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Volume VII of Focus ushers in the start of a new decade and the 41st anniversary of Cal Poly's City and Regional Planning Department. We have some 1,300 alumni to show for these four decades of training planners. We are proud of our roster of distinguished and productive alumni who are contributing to the planning profession in California, both across the USA and in countries around the world.

The department has flourished under enlightened leadership starting from Ken Schwartz in 1968 to William Simbieda in 2009, who now directs CAED's PDCI - Planning, Design Construction Institute and exercises entrepreneurship in support of research. I am honored to have assumed the position of CRP Department Head on September 1, 2009. I come to Cal Poly following seven years in the School of Planning at Arizona State University--five of them as director--and over two decades in Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. My CRP faculty colleagues are committed to teaching excellence, involved in the community, and exemplary in their collegiality and dedication to the department. It is a privilege to be part of this team. I look forward to assisting the collaborations and partnerships that have characterized their work.

The next few years will test CRP and Cal Poly. The challenging economic conditions we face in the country and in California have a direct impact on us. Nevertheless, our department and its faculty will continue to be totally dedicated to deliver a quality education through learn-by-doing pedagogies and action research. The students will continue their strong engagement and hard work, and strive for and win awards and recognition for their excellent output. In the last year alone, our student projects have won two Awards of Merit from the California Chapter of American Planning Association. One was for an Urban Design Plan for Downtown Delano, the other for a Climate Action Plan for the City of Benicia. Both were cutting-edge efforts that are informing policy. The Benicia Climate Action Plan was adopted by the City Council in September 2009. The Delano Strategic Plan was adopted by the city and won the American Planning Association 2010 National Small Town and Rural Planning Award for a student project.

The reputation CRP has earned, for exemplary student engagement in the discipline and excellent work in communities throughout the state, will continue. With the support of alumni, friends, and well-wishers, our faculty and students will sustain the strength and vital engagement to the practice of planning and to the learning-by-doing approach that has characterized this department in the last forty years.

FOCUS highlights some of the community-based projects that CRP faculty and students have completed this past year. We envision more of these connections in the years ahead. We anticipate expanding our international offerings, continuing to invigorate our curriculum, and building up both our programs, the BSCR and the MCRP, and sustaining them through the difficult economic times we face.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Focus. It is a record of some of our significant achievements over this past year. It flourishes and is made possible by a volunteer staff of students and faculty and the efforts of Professor Vicente del Rio, the Managing Editor, and Professor Umut Toker, the Assistant Editor. We urge you to participate in our journal as a contributor, a donor, or simply by sending us your opinions—all these are important ways to participate. Every year through Focus we welcome you to our world and what inspires us.