MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR
BY CARLY BOWMAN, PAC CHAIR

As we approach the 17th Annual Spring Social (to take place on April 17, 2013), I want to elaborate on what PAC means when we say than all proceeds from the event go towards enriching the student experience in the Planning Program. In fact, through that one fundraiser, PAC is able to do all of the following:

- Provide a substantial standing subsidy to the field trip taken by second year planning students prior to the commencement of the academic year (see Lauren English’s article about their trip to Las Vegas this year on page 6)
- Help support student attendance at the OPPI and CIP conferences, as well as in some cases supporting presenting students’ attendance at other conferences
- Host social events that connect current students with alumni and mentors, such as the Fall Planning Mixer and Mentoring Meet and Greet (see Graham Macdonald and Dema Ali’s articles on this year’s events on pages 5)
- Host and provide refreshments for an ever-growing list of professional skills development events organized by PAC members and presented by volunteer professionals. Events include planning skills modules and the Matthew Hanson Planning Opportunities Workshop. (see articles on this year’s modules on page 3)
- Fund student-requested targeted workshops on topics such as interview skills
- Host an annual industry event, the Friends of Planning Spring Social where an engaging speaker followed by a lively schmooze allows alumni and friends to (re)connect
- Contribute towards a fund earmarked for future scholarship provision, which will eventually provide for additional awards, to add to the five PAC funds have already ensured in perpetuity

This is a ton of mileage to get out of a relatively modest sum. PAC and all our supporters should be proud of our contributions.

When I joined PAC in 2007, the Committee was entering a period of tremendous growth: in membership, in initiatives, in fundraising capacity, in alumni outreach and in connectedness with the Planning Department and University Advancement administration. It has been exciting to be a part of this evolution, and satisfying to conclude my tenure as Chair in spring 2013 trusting that the Committee is in a very strong position.

Thanks once again to recent past Chairs Corwin Cambrey and Jeff Cantos for fostering this progression, and to PAC’s devoted volunteers who work energetically on programming and event planning for students and alumni. PAC is fortunate to have two excellent leaders in Melissa McEnroe and Mike Noble taking the helm as co-Chairs in spring 2013.

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PAC NEWS

THANK YOU TO PAC’S 2011-2012 MEMBERS

Carly Bowman, Chair
Melissa McEnroe, Vice-Chair
Michael Noble, Vice-Chair
Adam Molson
Auvinet Tehara
Corwin Cambray
Craig Cal
Andrew Dales
David McKay
Dema Ali
Eileen Costello
Geoffrey McGrath
Heather Inglis Baron
Jeffrey Cantos
Jordan Erasmus
Joyce Kwong
Kirsten Stein
Lee Owens
Leigh McGrath
Matt Armstrong
Michael Thorpe
Renee Gomes

Thank you to Michelle Berquist and Carla Tsang, last year’s first- and second-year student representatives, for their commitment to PAC. We really appreciated their direct feedback from current graduate students, and their hard work promoting PAC initiatives.

PAC welcomes incoming first- and second-year student representatives Evan Roberts and Lauren English. Thank you for volunteering with PAC!

PAC THANKS THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

In 2009-2010, with the help of the Division of University Advancement PAC launched an online donation form to recognize individual donors to the Program in Planning as “Friends of Planning”. PAC sincerely thanks the 2011-2012 “Friends of Planning”: David McKay, Kirsten Stein, Corwin Cambray, Ronji Borooah, Ann Borooah, Kyle Knoeck, Michael Thorpe, Melissa McEnroe, Katherine Parizeau, Michael Mizzi and Bruce Stewart, Andrew Brown, Joel Singer, Providenza Cancila, John G. Reid, Graham Bailey, Carly Bowman.

If you would like to become a Friend of Planning Donor in 2013, please click here to donate: www.donate.utoronto.ca/geography. Further details on the program are found on pages 9-10 of the PAC Review

PAC THANKS THE FRIENDS OF PLANNING

THE PLANNING CLASS OF 1993 IS CURRENTLY PLANNING ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION. IT WILL TAKE PLACE IN TORONTO THIS SUMMER.

If you want to get involved in its planning or wish for more information please contact its organizers: Rita Mezei (ritamezei@gmail.com) or Joseph Guzzi (jguzzi@sympatico.ca)

PAC MEMBERS RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AT THE UTAGA 2012 AWARDS NIGHT

Three PAC members were recognized in 2012 for their outstanding contributions. Matt Armstrong, Heather Inglis Baron and Kirsten Stein received 2012 UTAGA Outstanding Service Awards, for their work on promoting and organizing the Friends of Planning Spring Social as well as Planning Skills Modules. Thank you for your hard work Matt, Heather and Kirsten!

The 17th Annual Friends of Planning Spring Social, Save the Date!

April 17, 2013
Hart House Great Hall, University of Toronto

Featured Speaker: Jeanhy Shim
President, Housing Lab Toronto


Visit the Spring Social website to purchase tickets, sponsorships, and for more information:
http://my.alumni.utoronto.ca/geog

Jane Macijauskas presents the award to Heather Inglis Baron (top left) and Matt Armstrong (top right). Kirsten Stein was unfortunately unable to attend. (Bottom) Michael Noble, Melissa McEnroe and Paul Hess present the Friends of Planning Graduate Scholarship for Innovation to Melissa Bebee and Harleen Panesar. Award recipient Amy Bath was unable to attend.
NEW MODULE DRAWS LARGE AUDIENCE
Article by Michelle Berquist with photos by Carla Tsang

Seats were scarce and pizzas were plentiful at the new Affordable Housing PAC module that closed the curtain on the 2011-12 series. Students were grateful for the diverse perspectives provided by the panel of knowledgeable alumni: Cassandra Vink, SHS Consulting, Scott Pennington, City of Toronto Social Housing Unit, Bryan Sherwood, Toronto Community Housing, and Erik Hunter, City of Toronto Affordable Housing.

Panelists helped students clarify some common confusion regarding the myriad definitions of “affordable” and shared their insights on how the situation in Ontario compares to other parts of the country. The group discussed some of the major challenges faced by planners in the field, including waiting lists, financial constraints and political uncertainty. Discussion surrounding the nature of legacies inherent in the system and the problems posed by buildings of certain ages opened students’ eyes to the role history plays in planning the future of housing. Conversation about high profile projects, such as Regent Park and Lawrence Heights, highlighted some emerging best practices and illustrated the dynamic nature of working with a variety of partner organizations.

Despite the diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives of the panelists, a few take home messages resounded loud and clear from each of them: to succeed in this field one must appreciate the “art of the possible” and “stay inspired by the values that brought you to [the planning] profession”. Through their presentation and their professional accomplishment, these speakers demonstrated that compassion, creativity and compromise live at the heart of planning affordable housing.

Many thanks go to Kirsten Stein, who organized and hosted the event. Students look forward to other new modules in the future, starting with the upcoming panel-style module: “Towards an Integrated Approach to Decision-Making: The Social Planning Perspective”.

2012 SOCIAL PLANNING MODULE
Article and Photos by Michael Backs

The second PAC module of the 2012-13 school year, held on November 1st, focused on the wide range of planning projects and career options related to social planning. Four engaging speakers, including Carla Klassen from the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (attending thanks to Skype), Cassandra Vink from SHS Consulting, Asher Mercer from the Region of York, and Maureen Houlihan from the City of Toronto, talked about a range of issues, from thinking about equity and inclusion in planning for the upcoming Pan Am Games, municipal housing plans and strategies, the revitalization of social housing projects in Toronto, and the vital links between housing, employment and transportation.

Following the speakers’ presentations, students debated Toronto’s Regent Park revitalization as well as solutions for building more affordable housing in today’s economic climate, including the use of inclusionary zoning in other jurisdictions and how it might be applied in Ontario.

This is the first year PAC has held a social planning-themed module. With over 20 students attending, it is clear that University of Toronto planning students are thinking beyond issues of land use and built form and care about how planners can work to ensure social inclusion and quality of life.
The 16th Annual Friends of Planning Spring Social was held on April 19, 2012 and was well attended by a broad network of planning students, alumni, faculty, and professionals. The event was held at the Great Hall in Hart House, and featured live jazz, great food, and an excellent opportunity to network with many prominent industry representatives. The Planning Alumni Committee was pleased to welcome featured speaker Dr. Anne Golden, then the Conference Board of Canada president and CEO, who spoke about the role of cities and their ever growing global significance.

Dr. Golden, who was recently awarded the Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award by the Canadian Urban Institute, described cities and city regions as the new drivers of economic prosperity and the places where innovation and global trends will first arise. She also gave her thoughts on the qualities that successful cities would need in order to thrive. Dr. Golden, who in the mid-1990s chaired the Task Force on the Future of the GTA, noted that innovative regional governance models are needed to encourage better infrastructure and transportation planning. She also emphasized the value of a cooperative approach to economic development among municipalities, and in particular working together to improve the regional economy. Finally, Dr. Golden identified leadership as the transformative ingredient crucial to governance of an city or city region.

The University of Toronto’s Planning Alumni Committee (PAC), and the Department of Geography and Program in Planning, would like to thank the many individual Friends of Planning Fund Donors whose donations directly support student success in graduate planning programs at U of T. As well, PAC wishes to recognize the substantial long-term contribution of the event promotional sponsor, NRU Publishing Inc., as well as the ongoing support from the Ontario Professional Planners Institute. Finally, the generosity of the Social’s many corporate sponsors is deeply appreciated. The following are the Corporate sponsors of the 2012 Social:

**Speaker Sponsor:** TD Insurance.

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PAC’S MENTORSHIP PROGRAM 2012 MEET AND GREET
By Dema Ali

For the fourth consecutive year, PAC’s Mentorship Committee successfully held the Mentorship Program Kick-Off Meet and Greet at Madison Avenue Pub on the evening of October 11, 2012. Over 50 mentors and mentees gathered, providing mutual opportunity for professionals and planners-to-be to mix and mingle. The Mentorship Program continues to enhance current planning students’ learning experiences. It fosters students’ capacity to network amongst a diverse set of professionals in the planning stream, as well as explore their areas of academic and professional interest. Students were matched with professionals on the basis of planning interests, providing them with the opportunity to explore other facets of the planning field. Through a planning bingo game and a speed dating activity, mentors and mentees had equal chances of meeting each other and conversing about the planning profession. Many thanks go to all mentors who allocated some of their busy schedules to attend the event, as well as to PAC’s ongoing support. See you next year!

FALL MIXER
By Graham Macdonald

On Thursday September 13, PAC ushered in the new academic by hosting the Fall Planning Mixer at the Duke of York Pub. Now in its third year, the Fall Planning Mixer has taken up permanent residence on the PAC events calendar. This casual event attracts a mix of incoming and returning students, instructors and alumni providing an opportunity for students to get to know each other better, alumni to reconnect with friends new and old, and for both to make great professional connections. The evening kicked off at 5:30 and lasted well into the evening as many stuck around to celebrate former PAC chair Jeff Cantos’s retirement from the organization. Thanks Jeff for all your great work!

In past years, this event was held on the first Thursday of the academic school year. However, this date conflicts with the returning student’s annual field trip. In order to avoid this conflict the decision was made to push the event to the 2nd week of the school year so that both new and returning student could enjoy the evening together. The night was has huge success – so much so that event space was at times overflowing with people. The increasing popularity of this event will mostly likely leave us no choice but to graduate to a bigger space next year. Thanks to all that attended for contributing to the continued success of this event.

As a recent graduate myself (2012), I personally believe this is an important event, especially for the incoming students. I remember it as an extremely positive experience that allowed me, for the first time, to gain a tangible understanding of the types of colleagues and work that I could look forward too in my newly chosen profession. I left event that evening knowing I was in the right place and was eagerly looking forward to attending the event as a professional so that I could help provide that same positive experience to future students. The Fall Mixer never fails to deliver, so keep you eye on the calendar and join us in 2013!

MATTHEW HANSON PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP 2012

Article by Michael Noble and photographs by Lauren English

The annual Matthew Hanson Planning Opportunities Workshop was held on November 22. The event is an opportunity for alumni of the planning program to share their internship experiences, career paths and insights on finding exciting planning opportunities. The event was organized and hosted by Auvniet Tehara. This year’s panel featured:

• Erica Duque, Region of Peel
• Adam Molson, The Daniels Corporation
• Dawn Seetaram, Ministry of Infrastructure
• Bryan Sherwood, Toronto Community Housing
• Eldon Theodore, MHBC

Top left: Auvniet Tehara and Bryan Sherwood. Bottom Left: Eldon Theodore and Erica Duque. Top Right: The panel talks about their experiences. Bottom Right: Students listening to the panel presentation.
PLANNING SIN CITY
Reflections from our Second Year Planning Field Trip to Las Vegas

By Lauren English
Photography by Lauren English, Michelle Berquist and Sean Lee

On September 4th, 2012 fourteen students of the MScPl Class of 2013 embarked on a four-day field trip to Las Vegas, Nevada accompanied by a very brave Dr. Paul Hess. This year’s field trip was student led. In Spring 2012 a group of students proposed Las Vegas to the Department after conducting a survey amongst their colleagues. With the Department’s approval and Dr. Paul Hess’ support a field trip committee of eight students was formed. Four months later we found ourselves on a plane destined for the bright lights of the Nevada desert excited for the journey and stories to unfold.

Truly a city that never sleeps, we arrived late at night to an abundance of cabs, slot machines, and palm trees. Groups of students found their way to the Flamingo Hotel, our home for the next five days. An historic landmark in itself, the Flamingo was the first casino-hotel resort to open in Las Vegas. With financing from the mob, the hotel opened in 1946. Changing hands a number of times this art deco hotel has remained a landmark with many infamous guests, most notably Hunter S. Thompson.

Everyone was up bright and early on day one for a whistle-stop tour of the Regional Transit Commission (RTC), and Zappos, a major employer in the retail and logistics sector. First we learned about the advanced technology at FAST (Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation), an arm of the RTC that monitors, tracks, and analyzes the flow of traffic through the Southern Nevada Region. Equipped with live traffic cameras displayed on a floor to ceiling screen employees watch for accidents and delays on the Region’s robust highway system. Citizens can sign up for FAST’s notification system that will email and text drivers to notify them of any delays minimizing congestion. Next, we headed to the RTC’s brand new LEED platinum transit headquarters. We were pleasantly surprised to learn about the RTC’s sustainable transportation and transit initiatives. The RTC has a comprehensive cycling strategy that includes a network of bike lanes. As a pilot, they have a bike service center offering storage, repairs and showers, located in their building for use by any one with a membership. In an attempt to battle the transit stigma suffered by Las Vegas residents the RTC
has made a tremendous effort to glamourize transit usage. They have invested in new buses and branding. The most memorable of all their transit brands was the introduction of the ‘Deuce’ bus, which runs along major tourist routes whisking visitors from the hotels of the Las Vegas Strip to outlet malls on the outskirts of the City to historic Fremont street, 24 hours a day. At $5 one-way, the Deuce recuperates 150% of its costs, subsidizing much of the Region’s citizen oriented transit. Every Deuce bus is a double decker; RTC staff explained that it makes transit a memorable part of the tourist experience.

Near the downtown bus terminal one can find the Old City Hall, also known as the soon-to-be headquarters of Zappos, the multi-billion dollar online shoe and clothing retailer. In addition to City Hall, the owners of Zappos have purchased large tracks of land in Las Vegas’ currently derelict downtown core. We visited Zappos’ current headquarters in Henderson, NV to learn about their corporate culture, before heading downtown for a tour of their new development initiative near Fremont Street in Downtown Las Vegas. Embodying a similar culture to what I imagine Google or Apple would have, staff are encouraged to be as expressive and creative as possible; walls are covered in fake ivy, there’s a giant fish tank in the nap room, a cafeteria provides free meals, and no one (even the CEO) has their own office.

The high-octane, rainbow bright offices that will soon house Zappos make their surrounding neighbourhood pale by comparison. The heart of Downtown is Fremont Street, the original Las Vegas tourist strip.
less water; including a strict no lawn policy and encouraging nativ desert garden planning. They’ve worked closely with the mega-resorts and golf courses to implement waste-water-recycling programs.

After a tour of the SNWA’s water treatment facility in the hot desert sun, we welcomed the cool air-conditioned environment of Las Vegas’ Planning Department. There, we spent the afternoon with the City’s Director of Planning, Flin Fagg. Fagg shared with us his department’s difficulties and successes in establishing a sense of community in such a boom and bust economy. The City has put a lot of effort into revitalizing the old Downtown core and creating more citizen oriented spaces. By easing the bylaw application process for live music bars and restricting any gambling establishments on Fremont St. East, the City has created an attractive strip of cabarets, piano bars, and restaurants in an area once bordered up.

A group of us had the pleasure of spending our Saturday evening at ‘Don’t Tell Mama’s’, a local hot spot for live piano and one of the first establishments to take advantage of the new bylaw process on Fremont St. East. This was probably one of the highlights of my trip. It is said that Don’t Tell Mama’s is where Vegas entertainers go to be entertained – was it ever! For a City that prides itself on entertainment and service, this small establishment off the Strip of singers just waiting to be ‘found’ was exponentially better than any Celine Dion-esque talent happening on the Strip.

We spent our last day of Field Trip activities with our most candid presenters. Friday morning we met Randi Reed, a wonderfully outspoken woman who managed the leasing of small retail spaces on the Las Vegas Strip. Reed gave us her insights into the Las Vegas development industry. Joking that hotels and shopping complexes are only built to be torn down again, Reed pointed out a number of structures yet to be completed after the 2008 economic downturn. Standing tall in the desert half clad with glazing, these abandoned construction projects are a physical testament of the vulnerability of the real estate market. As a Vegas resident herself, Reed gave us a taste of the community off the strip. Residents of the Las Vegas Valley make up 80% of the total population of Nevada. Most of the individuals are employed in tourism based industries. Unlike many places in America, service jobs in Las Vegas are both highly respected and very well paid. Hotel valets can make as much as $80,000 a year. Casino dealers are heavily unionized, in turn they benefit from substantial salaries and benefits. Reed remarked that the mob has largely left Las Vegas and the City is run more so by off shore global resort giants located in Dubai and Hong Kong than anything else. Leaving us with a valuable piece of advice and the most memorable saying of our trip, Reed said, “Remember, Las Vegas was built on losers and risk takers, not winners”.

Las Vegas can be seen as the metaphoric epicenter of the American economy. When times were good, Las Vegas was the fastest growing city in America. Construction continued 24 hours a day just so the hotel industry could keep up with demand. The housing industry was built at a similar rate in response to the mass migration of workers moving to the area. Today, whole neighbourhoods stand empty and others are full only because their owners are trapped, waiting for their house to be worth at least enough to pay off the mortgage. For this reason, our decision to go to Las Vegas as our planning field trip destination was rather timely. We’ve seen firsthand how a community can come back after such a damaging economic blow. We’ve learned how planners can use their regulatory powers to build community oriented spaces in a tourist driven town. The SNWA taught us how to manage a community water supply under drought conditions. We’ll be able to draw on lessons learned from the Deuce tourist bus line when planning for the City of Toronto’s LRT airport connection. Many of us headed home appreciating the ambition and drive of this young City, bringing back planning lessons and hopefully, a bit of luck.

The second year planning class would like to thank the generous donation from the Planning Alumni Committee that made this field trip possible. Your commitment to our educational, professional, and social development is much appreciated. Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank Dr. Paul Hess for joining us on journey to Las Vegas and supporting the student led field trip commitment. We are very thankful for your time and company.
Dear Friends of U of T Planning,

Every year the Planning and Alumni Committee (PAC) at the University of Toronto provides financial support and career development opportunities to dozens of planning students. Through the Friends of Planning Fund, we fund scholarships, field trips, workshops and other activities which offer students a rewarding opportunity to enhance their education as well as a competitive advantage after they graduate. Please consider making a contribution to the Friends of Planning Fund to help us sustain these important initiatives throughout 2012-2013.

The Friends of Planning Fund allows PAC to offer programming to the approximately 60 students enrolled in the Masters program each year. This includes our Fall Planning Mixer, Mentoring program, professional development workshops, planning skills modules, and Spring Social Pairing. The events have become so popular that we have had to expand our offerings every year, providing additional planning skills modules on relevant topics that engage and energize the students. In addition, programs such as the Fall Mixer, mentoring and Spring Social Pairing are supported through the direct involvement of over 70 alumni, who are eager to meet and interact with current students.

The Friends of Planning Fund also helped to support a field trip to Las Vegas that was attended by over half of the Class of 2013. Like earlier field trips to New York, Detroit, Indonesia, and Mexico City, this trip allowed students to engage directly with practicing planners, tour development sites, and observe planning in an environment very different to what they are familiar with in Toronto. The Fund also supports five annually awarded PAC-sponsored scholarships and subsidizes students’ attendance at OPPI and CIP conferences.

We need to replenish the Friends of Planning Fund so that we can maintain and even expand our support of these essential activities. With your help, we can create more scholarships, and increase funding for conferences and workshops. Every M.Sc.Pl. student has access to the Fund and is encouraged to take full advantage of all of the opportunities that PAC offers.

Please consider making a donation to the Friends of Planning Fund. For any donation of $50 or more received before March 31, 2013, you will receive complimentary admission to the 2013 Friends of Planning Spring Social as a “Friend of Planning” as well as a tax receipt.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Carly Bowman
Chair, Planning Alumni Committee

You can now give online at: www.donate.utoronto.ca/geography. For more information about PAC, please visit: www.geog.utoronto.ca/alumni/pac.
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