Praxis: Theory in Practice
Department of Urban Planning
Ball State University
Spring 2012 Newsletter
praxis: theory in practice

1. the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted, practiced, embodied, or realized.
2. may also refer to the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas.

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Greetings to our alumni and the UP family! The theme for this newsletter is praxis. As Aristotle remarked, there are three basic activities that human beings engage in: theory, production (poiesis), and praxis. In theory we derive general principles of our profession, in poiesis we make or create a product, and in praxis we engage in reflective action. The purpose of praxis, which the Greek also called phronesis, is to apply our knowledge to improve civic life. Praxis is reflective action and requires that we continuously engage in the dialectic reflection of ends and means, thought and action. By so doing we are able to change or improve on the practice of our profession for the common good.

Praxis encapsulates what we do in the Department of Urban Planning. We have a long history of community engagement by urban planning faculty and students, in which we take our classroom knowledge to the field to help make a difference in the lives of Indiana residents and people the world over. Before the university embraced the adage of “immersive learning” we were already knee deep with our Community Based Projects (CBP) program, conducting community participation workshops and charrettes all over the state and helping to prepare neighborhood and community development plans. This legacy continues as is evidenced in the pages of this newsletter.

This semester the entire department will be engaging in a “complete streets” workshop to help prepare a plan and program for the City of Muncie. Professor Kelly will be providing the lead in organizing the department for this event. We will be inviting back to campus several of our alumni to work with our students. We will also be engaging with the leadership of the City of Muncie in discussing appropriate steps in the preparation and implementation of such a policy. Details of this event are included in this newsletter.

Each year through financial support from the College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) we were able to bring guest lecturers to campus to give a lecture on a subject of current importance to the profession. This year we invited Jennifer Kime and Jamie Thompson of Downtown Mansfield, Inc. to discuss downtown revitalization in the City of Mansfield. As downtowns around the country struggle to stay healthy from a period of economic decentralization and deindustrialization, the City of Mansfield's downtown has weathered the storms. How they did it and what lessons they’ve learned in the process was the subject of their lecture, which took place at 4pm February 6 in AB100.

Our Distinguished Alumni award this year goes to Adrian Scott Fine. Adrian graduated from the BUPD program in 1992. Since graduating he has been engaged in various aspects of historic preservation practice at local and national levels. From 2000 – 2009 he was the Director of the Northeast Field Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation in Philadelphia. In 2009 and 2010 Adrian was the Director at the Center for State and Local Policy for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He is currently the Director of Advocacy for the Los Angeles Conservancy, the largest nonprofit preservation organization in the country. Adrian will be on campus March 26 to give a lecture on his work and to receive the award from the department. We are excited and look forward to welcoming Adrian back to the department.

The praxis stories in this newsletter are just a few of the many activities faculty and students have been engaged in this past year. They provide an inkling of our department’s role in Indiana and how we are making a difference in the
state. The legacy continues!

Our front office has undergone a transition. After twenty-six years of service to Ball State University, Barb Hesselgrave retired early this January. Christine Rhine has been hired to take her place. Christine began working in the department the second week of January. Please welcome her cheerfully.

I wish you all much success and happiness in this Chinese Year of the Dragon. May good fortune behold you this year; may you be strong in health, innovative in your thoughts, bold, authoritative and irrepressible in your actions!

Welcome

Welcome to Christine Rhine

Christine Rhine is the new administrative coordinator in the Urban Planning office.

She is a Fort Wayne native who graduated from Ball State with a degree in telecommunications. She spent seven years working as a newspaper reporter and editor in and around Indianapolis. She married Paul Rhine and stepped out of the paying workforce for several years to raise two children, Andrew and Veronica, who are now teenagers.

The family lives just a few blocks from Ball State and enjoys biking to campus for events. They are involved in the Muncie/Delaware County Robotics team, the local homeschool community, and at Union Chapel church.

Christine is enjoying getting to know everyone in the Urban Planning family and is trying to get all the names and faces straight. She thanks everyone for their kindness and patience during the transition period.
2012 Distinguished Alumnus Adrian Scott Fine

Adrian Fine will receive the department’s Distinguished Alumni Award this year. Adrian graduated from Ball State University in 1992 with degrees in Urban Planning and Development, Environmental Design and Historic Preservation.

He is currently Director of Advocacy for the Los Angeles Conservancy. In this role he oversees the organization’s outreach, advocacy and response on key preservation issues within the greater Los Angeles area. This includes setting priorities, developing initiatives, working with local governments and preparing responses to Environmental Impact Reports. The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local, nonprofit preservation organization in the country.

Previously Adrian was the Director of the Center for State and Local Policy for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, based in Washington, DC, where his position involved providing research and responses on key state and local policy issues affecting historic preservation.

From 2000 to 2009, Adrian was the Director of the Northeast Field Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). As director he was responsible for coordinating the programs and advocacy efforts of the NTHP in Philadelphia, Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. From 1994 to 2000, Mr. Fine was a Senior Field Coordinator with the Northern Regional Office of Indiana Landmarks, the largest statewide nonprofit preservation organization in the country.

APA Update

Abby Wiles, MURP 2013

Ball State Planning Students, Though most of you are already aware of the American Planning Association’s National Planning Conference in April, the Indiana APA Chapter will hold a Professional Development Conference in May at Ball State University. Local and regional conferences provide students with valuable opportunities, both to network with local professionals and to learn about planning issues and initiatives relative to our Hoosier state. I look forward to seeing a cohort of students at the conference this May! For additional details, visit www.indianaplanning.org.

In addition, the Indiana APA Chapter will accept submittals for best student planning award until late March. Students may submit work directly or faculty members may submit work on behalf of students. Submission of individual or group work is acceptable, providing that group submittals contain the names of all students who contributed to the project. Please submit these to Josh Desmond, Awards Chair. He can be reached at desmondj@bloomington.in.gov or (812) 349-3423.
Spring Guest Lecturers

Department of Urban Planning Spring Guest Lecturers

We hosted Jennifer Kime and Jamie Thompson as guests of the department’s spring lecture series in February. Jennifer and Jamie are co-Directors of Mansfield Downtown Inc. and were with us from the 5th to the 7th of February. Below is the biographical information for Jennifer and Jamie.

Jennifer Kime

Jennifer Kime is currently the director of Downtown Mansfield, Inc. She has worked in a variety of capacities within the organization since joining DMI in 2001. Currently, Jennifer’s main focus areas are in long term planning, preservation based planning, new program and project development and community development for the downtown and near downtown neighborhoods. She also serves as a liaison and board member in many community groups including the Mansfield Richland Area Chamber of Commerce, Richland County Regional Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Richland Community Development Corporation and Discovery School.

Jennifer earned her BA from Antioch College in 2000 in Social & Global Studies, with a dual focus on Entrepreneurial Management and International Relations. Jennifer went on to earn her MBA from Ashland University in 2005. In addition to her work at DMI, Jennifer is Co-Owner and Co-Publisher of MidOhioLive.com, an online news network serving Richland, Ashland & Crawford Counties. Jennifer is married to Chef Mark Kime of Western Reserve Academy and they have three children, Sam, Lily and Olive. They enjoy the ongoing restoration of their historic home near downtown while raising their family and traveling.

Jamie Thompson

Jamie Thompson joined Downtown Mansfield in 2002. She has worked in multiple capacities within the organization and has been integral in maintaining and developing new and existing sponsor relationships. Jamie has also been at the forefront of downtown event development and has assisted in expanding the organization project management activities. Currently, Jamie’s main focus is sponsor recruitment, management of daily operations, grant writing and event development.

In 2004, Jamie earned a BA in Sociology from Ohio State University. During her time at OSU, Jamie worked as an intern with Richland County Children Services and was an active member of the North Central Ohio Business Development Council. Jamie went on to earn her MPA from Keller Graduate School of Management at DeVry University in 2010.

Jamie is married to Attorney Jerry Thompson of David C. Badnell LPA. The couple have three children: Jerry, James and Jack. The Thompson’s enjoy all things outdoors and raising their family!
Fellow Planning Grads,

I am happy to share some exciting news! A dedicated group of your fellow alumni have worked to reestablish the department’s Alumni Advisory Board. This group will engage alumni with the department’s faculty to bring real world lessons to the classroom. The board met in October and outlined a strategy and a game plan to begin the process of engaging alumni and incorporating their participation in the department. The following are some of the immediate projects that need your attention:

Mentoring Program: This program would match students and alumni based on interest, specialization, and time availability. The mentoring program will be very rewarding for both the student and the mentor. I know when I was in grad school, having a mentor made all of the difference.

Practitioner in Residence (PIR): The department plans on holding annual week-long workshops/studios with the help of alumni on various topics to get quick results for Indiana’s communities. While the studios are a week long, alumni don’t have to commit to the entire week (you could even do just a day). This would be a great opportunity to give back to the department, and directly impact students’ lives. The first PIR event is scheduled for February 20th & 21st and involves Complete Streets. There are additional events tentatively scheduled for April 2012. The department has asked for alumni participation at both events. Please let me know of your availability to help by emailing me.

Classroom Participation: The Alumni Board will work with the department to bring more alumni into the classroom. These activities could range from visiting a studio, class or even presenting at the annual CAP Alumni Day Symposium held each fall.

Department Development: The board will not only work to bring alumni back to participate in events, but more importantly to integrate real-world experiences into the student experience. This will be done through our involvement in departmental activities, meetings, and by providing input to planned curriculum changes. This is an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy with the department and CAP.

If you have any questions about the board or would like to volunteer to serve on the board and/or any of these initiatives please send me an email at: dghaake@gmail.com.
On May 22nd 2011, one of the worst tornados in US history struck the city of Joplin, Missouri. It was the first multiple-vortex EF5 tornado to strike in Missouri. At points along its 14-mile path through Joplin and the surrounding areas, the tornado stretched to over a mile wide. In the aftermath, it was determined that there were 162 fatalities and 17,000 people were affected by the tornado. Over 4,000 homes were destroyed and 3,500 more damaged. The economic impact was just as devastating with over 500 businesses destroyed and an estimated loss of over a billion dollars in sales and services.

Interestingly enough, I happened to be there. I recall the sky being pitch black as I left a frozen yogurt store and headed to my house about 20 minutes before the tornado struck. Had I stayed longer I would have been directly in the path of the tornado. I remember the sirens blaring and like most individuals, neither my friends nor I thought much of it as the tornado sirens went off; they happen a lot in Southwest Missouri in Spring. Luckily, we were not in the tornado path. We lived on the north side of the city and the tornado struck the south side.

In the days, weeks, and months that followed amazing acts of courage, bravery and generosity happened on a daily basis. People who were at one time strangers became friends and neighbors due to the tornado as people from across the city banded together to help one another and rebuild their lives.

Additionally volunteers from across the world came and helped. By the end of the cleanup, over 118,000 volunteers had come to help Joplin. It was incredible to be there and witness such an outpouring of the human spirit. In the aftermath, I was able to help by interning with the Harry S Truman Coordinating Council (HSTCC), the Regional Planning Commission of southwest Missouri. I was immediately put to work, meeting with survivors of the tornado and helping to assess their long-term housing needs. As part of the Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC), which was spearheaded by the Red Cross and FEMA, the HSTCC with about 40 other agencies and organizations worked to help Joplin residents get back on their feet. Additionally I was able to become a member of the Long-Term Recovery Committee working in housing construction.

I learned a lot about planning on the ground and what planning is chiefly about: people. My education in the MURP program helped me to recognize the community’s needs and to meet people where they were. I had an understanding of what urban planning is and was able to take my education and use it in an extraordinary way by working in a tornado disaster area. Never in a million years did I think I would witness the destruction of a city, nor the miracle of seeing Joplin rebuild. In planning, we may call it disaster management, but what it truly was is helping people rebuild their lives. Today, Joplin is strong and is rebuilding!
Joplin Tornado (con’t)
Architectural Salvage of Historic Landmark Benefits Community

Ryan Gallagher, MURP 2012

In June 2011, I began an internship with the Indianapolis-based non-profit, People for Urban Progress (PUP). An urban design center, PUP was formed in 2008. PUP was the organization that salvaged the landfill bound roof of the Hoosier (RCA) Dome. It was felt that a disposal site was not an appropriate home for the non-biodegradable, Teflon coated, fiberglass material. Rather, it was saved and repurposed for use as shade structures in community parks within the Indianapolis area. To raise money for that end, the “Dome Bag Project” began, in which wallets, purses and other small items were made from the fabric. To date, over $80,000 in revenue has been raised out of less than 5% of the fabric once doomed to occupy a local landfill.

Knowing that PUP had experience with large-scale structural salvage, as well as a three-pronged approach to projects including design, transit and the environment, I approached them with an idea to use discarded airplane fuselages to populate IndyGo bus stops which have neither seating nor shade.

Currently, IndyGo maintains over 4,000 bus stops with seating and shade structures at 230 of them. The airplane fuselage idea morphed into several forms until we were approached by Ecolaborative, a team of two brothers working on an idea to turn historic Bush Stadium, in Indianapolis into the nation’s first “Living Building”. After the Indianapolis Parks Department adopted plans to sell the property in order for it to be converted into condominiums, our attention turned to the structural salvage of this nationally registered historic stadium.

Partial demolition is scheduled to begin in March 2012, but with the help of Develop Indy, the Parks Department and the Riverside Civic League we were given permission to salvage what we wanted before the developer took over. After signing the agreement in December 2011 we approached IndyGo to set plans in motion to address the seating shortage at bus stops. Within a few weeks we contracted with IFAB, a fabrications firm in Indianapolis, to refurbish seats for use as bus stops along IndyGo routes. The first PUP stop is at the corner of Vermont and Alabama in the Massachusetts Avenue Cultural District. Currently, four more “PUP Stops” are scheduled for the spring and IndyGo has added a PUP Stop option for their Adopt-A-Stop program. Ideally, this will result in an increase in ridership, drawing new attention to public transit in Indianapolis.

In keeping with the PUP approach of generating private funds for public projects we will be selling the seats to the public in order to fund their installation in community parks and public spaces. Again, a useful material scheduled for disposal in a local landfill will generate income and be put to good use in Indianapolis. The Dome Roof Salvage was the first project of its kind in the country. So, too, is the Bush Stadium Seat Salvage, proving that the up-cycling of materials, deemed as refuse, could serve as a viable resource for communities moving forward.
Architectural Salvage (con’t)
Complete Streets Project

Eric Kelly, Ph.D., Professor of Urban Planning

This spring semester, students and faculty in the department will be assisting the Delaware County Planning Commission to develop a complete streets policy and program for the City of Muncie. “Complete streets” are streets that are designed for all users – drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, those who are mobility impaired, and transit vehicles. For more information on “complete streets,” see http://www.completestreets.org/ and this short video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eybnVOMEX6w.

On the 20th of February, we will have a one day kick-off event at 4pm with a lecture by Cynthia Hoyle of Orion Planning Group, Urbana, IL followed by a workshop the following morning. Community leaders and alumni are expected on campus to participate in these events. We anticipate that most if not all urban planning classes will be cancelled to allow participation in the event.

The last full week in January, the students in Community Facilities Planning will be assembling background information on “complete streets” – including reference material and models that have been used in other Midwestern communities (weather makes a difference in street planning, so the regional context is important).

At the February event, students will be divided into small groups (5 or 6) that will include a mixture of year levels. Each group will be assigned a small area of the city and will be asked to complete an “existing conditions” analysis using templates that have been used successfully for this purpose in other communities. Those materials will be due by April 10, allowing each group to select a time for the field work that suits all of its members – and that provides decent weather to be out. We will provide electronic and/or paper maps for reference for the field work.

Throughout the semester, graduate student Cheria Caldwell, who is assisting me with this project, will be continuing to gather background information on Complete Streets. On April 16th & 17th, while some of our colleagues are at the APA conference, we will hold a charrette/workshop here – with public involvement – to recommend complete street models that can be adapted to various street configurations in Muncie. This will not be a pure design charrette, because there are many good models that we can use, but it will deal with the design issues involved in adopting different models for different neighborhoods in the City of Muncie. We expect to have Muncie officials as well as some of our alumni here to participate in this two-day workshop. By the end of the workshop, we expect to have a rough draft of a report and recommendations for the City of Muncie. We will provide lunches and snacks for these activities. There will be no cost to students to participate.

On the Wednesday after our colleagues return from Los Angeles, we will hold a public unveiling of our recommendations – for interested media, for public officials, and for everyone in UP. We will provide lots of coffee to be sure that those returning on the red-eye stay awake to learn what we have done.

This is a co-curricular activity. Every student should either attend the APA conference and document the participation in it appropriately – OR participate in this activity. Our intent is to make this one both fun and fascinating. As many of you know, I am a past president of the American Planning Association and normally attend the national conference. This year I will stay here to facilitate this effort – and though I will be sorry to miss connecting with some friends in Los Angeles, I am excited about the
Return of the Street Car?

Francis H. Parker, Ph.D., Professor of Urban Planning

From 1890 to the 1940s, streetcars were the backbone of urban public transportation. Electrically powered from an overhead wire, they competed with increasing numbers of automobiles, and with more flexible motorbuses. The last streetcar in Muncie ran in 1931. Marion had streetcars until 1947, and the last Indianapolis line, College Avenue to Broad Ripple, closed in 1953. Many of today's bus routes follow the former streetcar tracks.

When “light rail” was introduced in the U.S. in the 1980s, proponents were at pains to distinguish it from the old streetcars. Light Rail was faster, used more private rights-of-way, and in some ways resembled the old interurban lines more than traditional streetcars. When necessary “light rail” could run in the streets, but a preference was given to former railroad lines or other separate alignments. But starting in the 1990s, and gaining surprising momentum in the last decade, there has been a revival of interest in the streetcar per se, with lines built very much like the old streetcars, in some cases using actual historic cars. Streetcars in New Orleans and San Francisco, which never entirely vanished, were refurbished as tourist attractions. A 1976 project in Detroit, initiated by the city planning department, imported historic streetcars from Portugal to serve the riverfront area between Renaissance Center and Cobo Arena. Memphis built new trolley lines in a downtown tourist area, with historic cars from Portugal and Australia. A recent map of operating, planned, or proposed projects around the U.S. shows 36 streetcar projects, and the list is constantly changing. Interest in new trolley lines has stimulated a cottage industry in replica 1920s streetcars, offered by two U.S. companies.

It was Portland which, as in so many things, took the next step, by opening a streetcar line in 2001 operated by sleek modern European trams. (An Oregon company now offers these same cars, U.S. built under license from the Czech Republic). A neon roof sign in the Pearl District advises “Go by Streetcar.” Portland is now extending the line across the river to stimulate residential development in a low density district with good proximity to downtown.

Though new streetcar lines look and feel much like the old ones, their purpose is quite different. Not intended as a citywide transportation backbone, the new lines are short – seldom more than two miles. They are “niche” transportation, as area collectors or “branding” elements for distinct areas. A line in Kenosha, Wisconsin, using restored heritage cars, serves hardly more than 100 passengers a day, but is a talking point for a brownfield residential development near downtown.

Complete Streets Project (con’t)

opportunity.
Attending the national conference is a great opportunity, and I encourage you to consider it seriously. But if for any reason you decide not to go, know that there will be an engaging activity here.
Return of the Street Car? (con’t)

Nor is the purpose of new streetcar lines identical to “light rail.” Where light rail typically brings commuters to a city center, the streetcar lines seldom venture far from the downtown itself.

Indianapolis has its own streetcar proposal, a downtown circulator which would loop from the Circle Center mall past the convention center and ball park, crossing the pedestrian Washington Avenue bridge to the zoo. The Downtown Indianapolis Streetcar Corporation board includes chief executives of the Chamber of Commerce and downtown museums and tourist attractions (http://indianapolisstreetcar.org).

The Downtown Indianapolis Streetcar would cost about $28 million. It is a stand-alone project, not competing with the $1.3 billion metropolitan transit plan unveiled in December 2011. Where the metro plan would reinvigorate the Indygo bus system and add bus rapid transit and light rail lines to the suburbs, the Downtown Streetcar would tie together key projects, and help distribute the riders brought downtown by the larger transit network.

If anything, the Downtown Streetcar could provide a vision of a new transit system, for a city which has largely forgotten transit. In that sense, it could be a conversation starter and a real help to the larger metropolitan transit vision. It is a good project, and one we should support.

SPA Update

Bithia Ratnasamy, President, Student Planning Association

Dear Planning Family,

On behalf of the Student Planning Association Executive Board, I would like to thank everyone who supported SPA in any way last semester. I was constantly encouraged by faculty and fellow students alike, as we successfully pulled off our first capture the flag tournament, bake sale, and bowling night, and were fortunate to hear from members of our faculty present on portfolios, finding internships and jobs.

This semester, I am really looking forward to all that is being planned! With presentations from Vera Adams and Lisa Dunaway lined up, SPA will continue to provide students with opportunities to develop professionally. Additionally, we’re looking to continue presenting TEDtalks and pizza monthly (beginning February 6th), having Planners Day at a Muncie elementary school, doing a Habitat build, and preparing students for the APA National Conference in Los Angeles.

Again, thank you to all who have supported us in the past, and we welcome your feedback for the future!
Planning for a New Experience in South Asia

Nihal Perera, Ph.D., Director of CapAsia and Professor of Urban Planning

CapAsia VII will take place in the spring of 2013. CapAsia VII will build on our 10 years of experience and promises to be even better than the previous ones. The group intends to do the main project, “Planning to Learn” in Bhubaneswar, India and a three-week project called “Building to Learn” in Bhutan, a small kingdom in the Himalayas. The group will also stopover in Kolkata, New Delhi and Bangkok.

India built several new cities after independence in 1947. Chandigarh is well-known because Le Corbusier was one of the planning contributors. Around the same time, in the late 1940s, Bhubaneswar was built as the capital of Odisha (Orissa) state. It is highly contextualized in society and culture. Its planner, Otto Königsberger, was the Chief planner of India, and he saw the failure of master planning --equivalent of comprehensive planning in the USA-- in the places he worked. These included India, Singapore, Pakistan, and several other states in the region. He developed a new planning approach called action planning which, instead of making a plan and then implementing it, is instead carried out as a continuous process that is made up of several cycles --small to large. In this, planning, implementation, and monitoring are intertwined. Planners continue to make adjustments to the plan based on changes on the ground; responding to people’s needs. Bhubaneswar was also built adjacent to a historic temple-city by the same name—instead of a clean site as in most capitals.

In addition to planning Bhubaneswar, Königsberger also established the Development Planning Unit at the University of London. The goal of the CapAsia VII group will be to learn about him, his plan for Bhubaneswar, and explore how the current city may be improved. As CapAsia groups usually do, this team will work with people from different neighborhoods for seven weeks to first understand how these people live and identify their planning needs. Then we follow this with discussions with the community and together come up with planning proposals for improving on their living conditions. We will collaborate with the leading School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, India. The project is supported by the Odisha government and a leading business school in the city, coordinated by Bibhu Nayak.

In Bhutan, students will explore how the kingdom uses a Happiness Index to measure development. The plan is to do a 3-week building to learn component there. Students will also take field trips across the beautiful kingdom.

Thereafter, we will stopover and do small projects in Kolkata, Delhi, and Bangkok. While in India, we will also visit a number of highly sacred places.
Planning for a New Experience (con’t)

for Hindus and Buddhists such as Konark, Puri, Bodhgaya and planned cities such as Jamshedpur. In addition to exploring Kolkata, the train to Bhubaneswar should provide a deeper experience of Indian culture. Living in a low-middle class area should provide an opportunity to immerse in the community and become more familiar with people’s everyday practices.

Students on CapAsia VII will learn about development, planning, and learning. By reflection, they will also learn about their own environments, culture, and themselves. More information on the program is available at: http://www.capasia.net. Application processing begins on March 5, 2012. The tentative duration for the field component is from January 3 through March 20, 2013.
Faculty Member Contributes to Third Place Award in Indianapolis Monument Circle Competition

Lohren R. Deeg, ASAI, Assistant Professor of Urban Planning

Assistant Professor Lohren Deeg collaborated with the firm Studio Three in Muncie to win “Judge’s Third Choice” in an international ideas competition for Monument Circle in Indianapolis held from March to June 2011, and hosted by Indianapolis Downtown Inc. The competition attracted 64 entries from around the world and has contributed to key themes and discussion on the future of the state’s most recognizable and visible public space. CAP alumni, emeritus faculty, and current students also submitted entries, and CAP alumni and leadership served as jurors and in the organization of the competition.

Information on the competition, video interviews of the winners, and an online exhibit of all 64 entries is viewable at the website http://www.monumentcircleidea.com

An excerpt from Studio Three’s entry is below:

“Nexus” is defined by Merriam-Webster as a “connection,” a “link”, a “connected group” and a “center” or “focus.” Monument circle is the nexus of several civic and cultural landmarks that constitute an east-west axis. This design respects Monument Circle’s history and employs tactics in spatial definition, enclosure, and meaning.

Much has been discussed in the debate on whether the Indianapolis Monument Circle has achieved its full potential as an urban space. That debate has lingered around the presence of automobiles in a traffic circle that was planned in the era of the pedestrian, bicycle and horse.

In order to appreciate Monument Circle, the pedestrian needs more than the few events and businesses that draw people to the circle and give them a reason to want to be there.

This design seeks to actively engage the pedestrian and the monument, with true spatial definition, enclosure and meaning.

The very thought of containing pedestrians to ‘districts’ or ‘urban trails’ only exist in cities that have put the automobile first. Imagine a city where one no longer has to plan a route or worse, actually travel to a destination to enjoy walking or cycling. Expressed concerns from stakeholders speak to the problem of “access.” No building along Monument circle has ever had a problem with access, if that access is by foot, the most natural, healthy, social, and sustainable form of human transportation, and the most adept to the practices of sociability, citizenship and commerce.

Faculty Member Contributes (con’t)
Food Deserts and Social Media

Junfeng Jiao, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Urban Planning

In 2012, the top public health journal: American Journal of Public Health will publish Prof. Jiao’s research on food deserts and urban planning:


Professor Jiao submitted two internal research proposals to the Sponsored Programs Office at Ball State to investigate food deserts in large and small Midwestern cities. He also worked with Prof. Steven Radil in the Department of Geography to submit an immersive learning proposal to develop an online survey course for students in both the departments of Urban Planning and Geography.

Professor Jiao also worked with Prof. Holmes in the Department of Communications to investigate people’s online media usage during the 2012 Super Bowl. They received Super Bowl-related twitter postings from Jan 30 to Feb 5 and will understand how social media can support visitors’ spatial navigation during a special event.

The analysis will also help organizers and researchers understand how locals and visitors convey spatial information through social media, which will inform future use of social media to facilitate large special event hosting. This study will also be used to validate Lynch’s famous city perception theory in a digital age. Professors Jiao and Holmes have submitted their research proposal for a peer-reviewed presentation at the 42nd Urban Affairs Association Conference that will be taking place in Pittsburgh, PA from April 18 - 21, 2012.

Additionally, his article on transportation planning is under review for publication in the Journal of the Transportation Research Board.

Jiao, J. Moudon, A.V. and Drewnowski, A. (revised and resubmitted). How to Identify Food Deserts: Measuring Physical and Economic Access to Supermarkets in King County, WA.
Immersive Learning on Campus & in Indianapolis

Vera Adams, MArch, MCP, MBA, Instructor of Urban Planning

PLAN 202
Sophomore Planning
Studio: Exactly How Big is An Acre?

Dr. Parker lectures that the University Green just south of CAP is approximately an acre in size. While History and Theory discusses acres, chains and dwelling units, studio discovers what it means and how to use it as a planner. So….

Week One of spring semester found PLAN 202 students experiencing first hand how big an acre is in below freezing temperatures on the University Green with Professor Adams.

First, students measured their pace in the 3rd floor hallway comparing their stride to taped distance on the floor. Next, with Adams as their guide, students paced off a 208’ by 208’ square in the snow - starting just outside CAP at the bus stop on McKinley (NW), then heading east nearly to the parking lot (NE), then due south nearly to the entry to Miller Business College (SE), then due west to the sidewalk along McKinley (SW), and finally due north to close the loop where students stood marking the starting point at the bus stop.

As a team walked off the perimeter, others drew lines in the snow to mark 30’ wide parcels. At the end, everyone gathered in the middle on the sidewalk between the Bell Tower and the Ash Tray to visualize an alley one might find midblock in an early 20th Century streetcar neighborhood like Meridian-Kessler in Indianapolis, the location of PLAN 202 studio projects this spring term. Students imagined the Letterman Building as two-story townhouses, the Bell Building as four-story offices, CAP as six-story elevator apartments, and the business school as three-story walkups.

So, Dr. Parker, you are right; you can fit an acre into the University Green, but we recommend you wait until the weather warms up.

Fieldtrip to College Avenue Corridor, Indianapolis

Week Two found sophomore planners on route to the College Avenue Corridor in Indianapolis as part of their urban infill site planning project this term. Accompanied by Paul Deibold, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Adjunct Professor in Historic Neighborhoods, and Mary Owens, Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association (MKNA) Land Use Board Member, students were whisked along College Avenue to do fieldwork at historic streetcar stops at 38th, 42nd, 46th, 49th, 52nd, 54th and Kessler Streets.

At each stop, Mr. Deibold pointed out structures of historical and architectural significance and architectural character, while Mrs. Owens described the neighborhoods’ values and objectives. Everyone walked his/her commercial node and a block into the residential districts associated with them to find a mix of large and small lots, single and multi-family homes.

A guided tour of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church at 42nd and Central provided a warm welcome from the cold and a rare look at Romanesque architecture as practiced in 1920s Indianapolis.

The class will continues its affiliation with MKNA and the neighborhood through multiple planning phases and multiple project sites illustrating alternatives as the neighborhood develops a plan in coordination with the Department of Metropolitan Development planners this spring. Our thanks go to Chair Michael Buraydi for supporting our efforts with BSU buses and to Rocky for being such a patient bus driver.
Immersive Learning on Campus & in Indianapolis (con’t)
Graduate Seminar in Affordable Housing to Publish Research Findings

Vera Adams, MArch, MCP, MBA, Instructor of Urban Planning

A collection of affordable housing case studies researched, written and compiled by graduate students in Professor Adams’s PLAN 541 Sustainable Housing will be self-published this spring. These examples of affordable housing were all funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credits and were for the most part, planned, designed, developed or financed by CAP Planning Department Alumni. The book is intended for use by undergraduates in the planning program as a guide to best practices and as an insight into career option for graduates of the program.

All case studies were located in Central Indiana, nine in Indianapolis, one in Fort Wayne and one in Lafayette. Each case is discussed in three parts: 1) market review, 2) site selection, 3) financing and feasibility. All case combine to represent a cross section of user and unit types, neighborhood conditions, land types and locations. Simple summaries of rent roll, financing sources and use of funds are presented.
In the Fall 2011 semester, Instructors Lisa Dunaway and Meagan Tuttle led the PLAN 302 Neighborhood Studio on a Neighborhood Action Plan for Whitely, a historic area within Muncie, Indiana. In working with the Whitely Community Council and the residents of the Whitely neighborhood, students in the course learned about a very important aspect of planning that was new to them: that planners are not only responsible for the built environment and economics, but also for providing for the social and community building needs of an area. Early in the studio, students completed the first steps in the neighborhood planning process such as creating basemaps, conducting field work, and taking photos of the neighborhood. However, they soon were learning new tasks, such as creating surveys and conducting public meetings.

Over the course of the semester, the students had many interactions with the residents of Whitely. They began by distributing paper surveys on foot, knowing many residents would not have access to the internet. Some students were fortunate to meet some of the residents in person and began learning about the neighborhood. After the preliminary research had been conducted, the students held their first public meeting, which drew nearly 50 attendees from Whitely and the Muncie community. At this meeting, students compiled lists of assets and opportunities based on the residents’ input. These lists helped to form the next step of the students’ work, which was to identify the needs of the community and determine ways to address those needs.

For the remainder of the semester, the students researched a series of action items which were organized into six categories: Infrastructure, Housing, Access to Services, Wayfinding and Signage, Education, Career Development and Skills, and Recreation. Students were responsible for providing information on how a specific action statement could be implemented in Whitely. This information included who would be involved, what the process would include, a timeline for implementation, funding needs and opportunities, priority areas for development, and other resources that could be utilized by Whitely’s leadership. Throughout the process of developing these items, students shared the information with residents at two more public meetings, and updated their work to reflect additional input.

The project was a huge success. The final deliverable, The Whitely Neighborhood Action Plan (WNAP), was presented at the students’ final public presentation in December. It was well-attended, with guests including Dr. Burayidi, Mayor Dennis Tyler, Councilman Julius Anderson, the Whitely Community Council, church and neighborhood organization leaders, and other departments from Ball State.

Whitely’s residents were encouraged by the level of detail that the students included in the WNAP, and its accompanying WNAP Citizen Workbook, and were motivated to embrace the proposed actions and begin implementation in the new year. The Whitely Community Council presented each of the students with a
personal copy of a letter of gratitude for their friendship, dedication, and hard work.

It was very important to both the students and the community that the WNAP become a reality and not sit on a shelf. 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.