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As 2016 is soon ending, we see a year that had major losses and uncertainties in the world. I am still reeling from the US election campaign and results, and the fear that it has engendered. We are in uncharted territory though many recall the 1930s in Europe. I find myself turning to art, and particularly music, to make sense of the world. Leonard Cohen’s songs - Everybody Knows and You Want it Darker - are amazingly prophetic - and the line in Anthem, “There is a crack, a crack in everything/ And that’s how the light gets in” profoundly resonates. Right now we need to look for those cracks and make them larger. I believe that SCARP is one of those cracks.

SCARP has had a proud 65-year history of championing an integrated approach to policymaking and planning, and being a positive force for innovation in the planning profession both in BC, Canada and internationally. The timeline that traces this history was created for our anniversary, and I encourage you to view it at: https://scarp.ubc.ca/history or please come to visit us and view it on the wall in Room 142 of West Mall Annex, UBC. In it you can see our trajectory and evolution.

We have had many awards and honours bestowed on our school and faculty since the last newsletter. Congratulations to all of those recipients. You can view these accomplishments on our home page: https://scarp.ubc.ca. John Friedmann, SCARP Honourary Professor, recipient of numerous awards and honourary doctorates, was honoured both here and in the US for his very important contributions to the planning field. More details on this can be seen in an article in this newsletter.

In October, Michael Leaf, a SCARP faculty member, and I took 15 students to Quito, Ecuador for the international UN Habitat III conference as part of a course on the habitat process. We were part of the Canadian delegation and the students also presented four posters at the conference. More details of this are in an article in this newsletter. The students had an amazing experience and represented Canada, UBC and SCARP ably. There will be a public event in January co-hosted by UBC and the Vancouver City Planning Commission where the outcomes from the conference will be presented.
We have had a very successful start to our mentorship program this year. This is the second year of this program and we are finding a lot of interest, among practitioners, in being mentors. If you are interested in doing this next year, please contact our newly-appointed Student Development Coordinator, Nicole Nagel.

This is the second year of our Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) program and we welcomed a new intake of students. The second year studio is off to an excellent start with 9 projects that students are working on. For the first year of this studio we have partnered with the City of Vancouver, the City of New Westminster, a Hazelton planning group, and UBC Campus and Community Planning. On Dec. 6 there will be preliminary presentation of the projects from 2:00PM – 7:00PM in the CK Choi Building on campus and the final presentations will be on March 31 in New Westminster. This is an open invitation to attend for anyone interested in these projects.

In other news, the revised MA/MSc in Planning degree program is open for applications for 2017-18 and we are beginning to develop an undergraduate program on urbanism. Finally, I want to wish everyone a happy new year and a good start to 2017.

Source: School of Community and Regional Planning Timeline - https://scarp.ubc.ca/history
“Jessica Hayes is a 2nd year Masters Candidate in the MCRP program. Her primary areas of interest are Social Planning, Community Development, Indigenous Community Planning, Affordable Housing, Public Engagement and Participation, and Gender Planning.”

Students from the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) spent part of the month of October in Ecuador, representing Canada as part of the official delegation to Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. Fifteen SCARP students participated in the conference which took place from October 17 – 20th, alongside fifty thousand other delegates and participants from the global community.

Through the New Urban Agenda: an “action-oriented document which will set global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development, rethinking the way we build, manage, and live in cities”, Habitat III aims to address urban challenges and encourage cooperation between levels of government, the private sector, relevant partners and stakeholders.

Sharing Vancouver’s Habitat I legacy

Habitat III was the third in a series of major UN conferences which have occurred every 20 years, the first was held in Vancouver in 1976. Penny Gurstein, SCARP’s director, was at Habitat I, and remembers the conference as an exciting time for Vancouver on the world stage.

In order to showcase Vancouver’s Habitat I legacy in Quito, SCARP students designed a poster series which was exhibited during the conference. The first poster of the series summarizes the social and economic impacts of the major events on their host cities: Vancouver and Istanbul. The second poster follows discourses on housing policies in Canada from 1976, while the third approaches the same topic on a
global scale. The last of the posters investigates the topic of governance, tracking the involvement of local governments and non-governmental organizations in the conference proceedings.

**A student-led initiative**

Almost a year in advance of the conference date, SCARP students began to self-organize, brainstorming ways in which to attend Habitat III. Through the Centre for Human Settlements, a unit within the School of Community and Regional Planning which was created as one of the legacies of Habitat '76, the students were able to receive accreditation to participate in the formal conference.

The students’ enthusiasm would eventually lead instructors Penny Gurstein and Michael Leaf to propose a 3-credit SCARP course around the idea, which was also supported by Go Global, UBC’s international learning initiative.

**Moving forward**

Moving forward, SCARP students are leading several projects to remain engaged with the New Urban Agenda during the post-conference implementation phase, including the development of media articles, public panels and events, and submissions to future conferences. Details will be forthcoming on many of the events and initiatives that the students are preparing in the hopes of continuing the momentum built in Quito.
MENTORSHIP: KICK-OFF EVENT

By: Austin Lui, Editor

On October 25, 2016, at 6:15pm, the Alumni Centre lobby was filled with professional planners, community leaders, and students. This night marked the beginning of a newly revised “tri-mentoring” program. This new approach matches up a professional planner (or someone working in planning) with a first and second year SCARP student. The mentors/professionals range from municipal planners and community developers to transportation planners and indigenous planners. The program is a way to bridge the academic theories in class with experience in the field.

Students from both cohorts are given the opportunity to build relationships with professionals, ask for advice, and get a better understanding about what it means to work in the field. The program fosters connections and builds networks in the planning field outside of SCARP.

Mentors have the opportunity to meet future planners, and build on their mentorship skills. Some mentors are graduates of SCARP, using this opportunity as a way to stay connected to the SCARP community. One mentor commented, “It is always a pleasure to meet such energetic and bright future planners.”

The kick-off event was not only an opportunity to match the mentors with the mentees; it is also an networking opportunity for professional planners.

The energy and enthusiasm from the kick-off event is a promising sign for the coming months of the mentorship program. Conversations from this night will hopefully be a catalyst for new, meaningful relationships.
John Friedmann: Interview

Introduction

John Friedmann is an Honorary Professor in SCARP and continues as Professor Emeritus in the Luskin School of Public Affairs at UCLA. In 1969, he was the founding professor of the Program for Urban Planning in the Graduate School of Architecture and Planning at UCLA where he served as its head for 14 years. His extensive research in international development took him to Brazil, Venezuela, South Korea, Chile, and China. His current research is on urbanization processes with special reference to China. Friedmann is married to Leonie Sandercock, Professor of Urban Planning and Social Policy, who joined the SCARP faculty in July 2001. He recently celebrated his 90th birthday with a well-attended lecture at SCARP. Here are excerpts of a conversation I had with Professor Friedmann.

How has planning as a field changed over the many decades you have worked as a planner?

When I studied at the University of Chicago in the 1940s and 50s, I was introduced to planning as an applied and interdisciplinary social science, but to us students, it wasn’t at all clear what our role should be in city building. The first planning school in the US had grown out of the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the 1920s as a specialization in the final year of architecture. Its primary concern was with land use and circulation. This concern continues today but with this difference: it has become a specialization within a social science-based planning. Established in 1946, the University of Chicago program set the tone for many of the new planning schools that were started in the following decades, including SCARP. The North American economy was rapidly recovering from both depression and war, and urbanization, which had ground to a halt for 15 years. Planning for urban growth was thus an important part of the post-war agenda, both here and in the war-torn world abroad.

But by the mid-‘70s, with the neo-liberal revolution underway, the “golden age” of planning came to a halt. Privatization was on the march and manufacturing jobs moved overseas where labor was cheaper and unprotected by legislation. The globalization of finance and trade went hand in hand with de-industrialization at home. As a result, both here and abroad, a lot of working people got hurt. But now, 40 years later, the neo-liberal world order is being challenged and beginning to morph into something else.
John Friedmann: Interview - Austin Lui

How do you see the world changing in the near future?
In the years ahead, our world will of course continue to be globally connected, but we now realize that the ideology of neo-liberalism has benefitted only a minority, while the majority is fighting back. The Trump revolution in America is part of a world-wide movement. More and more people are beginning to question the mindless consumer society we have become as other social values move to the foreground: the preservation of the environment, climate change, well-paying jobs, the return of national borders.

Here in Canada, the discourse in Ottawa continues to be about growth rates. Year by year, economic growth is supposed to go up. But does such growth actually reflect increasing wellness? The answer for most people is no. Collectively, many of us are in the grip of fear, anxiety, and social disorder. We need to start rethinking our attitude towards the economy in terms of an increasing quality of life rather than fictitious GDP growth rates that are still seen as the beginning and end of everything.

Our colleague, Bill Rees, has been a major advocate of this critique. He uses the urban footprint and ecological overshoot as the means of talking about it, and whatever we may think about his methodology, his critique gets at the right question. You cannot keep on growing when the resources required to sustain the economy are finite. It is a simple, straightforward thought, but it gets complicated once you start thinking of the world as a whole, China and India included.

What is the role of planners in all of this?
It’s not clear to me exactly what sort of skills community and regional planners have today. We have this tradition that goes back to the Chicago school that two-years of professional training is enough to get you ready for the world of practice. But in the intervening years, professional planning education has become so diversified that two years is no longer sufficient. Or so it seems to me.

Specializations of all sorts have evolved in our field, from land use to disaster management, from ICP to transportation, from environmental planning to international development. But there is no way we can deliver a meaningful specialization with a mere two years of training. Planning is not the only discipline that addresses these issues. Civil engineers do urban transportation; architects are also urban designers; planners are not the only ones claiming to know about environmental resilience. As a graduate planner, all you can say is that you are, as we sometimes phrase it, “a generalist with a specialty,” but the specialty is not very well defined and our students get only a brief exposure to one of them. You see the same pattern across North America. Theoretically, we could have a larger framework for teaching planning, just as engineering, for example, does. Any large engineering school is divided, among others, into programs of electrical, civil, chemical, mining, naval, and mechanical engineering. By comparison, I think that we try to do too much in planning education. Perhaps someday we will add a third year that would allow for a more meaningful education. But I don’t see this as an imminent possibility.
Of course, our graduates are still getting good jobs. But a generalist planner can look forward to a salary that is on the low side compared to similar professional pay scales in related areas.

What is your advice for budding professional planners?

Learn how to think critically about the world, and of our own place in this world. Start to think big. The other day, my daughter sent me a video she found online. It was a 24 hour time-lapse of Los Angeles from the sky. You see the flows of the traffic, the clouds moving, the change from light to darkness and back to light in a continuous, diurnal rhythm. When you watch this video, you begin to realize that this repetitive pattern is ongoing 24/7. I refer to it as part of the metabolic flows of the city. Think of the city as a kind of mega-organism. Some of these metabolic flows are visible, such as people and automobiles moving through the urban fabric. Others are invisible, such as information, water, sewage, and so forth, from the small to the massive. If you think of the city as an organism, which of these metabolic flows do we really know about? Is the city’s “body” healthy or diseased? Do you ever think of yourself as a physician to the city and its neighborhoods?

It would be helpful to distinguish this mega-scale of the urban and talk about it in terms that cannot be easily assimilated to other conversations. There is a lot of opposition to the organic model of the city, especially among social scientists. But if we take it seriously, it might lead to a revolution in our field, including the question of what’s “plannable” and what is not.

It is of course very difficult to make long-term forecasts with any degree confidence. There are too many things happening in the world over which we have no control, such as the impacts of new technologies, pandemics, cataclysmic events, political changes…. But if this is the case, as I think we can agree, then I am increasingly thinking that the time frame for planning should be the extended present rather than the distant future. Along with others and working in collaboration, let’s confront some current urban problems and try solving them, then watch what happens in a continuous process of social learning. The most effective planners will be those who grapple with problems in the extended present rather than strive for a utopian future.
Fausto Inomata is an international student from Brazil with experience in transit and active transportation design. His greatest interests are Social Planning and Environmental Justice and how these could be improved through Urban Design and Transportation Planning.

SCARP’s planning studio is a course introduced in the new MCRP professional program. The non-ICP students are gathered in small teams to collaborate with project partners according to their interest. The studio is a very intensive and fast-paced process that brings together faculty and adjunct faculty to help the student groups in their process and deliverables.

The studio teams are presenting the result of their mid-project milestone on December 6th, 2016 at UBC’s Liu Institute For Global Issues from 2pm to 7pm. All students and faculty are welcome to attend the presentations.

This year we are partnering with the organizations and themes below:

- **Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House**
  - Capital Development Planning
- **New Westminster**
  - Age-Friendly Development Strategy
- **New Westminster**
  - Animating the Riverfront Public Realm
- **City of Vancouver**
  - SCARP Viaduct Studio
- **False Creek South**
  - False Creek South Renewal
- **UBC**
  - Regenerative Eco-Urbanism in Stadium Neighbourhood
- **Upper Skeena Recreation Centre**
  - Community Mobility
- **Upper Skeena Recreation Centre**
  - Health Plan
NewsBytes is SCARP’s tri-annual newsletter highlighting current announcements, recent accomplishments, events, research, and broader planning movements of interest to staff, faculty, students, alumni, prospective students and members of the community.

Opinions expressed in NewsBytes are not necessarily those of UBC, SCARP, or the NewsBytes Editor. If you have questions or comments, or would like to make a submission to a future edition of NewsBytes, please contact NewsBytes Editor and Outreach Coordinator, Austin Lui, directly at austinlui6@gmail.com or contact the School of Community And Regional Planning at the address provided below.