

2023 – 2024

School of Planning Report to Faculty of Environment Council

Overview:

It's been a very good year! Members of the School continue to be highly productive in scholarly research as well as more applied work with community groups, governments, and the private sector. The School has delivered courses and supervision to more than 600 undergraduate students and 170 graduate students within our own unit, and many more across the University and broader academic community.

Over the past year, members of the School have focused attention inward on sharpening our core mission, for instance by finalizing our undergraduate program revisions, and by making changes to various administrative processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Outward efforts focused on knowledge dissemination, professional development opportunities for the profession, media engagement, and working with governments and international and national advisory bodies. Our faculty have frequently engaged with the community on hot button issues such as sustainability in farming land use, renovation protections, climate-friendly housing development, and social equity in planning. We continue to work diligently on identifying and carrying out action items in the area of equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice in line with the School's statement of values.

Moving forward, the School will support and help to advance the Faculty's very promising "Environment in 2035" initiative, the university's dynamic "Waterloo at 100" strategic plan, and the brand new, exciting Future Cities Institute (FCI). With this context in mind, we will conduct a full review of our master's programs, roll out the new undergraduate curriculum, build and expand our connections to the planning practice community, and continue to contribute to planning education, research, and practice.

Sincerely,



Mark Seasons, PhD FCIP RPP
Professor & Director

Our People:

The School has 6 staff members and 21 faculty (3 of these are joint-appointments with other departments/programs and 1 is serving in a full-time administrative position). We currently have about 670 undergraduate students and 160 +/- graduate students.

Current School administrative positions are held by:

- **Mark Seasons**, Director
- **Jeremy Pittman**, Associate Director, Graduate Programs
- **Carrie Michell**, Associate Director, Undergraduate Programs
- **Katherine Perrott**, Associate Director, Professional Practice
- **Janice Barry** completed her role as Associate Director, Graduate Studies, April 30, 2024. **Jeremy Pittman** stepped into the role effective May 1, 2024.

The School's faculty continued to support the broader University community in serving in administrative positions:

- **Jeff Casello**, Associate Vice President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
- **Michael Drescher**, Director, Heritage Resources Centre
- **John Lewis**, Director, Indigenous Faculty Relations
- **Leia Minaker**, Director, Future Cities Institute
- **Clarence Woudsma**, Assistant Vice President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

Planner-in-Residence:

Each year, the School of Planning hosts a Planner-in-Residence, an expert who teaches and conducts seminars. The program gives students and faculty the opportunity to interact with professionals who are leaders in their field. The Planner-in-Residence program is funded by the University of Waterloo Planning Alumni of Toronto.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, the Planner-in-Residence was Martin Quarcoompome. He delivered PLAN 403 in the winter term to our 4th year undergraduate students and interacted with the School community in various other ways throughout the year. Martin has a Bachelor of Environmental Studies (Planning) from the University of Waterloo. He is a Registered Professional Planner with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, and he is a Full Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners. Martin is a professional land use planner with over 15 years of experience in the private sector. He is a Vice-President with the Weston Consulting Group (Toronto).

Staff Colleagues:

We thank all our exceptional staff 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. Our valued staff members include: Sheree Solomon (Academic Services Manager), Tracey Beirness (Graduate Program Coordinator and Advisor), Jessica Huang and Neda Gohardehi (Undergraduate Program Coordinators and Advisors), Jonathon MacAlpine (Event and External Relations Coordinator), and Ashley Wagner (Administrative Coordinator).

Sessional Instructors:

Sessional Instructors are valued contributors to our work in the School. They cover core teaching needs during faculty leaves. As a professional School, we also enhance our curriculum by hiring several sessional instructors to offer courses taught by leaders in the profession. The School wishes to acknowledge the sessional teaching contributions of the following planning professional colleagues – they have really done a fine job of providing us with a practice perspective on planning, and doing so in a highly creative, accessible manner:

Fall 2023: Dana Anderson and Sean Hertel (PLAN 721, Advanced Planning Project Studio); James Parkin (PLAN 417/PLAN 686, Aggregate Resources), and Kevin Farrugia (PLAN/GEOG 387, Spatial Databases).

Winter 2024: Adrian Buttazzoni (PLAN/GEOG 432/HLTH 420, Health, Environment and Planning); Pam Deusling (PLAN 703, Planning Professional Practice); Matthew Davis (PLAN/GEOG 487, Management Issues in GIS); Yuri Langlois (PLAN 409, Urban Design Studio), Adrian Litavski (PLAN 483/PLAN 602, Land Development Planning), Joelle McNeil (PLAN 233, People and Plans), and Reesha Morar (PLAN 110, Visual Approaches to Design and Communication)

Spring 2024: Marcus Letourneau (PLAN 414/REC 425, Heritage Planning Workshop) and Dave Galbraith (PLAN/CIVE 484, Physical Infrastructure Planning).

Program Support:

This past year, we also continued to benefit from outside support for our course delivery from several professional groups. For instance, The Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation (TOARC) helped to deliver courses in our program. We want to acknowledge and very much appreciate the alumni volunteers who organize and run the highly successful annual UWPAT Dinner event in Toronto which has been held for a remarkable 31 years. Last year, the event attracted approximately 900 attendees – such a wonderful event. We wish to express our gratitude to the many members of the planning practice community who contribute guest lectures or participate in panels, as project mentors, or guest critics for our students' work.

We are saddened to note the recent passing (in November 2023) of one of the truly great and influential “champions” of the School, Ian MacNaughton. He was in the first MA (Planning) graduation class (1971). Ian and his firm made really significant contributions over the past 50+ years to the advancement of planning practice in this region, and across Ontario. Ian’s firm – MHBC Planning Consultants – have long been strong supporters of, and advocates for, our School and our students. We thank Ian and his firm for their continued support and encouragement.

Finally, we 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. They continued to offer important student initiatives and programming. The AGP and PSA are a key part of the School community, and they contribute to the life of the School and student well-being and success in so many ways.

Academic Programs:

Graduate Programs

In September 2023, the School of Planning welcomed 2 new PhD students along with a deferred admit in January 2023 and 22 MA/MES (Planning) students. This brings the total number of students in our research programs to 96 students. Between May 2023 and April 2024, we also welcomed 12 students to our online MPlan/GDip program, which is oriented towards working planning professionals. This brings the total number of students in that program to 34.

Fall 2023 New Admits:

- Total new admits: 37
- PhD – 3 (1 entered in Winter 23); MA/MES – 22 FT; MPlan – 10; GDip- 2

Fall 2023 Student Count

- Total graduate students: 156
- PhD – 44; MA/MES – 71; MPlan – 36; GDip – 5

Scholarship Recipients:

The School congratulates all our graduate student scholarship winners. The scholarship recipients that have been publicly announced between May 2023 and April 2024 include:

Chloe St. Hilaire – Vanier Canadian Graduate Scholarship, **Margaret Ellis -Young** - SSHRC J. Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral, **Samantha Leger** - SSHRC J. Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral, **Kayleigh Swanson** - Ontario Graduate Scholarship, **Kevin Bonnell** - Ontario Graduate Scholarship, **Amanda Morielli** - SSHRC J. Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Masters, **Michael Ricci** - SSHRC J. Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Masters, **Natalie Majda** - Ontario Graduate Scholarship, **Emma Borho** - SSHRC J. Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Masters, **Barnabas Addi** - Black Graduate Students EDI-RO Award, **Charisma Gerow** - **Emily Ruston Mann Memorial Graduate Scholarship**

Katherine Perrott, in their role as Associate Director, Professional Practice, provided leadership with support from Jonathon MacAlpine and Tracey Beirness to promote Internship opportunities for our Year 1 MA/MES (Planning) student colleagues, and organized job search and related training initiatives. The results have been very positive indeed.

Undergraduate Program:

In 2023, the School celebrated over 95 undergraduate students' graduation with their BES in Planning. Last September, the School welcomed 182 first year students, our largest cohort to date!

Awards Recipients:

Overall, 166 undergraduate Planning students received 283 awards/scholarships during the past academic year. Congratulations to our undergraduate award recipients: Petrina Cheung (Academic Achievement Award), David Patrick Pau (CIP-PSTF Outstanding Graduating Student Award), **Rachel Pring** (ESRI Canada School of Planning Undergraduate Scholarship), **Michelle Kofia** (MHBC Award for Black and Indigenous Students), **Dylan Schnurr** (Alan Weeks Memorial Award), **Tayvin Christopher Salyajivin-James** (Planning Class of 1981 Award for Black and Indigenous Students), Anthony Jun Feng Luo and Mattea Elizabeth Anne Schaap (Don Fleming Pragma Council Award), and **Myah Sachedina** (Shelley Ellison Memorial Award).

We were pleased to welcome **Neda Gohardehi** to the School as our second Undergraduate Advisor and Program Administrator. We also wish to congratulate **Jessica Huang** who is now a permanent staff member.

Fall 2023:

- New first year admits: 182
- Total undergraduate student count: 672

Graduating students:

- Spring 2023: 89
- Fall 2023: 7
- Spring 2024: 112

Some noteworthy undergraduate accomplishments:

- The **PLAN 211: Design Studio Foundations** course, taught by Dr. Katherine Perrott, focused on building student skills in digital modeling, urban design visualizations, and poster layout. The course explored the possibilities of what the future of the University of Waterloo campus could look like when meeting the University's sustainability goals. In Winter 2024, PLAN 211 had an exciting inter-disciplinary collaboration coordinated via the Sustainability Office with **CIVE/ENVE 583: Design of Urban Water Systems Engineering**, where students learned from each other about urban water flows and design. PLAN 211 students brought lessons about stormwater management into their designs for campus to enhance student experience and environmental sustainability.
- Ted Rogers Real Estate Association held the 10th annual Expand Your Empire Development Conference, Canada's largest real estate development conference and competition. The team from the University of Waterloo, including Matthew Van Bakel from the Planning program, won the First Place Grand Prize by proposing a development that would provide students and new graduates with affordable housing in Toronto, with the potential to apply the concept across Ontario. This team has won this award for the third consecutive year!

- The long-standing tradition of a student conference with the Toronto Metropolitan's Association of Planning Students (TMAPS) and the University of Waterloo's Planning Students' Association (PSA) took place in April. It was TMAPS turn to host, and this annual event continues to build bridges, providing opportunities to exchange ideas and mutual learning.

Special Events:

One 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.

Annual events included:

- School Graduation Luncheon Celebration
- School Welcome Event
- School Meet and Greet with New Graduate Students
- School Senior Orientation and Professional Development Event

Research Activities:

Faculty and student colleagues in the School continue to design, carry out, and communicate research that addresses the major issues of the day at multiple scales – the “wicked problems.” Our work is inter- and trans-disciplinary, and collaborative in nature. Our researchers work with colleagues in the Faculty, across the campus, and elsewhere (including the practice/policy world). We address issues such as (among many others) the causes and impacts of the climate crisis, future cities, the vexing food insecurity challenge, ecosystem governance, the development of geo-referenced decision-making models, prioritizing social equity, planning in/with complexity, affordable housing, and planning with Canada's Indigenous Peoples.

We pride ourselves on conducting research that is solution-oriented and that informs planning practice. Our work is published in top-ranked scholarly and practice-oriented journals. School scholars continue to perform well in Tri-Council, other domestic research funding programs and in international research funding initiatives, and they influence decision-making through high-profile media contributions

Some examples: The School of Planning's Dr. Brian Doucet contributed to our community outreach and media engagement efforts through his vocal support of Hamilton's first-of-its-kind by-law targeting renovictions. This by-law will increase protections for tenants in the case of unit renovations and ensure that Hamilton renters cannot be evicted solely for the sake of increased rental incomes. Dr. Doucet's role in promoting this by-law helps to address the School of Planning's focus on affordable housing in Canada.

Dr. Markus Moos also supported Post-Doctoral Fellow, and Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba, Dr. Raphael Ayambire in his in-depth literature review of 157 peer-reviewed articles to determine if social equity was adequately addressed in the scenario planning process. The results of this analysis highlighted a severe lack in prioritization of

social equity and offered a framework for integrating equity considerations into in future planning processes, providing us with tools for building a more equitable world.

Helping the School of Planning's goal of staying on the cutting edge, Dr. Dawn Parker helped co-author a report analysing how AI can be harnessed to change how social science research can be performed. AI as it now exists is a useful tool for extrapolation of data, and allows social scientists to quickly test theories and hypotheses at a large scale. However, Dr. Parker has noted that guidelines for the use of AI in research must be established. Dr. Parker's work has helped to address a complex and ever-changing issue in a way that promotes the School of Planning's goals."

Other exciting work done by our school members is highlighted on the School's website, under [News](#).

