mup
Student Handbook

master of urban planning @ texas a&m
If you can plan in Texas, you can plan anywhere

The Texas A&M Master of Urban Planning program brings together some of the finest thinkers and researchers in many critical, cutting-edge areas of contemporary planning. Graduates of the program go on to become leaders in the state, nation, and around the globe—changing our world, one plan at a time.

Texas is brimming with planning challenges: air quality, water quality, congestion, poverty, transit, sprawl, and natural hazards are just a few. So when Texas plans, it plans big. For example, planning for the area between Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, which surrounds Texas A&M, is big by any standards: it contains more than three-fourths of the state’s population, covers over 57,000 square miles and 66 counties. The Trinity River Corridor plan includes over 100 miles of river that flows through the heart of Dallas and Fort Worth.

Texans like their property rights, and they aren’t fond of government regulation: innovative approaches to growth management and land use regulation are needed here. The situation just makes us more creative, responsive and pioneering. Planners trained in Texas have all the tools and techniques of “standard planning” and then some.

Texas offers a microcosm (a big one) of the changes the larger earth is undergoing. We have three of the ten most populous cities in the country, and two of only twelve American metropolitan areas in the world top 100. The sheer number of cities in Texas creates vast urbanized areas, sometimes referred to as megapolitans. We are diverse in many ways: more than half of our (very large) population is a racial or ethnic minority, our historic diversity is unparalleled (we have been part of six nations), we have huge cosmopolitan cities surrounded by rural areas steeped in tradition, and we have almost every imaginable topographical feature, including a coastline, mountains, deserts, forests, plains and rivers, along with the hazards, threats and planning opportunities that come with them.

Our program boasts unique diversity of its own. We are housed in a college that offers graduate education in everything from Hollywood animation to construction science. Add in our low cost of living, warm climate and very reasonable tuition rates, and it’s easy to see why we say with pride, “This is not your typical planning school!”
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Interdisciplinary Program

Interdisciplinary education is a cornerstone of planning at Texas A&M. Within the college, you can take courses in Architecture, Land Development, Construction Science, Landscape Architecture, and even Visualization (the breeding ground of modern movie animation). No other program in the nation offers such a panoply within its own college. Likewise, opportunities for international study and research at A&M are outstanding. Not only in our own internationally diverse classrooms, but also by studying abroad in one of our many international programs, including ones in Europe, China and Latin America.
Dual Degree and Articulated Programs

Students with strong motivation to work towards obtaining a more than one degree can make arrangements at the beginning of their degree program. The Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning offers two dual degrees which include the Master of Urban Planning, as well as an articulated program that allows students to earn both the Master of Urban Planning and the Ph.D. in Urban & Regional Science. Dual degrees enable students to complete two degrees in three years, instead of the four years both degrees would normally take. The articulated program can save students up to a year of coursework.

Students interested in these programs must be admitted to both degree programs, and both degrees will be conferred at the time of graduation. Interested students should contact the Program Coordinators of each program listed below as soon as they are admitted for studies.

Available programs:

Master of Land and Property Development + Master of Urban Planning

Master of Architecture + Master of Urban Planning

Master of Urban Planning + Ph.D. Urban & Regional Science

Thomas Oomen earned masters degrees in both urban planning and architecture. He now serves as an Assistant Professor at the Sushant School of Art and Architecture in Gurgaon, India.

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MUP Coordinator
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wli@tamu.edu

Shannon Van Zandt
Interim Department Head
(979)458-1223
svanzandt@tamu.edu

Marcel Erminy
M.Arch Coordinator
(979)845-6436
merminy@tamu.edu

Yu Xiao
Ph.D. Coordinator
(979)458-2731
yuxiao@email.tamu.edu

master of urban planning @ texas a&m
# Overview of the Master of Urban Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Upon completion of core coursework, students will be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• facilitate a process of articulating community goals and objectives;</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>Physical Planning</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• analyze local conditions to develop a valid fact basis;</td>
<td>PLAN 604 (3) Methods I</td>
<td>PLAN 613 (3) Methods II</td>
<td>PLAN 684 Internship (1)</td>
<td>PLAN 662 (3) Applied Planning</td>
<td>PLAN 658 (3) Plan Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify, create, and employ policies, tools, and strategies that lead to a sustainable built, human, and natural environment;</td>
<td>PLAN 610 (3) Urban Structure</td>
<td>PLAN 640 (3) Planning Law</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Elective (3)</td>
<td>Elective (3)</td>
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<td>• use a transparent, inclusive process to facilitate coordination and implementation among government agencies and private sector organizations;</td>
<td>PLAN 664 (3) History &amp; Theory</td>
<td>Spatial analysis/communication elective (3)*</td>
<td>Elective (3)</td>
<td>Elective (3)</td>
<td>Elective (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• evaluate and monitor the success of plans and programs; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• communicate and educate through written, visual, and oral channels to achieve these objectives.</td>
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*Students must also take TWO courses from the following list of "spatial analysis and communications" electives:

- PLAN 624 Digital Communications
- PLAN 625 Geographic Information Systems
- PLAN 689 Site Planning

^Students will typically register for the PLAN 684 credit during the Fall 2 semester, but will complete the internship during the summer.

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**Emphasis Area or Certificate**

Through their elective choices, students develop specialized knowledge and tools. Emphases (four courses):

- Transportation Policy & Planning
- Resilient Communities
- Urban & Economic Development

Interdisciplinary Certificates (five courses):

- Transportation Planning
- Environmental Hazard Management
- Sustainable Urbanism
- Health Systems & Design
- Facilities Management

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CORE

Core courses convey knowledge that all planners need. On completion of core courses, students will be able to:

- facilitate a process of articulating community goals and objectives;
- analyze local conditions to develop a valid fact basis;
- identify, create and employ policies, tools, and strategies that lead to a sustainable built, human, and natural environment;
- use a transparent, inclusive process to facilitate coordination and implementation among government agencies and private sector organizations;
- evaluate and monitor the success of plans and programs; and
- communicate and educate through written, visual, and oral channels to achieve these objectives.

EMPHASIS AREA OR CERTIFICATE

Through their elective choices and professional paper, students develop specialized knowledge and tools in an area of their choosing. Students choose a four-course emphasis area, or may substitute a five course interdisciplinary certificate instead. Some students may choose to complete more than one certificate, but it can be difficult to graduate on time in this case.

Emphases (four courses):
- Transportation Policy & Planning
- Resilient Communities
- Urban & Economic Development

Interdisciplinary Certificates (five courses):
- Transportation Planning
- Environmental Hazard Management
- Sustainable Urbanism
- Health Systems & Design
- Facilities Management
Core Curriculum

Planners help communities envision their potential and understand strategies for reaching it. They gather data and present it in meaningful ways so that a participatory planning process is possible for all the groups affected by it, from policy maker to business owner to citizen. Planners are also key to carrying out plans, responsible for coordinating actions and policy enforcement among diverse groups of people.

Our program’s core courses are centered on understanding and applying this multi-layered process so that students graduate capable of planning for a variety of clients and at a range of scales, from the site plan to the comprehensive plan.

All students are introduced to the theoretical, historic and legal foundations of the planning field, but a specialty of the MUP program is its emphasis on practical and hands-on experience. Several courses have lab or studio components, and students yearly work with clients from all over Texas to produce plans and reports through applied planning courses. Student work culminates in an individually-conducted professional project or report meant to contribute analysis and recommendations to the planning field.

Program coordinator:
Wei Li, wli@tamu.edu

Comprehensive education

Second-Year MUP student Long Chen presents his team’s comprehensive plan to the Navasota City Council and community members.

CORE COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 604</td>
<td>Planning Methods I: Demography and Economic Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 610</td>
<td>Structure and Function of Urban Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 613</td>
<td>Planning Methods II: Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 625</td>
<td>GIS for Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 689</td>
<td>Legal Basis for Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 662</td>
<td>Applied Planning Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 658</td>
<td>Plan Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 664</td>
<td>Foundations of Planning (History and Theory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 665</td>
<td>Participatory Plan-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 689</td>
<td>Site Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A&M is known throughout the world for its expertise in planning for hazards and the coastal environment, transportation systems and healthy and resilient communities. Students can tap this expertise in two ways: by pursuing an emphasis area within the master of urban planning program and, if desired, by pursuing interdisciplinary certificates, which are offered through the College of Architecture’s research centers.

**EMPHASIS AREAS**

The Master of Urban Planning program at Texas A&M University offers a variety of emphasis areas for its students. Students choose a minimum of four electives from a published list of acceptable courses, both within and outside the department. Students must take at least half (6 hours) of their emphasis area electives from within the Urban Planning program (PLAN).

While students initially seek advising from the MUP Coordinator, once they have selected their emphasis area, they should see the emphasis area coordinator for advising on courses. The Emphasis Areas include:

- **Transportation Policy and Planning**  
  (Coordinator: Dr. Wei Li)

- **Resilient Communities**  
  (Coordinator: Dr. Philip Berke)

- **Urban and Economic Development**  
  (Coordinator: Dr. Yu Xiao)

- **Design Your Own** – this allows a student to create a set of courses that meets their specific interest outside the choices offered.

**CERTIFICATES**

The College of Architecture’s research centers offer interdisciplinary certificates, which feature courses and faculty from each of the College’s three departments. Certificates require a minimum of five courses. Students who complete the requirements for the certificate will be recognized on their diploma. Certificates may be earned separately from, or in conjunction with, an emphasis area within the MUP program.

Certificates available in the College include:

- **Sustainable Urbanism**  
  (Center for Housing and Urban Development)

- **Transportation Planning**  
  (Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center)

- **Environmental Hazard Management**  
  (Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center)

- **Facilities Management**  
  (CRS Center for Leadership & Management in the design & construction industry)

- **Health Systems & Design**  
  (Center for Health Systems Design)

- **Historic Preservation**  
  (Center for Heritage Conservation)
EMPHASIS AREAS

transportation planning

While transportation planning is about achieving efficient and effective movement of people and goods, the impact of transportation systems extends far beyond the physical roadway. Transportation systems shape urban form, affect economic vitality and impact quality of life. The issues faced by transportation planners in the 21st century are increasingly complex and interdisciplinary in nature, requiring skills, knowledge, and expertise that transcend traditional professional boundaries.

The 15-credit hour Graduate Certificate in Transportation Planning (CTP), offered through a collaborative partnership between the Colleges of Architecture and Engineering, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), and the Bush School of Public Policy, seeks to provide students with the education and training needed to address these professional challenges.

Key Outcomes

- The substantive base of knowledge needed to be broadly successful in the transportation profession, and
- Specialized instruction in one of four critical areas of professional need: Multimodal Systems Planning, Transportation and Urban Design, Transportation and Public Policy, and Transit Management.

Emphasis area and Certificate coordinator and link:
Dr. Wei Li, wli@tamu.edu
laup.arch.tamu.edu/academics/certificates/ctp/

Course Requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total credit hours required (Emphasis area)</th>
<th>(3x4) 12</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total credit hours required (Certificate)</td>
<td>(3x5) 15</td>
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### Foundation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 612</td>
<td>Transportation in City Planning</td>
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### Capstone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 678</td>
<td>Applied Transportation Studio</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Focus Area (Choose Three)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 626</td>
<td>Advanced GIS in Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 650</td>
<td>Disaster Response Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 670</td>
<td>Urban Public Transportation Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 672</td>
<td>Transportation and the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 673</td>
<td>Design for Sustainable Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 674</td>
<td>Transportation Systems Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 676</td>
<td>Transportation Investment Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVEN, LAND, MGMT, PSAA</td>
<td>For applicable courses offered outside the department, see <a href="http://laup.arch.tamu.edu/academics/certificates/ctp/">http://laup.arch.tamu.edu/academics/certificates/ctp/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVERY DAY AT MY JOB IS DIFFERENT. One day may involve sitting at my desk all day either writing a plan or report, reading up on a new topic, or preparing meeting materials. Another day I could be out in the field collecting information for a project. Things I do in my job now that I learned about at TAMU are: using GIS and creating maps, finding and analyzing demographic data, writing goals and objectives for a plan, and UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NEEDS.

THE PROGRAM WAS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST ACADEMICS, and I really valued the conferences, volunteer opportunities, and social activities with other students, faculty, and former students.

TAKE A COURSE IN THE CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT. So much of what I do ends up overlapping with engineers and having some insight into the engineering world is helpful. It also helps you get to know a professor outside the department.

Books

Girling, Cynthia and Ronald Kellett (2005). Skinny Streets and Green Neighborhoods
Hanson, Susan and Genevieve Giuliano, eds. (2004). The Geography of Urban Transportation, Third Edition
National Complete Streets Coalition, smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets
Newman, Peter and Jeffrey Kenworthy (1999). Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence
Shoup, Donald (2011). The High Cost of Free Parking

and Blogs: Streetsblog Network, streetsblog.net

Faculty Involvement

LAUP faculty members who commonly chair or serve on graduate advisory committees include:

Bill Eisele
David Ellis
Chanam Lee
Ming Han Li
Wei Li
Katie Turnbull
Tim Lomax
Teresa Qu
Doug Wunneburger

Transportation Planner & MPO Coordinator
City of Victoria, TX

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Walk this way: Students conduct a pedestrian audit

Dan Burden, executive director of Walkable Communities, pointed out successes and shortcomings of the Texas A&M campus and adjoining streets to students during a pedestrian audit, March 2009.

MUP Student Profile: Mary Craighead, ’12
EMPHASIS AREAS

Resilient Communities

Today, planners have their eye on resiliency, realizing that it is not if a community will be faced with a challenge but when. Resiliency, the concept of how well we bounce back from the hazards we face, has been a core research area for the faculty and students at Texas A&M University’s Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center (HRRC) for 25 years. We are leaders in the study of hazard and disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, especially in effective practices for hazard mitigation in coastal environments which our Coastal Planning Atlas and continuing education workshop, Planning for Sustainable Coastal Communities, address.

Students who pursue an emphasis in Resilient Communities can expect to come away with these key outcomes:

- Crafting land use and environmental plans;
- Mitigating and recovering from natural hazards;
- Fostering sustainable urban communities;
- Protecting the integrity of ecological systems; and
- Examining the impact of the environment on human health.

Emphasis area coordinator:

Dr. Philip Berke pberke@arch.tamu.edu

Course Requirement

Total credit hours required.......................................(3x4) 12

Foundation course required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 641</td>
<td>Environmental Planning</td>
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</table>

Focus area courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 616</td>
<td>Analyzing Risk/Hazard and Public Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 623</td>
<td>Planning in 3rd world countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 631</td>
<td>Health Systems Planning and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 634</td>
<td>Environmental Health Planning and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 642</td>
<td>Coastal Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 647</td>
<td>Disaster Recovery/Hazard Mitigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 649</td>
<td>Organizational &amp; Cmty Response to Crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 650</td>
<td>Disaster Response Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN 673</td>
<td>Design for Sustainable Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCH, LAND, RENR, PSAA</td>
<td>For applicable courses offered outside the department, speak to the emphasis area coordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE MUP ENVIRONMENT IS VERY UNIQUE in that the faculty not only engage through the advising process but actively encourage students to apply the more theoretical concepts from the coursework within on-going research projects.

My time at TAMU helped me to think analytically about the INTERSECTIONS OF LAND USE, HOUSING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Disaster recovery and community development senior planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ONE-PAGE MEMO AND THE TWO-MINUTE ELEVATOR SPEECH. The research side of planning is very important, but being able to succinctly and clearly communicate findings and priorities to a general audience is paramount in advancing any sort of policy.

Books

Beatley, Timothy and Kristy Manning (1997). *Ecology of Place*

Brody, Samuel (2011). *Rising Waters*

Hilgenkamp, Kathryn (2006). *Environmental Health*


Mileti, Dennis S. (1999). *Disasters by Design*

Faculty Involvement

MUP faculty members who commonly chair or serve on graduate advisory committees include:

- Phil Berke
- Samuel Brody
- John Cooper
- Forster Ndubisi
- George Rogers
- Walter Peacock
- Shannon Van Zandt
- Yu Xiao

“I love that I get help communities that lack the capacity for meaningful urban planning...My job enables our organization to bring planning capabilities to those communities who need it”

- Heather Wade, ’11

Coastal Planning Specialist, Texas Sea Grant

An annual planning forum: Imagining New Futures

The annual department event, Imagining New Futures, brings professionals and students together to learn about and participate in activities centered on themes of sustainability. Above, a team presents their ideas during the 2012 event.

MUP Student Profile: Travis Young, ’11

Disaster recovery and community development senior planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)
EMPHASIS AREAS
urban and economic development

Planners help cities manage growth that coincides with the visions of their community stakeholders. Today, more cities are focusing growth inside their existing boundaries, increasing density, and infilling under- or undeveloped areas. Students who choose an emphasis in this area have a great resource—the Center for Housing & Urban Development (CHUD), a leader in the inquiry for creating sustainable housing and communities.

Students who pursue an emphasis in urban and economic development can expect to come away with these key outcomes:

- How distressed neighborhoods and areas may be revitalized;
- Principles of business location, development and attraction, public-private partnerships, public sector incentives and revenue sources;
- Tools and techniques for addressing regional and local economic development needs; and
- Methods of increasing the supply of affordable, quality housing opportunities.

Emphasis area coordinator:
Yu Xiao, yuxiao@tamu.edu

Course Requirement
Total credit hours required (3x4) 12

Foundation
PLAN 689 (temporary number) Urban & Regional Economic Development

Choose at least one from:
PLAN 629 Neighborhood Revitalization
PLAN 627 Community Economic Development
PLAN 656 Housing and Community

Choose remaining from:
RPTS 604 Principles of Community
RPTS 605 Community Organization
ALEC 631 Dev and Planning of Community Education Programs
LDEV 661 Development and the Environment
LDEV 664 Market Analysis for Development
MUP Student Profile: Erin Newcomer, ’08

Erin Newcomer, ’08

My Favorite Course Was Housing and Community (Plan 656). This course allowed me to research and write about mixed-income housing, a subject I was most interested in during my time in the MUP program.

Due to the education I received in the housing and applied planning courses, I am able to provide developers with advice concerning site design for functional growth and development.

There is never a typical day for a planner because we are responsible for several tasks such as reviewing plats and construction plans; commercial site plans; zoning change requests; variance requests; annexations; sign permits; and alterations and improvements to historic buildings.

A goal that I attempt to achieve with any new development is to create a walkable environment for the citizens and patrons. I enjoy offering guidance when designing a site plan that complies with the ordinances and is conducive for future growth and the citizens within Belton.

Books


and Blogs: Shelterforce (http://www.shelterforce.org/)

Faculty Involvement

Faculty members who commonly chair or serve on graduate advisory committees include:

John Cooper
Cecilia Giusti
Walter Peacock
Shannon Van Zandt
Wei Li
Yu Xiao

Planning Director, City of Belton, TX

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The Professional Paper (also called the Masters Paper, or the MP) is original work involving a substantial degree of independent research, analysis, and/or design. It should reflect the student’s area of specialization, and should demonstrate the student's learning and capabilities in this area and his/her readiness for professional practice. This requirement is typically met by a word-processed paper with text supported by tables, charts, graphics, references, and a bibliography. It may also be met by an original product of some other form, such as a plan, a website, or a set of design products (posters, which will usually be accompanied by a paper).

The MP is expected to have considerably more substance than a typical term paper. A typical length is 35-50 pages, excluding bibliography and any appendices. It is expected to be professionally formatted and presented as though it were being provided to a client (which in some cases, it may be). Each paper should include a statement of the problem (what is the issue your paper addresses?), a justification for the problem (a literature review or other justification for why this issue needs to be addressed), an approach to addressing the problem (methods), findings, and practical implications for practicing planners. While the paper should address all of these items, it may use a variety of approaches to do so. There is not an outline or template which all papers must follow.

The MP may build upon a term paper done for a class (but should be substantively different), may be related to an internship or job, or may be an original project. Some students may partner with the Texas Target Communities program in the College of Architecture to identify a community or client who would like to undertake a project appropriate for the MP. Below are several types of MPs done in the recent past. This list is not exhaustive—other models for MPs are acceptable, and should be discussed with your graduate committee chairperson.

**TYPES OF MASTERS PAPERS**

**Model Ordinance.** Students may develop a model ordinance that addresses an identified issue in communities. Typically, the model ordinance would be developed through a thorough assessment of the literature on the topic to identify what the ordinance should be striving to achieve and criteria by which existing ordinances may be evaluated. Then, a review of several existing ordinances may be conducted to assess how strong and effective they are. Using the best features of each of these ordinances, a model ordinance can be generated.

**Best Practices.** MPs may identify best practices for achieving a particular desired outcome. A literature review identifies and justifies the need for the desired outcome, and then several communities that have been successful (and perhaps other unsuccessful examples) would be identified and assessed for which of their practices have been most successful and effective at achieving the desired outcome.

**Program Proposal.** A variation on the Best Practices model is the Program Proposal, in which the MP develops a program or policy to address an identified problem. The process is similar to that undertaken for a Best Practices paper, but instead of culminating in a set of recommendations, a location-specific program is proposed that solves or addresses the problem. This type of project is more often done as an outgrowth of an internship or association with a specific organization or community who has partnered with the student to produce this product. This type of project is also most likely to include a design element, if design is part of the solution.

**Small Area Plan.** Done in conjunction with a community through the Texas Target Communities Program, individual students may undertake a small area plan, such as for a neighborhood or district, or may do a specialized plan, such as an economic development plan, a site plan, a tourism plan, etc. This type of MP is much narrower, and would not include as much of a literature review as other types. Instead, it would include data analysis, issue identification, and the development of proposed solutions for a specific planning unit, such as a neighborhood or district. It would also typically involve regular interactions with the client.
Program or Policy Evaluation. This type of MP would focus on an existing implementation of a novel program or policy, often in a specific community. The MP would evaluate the program or policy to learn whether, how well, and why it achieves the desired outcome, if indeed it does. A literature review would establish and justify the criteria by which it would be evaluated, and then a careful assessment of outcomes and impacts of the program would be undertaken, culminating in a set of recommendations for improving the existing program or expanding it to other areas. This type of MP may be done in conjunction with a community or client, but may also be done independently.

Meta Analysis. A meta analysis is an extensive and systematic literature review on a specific topic. Meta analyses can provide the evidence for evidence-based design or decision-making. A meta analysis focuses on comparing and contrasting results from different studies to develop a thorough understanding of what is known and what is not known about the topic. The meta analysis integrates findings from the studies to identify patterns, sources of disagreement among those results, or other relationships that become clear in the context of multiple studies. It typically involves not just an assessment of the findings of each study, but an assessment of the quality of the studies themselves as a way of weighing how much confidence to place in the findings. A meta analysis should involve a systematic method of identifying the studies to be evaluated, as well as a method of assessing them. The paper would conclude with an assessment of what we know (findings that have been consistent and strong over a range of studies), what we may know (findings that have appeared in multiple studies, but for which there are contradictory findings and/or weak results), and what we don’t know about a topic or a relationship among variables. The conclusion would also likely include recommendations or prescriptions for how policies, programs, or design should or should not rely on specific assertions about the topic.

Original research. Students often choose to do an MP that answers a specific research question. An original study can be done as a thesis (more involved; typically involves primary data collection and/or rigorous statistical analysis) or a professional paper. This type of MP is most closely associated with working directly with a faculty member on a funded or unfunded research project, but may also be a spin-off of such a project. These types of MPs typically follow the structure of a journal manuscript—a clearly stated research question(s), hypotheses, data and methods, analysis, findings, discussion, and conclusions. Given the time constraints for a MP, data collection is typically limited to secondary data, or an existing primary data set from a faculty member. Analysis may include statistical analyses, spatial analyses, or, more simply, descriptive analysis. For an MP, the level of sophistication of analysis is usually somewhat less than it would be for a thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Academic Year</strong></td>
<td>Meet with advisor to review potential professional paper topics and requirements, and discuss ways to complete the professional paper requirements in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By April</strong></td>
<td>Submit a proposal for professional paper to the Student Services Associate. It should include a title, an abstract of no more than 500 words, a preliminary bibliography, and a list of the student’s top three preferences for graduate committee members. The abstract must include the research question or objective and the expected methodological approach (meta analysis/in-depth literature review, case studies, demonstration project, etc.). The bibliography should include a minimum of five sources that are expected to be critical to the development of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>By May</strong></td>
<td>A committee of PLAN faculty will review student proposals. Rejected proposals will be returned to the student for immediate revision. Students who do not have an approved proposal by the end of the fall semester should expect to delay graduation past May of the following year. Approved proposals will be returned to the student with comments and suggestions from the faculty committee. By the end of the first academic year, students will be assigned a committee chair, who is a faculty member from LAUP.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Second Academic Year</strong></td>
<td>Once the graduate committee chair has been assigned, the student is expected meet their chair to discuss the project and develop a timetable for completion of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>By September</strong></td>
<td>The student should work with the committee chair to identify a second committee member from within the LAUP department, as well as a third committee member from outside the LAUP department. When the committee is ready, the degree plan must be submitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By January</strong></td>
<td>Apply for degree to be awarded in May.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Early March</strong></td>
<td>Submit a completed draft of the professional paper to the graduate committee chair. Within one week of submission, the graduate committee chair will return the draft with comments. Within one week of having comments returned, the student must distribute the final draft to all members of the graduate committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late March</strong></td>
<td>Submit “Request and Announcement of the Final Examination” or 10 working days prior to the examination, whichever comes first, to the Office of Graduate Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By April</strong></td>
<td>Near the end of the semester of graduation, students are expected to present their professional paper’s publicly, accompanied by a poster. The poster should distill the contents of the paper into a visually attractive and informative display. A series of videos have been created to help students design effective poster displays. They are available on the MUP website. A schedule of the paper presentation will be made public, and both students and faculty are expected to participate in the presentations. External reviewers will also be invited to participate in the exhibit and will choose a selection of posters to be recognized by the program and department for their excellence.</td>
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Assistantships and Internships

Graduate Assistantships

Several types of graduate assistantships are possible, but there are usually not enough to go around. Incoming students may be granted departmental assistantships (GAs, graduate assistantships), which may be teaching (GATs) or non-teaching (GANTs). These students will be assigned to a particular professor to help with classes, research, or special projects. Typically, these assistantships are for 20 hours per week, although sometimes they may be split between two professors (10 hours each). Once the student has been assigned to the professor, he or she should arrange a meeting with the professor to discuss what things the student will be working on, and what expectations the professor has for the student. These expectations may vary widely from professor to professor. Some professors are very strict about the number of hours worked and will meet with students every week, while others will have students work independently by assigning them projects that may take weeks or even months. It is a good idea to ask to meet with your supervising professor regularly so that you have the opportunity to clarify questions that you may have and make sure you are on the right track.

Students who do not receive graduate assistantships from the department and still need work may seek graduate research assistantships (GRAs). These assistantships may be offered by individual faculty members who have funded research projects. Faculty members will seek students with particular skills or areas of expertise that are needed for their research project, such as statistical analysis, GIS skills, strong writing skills, verbal communication skills, specialty software skills, programming, etc., depending on the needs of the project. To learn about these opportunities, it’s best to talk to other students and faculty members about which faculty members tend to hire research assistants, and to approach these faculty members to ask if they have anything available. It’s best to have a resume available to help faculty members learn about what skills you have to offer. Remember, though, that faculty members get a lot of these types of requests, so these positions can be competitively awarded.

Assistantships typically include tuition and insurance for students. Another alternative is hourly work as a student technician. Faculty members will often hire students for an hourly wage to work on specific projects related to research, outreach, or other special projects. These student technician positions are more like regular jobs, where you get paid for the number of hours that you actually work, and you have to fill out time sheets. They also do not include any additional benefits like tuition or insurance. They are often also limited in the time that workers are needed—it may be for just one semester, or it may be longer, or even shorter. You can talk to individual faculty members about the availability of these jobs, and also pay attention to the MUP listserv, where these positions are often advertised as they become available. International students will have limits on the number of hours that they can work each week (not more than 20).

The type of work for research or non-teaching assistants will vary widely, and may include data entry; literature searches; making phone calls, creating charts, graphs, maps or figures; cataloging photos or data; creating graphics or drawings; writing and editing; etc. Teaching assistants will often be responsible for doing initial grading, scanning or copying materials, keeping track of attendance or participation, retrieving videotapes or materials from the library, and doing classroom set-up when needed. Sometimes, and depending on their experience and capability, teaching assistants will conduct some classes—giving a lecture or running an exercise.
Internships

In the spring of the first year, the Association of Student Planners will have a special meeting dedicated to internships, where second year students will share their experiences and answer questions. Generally, however, it is the individual students’ responsibility to find an internship. There are no right ways or wrong ways to find internships. Below are some typical types of organizations that would offer appropriate internships, followed by common kinds of searches. International students who seek internships off-campus are highly encouraged to consult with the International Student Services of TAMU regarding the application for CPT. For more information:
http://iss.tamu.edu/Current-Students/F-1-Status/Curricular-Practical-Training#0-WhatisCurricularPracticalTraining(CPT)%3F

Typical types of organizations:

- Cities (departments of planning, community development, economic development, housing, environmental services, emergency management, transportation, etc.)
- Councils of Government (COGs)
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Counties
- State or federal agencies (related to area of interest, like transportation, housing, economic development, environmental resources, water, coastal issues, emergency management, land use, and so on)
- Non-profit or non-governmental organizations (that advocate for something related to your area of interest)
- Private sector planning, architecture, landscape architecture firms (EDAW, Jacobs, Glatting Jackson, Lane Koenig, etc.)
- Developers or real estate firms
- Research groups (may be non-profit or university, like the Texas Transportation Institute)

Places to look:

- Website of the organization itself
- Website of a parent organization (e.g., American Planning Association, or APA Texas; but also special interest organizations like the Congress for New Urbanism, and so on)
- Job search engines (monster.com; opportunityknocks.org; etc.)
- Google searches (don’t just enter “planning”—that’ll get you nowhere. Use terms like “urban planning internships,” “sustainable urbanism internships,” “economic development internships,” “housing internships,” “transportation internships,” and so on)
- Conferences, like the state conference of the APA Texas chapter, the APA conference, the Congress for New Urbanism, other specialty conferences

Your search for an internship will be guided by the constraints that you have or the kind of internship you’re looking for. Some common paths are outlined on the following page.

Search for an “official” internship (i.e. a regular, organized, usually paying internship)

This is a good place to start if you don’t have too many constraints on where you go. Some organizations have standing internship programs that are well organized, carefully supervised, and involve planned interactions and programmatic activities with other interns. These are usually really good experiences and result in good networking opportunities for permanent jobs. Many universities have internship programs to match you with organizations both in the US and internationally. In addition, many federal agencies and special interest groups in Washington, DC offer internship programs.
Each of these sources for internships is typically quite competitive. You will often find these through job search engines and Google searches. Also, look at TAMU’s internship office to see what you might be eligible for/interested in.

**Search constrained by location** (i.e. you need to live at home, stay in B/CS, or want to spend the summer in a specific, really cool city)

Generate a list of organizations with offices in your location of choice. Visit the website of each of these organizations and look for posted internships. If there are none, you may also identify a contact person that you can e-mail or call directly to inquire about internships. You can also use existing networks to identify opportunities. If you are searching in your hometown, use your parents or parents of friends to inquire about contacts at appropriate organizations.

**Search aimed at a specific organization or group related to your emphasis area** (i.e. you really want to get involved in some cutting-edge project or initiative)

Make a list of the organizations that are doing what you want to do. Pay attention to the external links on these websites to identify other organizations that are involved in this type of work that you may have not known about. Look for posted internship opportunities on their websites, but don’t be limited by this. Contact these organizations directly by e-mail, mail, or phone, to inquire about potential opportunities. You may need to be willing to work for no pay.

Further, many types of organizations are members of state and national organizations, such as the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the American Planning Association itself. These and other similar, large organizations will often list internships and job opportunities on their websites. If you know a few organizations that you would like to work for, see what other organizations they are a member of and visit their websites to see if they list internships.
admissions

Students seeking admission into the Master of Urban Planning program should review the university and department websites for information about applications, deadlines, and financial assistance. Applications for both domestic and international students may be found at www.applytexas.org.

In general, we accept applications at any time of year. While we do not prohibit spring (January) admissions, we strongly discourage beginning the program at this time, since it puts the student off-sequence in the curriculum. Further, the chances of being admitted are considerably lower in the spring because there are fewer spaces available. Financial aid is also very difficult to secure for students beginning the program in the spring.

When students apply, they should expect to submit the following:

- All official transcripts and test scores to the University
- A Statement of Purpose
- Three letters of recommendation from former professors or employers

Applicants may also submit a resume. Portfolios are unnecessary for admission into the Master of Urban Planning program.

Once an application is complete, it will be forwarded to a committee of at least three faculty members who will review it. When reviewing applications, faculty look for evidence of a student’s academic ability, motivation for graduate study, fit in the program (whether the student wants the type of education we provide), and appropriate preparation.

There is no minimum GRE or TOEFL (English proficiency, for international students only) score required. Applicants are considered relative to the rest of the applicant pool, and the best candidates are accepted on a space-available basis. Financial aid is awarded on a competitive basis to the most qualified applicants.
university policies

Academic Integrity

HONOR CODE “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System.

To meet this standard in the Master of Urban Planning courses and program requirements such as the masters paper or thesis, all ideas (including text, data, or graphics) that are not your own must be properly cited. Note that ideas that require citation may not have been published or written down anywhere.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see the “Student Resources on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism” section on the TAMU Library website. Violations of university policies on academic integrity will be handled according to university guidelines. Depending on the severity of the infraction, sanctions for academic dishonesty include:

- A failing grade for the assignment
- A failing grade for the course
- Student dismissal from the program
- Student dismissal from the university

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 979-845-1637.

program policies

Course Substitution Policy

Students may substitute an independent study for an existing course if the faculty member who teaches the course and the program coordinator agree. Students should prepare a brief Request for Substitution which includes their reasons for the request and describes their proposed program of independent study in sufficient detail for the faculty involved to determine whether the proposed work is an acceptable substitute for the course. This form must be approved by the faculty member who teaches the course, the faculty member who will supervise the independent study, the MUP Program Coordinator and the Department Head.

This policy was APPROVED by the MUP Program Committee Dec. 12, 2007.

Internship Policy

Students enrolled in the Master of Urban Planning program must complete the internship component of the program as a requirement for graduation. The internship requirement is 120 hours of work (paid or unpaid) with a planning or planning-related agency. To complete this requirement, students must enroll in PLAN 684, a one-hour course.

Finding an internship is solely the responsibility of the student. Students may review announcements for job postings on the MUP list serv, on the office door of the MUP program coordinator, or by meeting with MUP faculty to discuss other available opportunities. Students may also visit the following web sites in search of job opportunities: www.planning.org and www.planetizen.org. Students may also contact an agency directly to seek internship opportunities. As planning is a particularly broad field, so too are the types of internships a student might seek. Students have sought internships with:

- Local planning departments, including the cities of Bryan and College Station, Texas, and the Brazos Valley Council of Governments;
- Metropolitan planning organizations;
- Local housing authorities;
- Private consulting firms which specialize in planning, architecture, and engineering;
- Non-profits and advocacy groups; and
- Non-governmental organizations.
Students are encouraged to seek internships locally, nationally, and abroad, both paid and unpaid. The Department office maintains electronic and “hard copy” files of potential employers that students can review; it also has lists of Career Fair-participating firms, many of whom hire students.

Students may seek advice on the appropriateness of an internship from the MUP program coordinator. The program coordinator may refer a student’s internship proposal to the Master’s of Urban Planning Program Advisory Committee for more detailed review and approval. The program coordinator will consider the following factors when advising students in this regard:

- Type of employer;
- Job duties;
- Appropriateness with respect to student’s stated career track;
- Other relevant factors.

In the rare instance that a student has exhausted all internship opportunities which are feasible, he or she may appeal to the MUP program coordinator, in writing, to ask for placement. The student must raise this appeal before the end of the spring semester of their first year in the program. The MUP program coordinator will assist the student in finding a supplemental opportunity to fulfill the internship requirement. This supplemental opportunity might include assisting a faculty member with an on-going research project which is practice related. Students should be aware that paid compensation is unlikely in this option. Participation in study abroad programs provides another unique opportunity for students to earn the internship credit.

- In order to facilitate the successful completion of the internship requirement, students should follow these steps:
  - Apply for internships during the spring semester of their first year;
  - Interview broadly with prospective employers;
  - Provide an intern-agency agreement or letter signed by the potential employer which states the scope of the intern’s responsibilities, number of hours, and scheduling to the academic secretary for placement in their permanent file;
  - Register for PLAN 684;
  - Before grades are due, submit a report to the supervising professor for signature;
  - Give a copy of the signed report to the academic secretary for placement in their permanent file.

The Internship Report

The internship requirement (PLAN 684) for the MUP is designed to allow students to apply the knowledge gained in year one of the program and observe the workings of a professional office. The professional office setting gives students the opportunity to participate in real-world projects, make professional contacts, and observe workplace practices and ethical decision-making. Certified planners, when they obtain certification, must adhere to a set of professional standards. These include responsibilities to the public, their clients and employers, and their profession and colleagues. These responsibilities can be found at https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm. Another excellent resource for standards of professional practice is Charles Hoch’s What Planners Do: Power, Politics, and Persuasion (Planners Press, 1994).

Students undertaking an internship should review, at a minimum, the AICP Code of Ethics. During the internship, students should observe whether, how, and to what extent these ethical standards are being met. Such observations may include customer service practices, transparency in dealings with the public, the use of data for decision-making, or the extent to which planning efforts are promoting the public interest. They may also include collegiality and support of professional development within the office.

We encourage students to keep a journal during their internship. Upon completion of the internship, students are expected to submit a 3-5 page report on their internship in which they reflect upon what they learned in the internship. While the first part of the report may be primarily descriptive—what they did, who they worked with, what types of deliverables were produced, etc.—the second part of the report should address workplace practices and ethics. The paper should
make explicit reference to the AICP Code of Ethics, and should address the ways in which this code of ethics was or was not demonstrated in the internship workplace. This paper must be submitted to the program coordinator no later than the last day of classes during the semester in which the student is enrolled in the internship credit.

financial aid guidelines

The goal of these policies is to make awarding of aid more consistent, equitable, and efficient in recruiting students.

- Aid for all MUP students is awarded with the goal of attracting and retaining the highest quality students. Need should be an important secondary consideration, as the international and out of state students receive an out of state tuition waiver if they receive a $1000 award.

- The deadline for aid applications is April 15. This takes into account the application deadline of March 1 for international applicants, since.

- Additional financial aid may be awarded “in arrears” at the Awards Banquet held in the spring of each year. That is, those MUP students receiving aid would be recognized toward the end of their aid-receiving year instead of immediately upon receiving the aid. This ensures that the aid recipient actually remains in the program and allows recognition of many more deserving students at the banquet, including GAs and recipients of tuition remissions.

- Departmental scholarships available to MUP students should generally be awarded to continuing students only (see 6 below for the exceptional case); the amount awarded may vary from person to person and year to year. Students should submit an application and a letter from their supervising professor to the Academic Secretary by April 15. Other criteria should be kept to a minimum so as to afford the greatest flexibility in making offers to applicants.

- In order to continue in a GA position for a second year, a MUP student must receive no grade lower than B in the first year and must also obtain a letter from his/her supervising professor recommending that he/she be allowed to continue.

GAs must submit the letter and a printout of grades received in the fall semester to the Academic Secretary by April 15; the committee will then award GA positions for the second year pending the student’s earning satisfactory grades for the spring semester. If a student loses a GA position he/she may still be awarded other aid by the committee.

- In late March the Academic Secretary will notify (via email and posted notices near the MUP student boxes) second year students of the need to complete an application and submit a letter by April 15 if they wish to continue as a GA or to be considered for Departmental aid.

- If some likely aid (for example, GA positions or tuition remissions) is still unknown by April 15 then the Departmental aid should be held in reserve and the aid award letters for new MUP students should simply award $1000 without listing the source of funds. This allows the Committee to cover aid awarded to deserving new students with available departmental scholarship funds, then switch them to remissions or GAs as those funds become available. All award letters must include a date (within one month of the date of the letter) by which an acceptance must be received or the aid will be awarded to another applicant.

- Beginning April 1 the academic secretary will prepare an updated spreadsheet before each MUP Program Committee meeting that includes every new student who has sent in an application, whether complete or not. The Committee will then prioritize the list based first on merit, then need. If a need for names for GAs or remissions arises between meetings the Program Coordinator is authorized to submit the highest priority names from the list, and let the committee know via email.

These guidelines were APPROVED by the MUP Program Committee on Dec. 12, 2007.
The Association of Student Planners (ASP) is the Texas A&M University student organization for the American Planning Association (APA) that represents students in the Masters of Urban Planning (MUP) program. It is led by students in the Masters of Urban Planning program and is a recognized organization of Texas A&M University and the American Planning Association. It consists of over 120 students and participates in numerous activities throughout the school year. The officers of ASP play an important role in both the College of Architecture and Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, by serving on committees such as:

- College of Architecture Student Advisory Council,
- College of Architecture Executive Committee,
- Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning Student Leaders Council
- Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning Faculty Council
- Masters of Urban Planning Faculty Committee

**Monthly Meetings**

ASP members get together monthly to discuss important issues related to the students and their future activities. Often the meetings are anchored by a guest speaker that talks about professional work outside academia. This creates a great medium for outside involvement and increased knowledge of professional planning. In the past we have had speakers from different...
cities of Texas such as Bryan, College Station, Houston, Austin, Dallas and the Brazos Valley Council of Governments.

**Career Fair**

Each year the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning hosts a career fair which attracts companies from across the state and even from other parts of the country. The Association of Student Planners collaborates with the American Society of Landscape Architects, student chapter (ASLA) to organize and invite different firms for this special event. This event occurs every February and allows students to spread their résumé’s and interview with different firms.

**Conferences**

Twice a year, ASP arranges for students to attend conferences, one at the state level and the other at the national level. In the fall, Texas APA holds a conference to bring planners together to mingle and learn about new initiatives with regards to planning in Texas. It is a good opportunity for students to network as well as learn from other practicing planners in Texas. National APA is held in the spring and brings together planners across the country to do the same, but at a much larger scale. Both conferences provide opportunities to network, learn and also to come closer as a planning class.

In order to offset costs incurred by attending these conferences, ASP receives assistance from former students and the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning. However, they also participate in fundraising activities such as shirt and textbook sales, as well as other campus activities such as replacing seat cushions at Kyle Field before the football season.

**Community Service**

As planners we like to think of ourselves as altruistic in our desires to improve our communities and cities, and our student planners are no different. Each year, Texas A&M University holds the “BIG EVENT.” This activity gets students out into the community to help the residents. The Association of Student Planners participates in this event each year with pride. In 2008, we were able to complete two separate service projects for different residents in Bryan and College Station.

**Elections**

The Association of Student Planners holds annual elections every March for the officer positions of president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. This timeline allows for the new officers and old officers to transition between academic years. In October of every year a 1st-year representative officer is elected among the incoming Masters of Urban Planning student class.

**professional advisory council**

The Planning Professional Advisory Council (PAC) is a support group between the program and key leaders in the design, planning, and development of high-quality, functional, and sustainable built and natural environments. By joining together key leaders, students, and faculty in the common quest, the PAC and the College of Architecture make a profound difference in enhancing people’s lives in Texas, the United States, and beyond.

The PAC’s support greatly assists the MUP Program as the program addresses issues related to the creation of improved human environments, the education of our students, and the improved condition of our natural environment. PAC members are the leaders who will be able to make a major difference in shaping the design and environmental quality of our built and natural environment in Texas, the United States, and beyond.
Frequently asked questions

1. **Where do I get a campus map?**

   An online campus map is available at: http://aggiemap.tamu.edu.

2. **How do I get into the Langford Building on weekends and in the evening?**

   See the Langford Building Administrator (located on the first floor of Langford A across from the stairs) and have them approve your Student ID card for official system recognition. You may also gain access by asking a faculty member or other students for the four digit door key code. Another old-fashioned and desperate method is to wait for another student to open it and slip in behind them.

3. **What is the MUP space?**

   The open space with couches, tables, a microwave, and a fridge on the third floor of Langford A in the central section of the cubicle walls is the “MUP space.” It is meant to be a common room for MUP students to study, chat, or have lunch.
4. How can I get a locker?

You can get a locker in the Evans library. For information on how to rent a locker in the Evans library, go to their website or information desk. The link is: http://library.tamu.edu/services/lockers.html

5. How do I obtain a computer access ID, and how can I get remote computer access?

All computers in the Langford building can be accessed with your Langford ID that is composed of your initials and the last four digits of your Student ID. For the initial password, check with the computing center on the first floor of Langford A (also the print center).

Around the campus there are several open access labs, for example in the Student Computing Center (SCC), the Horticulture building or Blocker that can be accessed by your NetID. For more information visit: http://oal.tamu.edu/

The library has computers on several floors that can be accessed by your NetID.

To work remotely from home, the main TAMU computing center can set you up with remote access. Take your computer and student ID – takes a few minutes to set up. This computer center also offers technical support for computer problems which is part of your student fees.

6. Where and how can I print?

Around Langford A there are several printers that you can use. Check which ones are working before you print! Printing is sometimes a fickle process. Generally each lab has a B/W printer that can double-side documents.

7. How do I pay for prints?

You’ll get a balance of about $60, of which $30 will be posted in your College of Architecture account and the remaining will go to your regular student account. You can avail the full amount at the beginning of your each semester. This balance can be checked in the lower right corner of your desktop when you are logged into your account in Langford.

7. How do I get ArcGIS and other software?

Students can get a one-year student version of ArcGIS from the secretary of the department on the third floor of Langford A for free. Note: ArcGIS is also available on all computers of the Open Access Labs around campus as well as on the computers in Langford A.

Other software, such as Office 2007, EndNote, SPSS, and etc may be purchased at reduced cost from software.tamu.edu. Introductory software short courses may be offered for free by the university. For details check shortcourses.tamu.edu.

8. Where can I make copies?

There is a copy machine in the TRC library on the second floor of Langford A. One copy costs 10¢. If you get a copy card, you can make copies at the Evans library. Another possibility is to make copies at FedEx/Kinko’s on University Dr. or at Copy Corner on Texas Ave.

9. Where can I print cheap posters?

In order to print posters, choose the appropriate printer on one of the computers in Langford A. Print your poster, then go down to the Media Center on the first floor of Langford A, pay your prints and they’ll print your poster. You can choose the paper quality and size, before paying. If you are unsure which printer to choose to print to for large format ask the Media Center first. https://wikis.arch.tamu.edu/display/HELPDESK/Printing. You can also go to a copy shop and print the poster there, but it is certainly more expensive.

10. What should I do if the printers don’t have any more paper?

Go to the Media Center on the first floor of Langford A and ask for more paper.

11. Where do I bind reports?

You can bind your reports at FedEx/Kinkos on University Dr. for about $5; just ask for the spiral bind.

12. Where can I scan?

There is a scanner in the TRC library in Langford A that can be used for educational purposes.

13. Where can I study quietly?

This is a good question…

Most students study at home or in the library. Evans library has several study rooms for rent; go to their website for more information. You will find a niche that matches your preference.
14. Where do I get my Student ID card?

Student IDs can be obtained at the General Services Complex (GSC), which is located on West Campus on Agronomy Rd. You can take bus #6 to its terminal stop. In order to get a student ID, your picture is taken and you need your UIN. The cashier’s office are located in the same building.

15. Where do I get my grade report, transcript and proof of enrolment?

Online: https://howdy.tamu.edu/

You can also request the documents in person on the first floor of the General Services Complex (GSC), which is located on West Campus on Agronomy Road. Take bus #6 to its terminal stop.

16. How do I get a cheap bike?


17. Where do I get cheap books, find out what books are required for courses and when should I order books?

There are several book stores on and around campus, e.g. the TAMU Bookstore in the MSC: http://tamu.bkstore.com, or Tradition’s bookstore. A list of books for your courses are listed according to the department and course number of your class on their website. You can also purchase your books online: most students buy cheap used books on www.half.com or on www.amazon.com.

Most professors expect for you to have your books the first week of class, so it is a good idea to check early with your professors what books are required for your classes instead of waiting until the first day of class. Our faculty are friendly and responsive, do not hesitate to look up a professor’s email address and ask them.

18. What are good places to eat lunch?

On campus there are several cafeterias and food courts where you can eat.

http://diningservices.tamu.edu/

There are several restaurants along University Drive in an area locals call “Northgate”, e.g. Freebirds, Potbelly’s Sandwiches, Chipotle, and others.

19. How do I get financial aid (graduate assistantship, scholarship, other forms)?

Most Departmental aid is awarded to incoming fall semester students, but there are some scholarships that are awarded in the spring, usually to returning students.

For information on available scholarships and financial aid, first turn to pp. 25 and 30 of this handbook, and then ask the Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning (LAUP) Department Office or your advisor if you still have questions.

Individual professors may also hire students and/or offer scholarships when they are awarded research grants etc.

There is some aid available at the University level; visit the A&M financial aid office at https://financialaid.tamu.edu/ for more information.

20. How do I find an internship?

General information and regulations on internships can be found in the MUP Handbook.

The Department Office has a list of several hundred firms that hire planners. Some of these firms participate in the career fair that is held annually in February. Several organizations post jobs and internships on their websites, so be sure to check the Central Texas, Texas, and national APA websites.

If you are interested in public transportation, contact Texas Transportation Institute http://tti.tamu.edu/, e.g. Linda Cherrington for opportunities based on TTI project requirements. As of Spring 2013, several 2nd Year MUPs and recent program graduates work for TTI either full or part time.

Contact professors who teach/research in specialties that
interest you: ask them for recommendations and for help networking to find that perfect opportunity.

21. Where can I find planning-related info online?

By no means a comprehensive list, but a good place to start is by checking these out:

- American Planning Association www.planning.org
- APA Texas txplanning.org
- Planetizen www.planetizen.com
- Project for Public Spaces pps.org/blog
- StreetsBlog streetsblog.net
- The Atlantic Cities theatlanticcities.com
- Urban Land Institute www.uli.org
- How do I find out about parking permits, campus bus schedules and city bus schedules?
- TAMU Campus Transportation: http://transport.tamu.edu/
- Bryan/College Station Public Transit: http://www.btd.org/BryanCollegeStation.htm

22. How do I become a member of the American Planners Association?

Students of the MUP Program get a free APA membership in their first year. In order to enrol as a student member, please contact an ASP officer to file the appropriate paperwork.

23. What are the benefits of being an APA member?

There are several benefits of being an APA member. These are just a few! APA members:

- Pay lower registration fees for conferences,
- Receive Planning Magazine, a publication of APA, and the APA’s monthly newsletter about what is going on in the planning profession,
- Pay lower prices for books or seminars offered by APA,
- Have access to exclusive opportunities for financial aid, internships and jobs

24. What are the deadlines for filing a degree plan, applying for graduation, and other issues?

Information of deadlines and the academic calendar can be found at the Office of Graduate Studies at http://ogs.tamu.edu/. The Office of Graduate Studies provides “Steps to Fulfil Master’s Degree Requirements” at http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/steps-masters.html.

25. Other items to be aware of:

Sometimes class rooms change before the first day of class, so check your schedule the week before classes begin.

You didn’t find the answer to a question you had? Or you think the given answer is not up to date or could be improved? Or you can think of other questions that should be included? let us know!

The impetus for this survival guide is input of students like you. If you have more questions, concerns, or simply want to share please contact an ASP officer (e.g. ‘13-’14 president, Maria Watson, at mw574@tamu.edu)
What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a synopsis of one’s creativity and development on specific knowledge over time. For students of the Master of Urban Planning program, a portfolio is required to be created in Texas A&M University web portal in the format of e-portfolio. E-portfolio is a powerful tool to showcase and summarize your personal views on topics covered in your courseworks, research works, both in the form of text and graphics, maps and photographs with proper illustration. For MUP students, each of these components of portfolio needs to be tied with the following learning objectives to demonstrate specific skills learned in different projects.

Learning objectives:

1. Assess and evaluate a community’s social, economic, environmental, and physical characteristics
2. Engage in (create) a planning process that is collaborative, inclusive, and participatory
3. Analyze primary and secondary data to identify community issues, problems, strengths, opportunities, inequities, and threats
4. Design alternative solutions (designs, policies, development projects, etc.) to address identified problems
5. Assess the legal, fiscal, and/or political feasibility/appropriateness of potential solutions
6. Communicate effectively (in writing, verbally, and graphically) to help communities understand options, visualize futures, and make informed choices
7. Practice planning according to professional standards of ethics, demonstrating an understanding of principles of social justice and diversity

The outcome of an e-portfolio is to help students seeking to enter professional field or pursuing higher education. It is the medium of demonstrating creativity, in-depth knowledge, analytical and research capability.

What to include in a portfolio?

An e-portfolio should include a short biography, resume and examples of academic works. Since MUP program is research oriented, the most of the projects are text-intensive. However e-portfolio does not need to be based on text only. The best way to showcase projects is through maps, graphs, photographs and other creative graphics with a consistent layout.

Where should I create the portfolio?

For students of Texas A&M University, there is an option to create eportfolio at E-campus web portal, located in https://ecampusprod.tamu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=29_1.

E-portfolio site contains two options:

• Create Personal portfolio

With the help of this option, students can create, modify and upload their academic works with the format provided on e-campus. Students also have the option to download their portfolio and share with prospective employers from this site.
• **Create Basic Portfolio**

Basic portfolio option creates a personal profile page for a student. Students can modify the layout with the options embedded in different tabs on the e-portfolio site.

There are some other free eportfolio websites that students often create online portfolios Below is the list of some of the popular ones:

- [www.behance.net](http://www.behance.net)
- [www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com)
- [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)
- [www.squarespace.com](http://www.squarespace.com)
MUP student alumni have always been a great resource for identifying and contacting different organizations in both the public and private sectors. Below is a list of organizations where recent MUP alumni have served and are serving as interns or full time professional planners.

**Jobs**

**State or University Agencies**
- Center for Texas Beaches and Shores
- Texas Transportation Institute
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Sea Grant
- Texas Department of Emergency Management
- Southwest Conservation Corps/Texas Railroad Commission

**City**
- City of Victoria
- City of Bryan Planning & Development Services
- City of McKinney
- City of Austin
- City of College Station
- City of Stephenville
- City of Houston
- City of Lafayette LA
- City of League City, TX
- City of Pflugerville, TX
- City of NYC, NY
- City of San Antonio, TX
- City of Georgetown, TX

**Regional Planning Agencies**
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission
- Harris County Community Services Department
- Houston Galveston Area Council
- Brazos Valley Council of Governments
- Northeast Texas Council of Governments
- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Middle Georgia COG, Macon, GA
- Research Valley Partnership
- Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
- San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization

**International**
- Sushant School of Art and Architecture, Gurgaon, Delhi NCR, India
- Public Forum, Urban Design Research Institute, Mumbai, India
- Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, Ahmedabad, India
- B+H Architects, Vietnam

**Private Planning firms**
- Calthorpe Associates
- Kendig Keast Collaborative
- Kimley Horn Associates
T-Concepts Corporation
Jacobs
Gunda Corporation
JHP
Batelle
Population and Survey Analysts, College Station TX
HNTB, Houston
Alfred Williams Consultancy, San Francisco
GEVAS (Transportation Engineering), Linz, Austria
Parsons Brinckerhoff, Los Angeles

**Internships:**
Texas Coastal Watershed Program
City of Columbia, SC
Texas Center for Beaches & Shores
Transportation Services, TAMU
Texas Transportation Institute (TTI)- Multimodal Freight
Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority
Woodlands Township Parks and Recreation
San Antonio Department of Environmental Policy
Texas Governor’s Land Office
Emergency Operations Center, Bryan and HRRC
City of College Station, Community Development
City of College Station, Neighborhood Development
City of College Station, Bikeways and Greenways
City of Bryan Planning & Development Services
City of Flatonia, TX
City of Ft. Worth Planning & Development
City of Frisco, TX
City of Corpus Cristi
City of Austin Planning & Development
City of Montgomery AL

Village of Burdett, NY (Planning Commission)
Bryan College Station MPO
BV COG Housing Services
Brazos Valley MPO
Northwest Indiana Regional Bus Authority
Singapore Mass Rapid Transit
Dickinson Bayou Watershed Partnership, Houston, TX
Downtown Memphis Commission
Goodman Corporation (Transit Planning), Austin, TX
National Park Service
Zhuozhou City, China
STIPDG Intern, US DOT
Texas Forest Service Emerging Communities
Landscape Architect Intern, NES, Inc.
Seattle Airport
Urban Design Intern, Martha’s Vineyard Commission
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Dept of Sociology, GIS work
Development and Construction Intern at Brazos Valley Affordable Housing Corporation
Planning Commission, Hillsborough Co, FL
Glatting Jackson
Engineering & Design Services, Texas A&M University
Population and Survey Analysts, College Station, TX
Sam Trans
Faculty and Courses
MUP Faculty

Sherry I. Bame
Professor
sbame@tamu.edu

B.S.N., (Nursing), University of Michigan
M.S., (Nursing, Public Health), Boston University
Ph.D., (Health Services Management & Policy),
University of Michigan

Interests: Health systems planning and policy,
environmental health, and health and human services
planning for hazards and disasters

Teaches: PLAN 630, PLAN 634

Elise Bright, AICP
Professor
ebright@tamu.edu

B.S., (Government & Spanish) University of Arizona
M.S., (City Planning), Harvard University
Doctor of Environmental Design, Texas A&M University

Interests: Economic development, zoning, environmental
planning, and impact assessment.

Teaches: PLAN 629

Phillip Berke
Professor
pberke@arch.tamu.edu

Ph.D., Urban and Regional Science, Texas A&M University
M.S., Natural Resources Planning, University of Vermont,
U.S. Department of Agriculture Research Fellowship
Award
B.A., Economics and Environmental Science, Empire State
College

Interests: environmental planning, coastal planning, plan
quality, climate adaptation

Samuel D. Brody
Professor
Director, Center for Texas Beaches and Shores
sbrody@arch.tamu.edu

B.A., (Environmental Studies), Bowdoin College
M.S., (Resource Policy & Behavior), University of Michigan
Ph.D., (City & Regional Planning), University of North
Carolina
Grad dip, (Environmental Studies),
University of Adelaide, Australia

Interests: Environmental planning, coastal sustainability
and resiliency, ecosystem management, and GIS

Teaches: PLAN 641, PLAN 642
**John Cooper**  
Associate Professor of Practice  
jcooper@arch.tamu.edu  
B.S. (Economics), Texas A&M University  
MUP, (Urban Planning), Texas A&M University  
Ph.D., (City & Regional Planning), University of North Carolina  
Interests: community engagement, emergency management, environmental justice  
Teaches: PLAN 662

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**Boah Kim** Assistant  
Lecturer  
boahboah@tamu.edu  
B.E.(Urban Engineering), Chung-Ang University  
M.S. (Urban Design), Chung-Ang University  
MUP (Urban Planning), Texas A&M University  
Ph.D. (Urban and Regional Science), Texas A&M University  
Interests: Integrated Urban Revitalization, Spatial Analysis, Sustainable Urbanism, Community Development and Design, Land Use, Urban Planning History and Theory  
Teaches: PLAN 656, PLAN 629, PLAN 625/626

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**Robert Cowell, Jr.,** AICP, CNU-A  
Adjunct Professor  
M.S. (Urban Planning), University of Tennessee – Knoxville  
B.S. (Aeronautics), St. Louis University  
Interests: planning administration, plan implementation, municipal finance, land use  
Teaches: PLAN 658

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**Cecilia Giusti**  
Associate Professor  
Associate Dean for Outreach and Diversity  
cgiusti@arch.tamu.edu  
B.A., Catholic University of Peru  
M.A., Institute of Social Studies, The Hague  
Ph.D., (Economics) University of Texas at Austin  
Interests: Urban and regional economic development and planning, urban and regional theory, diversity, inclusion, and economic development planning in developing countries, especially in Latin America.  
Teaches: PLAN 627, PLAN 623

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**Robert Cowell, Jr.,** AICP, CNU-A  
Adjunct Professor  
M.S. (Urban Planning), University of Tennessee – Knoxville  
B.S. (Aeronautics), St. Louis University  
Interests: planning administration, plan implementation, municipal finance, land use  
Teaches: PLAN 658

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**Cecilia Giusti**  
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M.A., Institute of Social Studies, The Hague  
Ph.D., (Economics) University of Texas at Austin  
Interests: Urban and regional economic development and planning, urban and regional theory, diversity, inclusion, and economic development planning in developing countries, especially in Latin America.  
Teaches: PLAN 627, PLAN 623
Chanam Lee
Professor
clee@arch.tamu.edu

B.A., Kyungpook National University
M.L.A., Texas A&M University
Ph.D., (Urban Design and Planning), University of Washington

Interests: Urban design and physical planning, urban form and non-motorized transportation, physical activity and public health.

Teaches: PLAN 632

Wei Li
Assistant Professor
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Ph.D. (Planning, Policy and Design), University of California, Irvine
M.A. (Planning), University of Waterloo
B.A. (Business Administration), Renmin University of China

Interests: environment and health impacts of transportation, green infrastructure, planning methods

Teaches: PLAN 613, PLAN 612, PLAN 676

Hwan Kim
Visiting Assistant Professor
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Ph.D. (Urban & Regional Science), Texas A&M University
M.S. (City & Regional Planning), University of Texas at Austin
M. Arch (Architectural Design), Han-Yang University, 2004
B. Arch (Architectural Engineering), Chung –Ang University 2002

Interests: GIS, decision-support systems, urban design

Teaches: PLAN 664, PLAN 689 (Site Planning)

Kim Mickelson, AICP
Visiting Assistant Professor
kmickelson@arch.tamu.edu

JD, University of Texas at Austin
MPA, University of Texas at Austin
B.A. University of Texas at Austin

Interests: planning ethics, planning law, environmental law, plan implementation

Teaches: PLAN 665, PLAN 658, PLAN 689 (Law)
Forster Ndubisi
Professor
Department Head

B.S., (Zoology/Ecology), University of Ibadan
M.L.A. University of Guelph
Ph.D., (Regional Planning & Resource Development),
University of Waterloo

Interests: Ecological design and planning, community
design, growth management, and interdisciplinary design
education

Teaches: PLAN 635

Forster Ndubisi
Professor
Department Head

B.S., (Zoology/Ecology), University of Ibadan
M.L.A. University of Guelph
Ph.D., (Regional Planning & Resource Development),
University of Waterloo

Interests: Ecological design and planning, community
design, growth management, and interdisciplinary design
education

Teaches: PLAN 635

Walter Gillis Peacock
Professor
Director, Hazard Reduction & Recovery Center
peacock@tamu.edu

B.A., (Sociology), Columbus State University
M.A., (Sociology), University of Georgia
Ph.D., (Sociology), University of Georgia

Interests: Sustainable community development, natural
hazards, hazard mitigation and long-term recovery, and
quantitative methods.

Teaches: PLAN 604, PLAN 642

Walter Gillis Peacock
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B.A., (Sociology), Columbus State University
M.A., (Sociology), University of Georgia
Ph.D., (Sociology), University of Georgia

Interests: Sustainable community development, natural
hazards, hazard mitigation and long-term recovery, and
quantitative methods.

Teaches: PLAN 604, PLAN 642

Teresa Qu
Lecturer
Associate Research Engineer, TTI
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B.S., (Civil Engineering), Tongji University, Shanghai, China
M.S., (Transportation Engineering), University of Texas at
Austin
Ph.D., (Urban and Regional Science), Texas A&M
University

Interests: Travel demand modeling, traffic operations
management, mobile source emission modeling,
bicycle and pedestrian traffic modeling, and congestion
performance measures.

Teaches: PLAN 674

Teresa Qu
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Associate Research Engineer, TTI
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B.S., (Civil Engineering), Tongji University, Shanghai, China
M.S., (Transportation Engineering), University of Texas at
Austin
Ph.D., (Urban and Regional Science), Texas A&M
University

Interests: Travel demand modeling, traffic operations
management, mobile source emission modeling,
bicycle and pedestrian traffic modeling, and congestion
performance measures.

Teaches: PLAN 674

Shannon Van Zandt, AICP
Professor and Interim Department Head
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B.E.D. (Environmental Design), Texas A&M University
M.U.P. (Urban Planning), Texas A&M University
Ph.D. (City & Regional Planning), University of North
Carolina

Interests: Housing policy, social equity, and social
vulnerability to disasters.

Teaches: CARC 601, PLAN 656, PLAN 665

Shannon Van Zandt, AICP
Professor and Interim Department Head
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B.E.D. (Environmental Design), Texas A&M University
M.U.P. (Urban Planning), Texas A&M University
Ph.D. (City & Regional Planning), University of North
Carolina

Interests: Housing policy, social equity, and social
vulnerability to disasters.

Teaches: CARC 601, PLAN 656, PLAN 665
Douglas Wunneburger  
Instructional Associate Professor  
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B.A., (Economics), University of Texas at Austin  
M.S., (Forestry), Stephen F. Austin State University  
Ph.D., (Remote Sensing/GIS), Texas A&M University  
Interests: GIS; landscape ecology-based planning and management; Spatial impacts of policy  
Teaches: PLAN 625, PLAN 626

Yu Xiao  
Associate Professor  
yuxiao@tamu.edu  
B.S., (Urban Studies & Regional Planning), Beijing University  
M.U.P., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
Ph.D., (Urban & Regional Planning), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
Interests: Local and economic development, economic resiliency, and disaster management and recovery  
Teaches: PLAN 610, PLAN 650, PLAN 689 (Urban & Regional Economic Development)

Dawn Jourdan  
Professor & Executive Associate Dean  
dawnjourdan@arch.tamu.edu  
B.S., (Urban Affairs and Theatre Arts), Bradley University  
M.U.P. and J.D, (Urban Planning and Law), University of Kansas  
Ph.D., (Urban Planning), Florida State University  
Interests: Landuse Law; Growth Management; On premise signage; Relocation grief; Climate change; Historical Preservation; Intergenerational Planning  
Teaches: PLAN 689

Hyun Woo Kim  
Lecturer  
hwkim@arch.tamu.edu  
B.S., (Urban Planning and Engineering), Yonsei University  
M.S.C.R.P., (Community & Regional Planning), The University of Texas at Austin  
Ph.D., (Urban and Regional Sciences), Texas A&M University  
Interests: Environmental Planning; Landuse Planning; Water Resources Management; Watershed Modelling; Low Impact Development; Climate change; and Geographic Information Systems  
Teaches: URPN 202, URPN 325, PLAN 625
Course descriptions may not match those in the university’s course catalog. We are in the process of revising course descriptions officially. These course descriptions better reflect current course content.

**PLAN Courses**

**604. Planning Methods I: Social, Economic, and Demographic Analysis.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Fundamental concepts and methods used in urban and regional research; qualitative and quantitative research design; measurement and scaling; sampling; data collection; data file construction; introduction to data analysis and statistical inference using social, economic, and demographic data sources. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**610. Structure and Function of Urban Settlements.** (3-0). Credit 3.
The study of urbanization and how geographic, economic, sociological and political factors give rise to changes in the structure and functions of cities; how the movement of people, products, services and capital create unique urban patterns of land use and infrastructure with implications for long-term livability and sustainability. Prerequisites: Graduate classification and approval of instructor.

**612. Transportation in City Planning.** (2-3). Credit 3.
Influence of transportation in shaping urban form; relationships between land use and transportation; conceptual layout of street systems; trends in urban development, site development, circulation and relationships to the street system; guidelines for the redevelopment of existing streets and the adjacent land. Cross-listed with CVEN 612.

**613. Planning Methods and Techniques: Transportation, Environment, and Infrastructure.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Methods and techniques of research, data collection and analysis related to the physical environment; coordination of planning process with public policy and plan implementation.

**616. Analyzing Risk/Hazard and Public Policy.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Evaluation and development of risk analysis, including risk assessment, perception of risk, risk communication and risk management; the mitigation of risk, involving technology, emergency management, disaster preparedness; emphasizes the relationship with risk analysis in public policy, participation, emergency preparedness, hazard mitigation and the management of risk. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**623. Development Planning in Third World Countries.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Examines historical, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of “Third World” development problems; application of planning methods and techniques toward long-term solutions in the context of unfolding contemporary world events; considers the role of international lending institutions, technical assistance and funding requirements in developing countries. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

Provides students an understanding of GIS fundamentals; basic concepts, principles and functions; essential skills for applying GIS in various fields such as urban planning, landscape architecture, land development, environment studies, transportation and hazard management; based on learning through class projects. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**626. Advanced GIS in Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning.** (2-2). Credit 3.
Continuation of GIS in Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning PLAN 625; topics include advanced spatial analysis technology; emphasis on urban planning, landscape architecture, land development, hazard management and related applications to issues. Prerequisite: PLAN 625.

**627. Economic Development.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Examines the strategies employed in the pursuit of local economic development. Discusses basic principles for critically assessing alternative development policies and programs; reflects on the goals and objectives of economic development efforts; and identifies tools for structuring and financing local projects. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**629. Neighborhood Revitalization.** (3-0). Credit 3.
This course addresses the social, political, and economic theory of neighborhoods—their growth, function and design. Students will gain an understanding of how neighborhoods experience change, as well as the consequences of this change for residents. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**630. Survey of Health Planning Processes.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Considers evolution and development of the health care system in the U.S. and how hospitals and other health service institutions go about developing strategic planning systems. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**631. Health Systems Planning and Policy.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Overview of health needs assessment and access barriers, cost-benefit of medical services and technology. Application of epidemiology basics in case studies. Critical examination of financing, policies and legislation for health services in the U.S. Cross-listed with BUSH 662. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

master of urban planning @ texas a&m
632. Design for Active Living. (3-0). Credit 3.
Understanding the forms and characteristics of the built environment and the influence on human behaviors, lifestyles and health; theoretical and empirical insights into the issues of physical activity, obesity, and automobile dependency; focus on how changes in the built environment help address these issues. Prerequisite: Graduate classification or approval of instructor. Cross-listed with LAND 632.

634. Environmental Health Policy and Planning. (3-0). Credit 3.
Interdisciplinary perspective of environmental risk analysis methods and policy implications; federal and state agencies and programs involved in developing and implementing environmental health policies and monitoring environmental health hazards; historical and economic context of environmental health legislation; framework for policy making process and criteria to determine effectiveness and outcomes. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

Reviews selected ecological concepts and explores integration into ecological/landscape planning and design using a historical perspective; historical and contemporary approach to provide an in-depth understand of how they can better mediate between human actions and natural processes. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. Cross-listed with LAND 635.

Legislative process and planning legislation; enabling legislation and legal tools of planner: zoning, subdivision ordinances, eminent domain, extraterritorial jurisdiction and other related planning instruments.

641. Problems of Environmental Planning Administration. (3-0). Credit 3.
State and federal legislation pertaining to environmental and consumer protection aspects of urban planning; review of administrative procedures; major judicial decisions.

642. Planning for Coastal Sustainability and Resiliency. (3-0). Credit 3.
Principles of resiliency and sustainability in coastal areas; examination of issues from ecological, social, economic, organizational, planning and built-environment perspectives; application of principles to realistic problems, settings and solutions. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

643. Disaster Recovery and Hazard Mitigation. (3-0). Credit 3.
Interdisciplinary study of the impacts of environmental disasters; describes process of disaster recovery and examines methods of reducing future vulnerability; analyzes regulation, market mechanisms, and public education as methods for implementing mitigation measures. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

649. Organizational and Community Response to Crises and Disasters. (3-0). Credit 3.
Introduction to the study of organized and community planning and response to natural and technological disasters and social crisis; focus upon emergency preparedness and response; practical issues, planning for emergency management and existing research literature of basic disaster at the organization and community levels. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

650. Disaster Response Planning. (3-0). Credit 3.
Mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery strategies; roles of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Governor’s Division of Emergency Management, the National Weather Service and the American Red Cross.

656. Housing and Community. (3-0). Credit 3.
Housing, its development, planning, marketing, designing, financing, and production; social and design history and contemporary issues of American housing development, urban renewal, neighborhood structure and community facilities.

Techniques of implementing major urban development programs and plans; capital improvements programming and budgeting; overview of regulatory measures including zoning and subdivision regulations; public involvement process; and fiscal planning.

Acquisition, analysis, and management of information pertaining to urban and regional planning in a case specific scenario; issue analysis; formulation of goals and objectives, and policies; consensus building; includes all tasks leading up to the preparation of an urban, regional or strategic plan.

A critical examination of the justifications for and major alternative approaches to planning in the public domain, beginning with the fundamental historical intentions of and projects in city planning within industrial societies and tracing the subsequent development of planning as political reform, political analysis, social mobilization and other modern variants.
**665. Participatory Plan Making.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Introduction to a wide variety of styles and methodologies employed by the urban and regional planner to engage the public in planning for the future, including visioning, consensus building, collaboration, deliberation, facilitation, meeting management, and dispute resolution.

**669. Urban Infrastructure Planning.** (2-2). Credit 3.
Identification of urban infrastructure requirements; criteria for utility location and design; projection of the conversion of land to urban uses; estimating demand for urban services; anticipating the effect of urbanization on storm runoff; and municipal practice in financing infrastructure extensions.

Planning, operations, fiscal, management and legal aspects of urban, rural and regional public transportation modes; preparation of transportation systems program elements.

**672. Transportation and the Environment.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Overview of topics related to transportation and the environment, including U.S. environmental policy such as NEPA and the Clean Air Act, fossil fuel dependence and alternative fuels, regional and local air quality regulations and impacts, climate change, and environmental and social justice. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**673. Design for Sustainable Transportation** (3-0). Credit 3.
Introduce planning and design principles, techniques, and examples for achieving sustainable transportation; neotraditional design, New Urbanism and smart growth; congestion and parking pricing; public transit and transit-oriented development; pedestrian and cycling travel; designing livable streets. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

**674. Transportation System Analysis.** (3-0). Credit 3.
Introduces basic concepts and techniques of modeling, analyzing and solving problems in transportation systems planning, operations, management and design within a unified framework for transportation systems analysis; includes: disaggregate demand theory and application, activity analysis and land use forecasting, network optimization stochastic processes, queuing models and simulation. Prerequisite: CVEN 672 or approval of instructor.

**676. Transportation Investment Decisions.** (3-0). Credit 3.
The course provides the graduate-level student with an overview of the elements of transportation investment decisions including transportation supply, demand, finance, and economic impact.

**678. Applied Transportation Studio.** (3-0). Credit 3.
This course provides a practical overview of urban planning and transportation topics including transportation-land use, function classification, thoroughfare and land use planning, site planning, traffic impact analysis, access management, and site design. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

**681. Seminar.** (1-0). Credit 1.
Reports and discussions of current research and selected topics in urban and regional planning. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

**681. Seminar.** (1-0). Credit 1.
Reports and discussions of current research and selected topics in urban and regional planning. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

**689. (Temporary number). Digital Communications.**
To learn, practice and develop fundamental knowledge and skills throughout the process of environmental design and planning: Bas map preparing, site plan designing, cross-section drawing, 2D plan rendering, 3D model rendering, and presentation skills.

### Variable Credit Courses

**684. Professional Internship.** Credit 1 to 8.
Professional practice under approved arrangement with public or private agencies.

**685. Directed Studies.** Credit 1 to 6 each semester.
Individual and group problems dealing with application of planning theory and practice. Opportunities to select foreign and domestic planning project of special interest.

**689. Special Topics in...** Credit 1 to 4.
Selected topics in an identified area of urban and regional planning. May be repeated for credit.

**691. Research.** Credit 1 or more each semester.
Research for thesis or dissertation.

**693. Professional Study.** Credit 1 to 6.
Approved professional study project undertaken as the terminal requirement for the Master of Urban Planning degree; preparation of a record of study summarizing rationale, procedure and results of the completed activity. Prerequisite: Approval of committee chair.
MULTI-YEAR SCHEDULE

We make every effort to avoid scheduling overlaps among classes. First year and second year core courses are often overlapped, since students will not be taking them in the same year.

FALL

M/W/F
PLAN 689 Digital Communications

Monday/Wednesday
PLAN 612 Transportation in City Planning
PLAN 634 Environmental Health, Policy & Planning
PLAN 641 Environmental Plan Administration

Monday only
PLAN 647 Disaster Recovery & Hazard Mitigation (evening)

Tuesday/Thursday
PLAN 604 Planning Methods I: Social, Economic and Demographic Methods
PLAN 610 Structure and Function of Human Settlements
PLAN 625 GIS for Planning
PLAN 626 Advanced GIS
PLAN 664 Planning History & Theory
PLAN 665 Participatory Plan Making
PLAN 674 Transportation Systems Analysis
PLAN 689 Theories and Policies of Urban Economic Development

Tuesday only
PLAN 649 Organizational Responses to Disaster (evening)

Wednesday only
PLAN 662 Applied Planning

SAND

M/W/F
PLAN 689 Digital Communications
PLAN 689 Site Planning

Monday/Wednesday
PLAN 642 Planning for Coastal Sustainability and Resiliency

Monday only
PLAN 650 Disaster Response Planning (evening)

Tuesday/Thursday
PLAN 613 Planning Methods II: Transportation, Environment, and Infrastructure
PLAN 623 Development Planning in 3rd World Countries
PLAN 625 GIS for Planning
PLAN 626 Advanced GIS
PLAN 664 Planning History & Theory
PLAN 665 Participatory Plan Making
PLAN 674 Transportation Systems Analysis
PLAN 689 Theories and Policies of Urban Economic Development

Tuesday only
PLAN 649 Organizational Responses to Disaster (evening)

Wednesday only
PLAN 658 Plan Implementation

Thursday only
PLAN 656 Housing & Community (evening)

SUMMER

PLAN 689 Digital Communications
PLAN 625 GIS for Planning
PLAN 612 Transportation in City Planning
MUP alumni

Travis Young
Disaster Recovery and Community Development Senior Planner
Houston-Galveston Area Council

“Never underestimate the importance of the one-page memo and the two-minute elevator speech.”

“What do you remember most about your time as a MUP?”

The opportunities I had to work with faculty and students on research projects (economic impacts of lake level reduction and housing recovery on Galveston Island) were some of the more memorable hours I spent in the program.

“What did you learn at TAMU that you use in your job now?”

My time at TAMU helped me to think analytically about the intersections of land use, housing, economic development, and the environment and showed me the importance of collaboration and communication with professionals from diverse backgrounds. The research side of planning is very important, but being able to succinctly and clearly communicate findings and priorities to a general audience is paramount in advancing any sort of policy.

“What’s a day like at H-GAC?”

Over the course of a day, I will work on a variety of projects like the H-GAC Fair Housing Equity Assessment, the Rapid Housing Recovery Pilot Program, and activities associated with the Gulf Coast Economic Development District. My average day is filled with strategic planning meetings, collaborative brainstorming sessions, and a whole lot of time spent coordinating all the moving pieces.

“Something you know now that you wish you had known just starting out as a MUP?”

I wish I would have placed more value on linking theoretical concepts with specific real-world policies, as well as the importance of accurately representing those relationships with financial/quantitative tools.
MUP alumni
Heather Wade
Coastal Planning Specialist
Texas Sea Grant, Portland, Texas

What do you remember most about your time as a MUP?

The many group projects helped me learn how to work as a team player and sometimes leader, which I have to do every day in my job. The mentoring I received from several faculty members also helped me not only in my emphasis area, but also as a professional in general.

What did you learn at TAMU that you use in your job now?

Advanced GIS, land use planning, environmental hazards assessment, how to review ordinances and plans, presentation and speaking skills, environmental planning, environmental hazards management, and public participation strategies, to name a few!

What’s a day like at H-GAC?

Every day at Texas Sea Grant is different. I’m a Coastal Planning Specialist under the Texas Sea Grant Extension Program, which means I live out in the field, where I work, not at headquarters in College Station or Houston. One day, I might be meeting with a local Development and Building Director to go over a zoning ordinance review, while another day I will be hosting a workshop on a specific planning topic. Some examples of the topics I cover in workshops include but are not limited to: coastal community resilience, environmental planning, coastal planning tools, climate change adaptation and coastal access.

What’s your favorite thing about your job?

I love the fact that every day is different and that I’m not always in an office. I also love that I get help communities that lack the capacity for meaningful urban planning.

Something you know now that you wish you had known just starting out as a MUP?

Networking. Networking is so important! I didn’t realize as a graduate student how important this actually was, but now I see how important it is every day in my job. It’s not always about what you know, but who you know.”
MUP alumni

Rob Rae

Planner
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Las Colinas, Texas

MUP emphasis area: Transportation Planning

Master's paper topic: Relationship between traffic crashes and the built environment

Internship company/ location: San Antonio- Bexar County MPO

Undergraduate degree and university: University of Calgary – B.A. Geography,

“What do you remember most about your time as a MUP?”

I really enjoy remembering the relationships that I had with other students and the faculty and staff while at TAMU. Although the time completing the master’s program was brief, we had lots of fun and enjoyed learning together.

“What did you learn at TAMU that you use in your job now?”

How to work and communicate with others was one of the most important things I learned while at TAMU. The applied planning courses helped me to understand the relationships that each group had internally, among other groups on the project and with the client that we were serving. These were invaluable lessons to further my career post-MUP.

“What’s a day like at H-GAC?”

Typically I spend the majority of my day fulfilling sub-tasks for projects that we are currently working on. The type of projects that I have worked on range from developing small sketchup models for new developments to running land use scenarios in CommunityVIZ and transportation models in TransCAD. I also spend a lot of my time in technical writing for comprehensive plans, corridor plans and sub-area studies.

“Something you know now that you wish you had known just starting out as a MUP?”

I wish that I would have focused more on my technical skills early on such as GIS, and adobe software such as Illustrator and InDesign.
MUP alumni

Nick Oyler
Robert Bosch Foundation Fellow
Germany

“Once you graduate, access to text books and journal articles remains an easy mouse-click or library card away, but participation in those same kinds of special events often becomes more inconvenient and limited, not to mention more expensive. Take full advantage of them while you easily can.”

MUP emphasis area: Sustainable Urbanism

Master’s paper topic: Comparative case study between the Mueller development in Austin, Texas and the Aspern Seestadt development in Vienna, Austria

Internship company/location: Downtown Memphis Commission, Memphis, Tennessee

Undergraduate degree and university: Bachelor of Science Geography and German, University of Memphis

What do you remember most about your time as a MUP?
The friendships and interaction with my fellow students. I don’t know if it really was the Aggie spirit or simply the fact that we all shared a similar professional interest, but I felt that whether in the classroom or at social events students in the program and LAUP department easily developed a camaraderie with each other.

What did you learn at TAMU that you use in your job now?
While I of course learned and advanced multiple skills as a MUP student, the ones that the program most helped me in were creating attractive graphics and visually representing data. Visiting professionals would regularly tell me and my fellow students the importance of these skills, and now I fully appreciate their advice. Whether with Photoshop or Powerpoint, these abilities undoubtedly bring value for me in job.

What’s a day like at H-GAC?
On one hand, a typical day at work for me can involve meetings in the office with my co-workers or with visiting officials from other German institutions or even foreign governments. On the other hand, a typical day could just as well involve trips to points across Europe in order to meet with planners, policy makers, and politicians, along the way taking research visits to, say, large construction sites or transit agencies. The one constant through all of it is investigating and learning from the European approaches to sustainable urban development.

What’s your favorite thing about your job?
Two things immediately come to mind as favorite details about my job. One is the freedom I have in choosing my tasks and research topics, and the means to accomplish them. The second is meeting people from such a diverse range of nationalities and professions.

Something you know now that you wish you had known just starting out as a MUP?
A student’s education consists of far more than the formal courses to attend and articles to read; there are a bounty of other learning opportunities offered in the department and program that come in the form of guest speakers, seminars, office visits, community engagement projects, and so on.
MUP alumni
Erin Newcomer
Planning Director
City of Belton, Texas

What do you remember most about your time as a MUP?

During my time as a MUP I learned so much from the professors and fellow students that has helped me during my planning career. The career fairs were also a great experience in which I was able to practice my interview skills and make connections with employers in the planning field. There were several classes within the Housing, Community, and Economic Development emphasis area that I enjoyed the most.

What did you learn at TAMU that you use in your job now?

At my current job, I often review plats and constructions plans for both small and large residential subdivisions and commercial properties. The housing and applied planning courses provided me with the knowledge and experience to adequately review the plans. Due to the education I received in these courses, I am able to provide developers with advice concerning site design for functional growth and development.

What's a day like at H-GAC?

It really depends on the day. There is never a typical day for a planner because we are responsible for several tasks. There are several planning tasks that I am responsible for such as reviewing plats and construction plans; commercial site plans; zoning change requests; variance requests; annexations; sign permits; and alterations and improvements to historic buildings etc.

Something you know now that you wish you had known just starting out as a MUP?

I wish I had more experience with platting and the laws relating to it. Mock zoning change requests and staff reports would be incredibly useful to have in an MUP course.
Mary Craighead
Transportation Planner, MPO Coordinator

“What do you remember most about your time as a MUP?”
I remember the great people I met and everything we all did together. The program was about more than just academics, and I really valued the conferences, volunteer opportunities, and social activities with other students, faculty, and former students. Not only did I get a great education, but I developed a whole network of people I can rely on throughout my career.

“What did you learn at TAMU that you use in your job now?”
In general, the writing and presentation skills I continued to develop at TAMU are crucial to my job. Beyond that, there are many skills and a lot of information that have helped me. Here are a just few examples: using GIS and creating maps, finding and analyzing demographic data, writing goals and objectives for a plan, understanding public participation needs, and knowing general transportation topics like alternative modes, access management, functional classification, public transit needs, and traffic signal timing.

“What’s a day like at H-GAC?”
Every day is different. One day may involve sitting at my desk all day either writing a plan or report, reading up on a new topic, or preparing meeting materials. Another day I could be out in the field collecting information for a project. A typical day can also include meeting with other City staff, TxDOT staff, or a consultant on a project. And occasionally I have to attend a City Council, Planning Commission, or Parks Commission meeting in the evening.

“What’s your favorite thing about your job?”
One of my favorite things is that I work on a variety of projects, so every project becomes something new to discover and learn. I also enjoy having the opportunity to attend meetings or training in different cities where I get to meet planners from other MPOs and learn about projects they’re working on.

“Something you know now that you wish you had known just starting out as a MUP?”
Particularly for transportation folks, take a course in the Civil Engineering Department. So much of what I do ends up overlapping with engineers and having some insight into the engineering world is helpful.