LAUP initiates community outreach partnership

Program to enhance outreach, continuing education, project documentation, collaboration

For many years the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University has engaged in a wide variety of community service teaching and research projects. LAUP is now expanding these capabilities with a new program, “Partnership for Community Outreach” (PCO), aimed at coordinating service and outreach activities within the department and beyond. Established October 18, 2005, PCO is coordinated by Dr. Michael Murphy.

The program provides an organizational framework leveraging LAUP’s capacity to systematically apply, disseminate, and validate knowledge about functional, healthy, and sustainable human environments. Its primary goal is to systematically link teaching to service and community-based research, thus enriching student learning experiences through the application of knowledge while improving the quality of life through the built and natural environment.

The program focuses on three key initiatives. First among them, “Service Learning Partnerships,” which include the ongoing Target Texas community service program, as well as ad hoc projects conducted by various classes. These learning partnership projects are community-based teaching initiatives. For many years the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University has engaged in a wide variety of community service teaching and research projects. LAUP is now expanding these capabilities with a new program, “Partnership for Community Outreach” (PCO), aimed at coordinating service and outreach activities within the department and beyond. Established October 18, 2005, PCO is coordinated by Dr. Michael Murphy.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Katrina aftermath

HRRC faculty helps news media, world interpret disaster

As Hurricane Katrina approached New Orleans last September, it appeared that the nightmare scenario long predicted by the hazards mitigation community was about to unfold. As the storm passed, it began to look as if the city might escape that nightmare scenario, but with the ensuing failures in the New Orleans levee system, the situation changed dramatically. Though the resulting destruction horrified the nation, those who had devoted their careers to understanding disaster response and recovery had seen their predictions realized.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, news media from around the world turned to the disaster experts at Texas A&M University’s Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center to gain understanding about this catastrophic event. Last fall, HRRC faculty, including Michael Lindell, Carla Prater, and center director Walter G. Peackock, fielded more than 200 media queries. The reporters wanted to know what had happened, what could have been done to prevent it and what steps could be taken to avoid another tragedy. The HRRC team was widely quoted in newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, addressing such issues as the failure of government agencies, evacuation missteps, disaster myths, distortions of the truth and long term recovery.


Outreach

Continued from Page 1

and research projects that provide research, preliminary planning and design studies for communities and groups who would otherwise be unable to afford professional services...

Our target is to complete curriculum reviews by the end of the 2006 spring semester, to implement a plan for marketing our revised vision and mission, and to strengthen curriculum for each program... The department is building on its solid foundation while moving toward a path of distinction.

MSLD students draw plans for new mixed use urban village

Students designed a proposal for Campus Pointe, a mixed use urban village on 12-acre site owned by Texas A&M University last year as part of a master of science in land development capstone course, Development Design & Feasibility. The proposal, a public-private co-development involving the university, the city of College Station, and private developers, is to be located on College Avenue in College Station.

The students completed a site and market analyses, urban plan, architectural and landscape architectural designs, and a financial feasibility assessment. They also presented a tax increment finance district and a venture structure involving the collaborative, equity investors and lenders.

The signature development included about 50,000 square feet of festival-entertainment retail space, a 110,000-square-foot convention center, a 240-room four-star hotel tower, a 500,000-square foot academic facility for Texas A&M MBA, and about 200 apartments and condominiums. The village is envisioned as an urban lifestyle ledges of places, arcades, and landscapes.

The University Council on the Environment adopted an Advisory Board for our Ph.D. program, which is a 22-page, 22-member vision statement and consensus process issued of a Call for Qualifications/Call for Proposals process based on the recommendation prepared by instructor Dr. Aref Shurakey and his MSLD students.

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semester, to implement a plan for marketing our revised vision and mission, and to strengthen curriculum for each program. In September 2005, we received a full six-year accreditation for our Master of Landscape Architecture program, which is under the leadership of Dr. Jon Rodiek. The program met all the ten conditions for obtaining full accreditation. The department also submitted an accreditation self-report for its Master of Urban Planning program in June 2005. An accreditation site visit for the MUP program is scheduled for the third week of March 2006.

Last year we successfully recruited five top-notch faculty members, a majority of them hired as part of Texas A&M’s ongoing faculty reinvestment plan. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Elisa Bright, Dr. Shearon van Zandt, Dr. Kimberly Winston-Geideman, Dr. Cecilia Giusti, and Dr. Lisa Weston. The varied scholarly expertise of these extraordinary individuals includes sustainable economic development, regional containment, housing and community development, brown fields redevelopment, and sustainable transportation. Another well-respected faculty member, Professor Pinyi Fisk, joined us during this academic year. He holds a joint appointment with the Department of Architecture. Fisk is nationally acclaimed for his work on sustainable design and planning and is co-founder of the Center for Maxi- mum Potential Building Systems in Austin.

Dr. Harlow Landphair, one of the cornerstones of our BLA and MLA programs, retired in January 2006 after distinguished service to the department and the Texas Transportation Institute. The LAUP staff has also undergone changes. June Withers is now the assistant to the department head, a new position replacing the administrative assistant to the department post previously held by Sharlene Ewald. Additionally, Clarissa Garcia and Robin See joined us in the fall of 2005 as the newest members of our support team.

I am especially proud of our faculty, particularly those who this year have obtained highly competitive research grants from major funding agencies. These grants range from major awards from the National Science Foundation to study the tsunami relief efforts and emergency planning, to a sea grant funding development of an electronic atlas for the coastal areas of Texas. Additionally, other faculty have received grants to fund service-learning partnerships, which strengthen the quality of our teaching program, while enhancing the quality of life for several Texas communities. To more efficiently coordinate and deliver such service learning initiatives and continuing education programs, last October the department established the “Partnership for Community Outreach,” coordinated by Dr. Michael Murphy (See page 1 story). LAUP students have also excelled. For instance, during the 2005 spring semester, one of our Ph.D. students, Wesley Highfield, won the very competitive U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellowship, funding his doctoral dissertation for up to $111,000 for three years. LAUP is also strengthening partnerships with constituents. The department expanded the membership in the IPD program to include Professional Advisory Board from 12 to 24 members and held a successful board meeting November 4, 2005. The MUP Advisory Board held its second meeting October 21, 2005. In addition, the newly established Industry Advisory Council for the Master of Land Development Program met for the second time on November 18, 2005. We are currently in the process of establishing an Advisory Board for our Ph.D. program. I thank all the board members who invest their time and resources to support our academic programs.

Great universities take immense pride in the quality of their academic programs, curricula, faculty, and students, as well as in building effective partnerships with internal and external constituents. Clearly, the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning is building on its solid foundation while moving toward a path of distinction.

Perspectives: Spring 2006 — Newsletter for the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning
Mr. Pliny Fish, hired as part of Texas A&M’s faculty re-envisionment plan, joins the College of Architec-ture as a joint faculty member between the departments of Archi-tecture and Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning.

As a director of the Center for Urban Infrastructure, Fish was able to bring in students from abroad to work on a variety of projects.

Mr. Fish is currently working on a project sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. His work has focused on the impact of landscaping on office property value.

Then meeting the P.H. program at Cleveland State, Dr. Winson-Geideman spent several years working in urban development, specializing in large, mixed-use projects. She was responsible for the acquisition of over $100 million in real estate and securing public approval for numerous housing developments. She worked closely with the city of Cleveland on the Homeownership Zone. A project sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which resulted in the production of 455 owner-occupied units targeting low and moderate income buyers. Her combination of education and experience provides a unique perspective on planning and development issues.

Dr. Sharon Van Zandt joined the LAUP faculty this fall as an assistant professor. She came to Texas A&M from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she was a senior research associate at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies, and adjunct professor in the Preservation, Planning, and Policy Department.

Dr. Van Zandt’s research focuses on issues of housing and community development, particularly low and moderate income families. Her dissertation examined the impact of homeownership on low-income households.

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Mr. Dan Butler, an experienced urban planner, joined the College of Architecture as a joint faculty member between the departments of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Mr. Butler is currently working on a project sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. His work has focused on the impact of landscaping on office property value.

Dr. Jodie Rosenblatt Naderi, who worked in the Air Quality Program with the city of Austin’s Green Building Program, provided initial conceptual work for the current development.

Her duties included conducting research on the contribution of micro-businesses to the local economy and successfully obtaining a post-doctoral grant from the City and Regional Planning Institute.

Dr. Van Zandt has also consulted for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which resulted in the production of 455 owner-occupied units targeting low and moderate income buyers. Her combination of education and experience provides a unique perspective on planning and development issues.

Dr. Winson-Geideman’s research focuses on issues of housing and community development, particularly low and moderate income families. Her dissertation examined the impact of homeownership on low-income households.

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I The Price of Permits: Measuring the Economic Impacts of Wetland Development on Flood Damages in Florida
By Wesley Higfield
Sam Brody, dissertation advisor
Floods continue to pose a significant threat to the property and safety of human populations in the United States. The economic impact from floods is estimated in billions of dollars annually and increasing development exacerbates these losses. This research examines the impact of wetland alteration on flood damage among local jurisdictions in Florida over a seven-year period. Wesley Higfield and his dissertation advisor, Dr. Sam Brody, measured wetland loss through the records of permits granted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Results showed that after controlling for environmental and socioeconomic variables, the number, type, and location of wetland permits are significant predictors of flood damages.

II URSC Students’ Project Receives Local and National Recognition
By Sindhu George, Sundeeh Akhtar, and Praveen Maghelal
A group of ten graduate students who are reaping rewards for their efforts in developing management strategies for sex-related crimes. Their research was presented at the ESRI Annual International Users Conference 2005 and the 8th Annual Crime Mapping Research Conference of National Institute of Justice.

III Microbusiness in the Texas-Mexico Border Region: Potential for Economic Community Development
By Dr. Cecilia Giusti
On November 7-8 Dr. Cecilia Giusti participated in the Urban Scholars Fellowship Symposium, organized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and sponsored by the National Academies in Washington D.C. At the event, 29 urban scholars from around the country presented their research. The Urban Scholars Program was established by the National Academies to advance research on urban issues through a nationwide competition, reviewed by the National Academy and awarded to 10 three-year Urban Scholars grants to recent Ph.D. graduates. Dr. Giusti earned one of these grants in 2002 for research titled: “Microbusiness in the Texas-Mexico Border Region: Potential for Economic Community Development.” Her research involved qualitative and quantitative analysis on micro-businesses in about 20 Texas counties.

IV Forecasting Land Use Changes along I-35 Trans-Texas Corridor
By Daniel Bally
Dr. Christopher Ellis, thesis advisor
Daniel Bally, Class of 2005, is a new employee with Michael Baker Jr., Inc., in Houston, where he employs GIS to conduct regional analyses. Most recently, he’s been working on a forecast model for changes in land use along the I-35 Trans-Texas Corridor. This model classifies satellite imagery and land cover data from four time periods to help determine where urban development may occur throughout the region. In the project, he reports, has kept him busy and is a lot of fun. “That project was in full swing when Katrina, Rita, and Wilma hit” said Bally, referring to the hurricanes that battered the Gulf Coast during summer and fall of 2005. “I was fortunate to be working on the I-35 project for the past couple of months working for and with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security on their housing recovery and damage assessment projects.” His office produced maps of population density within wind zones along the Gulf coast in efforts to help the affected communities. Bally said he enjoys working in the real world though he “wouldn’t mind a quiz every now and then.”

V Master of Landscape Architecture
By Daniel Bally
Dr. Christopher Ellis, thesis advisor
Daniel Bally ’05 has been working with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, developing GIS maps of the damages caused by hurricanes that battered the U.S. Gulf Coast last summer.

VI Master of Science in Land Development
By Dr. Cecilia Giusti
This past spring 2005 the MLA program saw the presentation of fourteen successful projects. These projects covered a wide range of topics and were located in such diverse places as Fushun City, China; Fitchburg, Massachusetts; and Big Pine Key, Florida. All 14 students are now working in professional landscape architecture offices. Below is a list of the students and their projects:

- Erin Bouch - Rehabilitation Facility and Landscape Design
- Likun Cao - Waterfront Development
- Ying Dong & Zhen Ma - A Healthy Community Master Plan
- Sean Duncan - Calebade Road Revitalization
- Kail Gadade - Habitat Community Design
- Sandeep Ghai - Residential Estate Design
- Sunita Gupta - Providence Church Roadside Memorial
- Amy Herr - Designing a Landscape Called Home
- Ma Huaj Majumdar - Philosopher’s Walk
- Hao Tang - An Urban Park Master Plan
- Dipti Trivedi & Yun Zhao - American Bo Dhi Center Master Plan
- Dustin Townsend - Reeves Ranch

VII Master of Science in Land Development
By Wesley Highfield
The Real Estate Development Student Association organized the trip and provided information about the program to attendees for a special video presentation prepared by REDA and shown in the background on a 32-inch flat screen. The trip was supported, in part, by Texas A&M Former Students Association, and by the program’s Development Industry Advisory Council.

The MSLD program has completed a scientific trend scanning study in which industry billions are dedicated to real estate development trends. Based on these trends, the advisory council will discuss potential areas for the MSLD program, potential new courses, and the potential involvement in these courses of non-land development alumni and academic and alumni mentoring of MSLD students. The council will also develop a budget for the $100,000 grant allowed during their last meeting, as well as for future fund-raising efforts.

VIII Master of Urban Planning
By Daniel Bally
Dr. Christopher Ellis, thesis advisor
This fall was a busy one for the MUP program, as we welcomed several new faculty and Ph.D. students, as well as a few students who were displaced from New Orleans universities due to Hurricane Katrina. Everyone is settling in well.

The Applied Planning class took on two challenging projects: an economic development plan for the city of Cas- tile, and a neighborhood revitalization plan for the city of Lewisville, Texas. Both projects will continue into the spring semester, along with an urban design study for the areas affected by the widening of I-35 in Lewisville.

Faculty have also embarked on several important MUP program activities. First, we are trying to spread the word about the existence and quality of the program. To that end, we have developed a short, dynamic Power Point presentation and a series of interim brochures that are available for anyone to use in recruiting. If you would like a free copy of the Power Point or the brochures, contact grindingtooth@arche.mail.tamu.edu. We also sponsored receptions at the Tex- as Chapter of the American Planning Associa- tion annual conference in Fort Worth, and for the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning’s annual conference in Kansas City. A good time was reported by all attendees, and I enjoyed meeting some of our former students.

Speaking of former students, we have also developed a former student listerv. Those who have not received any email from this listerv are urged to contact us so they can be added to the list. This is a great way to get back in touch with your classmates, find or post a job, and keep up with program events.

Ph.D. Urban and Regional Science
The URSF Faculty Advisory Committee is engaged in a strategic planning process to develop a draft strategic plan for dis- cussion and approval by the end of 2005. Students are invited to contribute to the revised curric- lum places the program on a stronger path.

The department is also engaged in a market- ing plan. The revised curriculum and strat- egy plan provides a unique niche of what can be marketed. An enhanced Web site is central to the plan. Target brochures will provide dynamic information on programs that “out”s that point to the Web for up-to-date information. Ph.D. students need information about the kinds of specialties offered by the faculty in specific areas, and the placement of recent graduates. This material will provide dynamic, current information on the program and the faculty involved. The URSF Faculty Advisory Committee recognizes the new era and a better Web presence. Former students interested in hearing links to our Web site should send Web or e-mail information to schwarten@arche.mail.tamu.edu.

Graduate research highlights

Academic program briefs

BACHELOR OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
During the fall semester of 2005, the landscape architecture faculty has been focusing on the review of the curriculum of the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program. This process began a year ago as the faculty realized a need to update and re-evaluate the BLA curriculum mainly because of changes in the professional practice and the on-going transition of faculty within the depart- ment.

Collectively, faculty started with revising the BLA program vision statement, which sets the direction for the program. Then, we examined the overall degree requirements and course structure by comparing them with those of the peer universities in United States. The Professional Advisory Board of Landscape Architecture Programs was also invited to participate in the pro- cess. We are currently in the process of re- viewing the design studio sequence. Plans call for continuing this process by the end of this fall semester.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LAND DEVELOPMENT
A group of ten graduate students from the Master of Science in Land Development program and Dr. Atel Sharkawy, the program coordinator, attended the Annual Conference of the Urban Land Institute, in Los Angeles. The Real Estate Development Student Association organized the trip and provided information about the program to attendees for a special video presentation prepared by REDA and shown in the background on a 32-inch flat screen. The trip was supported, in part, by Texas A&M Former Students Association, and by the program’s Development Industry Advisory Council.

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MASTER OF URBAN PLANNING
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Gene Schrickel: A Great Man of 20th Century Landscape Architecture

The Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning lost one of its long-time friends and greatest supporters last July when former student Ollie Eugene “Gene” Schrickel Jr. ’50, died in Arlington. He was 78 years old.

Over the last 40 years Gene was an untiring supporter of landscape architecture throughout the state, his local community, and at Texas A&M. Through his personal contributions, and those of his firm, Schrickel Rollins & Associates, Gene was an articulate voice for the potential and the responsibilities of landscape architecture. He was professionally involved in the planning and design of many Arlington parks and golf courses and major landscape projects at the University of Texas at Arlington and the Texas A&M campus, as well as project throughout the states.

His active citizenship led him to many years of participation in a wide range of activities in support of his community and his profession. As one of a handful of practitioners in his day, he was instrumental in the registration of landscape architects in Texas, served as president of the Texas chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, director of the national Council of Park and Recreation Consultants, trustee of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a member of the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners. Active in his local community, he served as a founder and board president of the Arlington Tennis Association, and the Arlington YMCA building campaign. He was a board member of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Arlington Visitors and Convention Bureau Advisory, president of Arlington Rotary Club, and an elder of the First Presbyterian Church.

In spite of his incredibly busy life, Gene always found time to support Texas A&M. A frequent and active promoter of the department, his contributions were indispensable to the development of the program we have today. He was always pleased to have students visit his office and learn about his multidisciplinary practice. He would not hesitate to invite a student, or a busload, to come in for a tour of the office and then take them, one or all, to a restaurant for lunch; all the while telling them about how lucky they were to have chosen such an exciting profession at such a great university.

“No small number of our graduates went into practice with the confidence to build highly successful careers because Gene had told them they could do it,” recalled Michael Murphy, associate professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture.

After returning from Navy service during World War II, Gene came to A&M to study landscape architecture, receiving his B.S. degree in 1950. While pursuing his degree Gene found time to play basketball, serving as team co-captain his senior year. He was a member of the Texas A&M Letterman’s Club, the 12th Man Foundation, and the Association of Former Students. He was also inducted into the University of Texas at Arlington, Athletic Hall of Honor where he lettered in basketball, tennis and baseball when he attended for one year prior to World War II.

In 1993 he established the Gene Schrickel Jr. Endowed Scholarship, which provides annual funds to A&M graduate and undergraduate students of landscape architecture. In 1998, he was honored as an Outstanding Alumnus by the College of Architecture.

“Sadly, some of the younger students missed the opportunity to meet him and experience his enthusiasm and wit,” Murphy said. “Those of us who were privileged to have known him will miss his friendship, his leadership and his inspiration. His pioneering work to establish the profession in Texas is a legacy that benefits each of us as landscape architects, as well as our society that enjoys the results of our work,” he continued. “Thank you Gene and God speed.”