Learning from California: 
Highlights from CRP Studios 2017/2018 AY

Planning and design studios are fundamental for the CRP department mission and the undergraduate and graduate curriculae. As the best vehicle for Cal Poly’s learn-by-doing pedagogy, the studio experience allows students to engage in quasi-real projects and work with real cities and their officials, stakeholders and communities, helping them to become better prepared for professional life.


An Urban Design for Collaboration and Innovation at Cal Poly.

The objectives of this studio are to introduce students to the urban design process and to creating people-friendly environments, and continue the development of their design skills, particularly computer-assisted programs. In Winter 2018, the class worked on an area on campus at the intersection of Highland and University Drives, between the Brizzolara Creek and Perimeter Drive. Currently containing two parking lots and a food processing unit, the students had to rething the area as a multifunctional space with residential units, an innovation center, educational facilities, and 50 parking spaces. The students were organized in teams of two and, after a thorough campus analysis and an investigation of case-studies, came up with their ideas. A common vision was to create a vibrant campus atmosphere by maintaining a variety of academic and entertainment opportunities, improve campus connectivity, and promote innovation through interdisciplinary, collaborative opportunities and social interaction.

Urban design proposal for Cal Poly’s campus, by Chloe Evans and Oscar Gake; CRP 202.


Railroad District Redevelopment, Dinuba CA.

This studio, involving two co-horts and 25 students, collaborated with CRP 553 (graduate studio) in assisting Dinuba, a town of 21,453 (2010) in California’s Central Valley. While the graduates focused on the entire downtown, this studio focused on re-envisioning the railroad corridor that abuts the downtown, represents a strong physical barrier and contains several vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings. Organized into 11 teams, after a field visit and a SWOT analysis, the students came up with a series of visions and design ideas for the redevelopment of the corridor and the railroad ROW itself. Combined, these projects generate a thriving and memorable Railroad District well integrated with the surrounding city. Ideas included restaurants and commercial activity, work-force housing, apartments, and town homes, office parks and a business incubator, a hotel, a museum and a community center, community gardens, plazas, and a linear park and bike trail along the railroad ROW connecting to nearby towns. (Read about this experience in the Faculty and Student Work Section)

Redevelopment along Dinuba’s Railroad District, by Jack Balfour and Valeria Diaz; CRP 203, Spring 2018.
**Undergraduate Studio:** CRP 341 Urban Design Studio III (Fall 2017). Instructors Hemalata Dandekar and Vicente del Rio.  

*Preparing San Francisco’s Embarcadero for Sea Level Rise.*  
Partnering with the Port of San Francisco, this studio’s two cohorts included 32 students who engaged in envisioning how the Embarcadero become resilient to sea level rise. Organized into six teams, the class prepared concept plans illustrating how renovated and repurposed buildings, warehouses, and piers could be combined with new buildings, parks, and redesigned public spaces. Inspired by solutions in other cities, such as New York’s Resilience by Design competition, the teams proposed several innovations such as a meandering seawall topped by a pedestrian promenade, lagoons for public use, a floating amphitheatre, a new recreational arcade with a Ferris wheel, and floating islands for different activities interconnected by boardwalks. The reports and powerpoints were presented to the Port of San Francisco, and the posters were exhibited in their Embarcadero headquarter’s public lobby. *(Read about this experience in the Faculty and Student Work Section)*

![Seaport Plaza, proposal for San Francisco’s Embarcadero by E. Huang, E. Gomez, E. Shimanuki, M. Spector & R. Browers; CRP 341, Fall 2017.](image)

**Graduate Studio:** CRP 553 Project Planning Lab (Spring 2018). Instructor Hemalata Dandekar.  

*Re-Imagining Dinuba’s Downtown.*  
This graduate studio was challenged with developing a concept design plan and development strategy for Downtown, Dinuba, a city of 21,453 residents (2010) in Tulare County. The city has experienced an economic shift away from the agriculture base that characterizes much of California’s Central Valley. The challenge to create a vibrant, mixed-use downtown was responded by the class a plan with four complementary zones: 1) Downtown Business District, with its tree lined east gateway, various housing types and arts and entertainment; 2) Civic Zone, focusing on public/civic functions and services with a traditional city square featuring a new city hall; 3) Downtown Main Street, retaining the small town charm with a contiguous façade of upgraded, adaptively reused or infilled buildings, and activated alleyways; and 4) Entertainment Plaza, with expanded opportunities for recreation, entertainment and enhanced outdoor plazas. The concept plan brings new attractions effectively transforming Downtown Dinuba into a local and regional destination. *(Read about this experience in the Faculty and Student Work Section)*

![SketchUp view of the urban design scenario for Downtown Dinuba; CRP 553, Spring 2018.](image)

City of Guadalupe General Plan Update.

This graduate studio’s 14 students collaborated with residents, stakeholders, and city leaders in a thorough analysis and comprehensive update of the City of Guadalupe’s General Plan. Located in Santa Barbara County, California and in the heart of fertile agricultural lands, Guadalupe is served by California’s Pacific Coast Highway that traverses its downtown. In 2015 the city had 7,220 residents of which 85 percent claims Hispanic or Latino origins, and the median household income was $43,710, well below the Santa Barbara County and California state medians.

Comprehensive research on the community as well as public feedback guided the class in developing an administrative draft General Plan with long-term goals, objectives, polices, and programs for thirteen Elements: Land Use; Circulation; Conservation; Housing; Environmental Justice; Economic Development; Public Facilities; Safety; Health; Open Space; Noise; Community Design; and Air Quality. The Preferred Growth Scenario for 2040 reflects a combination of features from three alternative scenarios presented to the community, and captures its desires: (a) for vibrant, walkable, and attractive neighborhoods; (b) to preserve the City’s character; (c) to provide an adequate and diverse supply of housing; and (d) to increase the number of jobs within the City. The Plan can improve Guadalupe’s quality of life, provide diverse housing options, generate economic vitality, and enhance the city’s tourist potential and attraction as a relatively affordable coastal community to live in.

The Proposed Land Use Map for Guadalupe shows development focused in five key areas of growth; class project, CRP 552/554, Fall 17/Winter 18.