

URBAN UPDATE

urban affairs & planning

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The beginning of this semester was different from any of the past seasons in Blacksburg. Joy and anticipation were tinged somewhat by the memories of the events of April 16. The Hokie Spirit dominated, however. Although we will never forget the Hokies we lost in the spring, we are moving forward in a very positive way. We have a wonderful group of students, freshly augmented with new grad students and our largest entering class of freshmen and transfers on record!

I assumed the duties of Program Chair on July 2, as Ted Koebel stepped down after his distinguished service to focus on other activities. He continues to provide invaluable assistance.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree at Virginia Tech. To mark the occasion, we are holding a reception in Blacksburg on October 26th from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Inn at Virginia Tech, and in Arlington on December 6th from 6 - 8 p.m. at the Arlington Economic Development Offices (1100 North Glebe Road, Suite 1500). I hope you can make one or both of these events.

I am a proud Hokie, holding a B.S. and M.S. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from Virginia Tech. I also served as President of the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and as a member of the National Board of Directors of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association. However, the opportunity to serve this program has me more excited than ever.

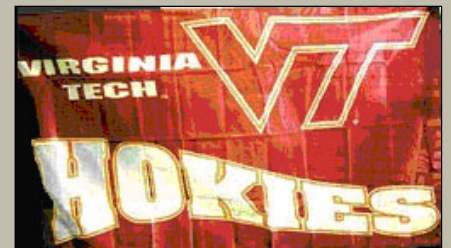
One of my top priorities is to reconnect the program with its alumni and friends. These periodic newsletters are part of this reconnection. Please contact uapvt@vt.edu and let us know what is happening in your life. We will be publishing significant milestones in the newsletter and plan to have alumni spotlights, like the one in this issue featuring Michelle Groenevelt.

Also, please drop by when you are on campus. I would love to meet you or see you again.

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COME CELEBRATE OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

On October 26th, we're inviting our alumni, faculty (past and present), and friends to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program. The celebration will occur at The Inn at Virginia Tech, located at 901 Prices Fork Road in Blacksburg from 7 - 9 p.m. Additionally, there will be a celebration December 6th from 6 - 8 p.m. at the Arlington Economic Development Offices located at 1100 N. Glebe Road, Suite 1500 in Arlington, Virginia. Please join us at one or both if you're able!

SPOTLIGHT: MURP GRADUATE MICHELLE GROENEVELT

Works in small Idahoan mountain town

Virginia Tech's planning students can look forward to exciting careers. One of our alumnae, Michelle Groenevelt (MURP '05), is making a career as a planner in a small mountain town in the state of Idaho. "It's an exciting job," Michelle says, because she is exposed to the many opportunities and challenges a small town offers for urban planning practitioners.

Michelle works in McCall, Idaho, which is located 100 miles north of Boise and nestled on the shores of Payette Lake. Residents and visitors indulge in year-round hiking, biking, hunting, backcountry fly fishing, sailing, water skiing, whitewater kayaking and rafting, ice skating, cross country skiing, snowboarding, and alpine skiing.

On a recent trip to Idaho, one of our faculty members, Heike Mayer, enjoyed the outdoors with Michelle. They went kayaking on the Payette River, and Michelle gave Heike a quick tour of the town.

Michelle was recently promoted to Planning Manager in the Community Development Department of the City of McCall. She will supervise a staff of seven,



and she is in the process of recruiting and hiring a new Community Planner and a Geographic Information Systems Technician. Michelle joined the city of McCall in September 2005 as the Community Planner/GIS Staff.

Since Michelle has been in the City of McCall, the following accomplishments are in progress or have been completed:

- Met information requests for land use applications, current planning information, and technical support;

- Implementations of: a revised zoning and subdivision code; a community housing policy for McCall; a community housing fee ordinance; a geographic information system; new planning, zoning, and building permit fee structures; and a revision of the comprehensive plan;
- Updated the urban renewal plan;
- McCall was awarded an EPA smart growth grant.

As a recent MURP graduate, Michelle has already experienced the breadth and depth of urban planning. She says, "McCall has become a progressive planning environment and continues to strive for innovative planning solutions." For example, the new City code limits formula retail and restaurants to promote a local economy and unique sense of place. Regulations also limit professional offices on the street level in the Central Business District to create a more congenial and interesting downtown. The first commercial "green roof" was installed this summer in the downtown area.

We congratulate Michelle on her accomplishments and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

CELEBRATIONS THE HOKIE FAMILY IS GROWING!

- Congratulations to Joe Schilling and his wife, Elizabeth, on the birth of their twin sons Thomas Joseph and Henry Jackson.
- Congratulations to GIA's Gerard Toal and his wife, Sabine, on the birth of their daughter.

UAP HAPPENINGS & UPDATES CONGRATULATIONS!

- John Browder is now Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for the School of Architecture.
- Jesse Richardson is UAP Program Chair.
- Heike Mayer is now Acting Associate Chair and Acting Director for the National Capital Region.
- Diane Zahm is now Associate Chair and Director of the Undergraduate Program.
- UAP welcomes Carlton Basmajian as visiting associate professor for 2007-08.

MORE THAN JUST CLASS...

- As a part of the Hokie Spirit Memorial scholarship effort, Ted Koebel and Kris Wernstedt are tying on their tennis shoes and going for a run. More precisely, they're running the Marine Corps Marathon (www.marinemarathon.com). Huah!
- GIA's Gerard Toal has been particularly busy, and not just with a new baby! Check out this article featuring his work and research in recovering Bosnia: www.research.vt.edu/resmag/2007summer/bosnia.html
- UAP students win Student Project Award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (see page 4)

ALUMNI TREK TO NORTHERN ENGLAND

Pull out your backpack and find the travel sized shampoo—here comes the opportunity of a lifetime!



To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the MURP Program, UAP is offering a special adventure travel program for planners and their significant others to Northern England in the second half of May, 2008.

The trip is a 10-11 day walking trek—village to village—through what is arguably one of the most magnificent and intensively planned, working landscapes in the world. The trek, covering approximately 130 miles, will traverse England's Lake District and Yorkshire Dales along with segments of Hadrian's Wall. Participants will be exposed to some of the most sophisticated and successful planning schemes

employed globally in growth management, rural landscape conservation, village design, and heritage protection. The trip is designed as an adventure vacation and casual social opportunity with a planning theme.

The trip will be led by Dr. Donald Chance and other faculty who conduct UAP's annual study abroad trekking program for students to the same region. Participants will be hiking at their own pace with light packs, staying at night in B&B's and hostels. A pack transfer service is anticipated to be available as the route is finalized, and the group size will be limited.

While rigorous, the trip is suitable for anyone in reasonably good shape that enjoys walking and mixing outdoor experiences in a rich cultural environment. Cost is anticipated to be approximately \$1900 (not including airfare). For more information, contact Donald Chance at dochance@vt.edu.

RESTORING HEALTH AND HOPE TO NEW ORLEANS

"healing, safety, economy, infrastructure, and sustainability"

Earthea Nance, UAP assistant professor since 2004, has long been interested in two fields widely separated in the professional world—engineering and social justice. After obtaining degrees in engineering from UC-Davis, she earned a self-designed interdisciplinary Ph.D. from Stanford University's Civil & Environmental Engineering Department in the areas of environmental planning and management, anthropology, and Latin American studies. Her doctoral research focused on community participation in Brazil's water and sanitation sector.

In 2005-06, while on leave from Virginia Tech as a Martin Luther King Fellow at MIT, she became involved in New Orleans' post-Katrina rebuilding and related social impacts. She founded the People's Environmental Center (PEC) in New Orleans to help people make informed decisions as they tried to rebuild and re-establish their lives. PEC provides direct access to non-profit environmental laboratory testing; household inspection and remediation assistance for contamination discovery; and workshops and training on inspecting one's house, taking samples, safe cleanup practices, understanding test results, and knowledge of environmental health impacts.

Based on her environmental planning and infrastructure background and her experience in New Orleans, in early 2007 she was appointed Manager of Infrastructure and Planning for the City of New Orleans Office of Recovery Management (ORM) by Dr. Edward J. Blakely, the City's Executive Director of Recovery Management. ORM's main responsibility is to oversee the financing and implementation of all public recovery initiatives in the city. Earthea's Infrastructure and Environmental Planning (IEP) Division aims to create a local environment that is safe from flooding and toxic contamination, and to create sustainable approaches for addressing climate change and coastal erosion. IEP develops policy, obtains resources, and manages programs in the areas of hazard mitigation, infrastructure, environment, energy, and sustainable development.

This has been an incredible opportunity for Earthea, and we look forward to her integrating this experience in her teaching and research when she returns to campus next year.



*To learn more about
Nance's current
mission and New
Orleans recovery
efforts,
visit
[nolarecovery.com/n
ance.html](http://nolarecovery.com/nance.html)*

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In order to make the 50th anniversary an extraordinary event that all will remember, we need the help of our most valued resources—you! We're looking to collect stories, anecdotes, and pictures of our school throughout the years so that we can showcase our rich history of excellence.

Please send your stories, pictures, etc. to uapvt@vt.edu.



UAP STUDENTS WIN VAPA STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

A team of UAP students in the Economic Development Studio @ Virginia Tech won the Student Project Award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (VAPA). The team, under the direction of Heike Mayer, acting associate chair and acting director of NCR, and John Provo, senior economic development specialist, conducted a year-long study (www.econdev.vt.edu/clients_projects/farmshoring.html) about farmshoring as an economic development strategy for urban and rural economies in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Students from both the Blacksburg and the Alexandria campuses worked together on this project and were honored at the annual VAPA conference. Farmshoring concerns the outsourcing of jobs or business contracts to areas of the country where the cost of doing business is lower. The students' research finds that firms are not just looking overseas, but to low-cost communities in rural areas in the United States. The Economic Development Studio is a community-based learning effort developed by the Office of Economic Development and UAP.

IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR RICHARD "DICK" ZODY
MAY 11, 1937 – JULY 20, 2007

REEMA SAMAHA
JUNE 28, 1988 – APRIL 16, 2007

