

## Department of Urban Studies and Planning

### Highlights

In December 2013, the [Department of Urban Studies and Planning](#) (DUSP) hosted the Institute Visiting Committee. As noted in its final report to the administration, the committee found DUSP to be “a stable, happy and successful department that is focused on the future.” The committee praised the department for making a successful transition to a new head and for implementing its previous recommendation to produce a strategic framework for the next 10 to 15 years, noting four key new faculty hires arising from this strategy. In conclusion, the report called the department “a true gem, able to attract the best faculty and students in the field.”

Echoing and elaborating on these findings, I am pleased to report that the department is currently in a position of operational strength, and the present moment represents an important opportunity to reshape and redefine our academic and intellectual future. Efforts over the past year to increase our endowment and raise funds, combined with growth in our sponsored research, have provided us with greater financial flexibility and, perhaps most important, allowed us for the first time to provide financial aid to all of the students who applied for it. At the same time, we recognize that the loss of four senior women faculty members within the last four years has not only created critical gaps in our department’s intellectual and cultural profile but diminished our gender and diversity profile. Filling intellectual gaps while restoring—or even improving—our faculty diversity makeup is a priority for the future.

While the past academic year was full of achievements and joys, it concluded with sorrow and grief with the passing of our colleague JoAnn Carmin. It was a great privilege for us to know, work with, and learn from JoAnn. In the coming semester, the department will be organizing a climate adaption symposium to celebrate and honor Professor Carmin’s contributions.

### Appointments, Promotions, and Visitors

One new faculty member started in the department in fall 2013. Jinhua Zhao is the Edward H. and Joyce Linde career development assistant professor of urban planning at DUSP. He holds master of science, master of city planning, and PhD degrees from MIT and a bachelor’s degree from Tongji University. He studies travel behavior and transportation policy, public transit management, and China’s urbanization and mobility. He sees transportation as a language used to describe a person, to characterize a city, and to understand an institution. His current project examines the interaction between government policy-making and the behavioral response of the public in the context of China’s urban development.

Albert Saiz was promoted to associate professor with tenure; Judy Layzer and Xav Briggs were promoted to full professor; Carlo Ratti was promoted to full professor of the practice; and Karl Seidman was reappointed as a senior lecturer. After more than 40 years of teaching in the planning program (including a term as department head), professor Tunney Lee officially retired and entered the ranks of the department’s emeritus faculty.

Multiple members of the department's faculty (including Professor Briggs and professors Philip Clay, Dennis Frenchman, and Eran Ben-Joseph) were selected by the provost to work with colleagues from the School of Architecture and Planning and other schools to help the Institute develop a comprehensive vision and plan for the future of East Campus and Kendall Square. Also, Professor Ben-Joseph was appointed by the provost to serve on a special committee on MIT's Environmental Initiative.

Two practitioners from Sasaki Associates, Mary Anne Ocampo and Stephen Gray, joined the department as lecturers in urban design, teaming up to teach 11.328J/4.240J Urban Design Skills and 11.304J/4.255J Site and Environmental Systems Planning. Both hold master of urban design degrees from Harvard.

Dr. Yu-Hung Hong returned once again as a lecturer of urban planning and finance to teach 11.483 Housing and Land Use in Rapidly Urbanizing Regions, 11.484J/11.144J Project Appraisal and Evaluation in Developing Countries, and 11.487 Urban Public Finance in Developing Countries.

Dr. Justin Reich served as a visiting lecturer in the Scheller Teacher Education Program. Reich is the cofounder of EdTechTeacher, a professional learning consultancy devoted to helping teachers leverage technology to create student-centered, inquiry-based learning environments. He earned his doctorate from Harvard University, where he led the Distributed Collaborative Learning Communities project.

The department hired a new GIS, data visualization, and graphics specialist, Mike Foster, to assist faculty and students with mapping, graphics, and media-related projects. Foster is a professional cartographer, designer, and GIS analyst specializing in geovisualization, graphics, and application design. He holds a BS in cartography and GIS from the University of Wisconsin and a master's in GIS and computer science from the University of Minnesota.

Professor Emily Talen spent part of her sabbatical from Arizona State University at DUSP as a visiting professor, teaching 11.THG Master's Thesis Preparation (City Design and Development) last fall.

Professor Luc Anselin, also from Arizona State University, spent part of his sabbatical with us, offering a special seminar (11.S946 Dynamic Urban Neighborhoods: City Scale Spatial Analytics) in collaboration with Sarah Williams.

The department was privileged to host two Martin Luther King visitors. Miloon Kothari is the executive director of the Housing and Land Rights Network in India and convened the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the United Nations. His appointment at DUSP was hosted by Balakrishnan Rajagopal. Dr. Karilyn Crockett received a PhD in American studies from Yale. Her dissertation, "People Before Highways: Reconsidering Routes to and from the Boston Anti-Highway Movement," connects many of the issues that are central to our department. Her visit to DUSP was hosted by Anne Whiston Spin and Larry Vale.

## Research and Teaching

The following new courses were developed and offered for the first time in 2013–2014:

- 11.A14 Freshman Advising Seminar: Data and the City (Ezra Glenn)
- 11.405 Political Economy & Society (Phil Thompson)
- 11.407 Economic Development Tools and Techniques (Amy Glasmeier)
- 11.S940 BRT Corridor Design Workshop (Chris Zegras, Jan Wampler)
- 11.S942 MATI Mozambique Workshop (Gabriella Carolini)
- 11.S943 Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative’s Design and Planning Workshop (Ceasar McDowell)
- 11.S944 The Theory of Participatory Action Research (Lawrence Susskind, Dayna Cunningham)
- 11.S945 Urbanizing China (Jinhua Zhao)

The department engaged in practicum/studio/workshop classes in Boston, China, Mozambique, Malaysia, Puerto Rico, Santiago, Colombia, and Somerville, MA.

In March the department initiated a new tradition, hosting “Lighting Talks,” a faculty research event at the MIT Media Laboratory. At the event, 12 different DUSP faculty members had three minutes each to explain one of their research projects in layperson’s language. Presenters included Albert Saiz, Amy Glasmeier, Anne Whiston Spirn, Bish Sanyal, Brent Ryan, Ceasar McDowell, Jinhua Zhao, Joe Ferreira, Judy Layzer, Larry Susskind, Larry Vale, and Chris Zegras. The event was emceed by doctoral students Christa Lee-Chuvala, Jason Spicer, and Tony Vanky, and each presentation was graphically recorded in real time by Kelvy Bird, a graphic facilitator.

The intellectual life of the department is organized largely around the activities of four program groups and several cross-cutting research initiatives. The program groups are City Design and Development (CDD); Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP); Housing, Community, and Economic Development (HCED); and the International Development Group (IDG). The cross-cutting initiatives—Urban Information Systems, Transportation Systems Planning, and Multi-Regional Systems Planning—are intended to bring together faculty from across the four main program groups.

## City Design and Development

On June 2, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that the Center for Advanced Urbanism (CAU) team, which includes, among others, Alan Berger, Alexander D’Hooghe, Miho Mazereeuw, James Wescoat, Sarah Williams, and Christopher Zegras, was one of the winners of the Rebuild by Design competition. The team’s winning design proposal, “New Meadowlands,” aims to protect a unique area of approximately 30 square miles in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan region against future flood events. The comprehensive regional project addresses issues of ecology, economy, transportation, and real estate development; \$150 million will be used for the project’s first phase.

Two of the four selected teams in the Rauch Foundation's ParkingPLUS Design Challenge included DUSP faculty members: Professor Ben-Joseph was part of a team led by Utile Inc, and Professor Williams participated with dub Studios. The challenge—initiated to encourage transformative thinking about parking structures in suburban downtowns—involved a national search for prominent, cutting-edge architecture firms, and these firms were commissioned to create designs specific to four Long Island communities.

In February, the department named Jennifer Pahlka, founder of Code for America, winner of the 2013–2014 Kevin Lynch Award. The award is presented biannually for outstanding scholarship and practice in urban design, planning, and landscape design. Pahlka founded Code for America in 2009 to connect city governments with the innovative and creative skills of technology and web-industry professionals. Since 2011, Code for America has partnered web developers and designers with local governments to create applications that help solve pressing urban problems. The apps—such as LocalData, a platform that creates new and more effective avenues for community participation—are open source, allowing them to easily spread to other cities and avoid costly bureaucratic red tape.

In April, CAU kicked off its spring 2014 symposium on the topic of “Scaling Infrastructure.” Rahm Emanuel, mayor of Chicago and former White House chief of staff for President Obama, gave the keynote address and took part in a question and answer session moderated by Professor Layzer. The event, the CAU's second and final symposium on the biennial “infrastructure” theme, convened political leaders, infrastructural engineers, design professionals, and academicians to discuss groundbreaking ideas on infrastructure. Faced with new economic, political, and environmental challenges, the question of appropriate infrastructural investments and design scales is critical to the future of urbanized territories. The technical and political realities, design possibilities, and social and economic concerns for shaping sustainable infrastructural futures in global contexts will be addressed.

CAU also issued a major new report on the topic of health and urbanism to highlight the complexity of this issue. Produced in collaboration with the American Institute of Architects, the document examines an array of public health matters in eight major metropolitan areas in the United States and suggests a wide array of possible remedies, from better mass transit to extensive tree planting. The report was principally authored by Alan Berger, a professor of landscape architecture and urban design, along with Andrew Scott, an associate professor of architecture; about a dozen graduate students from MIT's School of Architecture and Planning and researchers at CAU also worked on the project.

Based on the results of a competitive call for proposals, the city of Amsterdam announced that its new science institute, the Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions, would be developed collaboratively by DUSP, Delft University, and Wageningen University. Amsterdam is committing €50 million to the new institute, which is expected to generate hundreds of jobs. Corporate sponsors such as Cisco, Shell, IBN, Accenture, TNO, and Schiphol are also involved.

Adjunct professor Terry Szold hosted “Cities for All: A Universal Design Colloquium.” This event was a unique opportunity to ponder design as a civil right, creating universal access to urban spaces and places for diverse populations.

The Smith College Museum of Art featured an exhibit of photographs by Professor Spirn. *The Eye Is a Door* was the first major exhibition to explore how Spirn’s photographs encourage a deeper understanding of the natural and built environments through the development of visual literacy—the ability to read and analyze visual information. The 46 color images featured in the show connect such diverse topics as geology, biology, astronomy, anthropology, engineering, architecture, history, literary studies, global studies, studio art, and landscape studies.

Lecturer Susan Silberberg issued a new report, *Places in the Making*, that examines the interactions among placemaking, community participation, and the expanding ways communities are collaborating to make great public places. The report was unveiled at an event in the MIT Media Lab.

### **Environmental Policy and Planning**

In 2013, Professor Layzer was named director of the MIT Martin Family Society of Fellows for Sustainability, a program supporting multidisciplinary research on environmental sustainability at the graduate level.

AY2014 was the first year of the department’s new five-year Malaysia Sustainable Cities Program, supported by the Malaysia Department of Education in partnership with the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). DUSP and UTM faculty selected 10 senior scholars from developing countries, and these scholars will be in residence at UTM during the upcoming fall semester to study the process of city development in Malaysia’s largest urban centers: Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Barhu. As part of the effort, fellows will come to MIT in spring 2015 to transform their research findings into online learning modules. The department offered the first graduate student practicum in Malaysia during Independent Activities Period (IAP) in 2014, allowing 16 students to study sustainable city development in Malaysia with students at UTM. For the next four years, the students will return to Malaysia to continue the practicum along with the scholars. The fellowship program will be repeated each year over that period, with a new cohort of scholars selected each year.

Professor Susskind published a new book, *Good for You, Great for Me*. The book provides operational guidelines for winning negotiations in business, family disputes, international relations, or public affairs without undermining trust or ruining relationships.

Professor Layzer’s Urban Sustainability Assessment (USA) Project developed and tested a protocol for systematically evaluating the effectiveness of urban sustainability programs in the United States. This project is yielding several sample assessments—on composting, urban agriculture, tree planting, and light rail—as well as a protocol that academic or consulting teams can use to develop their own assessments. In AY2014 the project issued its first report, [Municipal Curbside Compostables Collection: What Works and Why?](#)

## **Housing, Community, and Economic Development**

Professor Robert Fogelson published a new book, *The Great Rent Wars: New York, 1917–1929*.

Data from Professor Glasmeier’s “Living Wage Calculator” were used to show the gap between the cost of living modestly in the United States and the minimum and poverty wage rates. Glasmeier began developing the calculator a decade ago while studying the causes of recurrent poverty. In addition to contributing data to discussions on raising the minimum wage, the tool illustrates why higher wages help everybody. Following IKEA’s announcement that it plans to use the calculator to increase wages, the calculator was featured in a number of news stories in publications such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Huffington Post*.

The MIT Resilient Cities Housing Initiative convened its inaugural symposium in fall 2013 to identify and highlight some of the most innovative examples of planning projects and policies that address urban housing problems. At the symposium, scholars and practitioners from MIT’s School of Architecture and Planning and prominent visiting scholars and practitioners discussed some of the world’s most promising planning projects (including projects that take the form of policies) claiming to equitably address housing and related needs in the face of increasing urbanization.

Students Elizabeth Kuwada, Alison Crowley, and Laura Martin were members of the two winning teams in the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston’s 2014 Affordable Housing Design Competition. The competition pairs teams of graduate students with affordable housing organizations to develop innovative and comprehensive development proposals addressing the needs of these organizations. Kuwada’s team, composed of students from Harvard and Boston University, worked with Lawrence Community Works and won first place for their AlmaViva project; Crowley and Martin’s team, including students from Harvard, was mentored by Peter Roth and worked with The Community Builders, winning third place for their Jackson Spring project in Jamaica Plain.

## **International Development Group**

In February the department hosted the “Property From Below” symposium, which brought together leading academics and other distinguished scholar-practitioners from more than 10 countries and many disciplines (including law, planning, urban theory, sociology, development studies, economics, and political science) to discuss some of today’s most important issues regarding property rights. The symposium addressed key dilemmas of property theory in the context of global commodification of land, widespread dispossession, and the current food, housing, energy, and environmental crises. The project, which resulted from research on property rights through Professor Rajagopal’s Displacement Research and Action Network at MIT, was a collaboration between the Institute and the University of Louvain in Belgium. The project was cosponsored by DUSP and the Harvard Law School’s Institute for Global Law and Policy.

DUSP alum Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala PhD ’81 was named one of *Time* magazine’s “100 Most Influential People.” Ngozi is currently Nigeria’s finance minister—“one of the toughest jobs on the planet,” according to *Time*. In naming her to this prestigious group, the magazine noted that she “has made corruption her enemy and stability her goal.”

As part of DUSP's Mobility Futures Collaborative, a team of students proposed using portable monitors to gather air quality data as people move around a city. Citizens, municipal governments, and advocacy groups would then be able to use this information via an open local air quality map. To assess the feasibility of such an initiative, students began by testing small portable air quality monitors to see if they could demonstrate air quality variations according to distance from traffic and route choice. The experiments were carried out on foot and by bike in Singapore and Mexico City. The research was supported, in part, by the Singapore National Research Foundation under the Future Urban Mobility Interdisciplinary Research Group (part of the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology).

The Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS)/Humphrey Fellows Program continues to provide an important link between MIT and the international community, fostering a mutual exchange of knowledge and understanding about issues of common concern in the United States and other countries around the world. During the academic year SPURS hosted 18 fellows from Angola, Bahrain, Bhutan, Chile, China, El Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, and Zambia.

### **Urban Information Systems/SENSEable City Laboratory**

The SENSEable City Lab's Engaging Data 2013 conference explored the topic of "Big Data or Bad Data." The event included a panel featuring professor and activist Noam Chomsky; Barton Gellman, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and publisher of Edward Snowden's leaks in the *Washington Post*; and other special speakers.

### **Undergraduate Program**

In August, DUSP partnered with the Department of Architecture to participate in MIT's Freshman Pre-Orientation Program (FPOP), offering 20 new freshmen a two-day session to learn about cities and design.

### **Graduate Degree Program Enrollment and Activities**

The department's graduate programs enrolled 59 new masters in city planning (MCP) students, three new SM students, and nine new doctoral students. The department granted 73 MCP, one SM, and seven PhD degrees.

The following table reports data on the 2013–2014 admissions cycle for the department.

#### **DUSP Admissions Cycle, 2013–2014**

	Applications	Admitted Students	To Be Enrolled
MCP (including the dual MCP/MST degree program)	392	93	59
SM	4	3	3
PhD	88	12	9

Particularly noteworthy, all graduate students who requested financial support were offered some form of aid.

## Doctoral Program

The PhD Committee completed a review of students' first-year experience and made recommendations for curriculum updates and additions. Specifically, 11.800 will be transitioned to a nine-unit subject, Reading and Writing Research, that will connect students to a variety of approaches used by those who study planning and development. We are also introducing more planning theory into the required curriculum, with some modest adjustments to the 11.233 Research Design for Policy Analysis and Planning fall subject. In addition, we are introducing a new six-unit required fall subject, 11.910 Planning Ideas That Matter, with the thought that the course may evolve into a term-length subject in the future.

As noted above, the department graduated seven new PhD students. The following dissertations were completed in 2013–2014:

- “Expanding Transportation Planning Capacity in Cities of the Global South: Public-Private Collaboration and Conflict in Chile and Mexico” (Onesimo Flores Dewey)
- “Essays in Climate and Development” (Roberto Guerrero Compean)
- “Participatory Infrastructure Monitoring: Design Factors and Limitations of Accountability Technologies” (Dietmar Offenhuber)
- “A Theory of Sustained Cooperation with Evidence from Irrigation Institutions in Nepal” (Atul Pokharel)
- “Infrastructure and Agency: Rural Electric Cooperatives and the Fight for Economic Democracy in the United States” (Abby Spinak)
- “Trading Places: The Development of Markets for Ecosystem Services in the United States” (Mattijs Van Maasakkers)
- “The Killing Consensus: Homicide Detectives, Police that Kill and Organized Crime in Sao Paulo, Brazil” (Graham Willis)

## Alumni Outreach

Local alumni continue to play an active role in sponsoring internships for students, providing career advice at the alumni career forums organized by each of the program groups, and participating as guest lecturers in numerous classes. Alumni across the country offered summer positions for current students and served as employers for recent graduates. Alumni also continue to play a role in the implementation of the practicum requirement, a significant element in the revised MCP core curriculum. Building on our existing alumni outreach programs, in the fall we organized the first-ever “DUSP X” event in New York City. Titled “Katrina and Sandy—Risks, Adaptation, Successes, and Climate Change,” the event featured an exchange of information and experiences from our alumni on these two major disasters. At the end of a day of meetings with alumni at relevant offices around the city, the department moderated a conversation among alumni from New Orleans and New York as well as DUSP faculty with experience in post-disaster recovery and resiliency planning.



Alumni once again participated as panelists in each of the four annual alumni career forums associated with the department's four program groups, as well as serving on panels for alumni in transportation planning and the eighth annual Real Estate Career Day, organized with the Center for Real Estate and the Harvard Design School. They also served on a panel examining professional practice in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; participated in the PhD Alumni/ae Career Forum; and were involved in a pilot PhD alumni mentoring program.

The DUSP career resources website and the DUSP career development director, Mary Jane Daly, continue to serve alumni as well as current students seeking continued professional development. They also meet the needs of potential employers of DUSP students and graduates. Over the past year, the department organized a number of alumni employer information sessions on campus for students.

**Eran Ben-Joseph**  
**Department Head**  
**Professor of Urban Studies and Planning**