Greetings from the Chair

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Alumni,

Happy New Year to one and all! I hope you had a relaxing holiday season and are well rested for the new year. First, we have some exciting news to share with you. Last fall, the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) re-accredited both the Bachelor of Urban Planning and Development (BUPD) and the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) programs for the next five years. The PAB site visit team (SVT) evaluated the programs based on over one hundred criteria; both programs scored high marks. The SVT was impressed with the curricula of the programs and with the planning skills that students demonstrated in their work. The SVT noted that "the BUPD program is a high-quality, well-developed program that meets its stated mission." It also observed that "The MURP students are of high quality and enthusiastic," and that "there is much pride in the program and its potential." My special thanks to faculty in the department whose tireless work with the students enabled us to achieve this feat.

We have a number of exciting activities taking place in the department this semester! We look forward to your participation in these events, which are listed in the pages of this newsletter. We have established an Alumni Recognition and Guest Lecture Day that will be celebrated each semester as a way to recognize the remarkable work our alumni are doing both within and outside of the country.

Our first such honoree will be Tadd Miller. Tadd, a 1998 graduate of the department, has since been involved in numerous development projects that are making a difference in the lives of people in Indiana and beyond. We will be recognizing his achievements and contributions to the planning profession on the 22nd of March. You can read more about the work of Tadd in the pages of the newsletter.

We are also working to strengthen the department’s relationship with the professional planning organization for the state. We are proud to be hosting the APA-Indiana spring conference this year, which will take place on the 26th of March at the Alumni Center. We look forward to welcoming you to the department and to the conference.

The department has established a fund, through the University Foundation, which now allows alumni and friends to designate that their contributions be made directly to the Urban Planning Department for scholarships. These scholarships help defray the cost of education for our students and recognize educational excellence. The account can be referenced as 681 Urban Planning Scholarship Fund. I thank you in advance for your support and contributions.

Speaking of scholarships, I am also happy to report the creation of the Dave Schoen and Mandira-Kar Schoen Scholarship that was created by Dave Schoen and his wife to provide financial support for students in the department. Dave has served the department for over thirty years; this is the culmination of his many good works for the department through the years. Thanks to Dave and Mandira for their generosity.

The theme of this newsletter is “Celebrating our students;” we have provided a snapshot of the many accomplishments of the collegiate members of our department. The commitment by our department to quality work and community outreach, especially through our studios, shines forth in students’ work. These principles will continue to guide the department’s future endeavors.

As we enter the new decade, the department will pursue a number of significant, strategic goals to enhance our national reputation and sustain our legacy of providing high-quality urban planning education. Among these goals are to: i) strive to increase student enrollment in both the undergraduate and graduate programs; ii) diversify the student and faculty body; iii) increase the number of faculty that are tenured or on tenure track; iv) enhance our national reputation; and v) strengthen the department’s relationship with our alumni and the planning profession in the state. Achieving these goals by mid-decade will require all hands on deck; I ask for your support, suggestions, and wisdom as we move forward with these tasks.

Finally, as we prepare to welcome two new tenure track faculty to the department in the fall semester we are also seeing the departure of one of our faculty. Professor Milliken is leaving us to take a new job with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. We thank Professor Milliken for her service to the department and wish her well.

To faculty, students, staff, alumni and friends may this decade bring you joy and peace, and most of all sharpen our minds to stay ever more inquisitive.

Michael Burayidi.

“The BUPD program is a high-quality, well-developed program that meets its stated mission, and the MURP students are of high quality and enthusiastic.”

PAB Site Visit Team (SVT)
In Fall 2009, students in the PLAN 203 Regional Planning Studio completed a community planning study for Heritage Lake, a private lake side community in Putnam County, Indiana. The community is challenged by its changing identity from a weekend getaway to a full-time exurban community. Among these challenges is paying for needed services with a small annual property owner's assessment, and one of the lowest tax rates in the state!

This experience exposed 2nd year students to the planning process and some typical planning issues they are likely to face in the field upon graduation. The students exhibited excellent critical thinking skills, which culminated in a professional-quality planning report and presentation to the community on December 12th.

“the students exhibited excellent critical thinking skills”

Jennifer Milliken
Third Year Undergraduate Studio
Professor Scott Truex

The third year planning studio was engaged in two community studies in the fall semester. In the first five weeks, students studied, explored concepts, and developed recommendations for connecting five Cultural Districts using a Bicycle Trail network. The Muncie Urban Revival Association (MURA), a Ball State student organization, initiated the project in collaboration with the City of Muncie and cultural district/bike advocates from the area. The studio researched the role of cultural districts as a part of revitalization, and used the cultural districts developed for Indianapolis as case studies. Two landscape architecture studios joined the class for a two-day charrette held at the Living Lightly Fair at Minnetrista. This community workshop generated ideas and integrated public comments for the final plan. Each student team created a report and display to highlight the main features of each district; the display boards were part of a public exhibit at the Muncie Downtown Art’s Walk in September.

The class used Bluffton, IN as the study community for the remaining ten weeks of the semester. They first developed a community profile that included census research, surveying and several days of field work in the City of Bluffton neighborhoods. The students also examined housing and site conditions of the community focusing on issues critical to “aging in place.” The class was able to utilize the experiences of Carol Ellinger, Director of Planning and Development for Aging and In-Home Services of Northeast Indiana, Inc., to help them with this project. At the end of the study, students evaluated their group research activities, and each produced a community profile for the City of Bluffton. This was process was critical for the third year students in order to have individual products demonstrating their writing, analytical and graphic skills as they prepare for portfolio reviews in the spring. The studio ended with a public presentation in Bluffton with each of the three teams presenting a Power Point, display boards and summary of their final study report.

Fourth Year Studio
Professor Paul Foulger

The fourth year students were assigned a project to begin work surveying National Guard Armories in the State of Indiana, a project that is estimated to take 2-3 years to complete. The students collaborated with the Building Better Communities Fellowship Program and Robert Atnip, the State Master Planner for the Army National Guard, for their work on this project. The project consisted of inventorying the existing armory facilities and sites, and evaluating them based on design codes and anti-terrorism standards produced and mandated by the National Guard. After site visits, speaking with armory managers, conducting SWOT analysis, and collaborating in small groups, the students delivered recommendations to Robert Atnip. These recommendations included either renovation or relocation of sites in order to comply with regulations. Professor Foulger and the students of his studio were recognized at the Building Better Communities banquet at the end of the semester.
Digital Communication Media Class
Professor Lohren Deeg

PLAN 261 is a communication and media course taught in the fall semester of the second year. Students begin by analyzing and forming persuasive arguments surrounding recent articles in planning and development, and then test these arguments through PowerPoint presentations and essays. They then explore software from the Adobe Creative Suite, assembling a digital entourage library for use in analysis, land use, and street level perspectives for future visioning of planning goals and development proposals. Graphic design and layouts are introduced for the development of templates for desktop publishing and articles. Google SketchUp is introduced as a tool in geospatial mapping, development massing and visioning; other explorations include diagramming, details, and illustrative site plans in marker and color pencil. Students complete the course by creating a multiple page portfolio layout in the Adobe Creative Suite for use in future required portfolio submissions in an academic context, and for seeking future employment.

Example of work shown is that by Annie Meurer, second year BUPD candidate. The top-left image is of a land use map of her hometown (Charlestown, IN) that she created in Photoshop using the APA land use. Top right is a site analysis map drawn with a pen, marker, and colored pencil media showing different types of arrows and areas and spaces. Bottom left is a scaled drawing of a sign, and bottom right is a three dimensional site plan graphics from a military base with added greenery, color, and shadow of the plan.
Professor Adam’s class joined the national AIA SDAT team and Professor Bruce Race’s Master’s class in Urban Design studio in a three day, 24/7 charrette. Their focus was on five neighborhoods surrounding the proposed light rail transit node at 22nd and the Monon Trail on the east side of Indianapolis. The history of the roughly 1000-block area dates back to Indy’s earliest settlements and was the site of major automobile and steel manufacturing. Students prepared on-site surveys of existing conditions in demographics, housing conditions, infrastructure, vacant lands, brownfields and circulation. Their insightful observations proved accurate when they met with community members in October, where they surveyed the local residents to identify their highest priority concerns. With three days of intense problem definition, alternative solution development and presentations to the community, they returned to their university studio to prepare Goals, Objectives, Recommended Strategies and Timelines for implementation.
Studio & Outreach Activities

First Year Graduate Studio
Professor Bruce Frankel

The 1st Year graduate studio analyzed four sites, split between greenfield and infill developments. Students assumed responsibility for site selection, analysis, and recommendations of a development program. The studio incorporated suitability, feasibility and impact analysis, and covered all three areas of concentration in the MURP. Each professional report and presentation was juried by the external constituents of each project.

1) Market Square, Indianapolis: This presentation/report went so well that a January meeting at the Indianapolis office of the DMD is planned as a repeat and for discussion of the Nicole McDermid/Chris Urban plan with a view towards its implementation. This 16-acre site, currently used for parking, and with parcels owned by the City and private entities, found its suitability as a mixed-use redevelopment. The $380 million architectural program results in a surplus financing if a HoTIF is deployed properly.

2) Ball State Certified Technology Park: Utilizing dormant land owned by the University, students Gayani San Habarakada Liyanage and YoYo Chang, formulated a live/work/play development pursuing the recent University initiative in commercializing its academic technologies. As a field investigation, the success of Purdue’s four CTP’s along the I-65 corridor served as encouragement. The program is conceived of in a campus setting with 2.1 million s.f. of office/light assembly and 806 apartment units, accompanied by recreational and day care supportive uses. The strength of the feasibility analysis withstood the juried critique that such an idea may be unsuited to BSU, as we are not a “research university.” The CTP land use has significant impact on both primary and secondary employment through the multiplier effect, and re-introduces the University as a property tax payer at a fiscally-challenged time.

3) Nebo Town Center: Students Travis Kazmierzak, Nikkiita McCoy and Bill Cronin set out to provide a new town center and alternative to McGalliard’s strip retail with the a large parcel at the southwest corner of McGalliard and Nebo. The plan takes advantage of the existing and prospective demand for such an “urban” use in this suburban location and of the 24/7 big box retail uses adjoining the site to the north. Transit, bicycle paths and shared parking [26% savings in land use] mitigate dependence on the car.

4) South Walnut & Greenline Redevelopment: The prospect of the Greenline initiative and its planned station stop, and the presence of a defunct southern edge of the downtown of Muncie caused students Emily Gross and Mark Leach to propose a seven-block infill development.
Placemaking in Indy: MUD program launched
Professor Bruce Race

After years of planning, Ball State’s Masters of Urban Design (MUD) kicked-off this past Fall semester. The program is located in a downtown storefront studio in Ball State’s Indianapolis Center. The first class includes 10 very talented students. Nine of the students are former CAP undergraduates, six of which came from the Urban Planning program. Each MUD student is required to have an outside professional advisor.

The students have been working with the community to explore urban design concepts for East Washington Street. The 2.5 mile-long corridor presents a variety of planning, economic development, historic preservation and design challenges. Each student has developed an overall urban design plan they presented at a Community Development Corporation neighborhood meeting and then to a CAP faculty jury. During Spring Semester, MUD students are refining open space and transportation concepts and preparing a sub-area plan for a historic factory district. Starting in June, they will finish preparing their creative projects on their way to graduation in August.

The MUD program has an open enrollment for those interested in studying in Indianapolis next Fall. See the CAP website for details.
Sustainable Neighborhoods on the Monon: SDAT Charrette
Professor Bruce Race

On October 28-30, 2009 over 80 students and over 80 professionals and Ball State CAP faculty participated in a charrette exploring sustainable futures for the neighborhoods surrounding 22nd Street and the Monon trail in Indianapolis. Running parallel with a national AIA Sustainable Assessment Team (SDAT), the students demonstrated planning, landscape and architectural concepts and methods for revitalizing the area utilizing sustainable design principles.

Students worked as members of three teams. One team focused on green neighborhoods with an emphasis on green infrastructure, renovation and infill. A second team explored ways to use mixed-use infill development as a catalyst for reinvestment and reintroduce social and economic focus for the neighborhoods. A third team emphasized reinvesting in brownfield sites around future light rail transit stations to create jobs and transit-oriented lifestyles.

Students and faculty from all three CAP departments provided energy and ideas that fueled the charrette process. The event included community workshops and open houses where students presented their concepts and talked about them with area residents and SDAT team members. At the conclusion of the charrette, students presented and discussed their ideas with Indianapolis Mayor Ballard and City Council representatives. Since the charrette, the Mayor has underscored his support for the use of transit and sustainable investments as an integral part of economic development strategies.

Bruce Race, FAIA, AICP of the Urban Planning Department and planning alumnus Brad Beau- bien, AICP of CAP Indy serve as co-chairs for the area community steering committee. They are helping coordinate a collaborative effort between neighborhoods, professional volunteers, the City of Indianapolis and local Community Development Corporations (CDCs).

CAP students discussing their sustainability ideas with Mayor Ballard
Accolades for the Indy Center

The Indianapolis Regional Center Design Guidelines, a joint project of the City of Indianapolis, the College of Architecture and Planning Indianapolis Center, and the Historic Landmark Foundation of Indiana’s Urban Design Oversight Committee, has won the 2010 National Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice from the American Planning Association. The award, considered to be the most prestigious in the planning profession, will be presented at the 2010 National Planning Conference in New Orleans on April 12, 2010.

The guidelines and implementation tool called for by the previously adopted Regional Center Plan 2020 and, for the first time since the Regional Center zoning district was established decades ago, provide a community standard for urban design in the downtown area. Designed to promote creativity, diversity, and local heritage, the guidelines are intended to protect stakeholder investments by maintaining downtown Indianapolis as an efficient, sustainable, and vital place to live, work, and spend free time.

The written guidelines provide a valuable resource on the goals of the city for developers, architects, other designers, and staff. The guidelines also provide, for the first time, an opportunity for public comment on significant investments in the Regional Center. Numerous current and former CAP faculty and staff, including Scott Truex, Brad Beaubien (BUPD 00 MURP 01), Adam Thies (BUPD 00), and Harry Eggink, as well as graduate students Matt O’Rourke (MURP 04), Nathan Schmidt (MURP 04), Sarah Chmielak (MURP 04), Carmen Lethig (MURP 07), Jeff Leuenberger (BUPD 05 MURP 08), Erin Brown (MURP 08), and Emily Rosendall (MURP 07), worked on this project. The project was also a recipient of a 2009 Hoosier Planning Award from the Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Complete information about the National Planning Awards can be found at www.planning.org/awards/2010/

Information on the CAP Indianapolis Center can be found at www.bsu.edu/capic
Tadd M. Miller will be the first to receive the department’s Alumni Recognition Award this spring. Tadd is the founder of Milhaus Ventures, LLC, doing business as Milhaus Development and Milhaus Capital. Prior to founding Milhaus Capital, he was the founder of City Centre Associates, later re-branded as Kosene Residential, Inc., an Indianapolis based real estate development company focused on Urban Infill and Mixed Use development. City Centre was responsible for the redevelopment of much of the east side of downtown Indianapolis.

Tadd graduated in 1998 from the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Ball State University, completed his MBA at Indiana Wesleyan University in 2002, then obtained his Juris Doctorate from Indiana University in 2006. In addition to growing and managing the day to day activities of these companies, Tadd is actively involved in the Urban Land Institute, the International Council of Shopping Centers and is a co-founder of Indianapolis based Wellfount Pharmaceuticals, one of Indiana’s 40 fastest growing companies. In his free time, Tadd is an instrument rated pilot and enjoys traveling with his wife Julie and son Ethan.
A Greener Nappanee Documentary

In the summer of 2009, Professor Truex’s proposal for a class on “Coffee, Community and Climate Change” was funded by the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry. The subject of inquiry in the course was, Can Indiana communities lead the green revolution? Professor Truex’s proposal was one of five such projects funded by the Virginia B. Ball Center for the 2009-10 academic year. Ball State’s Institute for Digital Entertainment and Education (IDEE) spent the summer with Professor Truex and Ball State students who were part of the immersive learning project. The project caught the attention of Rodger Smith, Director of IDEE based on other digital projects Professor Truex is working on with IDEE. For five weeks in the summer an IDEE camera crew followed the VBC team around Nappanee as the team interacted with the community. The 30-minute documentary features 4th year Urban Planning students – Robert Neizgodski, Alex Schull, Paula Skrzypczak, Meagan Tuttle and Meiqi Zong. Other CAP students were Landscape Architecture student Ginger Botton, and Architecture students Dusty Lake and Mickey McGlasson. Lauren Harper, an Organization Communications major, was also part of the team; Katy Jarboe, Urban Planning graduate student, served as project assistant. The documentary is viewable at IDEE’s website: http://www.bsuidee.com/index.html

Mr. Truex goes to D.C.


Scott Truex will be a presenter and participant in an all-day pre-conference Workshop session titled The New Conservation Strategy and the New Green Economy co-chaired by Professor Motloch. The group will also participate in a Breakout session entitled Green Economy: Shifts in Science and Education that will take place the following afternoon. The sessions are organized by John Motloch and David Armstead. Speakers in the session from outside Ball State University are David Armstead and Joanne Dowdell. Scott will be presenting his views on how cities are and will be impacted by the “New Green Economy” and the critical issues they will be facing, which require a new approach to community and economic development. The NCSE’s signature national conference will engage leading thinkers and doers from a diversity of disciplines, sectors, and perspectives in a structured conversation about the meaning of the green economy and how investment in green education, research and jobs can help solve both the economic and environmental crises.

Welcoming over 1000 attendees, The New Green Economy will bring together leaders in sustainable business, environmental policymakers, civil society, university faculty, students from across the nation, and educated citizens.
My Experience in India
Nihal Perera

During the sabbatical, I am working on two books—an edited volume and a monograph—and am trying to better understand development, planning, and planning education in Asia (and, thereby, the emerging world). I am now working on a book at the National University of Singapore. It is wonderful to have a research fellowship at such a prestigious institution where learning goes on at all levels.

My first stop was India where I taught at CEPT University in Ahmedabad. It is by far the leading school of planning and architecture located in the most developed state in India, Gujarat. It became amply evident that the idea that India and China will set the tone for future developments in the world is already too old. The changes are already in process and no one might be able to affect them very much. It was very kind of my colleagues and friends to invite me, welcome, and open many doors for me to experience contemporary transformations, planning, and planning education in India.

I took part in many meetings including those organized by various governments on their developmental programs, discussions organized by the school on how to provide necessary skills, meetings between planners and “local people,” visited vast areas that are being developed and earmarked for development, and taught a studio which made a development plan for a new industrial area in northern Karnataka and a planning theory module in this new context. It was great to see a lot of money at the disposal of Indian capitalists, Indians living abroad (NRIs), and state governments. They are compelled to invest their wealth and there are unbelievable opportunities for planners, architects, planning and design educators, and schools.

At the same time, new (locally-grounded) ways of thinking are slow to emerge. Research is further weakened by the urgency of the growth process which does not provide planners and faculty much time to think. All these make the planners, designers, and schools continue to adopt old development models shaped under the US and Western leadership after WWII some of which we now consider “unsustainable.” These paradigms are transforming this great development potential into simple economic growth. Moreover, this makes some social divisions worse: India will economically progress but the poor will become poorer and the conflicts, such as the one waged by the Maoists in the northeast, will become worse before the situation gets better.

Living in India gave me one of the best experiences of any society. It was quite painful but amazing and humbling. India is such a different place, it requires a great deal of change in you to adapt to the society. Regular everyday activities that we take for granted such as renting an apartment, getting an internet connection, organizing/not wanting personal services and deliveries of various things, opening bank accounts, paying bills, and even getting a check cashed provided me with great insights into this unfathomably complex society. I have been in India many times over the last decade, but I am so happy that I was able to deeply immerse myself in the society. Now I better understand what Mahatma Gandhi, Ranajit Guha, and Jyoti Hosagrahar (in architecture) have written about India and Indian people.

Yet India is possibly the most diverse and most democratic society in the world and also the most discriminatory and stratified society that I have ever experienced. The middle classes are expanding and they continue to build their new lives upon this discrimination, largely along renewed (older) caste lines, new class lines, and many other forms of stratification which the most middle-class people love to maintain. At the same time, these stratifications are not easy to maintain. The brightest thing is the enormous entrepreneurialism of the lowest classes and castes—the best that I have ever seen—and I was able to observe how they construct their own social power and sense of place. While they provide services to middle classes, they are also informally organized in every apartment complex to assert their demands in informal ways such as not showing up for work when they are busy with family or other obligations.

In regard to my teaching interests, I was able to better understand both the declining cities in the USA, the expanding cities in the East, and their connections. The value of our (BSU) development model that we develop in international and multicultural planning class and CapAsia is clearer than ever.

India has some fantastic people who think about these issues and others. During my stay, I learned so much from such people ranging from my landlord to friends and colleagues at CEPT and other schools, especially the Dean Utpal Sharma and our last year’s Fulbright Scholar Shrawan Acharya. There is a lot of learning by doing going on in various academies. I learned about the people who are being displaced by the riverfront development and a tribal group that is struggling to establish their identity and vitality through reviving their older streetplays tradition.

I would not exchange the experience for anything. This is precisely the learning opportunity that I try to give to our students. I am developing very interesting projects for CapAsia VI.
My Recent Trip to India
Professor Dave Schoen

My wife and I have just returned from a trip to India – including a weeklong tour of Rajasthan, an Indian State in the northwest part of the country. Rajasthan is huge, mostly arid and containing some dessert. Life is hard but the folks who live here are mostly upbeat (slower life styles) and keep busy with tourism, their regular jobs – and cottage industries. A “cottage industry” is an activity engaged in by individuals, or families, working from their homes on a typically part time basis. Cottage industries were prevalent prior to the industrial revolution and almost disappeared afterward. Now they are starting to reappear. I would like to tell you about a family we met who engage in carpet making on a part time basis and the impact that his activity has made in the village they live in.

We met the family via our guide who was showing us examples of village life and cottage industries. As we got out of the car, Roopraj came out to greet us, speaking English - American English. It has been my experience that it is most rare to meet an Indian speaking with an American accent so I asked him how this came about. He replied that he had no formal education but had learned English by listening to Voice of America on the radio and speaking to tourists that came to his home to shop for carpets. Even more amazing, was the fact that his home was not connected to the electric grid (it is not available in the village where his family lives). Instead, he had purchased some solar panels to power his radio and to recharge a cell phone. He had qualified for a partial government grant to purchase the panels some time ago.

The loom Roopraj uses is handmade and rather primitive (see image). He learned his carpet making skills from his grandmother and has taught his brothers, and children, to make carpets. The carpets are not the knotted wool carpets that we are familiar with here in the US but instead are simply woven using camel hair and wool and silk. The Indian name for them is “dhurry”. They are colorful, have geometric patterns and come in many sizes (you can arrange for a custom size). They are beautiful (see images)!

Roopraj formed a cooperative of 44 families a long time ago.
Prior to the coop being formed, individual families would weave the dhurries and then sell them to a middleman, always to their disadvantage. Roopraj organized the families and now the coop has a “share and share alike” philosophy. When a carpet is sold, the revenue is shared between all 44 families. As a side note Roopraj and the coop have been featured on CNN and BBC.

There is a significant impact on the families and the local area from this cottage industry. Because the revenue from sales is shared between families, all are much more comfortable financially. They contribute to the local economy and they have greatly increased the tourist “draw” to the area. Rajasthan, as an Indian State, has ramped up its “tourism” profile a long time ago. Thanks to individuals such as Roopraj, the area has been extremely successful in attracting tourist money. From your planning economics, or methods class, you should remember that the tourist industry is a “basic” industry and thus provides new revenue for the local economy with the power of the multiplier rate.

Cottage industries are a good thing. Even we in the US are now experiencing this phenomenon. Many are working from home doing baby sitting or using computers to transcribe medical records, do internet sales or market their skills to help others in many ways. I suspect that we’ll see much more of this type of economic activity in the future.

Roopraj, and the coop, have a website – www.rooprajdhurry.com. You can see examples of the standard carpets they weave and purchase them using a credit card. You can also arrange for custom sizes and colors.

As a last note, I want to share this small tidbit. As we were leaving the home of Roopraj, another guide had brought another tourist to view and possibly buy some carpets. As we were getting into our car, Roopraj switched to French and began speaking to the new guest. Yikes! What could this man have done with a formal education?
Teaching a Distance Learning Course
Professor Francis Parker

Even to an IT illiterate like me, it’s obvious that the highest priority for the Urban Planning department is to develop a distance learning strategy for the graduate program. Probably the most common question I get from prospective graduate students is “do you offer any on-line courses.” Currently we do not.

Distance learning courses can take many types. One is the “prepackaged” course, where all material is available online, using Blackboard or whatever media. Students review material at their own pace, take online exams when they feel ready, and submit assignments which can be reviewed and graded by a faculty member. This probably requires the highest up-front investment in return for a low-maintenance and continually available course opportunity.

Other formats involve seminar discussions at a predetermined time, with students and faculty linked in real time audio mode. This format is currently used by the Ball State nursing program. As one participant noted, “you can be sitting at home in your PJ’s, but you better be ready if called on!”

My experience to date is limited but instructive. Last fall I taught PLAN 577-Urban Design 640 – “History of Urban Form.” The class was a mixture of graduate planning students, one historic preservation student, and ten Urban Design students. It was a normal seminar format, but students were in two places: Muncie and Indianapolis. Normally the planning students were with me in the department conference room, while the Urban Design students were in a classroom at the CAP Indy Center. Some of the students came and went between the two locations.

I was initially apprehensive! Fortunately we were provided with a very helpful IT technician, who attended every class on the Muncie campus, and got the remotes set up in Indy before class time. We had voice and picture connection between the two classrooms, and we were able to look at power point visuals, mine or students, from both locations.

There were some logistical problems. With a divided screen, the large screen would show whatever we were sharing, with only a small screen left over to “see” students at the other location. I found this awkward, being used to the immediacy of the classroom seminar, where facial expressions and body language are a part of the communication process.

I’ve resolved that if I do this again, I would try to give some of the classes from the opposite end, to get to know those people better than as disembodied voices. The other problem was simply transferring material. Students were responsible for sending me their projects, reports, etc., which I would then put up on the screen. However, in a culture of “last minute,” there were repeated times when incoming projects swamped and overloaded my email. I’m told there is a simple locker fix for this, but it will have to be worked out next time.

Students from both locations submitted presentations to me electronically, and we then showed them from my computer. They submitted text reports and exams to me via email or paper copy. Probably a second time I would ask that all papers and exams be submitted electronically, just for ease of managing.

This course was a small step in distance learning, but a satisfactory one for an IT illiterate like myself. In an era when we are being asked as a department to do more with less I believe it’s important to explore alternatives to conventional classroom education. Distance learning is clearly one such option. I believe this may be the most important thing we do as a department.
Lauren Petersen, a third year BUPD student, is working this Spring semester as a legislative intern with the 116th Indiana General Assembly. Besides being an excellent student, Lauren has been a BSU Resident Assistant, a counselor at Hoosier Girl’s State, and a Make-a-Wish “Wish Granter.” She was Miss Ball State for 2009, BSU Homecoming Queen for 2009, and Miss Bluffton for 2010. Lauren and her identical twin sister Clare were co-vedictorians of their high-school class in Bluffton, IN. Below she shares her experience as an intern at the Indiana Legislature:

The first few weeks of my legislative internship with the 116th General Assembly for the Indiana House of Representatives have been rewarding and enlightening. Each day offers opportunities to learn firsthand about the legislative process as I gain valuable experience in a high-profile, professional work environment. I work directly with three state representatives, one of which is Representative Dennis Tyler of House District 34, which includes Muncie, Indiana. From day one, I felt like a valued member of the Indiana General Assembly’s legislative session staff.

As a legislative/constituent intern I assist my representatives in meeting legislative and constituent research responsibilities. Upon arriving at work I organize bills that will be heard in my representative’s committees and then I am responsible for “staffing” the committees, which means sitting in on their hearings and taking notes. The afternoon starts by organizing bills and amendments that will be heard that day in the house chamber. Before session starts I make sure my representatives have everything they need and ask them if there is anything specific they would like me to work on during the afternoon. Throughout the day I organize the legislators’ daily activities, such as writing bill summaries and responding to surveys, constituent letters, and phone calls.

One specific learning opportunity occurred when I staffed the Small Businesses and Economic Development Committee, which is chaired by one of the representatives I work for. That day, Representative Tyler introduced a bill he authored that dealt with implementing a third CRED district in Muncie. It was great to see how an Urban Planning philosophy was incorporated in the bill and that I could relate with Representative Tyler’s point of view, as well as those shared by the lobbyists who testified. At the end of the committee, I introduced myself to some of those lobbyists who worked for organizations like “Indiana Downtown Association” and “Urban Initiatives” and received their business cards. My internship has proven to be a great learning and networking opportunity. I am privileged to share this internship with twenty of Indiana’s most intelligent and aspiring young professionals. Most of my fellow interns are in the process of applying for law school and have been involved with campaigns and the legislative process. Throughout this experience I hope to gain the knowledge and insight that will help to determine my future professional aspirations, whether it be becoming an Urban Planner, pursuing a Juris Doctorate Degree, advocating environmental causes, becoming a political leader, or accomplishing all of these goals. I am grateful for those professional and social contacts I have and will continue to foster throughout my internship, which will generate both career and academic opportunities for my future.
Adieu & Scholarships

Adieu to Jennifer Milliken, AICP

Prof. Milliken will not be continuing as an Adjunct Instructor in the spring semester. She has accepted a full-time position with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority as a Community Development Representative.

Her role in the new position is to facilitate the flow of federal and state grants to Indiana communities for affordable housing and community development. The recipients include private developers and non-profits as well as local governments. Her office is in downtown Indianapolis, but her job requires her to travel to other communities in the state as well. Prof. Milliken is also keeping “open” her consulting business to do a few side jobs, so that she can have the option to expand it back to full time someday when the economy improves.

While Professor Milliken enjoyed teaching, she couldn’t pass up the opportunity of a full-time, permanent job with benefits. Professor Milliken will continue to serve the college as a loyal Alumna and to stay active in APA-Indiana.

Scholarships

The Dave Schoen and Mandira–Kar Schoen Scholarship

The goal of this award is to recognize excellence in academic achievement for students whose major is in urban planning. All urban planning majors are eligible for consideration for the scholarship. Applicants should submit a portfolio of their work and write a 1,000 word essay explaining their interest in Urban Planning. Selection of the recipient will be made by the collective Department faculty based on academic excellence and financial need. Selected students will be presented with the award at the CAP annual Student Awards ceremony in April. All applications should be submitted to the Chair, Department of Urban Planning no later than the 31st of March.

Department of Urban Planning Scholarship Fund

The department has established a scholarship fund with the University Foundation to solicit funds to provide scholarships for urban planning students. Alumni and friends can specify donations they make to BSU to this account. The number and name of the account is 681 Urban Planning Scholarship Fund.
Spring Events

- February 15th - Portfolio reviews begin
- March 22nd - Alumni recognition and guest lecture
- March 26th - APA Indiana spring conference
- April 4th to 10th - APA National Conference in New Orleans

Planning Job Opportunities

This is the time when students will start looking for urban planning jobs as they prepare for graduation at the end of the semester. The following web sites are provided to help ease the job search blues:

http://www.geturbanplanningjobs.com
http://www.urbanplanningnow.com/
http://www.urbanplanningjobs.net/
http://www.jobsinplanning.com/

Volunteers Make a Difference

The following students volunteered their time to call our alumni to thank them for their donations to the university: Dana LaBelle, Rex Ramage, Cory Banacka, and Ryan Clark. My special thanks to them for giving of their time for this very important activity on behalf of the department.

Summer Classes

The department will be offering a number of summer classes this year. The following are some of the classes we are considering offering. Please be on the look out for updates throughout this semester.

Field Study Tour

Eric Damian Kelly, along with Amy Gregg of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, will lead a field study tour to the Colorado’s Wet Mountain Valley and San Isabel National Forest in May. The 10-day trip will focus on management of public lands and water in the west. It will also look at the history of the area and visit the first campgrounds built in a national forest, designed by the Forest Service’s first landscape architect, Arthur Carhart, in 1921.

PLAN 498/598, PLAN 100, and CAP 102

Professor Truex is planning to offer one or more of the following courses, depending on interest from students: PLAN 498/598 - Community Development (includes a trip to Sandtown Neighborhood in Baltimore, Maryland), and PLAN 100, and CAP 102.