*March 8, 2010*

**SITE VISIT REPORT**

**Master of Urban and Regional Planning**

**School of Urban and Regional Planning**

**College of Architecture, Urban and Public Affairs**

**Florida Atlantic University**

**Visit Dates: January 31, 2010 – February 3, 2010**

# **Part I. List of Site Visitors and Their Affiliations**

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# **Part II. Site Visit Schedule**

# **February 1, 2010**

8:30 AM-9:30 AM Initial team meeting with Dr. Jaap Vos, Associate Professor and Director

9:30 AM-10:00 AM Team meeting with Dr. Rosalyn Carter, Dean of the College of Architecture, Urban and Public Affairs

#### 10:00 AM-10:45 AM Travel to Boca Campus

11:00 AM-11:15 AM Team meeting with Dr. Diane Alperin, Interim Provost

11:15 AM-11:30 AM Team meeting with Dr. John Pritchett, Interim President

11:30 AM-12:15 PM Travel back to Fort Lauderdale

12:15 PM-1:30 PM Lunch

1:30 PM-2:00 PM Tour of Facilities by Jaap Vos and Cara Capp, President of FAPS (Florida Atlantic Planning Society: Faculty Offices; John DeGrove Research Library; Student Offices; Visual Planning Technology Lab and Offices; Classroom; Design Studio

2:00 PM-2:30 PM Interview with Dr. Yanmei Li, Assistant Professor

2:30 PM-3:00 PM Interview with Dr. Asli Ceylan Oner, Assistant Professor

3:00 PM-3:30 PM BREAK

3:30 PM-4:30 PM Meeting with students

4:30 PM-5:00 PM Interview with Dr. Ann-Margaret Esnard, Professor

5:00 PM-6:00 PM Meeting with area employers

**February 2, 2010**

8:00 AM-9:00 AM Review of student work

9:00 AM-9:30 AM Interview with Dr. Diana Mitsova, Assistant Professor

9:30 AM-10:00 AM Interview with Dr. Kasama Polakit, Assistant Professor

10:00 AM-10:30 AM Break

10:30 A.M-11:00 AM Interview with Dr. David Prosperi, Professor

11:00 AM-12:00 PM Meeting with other School Directors in College: Dr. Gordon Bazemore, Professor and Director School of Criminology and Criminal Justice; Aron Temkin, Associate Professor and Director School of Architecture; Dr. Hugh Miller, Professor and Director School of Public Administration

12:00 PM-1:30 PM Lunch with Alumni

1:30 PM-2:30 PM Meeting with: Marci Nolan, AICP (Adjunct Professor(; Linda Friar, AICP (Adjunct Professor); Sarah Shannon, Director Institute of Government; Dr. Efraim Ben-Zadok, John DeGrove Eminent Scholar in Growth Management and Development

2:30 PM-4:00 PM Team meeting/work

4:00 PM-5:00 PM Meeting with local APA Chapter and other professional organizations:

# **February 3, 2010**

8:00 AM-9:00 AM Exit meeting with Dr. Jaap Vos, Associate Professor and Director

9:00 AM-10:00 AM Exit meeting with Dr. Rosalyn Carter, Dean of the College of Architecture, Urban and Public Affairs

#### 10:00 AM-10:45 AM Travel to Boca Campus

11:00 AM-12:00 PM Exit meeting with Dr. Diane Alperin, Interim Provost and Dr. John Pritchett, Interim President

**Part III. A. Site Visit Report Checklist**

| CRITERIA and GUIDELINES\* | **Met** | | **Partially Met** | | **Not Met** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Mission, Goals and Objectives** | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Statement | X | |  | |  | |
| 1.2 Focus |  | | X | |  | |
| 1.3 Clarity |  | | X | |  | |
| Guideline: Specific Objectives |  | | X | |  | |
| 1.4 Academic Excellence | X | |  | |  | |
| 1.5 Progress | X | |  | |  | |
| 1.6 Dissemination | X | |  | |  | |
| 1.7 Assessment and Participation | X | |  | |  | |
| 1.8 Diversity | X | |  | |  | |
| 1.9 Educational Outcomes |  | | X | |  | |
| **2. Institutional Relations** | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Opportunities within the Institution | X | |  | |  | |
| 2.2 Contribution to the Institution | X | |  | |  | |
| **3. Academic Autonomy and Governance** | | | | | | |
| 3.1 Administrative Location | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Department or School | X | |  | |  | |
| 3.2 Program Identity | X | |  | |  | |
| 3.3 Program Autonomy | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Administrator’s Reporting Pattern | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Independent Entity | X | |  | |  | |
| 3.4 Governance | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Minimum 1 Full Professor Rank | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Minimum 2 Assistant Professor Rank | X | |  | |  | |
| 3.5 Participation in Governance | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Responsiveness | X | |  | |  | |
| 3.6 Program Leadership (Administration) | X | |  | |  | |
| **4. Curriculum** | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Relation to Mission, Goals and Objectives |  | | X | |  | |
| 4.2 Components: Knowledge, Skills and Values | | | | | | |
| 4.2.1 Human Settlement | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.1(a) Social Sciences | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.1(b) Environmental Sciences | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.1(c) Design Arts | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.1(d) Legal Studies | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2 History and Contemporary Planning Practice | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(a) Purpose and Meaning of Planning | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(b) History of Urban Planning |  | | X | |  | |
| 4.2.2(c) Economic, Social and Political Institutions | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(d) Methods and Tools | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(e) Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(f) Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(g) Equity and Social Justice | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2(h) Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3 Practice of Planning | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(a) Problem Solving Skills | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(b) Research Skills | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(c) Written, Oral and Graphic Communication Skills | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(d) Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(e) Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(f) Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects |  | | X | |  | |
| 4.2.3(g) Anticipation of Future Changes | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(h) Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3(i) Working with Diverse Communities |  | | X | |  | |
| 4.2.4 Values and Ethics | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.4(a) Discriminating Among Competing Goals | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.4(b) Forms of Decision Making | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.4(c) Social, Historical and Ecological Legacies | X | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.5 Specializations (Optional) **N/A** |  | |  | |  | |
| **5. Faculty Resources and Composition** | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 Customary Expectations | | X | |  | |  | |
| 5.2 Qualifications | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 5.2.1 Educational Diversity | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 5.2.2 Educational and Professional Attainment | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 5.2.3 Practitioners | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 5.2.4 Adjuncts, Lecturers and Guest Speakers | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 5.2.5 Planning Predominance | | X | |  | |  | |
| 5.3 Faculty Recruitment and Composition | | X | |  | |  | |
| 5.4 Continuing Academic and Professional Development | | X | |  | |  | |
| 5.5 Size | |  | | | | | |
| Guideline: One Degree: Minimum of Five FTEs | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Two Degrees: Minimum of Seven FTEs **N/A** | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.6 Concentration of Resources | | X | |  | |  | |
| 5.7 Student/Faculty Ratio | |  | | | | | |
| Guideline: Graduate Program: 10:1 students/faculty | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Undergraduate Program: 15:1 students/faculty **N/A** | |  | |  | |  | |
| **6. Teaching, Advising and Student Services** | | | | | | | |
| 6.1 Teaching Quality | | X | |  | |  | |
| 6.2 Faculty Qualifications | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Continuing Association | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Core Curriculum Teaching | | X | |  | |  | |
| 6.3 Specializations (Optional**) N/A** | |  | |  | |  | |
| 6.4 Course Scheduling | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Regularity of Offerings | | X | |  | |  | |
| 6.5 Advising | |  | | X | |  | |
| 6.6 Placement | |  | | X | |  | |
| 6.7 Financial Aid | | X | |  | |  | |
| **7. Research and Scholarly Activities** | | | | | | | |
| 7.1 Policy | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Practices and Mission | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Instructional Load, Release Time and Leave Opportunities | | X | |  | |  | |
| 7.2 Quality | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 7.2.1 Link with Teaching | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 7.2.2 Link to Practice | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 7.2.3 Dissemination | | X | |  | |  | |
| **8. Public and Professional Service** | | | | | | | |
| 8.1 Policy | | X | |  | |  | |
| 8.2 Quality | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 8.2.1 Link with Teaching | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: 8.2.2 Link to Profsnl. and Scholarly Communities | | X | |  | |  | |
| 8.3 Continuing Education | | X | |  | |  | |
| **9. Students** | | | | | | | |
| 9.1 Quality | | X | |  | |  | |
| 9.2 Admission Standards | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Previous Performance, etc. | | X | |  | |  | |
| 9.3 Size | | X | |  | |  | |
| 9.4 Recruitment and Composition | | X | |  | |  | |
| **10. Institutional Resources** | | | | | | | |
| 10.1 Library and Information Services | | X | |  | |  | |
| 10.2 Physical Facilities | | X | |  | |  | |
| 10.3 Computer Capabilities | | X | |  | |  | |
| 10.4 Financial Resources | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: External Resources | | X | |  | |  | |
| Guideline: Contact with Alumni | | X | |  | |  | |
| **11. Administrative and Fair Practices** | | | | | | | |
| 11.1 Student and Faculty Grievance Procedures | | X | |  | |  | |
| 11.2 Non-discrimination | | X | |  | |  | |
| 11.3 Inclusivity | | X | |  | |  | |
| 11.4 Accurate and Comprehensive Information | | X | |  | |  | |
| 11.5 Confidentiality of Student Records | | X | |  | |  | |
| 11.6 On-going Monitoring and Evaluation | | X | |  | |  | |

\*All subjects listed are criteria unless otherwise noted.

**Part III. B. 1. Overall Assessment of the Program**

The Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program at Florida Atlantic University is a strong program that has experienced significant change and improvement since the last Site Visit in 2004. The Department has become a School within the College. Applications have increased. Enrollment has grown. The quality and diversity of students has increased. There have also been changes in the faculty with four recent hires at the assistant professor level. Only two of the faculty members present during the last Site Visit remain. The Program has revamped the curriculum, consolidating four specializations into two focus areas of concentration. The School has generated significant extramural funding including a prestigious National Science Foundation grant. Scholarship and publications in peer-reviewed journals have also improved. The School has been successful in securing donations and scholarships which have benefited students and the learning environment. Coupled with the funded research, support of the Program from the University and College have helped the School to build and maintain a state-of-the-art computer facility with advanced GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and visualization tools.

The Program has benefited from strong leadership. During the Site Visit, the Program Director was universally praised for his efforts. As one senior faculty member commented, “the Program has never been better.” Equally impressive is the culture of collegiality and mutual support that has emerged even amidst difficult economic times in the state. The Program has developed an exemplary mentorship program for the junior faculty. There is a pervasive positive, “can-do” attitude fostering a sense of community, ownership, and responsibility among faculty, students, and others connected to the unit. A key component has been an introspective and self-critical perspective that has emphasized continuous improvement. The Program has garnered a well-deserved reputation among local employees, practitioners and alumni as a source of committed, professional planners. The Program has made concerted efforts at assessment as evidenced by the fact that they have taken the PAB accreditation process seriously. Faculty have also secured University assessment grants and have been developing rubrics and procedures for evaluating student learning. While this is still a “work-in-progress,” the Program clearly understands and strives to make improvements based on the analysis of student learning outcomes.

The School faces several challenges. The institutional setting is complicated by the fact that Florida Atlantic University is spread out over a large geographic area on seven different campuses. As a public institution in a state experiencing a pervasive economic downturn and increased pressures to do more with less, the College and academic units face major economic hurdles and chilling realities such as deeper cuts, reallocations, and even the possibility of lay-offs and restructuring. All of this comes at a time of growing needs for urban and regional planning and pressing demands for more thoughtful integration of economic, environmental, social, and community needs and resources. The Program exists within a dynamic, complex, and challenging regional context where issues of sustainability, resiliency, globalization, and quality of life are critical concerns. While the Program has the potential to make significant contributions to debates and deliberations regarding contemporary issues associated with state, regional, and local policies, it is also well positioned to contribute to national and international agendas on such topics as climate change, energy and environment.

The relevance of urban and regional planning is evident. The undergraduate program has experienced significant growth. There are strong demands not just for the MURP degree but for specialized post-baccalaureate certificates and doctoral level education in planning. There are genuine opportunities to use the South Florida region as a site for research, education and training for better understanding the “multi-scalar” dimensions of urban and regional planning. The School, College, and University could play an expanded role in addressing these needs.

The challenge to Florida Atlantic University is not just to the sustain the positive developments that have occurred within the School of Urban and Regional Planning, but to foster continued improvement, even amidst a climate of retrenchment within public higher education. In terms of the PAB criteria and guidelines, this report suggests directions that could strengthen the curriculum, research climate, and effectiveness of the Program. There is need for sharper focus and clarity with regard to the multiple demands on the School for planning education (MURP, undergraduate, certificate, and doctoral education). The recommendations in the report also include strengthening the curriculum in terms of planning history, physical planning, and working with disadvantaged and diverse communities. There is need for more institutional resources to support advising and communications. Additional faculty lines are needed, particularly if the School is to sustain the recent positive momentum and address nagging concerns regarding retention, leadership, and demographic transition. There are significant concerns regarding the administration of research and the recovery and investment of indirect returns particularly given the growth in the School’s research funding. These are significant, but not insurmountable considerations if the Program is truly going to advance to the next level.

In terms of the larger the larger aspirations of the School, the University needs to seriously consider creation of a Ph.D. in planning so that the unit can more fully transition to the realm of knowledge production from knowledge transmittal. This will go hand-in-hand with efforts to enhance FAU’s reputation as a research institution. Urban and Regional Planning has not only been a leader within the College in terms of funded research, it also serves as an ideal platform on which to integrate multi-disciplinary and place-based research.

For two of the three days that the Site Visit Team was in Fort Lauderdale, the weather was rainy and somewhat dreary. Yet as the team began to absorb, understand, synthesize, and report back to FAU, the environmental conditions began to improve, markedly. The Site Visit concluded not with not just the legendary Florida sunshine but also a sense that the Program has a bright future.

**Part III. B.2. Overview – Outcomes Assessment**

In the Fall of 2009, faculty applied for and received a grant from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis for URP 6425 (Environmental Analysis in Planning) and URP 6545 (Urban Revitalization) to develop rubrics and assessment procedures for: writing, analytical critical thinking (GIS based), graphical communication, and teamwork and other areas. There is also an assessment grant for an undergraduate course. A report will be written and presented to a University committee in the Spring of 2010. This will increase understanding of assessment procedures specific to planning education. The Program also used the Seminar in Urban Planning (URP 6310) to conduct an overall assessment of the MURP program, based on the PAB criteria. Faculty members meet routinely to discuss curriculum issues and have made adjustments to enhance student learning. There are other initiatives underway such as the development of web-based portfolios which could be incorporated into a more formalized assessment program. In addition, the participation of alumni, area employers, and other practitioners in the assessment of longer-term outcomes could enhance assessment efforts. Upon graduation, students also fill out a form that can be used for tracking graduates and measuring outcomes over time. Like the effort initiated by the PAB, the work at FAU on assessment is clearly a “work-in-progress.” FAU is positioned to contribute to the larger discussions on how best to capture and measure planning student learning outcomes.

### **Part III. C. 1 Criteria and Guidelines**

**Met**

The School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) has done well in meeting PAB criteria and guidelines. There has been clear evidence of improvement since the last Site Visit. The Program has also adopted a culture of continuous improvement which has carried over to the PAB criteria and guidelines. This is a program that clearly takes the process of accreditation seriously. The assessment by the Site Visit Team is based on a review of the 2004 Site Visit Report and the September 2009 Self-Study Report, as well as the onsite visit interviews with faculty, administrators, students, alumni, area employers, and others from the professional planning community. The Site Visit Team also conducted a review of data, information, and examples of student work furnished by the School during the visit.

**1. Mission, Goals and Objectives**

The mission, goals, and objects of the Program were revised in 2008 based on significant faculty input and collaboration. The revised mission and associated process produced a strong statement from which to move forward with detailed goals and objectives. Most of the mission, goals, and objectives criteria have been met, though it has been less than a year since the adoption of their revised mission. The School has used a collaborative process to develop and review these directions and while the effort is recent, faculty and some students demonstrated knowledge and appreciation of the complex, “multi-scalar” efforts to craft a coherent identity for the Program and its graduates. More work needs to be done in terms of communicating and disseminating the mission, goals and objectives, especially for students and those attending the Program. The benefits of the various planning degrees and credentials might also be better described and shared with area employers, alumni and planning practitioners. Further explanation of recent changes such as the consolidation of specializations and other curricular changes as well as progress made in formulating the “South Florida School of Thought” is needed. The mission, goals, and objectives are both broad and specific to the needs, conditions, and opportunities in South Florida.

The fully met criteria include:

1.1 Statement

1.4 Academic Excellence

1.5 Progress

1.6 Dissemination

1.7 Assessment and Participation

1.8 Diversity

**2. Institutional Relations**

All criteria for Institutional Relations have been fully met. The Program is well respected within both the College and the University as a whole.

2.1 Opportunities within the Institution

Collaborations between faculty members from different programs on research are present, as is some cross-over for student classes, yet this is an area for more work particularly in times of economic downturn where there is a tendency towards retrenchment. Students and some faculty expressed concerns regarding the difficulties of cross-registration within the College and across different units within the FAU system. There are logical opportunities for SURP students to take classes in other schools and vice-versa, but they are not well communicated to the students.

2.2 Contribution to the Institution

The members of the faculty serve the on University committees. Additionally, the solar energy panels on the roof of the building started from a student project which has become a point of pride for the entire university. The School is viewed as a leader in the College. There is evidence of contributions not just to the downtown campus but to the overall institution. While collaboration and participation is challenging due to the geographic dispersal of educational endeavors on multiple campuses, the Program clearly contributes to undergraduate education on the Boca campus and to the broader missions of FAU.

**3. Academic Autonomy and Governance**

All criteria of Academic Autonomy and Governance have been fully met. Specific comments related to some of the criteria can be found below.

3.1 Administrative Location. School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) is one of five schools in the College of Architecture, Urban and Public Affairs (CAUPA)

Guideline: Department or School

3.2 Program Identity. SURP has benefited in its identity from physically bringing faculty and students together on one campus, and, for the most part, on one floor of the main Ft. Lauderdale campus building.

3.3 Program Autonomy

Guideline: Administrator’s Reporting Pattern

Guideline: Independent Entity

3.4 Governance. The SURP faculty consists of 2 full, 1 associate, and 4 assistant level tenure track faculty members. A search is underway for another hire at the associate level which will enhance the administrative as well as programmatic aims of the School.

Guideline met: Minimum 1 Full Professor Rank

Guideline met: Minimum 2 Assistant Professor Rank

3.5 Participation in Governance. The faculty have a strong recent history of collaborative decision making. They meet weekly either for research related or administrative purposes. The climate is open and positive, and faculty members expressed appreciation for such an environment. Senior faculty expressed genuine concern for the welfare of junior faculty members. Junior faculty expressed appreciation for the mentorship and support they have received from the School.

Guideline: Responsiveness

3.6 Program Leadership (Administration). The School’s current director was universally praised, both inside and outside the University, for his leadership and efforts in transforming the Program. He has initiated significant positive change for students and faculty, enhanced the visibility of the School within the College and the University, and has been establishing the collaborative culture in the School. He is very much the face of the Program.

**4. Curriculum**

The curriculum has undergone a recent revision which has not yet been fully institutionalized. As a result there are curriculum criteria which have not been fully implemented or worked through. Most of the curriculum criteria, however, are fully met in either dedicated courses (such as a Legal Aspects course for Legal Studies, or Urban Design for Design Arts) or, more typically, as components of multiple courses. Two areas of the curriculum are universally seen as strong points for the Program: GIS and environmental courses. GIS elements are introduced in a core course but advanced elements have now been integrated into environmental planning and urban revitalization courses. This adjustment solidifies the practical application for students. Additionally, the environmental courses have been noted by students and alumni as particular strengths of the Program. Given the complex environment found in the South Florida region, this strength will undoubtedly serve the Program and its students well.

Based on review of the Self-Study Report, inspection of the course syllabi, and discussions with faculty, students, alumni, and others knowledgeable about the Program, the following criteria and guidelines were met:

4.2 Components: Knowledge, Skills and Values

4.2.1 Human Settlement

4.2.1(a) Social Sciences

4.2.1(b) Environmental Sciences

4.2.1(c) Design Arts

4.2.1(d) Legal Studies

4.2.2 History and Contemporary Planning Practice

4.2.2(a) Purpose and Meaning of Planning

4.2.2(c) Economic, Social and Political Institutions

4.2.2(d) Methods and Tools

4.2.2(e) Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans

4.2.2(f) Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans

4.2.2(g) Equity and Social Justice

4.2.2(h) Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment

4.2.3 Practice of Planning

4.2.3(a) Problem Solving Skills

4.2.3(b) Research Skills

4.2.3(c) Written, Oral and Graphic Communication Skills

4.2.3(d) Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills

4.2.3(e) Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation

4.2.3(g) Anticipation of Future Changes

4.2.3(h) Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans

4.2.4 Values and Ethics

4.2.4(a) Discriminating Among Competing Goals

4.2.4(b) Forms of Decision Making

4.2.4(c) Social, Historical and Ecological Legacies

4.2.5 Specializations (Optional)

The Program does not currently have specializations. It has revised prior specializations to be two “focus” areas of study: environmental planning and economic development planning.

**5. Faculty Resources and Composition**

All Faculty Resources and Composition criteria have been fully met. Specific details on some of these criteria are discussed below.

5.1 Customary Expectations

5.2 Qualifications

Guideline: 5.2.1 Educational Diversity

Guideline: 5.2.2 Educational and Professional Attainment

Guideline: 5.2.3 Practitioners

Guideline: 5.2.4 Adjuncts, Lecturers and Guest Speakers

Guideline: 5.2.5 Planning Predominance

5.3 Faculty Recruitment and Composition. Since the last Site Visit, the School has been successful at recruiting 4 junior and one associate (now full) faculty member; all new hires are female and from diverse international backgrounds. Two faculty members departed in that time, one for personal reasons, and the other for non-renewal. The existing culture will be important to keep junior faculty successful.

5.4 Continuing Academic and Professional Development. The School has shown significant improvement in this area since the last accreditation Site Visit. Junior and senior faculty members all discuss the strong mentoring that exists for junior faculty members. There is an open and collaborative environment for research and the existing Monday Morning Meeting of the Minds (M4) provides a great opportunity for junior faculty to gain valuable feedback on publications in progress and potential future research direction. Mentoring of associate level faculty for promotion to full is not evident.

5.5 Size. The Program is currently operating with seven full time faculty in the School and a search underway for an eighth. Given the existing teaching and research, as well as future potential of the School, this is seen by the SVT as a minimum for the School.

Guideline: One Degree: Minimum of Five FTEs

5.6 Concentration of Resources

5.7 Student/Faculty Ratio

Guideline: Graduate Program: 10:1 students/faculty

**6. Teaching, Advising and Student Services**

Most criteria in this section have been fully met. Interviews with students and alumni point to a meaningful graduate experience both in and out of the classroom. However, the recent changes in the curriculum have created some confusion and differences in student experiences. The major weakness of this section is in advising which is discussed under the section on Partially Met criteria. Specific details on some of these criteria are discussed below.

6.1 Teaching Quality. There is an active approach to enhancing teaching quality through regular review of the curriculum by faculty and the introduction of curriculum assessment.

6.2 Faculty Qualifications

Guideline: Continuing Association

Guideline: Core Curriculum Teaching

6.3 Specializations (Optional) – N/A (see 4.5)

6.4 Course Scheduling

Guideline: Regularity of Offerings

6.7 Financial Aid. The Program has been successful in attracting both private donations and funded research grants which have served to augment the availability of aid to students. The addition of scholarships has been a major incentive for the acceptance of quality MURP candidates into the Program.

**7. Research and Scholarly Activities**

All criteria in Research and Scholarly Activities have been fully met. The research culture in the Program has been established and significant extramural grants have been received. There are some concerns expressed by administrators, faculty, and researchers with regard to the administration and management of research grants. The principle concern involves the return of overhead to generating units and faculty members and other incentives for funded research. The College seems aware of these issues and efforts involving the central administration to address these concerns appear underway.

The School has adopted the appointment, promotion and tenure practices of the College and University. The guidelines have been made clear to all faculty based on the Self-Study Report and the faculty interviews. The following criteria and guidelines have been met:

7.1 Policy

Guideline: Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Practices and Mission

Guideline: Instructional Load, Release Time and Leave Opportunities

7.2 Quality

Guideline: 7.2.1 Link with Teaching

Guideline: 7.2.2 Link to Practice

Guideline: 7.2.3 Dissemination

While all criteria and guidelines have been met, it should be noted that many of the faculty members are at the assistant professor level and there is a need to ensure continued linkages between research, practice, and teaching. The senior faculty have made impressive efforts to mentor junior faculty in increasing publications and research endeavors.

**8. Public and Professional Service**

Criteria for Public and Professional Service have been fully met. There is a strong relationship between the Program and the professional practice community in South Florida. The alumni network is strong. Specific details on some of these criteria are discussed below.

8.1 Policy

8.2 Quality

Guideline: 8.2.1 Link with Teaching. Two classes, Planning Workshop and Planning Project, provide the strongest links between practice and teaching. The Workshop serves as a full class group planning effort with an external client. The Planning Project capstone is dependent on individual student initiative and provides an opportunity for students to integrate coursework and concentrate on a particular area or topic in planning.

Guideline: 8.2.2 Link to Professional and Scholarly Communities. The Director has built upon and significantly strengthened the link to professional and scholarly communities. Dr. Vos serves as the School’s liaison to the Broward Section of the Florida APA, as well as the Executive Committee of the Chapter, and students rotate positions on the Florida APA Executive Committee with the other planning schools in Florida.

8.3 Continuing Education. The Program has a strong relationship with the local practitioners, many of whom are FAU planning alums. According to site interviews, input from Florida APA, and the SSR, the School coordinates with the local APA section to host continuing education events (lectures, workshops) at their facilities.

**9. Students**

**A**ll criteria under Students have been fully met. Specific details on some of these criteria are discussed below.

9.1 Quality. The Program has really made great strides since the last Site Visit in the overall quality of its students. MURP students have a strong reputation according to our interviews with practitioners for their professionalism, level of inquiry, and mix of practicality and idealism.

9.2 Admission Standards

Guideline: Previous Performance, etc.

Admission standards have been raised consistently and according to an established plan since the last Site Visit. The Program has held to its standards and as evidenced by higher overall GRE and GPA scores.

9.3 Size

While the class size has decreased somewhat in response to the higher admission standards, the level remains sufficient to provide a strong community of inquiry.

9.4 Recruitment and Composition

The School Director is responsive to direct inquiry regarding the MURP Program. Additionally, students are visible at conferences and events which strengthens the recruiting potential.

**10. Institutional Resources**

All criteria under Institutional Resources have been fully met based on the SSR and our Site Visit inspection. Specific details on some of these criteria are discussed below.

10.1 Library and Information Services

A new John DeGrove Research Library is housed on the same floor of the Program. This library houses many unique pieces of scholarship related to growth management and is a wonderful asset for students and faculty. In addition, the City Library is in close proximity to the School facilities; while not an academic resource per se, that library still services students and faculty. The main FAU library is located on the Boca campus. Many academic resources are available via online services.

10.2 Physical Facilities

The School has high quality physical facilities with technology enhanced teaching capabilities in the classrooms, new offices, and instructional labs.

10.3 Computer Capabilities

The computer capabilities within the School are state of the art. This includes the Visual Planning Technology (VPT) Lab which is a fantastic resource for researchers and students in the School. In addition, there are School specific computing resources with all relevant software, as well as more general computing facilities for FAU students elsewhere in the same building.

10.4 Financial Resources

The School and Program do feel the current economic downturn across the region and state. However, the College has been responsive to the needs of the School as evidenced by the current faculty search at the Associate level. College level advising and communication assistance has also been approved from the University level.

Guideline: External Resources

There is strong evidence of faculty grants, including one from NSF, which supports faculty research; collaboration between faculty on such grants exists as well. The student MURP scholarships from an anonymous donor are another strong resource of which the Program has taken advantage.

Guideline: Contact with Alumni

Since the last Site Visit in 2004, the Program has improved its recordkeeping with alumni. The Director serves as the primary point of contact for alumni. Additionally, the student organization continues close contact with alumni for career fairs as well as outreach (river clean up) efforts. The relationship with alumni is strong based on interview feedback.

**11. Administrative and Fair Practices**

All criteria under Administrative and Fair Practices have been fully met by the Program. There are standard procedures in place to ensure fair practices for students and faculty. This is a mature institution in which many of the key administrative and fair practices have been codified and made available to students and staff members. The following criteria have been met:

11.1 Student and Faculty Grievance Procedures

11.2 Non-discrimination

11.3 Inclusivity

11.4 Accurate and Comprehensive Information

11.5 Confidentiality of Student Records

11.6 On-going Monitoring and Evaluation

### **Part III. C. 2 Criteria and Guidelines**

**Partially Met**

**1. Mission, Goals and Objectives**

1.2 Focus

The School needs to sharpen its focus on what it ultimately wants to do. Clearly, there is a strong emphasis on the MURP, which is the cornerstone of the School, is widely respected and admired in Florida, and has improved and succeeded with limited resources. At the same time, it has a growing undergraduate program that is admittedly taking valuable time and resources away from the MURP. The School is also debating the future of the Certificate programs it offers. Additionally, serious consideration is being given to the creation of a Ph.D. program. Until decisions have been made on which degrees to offer, this criterion is considered to be “partially met”.

1.3 Clarity

Guideline: Specific Objectives

The new goals are ambitious. The Site Visit Team is concerned about the overall focus of the goals. As a result, it appeared difficult for anyone to articulate the “brand” for the School and how it distinguishes itself from other planning programs in the state. The Site Visit Team felt there was a lack of clarity with the goals and objectives. There were so many different goals and objectives that it is difficult to see the priorities and what is really important. This also raises the issue of how much can realistically be accomplished over the next couple of years if the School attempts to move forward with many initiatives simultaneously, especially with a relatively junior staff and financial constraints.

1.9 Educational Outcomes

As was the case after the 2004 Site Visit, the Team has a concern about the need to clearly identify how the goals and objectives will be met and how progress will be measured. More discussion regarding outcomes assessment including some positive works-in-progress is discussed under Part III. B.2. Overview – Outcomes Assessment.

**4. Curriculum**

4.1 Relation to Mission, Goals and Objectives

Recognizing that the School has recently revamped its curriculum and developed new goals and objectives, it was unclear as to how the two are interrelated. The curriculum still seems to be a bit of a moving target as new courses are developed by the faculty and other courses are removed from the Program or changes are made to the core curriculum.

4.2 Components: Knowledge, Skills and Values

4.2.2(b) History of Urban Planning

Although there is mention of planning history in the Planning Process and Skills class, a review of the syllabus and the written material prepared by students in the class did not seem to indicate enough of an emphasis on planning history to determine that this criterion has been fully met. The Site Visit Team also noted that a number of the reading materials appeared to be older and perhaps some were out of date.

4.2.3(f) Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects

The Team understands that there was some exposure to the theory behind site planning in the course work. However, the input received during the interviews with students, alumni, and employers all pointed to the need for more in-depth training on technical skills including the preparation and the ability to understand site plans. To some extent, this is covered in the Site Planning class (URP 4870/6873), but this is essentially an undergraduate level class. The Team suggests that this material should be covered in a graduate level class and/or as a specific skill in the Planning Project.

4.2.3(i) Working with Diverse Communities

A review of the Planning Project reports and other class projects generally did not tend to focus on issues of diversity or disadvantaged communities. This seems particularly important given the demographics of the South Florida area. A greater emphasis on this topic was suggested by the students, alumni, and employers.

**6. Teaching, Advising and Student Services**

6.5 Advising

Advising seems to be unorganized. Although students and alumni expressed that they could turn to any faculty member for advice on course selection, it was ultimately the responsibility of the Program Director to address advising from an administrative point of view. It is recommended that the students be assigned (or select) a particular faculty member that acts as the advisor for the course of the student’s time in the Program.

Moreover, advising students early in the process is particularly important because of the need to sequence the courses properly in order to allow students to make best use of their opportunity to take elective classes. The need to coordinate scheduling for part-time students was an issue raised during a number of the interviews.

6.6 Placement

Again, students and alumni believe that they can turn to anyone on the faculty for career advice. The faculty seems to be well connected and can make a number of referrals and point students in the right direction. Career services at the university level are too general to be relied on for graduate students in a field such as planning. It is important for someone on the faculty to be specifically charged with providing career guidance to the students.

### **Part III. C. 3 Criteria and Guidelines**

**Not Met**

Based on review of materials submitted by the program and interviews conducted by the Site Visit Team, none of the criteria and guidelines were found to be “not met.”

**Part IV. Strengths of the Program**

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report and interviews with the Program Director, Dean of the College, Interim Provost, Interim President, Faculty, Students, Affiliate Faculty, Alumni, Employers and representatives of the local section of the American Planning Association and other planning organizations (Palm Beach County Planning Congress), the Site Visit Team determined that Masters of Urban and Regional Planning Program offered by the School of Urban and Regional Planning Program, Florida Atlantic University is a strong, thriving program which has experienced a great deal of positive change. As one senior faculty member described the Program, “it has never been better.” There are new faculty members, a re-worked curriculum with an emphasis on contemporary planning issues, and much positive energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to creating a locus of scholarly activity in the South Florida region.

The Program has strong, well-respected leadership. The Program Director was universally praised by students, administrators, alumni, area employers and representatives of planning organizations. Under his leadership, a cohesive, collegial, supportive environment has been created, including an exemplary mentorship program for junior faculty. Initiatives such as a regular meeting to support research and scholarship as well as other regular faculty meetings demonstrate that the faculty is deeply engaged as members of a community of scholars. The investment in community has had big pay-offs. The Program was able to attract a cadre of bright, promising young scholars. The enthusiasm for planning education has carried over to students and others associated with the Program. The efforts and accomplishments of the Director and the School have won the respect and admiration of others throughout the campus and in the community. Employers reported that they repeatedly hire School graduates.

Applications to the MURP program have increased. The quality of students as evidenced by test scores and grade point averages has increased. Scholarship availability has played a role in the attraction of high caliber students. The sense of community has fostered a positive spirit among students who have also created an active organization.

Faculty and students have been praised for their engagement in the community. South Florida provides a challenging, interesting, and complex laboratory for the development of planning theories, methods, and tools. Planning continues to be in demand and FAU trained planners have earned much respect in the community. Many are engaged in important social, physical, environmental, and community efforts. There is every indication that graduates of the Program are making a difference in consequence planning projects and programs within the region and beyond. While metrics and long-term measures of program outcomes still need to be developed, this is a program which clearly takes assessment activities seriously. There is clear evidence of a culture of assessment and continuous learning and improvement.

Funded research has increased, including the award of a prestigious NSF. Scholarly output has also increased. In addition to receiving a university assessment grant for an undergraduate class, there are also two graduate classes which have received funding to develop metrics for student learning and preparedness across different elements of the curriculum. While some of these initiatives are still works-in-progress, there is every indication that the Program will continue to improve, grow, and have a positive impact on planning education in the region, state, and nation.

# **Part V. Recommendations for Improvement**

**A. Partially Met/Not Met Criteria**

Based on a review of the Self-Study and the data collected during the Site Visit, there were no “not met criteria.” Only a few criteria were found to be “partially met.”

**1. Mission, Goals and Objectives**

1.2 Focus. This criterion was “partially met” in part because there have been numerous recent changes to mission, goals, and objectives. While the statement was well developed in terms of making the connections between the South Florida environment and the strategic opportunities for planning education at Florida Atlantic University, there are many lofty goals which have been identified. Moreover, additional reflection and development of specific objectives may be necessary. A review of the long list of program objectives suggests that this is still a work in progress. Integration with university plans as well as economic and fiscal conditions may also have an impact on resources and the authorization of new initiatives. The Program has also established a strong reputation for the MURP degree. More deliberation regarding the proposed Ph.D., as well as the role of the School in terms of undergraduate education and post-baccalaureate certificate programs in planning is needed. While all of the key ingredients for success exist, there is need for more detailed enumeration of the benefits and costs of the proposed changes.

1.3. Clarity. The mission, goals, and objectives need greater clarity and to be better integrated with College and University plans. While the Program has demonstrated a high degree of self-reliance, future growth and expansion will require more consistency and clarity with plans and policies outside the School. The Program needs to develop a clear “brand” so that prospective students as well as others in the University and extended community better understand the mission. When interviewees were asked to define the “brand” of an FAU planning degree, there was both a wide-range of responses as well as uncertainty, due not just to the complexity of the School’s mission, but also a sense that the Program is undergoing significant change.

1.9. Educational Outcomes. This criterion was “partially met,” yet the Program has made impressive strides towards creating an informal culture of being a continuously learning and improving organization. It is clear that the Program has made significant improvements since the last Site Visit. Notably, many of the weaknesses and concerns identified during the last Site Visit have been addressed. The Program clearly takes assessment seriously. Many of the procedures and efforts related to assessment of learning outcomes are under development. The lessons from the University assessment grants, as well as other assessment activities underway need to be more fully examined, synthesized, and transformed into actions for improving the long-term program effectiveness. Use of exit interviews, panel reviews of student portfolios, and tracking of long term performance, impact, and outcomes of planning school graduates will contribute not only to better understanding of FAU’s program, but also to the knowledge and understanding of how best to measure planning educational outcomes. This is of national interest.

**4. Curriculum**

4.1 Relation to Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The Program needs to revisit the curriculum in relation to Mission, Goals, and Objectives in a few years so that changes can be evaluated. The elimination of four specializations as well as the efforts to embed GIS in many of the core courses should also be examined. By then, significant decisions will have been made as to the directions the School will pursue regarding the offering of various degrees, concentrations, and focus areas. Over time, more data as to the effects of these significant changes on program effectiveness and learning will also be available.

4.2 Components: Knowledge, Skills, and Values

4.2.2 (b) History of Urban Planning. A more purposeful inclusion of Planning History in syllabi across the curriculum as opposed to the creation of another core course would address this need.

4.2.3 (f) Creation of Plans, Programs, and Projects. One option is to create a graduate level course in site planning. Another would be to make site planning a part of the planning project class. A third is to develop special short-classes for students on site planning.

4.2.3. (i) Working with Diverse Communities. It is clear from a review of the curriculum and from discussions with faculty that the importance of working with disadvantaged and minority communities is an important value conveyed to students in the Program. At the same time, based on a review of student work and projects, the Site Visit Team believes that more encouragement is needed to increase experiences in working with low-income, minority, and disadvantaged communities in the region. While the Program has made significant strides in terms of international planning education, more emphasis on diverse communities in the South Florida region is needed.

**6. Teaching, Advising and Student Services**

6.5 Advising. Improvements to the advising system are needed. A disproportionate share of the responsibility falls on the Program Director. Other faculty could be more involved and formalization of advising roles is needed, particularly as the Program grows and changes. The College is aware of these concerns and efforts to increase advising services are underway. Advising involves much more than course requirements and prerequisites and sequencing. It also includes guidance and support for areas of concentration, final project topics, and other concerns specific to the field of urban and regional planning. While college-wide advisers can be of assistance, the relationship between planning students and faculty is critical. Advising for part-time students needs special attention. While full-time students can benefit from more close and informal interaction with faculty, the part-time students may be more challenged in terms of receiving the necessary mentorship and interaction with faculty. The need for improvements in advising will increase as the Program continues to grow and expand in scope.

6.6 Placement. Again, students and alumni believe that they can turn to anyone on the faculty for career advice. The faculty seems to be well connected and can make a number of referrals and point students in the right direction. Career services at the university level are too general to be relied on for graduate students in a field such as planning. It is important for someone on the faculty to be specifically charged with providing career guidance to the students.

**B. Other Areas of Enhancement**

There are number areas of enhancement. While the role of the Site Visit Team was focused on a review of the MURP degree, the subject of a Ph.D. in planning was raised by the faculty. It should be noted that only masters and baccalaureate programs are subject to PAB review.

Consider a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning

The prospects of a new doctoral program in planning are best understood in terms of the School’s emphasis on academic excellence and becoming a stronger locus of planning scholarship. A doctoral program would support efforts to improve scholarship and research. Having advanced students would also support efforts to secure funded research. Having a Ph.D. program would also provide support for the growing undergraduate degree in urban and regional planning. A Ph.D. in planning would also support the School’s effort to participate in University-wide interdisciplinary research initiatives. Such a program would also complement FAU’s efforts to upgrade its status as a research institution. A Ph.D. program would also enable the School to devote more efforts to the production of knowledge as well as to teaching. The field of urban and regional planning is particularly suited for interdisciplinary research and for both addressing the pressing environmental, economic, and social needs of the South Florida region and transferring new empirical knowledge, methods, and tools of urban and regional analysis to other places facing similar challenges.

The creation of a new degree program will require the School to make serious, hard choices regarding not just the MURP degree but also the undergraduate program and the certificates it currently offers. It will require more careful planning and integration with the Program’s mission, goals, and objectives. It will also require even more collaboration and integration with other units in the College and across the FAU system. It will require the support and active participation of administrators and others at FAU and in the broader community.

Address Research Infrastructure Needs

The School has had recent success with extramural funding. There are concerns, however, about incentives for research and the availability of support staff and the return of overhead funds generated by extramural grants. While the School has been well supported in terms of equipment and software, as the research enterprise grows, there is need for more predictability as to availability of funding for travel, equipment, and other investments in research. Many people interviewed expressed the need for a unit such as the Center for Urban Environmental Solutions (CUES) which had a reputation for not just generating extramural funds, but also channeling these resources back into student research assistantships and other activities supportive of the College’s educational missions. Perhaps CUES should be restructured under new leadership as part of the research agenda.

Improved Communications and Public Relations

There is need for improved communications and public relations in order to better share information about the Program’s successes and achievements both within the FAU system and in the broader community. While efforts such as the recent four minute documentary do a good job of highlighting some of the College’s successes, there is need for a more sustained effort to showcase the achievements of the School of Urban and Regional Planning.

# **Part VI. Addenda**

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## **A. Student Composition Data:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **STUDENTS IN**  **THE PROGRAM** | | ENROLLMENT STATUS AND GENDER | | | | |
| **Full-Time** | | **Part-Time** | | **Total** |
| **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **U.S.** | **White** | 8 | 5 | 5 | 4 | **22** |
|  | **Black** | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | **6** |
|  | Native American | NR | NR | NR | NR | **NR** |
|  | **Asian American** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **1** |
|  | **Hispanic** | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | **10** |
|  | **Other** | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **2** |
| **Foreign** | | NR | NR | NR | NR | **NR** |
| Total | | **12** | **13** | **7** | **9** | **41** |

## **B. Faculty Composition Data:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FACULTY IN**  **THE PROGRAM** | | TEACHING STATUS AND GENDER | | | | | | |
| **Full-Time in Planning Unit** | | **Part-Time in Planning Unit\*\*** | | **Adjunct** | | **Total** |
|  |  | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |  |
| **U.S.\*** | **White** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | **4** |
|  | **Black** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** |
|  | Native American | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | **NR** |
|  | **Asian American** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** |
|  | **Hispanic** | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | **NR** |
|  | **Other** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** |
| **Foreign** | | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **3** |
| Total | | **2** | **5** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **3** | **10** |

## **C. AICP Membership:** 3, all of whom are adjunct faculty

**D. Teaching FTEs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FACULTY MEMBER NAME** | **TEACHING FTE** |
| 1 | Esnard, Ann-Margaret | .60 |
| 2 | Friar, Linda | .20 |
| 3 | Li, Yanmei | .75 |
| 4 | Maghelal, Praveen | .60 |
| 5 | Mammano, Marilyn | .20 |
| 6 | Mitsova, Diana | .50 |
| 7 | Nolan, Marcie | .20 |
| 8 | Oner, Asli Ceylan | .10 |
| 9 | Polakit, Kasama | .35 |
| 10 | Prosperi, David | .85 |
| 11 | Vos, Jaap | .60 |
| 12 | Levine, Joyce | .20 |
|  | **TOTAL TEACHING FTEs** | **5.15** |

**E. Student/Teaching Faculty Ratio:** 23.8/5.15=4.6