

SCARP Newsbytes November 2006

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Newsbytes is the School of Community and Regional Planning's (SCARP) online newsletter for both current and prospective students. This newsletter will keep you informed regarding student and faculty information, and SCARP school events.

SCARP students are mid-way through term 1 and many are feeling the pressures of paper writing, urban design studio projects, and thesis research. Despite these responsibilities, SCARP's new students are integrating themselves well into graduate school life.

September was busy with the first-year student orientation that included an overnight trip to Whistler and a city tour of Squamish that was led by one of the city's planning professionals. Early October realized SCARP's annual 'Amazing Race' event. This event challenges first-year students to race around Vancouver and into the greater Vancouver regional district. The students were to find clues that would lead to the final destination. This race provides students the opportunity to explore Vancouver and the greater district's urban fabric including different transportation methods (bus, skytrain, ferry), communities and various services and amenities.

The 2006-2007 school year offers new opportunities as SCARP recently congratulated Dr. Leonie Sandercock as the school's new Director. Dr. Sandercock notes this is SCARP's "golden age" and she is proud of this recent appointment.

Enjoy the read! Should you have any questions or ideas for this newsletter, please feel free to contact Kate Sunderland directly at katesun@interchange.ubc.ca

STUDENTS

New Students!

Every year SCARP welcomes approximately thirty new students to the two-year Masters graduate program. Students come from near and far, and together bring valuable experience and knowledge that help contribute to the School's success. This edition of newsbytes would like to introduce two new Scarpies:

Name: Max Goldstein

Where are you from: Stockholm, Sweden

Why did you choose SCARP: I chose SCARP because of its emphasis on sustainability and public participation.

What program are you in: I am in Urban Design because I am interested in how our cities are shaped, how we can bring nature into the city, as well as creating exciting places with "life between the buildings".

Impressions of Vancouver thus far: Vancouver needs a subway (or extensions of the sky train), especially out to UBC. To me it feels strange the way so many neighborhoods extend along "main streets" with vast dead stretches of houses between them. I would like to see better integration of these parts. But I do love Vancouver's mix of water, mountains, and skyscrapers.

Favourite quotes: "Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else." Italo Calvino

Name: RJ McCulloch

Where are you from: I grew up in Ohio. (exactly where doesn't matter...)

Why did you choose SCARP: SCARP is a well-regarded program with an outstanding faculty located in the perfect urban laboratory.

What program are you in: I am in the Urban Design stream because I am most interested in design, and because I believe this it will allow me to contribute the most to the field of planning. Impressions of Vancouver thus far: Vancouver...stunning, fresh, vibrant and exciting come to mind. Really, I feel quite lucky to live in such an outstanding urban space - truly the best I've encountered in North America and one of the best I've come across throughout the world. I simply love it here.

Favourite quote: "comme ca" -Frank Ducote

Tips for Students!

Top 5 tips for students... Compiled from second year SCARP students, listed below are tidbits of valuable information that hope to help current students, and provide prospective students a glimpse of what student life at SCARP is really like:

5. SCARP encourages an interdisciplinary approach to a student's academic experience. Therefore, feel free to explore classes in other departments (Geography, Earth Sciences, Architecture) and other academic institutions (SFU, UVIC etc.) to help tailor this master's degree to your specific interests!
4. SCARP is a 60 credit program so try to take advantage of summer classes and internship opportunities to fulfill these credits needed.
3. You are not alone! The Graduate Student Society (GSS) and UBC offer a variety of helpful workshops (academic writing tips, resume writing assistance etc.) or support programs (counseling services, yoga classes) to help all students achieve success in their studies.
2. There are many opportunities to integrate with architecture and landscape architecture students. Why not join the Community Studio. This volunteer collaboration between planning, architecture and landscape architecture students, assists community initiated projects with student help. This help includes graphic and technical skills, design information and resources, and design workshops. The idea is for students from all three disciplines, to have the opportunity to volunteer their skills to various community projects.

1. As busy as graduate school may be, always remember to take time for yourself. A healthy body makes a healthy mind. Check out SPROUTS in the basement of the Student Union Building. SPROUTS is locally grown produce store that also sells a variety of organic foods to keep your body well nourished.

FACULTY and STAFF

FACULTY:

Welcome Dr. Leonie Sandercock as SCARP's New Director!

There is no hiding Dr. Leonie Sandercock's enthusiasm for SCARP when she passionately speaks about the school thanks to its strong curriculum and driven students. Claiming there is no better time to be Director considering SCARP's present "golden age", she is excited to build on the tremendous job of her predecessor, Tony Dorcey, while fostering her own leadership style and goals.

Leonie has every reason to be proud of SCARP, especially considering last year's national student conference (Planners for Tomorrow – www.plannersfortomorrow.ca) that was organized and hosted by SCARP and its students. This conference fostered great enthusiasm for urban planning and was appropriately scheduled a week before Vancouver's hosting of the World Urban Forum. Many of SCARP's faculty were among the speakers at this UN Forum while students volunteered many hours to contribute to the Forum's success.

In her role as Director, Leonie is offering a new leadership style by implementing a more devolved approach. Sandercock is sharing some of the directorship responsibilities among colleagues to help provide a greater balance and diversity of minds. This style would benefit a long-term goal of providing an easy Directorial transition for the next individual. Additionally, this style provides a more flexible Directorship allowing all faculty to pursue individual research while maintaining school administrative responsibilities.

SCARP students are proud to have Dr. Sandercock as the School's new Director and warmly welcome her in this new position.

Urban Design Faculty Position Available

SCARP invites applications for a tenure track Assistant Professorship in Urban Design. The successful applicant should have the ability to design and teach graduate-level courses relevant to the School's Areas of Concentration in Urban Design and Physical Planning.

New Faculty at SCARP

Dr. Wendy Sarkissian

SCARP would like to welcome Adjunct Professor Dr. Wendy Sarkissian who will be co-teaching with Adjunct Professor Larry Beasley starting January 2007. Together they will teach Understanding Vancouver's Inner City Housing: Multifaceted Post-Occupancy Evaluation – The

False Creek North Case Study. “This course will explore philosophy, theory and techniques of multifaceted post- occupancy evaluation and will ultimately apply these using Vancouver’s False Creek North as a case study. The course is arranged in two semesters – one focused on conceptual and methodological aspects and the second on application of concepts.” (Taken from class outline)

Wendy brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to this position. She “is passionate about our future...the future of work, of housing, of communities and of citizen participation. She is committed to finding spirited ways to nurture and support an engaged citizenry. Her successful career as consultant and academic in Australia and overseas has provided firsthand knowledge of many contexts, from developers’ boardrooms to low-income housing estates.” (Sarkissian website) To read more about Dr. Wendy Sarkissian please visit her website at www.sarkissian.com.au.

Margo Fryer

SCARP also welcomes Margo Fryer as a new full-time faculty member. UBC has offered funding to appoint Margo Fryer, the Learning Exchange Director, to a joint appointment at SCARP. Before developing the Learning Exchange, Dr. Fryer worked in health-related consulting research. Her teaching at SCARP will be focused on equipping students to work with agencies similar to the Learning Exchange in and around Vancouver. Although this specific direction has not previously been envisioned for SCARP, this appointment is consistent with the School’s goals of increasing engagement with the community.

More New Faculty Members!

Newsbytes will introduce you to other new SCARP faculty members in the next newsletter. These new members include: Frank Ducote, Scot Hein, Joyce Drohan, Jonathan Frantz and Nathan Edelson.

SCHOOL

Computer Lab Assistant

SCARP hired first year student Courtney Campbell to be the computer lab assistant for the West Mall Annex lab, Cosmopolis lab, and the Urban Design la25b. Courtney works each Tuesday & Thursday from 1:00-4:00pm and can be found in one of the three labs.

Please feel free to contact Courtney directly at courtney.campbell@gmail.com should you have any computer questions or concerns.

SCARP Colloquium Series 2006-2007

Since 2001, SCARP and The Centre for Human Settlements (CHS) have initiated a noon hour colloquium series that features biweekly interactive presentations by members of the faculty. The purpose of the colloquium series is to promote dialogue and discussion among faculty, staff, and students as well as other members of the UBC community, about issues that are relevant to SCARP’s mission.

The bimonthly presentations are organized this year by Professor Yossi Berechman. All sessions are held on Wednesdays from 12:30-1:45 in WMAX 150. Keep your eyes and ears open for announcements of upcoming speakers as part of the colloquium series.

Christmas Party!

Mark your calendars for December 1, 2006. This will be the SCARP Faculty and Student Christmas Party at WMAX!

APPLAUSE!

Congratulations to Tanja Winkler!

Tanja Winkler, a recent graduate of SCARP's PhD program received 2nd prize in the American Collegiate Schools of Planning Gill Chin Lim award for the Best PhD in international development planning. Tanja's Supervisory Committee included Leonie Sandercock (Chair), John Friedmann, David Ley (Geog, UBC) and Alan Mabin (U of Witwatersrand). Tanja's dissertation is titled *Kwere Kwere Journeys into Strangeness: Reimagining Inner-City Regeneration in Hillbrow, Johannesburg*

Congratulations to Matti Siemiatycki!

SCARP's recent PhD graduate, Matti Siemiatycki, has taken up a four-year position as Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow.

Student Awards

SCARP congratulates all student recipients of the 2006-2007 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada award, and the University Graduate Fellowship award. A list of names will be published in the next edition of newsbytes.

Memorial Scholarship Helps SCARP Students Follow Influential Planner's Lead

"Professor Wiesman was very much involved in the exchange of ideas between Canadian and Chinese planners and I hope to be a part of this exchange."

– Leslie Shieh, co-recipient of the Brahm Wiesman Memorial Scholarship in Community and Regional Planning, 2006

When Brahm Wiesman was the Director of UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP), Thammasat University in Bangkok invited the school to participate in some human settlement issues. Brahm, his wife Madge, and colleague Peter Boothroyd travelled to Thailand in 1988, going out into rural areas with professors from Thammasat to consult with village tambon councils. This was the first of many trips to Thailand, and the beginning of a long-term relationship with Asia, both for SCARP and for the Wiesmans.

Under Brahm's directorship, SCARP and UBC's Centre for Human Settlements (CHS) initiated their first major overseas development projects. As a result, CHS was designated a Centre of Excellence by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1990. Brahm and Peter began collaborative work in Vietnam, but it was China that became Brahm's principal area of interest.

He and Madge first went to Beijing in 1989, just a few months after the Tiananmen Square protests, and this visit led to groups of planners from China coming to UBC to exchange ideas. After his retirement from SCARP, Brahm continued to travel to China regularly, consulting on planning projects. Between 2001 and 2002, he visited the country eight times.

Brahm Wiesman initially planned to become an architect but after receiving his degree in Architecture from McGill University, he felt the field wasn't going to give him the challenges he craved. "He was always interested in cities and their arrangement and infrastructure," Madge recalls. "And so, when the planning school was set up at McGill, he went to it."

After completing his MA in Planning in 1948, Brahm moved to Edmonton as Assistant Director with the city's planning department. On a ski trip to Jasper, he was wandering along a train-station platform when he struck up a conversation with a physiotherapist named Madge McCulloch, who had moved to Canada from Scotland less than two years before. Brahm and Madge married in Victoria, where Brahm had taken up a position as Director of Planning; in 1961, they transferred to Vancouver.

Brahm was working with the City of Vancouver planning department when his former classmate, Dr. Peter Oberlander – at that time Director of SCARP – invited him to deliver some guest lectures. This foray into the academic world persuaded Brahm to join the faculty. He later became Acting Director of SCARP (1971-1974), and Director (1978-1987). He was greatly respected for his teaching abilities; Peter Oberlander calls him "a natural teacher who engaged his students", Peter Boothroyd remembers him as a clear thinker and speaker, while his students speak of his mentorship and guidance.

After Brahm's passing in 2003, his last PhD student, Erasmus Morah, demonstrated the impact of this mentorship. Madge recalls how Erasmus suggested that establishing a scholarship in Brahm's memory would be a fitting tribute to a man whose insightful teaching had inspired so many other planners.

"I felt this was a wonderful idea," Madge says, "and so we set up the Brahm Wiesman Memorial Scholarship in Community and Regional Planning at UBC."

This award supports graduate students who need to travel abroad to carry out research for a SCARP thesis, project or practicum under the auspices of a university exchange program, with preference given to students intending to conduct their research in China (or Thailand or Vietnam if no student with a focus on China qualifies).

Several friends, colleagues and former students have joined Madge in contributing to the endowed fund that makes yearly sums available for students. The scholarship was awarded for the first time in 2006 to two PhD candidates: Leslie Shieh, who is researching the impact of urbanization on villages on the fringe of Chinese cities, and Sheng Zhong, who is studying a development project on Shanghai's waterfront and how it may affect the people who live there. Fittingly, this was Brahm Wiesman's final consulting project.

On receiving the award, Leslie says, “I am appreciative to have been one of the recipients of the scholarship this year. Having just spent a year studying in China, I look forward to returning to continue research there. Professor Wiesman was very much involved in the exchange of ideas between Canadian and Chinese planners and I hope to be a part of this exchange.”

Sheng says, “I met Professor Wiesman many years ago in China as his translator and he was very much dedicated to the promotion of China’s urban planning profession and education. I got a lot of knowledge and advice from him, which I think will benefit my whole life. The scholarship is an inspiration for me, and I think the best way to thank him is to work hard to accomplish my PhD. The scholarship enabled me to go back to Shanghai to collect preliminary information for my research prospectus and to visit some of Japan’s industrial areas that are related to my own research in Shanghai. Without the support of this scholarship, I wouldn’t have been able to make the trip this summer.”

In order to provide even more support for students through this scholarship, Madge Wiesman would like to build up the award fund still further, and hopes that other donors might see their way to contributing to this initiative.

Sharing her thoughts on the award, Madge says, “I hope that the Brahm Wiesman Memorial Scholarship in Community and Regional Planning will help deserving students contribute on an international basis to the betterment of communities, to the further advancement of the planning profession, and to further advancements in the teaching of planning.”

The Brahm Wiesman Memorial Scholarship in Community and Regional Planning honours an influential professor and planner while helping SCARP students carry out international research. If you would like to contribute to the fund, please contact Murray Landa at murray.landa@ubc.ca or 604-827-4155.



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