Time flies when one is having fun. It is almost five years since I began this job! So please permit me to reminisce over some of the significant mileposts. Most significant of these is the recent four-year re-accreditation of the undergraduate and graduate programs by the Planning Accreditation Board last year. Planetizen also ranked our graduate program as one of the Top Ten in the Midwest for the first time in 2011. (This is done once every three years, and undergraduate programs are not ranked).

We’ve institutionalized the production of a regular newsletter each semester so we can stay in touch with our alumni and the public. At the end of each semester, I provide a Report Card to summarize transactions in the department during the course of the semester. A 10-member Alumni Advisory Board now meets on a regular basis to deliberate on matters of concern to alumni and the department. Their feedback and involvement in department affairs has been invaluable to us. In the same vein, the Indiana APA is making Ball State the location of the organization’s annual spring professional development conference. This is a relatively new development and is significant because it helps our students to connect with practicing planners and to learn from them.

Professor Lisa Dunaway and Alumnus Trevor Traphagen coordinated a Mentoring Program that pairs current students with planning practitioners, so students can learn first-hand about the profession from those who are in the field and practicing it on a daily basis. The Just Lunch program that was initiated by Vera Adams was established with a similar goal in mind. Additionally, we have a student monitoring program, which established 2.75 as the minimum GPA for students in the program. Those with lower GPA meet with the department chair to see how to help them bring their performance up. These programs together with good student advising have helped us maintain a high student retention and graduation rate, perhaps the highest on campus.

Each year we bestow an award on one of our alumni. As you know, the department’s Distinguished Alumni Award brings an alumnus to campus to give a talk in their area of specialization and to interact with our students. It also helps us to tighten our relationships with alumni.

A scholarship fund was created from which we can grant meritorious achievement awards or subsidize the cost of travel for students. The Eric and Sandra Kelly Award for example is given to the student who wrote the best thesis in a given academic year. Eric’s dedication to the quality of students’ education through his monthly contributions to the department is one for which we are forever grateful. Similarly the immediate past chair of the department has been generous in establishing the Dave and Mandira Kar-Schoen annual $1,000 award to a graduating high achieving student. Some of our alumni and well-wishers have made similar commitments to the scholarship fund.

Staying in touch with our students is important, and while I am not able to meet with each student during the academic year, I have established a Chair’s Advisory Board composed of a student from each year of the program that meets with me the first Monday of the month. This group is the sounding board and voice of the students, and through them we ensure accurate information flow from and to the student body. We have been holding a spring Internship Fair that provides an opportunity for students to share their internship experiences with their fellow students and for employers with internship opportunities to meet with students as well. In the last year, we’ve also increased the number of partnerships we established with communities and planning agencies to help support graduate students with internship opportunities and funding for graduate assistantships. We will be recognizing their support this spring during the CAP Faculty/Student symposium.

Growing the student population is important, so each year we hold an open house to provide potential students with the opportunity...
to learn about our graduate programs. Bruce Frankel has been instrumental in organizing and conducting these sessions. Also upon assuming office as chair at Ball State I noticed that the Office of Special Outreach Programs brings high-achieving minority students to campus each summer. The Summer Scholars program provides an opportunity for minority students completing grades eight through ten in Indiana to visit Ball State for a two-week stay to learn about college majors and careers. Unfortunately, these students never got the chance to learn about the design professions because the College of Architecture and Planning was not a stop on the itinerary of the organizers.

To rectify what I thought was a deficiency, I worked with the admissions office to ensure that these students are brought to CAP. Now two sets of about 30 highly motivated, talented, and driven minority students come through our college each summer and receive a lecture and tour of our facilities from students and faculty. This at the very least exposes them to our three professions as potential career choices.

These programs are not enumerated to boast of my personal accomplishments, and they would not have been consummated without the support of the department’s faculty, students, and alumni. I recount them to show what we’ve accomplished with great teamwork in the past five years. I am grateful to the hard work of our faculty, students, alumni, and the general public who continue to support the department with an eye to achieving excellence and to providing the best education possible for our students!

In the years ahead, there is more work to be done to continue to move the department forward, and I am confident that we will all rise to the occasion. Our alumni have requested that we engage in research that will inform planning practice, especially in Indiana. We need to increase our engagement in the production of high-impact research both scholarly and practical and build our national presence as thought leaders in the profession. I believe this adds immeasurably to the reputation of our programs and to the value of the degrees that our students receive. We need to redouble our efforts to educate the public about urban planning and the role that we provide in the development of quality places and to the economic development of communities. This is an area that several of our faculty such as Bruce Race and Scott Truex excel in and I expect them to be out front on these efforts. And we need to generate more external grant funds to continue to support our graduate students through graduate assistantships. In the past Nihal Perera was able to bring in Fulbright grants to support the CapAsia study trips and it is one that deserves applause.

Additionally, we must continue to sharpen our curriculum and stay abreast of planning practice so that our students receive practical and hands-on education that will continue to make them the first choice for employers in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. These are the goals that in my humble opinion the department needs to work on for the next couple of years, whether I continue in my role as chair or not. For now, thanks for all you do and continue to do for the department and stay blessed!
3RD YEAR STUDIO WINS NATIONAL AWARD

LISA DUNAWAY, AICP, LEED AP
INSTRUCTOR OF URBAN PLANNING

The AICP Student Project Awards Jury selected the project “Old West End Neighborhood Action Plan” as a winner of a 2014 AICP Student Project Award for 2014. The project was completed by Lisa Dunaway’s PLAN 302 studio class in fall 2013, and details recommendations for the Old West End Neighborhood Association in Muncie, including housing, infrastructure, land use, safety, and quality of life.

The Old West End Neighborhood Action Plan (OWENAP) is a citizen-generated policy regarding the future of the neighborhood, and contains initiatives that are developed by the residents of the neighborhood. The OWENAP falls under the umbrella of the Muncie Action Plan, which is a strategic guide for the city to create an action agenda for the future.

Over the course of the semester, the students’ knowledge of planning grew to include such skills as public speaking, professional report writing, and survey creation. They also discovered many sources of information that are helpful to community development including making connections with local organizations, researching grant opportunities, and the importance of establishing relationships within a community. An important take-away from the project is that students learned the interdependence of the built and social environments, a lesson that will stay with them for the rest of their professional career.

Lisa Dunaway, AICP, LEED AP, has taught the Urban and Neighborhood Analysis Studio for three years. Students involved in the project were Ty Adley, Adam Beauchot, Davonte Caldwell, Erin Cotant, Chelsea Fenimore, Taylor Firestine, Dylan Fisher, Ellen Forthofer, Brock Goodwin, Daniel Greenfield, Haley James, Seth Koons, Nathan Law, Charles Russell, Mackenzie Thibault, and Derek Walker.

The project will be recognized with an Honor Award, given in recognition of special achievement by undergraduate planning students. The award will be presented at the Annual Meeting and Leadership Honors Ceremony at the 2014 APA National Planning Conference in Atlanta.
ONE HOME AT A TIME

DAN PHILLIPS, BUPD 2002, ENERGY ANALYST
INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION

I feel fortunate to be in the position I am at the Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA). There are many opportunities for professional growth; the only limits are one’s time and ability. In keeping with planning, I wear a few hats. One morning I can be working with an Indiana utility company to measure the energy impacts from Indiana’s Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). That afternoon I can be in a client’s crawl space or attic, auditing their home for potential energy savings. One of INCAA’s projects is Indiana’s technical training facility for their low income weatherization program. I also work with the training team in developing or refining how to implement their curriculum (mostly as it pertains to computerized audits). There is quite a bit of variety throughout the year.

Coming into college I had an interest in housing and energy, which I thought would lead down the architecture path. But I kept an open mind that first year. By the end of the first year, there were more aspects of planning that I felt interested me than the other two professions. The wide range of the curriculum meant I would be spending more time outside of the CAP building. That said, thinking back I enjoyed the classes taught by CAP professors most.

The importance and value of internships has been very clear to me. I got extremely lucky in that my internship was at INCAA. It just seemed to fit. For three summers I worked at INCAA. The first two summers were spent working on short term, intern-ish projects. But the third summer was what really opened my eyes.

INCAA also has a small production staff that assists the training staff from time to time, but they also do conservation programs somewhat separate from Indiana’s weatherization program. INCAA would get smaller programs to work on from the local utility companies. That third summer I went to work on the production staff with Mike Phifer.

Mike is a bit of a living legend and was praised as so by Dr. Hill in the many planning classes I took from him. And rightly so. I have no idea how he tolerated me. I had essentially no carpentry skills in a light carpentry industry. But by the end of the summer I had a crash course in how to really make an impact on a person’s home. That sealed the deal.

My family was a little curious then when I took a job working for an insulation company in Muncie after finishing my coursework at Ball State. About a third of our work came from working in weatherization. But the other third came from working in new construction. We were working in homes around the time that the housing bubble was starting to froth. My boss and I would ask each other “Who the heck is going to buy a house like this here in Muncie?” when I should have been asking myself, “What bank is foolish enough to lend this builder this much money to build a house without a buyer?”

The insulation business experience helped temper my idealized thoughts. Sticking to bids, covering costs, and trying to make a profit are all elements of implementation that are important to turning good ideas and plans into a reality. When my friend and boss left, I left as well. After a short time working as a weatherization crew leader at a not-for-profit community action program, I was asked if I would like to work at INCAA full time. Seven years later, here I am!

There are three professors who really made
an impact on how I think and work today. Dr. Nihal Perera helped by pulling me from my sheltered, Midwest life into places I never thought I would go by exposing me to people, cultures, environments, food, and fauna that I can now better relate to. More importantly, when I see or read news from other parts of the globe, I’m a little less naive to think I can understand what is taking place without an understanding of the culture.

Dr. Eric Kelly helped hammer home the importance of implementation. The best plan does no good if it cannot get off the shelf. What is the culture where you are working on a problem? Can everyone be brought to the table to help with implementation? Who can help you get the job done? Who will oppose what you want to do? Are there physical limitations, fiscal limitations?

Lastly is Dr. William Hill, who opened my eyes to the profession I am now passionate about. Beyond the blower doors, spreadsheets full of formulas and analysis, and the hours spent fine-tuning lessons, Dr. Hill showed that planning is problem solving. There are many approaches to many problems. Be sure to look back at what has been done because feedback is important. Are goals getting accomplished? Weatherization and building performance happened to hit a sweet spot for me. I enjoy helping to conserve natural resources, while making housing more affordable to those in need, while improving the housing stock of our neighborhoods, using local labor, with measurable impacts to provide additional feedback. I can’t thank him enough.

SPONSOR A STUDENT TO ATTEND THE APA ATLANTA CONFERENCE

Remember your Ramen noodle dinner days? It’s tough to come up with $245 to travel to the annual APA conference when you’re a broke student, but we all know the educational value of the seminars and the networking opportunities in Atlanta will be tremendous. If you’d like to sponsor a student or contribute something to help someone attend, we are accepting donations!

BUPD grad Bryan Schuch has pledged $300 toward the effort.

“As a student presenter at the event last year, I believe it can be very beneficial to someone who is willing to take in what the conference has to offer,” he wrote. “I would like to make a contribution to the program to help a student go on the trip.” Bryan asked the department to choose a student to receive the award, and we intend to choose one of the students from our extremely competent SPA leadership board to receive the assistance.

Indiana APA has also given us a generous check for $1,000 which we’ve used to offset the cost of the entire trip, bringing the amount each student will pay from $275 to $245. We’re grateful for the support and welcome any and all contributions. Checks can be made payable to the department and sent to Ball State University, Urban Planning AB 327, 2000 W. University, Muncie, IN 47306. Of course, you are always free to help our students in other ways, by contributing to our Ball State Foundation account or even by sponsoring a graduate assistant who would in turn work for you. Give us a call at (765) 285-1963 if you want to know more!
In the last decade since graduating from Ball State University’s Master of Urban Planning Program, Daniel G. Haake, AICP has built a career working with local, state and national partners to solve complex and politically sensitive transportation challenges in both the private and public sectors.

At CDM Smith, Haake is frequently tapped to lead freight planning projects for clients throughout the nation. In addition, Haake serves as project manager for multiple research projects commissioned by the National Academies. Prior to CDM Smith, Haake administered the nationally recognized freight-planning program at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC); where he led a multi-jurisdictional effort to prioritize and accelerate projects to alleviate congestion threatening the success of the Rickenbacker Inland Port. In 2012, the partnership’s success culminated with the award of a fully-funded TIGER IV grant to complete the final project in the portfolio.

Most recently, Haake has worked with international transportation leaders to undertake two major research projects sponsored by the National Academies with the goal of solving major freight challenges that have a direct impact on our nation’s economic future and livability of our neighborhoods. In addition to this work, Haake has committed his personal time to stewarding a new generation of planning professionals by way of leading the Urban Planning Department’s Alumni Board. In 2013, Ball State named him a Graduate of the Last Decade for his dedication to public service and the university.

Haake has served in both elected and appointed leadership roles with prominent national organizations including the Transportation Research Board and American Planning Association.

**National Cooperative Freight Research Program (NCFRP) 38**

**Improving Freight System Performance in Metropolitan Areas**

Integrating freight deliveries within the urban fabric of metropolitan centers is critical to support local neighborhood economies and the quality of life expected by residents. The impacts of these deliveries are significant while often very complex. To meet consumer demand, goods and commodities must be available at the right place and at the right time. Normally, this requires freight to be delivered in close proximity to consumers at home and work. More often than not this creates a paradox. The goods consumers demand are largely delivered on the same trucks that are often perceived to adversely impact quality of life. Trucks require more space and time to operate as compared to normal passenger movements. Trucks require fuel, maintenance and parking— all of which affect the environment and livability.

Freight activity produces both positive and negative impacts on modern urban living. The goal of NCFRP 38 is to develop a guide for regional planners to identify practical strategies and solutions for public and private stakeholders to improve freight movement system performance in diverse metropolitan areas. This will become increasingly important as freight grows to be recognized as a significant part of building livable communities and designing complete streets. Simply put: no one will walk to the store if there is nothing to buy. This study is a first step in solving the paradox of freight in metropolitan areas.

**National Cooperative Freight Research Program (NCFRP) 40**

**Improving Export Freight Logistics**

In 2010, President Obama created the National Export Initiative with the goal of doubling exports to help business, employment and the economy grow more rapidly than
otherwise possible. The rapid growth and larger consumer base within developing economies constitute a significant market for companies to achieve their maximum growth in order to reach higher towards communities’ maximum economic impact.

For the past several decades, the emphasis on transportation planning to accommodate trade, when trade was considered at all, has primarily focused on improving the transportation system handling imports. This poses a tremendous problem for companies that wish to increase exports; while existing infrastructure, business models and governmental processes are focused on doing just the opposite.

NCFRP 40 was developed to tackle this challenge. The project is focused on identifying the domestic impediments (e.g., those related to infrastructure and equipment supply; environmental, safety, and security legislation and regulations; land use issues; and transportation service) that currently restrict U.S. export supply chains; and to identify options for improving export freight logistics without degrading the existing import supply chain.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Indiana APA Spring Professional Development Conference
March 21, 2014
Ball State University Alumni Center

The 7th Annual Faculty & Student Symposium
Ball State University
College of Architecture & Planning
April 2, 2014

Susan Fainstein
"The Argument for Just Outcomes"
April 7, 2014 @ 4:00pm
CAP Room AB 100 (CM credits have been requested)

American Planning Association
National Conference
April 26 – 30, 2014
Atlanta, GA
Once an urban planning student at Ball State University, Meena (Viswanath) Beyers now sits at the head of Marketing and Communications for the Energy Efficiency Program at Nicor Gas, a natural gas provider, in Illinois. Her efforts focus on marketing campaigns, educating the public and businesses, and collaborating with other departments across the company. How did a graduate from Ball State’s Department of Urban Planning transform from a planner into a marketing and communications specialist? What seems like a non-traditional progression from education to professional life is the unique and edifying career path Meena has experienced.

Right out of college Meena scored a fresh-faced planner’s dream job with the City of Naperville, Illinois, which had established itself as a city with progressive planning policy. As a community planner, Meena experienced the duties of a traditional planner, but was encouraged to solve and organize projects creatively. Three years later, she began working for the Chicago suburb Oak Park as a building division manager. “I began to wear multiple hats,” Meena explains. Her focus shifted from solely new development implementation to supervision, community relationships, and big-picture community development. Meena began night classes toward a Master’s in Public Service Management which she earned from DePaul University in 2008.

Meena moved jobs to work for another Chicago suburb, the Village of Brookfield. The village had just hired a community development director who then hired Meena as the village’s first planner. “There were some challenges,” she confirms about the job in Brookfield. As their first planner, Meena had trouble getting momentum for change in the community. Out of the challenge of working with community members and committees, Meena honed her skills as an exceptional communicator.

In 2010, Meena made a big move from the public to the private sector by becoming the Senior Marketing Project Manager at Resource Solutions Group, a company that helps utilities, businesses and individuals make the wise use of energy a way of life. Here her love for marketing and communications took off as well as a love for trailblazing. Meena remembers working with Resource Solutions Group at the very start of the company.

“I was with the company since the time we were working in each other’s dining rooms.” She explains the value of being a part of a startup is the exposure to all components of an organization. Meena describes the faster pace change from the public to the private sector. “One of the great things about working in the private sector is that you can move from concept to implementation very quickly.” Just last summer, Meena received the call to begin working for Nicor Gas. Along with several other duties, she collaborates to develop efficient environmental solutions in the natural gas industry.

Meena reflected on her time at Ball State in the Urban Planning department. She highlights the importance of collaboration and people skills, which she attributes to learning during her time at Ball State. Most of her career has been spent in the community with people instead of being alone working on a computer. Meena appreciated the applicable college projects that forced her out of the classroom to interact with the community. Meena challenges students with the question: “What skills are you building now that will transfer to multiple careers?”

When asked what she would say to young planners, Meena said “Students should be open to where a career can lead them.” A planner cannot rule out any option. The diverse career Meena has experienced shaped her professional life tremendously. However, one thing remains the core to her professional life: “When I think about Urban Planning, I think ‘what a great way to be a change agent’.” At all the organizations she has worked at and in the various positions she has held, Meena has continually demonstrated her passion and ability to be that change agent.
Hi, I’m Alexander T. Sulanke, founder, owner, and sole employee of Hoosier Microgreens. I love this job. It provides unparalleled nutrition, a really fun challenge, and I get a room in my house where it is always summer. Now, this isn’t all I do; I also work full time as a private sector land use consultant, helping clients to navigate the bureaucratic maze of rezonings and variances. You still have to pay the bills when you start a small business.

My growing business and side project is microgreens. These are many of your favorite veggies in their most nutrient dense and flavorful stage of growth. My interest stemmed from watching various YouTube videos which taught me the importance of high nutrition and the ease of growing these tiny plants. Practically every aspect of my education in Urban Planning is utilized in this endeavor. From sustainability, to design, to public interaction, to economics, to the time I spent in studio, it all has impacted my interest and success with Hoosier Microgreens.

The first and foremost aspect of my education, the one that drove me in this direction, is the emphasis on sustainability. Learning about food security really scared me. Knowing that my food was travelling, on average, 3,000 miles from the farm to my plate—all the while losing nutritional value and potentially picking up some really nasty diseases along the way—seriously freaked me out. This is especially scary when you consider the concept of peak oil and the extreme price increase we can expect of food in the near future. I was really motivated to learn about local food options and to grow my own food, which I did, outdoors in the garden during the summer and indoors hydroponically during the winter. Once I learned about the benefits and quick growing time of microgreens, I knew I had to give those a try.

Additionally, my education in sustainability taught me about the importance of having food which comes from properly raised, non-GMO seeds. These seeds not only produce a much higher quality of food, but they also keep you from being enslaved to companies which own patents on the very seeds you are growing, giving them far too much power over the food system. I also learned about food deserts. If you were to visit my nearest grocery, you would realize that I am living in one. Unfortunately, microgreens aren’t fully sustainable. Microgreens use a lot of seeds to produce a little amount of produce, despite how nutritious it is. Additionally, I couldn’t possibly grow my microgreens without a lot of electricity for lighting, water systems, and ventilation/air flow. Since I, like most Hoosiers, am dependent on coal electric plants, it makes me feel guilty to think about the amount of natural resources I burn through and the pollution that is created as a byproduct. In the future I hope to be able to do a lot of growing outdoors or in a greenhouse, where much less electricity is needed.

I currently sell microgreens exclusively at the Indy Winter Farmers Market in the historic Indianapolis City Market. This requires face-to-face interaction with the public and, apart from growing the microgreens, this interaction is the most important part of my business. As with planning, much of the public needs education. People don’t know what microgreens are. To sell them, I must inform potential customers clearly and quickly. I am currently working to start an even more planning-esque endeavor of teaching members of the public, in hands-on classes, how to grow microgreens in their own homes. This is important because the most nutritious and best tasting produce you can get is that which you grow yourself and
harvest immediately before eating. Much of my public interaction skill comes straight out of my experience with charrettes in school and working with the public in my current job as well as my previous job as a public sector zoning planner with the City of Indianapolis.

Hoosier Microgreens might only be a little more than a hobby, but don’t underestimate my time commitment to this project. The plants only take 10 days from planting to harvest, but they require me to put in 20-30 hours per week, and that’s in addition to my day job. This means some really late nights planting and harvesting and some really early mornings at the market. Also I have to bend over and stare at what I’m doing for hours to ensure a high level of quality for my produce, leading to some sore backs and eyes. These are skills which I must thank studio for. If I didn’t spend as much time there working late for an early morning deadline, I couldn’t possibly handle the microgreen/farmer’s market business.

Of course, two of the most important aspects of urban planning are planning and design. If you think growing thousands of plants is easy, you’ve got another thing coming. Planning is key. My grow room, although only 120 square feet, is like a tiny city. I have to provide space for the maximum amount of citizens (plants) while still providing them with the highest quality of living (light, soil and water). Space is a serious issue, and it’s not just the space for growing, but also the space for mixing soil, planting trays, moving around, and having proper airflow to keep away mold.

Additionally, time is an issue. Spending 20-30 weeks on Hoosier Microgreens is only possible because I manage my time. If I didn’t, I would have to spend considerably more time to grow, harvest, and sell all of these plants. When it comes to electricity I have to deal with timers, cords, plugs, and lights. I feel like a utility company sometimes. This is especially important because water and electricity don’t mix, and, like Louie the Lightning Bug always says, “You’ve got to play it safe around electricity!”

Furthermore, this takes up an entire room in my house, a room which used to be my office. This meant redesigning the entire layout of my house, and, since I had my first child in March, also providing room for her. A lot of planning, and babyproofing, has gone into this house to keep it livable for me and my family.

Urban Economics taught me the importance of being local. Not just in-the-state local, but as close to the city center (which is where I sell my products) as possible. After all, that’s where the hip crowd with the money tends to hang out. Although I considered it to be the most boring part of my education, being able to work with spreadsheets is one of the most vital skills to my operation. This skill has been instrumental in determining the amount to grow, and more importantly what to charge, much easier to wrap my head around.

When I’m not working on Hoosier Microgreens, I work as a private sector zoning consultant. Seeing the need, I created both of these jobs. There were a lot of companies handling variances in Indy (and around the state) that could use a professional planner on staff, so I approached one of my favorites about creating a position for me. Now I get to work full time in zoning, utilizing my degree, and pursuing my other passions too.

In my opinion, a planning degree is the most versatile degree that exists. You can do whatever you want with a planning degree. That’s why I chose planning after three years of college and why you see planners in all sorts of different careers. You can find work anywhere: You just have to keep your eyes open and inspiration will come to you. I am very thankful for the options which I have had in life thanks to planning, and I can’t wait to see where it will take me next!
Today I bike to the CBD from my beachside suburb of Coogee, where I am the vice captain of one of Coogee Surf Lifesaving Club’s volunteer surf patrols. From the CBD, I usually take the train or a bus to Macquarie Park.

I still affiliate with Ball State and have a flash of pride when it gets a mention or I spot a Ball jar somewhere. This year I took a Monday off to watch the Ball State cardinal gridiron team in a last minute heart-breaker. It’s been a pleasure reflecting on the last few years! I’ve been working as a transport planner in Sydney, Australia, for nine years now, so I was delighted to be contacted for this newsletter. I fondly reflect on my time at CAP. Pondering this article and the interview questions, I traced my route to “Oz” and the role Ball State played. Ball State gave me a great start: My professors, the study tours and studios introduced me to New Urbanism, urban renewal projects, and walkable neighbourhoods. The CapAsia II trip instilled a love of travel and travel-writing and led to lasting friendships across continents.

My required third-year internship led me to transportation planning, at the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, the MPO and gateway of Fort Wayne and Allen County’s federal highway and transport dollars. It was a valuable experience: I prepared a review of the Fort Wayne bus network, installed traffic counters and learnt to ask for equal pay, after I realised that my fellow Ball State classmate (male) was paid more for the same role three months earlier!

After completing my BUPD at Ball State in 2002, I moved to Seattle and completed a Master of Urban Planning at the University of Washington. Having already worked as a transport intern, I interned for the county Road Services division and also the Market Development Group. This traffic and public transport planning experience was supplemented by lots of commuter cycling in Seattle’s hilly neighbourhoods and learning still water rowing and sculling on Lake Union.

A chance meeting at the 2005 APA conference in San Francisco with the managing director of Landcom, the state owned land developer for NSW led me to a role in his Sydney-based team. We prepared the first street design guidelines to encourage a complete streets approach to new and residential redevelopment projects. From there I moved to Parsons Brinckerhoff’s Sydney office, to a specialist team of multi modal transport planners based in the CBD, in easy cycling distance of my still water rowing club. My favourite projects were the people-focused public transport interchange scoping studies, station area plans, pedestrian access at events, and a 2008 report on cycling data.

In Oz, I’m officially called a town planner not an urban planner. I value the cross-discipline training that the planning degree at Ball State and the University of Washington required of students. The course work that I conducted through the Honors College and the supplemental minors in East Asian Studies and History were formative, critical thinking experiences. I found Australian professionals quite parochial, particularly the civil engineers who are drawn into transport planning and traffic engineering based on their road design or CAD experience rather than a true interest in personal mobility. Sadly, the town planners aren’t much more open minded, trained from an early stage in their career to say no to anything which may change business as usual.

Professionally, today I wear two hats, as an associate transport planner at GTA Consultants and as the general manager of the new Transport Management Association, Connect Macquarie Park + North Ryde. The pilot organisation is a business-led partnership between the state and local government.
Our initiative aims to reduce the rates of drive-alone and traffic congestion in the largest office park in Sydney. Businesses are struggling to attract and retain talented staff – which is often linked to the traffic and parking pressure in the Macquarie Park area. We rely on the strength of our multidisciplinary teams to develop travel behaviour change programs.

We engage human resources staff and facilities managers, providing staff benefits without relying on work cars and plentiful, free car parking. “Carrot” programs include Ride to Work days or post-tax salary sacrifice schemes for public transport tickets, whilst “stick” programs include charging for car parking. We also link to the state and local government, providing information into a variety of government programs and teams.

At our launch in November, we attracted 140 participants from blue chip businesses, the mayor of Ryde and the Hon. Victor Dominello, our member of Parliament.

http://youtu.be/YhYCF1daZL8

The Hon. Victor Dominello, MP and Rebecca Lehman pose with Connect Macquarie Park’s fleet bicycle.
One of my fondest childhood memories from growing up in urban South Africa was building a miniature “mud city” together with my elder brother and two friends. It was an intensive project over two days, built without plans or any preconceived ideas about what facilities were to be provided where. It was sheer intuition, negotiation and harmonization between the four of us. We were very proud of what we created and we admired it for the three days that it stood until the rains came and washed it away. I was about 8 years old.

From this early age I have had a great interest in the spatial arrangements around me. I was fortunate to attend a liberal arts school, the first truly non-racial school in Southern Africa—Waterford Kamhlaba, a World United College. Here I was able to study the sciences, mathematics, geography and the arts, providing me a well-rounded educational foundation, which I have appreciated throughout my life. However, it was my love for geography that would lead me towards an interest in urban and regional planning. I went on to major in geography in my undergraduate studies. I was not aware of “urban and regional planning” as a profession until in our final year we were paid a visit by officers from the Central Government Department of Urban and Rural Planning. During this discussion everything fell into place for me—it seemed all I had studied and what I enjoyed had come together to seal my fate!

Geography interested me largely because of the different perspectives it brought to the understanding of the physical environment and the impact human activity had on it. The breadth of the subject, covering geomorphology to urban economics totally fascinated me. I think it was the multi-disciplinary nature of urban and regional planning that hit a cord with me, making me feel I could be a part of finding solutions to the ever-increasing pressure on mankind’s use of finite resources. Arriving at Ball State University in the fall of 1979 to pursue a Master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning was therefore a major highlight of my student career. I was not disappointed in finding out that the classes were made up of students from all over the world—I think foreign students were about equal or more than American students. The faculty, amongst them Francis Parker and David Schoen, was superb and the classes small enough for one to receive special attention when warranted.

Returning to South Africa in 1981 armed with a master’s degree, I knew I was ready to make a difference. My career was to begin as a town planner in a mining-town in Botswana called Jwaneng. This is where the world’s richest diamond mine is to be found. In 1982 it was a new town, an experiment by the Debswana Mining Company and the government of Botswana to create an “open town.” The first diamond-mining town had been declared a “closed town” for security reasons. I was the first town planner and joined a pioneering team of engineers and architects committed to making Jwaneng a model town. My duties entailed largely enforcement of the town-planning scheme and zoning control, but also included new area subdivision design. This was challenging and most enjoyable and confirmed to me that I had made the right career choice. However at the end of my contract in 1984, I felt I needed something more challenging, so I returned to South Africa to join a consulting firm of Architects and Town Planners.

I was to spend eight years with the firm during which time we worked mainly on regional plans. The partner responsible had a special interest in regional planning which was fortunate for me because I already had exposure to statutory planning and layout designs. This was particularly fulfilling, as we tended to work in rural areas, looking at regional economic potential, as well as regional infrastructure plans. After 10 years of working as a planner, I had experienced urban planning in a new and fast developing local authority, and I had received exposure to development planning in a number of rural settings.

1990 was a watershed year in modern South African history—on the 2nd of February 1990, the president of the all-white government announced the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners and the unbanning of black political parties. This set in motion thoughts about what the
future could be like. For the first time in my life I knew that I would be able to do whatever I wished without the constraints of legalized discrimination. I thought that with the training and experience I had gained, I needed to make the shift from “planning” as a consultant, towards being an “implementer.”

I had worked in a region in rural KwaZulu Natal (KZN) where I came across teams from the national power utility Eskom, which were starting to electrify rural areas. This was under the aegis of the “Electricity For All” program that Eskom had proactively started during 1990. This had inspired me immensely—here were people actually doing something to improve lives as opposed to talking (planning) about changing lives! Another utility, the Umngeni Water Board had started doing similar work in rural KZN. I decided to look to both these entities for employment. My rationale was that much as I enjoyed working in an architectural and planning firm of about 27 people, the dawn of democracy had brought about an opportunity for bigger challenges. What better way to do this than with entities that were already changing people’s lives? So at the end of 1992 I resigned from the firm—by then I had become a partner.

When I joined Eskom at the beginning of 1993, the question people asked was “what is a planner doing in a power utility?” I was to manage the Electrification programme in KZN, which had a huge backlog in electrification of households. When the program began in 1990, the level of household electrification was at about 23 percent. To deal with this backlog within a reasonable timeframe, a massive national programme was launched, which at its peak electrified 1,000 homes a day. By 2012, the electrification rate had risen to 75 percent, and today stands just under 80 percent.

To be a part of this program was most fulfilling. I have often said that there are few things as satisfying as seeing an elderly person experience the “magic of electricity” for the first time at an advanced age—something that we take for granted. Career advancement opportunities in Eskom were readily available, and I took full advantage of them. I took some business and finance courses, took up a posting at the London office for 18 months, and moved around several divisions within the company. In my eighth year since joining the company, I became chief executive officer designate and CEO a year later. This was a position I held for two terms spanning a period of seven years.

At the end of 2007 my second contract came to an end. This was followed by a compulsory two-year cooling off period during which I could not be involved in the energy sector. When this expired in 2010, I founded an energy company focused on developing renewable generation projects and providing energy efficiency services. This was a new frontier in that there had been no independent power producers in South Africa, and there had been no commercial procurement of renewable energy into the power grid. It has been a challenging but very rewarding period—in the space of four years, together with partners, we have succeeded in developing a pipeline of six solar photovoltaic projects, two of which are under construction. One is a 75MW plant due to reach its commercial operation date in August 2014, and the other a 10MW plant that will reach its commercial operation date in May 2014.

Urban and Regional Planning is multi-disciplinary at its core. In understanding human activity, and in facilitating human development, one has to understand the dynamic interplay between economic, social, and physical factors, and how they could harmonise in space. In a complex modern society, such activities occur less in predetermined patterns and more in organic and opportunistic ways. For me it is this fundamental learning from my studies of urban and regional planning that has allowed me to have a career spanning several sectors and in several countries. I like to think that my career has been the epitome of the difference between strategic planning and master planning. I fundamentally refuse to believe in “blueprints.” I have never had a “five year plan,” but I have ensured that I find a new challenge every five or so years. At every turn I have tried to identify strategic opportunities, and I have sought to find ways to maximize my involvement in such opportunities.

Although I have not been professionally engaged in urban and regional planning for the past 21 years, I remain a registered member of the statutory council of planners. I have at various times mentored planning students precisely because planning sits well with me, and I will continue to promote the profession as long as I can.
Like many Urban Planning students, when I started at Ball State University my goal was to become an architect. Then, I took PLAN 100 with Dr. Kelly and I fell in love with Planning. I fell in love with cities, maps, improving lives, solving problems, designing communities, relating to people, and making the world a better place. I was lucky; I found a career I was passionate about early on in college. I was even luckier; I found the man that would become my husband, too.

Cecil Pendleton was four years ahead of me and starting his last semester when I met him on my first day in the dorms. We had a similar circle of friends but we only ever saw each other in passing before he graduated in December of 2004. Coincidentally he also obtained his degree in Urban Planning. A year later I wondered how he was doing and looked him up on Facebook. I knew he was a soldier, and we were in the middle of two wars. Somebody had mentioned his name in reference to him training for the military and I wanted to know if he was deploying. He wasn’t. But we hit it off and soon started dating. He did deploy later that year before my junior year started. We dated long distance from Muncie to Baghdad until he came home on leave and proposed to me. Most of my last semester consisted of me missing my fiancé in Iraq, studying Urban Planning, planning a wedding, and applying for jobs.

By the summer of 2008, Cecil and I were married; I was beginning my career in planning, and Cecil wasn’t set to deploy again for a few years. I thoroughly enjoyed the Planning field. My first job was in Indianapolis reviewing plans and issuing permits and moved on to be an associate planner with the city of Franklin. Franklin had a lot to offer me as a new planner. I saw every aspect of city planning close up. I got experience in many planning processes. There were two other Ball State planners to mentor me and help me grow as a planner. But I soon became frustrated with the political side of the planning process.

Around the same time, Cecil was preparing for a second deployment. This time he was headed to Afghanistan. His unit in Valparaiso needed a volunteer to run their Family Readiness Group (FRG), which helps connect military families to education and resources for military life, and I volunteered. I even decided to leave my job in Franklin to be able to dedicate more time to the group. This was one of the hardest decisions of my life. I thought it was irresponsible to leave a job with no job lined up. But I realized one of the main reasons I went into planning in the first place was because I wanted to help people. Political frustrations and stress were keeping me from seeing how I was helping anyone anymore.

I ended up volunteering for two years during the preparation, deployment, and return of the unit. The 713th Engineer Company experienced an intensely difficult deployment. Throughout everything I just wanted to be there for the families. I wasn’t always sure I was doing the right things or saying the right things, but I realized I was helping people. Wives and moms expressed to me on many occasions how much I had helped them during the deployment. I felt like I had found my calling, but I was a little confused that it was so far removed from the world of planning.

I thought after my volunteer hiatus I would go back to planning. But soon after Cecil returned home a job opportunity opened up in Franklin of all places. The position I ended up taking was a Family Readiness Support assistant working as a contractor for the Indiana National Guard Family Programs. Essentially, I manage all the FRGs, about fourteen of them, for a battalion whose units are spread across the state. I train the volunteers and commanders, track their progress, and guide and support them in all things Family Readiness.

When I got my degree in Urban Planning, I thought I would use all those skills helping
one community. Now I get to help a dozen communities of military families whose geography extends far past our state borders. My job uses more skills from CAP than I ever thought it would. When I’m reading Army regulations, I’m reminded of interpreting zoning ordinances. When I’m training a room full of soldiers with their weapons pointed at me (although safely on the floor), I’m reminded of plan commission meetings. I still couldn’t tell you which of those situations were more intimidating though. I use analytical and problem solving processes daily. When helping plan events, I’m better able to find and connect to resources within the community because I practiced that at Ball State. Collaborating within and among groups can be difficult, but we did that on a daily basis in studio.

Even my love for maps and cities is alive and well. There is a huge armory map of Indiana with every National Guard unit’s location shown hanging in my office. I even get to visit many of the armories on the maps and see how they fit in with their communities. It’s interesting how each community interacts so differently with their military connection. I love traveling to these armories that have such a rich history, meeting with the families and volunteers, and helping those families connect to the community around them.

Ball State College of Architecture and Planning faculty didn’t just prepare me for a career in planning; they prepared me for any career in whatever I’m passionate about. I’m glad I soaked up everything my professors had to offer me. I’m glad I became a planner. And I’m glad I got involved and found out I had a passion outside of planning and pursued that despite my fears. I believe I am better at my job because I was a planner first. And regardless of where my career takes me, I think in my heart I will always be a planner.

Looking for a Summer Intern?

If you are planning to attend this month’s APA Indiana spring conference, consider setting aside the last hour of the day to interview potential interns. The department and the APA will co-sponsor an internship fair from 4-5 p.m. Anyone attending the event can request to participate. Our students will bring their portfolios and will look forward to seeing what opportunities you have to offer.

Our interns are typically scored very highly by their supervisors. We ask for a short evaluation of the student when the internship is finished, and in 2013 our undergrads rated a 7.15 on an 8-point scale when employers were asked to rate the students’ contributions to the company’s goals. Our grad students earned a 7.5 when employers answered the same question.

Internships can be paid or unpaid, and students are required to work 200 hours. The paperwork on your end is minimal, and the benefits are great!

Email crhine@bsu.edu to secure your place at the table March 21 at the Ball State Alumni Center. (Registration for the APA conference on that day should be completed on the APA Indiana website.)
Upon graduating from the College of Architecture and Planning, I took a commission as an engineer officer in the U.S. Army. My first assignment after college was the Engineer Officer Basic Course (EOBC). The five months I spent in this school greatly enhanced the training I received as an urban planning and development student. At EOBC, I learned about horizontal construction, vertical construction, military bridging, and demolitions. The training I received at CAP gave me a strategic level mindset and implanted the importance of many departments and resources coordinating together to achieve a common goal. The training I received at EOBC gave me technical skills to execute tasks and projects that are developed in master planning.

Because I was in the Indiana Army National Guard, I started applying for jobs near the end of EOBC. I used my new engineer training to enhance my Urban Planning resume and landed a job with the city of Indianapolis Department of Code Enforcement. In this position, I reviewed construction documents for zoning code and building code compliance and reviewed exceptions to criteria with the city’s current planning department. This position thoroughly exercised my civilian and military training. One weekend a month I would conduct military training with my engineer company. This role exercised the strategic training that I received as a planner and how to best manage resources. I worked for Indianapolis for six months before I received a mobilization order to deploy to Iraq. I was stationed in the capital city of Baghdad. As a student of urban planning and development being in Baghdad was incredible. As an engineer officer and planner, I was able to better analyze the city and plan missions. I would study neighborhood trends which would impact how we operated those areas.

After I returned home, I had a follow on assignment for the Army at Camp Atterbury. I was assigned as the “mayor” for two Forward Operating Bases (FOB). I was in charge of a team of 15 soldiers. Our job was to schedule and manage training that took place at either FOB. We were the public works to maintain our little cities, and I was also the planner to manage and plan growth of each FOB. I relied heavily on getting organizations to work together to support many of my projects. Also, I had resources that I would share with other units operating at Camp Atterbury to build relationships and support community goals for Camp Atterbury. My final year working at Camp Atterbury required that I create a new job position for the directorate of public works. I became the terrain manager; this job was basically a land use planner for the base. I began to implement planning policies and procedures for using and managing space and development across the base.

My work at Camp Atterbury gained recognition at the state level, and I was asked to apply for a planning job for the Construction and Facilities Management Office. In my current job as the plans and programming branch chief, I develop recommendations for long-range construction for Indiana National Guard facilities. Planning for the Army at the surface is not like the planning I was taught at CAP. There are many regulations and laws that require reports and specific actions. However, I am dealing with communities all across the state because our readiness centers are community based. Also each Army unit is a small community with its own needs, so it is important that I integrate those needs with the larger community needs. Also, when there is a big construction project being planned for a specific city or town, I will get involved with the planning board meetings to better understand the current environment and needs of that town. Even though there are many regulations, the Army, (and military
Last fall I took PLAN 431 Urban Transportation Planning taught by Robert Wertman, MURP, 2013. As part of the class requirements, we were to report on a current planning issue in a city or along a transportation corridor. Along with that we had to prepare a GIS component to demonstrate our understanding as well as our ability to analyze data.

I researched crashes along State Road 332 over a three-year period from 2010-2013. I analyzed crashes at key intersections and made proposals to make the roads safer, more efficient and aesthetically pleasing. I chose this highway because I had a gut feeling that it was underperforming. I felt I could make proposals that could alter the highway just enough to make everyone that uses it enjoy their drive a little more.

As you know, State Road 332 is a key corridor between Interstate 69 and Muncie. In my research I found there were 773 crashes within a half mile of SR 332 between 2010 and 2013. This accounted for 10 percent of all Delaware County crashes. This is in part due to the estimated 177 vehicles per hour per lane on the road every day.

From my study of crash analysis I made several proposals for improving the corridor including roundabouts, additional right-hand turn lanes, vegetative upgrades, and a growth boundary. These proposals can be seen in the diagram below.

The proposals not only make State Road 332 safe, more efficient and aesthetically pleasing but also save on travel time and gas, and hence decrease pollution and improve the overall landscape. As Muncie considers sign and other regulations for this important corridor, my proposals will hopefully help make a statement about the new leaf Muncie is turning.
The Department of Urban Planning here at Ball State always has something new and exciting going on. Whether it is guest lectures, student presentations, symposiums, or just department get-togethers, many may wonder how all the activities get coordinated. It’s a lot of information for students, faculty and staff to keep straight, and the glue that holds it all together is administrative coordinator Christine Rhine.

Christine, a native of Fort Wayne, IN, majored in telecommunications here at Ball State and after graduation wanted to do production work and write documentaries. Initially, she wrote for Topics Newspaper, which was delivered throughout Hamilton County and the three northern townships of Marion County. Working first as a freelance writer, then reporter, and finally as an editor, Christine wrote about urban planning issues around Carmel and Noblesville in the 1990’s. She reported that she especially enjoyed writing about master plans.

After taking a break from her job to homeschool her children, Christine continued freelance writing. Due to her exposure to planning while writing for Topics, she came across the job announcement for the administrative assistant for the program in 2011. She applied and has been here ever since. Christine says it’s a perfect fit because of her “love of urban planning, how involved the department is with the community, and the projects that students are always working on.”

Christine thrives when working on multiple projects with tight deadlines, something she does daily here in the department. The most stressful thing about her job? “Ball State is a large organization that uses its own language, and I’m still learning that language and the other details the university uses in emails and other communications,” she responded. Christine learned from being a writer that she often has to ask multiple questions to find the answer she needs.

She feels the most important thing about urban planning is that it helps communities figure out where they want to be and how to get there. “Communities need to take charge of their destiny, and planning well allows them to do that,” she said. Improving quality of life, economic development and transportation systems are all important functions of planning that Christine enjoys seeing in action in her job. When she’s not at work keeping students, faculty and staff up to date on what’s going on in the department, Christine enjoys “reading, doing family things, baking and taking care of three dogs.” When asked what she likes most about her job, Christine responded, “I like the people, and connecting them to the information they need whether they know it or not!” When she was hired, Eric Kelly told her, “We can take care of ourselves, but we need you to take care of our students.” Christine has done just that and continues to do so with a smile every day.