Message from the Director

What a year to report on! Like everyone else, the School of Planning found itself transitioning to an online world: The COVID-19 pandemic affected, and continues to affect, all aspects of our operations as well as all our personal lives deeply. We found ourselves adapting to continually evolving circumstances both on the work and home fronts, with people impacted in both similar and unique ways depending on circumstances.

In the midst of this, planning students and faculty managed to contribute in important ways to current debates on the impacts of COVID-19 on our communities (for instance, working with the Region on Official Plan review), highlighting changing home-work arrangements, shopping patterns, travel behaviors and the ways in which the pandemic exacerbates existing and ongoing inequalities in our communities. Research and evidence-based policy advice from School members is likely to continue on these fronts.

We also acknowledge the death of George Floyd, which brought long-standing issues of anti-Black racism, racism in general, discrimination and inequality more to the fore. Ongoing conversations among students, staff, and faculty note important ways in which planning education can contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable society. These issues continue to reveal the importance of systemic change within the planning profession and Canadian society itself to addressing racism as well as the long standing impacts of colonization on Indigenous populations – we continue to think about and implement ways in which planning education can contribute to addressing these critical issues.

Thus, the year has not only led us to rethink ways in which we deliver courses but also continued to push us to recognize our own privilege, and the nature of professional planning education itself, and its role in fighting racism and building more equitable and inclusive communities in general.

I highly commend faculty and staff colleagues and our students for demonstrating tremendous endurance and capacity to adapt during highly challenging circumstances. It’s certainly been a difficult year. Along the way, I witnessed a great number of acts of kindness, compassion and downright grit. Members of the School, and of the Faculty as a whole, really have worked hard together as a team during these challenging times. I sincerely thank everyone for their hard work, commitment, humor and humanity.

Sincerely,

Markus Moos, PhD MCIP RPP
Director
School of Planning
ANNUAL SUMMARY

People

- The School currently has 19 faculty and three staff members (with searches on-going for two open staff positions).

- Markus Moos became Director as of July 1, 2020. The School thanks Clarence Woudsma for over a decade of outstanding service in this role. The School celebrated Woudsma with a virtual toast, and a curb-side delivery of goodies.

- Jennifer Dean became Associate Director Undergraduate as of July 1, 2020, taking over from Michael Drescher who previously served in this role.

- Joe Qian continues to serve in the role of Associate Director Graduate until July 1, 2022.

- Retirements: The School celebrated the retirement and successful careers of Karen Hammond (March 12, 2020 – event held the day before the pandemic lockdown), Kevin Curtis (December 31, 2020), Pierre Filion (December 31, 2020).

- Our congratulations go to Janice Barry who earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor – a recognition of her excellence in research and teaching.

- Tiffany Chen has taken over the role of Undergraduate Advisor for the School, Jessica Martinson moved to KI after returning from parental leave, and Agata Jagielska has moved into another position outside the faculty.

- We thank our exceptional staff, Sheree Solomon, Tiffany Chen, and Shelley Knischewsky, for their continued hard work and outstanding contributions to the School. School staff deliver high quality service, and work collectively to ensure smooth School operations. The School would not run without them. This year in particular, we saw transitions in several staff roles, which meant a significantly increased work load. Remaining staff handled this situation exceptional well and need to be recognized for their efforts. Thank you, Sheree, Tiffany and Shelley, for all that you do.

- The School’s faculty continues to support the Faculty of Environment and the University in serving in administrative positions:
  - **Jeff Casello**, Associate Vice President Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
  - **Michael Drescher**, Director, Heritage Resources Center
  - **Leia Minaker**, Director, Survey Research Center

- For the past year Rob Horne was appointed Planner-in-Residence – teaching a core 4th year course as well as contributing to the School in a number of other ways.
  - Rob is a seasoned planning leader with over 30 years of municipal experience. He was the Commissioner of Planning, Development and Legislative Services for over a decade with the Region of Waterloo until 2016, followed by a three year role as Chief Administrative Officer with the City of Stratford. He has also worked at the Federal and Provincial government levels, and comes from a family-owned small business.
• The School wishes to acknowledge the teaching contributions of the following individuals from the professional ranks:
  o Fall 2020 – Christopher Alton (PLAN 210); Dana Anderson (PLAN 721); Bob Lehman (PLAN 721); James Parkin (PLAN 417)
  o Winter 2021 – Christopher Alton (PLAN 211); Denise Baker (PLAN 471); Tim Blair (PLAN 483); Kevin Curtis (PLAN 703); Julia Smachylo (PLAN 409); Nancy Smith (PLAN 471)
  o Spring 2021 – Morgan Boyco (PLAN 346); Marcus Letourneau (PLAN 414); Anahita Shadkam (PLAN 349)

• We sincerely thank student members of the Association of Graduate Planners (AGP) and the Planning Student Association (PSA), the planning student associations at the graduate and undergraduate levels respectively. Despite challenging circumstances, they continued to offer important student initiatives and programming, delivered virtually. The AGP and PSA are a key part of the School community and contribute to the life of the School and student well-being and success in many ways.

• Finally, the School acknowledges its co-op students hired during the past year as research assistants, on-line learning assistants, and community outreach coordinators. The co-op students have contributed to successful School operations in important ways, and helped tremendously with the transition to on-line delivery during the pandemic.

Programs

Graduate Studies

• 2020 new admits: 34
  o PhD: 8
  o MA/MES: 21
  o MPLAN: 3
  o GDIP: 2
• 2020 (Fall) total graduate student count: 113
  o PhD: 39
  o MA/MES: 51
  o MPLAN: 20
  o GDIP: 3

Undergraduate Studies

• 2020 new first year admits: 124
• 2020 (Fall) total undergraduate student count: 568
• Graduating Students
  o Spring 2020: 103
  o Fall 2020: 3
  o Spring 2021: ~91 (final count not available until May 19th when grades become official)
On-Going Activities

Research

- Faculty members in the School continue to be successful in ongoing research activities including the securing of new funding from various sources.

- Members publish peer-reviewed work in major international outlets and in leading journals in planning and adjacent fields. Faculty also have an impact through practice work and research conducted directly with local communities and organizations.

- The scholarly output by our faculty complement last year was nearly 300 units of output including books, book chapters, peer reviewed articles, reports, designs, software, invited keynote presentations, conference papers and posters and other presentations.

- Throughout the year, our Faculty members are active organizers and participants in a wide range of events related to their scholarship. While this is an important part of academic life in general, it is particularly important to a professional planning school with stated aims to integrate our scholarly activity with the broader communities.

Hiring

- We are in the final stages of hiring a full-time lecturer in design and planning practice (replacement due to retirement).

- We are currently hiring for several existing staff positions due to turnover:
  - Graduate Administrator
  - Administrative Coordinator
  - Events Coordinator

Events

- A distinguishing feature of the School of Planning is our vibrant and vital connection with the practice world of professional planning; and special events are an essential contributor to the success of that connection.

- The pandemic certainly made it more challenging to run events. Although reduced in number from prior years, the School still managed to organize and run several successful on-line events:
  - Ceremony for first-year student induction into the planning profession
  - Pragma council conference events
  - A joint Planning and Engineering public talk (including the Planner-in-Residence and the Engineer-in-Residence)
  - First Planner-in-Residence public talk and panelists
  - Various student support events, such as Fall orientation/welcome events, student drop-in sessions, writing circles, coffee chats, lunch chats, senior orientation etc.
Other

- The School has formed an Anti-racism, Indigenization, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ARIEDI) committee, including 4 student representatives, and a sub-committee of 12 students. Their first task is to work with the School to develop a statement of values to guide our activities.

- The School is conducting a curriculum review, including alignment with evolving professional competencies and, working closely with the ARIEDI committee, equity, diversity and inclusion objectives.

- The School is happy to report that the Professional Standards Board has successfully renewed the School’s professional accreditation with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

- The School has created a new Instagram account to aid in outreach and communication with the School and broader community (@uwplanning).

- The School became officially a member of the American Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). Although many individual faculty members have long-standing connections with the ACSP, this is the first year that this US-based organization has opened up its institutional membership to Canadian schools. As a member, the School benefits from building its international connections, ability to participate in discussions and vote on ACSP matters, and eligibility for ACSP awards and support programs.

- This past year we also continued to benefit from outside support for our course delivery from a number of professional groups. For instance, the UWPAT (University of Waterloo Planning Alumni of Toronto) and The Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation (TOARC) helped to deliver important courses in our program.

Prepared and submitted by Markus Moos, May 7 2021, with special thanks to Clarence Woudsma, Sheree Solomon, and Tiffany Chen for assistance in preparing this report.