FROM THE CHAIR

James A. LaGro, Jr.

This is an exciting time to be a planner! With the population in the United States now exceeding 300 million, there are growing opportunities for urban and regional planners to impact the livability and vitality of urban, suburban, and rural communities. Research—as well as common sense—suggests, for example, that public health is inextricably linked to the planning and design of the built environment. Smart growth, new urbanism, context-sensitive planning, sustainable or “green” (re)development—and other emerging planning and design “paradigms” are reasons for optimism!

In the past year the department has been fortunate to hire two new assistant professors. Asli Göçmen, who recently earned her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, joined the URPL faculty in January of 2006. With expertise in the application of geospatial information systems in planning, Asli is developing a statewide extension/outreach program as well as leading URPL’s instructional efforts in this area. Also, this past spring, Kurt Paulsen was hired from a strong field of candidates with expertise in land use policy and planning. A native of Wisconsin and a UW–Madison alum, Kurt earned his Ph.D. from Rutgers University and served for two years on the planning faculty at Temple University. (See the related New Faculty Profiles.)

Unfortunately, in the past year we also said goodbye to a valued colleague, Marcia Caton Campbell, who is now working with the Wisconsin-based Urban Open Space Foundation. We wish the best for Marcia as she continues to make important planning contributions to urban food systems, community gardens, and in other community development areas.

Our strategic plan envisions the addition of at least two more URPL faculty members to help us better serve our students, the state of Wisconsin, and beyond. State budget constraints, however, continue to impact URPL, as well as most other departments and centers on campus. Another year or more may pass before we are authorized to begin recruiting for those positions. Nevertheless, with support from both the College of Letters and Science and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences—and especially with gifts from alumni and friends—URPL’s students continue to enjoy an exceptional educational experience.

Our graduate planning programs expose students to a broad range of qualified teachers—from nationally prominent planning scholars to highly accomplished planning practitioners. Over the past two semesters, for example, our adjunct faculty has included several experienced practitioners, including: Linda Donnelly (retired, Cincinnati Department of Community Development and Planning), Kamran Meshah (Dane County Department of Planning and Development), David Boyd (MSA Professional Services), and Mark Roffers (Vandewalle & Associates).

Madison’s mayor Dave Cieslewicz—an articulate advocate for urban planning and revitalization—also taught a five-week URPL course last spring titled "The Power of Cities." Guest speakers for the course included John Norquist (former mayor of Milwaukee and current executive director of the Congress for the New Urbanism), Don Chen (executive director, Smart Growth America), and Scott Bernstein (president, Center for Neighborhood Technologies).

Planners are making—and will continue to make—important contributions in protecting public health, safety, and welfare. URPL is proud to play a role in that process. When you have significant milestones in your professional or personal life, please let us know. And feel free to contact me with your suggestions for articles in future issues of Connections. Thank you for your continuing support!
In spring 2006 I was on sabbatical from the UW. I used the semester to advance my knowledge through research on issues of European land-use policy and property rights. On a personal level it was an absolutely delightful time. My wife Susan and I lived in Florence, Italy. We rented an apartment in Oltrano, the “over the river” neighborhood of old Florence—then and now the preferred place for craftspersons and artisans, a neighborhood still full of “real people.” We reveled in living in an ancient, dense, organic urban environment; getting to know and become known to our local coffee shop owner, baker, newspaper seller, and dry cleaner; and learning the back streets and byways largely undiscovered by tourists. The front door of our early–20th century apartment building opened onto a direct “across the street” view of a standing section of the medieval wall that used to surround the city. Our life was pedestrian—we walked into the center city for Susan to take language classes and for me to catch a bus or the intercity train.

I was affiliated with the European University Institute in Fiesole. Fiesole is on one of the hills surrounding Florence and is one of the original Roman suburbs of the city. EUI, a project of the European Union, has the premier library in the world for European material.

My research focused on material for my upcoming book The ‘Taking’ of Europe. Enlightened by my travels to Europe over the last decade, I have become aware of how individual western European governments and the EU as a whole are in a process of serious reassessment of their long-standing approach to land-use planning and policy. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the rise of China as a global economic power, and the advancement of the “European project” (for example, the introduction of the euro as a common currency, the elimination of border controls within Europe, and the revision of labor rules to allow cross-Europe employment) have made Europeans wonder about the continued utility of a top-down, strong government approach to land and environmental planning. An interest in US market-based approaches to policy—such as transfer of development rights—is omnipresent. In my project I wonder whether all this is leading to new ideas about individual property rights and new relationships between individuals and governments on issues of land management and environmental resources.

During my sabbatical, I conducted research in Italy, France, Norway, and the Netherlands; meeting with academics, governmental officials, and non-profit activists. What I learned was more surprising than it was confirming of my initial hunches.

Is there a “taking” of Europe? No and yes. No, not in the specific way Americans planners understand the idea. That is, there is no legal doctrine of “regulatory taking” in Europe. On the whole, the laws in Europe still provide for very strong governmental regulation—a role that is largely uncontested by landowners and can be exercised without concern for landowner claims for compensation.

Yes, in that the position of individual landowners vis-a-vis government is undergoing a seismic shift. For a variety of reasons landowners are emboldened to challenge government plans and zoning designations, and to demand, through the political process, changes that benefit their properties and land development opportunities. And the political and planning systems are responding to these demands. The position of private property rights is getting stronger and that of government weaker.

Is this the whole story? I don’t know yet. I hope to complete my research and manuscript by the end of 2007. But if you want to learn more about my work to date, you can download a working paper from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Web site, www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/pub-detail.asp?id=1105 or contact me. During the 2007–2008 academic year, I will offer a new course drawing from this research.
NEW FACULTY IN URPL

Ken Genskow joined the URPL faculty in June 2005 as an assistant professor focusing on environmental planning. Professor Genskow’s research interests include collaborative approaches to resource management, water resources policy and planning, and environmental program evaluation. Ken is affiliated with the UW–Madison/UW–Extension Environmental Resources Center, serves as a UW–Extension specialist on water resources, and directs Extension’s statewide Basin Education Initiative. Ken is currently working with USEPA, USDA, and the Wisconsin DNR on various projects related to incorporating social and institutional factors into watershed planning, management, and evaluation.

Professor Genskow is an URPL alumnus, completing his Ph.D. in urban and regional planning in 2001 under the supervision of Steve Born. Ken has a BS in general engineering and a master’s in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Ken has worked on watershed management issues for Wisconsin DNR and UW–Extension. He spent three years working as a planner and engineer through the US Peace Corps in Nepal and two years assessing environmental programs with the Army Environmental Policy Institute in Champaign, Illinois. Ken lives in Madison with his wife Martha and their two children, Jake and Erik.

Asli Göçmen joined the URPL faculty as an assistant professor in January 2006 soon after completing her doctoral degree at the University of Michigan’s Urban, Technological, and Environmental Planning Program. She holds a joint appointment at URPL and UW Extension’s Community, Natural Resources, and Economic Development Program as a geographic information systems (GIS) specialist. This fall Asli is teaching a course on GIS for planners, covering basic principles of geographic information sciences and planning-relevant applications and issues.

Asli’s primary research and teaching interests are in the areas of urban environmental sustainability, the role of planners in promoting environmental stewardship, and the application of spatial analysis and GIS in urban, environmental, and regional planning. Her current research includes an investigation of open space conservation subdivisions in southeast Wisconsin and barriers to the effective use of GIS in planning among local and regional governments in Wisconsin.

Asli was born and raised in Ankara, Turkey where she graduated from Middle East Technical University. In 1992 she came to the United States to continue her education at the University of Cincinnati, where she received a master’s in planning in 1994. Asli then practiced as a planner and GIS specialist in local and regional planning offices in the metropolitan Cincinnati area before undertaking doctoral study. Asli greatly enjoys traveling and learning about places and people. She appreciated being part of the Wisconsin Idea Seminar during the spring, which gave her a chance to explore the state and meet interesting people. Her husband Mark shares her love of travel. This summer they traveled to Turkey, and are now planning to explore Japan this winter.

Kurt Paulsen says he is excited to be returning to Madison and the University of Wisconsin after an eight-year absence; he joined the faculty as an assistant professor this fall. A Wisconsin native, Kurt completed two master’s degrees at UW: agricultural and applied economics and development policy and public administration. He then moved east and received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in urban planning and policy development. In 2005 Kurt received the award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning for the best dissertation in the field of planning.

Kurt moved back to Madison from Pennsylvania, where he taught at Temple University’s Department of Community and Regional Planning in Philadelphia for three years. In URPL his teaching and research will focus on land use and comprehensive planning and public finance. This fall he is teaching a course in comprehensive planning with a land use emphasis, and in the spring he will teach an undergraduate course in the history and theory of city and regional planning. Kurt’s research has focused on local government land use planning processes in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and he is currently working on a study for 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania.

continued on page 4
Dr. Xianli Xia is a scholar from the People's Republic of China visiting URPL for one year. He arrived in March 2006, and his family joined him over the summer. Dr. Xia is a lecturer at the Northwest Agricultural and Forestry University in Yangling, Shaanxi Province. He has primary research and teaching interests in the areas of rural regional planning, sustainable development, and the rural exurbanization process. Dr. Xia is conducting comparative research on rural planning and development and attending selected URPL classes. Dr. Xia is working with Professor David Marcouiller on the role of tourism as a driving influence behind contemporary exurbanization processes. Dr. Xia has worked as a land use planner while finishing his doctoral degree in agricultural economics and management. He has chaired a Study titled “Urban System Framework and Governance in Shaanxi Province,” and participated in the Sino-Euro cooperation program titled “China Village and Small Town Sustainable Development.”

Professor Rafael Crecente Maseda of the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain visited URPL for three weeks in October. This is Professor Crecente’s third visit to UW–Madison and second residency in URPL. He came to continue work with Professor Harvey Jacobs on the design of new master’s and Ph.D. degrees in planning at his university, and to serve as the inaugural speaker for a new multi-year campus-wide series Professor Jacobs initiated in the department on “European Innovations in Urban and Environmental Management” (see Faculty Research and Grant Activities).

Adam Goodberg joined URPL in 2004 and was one of the department’s first MIP students. Since September 2005, he has been serving in the US Peace Corps, assigned to a nonprofit NGO in the Moldovan capital city of Chisinau. Moldova is a small Eastern Europe country, landlocked between Romania to the west and Ukraine to the east and south.

His first months in Moldova were spent in pre-service training, studying Russian and Romanian in the mornings and training in SWOT analyses, NGO structure, and strategic planning in the afternoon. Since being sworn in as a Peace Corps volunteer in November 2005, Adam has been working with the Kishinev Jacobs Jewish Campus (www.jewish.md), helping to bring people and money to the center.

Recently, Adam has also been working for CReDO (www.credo.md), a human rights organization. With CReDO, he has been assisting their leadership program and working on a policy paper for minority language education in schools. In the near future, he will be sent to western Romania to take part in a peace-building seminar with delegates from Romania, Moldova, and the breakaway Transdniestrian Republic to the East of Moldova.

Flexibility is an important aspect of success. Adam states that “if there is one constant to Peace Corps life it is this: you never know what you are going to get.” Work has been mixed with an ample dose of pleasure. Adam has shared his wisdom as a tutor for the lead singer of the famous rock band Zdob si Zdub (www.zdob-si-zdub.com) and has become quite a blues musician. He states that “a music promoter recently discovered me, so I will soon start playing blues at some local venues. All that is left is to get an invitation to play with the national soccer team!”

Adam is pretty upbeat: “Had I not been so well prepared for the Peace Corps with URPL, I would certainly not have been given the Capital City Assignment. Of course, at some point the fun must end, and I will return home and wrap up my master’s international thesis while I finish coursework for URPL. Or does that mean that the fun is just beginning? Until I see you for the 2008–2009 year, I wish you the best from Moldova.”

For more information about the MIP, visit www.cals.wisc.edu/studyabroad/peace-corps/ or contact Professor Dave Marcouiller, who is the campus MIP coordinator, at 608/262–2998.

Adam Goodberg is one of URPL’s first Master’s International Program students and is currently midway through his Peace Corps assignment in Moldova.

URPL’S PEACE CORPS PROGRAM—ADAM GOODBERG

URPL is one of the few planning programs in the US that has a formal relationship with the Peace Corps. The URPL Master’s International Program (MIP) is a track that combines graduate planning education with Peace Corps service.

Kurt lives in Middleton Hills, a New Urbanist-inspired development. He and his wife Evelyn (also a UW grad) have two children, Anna and Stephen, and another on the way. He says “even while exiled to Pennsylvania, we never lost our loyalty to the Badgers and the Packers.”
Professor Jack Huddleston has just completed the second year of a multi-year project sponsored by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy dealing with the “fiscal dimensions of planning and development.” As project director, Jack has been responsible for assembling an international team of experts to develop papers on how planning affects the fiscal conditions of cities and regions. The team has developed papers on the intersection of planning and the local budget, property tax administration and policy, capital budgeting, debt financing, tax increment financing, impact fees, fiscal impact analysis and a set of planning-related case studies.

Beginning this fall Professor Harvey Jacobs will be organizing and coordinating a three-year seminar series titled “European Innovations in Urban and Environmental Management.” Funded by the University of Wisconsin Center for European Studies the series will invite speakers engaged in the promotion and assessment of these innovations. One of the goals for the series is to create a dialogue about the lessons to be learned from Europe for the engagement of similar issues in the U.S. The first speaker in the series in October was Professor Rafael Crecente Maseda of the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, who presented “New Solutions to Old Problems? Integrated Regional Approaches for Sustainable Development (The European Union FARLAND Project).” Professor August Røsnes of Norway has been invited to be the spring 2007 speaker.

Assistant Professor Asli Göçmen received funding from UW Land Information and Computer Graphics Facility (LICGF) to conduct research on the use of GIS in public planning agencies throughout the state of Wisconsin. This is part of a larger study that received funding from the US Department of Agriculture and a collaborative effort with Professor Steve Ventura, director of LICGF. The research will contribute to an understanding of the status and barriers to the effective use of GIS in planning among the local and regional governments. The products from this study will contain a report concerning the needs assessment for local GIS operations, and also tools and information for local and regional governments, the intent of which is to help address data, technology, and training needs.

Microfinance programs are promoted as ways poor households in developing countries can increase their incomes. Yet, do higher incomes translate into improved access to health and education for children? Are households with access to microcredit better able to weather economic shocks, such as the death of a spouse or a bad agricultural season? Dr. Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel directs a research project funded by the World Bank that attempts to answer these socioeconomic questions by studying group-lending and microcredit programs in Malawi, Kyrgyzstan, and Andhra Pradesh, India. Using household surveys and focus group discussions, the study will determine whether these microfinance programs empower women, particularly those who borrow, by giving them a greater voice in household decisions and income allocation, and by improving their status within the community. Preliminary results are expected by July 2007.

Assistant professors Ken Genskow and Asli Göçmen, along with colleagues from three other mid-western states, received funding from the US Department of Agriculture for a three-year research and extension project addressing rural watershed planning and management. The project will focus on factors that influence conservation decisions by farmers and rural land managers, and will develop new tools for designing effective education, outreach, and incentive programs for watershed management.

Together with colleagues in botany, geography and plant pathology, Professor Harvey Jacobs has received funding to continue a France-based graduate student exchange opportunity initiated in 2005–2006 in the areas of land use, conservation biology, and environmental management. The exchange has been funded for a second year by the French American Cultural Exchange Foundation for French-American Academic Partnerships (approximately $120,000). In addition, the team has secured a three year grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation International Research Experiences for Students Program (approximately $150,000). The exchange opportunity provides for around five students per year to go to France in the spring semester to take classes or undertake research (and a similar number of French students to come to UW). To date, the primary partner institution in France is AGRO-M, one of the école supérieure for agriculture, located in Montpellier in the south of France. The exchange began in spring 2006 with four UW students, including one URPL student, and five AGRO-M students, and will continue at least through the 2008–2009 academic year.
Your Gift Makes a Difference

Gifts to the Department of Urban and Regional Planning are critical to our success. Contributions through the UW Foundation’s gift funds help us attract top graduate students and provide vital resources for planning education enrichment. Gifts support the URPL library (journal subscriptions) and computer lab (planning support software), and strengthen the URPL community in a variety of other ways. Recent gifts, for example, have funded URPL alumni receptions (at ACSP and APA meetings), the publication and mailing of this newsletter, and travel subsidies for URPL’s students to attend planning conferences.

Please see the UW Foundation Gift Form enclosed with this issue of Connections. We promise careful stewardship of URPL gift funds. Gifts of any amount are welcome—and most gratefully received.

RECENT GIFTS TO URPL

We thank the following alumni, friends, and organizations for their very generous support:

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Washington, DC
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White Bear Lake, MN
Merrill, WI
Saint Paul, MN
Verona, WI
Amherst, MA
Jenny Epstein  
(MS 2006)

This past August I moved to the Mining Triangle of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua to work for two years with the community development organization Bridges to Community (www.bridgestocommunity.org). Bridges has a dual focus: the first is to facilitate sustainable community development programming, the second is to promote cross-cultural learning and a deepening awareness of global interdependence through volunteer group participation in the development projects.

Bridges currently has four project sites: three are on the Pacific Coast near Managua (Tiquantepe, Masaya, and Guanacastillo.) These projects focus primarily on housing construction. Years of destruction following the Somoza regime, the earthquake of 1972, the Contra War of the 1980s, and Hurricane Mitch in 1998, left this area with an extreme shortage of adequate, livable housing.

The project I work on is in the city of Siuna on the Atlantic Coast, which differs greatly from its Pacific counterpart. Located in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), Siuna is in the buffer region of the Bosawas Reserve, Central America's largest rain forest. The issues evident in the Siuna (pop. 19,000) and the surrounding rural communities (pop. 68,000) are similar to those addressed by community development practitioners throughout the United States. These include high unemployment, environmental degradation, and public health concerns, here due to the effects of large-scale gold mining from the 1930s to 1980s. Today, the principal industry in Siuna is agriculture and livestock production, for which 56% of the total farming land is used. During the 10-hour ride northeast from Managua to Siuna, the ranch-filled landscape illustrates the same problems of agricultural sprawl seen throughout the Midwest.

Our community development program in the rural community of Santa Rosa, DAPA (De Allá Para Acá From There to Here), is focused on farm diversification, which promotes agro-forestry and a decrease in dependence on basic grains. We are currently in the last year of the three-year program which consists of nine components. This past year saw successful plantain crops, which allowed the families to pay off the Bridges loan of cacao trees (a very successful commercial crop.) During 2006–2007 the families will take out loans for cattle and chickens to be repaid through the animals’ offspring.

Most days, while sitting in my office, Reggaeton music blasts from my neighbor’s stereo, and I can’t help but think back to my days in URPL hearing Sean Paul and Daddy Yankee’s newest dance hits coming from Jack Huddleston’s office. So really, my life in Siuna isn’t that different than my time spent in Room 208.

If you have any questions about the project or the organization feel free to contact me at: jennyepstein@gmail.com.

Jan Reek  
(MS 1998)

During her time at URPL and following her graduation in 1998, Jan Reek worked at the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development. Now she is the director of programs for Project Home. “I manage our production programs—weatherization and home repair. We also have affordable rental housing for low income families and people with HIV/AIDS.”

Jan first discovered the planning program while she was still an undergraduate. “I created my own major as an undergraduate through the Liberal Studies Independent Major Program. Beth Howe, a former URPL faculty member, was my advisor. I was able to take some URPL courses as an undergraduate, and it sparked my interest to obtain a master’s degree. I found the URPL program satisfying because planning is such a value-laden activity. Pursuing a degree allowed me to put together a course of study that provided both knowledge about subjects of interest to me and increased discernment about causes and solutions for societal problems.”

Since 1980, when she first worked for Project Home as a home repair supervisor (minor home repair for low income homeowners), Jan says the driving force behind her career has been families’ needs for high-quality, affordable housing. “Housing is such a basic need. Much of my career has been spent in this area—from using my carpentry skills to fix someone’s home, to making loans to low-income people to fix their homes and providing construction management services to accomplish the work, to consulting with other nonprofits and local governments on affordable housing development projects and other housing-related programs.”

At Project Home she supervises the production staff who provide no- or low-cost weatherization and home repair services to customers, using her construction background everyday in her job. Jan goes on to say, “I use skills developed in my URPL education in grant writing, planning, program development, and administration.”

Giving advice to current URPL students and recent graduates, Jan uses insight from her own experiences in the planning profession: “Focus on your true passion, and you will find meaningful work—one of the true pleasures of life.”

janr@projecthomewi.org
WHERE, OH WHERE, HAVE OUR ALUMS GONE??

URPL does not have current information for the following alumni. Do you know where they are? If so, please let us know or have them contact the Department. Thanks.

A
Khalid R. Mahdi Al-Samarraie (MS 1975)
Warren T. Anderson (MS 1967)
Robert M. Arnstein (MS 1973)
Arségianto (MS 1984)

B
Autumn A. Baker (MS 1992)
Sujit Banerji (MS 1968)
Isaac Barrow (MS 1999)
Isabel Katherine Benziger (MS 1971)

C
Juan Carlos Crespo (MS 1983)—Bolivia

D
Dean R. Evans (MS 1960)

F
Regina Kirk Francis (PhD 1981)
Tetsuya Fukunaga (MS 1992)

J
Muhamadou L. Jeng (MS 1984)
Malcolm L. Johnson (MS 1970)

L
Winston (Wen-Tsuen) Lee (MS 1969)

M
Kok Hoi Mak (MS 1976)
Charles J. McCarthy III (MS 1996)
Valorie L. Monk (MS 1977)
Faith L. (Cholvin) Morello (MS 1983)

R
Kenneth F. Reinert (MS 1968)
Thomas W. Rodda (MS 1968)
Marc M. Rueter (MS 1972)

S
Jacob Segal (MS 1965)
Ian D. Shimmin (MS 1989)—Australia
Chiifen (Sophia) Su (MS 1989)

Keep Us Posted!

Please help! We are trying to modernize and update our alumni data. Your email address will help us keep track of you and facilitate communication when you want to contact your fellow alumni.

Have you moved? □ Yes □ No
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