

# NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Although we are very happy that *FOCUS* reached its fifth anniversary, we open this Editorial with a very sad note. CRP professor Michael McDougall passed away on April 8, 2007--a blow to all of us. Mike retired from Cal Poly after twenty years of teaching in CRP, and he had left a profound contribution. Last year, we were fortunate to have him collaborate with an article on his unique visual analysis and drawings of a small Italian town that he loved to visit. This was but a tiny example of his powerful analytical, teaching, and graphic skills. As teacher, colleague, and friend, he marked everybody's life in Cal Poly in very special ways. Mike leaves behind a big void, and this issue is dedicated to him.

*FOCUS'* Tribute to professor Michael McDougall starts with remarks by CAED assistant dean, Richard Zweifel, and San Luis Obispo County planning director, Vic Holanda. They were invited by Mike's family to celebrate his life during a memorial at Cal Poly last year. Next, an article by his long-time friend Calvin Platt, chairman of the SWA Group, reminds us of Mike's involvement with the planning and design of Foster City by revisiting what is one of the most famous and successful new communities in California.

In the "Essays" section, Beth Fillerup writes about the history and trajectory of RRM Design. Starting in San Luis Obispo where they keep their main office, RRM became one of California's leading planning and design firms, and they keep nurturing their strong ties to Cal Poly and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. This year's section on "Student and Faculty Work" has been expanded to make room for a lot of great material. Graduate students, Esther Valle and Elissa Black, open the section with articles on their master's theses. Esther studied whether the New Urbanism and Participatory Design approaches are effectively providing a sense of community in their projects, by comparing four residential developments in California. Elissa discusses the implications of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) national system and its criteria for neighborhood design from a planning perspective, making a case for the goals she is currently pursuing in her master's thesis.

Lecturer, Jeff Hook follows by discussing the results and pedagogical implications of the senior project lab (CRP 463) that he has been teaching for CRP. This lab is a new alternative for students who opt out from pursuing their capstone graduation project as an independent two-quarter long effort, but would rather follow a more restricted agenda in a lab environment for one quarter. Next, lecturer, Ken Topping; professor, William Siembieda; and associate professor, Michael Boswell present us with a brief overview of their work as coordinators of one of the most important projects CRP has ever engaged in: the State of California Hazards Mitigation Plan 2007 Update. The process they led was a multi-level and inter-agency one-year effort that culminated with a new plan--recently adopted by the state and approved by FEMA--which sets a higher bar in facilitating mitigation and disaster preparedness in California. Recent class work is described in the following

two articles. Professor, Vicente del Rio addresses his summer third-year Community Design lab in which students responded to a real client and designed a residential resort in Bahia de Banderas, just north of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Assistant professor, Adrienne Greve and her students, Corbin Johnson and Kevin Waldron discuss CRP new elective *Planning and Urban Ecology*, in which the students monitor the impact of Cal Poly's new student housing on the campus creek system. This section is closed with assistant professor, Umut Toker's describing his 3-D computer modeling project for the City of San Luis Obispo and for San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. The project provides a powerful instrument for the simulation and control of development, and will facilitate community participation in the decision-making process.

In the "International Exchanges" section, two of *FOCUSUS'* more constant collaborators, both seniors in the BSCR program, write about their experiences abroad during the fall quarter. Christina Batteate went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she took an urban design studio at the Federal University, dealing with the upgrading of a squatter settlement, and interned at the UN-Habitat regional office for Latin America. Coincidentally, Jennifer Venema also works at the UN-Habitat, but as a volunteer intern in their headquarters at Nairobi, Kenya, and she writes about the incredible experience she gained from that.

For *FOCUS'* closing section, "Spotlight," we interviewed Sean Nicholas, from the MCRP class of 2005, who is now an associate planner with the city of San Clemente, CA. Sean talked to us about his impressions of the program and about his professional trajectory since graduation. Next, Jamie Macartney (BSCR, 2006) writes about his story since he left CRP and got a job in Urbanism+, one of New Zealand's top urban design firms in Auckland, where he has been involved with important plans and projects. Finally, we present the reader with the abstracts of all MCRP theses and projects defended in the past year.

We are planning surprises for next year's *FOCUS*. The CRP Department will be celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a series of events are being planned. The department is proud of being around for so long, of counting on the excellence of its excellent students and faculty who bring in so many awards, and have been pushing programs to the top list in the state and in the nation in both undergraduate and graduate education. *FOCUS* is interested in featuring alumni work, be it in the form of an article, a portfolio of work, or an interview. If you are an alumnus and are interested in contributing, we encourage you to get in touch with us.

***Vicente del Rio, Ph.D.***

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