School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning
Arizona State University

Planning Honors Program And Opportunities

Navigate your world. Plan your future.

Urban planning is shaping the way our cities, states and communities operate, how people navigate the globe, and how cities are planned for success. Urban planners guide communities in making wise decisions about their use of land and resources.

The BSP program in urban planning provides students with expertise in both the analysis and the synthesis of the physical, social, political and economic issues that shape urban and regional development. The accelerated BSP / MUEP (4+1) program offers an opportunity for highly qualified students to complete both a bachelors' and masters' degree in urban planning in 5 years. This opens up opportunities to enter the field of planning with an accredited professional degree, in little more time than required for the bachelor's degree.

We also have a minor in urban planning that complements majors in sustainability, architecture, visual design and other areas. To learn more about opportunities in urban planning, you can watch this short video on the core strengths of our program.

The specialty areas of professors in the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning particularly focus on the following themes.

Geography

- Earth Systems & Climate Science
- Sustainability Science & Studies
- Computational Spatial Science
- Place, Culture & Identity

Planning

- City Building and Urban Structure
- Environmental and Resiliency Planning
- Housing, Neighborhoods, and Community Development
- Spatial Analytics and Smart Cities

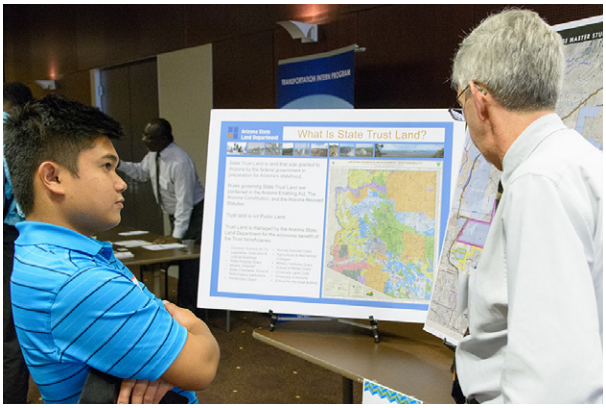
Graduates in urban planning pursue career opportunities with private planning firms and governmental planning agencies (mainly at the city level, but also with county, state and federal entities). Some planners elect to pursue graduate degrees to develop specialty skills and to enhance their opportunities for career advancement. The urban planning degree, especially when combined with a focus on geographic information science, gives graduates an advantage in careers that combine urban planning with GIS and in other jobs dealing with urban issues.

For More Information

Come visit the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning on the fifth floor of Coor Hall. Professor David King (David.A.King@asu.edu) is our urban planning faculty Honors Advisor and will assist Honors students in finding advisors for Honors theses.

For detailed information about our programs and requirements, please set up an advising appointment. Visit http://geoplan.asu.edu/advising to set up an appointment online. Any of our full-time advisors can guide you on all geography, urban planning, and GIS programs.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES FOR PLANNING MAJORS



Honors Classes and Contracts - Most planning courses are open to Honors Contracts, allowing honors planning majors a great deal of flexibility in selecting courses for their program of study. An Honors section of the required Sustainable Cities (PUP 190) course is offered regularly. In addition, honors students in their senior year are welcome to take graduate seminars that qualify for honors. Most important, planning students in the Honors program have opportunities to research and write an Honors thesis in their senior year. Planning faculty are supportive of this and ready to provide assistance and serve on Honors thesis committees.

Student Planning Association @ ASU (SPA) - The ASU Student Planning Association is a student-created and student-led group that furthers ASU planning students' educational goals and enhances their experience through events, advocacy, the distribution of information, and encouragement of an environment where students can easily share resources. Its events include software seminars, professional office field trips, and information sessions on topics such as internships, scholarships, and other school programs. For more information, see http://geoplan.asu.edu/spa.

Internships - We encourage all planning students to seek out internships. They provide a valuable opportunity to see how planning works in real-world settings. Our undergraduate planning students have done internships in city planning departments, state and local agencies, private firms and nonprofit organizations, and have participated in projects dealing with community participation, zoning, urban development, transportation, and environmental and recreational planning. See http://geoplan.asu.edu/internships for current internship opportunities and other resources for finding internships. The Decision Center for a Desert City also has a superb internship program focusing on diverse research that is relevant to urban planners, water managers, and other stakeholders.

Formal Lectures and Informal Talks We encourage our majors to attend our series of research talks on Thursday afternoons. Scholars from around the USA and world visit our school and give talks on their research. These colloquia are often followed by visits to local watering holes so you can get a chance to socialize with our school faculty and visitors. We also have a more informal "bag lunch" series where undergraduate majors, graduate students and faculty chat about various research experiences. (For more information go to http://geoplan.asu.edu/events). In addition, the seminars, information sessions and field trips organized by the SPA provide valuable opportunities to interact with professionals and graduate students in an informal, casual setting.

Scholarship - The school supports students in seeking national scholarships available for planners through ASU, as well as state and national oranizations. For links to information about all these scholarships, see https://geoplan.asu.edu/student-life/undergraduate-experience/scholarships-funding

ADVISING TIMELINE

Note: This list is meant to supplement the expectations of the Barrett Honors College. Be sure to talk to the advisors in Barrett to ensure you are meeting their requirements and deadlines.

Freshman and Sophomore Year: This is the time when you will be fulfilling your general studies requirements. When you have identified planning as a possible major (or minor), we strongly encourage you to meet with the Faculty Honors Advisor David King, making an appointment via e-mail: David.A.King@asu.edu. Professor King will direct you to the undergraduate planning advisors, who are experts on courses and opportunities within the major. He will help you find a faculty mentor who matches your interests. He can also explain to you the Honors Thesis process and provide examples of past theses.

Junior Year: Honors students get "priority registration" if they go through the mandatory fifth semester advising with the Barrett Honors College. At this time, we also require that you meet with Honors Advisor David King to go over the upper division planning courses and how best to plan those to work towards an honors thesis. Also sometime during your junior year, you will need to take one of the Thesis Workshop Sessions periodically offered by Barrett. Or, you can do this on-line through a workshop offered through Barrett via ASU Blackboard. Please see details here: http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/. Drafting your Prospectus by the second semester of your junior year is also highly desirable (see more on the Prospectus below).

Senior Advising: By the start of your senior year, you should have formed a committee of a First and a Second Reader for your theeis. If you have not found a suitable thesis advisor, don't panic. Just email or meet with Honors Advisor David King to find the best match with your interests.

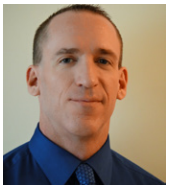
You should submit an Honors Thesis Prospectus to your Thesis Advisor (First Reader) early in the fall semester—if not earlier—in order to defend in the spring. **The Prospectus** outlines your thesis topic and plans in about 1 or 2 pages; it should also include the student's full contact information, a working title, your First Reader (i.e., Thesis Advisor or Committee Chair) and Second Reader, plus a timeline of activities leading up to the planned defense. This prospectus plan should be co-signed by the student and their Thesis Advisor (First Reader) before submission to the Barrett College.

Note: This list is meant to supplement the advising activities of the Barrett Honors College. Always follow the guidelines for the Honors College first.

PLANNING FACULTY AND THESIS OPPORTUNITIES

The faculty members below are especially interested in advising and working with Honors students. Briefs bios are provided here to help you identify a thesis topic and/or the First and Second Readers who will oversee your honors thesis. To view the complete list of potential faculty advisors for your Honors Thesis or other activities, you can also visit https://geoplan.asu.edu/about/people/faculty.

Meagan Ehlenz: Professor Ehlenz focuses on issues of community development and social equity in cities. She welcomes students interested in the dynamics of neighborhood change (How are neighborhoods changing? Who benefits and who doesn't? What policies/strategies can change those dynamics?), community wealth-building strategies (e.g., community land trusts, housing/worker cooperatives, community economic development), and issues of social equity and diversity.



Jason Kelley: Dr. Kelley is always eager to work with honors students interested in topics of urban transportation planning and policy, environmental justice and social equity, pedestrian-oriented urban design and development, and the historical evolution of urban planning and urban design paradigms and practice.

David King: Professor King focuses on transportation and land use planning. His research largely focuses on local and regional planning issues, with common themes of transportation finance, social equity and technological change (such as evaluating Uber and Lyft as alternatives to auto ownership, or how the development of automated vehicles might influence city growth). He seeks to work with students interested in environmentally and financially sustainable transportation, urban redevelopment, creative placemaking and equitable transport investment. Projects can range from policy development and evaluation to statistical analysis of transportation and land use phenomena. Students can use qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research methods.

Mike Kuby: Possible honors thesis topics include transportation, energy, and sustainability. He is currently working on light rail and streetcar transit, alternative-fuel vehicles, carbon capture and storage, bicycle infrastructure, and the impact of climate change on transportation systems. He focuses on optimizing the infrastructure for more sustainable technologies (such as alternative-fuel station locations) and using GIS, statistics, and survey research to better understand their geographic and behavioral aspects.

Elizabeth (Beth) Larson: Beth Larson welcomes honors projects in all her courses. Topics are wide-ranging, and especially welcome are those involving human rights and social justice in the developing world; global environmental issues; and geography in literature/novels.

Kelli Larson: Dr. Larson welcomes honors thesis topics and project pertaining to society and the environment; water governance and sustainability; environmental perceptions and attitudes; urban landscape design and management; and human behavior and behavior change, among other topics Her current projects focus on: water demand and conservation in U.S. cities; residential landscapes and bird biodiversity; and, cross-national perceptions of water resource problems and climate change.

Kevin McHugh: has served on several BHC student thesis committees for students across a range of majors and has mentored BHC students in geography and urban planning. Kevin is a cultural geographer who is keen to work with honors students on topics relating to place, landscape, movement, and community. His own research in critical cultural geographies draws on philosophy, social and cultural theory, film, and literature in advancing understandings of movement, memory, place, and landscape as constitutive of the modern world and the human condition.

Sara Meerow: Professor Meerow's research focuses on how we can make our cities more sustainable and resilient to climate change and other challenges. She would be happy to work with honors students interested in urban resilience, climate change adaptation, green infrastructure/green space, urban agriculture/gardening, and infrastructure planning in cities across the US or internationally. Research projects could use qualitative, quantitative, or geospatial analysis (GIS) methods.

Trisalyn Nelson: uses GIS and other data science tools to research applied questions in spatial ecology and active transportation. Two topics of particular interested are wildlife movement and cycling safety. Using GPS data and GIS methods her team is understanding human disturbance changes habitat selection of grizzly bears and other wildlife. As well, her team developed www.BikeMaps.org to crowdsource data on cycling safety. She is actively looking to work students interested in working on the www.BikeMaps.org project in Tempe and Phoenix. Projects could include technical development, outreach and promotion, or analysis of data.

Deirdre Pfeiffer: Professor Pfeiffer welcomes the opportunity to work with honors students interested in topics related to housing, aging, diverse groups, social equity, health, community engagement, and suburbia.

David Pijawka: welcomes the opportunity to work with honors students interested in research related to sustainable planning and design, socio-economic assessments, disaster management and recovery planning, perception and behavior studies, and institutional design.

Deborah Salon: Dr. Salon welcomes the opportunity to work with honors students interested in research related to transportation systems. In her research she is especially interested in questions relating to how transportation systems in cities can be improved by making them more environmentally sustainable, more equitable, and more affordable for users. This includes how transportation systems affect other important aspects and functions of cities, such as economic development, real estate markets, and neighborhood livability.

Daoqin Tong: Dr. Tong looks forward to working with honors students. Dr. Tong's research has mainly focused on the use of spatial analytics including spatial optimization, geographic information system (GIS), and spatial statistics to support urban

and regional studies concerning locational decisions, transportation, food access, and public health. Her recent projects include modeling spatial data uncertainty, studying urban food access and urban agriculture, understanding human movement and vector-borne disease spread as well as examining rainwater as potential resource for water independence in desert cities.

Elizabeth (Libby) Wentz: Professor Wentz is happy to work with honors students with interests in using geospatial technologies to better understand residential water and energy use in desert cities. Current cities under investigation are Yuma, Tempe and Phoenix, Arizona and Las Vegas, Nevada. For students interested in international experience, honors theses could involve remote sensing and GIS use in tropical rainforest research.