumni Meet-up

The greater Kansas City area alumni met at McCoy’s Bar in Westport to reconnect and socialize. The annual get-together was on June 19, 2014.

Where has your Urban Planning tee-shirt been?

Chair White (right) wore hers in the Black Forest where she teaches a summer study abroad environmental studies class in Freiburg, Germany.

Assoc. Professor Bonnie Johnson (left) has her t-shirt on in front of one of Louis Sullivan’s “jewel box” banks in Grinnell, Iowa.

Where has your KU Urban Planning T-Shirt been? Send your photos to bojojohn@ku.edu.

Thank You, Mell Henderson

At our May Advisory Board meeting we recognized outgoing Board member Mell Henderson. A 1983 graduate of our program, Mell recently retired from the Mid-America Regional Council, where he served as Director of Transportation. As a 12-year member of the Urban Planning Advisory Board, Mell’s contributions both in front of and behind the scenes are tremendous. He also co-taught the Introduction to Transportation Planning class on occasion. We deeply appreciate his efforts on behalf of KU Urban Planning, and wish him well in his new Sarasota, Fla., home… where we will be holding all our future meetings (just kidding, Mell!).
Is there a new Sheriff in this here town?

Not exactly. But Associate Professor Anne Dunning is participating in the six-week Douglas County Sheriff’s Citizens’ Academy. The Academy is designed to give participants a working knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of the Sheriff’s Office. Attendees gain an overview of the Corrections and Operations Divisions, accident investigation, field sobriety testing, building searches, patrol driving, firearms, tours and more.

“I am participating in the program, said Dunning,” because transportation is all about establishing access, and security is all about blocking access; the two are closely linked.

“Is there a new Sheriff in this here town?”

Spotlight on faculty publications, presentations, and grants

Department of Urban Planning faculty and students were prolific as always in 2013-14. Here is some of their recent work.

Articles

Housing Choice Voucher Location Patterns a Decade Later by Kirk McClure, Lydia Taghavi, and Alex Schwartz (In press) Housing Policy Debate.

Housing Programs Fail to Deliver on Neighborhood Quality Re-examined by Kirk McClure and Bonnie Johnson (In press) Housing Policy Debate.


Going Green? The Impacts of Sustainability Planning in Greensburg, Kansas, USA by Laura Hewitt Sparks and Stacey Swearingen White (2013) International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning. Laura is a 2011 graduate of our program, and this article stems from her thesis research.

Continued next page
Spotlight on faculty publications, presentations, and grants, continued


Grants

Associate Professor Anne Dunning recently received a grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) to evaluate the sampling system KDOT uses to collect traffic counts. Kansas communities receive state funding based on the traffic volumes of these counts, yet state-government staffing reductions have left the job of counting every highway and many local roads in the state to two people. Over fifteen months, Dunning’s research team of Doctoral Student Fred Combs and incoming Master’s Student Shofi Ull Azum will work to make their jobs as efficient and statistically accurate as possible.

Book Chapters

Associate Professor Anne Dunning is writing a book chapter on how to get small towns and rural communities in remote areas surrounded by protected lands to be more open to transit options. Park officials are learning about transportation alternatives to long queues of private vehicles, but no system will work if the local people and businesses believe and tell visitors the only real way to move involves a car. Community stakeholders need to learn about transit options, and managers of protected lands need to include community members in transportation planning.

Professor Kirk McClure is writing the chapter “Federal Government and Housing Policy,” for the second edition of Introduction to Housing, edited by Andrew T. Carswell, Sarah Kirby, Kenneth R. Tremblay, and Katrin Anacker for the Housing Education and Research Association (HERA). The book will be released at the annual conference of HERA in Kansas City in October.

Presentations


I wonder what happened to...? Alumni notes

2010s Ashley Crites, ’02, was promoted to Land Use Controls Manager for the City of Tuscaloosa, early in July 2014. She is responsible for all current planning including the interpretation and enforcement of the zoning ordinance. Tuscaloosa continues to rebuild from the 2011 tornadoes and to seek balance with booming growth due to the University of Alabama. Among countless other projects, she is currently working on a form-based code for the downtown area, contracting with Code Studio out of Austin.

Jacque Lumsden, ’14, recently accepted a position as the Marketing Coordinator/ Transportation Planner with CBB Transportation Engineers + Planners in St. Louis. In this role she is charged with branding and marketing the company, as well as coordinating project pursuits and client relationships. She assists with transportation planning on various projects, focused generally in Missouri.

Whitney L. Morgan, ’13 and Jim Hubbell, ’02 along with their colleagues at the Mid America Regional Council (MARC) Tom Gerend, Stephen Lachky, and Chris Depusoir were recognized by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations with the National Award for Outstanding Overall Achievement for a Transportation Management Area /Metropolitan Planning Organization. The award specifically recognizes MARC’s efforts related to performance monitoring.

Nick Pappas, ’10, recently accepted a position with the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments as their Regional Transportation Planning Program Manager.

Meghan Skornia, ’13, recently accepted a position as an associate with Code Studio in Austin. She is currently working on an updated zoning code for Los Angeles (recodeLA), a Unified Development Ordinance for Cincinnati, and a TOD and Form-Based Code in Fort Worth, Texas.

Ben Hyde, ’13, accepted a position through the AmeriCorps Vista Program doing affordable housing in New Braunfels, Texas. It is a program being run through the McKenna Foundation and he is working for three different organizations: New Braunfels Housing Partners, Comal Homeless Coalition, and Texas Homeless Network.

2000s Daniel Carey, ’08, is currently an adjunct lecturer at the University of Texas at El Paso in the Department of Art. He teaches two museum studies courses and serves as one of the cochairs for the Border Museum Association.

Guoqiang (Alex) Li, ’04, moved to the greater Boston area last August and started working for Southeastern Massachusetts RPA. He and his wife are very happy to settle down there with their son Sihan.

Shaun Morrell, ’03, is the Urban Transit and Intercity Bus Program Coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Office of Transit. Shaun and his wife Noëlle were married in May 2013 and live in south Minneapolis.

Sarah (Koepke) Van Buren, ’02, was recently appointed to the City of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin’s Redevelopment Authority and to the City of Fond du Lac’s Plan Commission. She is excited to be able to serve her community while using her planning skills in a very different way.

1980s Carol Ketcherside, ’84, Director of Administration & Organizational Development for Valley Metro in Phoenix, Arizona, coauthored a paper accepted for both presentation at the 2014 Transportation Research Board Annual Conference in Washington DC, and for publication in the Transportation Research Record (TRR), the Journal of the Transportation Research Board. The paper was titled: Valley Metro Organizational Integration: Advancing the Future of Transportation in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

John Slaughter, ’86, was selected as the County Manager in Washoe County, Nevada in November 2013. John has been with Washoe County since 1986, working as a land use planner, the County’s strategic planning manager, and as the Director of Management Services.

Candace Stowell, ’87, has an urban planning consulting business in Carson City, NV and is also working for Wells Barnett Associates, LLC in Stateline, Nevada. She keeps busy with volunteer work for the Carson City School District, the Nevada APA Chapter, and Western Planning Resources (publisher of The Western Planner). Look for Candace’s “Viewpoint” column entitled, “Public School Planning a Priority,” in the June 2014 issue of Planning magazine.

Stay in touch! Send your Alumni Notes to Bonnie Johnson, bojojohn@ku.edu.
About KU’s Department of Urban Planning

Our graduates believe in the power of planning to help communities’ envision and chart their futures. Good urban planning creates communities that offer better choices for living. Planners help people make their communities more sustainable, healthful, fair, attractive, and relevant. KU’s Master of Urban Planning program is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board. Strong emphasis is placed on policy planning and analysis of urban and urbanizing environments. Students take foundation courses in history, theory, and analytical methods to hone critical thinking skills. They also specialize in a planning area of their choice: housing and community development, sustainable land-use planning, or transportation planning.

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