

## Note from the Department Head

We wish you a warm welcome to the third edition of FOCUS, the annual journal of the City and Regional Planning Department. FOCUS presents the current faculty work, student involvement, and alumni accomplishments. In a very real way FOCUS reflects the present, the past and the future of the profession as we know it at Cal Poly.

We ask you, the reader, to provide us with feedback and suggestions for improvement. As always, we owe a special thank you to the private donors (see inside back cover) who provide the funding for this publication.

This issue reflects the continuing departmental effort to enrich our curriculum through international experiences. You will find some very interesting international planning articles, including a wonderful environmental planning project to protect the ancient Mayan city of Copan, located in the northwest highlands of Honduras. This was our first interdisciplinary effort to team with faculty and students from Cal Poly's Landscape Architecture Department and a Honduran University.

In November 2005 CRP coordinated the International Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Symposium. We brought to campus a multidisciplinary group of thirty international and national experts on disaster and hazards reduction. The symposium overview article provides insight into the central message that we can save lives and protect property through planning and design procedures. CRP wishes to become a leader in developing a curriculum on "Community Safety and Design." If you wish to help us do this, please contact us so we can see how you can help in designing disaster resistant communities. The symposium proceedings are available in CD form as a special issue of FOCUS. If you are interested in obtaining the proceedings, please contact us.

CRP now has four exchange programs for students who wish to study planning abroad. In this edition you will find excellent student writing about their international educational experiences in Brazil and Honduras. We also had one student in Switzerland this year.

For many years the City and Regional Planning Department has partnered with central coast communities to address planning issues. Student work resulting from these partnerships has earned several national awards from the American Institute of Certified Planners. An example of effective partnering is laid out in the article on the King City (Monterey County) planning studio. When students engage with the community they are faced with real world issues and the nuances of local culture and context. Students benefit from the real world experience, and the community benefits by getting fresh ideas and useful planning products. In addition to King City, this year the CRP studio courses have worked in the city of Ventura on sector plans, in Redding on riverfront revitalization, in San Luis Obispo on sustainable transit oriented development, and in Pascagoula, Mississippi on site designs for Katrina recovery.

I hope you enjoy this edition of FOCUS and think about becoming a FOCUS supporter, either as a contributor of content or through financial assistance. If there is any subject matter that you wish to see included in future issues, please let us know.

William J. Siembieda, Ph.D. AICP  
*Professor and Department Head  
City and Regional Planning Department  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo  
([wsiembie@calpoly.edu](mailto:wsiembie@calpoly.edu))*