

# The Jayhawk Planner

The University of Kansas  
Graduate Program in Urban Planning

Spring 2006

## Letter from the Chair

During this past academic year, a great number of events have occurred that have taken a considerable amount of time and effort with our faculty. One unanticipated event was the March 12 “microburst,” which damaged Marvin Hall, including several faculty offices. Signs of the storm are still visible across campus, but we are more or less back to normal. On a more positive note, our faculty was occupied with hosting the national meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning in October. We have also considered some curriculum revisions, including changes to the transportation planning concentration.



Another important task for this year relates to our broad effort to ensure a strong future for our Program. My colleagues and I have been involved with understanding better who graduates with a MUP from Kansas and who succeeds. We have studied the success characteristics of our students with data gathered from our records, and with marginal changes, we feel that we can improve our student body.

Grade inflation at the undergraduate level is increasingly influencing student applications. In the past, there were always some students who were on probation and succeeded. Now we have significantly fewer students on probation, but we still see the same performance levels in the classroom.

We need to ensure agencies, firms, and our graduates that they are fully capable of performing in practice. Students increase their success in the classroom when their classmates are equal to the task. We expect students to help one another, but that help must be mutual.

How we evaluate student applications in the future will not change substantially, but our research findings have made us more aware about whom to select in order to ensure a quality classroom experience and graduates agencies and firms will want to hire. I welcome any comments you might have on these or other issues.

Jim Mayo

## Faculty Publications

Our faculty continues to be active publishers in their research.

Stacey White published with Michael R. Boswell, “Planning for Water Quality: Implementation of the NPDES Phase II Stormwater Program in California and Kansas,” in the *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. This article explores how local governments have implemented federal stormwater mandates. She is currently working on research that is an extension of this work. She has also received a KU Graduate Research Foundation summer grant to develop a process for identifying the full realm of factors critical to successful land protection planning in an era of prominent social conflict over land use.

Jim Mayo and Stacey White published “Environmental Education in Graduate Professional Degrees: The Case of Urban Planning,” in the *Journal of Environmental Education*.

Bonnie Johnson published “Identities of Competitive States in U.S. Presidential Elections: Electoral College Bias or Candidate-Centered Politics?” in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. The results showed how both Kansas and Nebraska have consistently been spectator states for receiving special attention for federal funding and staff appointments in presidential elections.

Kirk McClure has recently published two articles. His “High Housing Cost Burden in the Housing Choice Voucher Program,” appeared in *Cityscape* in which he examined the nation’s largest rental housing program to identify which households in the program suffer a high housing cost burden. His “Deconcentrating Poverty through Homebuyer Finance Programs” was published in the *Journal of Urban Affairs*, and he explores the ability of homebuyer programs to assist very low-income homebuyers to enter neighborhoods with low poverty levels. This paper won the Urban Affairs Association “Best Conference Paper” Award last year.

Alan Black reviewed Bruce Katz and Robert Puentes (editors) *Taking the High Road: A Metropolitan Agenda for Transportation Reform* in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*.

Cliff Ellis wrote a review of *Merchant of Illusion: James Rouse, America's Salesman of the Businessman's Utopia* in the *Journal of Planning Literature*.

## **ACSP Conference**

This past fall, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning met in Kansas City, and with our Program being a co-host, several faculty members either presented papers or coordinated events. Daniel Serda played an important role coordinating events for the entire conference and everyone owes him a debt of gratitude.

Kirk McClure served as the Co-Chair of the Fannie Mae Track in Housing and Community Development, and in this track, he presented the paper "The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program Goes Mainstream."

Cliff Ellis presented "Political Contours of the New Urbanism." He discusses the differences between suburban sprawl and New Urbanism with respect to political life. The political theories of social democracy, liberalism, communitarianism, civic republicanism, and conservatism are examined with respect to their implications for city planning.

Alan Black was a moderator and a discussant for the session, "Transit Planning Topics." Stacey White served as Co-Chair of the Environmental Planning and Resource Management track, and as a moderator and discussant for a session on collaborative watershed planning. McClure and White each also organized two of the conference's mobile workshops.

## **Other Conferences**

At the annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association in Montreal, Kirk McClure presented "Deconcentration of Poverty Using the Housing Choice Voucher Program." He compares the degree of success that different groups have in gaining access to low-poverty areas using the voucher program. At the Urban Affairs Conference, McClure also participated in a roundtable. Along with other housing policy professors, this roundtable discussed national housing policy approaches in the United States and Canada.

Faculty members have been involved in other conference activities. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, Bonnie Johnson

moderated the breakout session, "Coordinating Land Use and Transportation" at the Midwest Transportation Planning Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. Stacey White and Kirk McClure will continue to serve in their track chair duties for the annual ACSP conference in Ft. Worth, Texas.



*Tom Yahl, Jennifer Thomas and Duane Felix at the APA Conference in San Antonio*

## **Practice**

Kirk McClure recently updated the consolidated housing and community development plan for Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He appeared as an expert witness in legal trial, questioning the wisdom of placing a regional shopping center in a single-family neighborhood. Finally, he is working on an analysis of impediments to fair housing study for a county in Georgia on the outskirts of Atlanta.

Jim Mayo is involved in a neighborhood survey of the Argentine neighborhood in Kansas City, Kansas. His questionnaire design and the analysis that follows will look at local plan alternatives for developing housing and park alternatives.

## **Congratulations Stacey!**

One of the important moments in any professor's life is earning promotion and tenure. We are proud to announce that beginning this fall semester, Stacey White has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure; we are very proud of her accomplishments. Her research has involved graduate education in environmental planning, water quality management, public participation in land-use management, and sustainability with New Urbanism. Over the years, students have commented what an excellent teacher

she is and how devoted she is to her teaching. If you have the opportunity to congratulate her, please do.

### ***Student Wins a National APA Award***

Daniel Peters' paper, "The Wright Amendment: Right or Wrong? The effects of a restrictive transportation law on commercial airlines and consumers" was awarded the best undergraduate student transportation paper by the Transportation Division of the American Planning Association at their national conference in April. Daniel is a student in the KU Journalism program. He developed this paper while enrolled in Bonnie Johnson's Introduction to Transportation Planning course.

### ***New Courses***

The Urban Planning Program added two additional courses for students. Phil Englehart re-introduced Alan Black's former course, The History of the American City. This spring, Mike Grube has been teaching an advanced version of real estate development, and Kirk McClure is now teaching Local Economic Development.

### ***Curriculum Improvements to the Transportation Planning Concentration***

As many of you know, two years ago we hired Tracy McMillan to head the transportation planning concentration, and she later took a position at the University of Texas at Austin. Since that time we have filled courses with part-time instructors and they have done a wonderful job teaching our courses.

During this past academic year, Bonnie Johnson, Alan Black, Mell Henderson, and Tom Dow developed a plan for improving and stabilizing our efforts in transportation planning. Courses are being restructured to ensure that all students have a policy and theory course, a methods course, and an implementation course. The latter course will involve issues of project management, an area we have needed to address. At the same time, we will be adding new courses that relate transportation to sustainability.

### ***Environmental Planning Becomes a Concentration***

Beginning this fall, Environmental Planning will become a separate concentration from land use. We have contemplated this change for some time. Stacey

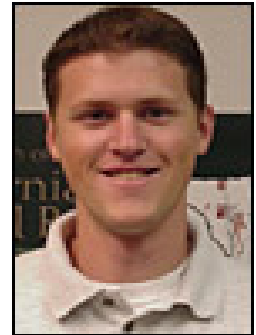
White is restructuring her existing courses and adding new teaching materials to provide more depth in content for students who wish to pursue environmental issues.

### ***Getting Together with the Alumni***

In an attempt to gather KU planning students, faculty, and alumni, we held a gathering at the City Tavern in the Historic Freight House in Kansas City on May 5<sup>th</sup>. A good time was had by all, and we hope to periodically hold these events so that everyone can reacquaint themselves with one another.

### ***Graduate Profile – Daniel Hamilton***

Daniel Hamilton's work as a planner has taken him far from Kansas. After graduating from the UBPL Program in 1999 (Urban Design concentration), Hamilton worked for HNTB, a Kansas City consulting firm, for approximately two years. He then moved to California, working first as an Associate Planner with the City of Galt, and subsequently returning to the private sector. Since August 2005, he has worked as a Senior Planner with Pacific Municipal Consultants, where he does a variety of long-range planning work for California cities and special districts, including review of their finances, governance, growth projections, and environmental policies.



Hamilton's work necessitates a clear familiarity with the specifics of planning practice in California, including compliance with that state's main environmental law, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). His typical workday could best be described as one of extreme multi-tasking; he must balance multiple current projects, oversee the work of other planning staff, and market his company to potential new clients. This busy pace requires Hamilton to rely heavily on his skills in organization, attention to detail, and time management. He most enjoys the opportunity to synthesize information from a variety of sources and develop it into a useful resource. For example, conducting an environmental review requires bringing together an analysis of biology, archaeology, engineering, and other perspectives.

Hamilton feels that his education and experiences at KU have been important to his career success. His exposure to the various planning specialties at KU allowed him to decide how and where to begin his

career. The UBPL Program helped him focus his broad interests and provided him with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed. Moreover, the connections he made with fellow students, faculty, and guest speakers have proven invaluable in both finding a job and developing within the profession.

To current students, Hamilton offers the following advice: use available resources to investigate those aspects of planning which are most interesting. Among the planning trends he feels most likely to influence the profession in the near-term are expanded hazards and emergency preparation planning efforts, transit-oriented development (TOD), and the various state-level responses to the use of eminent domain by local governments (stemming from the recent *Kelo* decision). Above all, Hamilton suggests, planners should find a part of our vast profession that they can feel passionate about and to strive to work in that area.

### ***Current Student Profile – Jennifer Thomas***

When Jennifer Thomas graduates this May (Land Use and Environment concentration), she will have considerable planning experience under her belt, thanks both to her degree and to her experience as an intern at Planning Works in Leawood, Kansas. For the past three semesters, Thomas has worked approximately 20 hours a week in her internship, plus full-time work during the summer. While at Planning Works, a land use planning consulting firm (formerly the Freulich, Leitner, and Carlisle Planning Group), Thomas has assisted in the research and compilation of planning documents including Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances, Comprehensive Plans, Subdivision Regulations, and Zoning Ordinances.



Thomas wholeheartedly believes in the importance of an internship experience for UBPL students. Her own internship has allowed her to develop her particular interests in planning, assuring that she will have a good employment fit upon graduation. In addition, an internship experience has allowed her to have a better understanding of the planning principles she is learning in the classroom, while simultaneously bringing that classroom knowledge to bear on her work as an intern. She was pleased, for example, to work with a planner on a site plan review as she was learning those techniques in her Site Planning class.

After graduation, Thomas hopes to begin her planning career in the public sector, as a planner for a central city. She is most excited about working on behalf of citizens to ensure that they are present and included in the process of planning for their city. She intends to earn her AICP certification as she is eligible to do so. While she is as of yet uncertain of her long-range career plans, no doubt those will come into focus as the short-term unfolds.

### ***Scholarship Funds***

During the past year, the KU Student Senate provided \$6,000 to fund students who represent diverse backgrounds. That money was divided among two students. Once again, the KU Student Senate has funded us for the next year with the same amount. I believe one reason for our successfully receiving grants is that we fund students both who have financial needs and who graduate. The money is well spent.

The Graduate School has awarded us two Professional Master Degree grants that will fund each student \$3,000 per year. These funds are very helpful in our attempt to attract students with excellent academic credentials.

During this academic year, we funded Laura Wagner with the Alan Black Scholarship. Laura received her bachelor degree in French from Kansas State University. She has proven to be an exemplary student and worthy of this funding.

We have not yet met our financial goal for the Alumni and Friends Scholarship fund. Although we are getting closer to meeting the required funding, we need your help to activate this scholarship. If you can give, make your check payable to the KU Endowment Association noting "Urban Planning Alumni and Friends" in the memo portion. Mail it to the KU Endowment Association, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, KS 66044. Gifts are tax deductible and can also be given online at [www.kuendowment.org](http://www.kuendowment.org). Contact Amy Piersol with questions about financial support at (785) 832-7421 or [apiersol@kuendowment.org](mailto:apiersol@kuendowment.org).

### ***The Alumni Page***

If you have not entered your email address on the Alumni Page on our website, please do. This entry enables us to keep quicker contact with you as well as your former classmates.