Alumna, students bring planning to high schoolers

We have started introducing the next generation to planning by offering Urban Land Institute's UrbanPlan workshops to high school students.

How can you help?

Turn to page 3. And thanks for asking!

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- Alumnus teaches mobility class
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- APA Indiana conference, Fort Wayne initiatives, and more
For the second year, the College of Architecture and Planning has held its alumni awards program via Zoom. You can watch the program here.

Alumni Brad Beaubien and Adam Thies were named outstanding CAP alumni. Beaubien is director of destination development at Visit Indy, and Thies is associate vice president for capital planning at Indiana University.

"My career is defined by the DNA of a CAP education: immersive learning, design thinking, and the interdisciplinary first-year program," Beaubien wrote. "The real-world community projects in studio gave me the confidence and tools to design and lead projects with significant community engagement. The design thinking process allows me to rapidly prototype, test, and evolve processes and projects to be more efficient, effective, and impactful."

Thies reflected on the relationships built in CAP. "On the surface, we all want to be known for something. In the case of the built environment, we often individually want to be known for creating, making, designing something that others call great. But underneath that, and maybe deeper, is our desire to make things together, to laugh, to love, to be silly, to be awed – with others, not alone. CAP was always a place about the deeper – the people."

Ellen Forthofer, urban planning manager at Downtown Denver Partnership; and Bithia Ratnasamy, Atlanta Housing Authority’s first director of housing within the Executive Offices; were named graduates of the last decade.

"At CAP, I found an environment where I could experiment, observe, learn, create, and share," Forthofer wrote. "I discovered new ways of thinking about communities and my role in them."

Ratnasamy shared a treasured memory: "I'll never forget a walk that a group of us took with former Professor Francis Parker during a field trip to Boston. Though we had places to be, we ended up stopping spontaneously to hear a man playing a hurdy gurdy in the heart of Boston Common. While there's so much to learn about cities and systems, it was an unexpected lesson in pausing to appreciate the joy and beauty found in the unexpected moments of urban life."

See past CAP award winners here.
Many students who gain a degree from CAP share a similar love for Legos. I remember classmates mentioning interest in Legos as a factor in their decision to pursue architecture. I felt similarly. I also had no idea what urban planning was but can recall my dad suggesting it as a great field to pursue. Little knowledge of urban planning directed me to a more common choice, architecture. With exposure comes knowledge, direction, and influence.

Had I understood urban planning as an eighteen-year-old, my focus freshman year of college may have looked different. Our hope as a department is to utilize Legos and the Urban Land Institute UrbanPlan program as a tool to expose high school students to urban planning.

The UrbanPlan Workshops—made possible by a grant from the Ball State Discovery Group—invite high school students to engage in the fundamental forces that affect development in our communities. Students are placed on development teams and propose realistic land use solutions that address challenges within Yorktown, the workshop's fictional community. Teams collaborate and position Lego buildings on the Elmwood District site, a once-vibrant area destroyed by a fire. Teams refer to the city's outlined goals and align their proposals with a vision for the district.

This past fall, the department hosted nine students from a variety of Indiana communities at our first UrbanPlan Workshop. The students were split into two teams, given roles, and spent the day determining proposals for the Elmwood District. Organized to feel like the students are working for a development firm, teams worked at studio desks and utilized a site plan, Legos, and financial model to collaborate and finalize their design.

The day ended with a realistic city council meeting. During the meeting, teams presented and answered questions regarding their plans. The experience even included community members or friends and family invited to listen to the proposals.

To watch students engage in planning discussions was incredible. How many of us had these conversations as high schoolers? The ability to

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While Chair Scott Truex and Instructor Mary Banning have taught ULI Workshops in PLAN 100 for several semesters, Nov. 6 marked our first high school workshop. We held it at our Muncie Mall storefront.

Meet students and potentially facilitate their first CAP experience was unmatched. During the workshop, we learned about hometowns and discussed issues they see and would like to change. These discussions lead to explaining urban planning and program and career conversations.

We also provided a free lunch where current planning students engaged with and answered questions about the planning program. These current students also spent the day volunteering and assisting the teams.

As we expand the workshops, I hope we see more interest in urban planning. No doubt, students will understand the factors and steps to develop a project, but ultimately, I hope they walk away with exposure to a fresh idea, dream, or even a future career in planning. If anything, the department is building the next generation of community leaders and thinkers. May we use Legos to offer knowledge, direction, and influence, and may the students leave excited to engage with their communities!
Accreditation visit went smoothly

The Planning Accreditation Board visits accredited schools periodically to assess how well they prepare students to work in the field. Our latest visit was in November, and the team asked specifically to meet with our most recent alumni. We are thankful for so many who agreed to meet either in person or via Zoom. Current students, employers, and APA Indiana reps, also met with the team to discuss what is going well and what areas need improvement.

The site visit team included two planning educators and one professional planner. We have a very preliminary report from them now. After all reports and reviews end, the PAB will grant us from one to seven years before the next accreditation visit. We won't learn those results; however, until the spring APA conference in San Diego. Chair Scott Truex will meet with the PAB board there to get more details about how we can improve our programs.

If you would like to read our self-study reports, you can find them here. And we are always open to your suggestions, so feel free to email us anytime at planning@bsu.edu.

We appreciate everyone who helped: Alexis Adams, Brandon Burgoa, Jasmine Mason, Andres Nieto, Alex Pope, Jeb Reece, Michael Terronez, Alex Varney, Josh Campbell, Tiffany Gehrke, Emily Hepworth, Jacob Ihrie, Meghan Jennings, Christina Jesse, Abigail Lane, Unai Miguel Andres, Steven Stransky, Paige Story, Abby Wiles, Philip Roth, Ross Hilleary, Marta Moody, Jerry Bridges, Annette Phillips, Mike Hollibaugh, all of our awesome students (special shout outs to tour guide Will Snyder and to Elise Jones and Brandon Resnick who made time to talk to the team about the UrbanPlan workshops), Lori Pence, Julie Maugherman, and all faculty members. Other supporters who held lengthy one-on-one meetings with the team were CAP Dean Dave Ferguson, Provost Susana Rivera-Mills, and University President Geoffrey Mearns.

By the numbers

3 team members
4 days of review
22 meetings with
84 people
759 pages of text
This past November, our fourth-year-studio team had the pleasure to defend its title for NAIOP 2021, a statewide real estate competition sponsored and attended by development professionals from across Indiana. The prompt this year focused on a site near the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Speedway, Indiana, challenging our cohort to reimagine an existing gravel parking lot into a landmark development seeking to activate Speedway in and outside of regular motor speedway event days. Our mixed-use residential, retail, and commercial office development was crowned by a new permanent stadium for the Indy Eleven Soccer Team, complimenting Speedway’s capacity for destination recreation activities adjacent to downtown Indianapolis. Our team’s collective ability to study and graphically model the project’s components, along with an educated understanding of urban planning implications from its development, led us to an incredible win. We want to thank our faculty mentor, Dr. Bruce Frankel, and the Department of Urban Planning for supporting us with out-of-classroom opportunities like NAIOP.
Experienced alumnus, mobility experts teach students nuances of planning

By EHREN BINGAMAN, principal at TransPro and instructor of urban planning

For the Fall 2021 semester I was invited by Chair Scott Truex to develop and lead a class related to transportation planning. After about a thousand emails and several phone calls, we aligned on Plan 498/598, Exploring Modern Mobility.

Students were engaged in a semester long journey to think about mobility infrastructure through a variety of lenses intentionally developed to help them see beyond the physical impacts to the built environment.

Mobility systems are complex and nuanced—decision making is not just about where to place a road or bus route or trail. In the end, students were challenged to develop a personal philosophy about the future of mobility and its impacts on community.

Much of our experience was discussion based with students completing an independent mobility project, using transportation systems other than personal use vehicle; collaborating in a team project to propose a new model for funding transportation; and writing a final paper about their personal philosophy on the future of mobility.

Our journey was facilitated by a variety of guest speakers and panelists who helped students understand the past, present, and future of planning decisions related to mobility infrastructure (John Myers and Chris Kopp of HNTB); the fundamentals of transportation decision making and transit planning (Flaun’say Caver PhD of Cleveland RTA); how transportation investment decisions get made, are funded, and the policy perspectives that inform those decisions (Kim Irwin from Coalition for Health Promotion and Ryan Hoff from Indiana Association of Counties); debated if transportation is a human right (Taiwo Jaiyeoba, City of Greensboro, and David Johnson of Kansas City Area Transportation Authority); explored regionalism and evolving urban areas (Cain Williamson of The ATL – Atlanta Transit Link); learned about transportation networking companies and new models in mobility (Arjan Van Andel of Uber and John Donlon of UZURV); and were challenged to think differently about measuring success in the mobility space with bestselling author Mark Aesch of TransPro.

The journey revisited the theme of the planners’ conundrum, that they are constantly trying to prepare for the future in response to the last 50 years of decisions. In the end, students presented challenging, thoughtful perspectives on the future of mobility that gives promise to the complex environment for decision making they will face as professionals.
It was a chilly Wednesday morning as I drove to the Muncie Mall, accompanied by two international student planners, Temuulen and Mauriz. Today marked the beginning of the Urban Planning Department’s long tradition of a field trip week, where the entire department would travel together to experience the built environment of different place. Then, at the end of the week, students would make charrettes based on what they observed and researched throughout the trip. Although this field trip week would be only three days due to COVID-19 complications, I was ready for a break from my regularly scheduled classes and excited to focus solely on one project: reimagining the Muncie Mall through the charrette process.

Reimagining the Muncie Mall

After pandemic nixes field trip week, we opt for three-day charrette

By ENZO LUNDY, BUPD 2023

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On the first day, the department split into three focus groups which would analyze and reimagine the mall in a certain general direction: technology and innovation, youth development, and senior/multigenerational living. I was on the technology and innovation team, where I oversaw researching possible transportation-related scenarios, such as transit-oriented redevelopment with a focus on implementation of modern technology like virtual reality and creating a high-speed rail corridor from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne using nearby tracks. A key feature of the charrette process is quickness and deliberation, which meant we only had a few hours to research and identify key aspects that we thought should be considered in our designs.

At the end of the day, each team presented their findings to the entire department. I was amazed at how diverse the findings were from each team! There were ideas ranging from partnering with Ball State’s Health Department to help provide care in a mall-based senior care facility to integrating virtual reality with customers’ shopping experiences! All these ideas made me excited to get started with the next step of the charrette process: conceptualizing the Muncie Mall with these ideas.

On the second day, it was finally time to whip out the trace paper and coloring pencils! We started by dividing each team into two to focus on and implement aspects of what we
had learned the previous day. For the tech and innovation team, that meant one group was focused on a scenario with a high-speed rail connection; my group was focused on a scenario without one. As we started, we had to keep in mind that the charrette process put us on an intense deadline to have a final concept in just six hours. However, another key aspect of the charrette process is using existing materials, such as satellite images, to trace over while applying our ideas and improvements along the way. This helped speed up the work, as well as the number of ideas we could try implementing onto the site!

For my group’s design, we focused on opening the mall to the outdoors and implementing common spaces to encourage interactions and conversations between people of different ages and backgrounds. These common spaces could facilitate innovative thinking as people gain new perspectives from different people. We also focused on having activities that drew in all age groups, such as a technology education center for the youth, an international food court, and flexible office space to be used as testing grounds for AI technology. After an intense day of work, we wrapped up with another round of presentations and headed to home to prepare for the final day of redesigning the entire mall.

As the final day of the Muncie Mall Charrette began, my group reviewed our work from the prior two days to complete our final redesign of the mall. It was crucial to communicate our vision clearly and effectively. To accomplish that, we created a final comprehensive plan of the site using insights we learned from the charrette process along with gathering graphics and real-life examples. Many groups, including mine, kept a realistic approach to the site in the hopes that some ideas from this charrette process could help inform Muncie’s decisions regarding the future of the mall. In fact, while we worked to complete our visions, community members from around Muncie came to check out our work, including the Mayor!

After another intense day of charrettes and vision-building, we prepared to present our final plan. In the audience, there were notably a few city employees, neighborhood leaders, and some who joined on Zoom! As groups presented, I was once again amazed at the uniqueness of each proposal and vision, as they ranged from a complete transformation to small-scale interventions on the site, and before I knew it, it was my group’s turn to present. I was nervous, but I was also proud and confident of the work we had done over such a short period of time.

As the day came to a close, I felt accomplished and hopeful for the future of the Muncie Mall. Despite only spending three days at the mall, I’ll never forget the intensity and impressiveness of the work we, as a department, accomplished. It was a great experience, and I’m looking forward to more weeks like this in the future!
What does a planner do?

That's the heading on a new BSU webpage we've designed to answer the pervasive question.

To answer that question, our web team -- Chair Scott Truex, Associate Professor Lohren Deeg, and I -- read countless definitions and combed through our alumni directory searching for commonalities. Lohren is a visual thinker and sketched madly on the whiteboard. I wrote just as madly, capturing his ideas in words that my brain -- always looking for a great lede -- could understand. Scott excels in making connections between ideas. And all three of us are fixated on the future where we hope enrollment will increase.

What we came up with required alumni buy-in. Luckily our alumni are awesome, and, boy, can they write! You'll notice some holes on the new page. That's because we still need YOU! See which heading best fits your planning story, and drop me a line at planning@bsu.edu.

I'll add the stories to our blog and share them on social media. You can help by re-sharing or by showing off the page on your social media accounts. The future demands that we educate planners now, so please lend us a hand!

-- Christine Rhine, administrative coordinator

THE FUTURE BEGINS WITH URBAN PLANNING. WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

The future of COMMUNITIES depends on planners who advocate for, design for, and craft policy for the people who live and work there.

Lisa Roberts  Chris Urban  Britt Redd

The new page has five sections that introduce broad planning-related fields, each tied tightly to the future. Each statement is followed by photos of alumni. Clicking on their names takes the reader to that person's story page.
Here's the rest of that new page content!

**Click here to see the real deal.**

The future of **MOBILITY** depends on planners who create resilient transportation opportunities for all people. Improving mobility can have a huge impact on the ability of people to hold jobs.

The future of **EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION** depends on planners who use their communications and organizational skills to make sure everyone has a seat at the table and that resources are used equitably. You can find these planners spread across a wide range of fields.

The future of **LIVABILITY** depends on planners who design resilient cities that can survive pandemics and climate change while creating places that mitigate the effects of these crises and preserve the best of our past.

The future of the **ECONOMY** depends on thriving communities. You’ll find planners in real estate development companies, all levels of government, and fields such as tourism, military, hospitals, and aviation.

Brad Beaubien  
Jitin Kain  
Lauren Petersen  

Cory Hull  
Taylor Firestine  
Bithia Ratnasamy  
Beth Johnson
My graduate assistantship position at the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission gives me real-world experience to go with my graduate studies. While learning about the basics of urban planning and design at BSU, I also learn how these are applied at the Plan Commission.

My task there is to help write a Resilient Muncie Climate Action Plan. This document will detail past steps taken towards city-wide climate resiliency and outline a path forward towards increasing resiliency.

I have been utilizing my undergraduate degree in environmental policy to inform the environmental-side of things, while the MURP courses are helping me to understand the Commission’s authority regarding this document and teaching me basic design techniques I can use to portray ideas. Though specifically focused on the environment, this graduate assistantship seems to be a stepping-stool to broader planning internships because it exposes me to the real-world workings of a planning office. Overall, this opportunity has given me a planning-related job which boosts my self-esteem as a planner and gives me somewhere to go during the week!

That's a wrap!
We ended fall by showcasing the work of four studio classes. Lots of visitors stopped by our Muncie Mall storefront to see the displays!

GA says working for city is a great fit
By JESSIE MUNCIE, MURP 2023

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From the chair's desk

By SCOTT TRUEX, chair

As we approach the beginning of spring semester, I am excited to look ahead and share some upcoming events with you.

Hosting APA-IN Spring Conference
March is looking up with the arrival of planners from all over the state for the annual spring conference of the Indiana APA, and we're excited to host it this year at the BSU Alumni Center. It’s always a source of pride to see so many alumni offering workshops and lectures at this conference. We are also planning events and opportunities for current students to share their work and have time with alumni to learn more about “life after BSU”!

ECAP engaging Fort Wayne
This semester, a small group of students and I will explore, research, and connect with individuals, organizations, firms, foundations, and civic leaders to discover opportunities for BSU to “Engage with Fort Wayne.”

Ball State is looking to expand our immersive learning programs and degree offerings to North Eastern Indiana. ECAP/BSU is exploring space in Electric Works, the magnificent makeover of the General Electric Campus near downtown, under the leadership of alumnus Jeff Kingsbury.

I’ve begun talking with alumni about what our involvement could look like and how the Department of Urban Planning can partner and create new and exciting engagement opportunities for our students and faculty.

ULI’s UrbanPlan continues to expand
ULI’s UrbanPlan continues to be part of PLAN 100, our intro course for ECAP first-year students. Under the leadership of alumna Mary Banning and with funding from the Ball State’s Women Foundation Discovery Grant, we will be conducting high school workshops in Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, and Muncie.

Several of our planning students are trained by ULI and assist in presenting this program. Additionally, many alumni also participate in reviewing the proposals developed by the high school teams. Please let us know if you are interested in helping us in any of these cities or others.

Stay in touch!
We would love to hear from you! We consider our alumni our best asset and appreciate all they do for the Program! Please make sure we have the most current email address for you, as we will be sharing more news this spring. In addition, our department website is an excellent resource of information and stories of what our alumni are doing.