Cal Poly Professor Awarded Grant To Prepare Book on Brazilian Urban Design

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A Cal Poly city and regional planning professor has been awarded a $10,000 grant by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in Fine Arts to produce a book on contemporary Brazilian urban design.

Vicente del Rio is bringing together his own case studies on Rio de Janeiro and studies by Brazilian urban researchers on such topics as revitalization, social inclusion and gated communities. He is writing and compiling the book, "Beyond Brasilia -- Contemporary Urban Design in Brazil," with Cal Poly City and Regional Planning Department Head William Siembieda.

"The Graham grant is a great opportunity to develop some of my own interest in urban design methodologies and techniques in the developing world," del Rio said. "With American design professionals working more and more abroad, they can learn some valuable lessons from the Brazilian experience and apply them here.

"In California," he said, "there is a growing debate surrounding 'smart growth,' with a focus on denser housing, mixed-use zoning, public transportation and sustainable urban development. Cities in Brazil, naturally, are much denser and depend more on public transportation. I feel the Latin American experience, especially in Brazil, can help us address important issues of urban form and transportation."

A native of Rio de Janeiro, del Rio will conduct his research from San Luis Obispo.

At Cal Poly, del Rio is responsible for the City and Regional Planning Department's urban design studio classes. For the past two years, he has led student design-revitalization projects in Arroyo Grande.

"This award demonstrates national recognition of Vicente's talent," Siembieda said. "And he is sharing his international expertise with cities of the Central Coast."

According to Siembieda, the Graham Foundation grant is the country's most competitive award for architecture and urban design. Of approximately 500 grant applicants this year, 100 received grants. A $10,000 grant is the largest the foundation awards to an individual.

Del Rio earned bachelor's degrees in architecture and planning in Brazil, a master's in England, and a doctorate in Brazil. He joined the faculty of Cal Poly's College of Architecture and Environmental Design in 2001 after teaching architecture and urban design for more than two decades at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and working in state and municipal planning departments and in private practice in Brazil. He has
lectured in the United States, Europe, Mexico and South America and written numerous journal articles and five books.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A photo of del Rio is available from Bob Anderson, (805) 756-1511, or banderso@calpoly.edu.

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