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Note from the Department Head

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HEMALATA C. DANDEKAR

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Volume VIII of Focus finds Cal Poly's City and Regional Planning Department embarked on a scrutiny of ourselves as we complete the self-studies of our graduate and undergraduate program. These self-studies, designed to inform the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) about us, are serving to provide us a reason to pause and reflect on what we have achieved to date. Key in this is our understanding of our more than 1,300 alumni, what they have achieved, their contributions to planning, and how their education in CRP has served them. To help us in writing this story the CRP holiday card included an alumni survey. Thank you to the many alumni who responded. If you are an alum and did not, it is not too late! The survey can now be taken on-line at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CRP_Alum_survey_2010

A few moments of your time to complete the survey is very much appreciated. It will help us with our report and allow us to celebrate alumni achievements. Look for an overview of survey findings in the next Focus.

The PAB site visitor team will visit the campus October 3-5, 2011. In preparation faculty has taken a hard look at the goals and objectives for our department and its programs, eliciting input from alumni, employers, and our current students. We welcome your review of these draft goals and objectives, which are posted on the CRP web site. Your critique and comments are most welcome at the crp@calpoly.edu email.

I am now well into my second year as Head of Department of City and Regional Planning. It has been a very productive and stimulating time. The budget concerns mentioned in the last issue of Focus have not dampened the enthusiasm of our students and the high quality of their work nor that of CRP faculty. It continues to be a privilege to serve with this collegial and dedicated faculty team and continue the longstanding tradition of excellence that characterizes this department. As you browse through this issue of Focus please keep an eye out for opportunities that appeal to your own engagement with the CRP family— by creating an internship, serving as a mentor, supporting a student project, organizing an alumni get-together, creating a scholarship for students in certain specializations, endowing a grant to support student international travel and exposure, or facilitating a symposium on a particular planning topic that might benefit from debate and scrutiny. We welcome and look forward to your support and collaboration in any of these and other efforts that might move us forward.

As we did in the last issue this FOCUS reviews highlights of the community-based projects that CRP students completed this past year. A majority of these studios were sponsored by the communities we worked in, and for. We hope to continue this longstanding tradition. Please take a look at our studio sequence in my article in the Spotlight section and contact us if you have a project you would like to engage with us on.

We are expanding our international offerings over the summer this year with a two-week course in Turkey and a four-week course in Lisbon. We see these international exposures as adding value and strengthening our already strong core curriculum and our commitment to planning in California. These courses are add-ons and will help to invigorate our curriculum, and build up the capacity of CRP students, empowering them to work in the global arena, where they will need to practice in the future. We believe that the learning from such offerings sustains and strengthens our students capacity to be competitive and helps them succeed in these difficult economic times.

This issue of Focus highlights the achievements of student, faculty, alumni and friends of CRP. Please participate in our journal as a contributor, a donor, or simply by sending us your opinions—all are important. This year, as in the past, through Focus we welcome you to our world and what inspires us. Do send us news of your activity or successes. We'd love to hear from you – crp@calpoly.edu.