Planning
City & Regional
Art by Blaze Syka, BSCRP '12

Cal Poly Leads Cal Poly Teams in Urban Design & Low-Income Housing Competitions

Urban Land Institute’s (ULI) annual Hines Student Urban Design Competition promotes innovative built-environments and intensive collaboration across disciplines and sectors. This year, CRP led three five-person teams of planning, architecture, and business students. After ULI announces the city, project area, and “challenge,” teams have only two weeks to submit their proposals, including a plan for the whole area, a “demonstration project,” a pro-forma, and creative solutions for financing and implementation.

This year’s challenge was, “Maximizing the Transit Opportunity: Mount Baker Station Area Seattle, Washington.” Students reported that—though grueling at times—the competition was the single most valuable experience they have been involved in at Cal Poly. This year, Cal Poly’s Bank of America Low-Income Housing Challenge team has 10 undergraduates and 2 graduate students, representing Planning, Business, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Construction Management. The team is partnering with Madonna Enterprises to design live-work and a variety of low-income units for a site on Los Osos Valley Road, near Highway 101. Notable design challenges the team will address in its proposal include managing the impacts to nearby Froom Creek, the wetlands, and Irish Hills open space.

The final presentations/reception is on May 19th in San Francisco. Alumni are encouraged to attend. For details of the event, please email crp@calpoly.edu in late April.

You can participate! Competitive design teams depend on feedback from business, architecture, and planning professionals. If you are interested in reviewing proposals, email crp@calpoly.edu.

Charting the Path to Solar Farms

CRP and Public Policy students in Dr. Greene’s class visited the proposed site of Topaz Solar Farm in SLO County. Representatives from the development company First Solar presented the proposed site design and mitigation measures planned to minimize aesthetic and biological impacts in the area.

The proposed solar farm would provide 550 megawatts of renewable energy to PG&E’s supply, as well as provide future jobs for students of Planning, Engineering, and Agriculture. The Draft Environmental Impact Report estimates that the energy will offset 352,826 metric tons of carbon emissions, 133 percent more than the 2005 City of San Luis Obispo Baseline Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The County Planning Commission has conducted study sessions and hearings are expected to follow. If entitlements are issued and construction starts this year, the farm should be operational in 2014.

In the field!

Valuable experiences occur outside the classroom:

Walking tour of San Francisco planning projects with Dean Jones
Agricultural & conservation easement site tour (SLO Land Conservancy)
The Morro Bay National Estuary Program’s offices and estuary site
A tour of downtown SLO infill development challenges / opportunities.

A note from the Department Head

We are delighted that our Fall 2010 newsletter prompted connections between alumni, students, and faculty. It is a pleasure to send you the second of our biannual updates. I trust you received the CRP holiday card; thanks to the many of you who made a donation and returned the enclosed survey. If you did not, it is not too late! The survey is available online at planning.calpoly.edu and will help us to provide an accurate report of alumni in our self-study. The Planning Accreditation Board makes its site visit October 2011. In preparation, we have taken a hard look at the department’s goals and objectives. Input on these from you is welcome at: crp@calpoly.edu.

This newsletter touches on some of our current activities, from solar farming near the Carrizo Plain to taco truck policy in metropolitan Los Angeles. As you read, I urge you to consider opportunities to engage with the CRP family—by creating an internship, serving as a mentor, organizing an alumni get together, creating a scholarship, endowing a grant for international travel, or facilitating a planning-related symposium.

It has been a very productive six months. The budget concerns have not dampened the enthusiasm or high quality of work by our students and faculty. We continue the long-standing tradition of excellence and look forward to your support. Please do stay in touch; we’re eager to hear of your news and achievements.

R. Thomas Jones, A.I.A.
Dean, College of Architecture and Environmental Design

A note from the CAED Dean

The CRP department faculty and students continue to be in the vanguard of Cal Poly programs, connecting the university to real communities with deserved public acclaim. The college remains proud of the leadership and innovation demonstrated as our planners learn to shape great places around the globe. This issue showcases a sampling of what makes the education so exceptional, and the world a better place, thanks to CRP. We also thank our community of alumni, civic leaders, and donors who help us stay connected to the real world so strongly. Kudos to all.

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Planners-Turned-Artists Exhibit at Art After Dark

In the second Public Art for Planners workshop, CRP hosted a photography exhibit at the Creamery, Downtown SLU. With training in composition and photo editing by professional photographer Ken Brandstetter and Professor Emeritus Brian Kesner, students portrayed the interplay between art, public space, and people. The exhibit was on display in the CAED Dean’s office, and will be on display in Berg Gallery during Open House.

Photograph by Jenny Dalglish, 1st Year MCRP

Hungry Streets: Mobile Food, Public Space and Policy

Second-year MCRP student Timothea Twy is studying food truck trends and policies in metropolitan Los Angeles under Dr. Toker’s supervision. Here, she describes her research and why it matters.

“...to “advancing the work of female faculty and students at a number of institutions.” According to Dandekar’s former University of Michigan student Sujata Shetty, the fact that Dandekar “demanded and got our best work was itself an enormous gift to us... That she has been a steadfast supporter of so many of us, for so long, in all facets of our lives, is a testament to her deep commitment to her students.”

Dr. Dandekar Receives Prestigious McCoy Award for Advancement of Women

In October, Dr. Dandekar was awarded the Margarita McCoy Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, for her outstanding contribution toward the advancement of women in planning through research, teaching, and other research. McCoy Committee Chair Professor Ann Forsyth of Cornell reported that Dandekar’s nominating letter highlighted her dedication to “advancing the work of female faculty and students at a number of institutions.” According to Dandekar’s, former University of Michigan student Sujata Shetty, the fact that Dandekar “demanded and got our best work was itself an enormous gift to us... That she has been a steadfast supporter of so many of us, for so long, in all facets of our lives, is a testament to her deep commitment to her students.”

The Legacy of Scholarships

“Receiving the Mike MacDougall Urban Design Award allowed me to study abroad in Brazil and work in some of the most underserved communities in the world. The professional and personal connections I made as a recipient of the award has had a wonderful influence on my career; I am very grateful.”

Christina Baetlese, BSCRP ’08

“...a fiscal, academic award, but also because the recognition stemmed from such a respected planning firm. The award has subsequently provided inspiration to continue striving for professional excellence in planning.”

James Hinkamp, MCRP ’11

Over $30,000 in merit-based aid are awarded to CRP students each year. If you or your firm would like to contribute to student scholarships or programs, please email crp@uw.edu.

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“There are so many reasons street food is relevant to planners who are hoping to make our cities more diverse, vibrant, and economically successful places to live. Street food is a vital part of many cultures, and encouraging vendors in public places has the potential to not only incubate small businesses, but also make active, engaging streets. I was really drawn to this topic after living in LA when the gourmet mobile food vendors were really becoming popular, and the City and County were struggling with regulating these new “taco trucks.”

I hate seeing cities and counties moving toward heavy regulation and even prohibition of mobile food vending because they aren’t sure how the vendors impact streets, neighborhoods and nearby businesses. I hope that through my research, I can shed a bit of light on the relationship between vendors, customers, and public space use and vitality. It will be interesting to see how public space is used differently when a food vendor is present in the area. Perhaps if jurisdictions have a little more information about how vendors operate, where they locate and why, and how people perceive and use public space and vendors in the space, they can make more informed policy decisions.”

Global Engagement

PUEBLA - MCRP/MS Engineering alumna Erin Cooper is part of a three-country project on sustainable urban management practices in Puebla, Mexico, Montreal, Canada, and San Francisco. The project is supported by the Mexican research organization CoMex, and co-led by Professor Bill Siemieda. In Puebla last December, Erin presented her research and gained exposure to international transportation systems.

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