

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

You have in your hands an exciting new issue of FOCUS with exciting news! The news first: FOCUS was honored with two awards of excellence in 2006, from the Central Coast Section and from the California Chapter of the American Planning Association. Together, with the positive feedback we have always received from our readers, it's the best reward we could get, and a reassurance that we have been successful in our mission.

As mentioned by professor William Siembieda in his preface, the CRP department has kept pace with its award-winning history with the American Planning Association: Michael Marcus received the award of leadership for a student planner, the Templeton 2030 Community Plan / Templeton Downtown Vision developed by professor Zeljka Howard's planning studios received awards of excellence from both the Central Coast section and the California chapter, and the Redding Waterfront Revitalization Plan by Vicente del Rio's graduate project planning studio received an award from the Central Coast section. Also, a Cal Poly team led by CRP graduate students entered the Urban Land Institute urban design competition for the first time, and was awarded an honorable mention among 81 entries from the United States and Canada!

Our excitement this year also comes from the changes in FOCUS, as we expanded the contents and changed the graphic lay-out. The traditional section with student work now also includes faculty work, and a new section will feature ironic but profound perspectives through cartoons on planning issues. We inaugurate the Cartoon Corner with a sharp observation about "contextualism" in big-box design by New Times cartoonist Jerry James, and a critique of speculative urban development by Tarcisio Bahia, an architecture professor in Brazil.

This year, the section Special Events has articles by CRP students on two important occasions. Cristina Batteate and Jennifer Venema write about the Design of Public Spaces Symposium, organized by the CRP department in October 2006. An interdisciplinary panel of four guests discussed different views on public spaces in the US, Thailand, Brazil, Spain and Mexico. Next, graduate student Geiska Baker writes about a lecture about the changing travel patterns of older women, delivered by Sandra Rosenbloom, professor of planning at the University of Arizona.

Five exciting articles compose the Essays section this year. Cal Poly's psychology professor Daniel Levi discusses a study on environmental attitudes and health impacts of living at the agricultural / urban interface in Oceano, Calif. Colin Drukker and Lisa Jabuka write about the Planning Center's efforts toward good planning and place making in the suburbs. Faculty David Dubbink defends the importance of the noise element in general plans by comparing the Californian to the European experiences. CRP faculty Paul Wack and Ruth Knack provide multiple views about what is perhaps the most important single issue for planners: global warming. Finally, the sketches and writings of Michael MacDougall, who taught at CRP from 1972 to 1992, take us through a delightful visual sequence of spaces in Orta San Giulio, Italy (*Thank you Mike for allowing us to have your beautiful watercolor on the cover!*).

The Student and Faculty Work section starts with two articles on planning for Traver, a small community in the Central Valley. Faculty Vicente del Rio and Umut Toker write about their participatory process toward a concept plan for the town, involving a series of community workshops, and BSCR student Michael Costa writes about the continuation of these efforts through his third-year class' urban design project. Next, Camille Passon discusses how youth perceive and value their communities, and the planning implications; the results were from a comparative study of San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles and Cambria from her MCRP thesis. Elaine Kabala writes about her senior community planning lab's community plan for Ventura's Westside and North Avenue districts which focused on new urbanism and smart growth principles. Craig Minus, from the MCRP program, writes about his team's entry to the 2006 Urban Land Institute Gerald Hines Urban Design Student Competition. Lastly, CRP lecturer Ken Topping -a leading expert on urban disaster risk reduction and mitigation in the US- writes about the revision of the California State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, a project currently being developed by a team of CRP faculty under a contract with the State Government.

In the International Exchanges section, we bring you an essay by visiting urban design professor Ivor Samuels about the uses of historic spaces in Europe and the conflicts between the local context and globalization. Ivor was one of the founding members of the Joint Center for Urban Design at Oxford Polytechnic, now Brookes University, in England, and he will teach graduate and undergraduate studios at CRP this coming Spring quarter.

As always, the Spotlight section gathers news from our alumni. This year we interviewed Michael Codrum, a graduate from the MCRP program (1998) who is an associate planner with the City of San Luis Obispo. Corinne Rosenblum, another graduate from the MCRP program (2005), writes about her experiences during and after school, and her work as a hazard mitigation planner. FOCUS closes with the abstracts of all theses and professional projects defended in the MCRP in 2006.

I hope you enjoy this year's issue, the readings and the new looks of FOCUS. Please always let us know what you think of our efforts. We also encourage you to engage in the making of FOCUS in one or more different ways. Until next year!

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