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The SCARP community has had a very busy few months and it is anticipated that it will be even busier in the future. Another highly successful student-organized symposium was held on February 27 with the largest attendance to date. The symposium’s workshops were inspiring and thought-provoking and a huge congratulations needs to be extended to all of the student organizers.

Planning is actively occurring for the Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP), the professional accredited degree, which will commence in September 2015. SCARP is also jointly hosting, with the Department of Civil Engineering at UBC, a Master of Engineering Leadership (MEL) in Urban Systems which will commence in January 2016. We have hired a new faculty member, Dr. Alex Bigazzi, who will hold the joint Civil/SCARP position in Transportation Planning starting July 2015. We are in the process of recruiting a Canada Research Tier 2 Chair in Sustainable Urban Systems and Infrastructure Planning. A number of our faculty and students have been involved in community issues including the Transportation Referendum and we continue to host visiting scholars and delegations from universities around the world.

We are still planning for the renovation of the Lasserre building to accommodate the consolidation of SCARP in one location. Other initiatives we are working on include a joint SCARP/SALA Master of Urban Design Symposium in April 2016.

If you are a SCARP Alumni you will be hearing from us shortly about a mentorship program we are organizing with the PIBC (Planning Institute of BC) which will provide an opportunity for students to be mentored by professional planners during their time at SCARP and while they are going through the membership requirements. We hope that you will be willing to mentor a SCARP student.

I want to acknowledge the retirement at the end of this term of three adjunct professors who have each made an important contribution to SCARP over the years. Norma-Jean McLaren has taught Plan 538 – Cross-Cultural Planning (Educating the Heart) and has mentored countless students, Jon O’Riordan has taught several courses on sustainable approaches to environmental governance and through his leadership set a standard for future environmental planners, and Raymond Young has, for countless years, taught Plan 506 – The Legal Context of Planning and instilled in our students an appreciation for how planning intersects with the law. All three of these adjunct professors will be very much missed and theirs will be hard shoes to fill.

As we move forward with our new initiatives we welcome input from the SCARP community. It is you who make SCARP as strong and well regarded as it is.
Housing for all. This was the bold vision that a recent multimedia art exhibition explored. From Wednesday, May 20 to Saturday, May 23, the Future of Public Housing Project hosted an exhibition at the Interurban Gallery that engaged members of the public on key issues of public housing. It was an opportunity to bring together artistic expression and activism around housing with relevant local and international research. The diverse art pieces reflected the many different housing experiences that people have in our communities, from young people aging out of foster care, to seniors facing eviction from their home at Little Mountain. The hope is that by sharing these stories and experiences, we can build the empathy and awareness necessary to mobilize community support around key housing issues.

The exhibition featured four themes. ‘A History of Housing’ gave attendees the historical context to our current housing situation, and featured archival films. ‘Struggles for Shelter’ highlighted the current housing experiences of people around the world, from as far as Tajikistan to Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The exhibition was fortunate to feature artist David Vaisbord’s work on The Little Mountain Project, including real artefacts from Sim and Joan Chang, seniors that remained in the last social
housing building on the site. ‘Power to the People’ gained inspiration from the actions that citizens have taken on housing issues, from hosting Vancouver’s first SRO convention to designing their own version of the Little Mountain site. Finally, ‘Futures of Public Housing’ looked forward, by showcasing films made by young artists as part of the Housing Matters Media Project, by Patti Fraser and Corinne Brown. The exhibition would not have been possible without the support of the Carnegie Community Action Project, Joanne Gates and her studio course at the UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Habitat for Humanity, the Vancouver Foundation, and the Interurban Gallery. Over 200 people had a chance to see the exhibit, and provide their thoughts on how we can accomplish a future with housing for all.
I had the fortune of being in the last cohort of “Cross-Cultural Planning (Educating the Heart)” taught by Norma-Jean McLaren. She began teaching the course at SCARP in 2007, but had worked with SCARP a few years before that. Initially, I was not sure what to expect from the course, but the idea that it would help “educate my heart” for my future career in planning interested me. Indeed educating my heart was one of the many beautiful lessons that the course taught me. The course focused on developing cross-cultural communication and understanding in planning practice. We heard from a diverse group of speakers who had worked to integrate cross-cultural perspectives in their careers. One of my favorite speakers was Norma-Jean’s good friend, Meharoona Ghani, a Spoken Word Artist, Public Speaker, and Diversity and Intercultural Planner. Meharoona spoke of the importance of sharing diverse perspectives, and of creating connections between different cultures. The idea of creating cross-cultural connections is a teaching that Norma-Jean constantly emphasized in the course, and a teaching that has shaped much of her life’s work. Norma-Jean first began her career working with neighborhood houses, where she worked closely with newcomers. She became fascinated by the fact that many of the newcomers “had to make such a big jump in their life.” Many did not speak the language, some had left under very difficult circumstances, and some were seniors who had never left their countries before. In her work with the various newcomer communities, Norma-Jean worked to connect the life stories of newcomers, First Nations peoples, and settlers so that each group could “understand the gain they have from coming together.” She realized that in order to create a
sense of compassion and understanding between the various groups of peoples that exist in Canada, it was important to bring everyone together. From this idea of needing to connect different life stories, emerged the film “The Spirit Has No Colour,” which Norma-Jean initiated and co-produced, and which has been screened all over the world. The film was a joint production of the Police Academy, JIBC, 42nd Street Consulting and Orca Productions. It has been used as a training film for BC’s municipal police recruits in order to shine a light on the relationship between police and Aboriginal Peoples. Norma-Jean wanted to do the film not only as a “justice film,” but as a film for the “average Canadian,” in order to prevent Aboriginal-centered programs from getting shut down. She also helped create the film in order to produce a counter narrative to the story that Canada had brainwashed First Nations people into believing “the idea that their culture was nothing, and that they needed to change their culture.”

The importance of creating inter-cultural connection in order to create peaceful relationships was one of the most valuable lessons that Norma-Jean learned from her years of community-based experience and that she brought to her teaching at SCARP. As she stated, “If we don’t have contact with newcomers we miss the knowledge and teachings they bring. It is still so incredibly important when we put people together. We are our own worst enemies when we don’t do that. People need to be brought together.” Another great lesson that Norma-Jean also emphasized in her teachings at SCARP was the importance of “coming from your heart when you engage in planning and community work.” As she said, “I called it educating the heart [Cross Cultural Planning] because our minds are powerful, but our heart has to be involved in what we do.” For Norma-Jean, the heart teaches us lessons that the mind does not, it is another way of knowing, which teaches us balance. As she said,

“There is a part of us that thinks we are better than others, and the other thinks that we are less, and they are both battling each other. Finding the balance is realizing that we are not just another human, but we carry in us gifts that we are not allowed to keep, that is not what we were given them for. We were given the gifts in order to share them.” She also emphasized that the heart also teaches us that we create ourselves. “In the face of pain, in the face of love, in the face of all of life spectrums we have the ability to take control of our lives.” Finally, Norma-Jean acknowledges that engaging in “heart-based doing” is not always an easy task.

“In the face of suffering, sometimes it [community work] breaks your heart, but you have to understand where the pain and the love takes you. Sometimes it may tell you to go inward to meet yourself, or at other times, it may tell you to go and meet others first so that you can spread your teaching and lessons learned.”

These were some of the lessons that Norma-Jean helped students to better understand in her time at SCARP. I am very grateful for having been in part of such a beautiful course that challenged me to engage with my heart as a valid way of knowing. Thank you Norma-Jean, I know many SCARP students are very grateful to you.
Current Work: ‘Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay, BC as Director of their Treaty and Natural Resources Department

My work experience includes 16 years as a regional planner and municipal administrator in Northwest BC, 17 years as bioregional planner for two BC First Nations, and 10 years as an Adjunct Professor at SCARP. I have completed bioregional planning and mapping projects on four continents, and have written widely on the same subjects. Over the last 10 years I have primarily worked for the ‘Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay, BC as Director of their Treaty and Natural Resources Department. Collectively, we coordinate title and rights actions, conduct a wide range of cultural and scientific research, have created a folio of 1,200 digital bioregional maps, and generally work to put a ‘Namgis ‘face’ on every square centimeter of their 2,800 square kilometer territory.

Professional accomplishments include completing BA, MA, and PhD planning degrees in three different countries, enjoying a 10-year period of simultaneous work as an academic and practicing planner, developing bioregional mapping as a tool of community empowerment, and editing two anthologies on bioregional planning for New Society Publishers.

My personal and professional goals have been to live and work at the edges of the world for rural communities and First Nations who remain connected to cultures of place. These are communities where cascading impacts of awful injustice are experienced on a daily basis, but also where a powerful resistance is fostered by cultivation of wickedly defiant humour, and knowing more about ‘home place’ than any force attempting to exploit it. Every day in nearly 40 years of my planning practice has been an adventure.

I have special memories of my time as a student at SCARP. Bill Rees was a supportive and persistently skeptical mentor. I was encouraged to explore the idea, bio-regionalism, that is a constant ideological touchstone in my life’s journey.
Marine hazards, such as sea-level rise, storm surges, and marine transportation disruptions, pose significant challenges to many coastal communities in the Strait of Georgia region. Regional collaborations that support shared learning and institutional capacity building have the potential to reduce these hazard risks by facilitating networks of resilience. The Marine Environmental Observation Prediction and Response (MEOPAR) team at UBC brings together interdisciplinary researchers and students focused on reducing coastal vulnerability to confront these issues. Prof. Stephanie Chang (SCARP/IRES) and her team are currently working on a marine transportation disruption project and are developing a hazards vulnerability similarity index to support coastal resilience research in the Strait of Georgia.

On May 27, the MEOPAR UBC team hosted the 3rd annual Strait of Georgia Marine Hazards Workshop at the False Creek Flats Community Centre in Vancouver. With over 60 participants, the workshop brought together a diverse group of coastal management stakeholders, including representatives from municipal planning departments, federal and provincial governments, the Musqueam First Nation, emergency response organizations, port authorities, industries, and NGOs. During the workshop, the MEOPAR UBC team presented their current research findings and had an opportunity to receive valuable feedback from the participants. Thematic break-out sessions and a spirited world cafe session allowed the participants to discuss how to improve communication of the research results for end users and to make suggestions for the direction of future research. This constructive feedback has been documented and will be included in our upcoming workshop report.
On Tuesday, May 26th, SCARP held a reception at the Lasserre Building to honour SCARP 2015 Spring Graduates and the retirement of Jon O’Riordan, Raymond Young, Norma-Jean McLaren and Patti Toporowski. SCARP students who received awards and those recognized for volunteer achievements were also honoured. The event began with a speech of thanks and recognition to the students and retirees by the Director of the School, Penny Gurstein. Penny expressed her gratitude to the faculty and staff who had worked for the school and their commitment to the students’ learning throughout the years. In recognition of Patti Toporowski, who worked at SCARP for over 28 years, Michael Gordon, Senior Downtown Planner with the City of Vancouver, spoke of Patti’s wonderful work for SCARP, and her dedication to all SCARP students.
SCARP MASTER’S
GRADUATES SPRING 2015

Beaudreau, James, MAP
Project: Vancouver’s Missing Middle: Comparing Urban Forms to Inform Residential Building Typologies for Vancouver
Committee: Maged Senbel, Foong Patrick Chang (City of Vancouver, Planning Dept.)

Chen, Wei-Chung, MScP
Project: Social Vulnerability and Risk Perception of Chinese-Speaking Immigrants in Metro Vancouver: A Case Study of Richmond City Residents
Committee: Stephanie Chang, Leonora Angeles

Esser, Gabrielle, MAAMAP
Committee: Leonora Angeles, Abidin Kusno (UBC, Institute of Asian Research), Aprodicio Laquian

Haber, Lee, MAP
Committee: Lawrence Frank, Stephanie Chang, Gordon Price (SFU, The City Program)

Kebede, Adam, MScP
Project: The Green Streets Game: Evaluating a Collaborative Design Tool for Youth Public Engagement
Committee: Maged Senbel, Arthur Orsini (Vancouver City Health).

Krause, Peer-Daniel, MAP
Project: Redeveloping Under-Built Community-Owned Real Estate
Committee: Maged Senbel, Emily Beam (Vancity Community Foundation)

McGlenn, Stephen, MAP
Project: A Collaborative Indigenous Community Planning Project with the Tobacco Plains Indian Band
Committee: Jeff Cook, Tobacco Plains Indian Band

Mendoza, Maureen Grace, MAP
Project: Multicultural Policy, Programming, and Planning: The Collaborative Future of Metro Vancouver’s Municipalities and Settlement Sector
Committee: Penny Gurstein, Andrea Arnot (Richmond Multicultural Community Services)

Miller, Alexander, MScP
Project: An Analysis of Underwater Noise Regulation: Beluga Whale Protection in Cook Inlet in Anchorage, Alaska
Committee: Jordi Honey-Rosés, Robert Small (Alaska Department of Fish & Game)

Rennie, Erin, MAP
Project: Improving Sustainability in BC’s Municipal Cemeteries
Committee: Mark Stevens, Erik Lees (Lees & Associates)

White, Robert, MScP
Project: Moving Forward: Opportunities for Vancouver’s Digital Wayfinding Map
Committee: Maged Senbel, Jenniffer Sheel (City of Vancouver)
NewsBytes is SCARP’s tri-annual newsletter highlighting current announcements, recent accomplishments, events, research, and broader planning movements of interest to staff, faculty, students, and alumni, as well as 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, Maria Trujillo directly at scarp.news@ubc.ca, or contact the School of Community And Regional Planning at the address provided below.