

VICENTE DEL RIO

FOCUS now completes eight long years of existence; a time span in which we saw the budget for education deteriorate, classes increase or be cancelled, registration shrinking, and numerous colleagues losing their jobs. It is not a time to rejoice but to be strong and help fight this crisis. However, thanks to CRP's many conquests and the quality of its undergraduate and graduate programs, faculty, and students, our department has managed to stand high and strong. And FOCUS is living proof.

In the present issue we have moved the "Cartoon Corner" to... a corner, the inside back page, where the cartoons will be published in full color, providing FOCUS with a spirited closing. But we are planning significant changes for next year. We decided not to pursue having FOCUS published for Open House but for the fall quarter instead. This will not only allow us to include articles and accounts on classes and projects that coincide with the academic year, but it will give us the summer time to deal with the huge tasks behind publishing. In addition we are planning changes in graphic design, so next year FOCUS might surprise you with a "face lift"!

After the customary introductory notes by department head and professor Hemalata Dandekar, FOCUS opens with an astute chronicle by Chris Clark in "A Planner's View." As an experienced planner and lawyer with a degree in linguistics, Chris is a champion of words who makes reading a delight. He will amuse you with an account of a class when he had students design new systems of law for a reinvented nation, each group assuming a different approach from "nimbians" to "profiteers".

The "Essays" section brings two important scholarly contributions. Henry Sanoff, distinguished professor of architecture at the University of North Carolina, Raleigh and an international authority in participatory design, writes about the evolution of the field, its role in building democracy, and the different types of community involvement. Next, Daniel Levi, professor of psychology at Cal Poly, and planning consultant Sara Kocher discuss their research on sacred places and more specifically on wats –Buddhist sacred precincts, their cultural meanings and implications for place identity, and the conflicts between tourist and religious uses.

The section "Faculty and Student Work" brings you articles that are excellent representatives of CRP's work: two are project-oriented and two are research-oriented. Faculty del Rio, Nuworsoo, and Toker write about results of a contract with Madera County's Planning Department: a series of community workshops, a transportation plan, and an urban design plan for the Avenue 12 Corridor. Anthony Kiet, architect and MCRP student, writes on the morphology of Arab cities, the impacts of modernism, and how to reconcile planning and design with traditional cultural values. Professor Hemalata Dandekar and Adrianna Jordan, an MCRP graduate, discuss their research on the influence of the railroad in San Luis Obispo's development, its morphology, and in the distribution of architectural types. The section closes with faculty Hemalata Dandekar and Umut Toker writing on their experience supervising interdisciplinary graduate teams in the Gerald H. Hines National Student Urban Design Competition, promoted by the Urban Land Institute.

The "International" section features faculty Adrienne Greve describing her experience as a guest presenter in an international forum on planning and climate change in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Professor Dandekar opens the "Spotlight" section with an article on last year's studios, which covered a lot of ground both in scope and in geography --from Madera and Fresno counties in the North to Los Angeles in the South. Recent CRP graduates follow with their articles. Scott Harmstead, an associate planner with Madera County's Planning Department, describes his trip to India on a program for young professionals sponsored by Rotary International. Melissa Streder writes about her professional trajectory and her present job at Caltrans in San Luis Obispo. Jason Kambitsis, a planner with the City of Pittsburgh PA, discusses guidelines that all young planners face in some point along their career. And, as customary, the "Spotlight" section closes with the abstracts of the master's thesis and professional projects finalized this past year.

We hope you enjoy the reading and that you recommend FOCUS to colleagues and friends. We are also on-line at <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/focus/>



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