LEAP and PIPSA Would Like to Welcome the Incoming Class of 2010 to Pratt Institute!

Leaders in Environmental Advocacy at Pratt (LEAP) and the Pratt Institute Planning Student Association (PIPSA) are the professional student associations of the Environmental Systems Management and City and Regional Planning programs, respectively. We, together with the Pratt Historic Preservation Organization (PHPO), seek to take the educational experience of PSPD students one step further – generating a sense of community both on and off campus.

At this year’s student orientation, John Shapiro commented on the fact that many of the PSPD’s alumni return as faculty members, saying: “It’s a very special place, which you will all come to see shortly. And the reason is you.”

Truly, the PSPD is a community of students, faculty, and alumni bonded by common goals and values. We are committed to participatory planning and advocacy, and we strive to have an impact. While school is in session, this creed seems to echo down the hallways. But Pratt students don’t just learn in the classroom. We engage directly with community members, for we believe that community involvement is the key to a genuinely sustainable future (“Nothing About Us Without Us!”).

This issue of multipliCITY celebrates the 50th anniversary of the City and Regional Planning program and the legacy of progressive planning at Pratt Institute.

In keeping with this spirit, LEAP and PIPSA are working together to create a full slate of fun and educational activities, with a special focus on major environmental planning issues in and around the New York metropolitan region. A series of panel discussions will explore how current farming projects are shaping the future of urban agriculture. We will also be following up on a panel discussion held this spring, which brought together policymakers, landowners, and activists from all over the state to talk about the controversial proposal to drill for natural gas in New York City’s watershed.

Both LEAP and PIPSA would like to extend a warm welcome to the incoming class and encourage all students to get involved. We are student-run organizations, and we can only thrive with consistent and committed student interest. So come to a meeting and let us know what issues and concerns you would like to see addressed in the coming months.

PIPSA aims to bring professional, cultural and academic planning opportunities to PSPD students and faculty. In addition to coordinating a progressive agenda of events, PIPSA also seeks to raise awareness around current issues and initiatives. Council members are dedicated to providing all students with progressive ways for tuition reduction and work-based placement. This year’s focus will be the nexus between diversity, equity, sustainability, and the built environment.

LEAP is a group of concerned graduate students who seek to disseminate information and bring awareness to urban environmental issues. Throughout the year, LEAP sponsors a variety of events and activities, including networking gatherings, discussion panels, volunteer opportunities, and hands-on workshops. LEAP hopes to enhance each student’s experience at Pratt, encouraging a deeper level of engagement and knowledge about current environmental issues happening in our community, our city, and our globe.
The American Planning Association’s (APA) New York Metro Chapter has awarded the Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment (GCPE) the 2010 Meritorious Achievement and Service Award, which recognizes the work of individuals or organizations of unusual merit or achievement in the planning profession. Officials from the APA’s Metro Chapter said they wanted to recognize Pratt for its 50 years of community service in planning.

The award will be presented at the APA New York Metro Chapter’s annual meeting on October 1, 2010. (Visit www.nyplanning.org for event details.)

GCPE celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. As part of its mission, it works closely with the Pratt Center for Community Development – one of the nation’s leading college-based advocacy organizations – and connects graduate students looking to get hands-on planning experience with community organizations seeking solutions for making their neighborhoods more livable, inclusive, and sustainable.

Each year, the APA New York Metro Chapter bestows recognition on individuals, organizations, and projects that exemplify the best of the metropolitan region’s planning work. Given at the Chapter’s Annual Meeting, the awards are meant to highlight excellence in the field and inspire planners of the next generation. The awards encompass a variety of achievements and include recognition for seasoned leaders as well as those just beginning to make their mark.

The APA’s New York Metro Chapter addresses planning issues that concern the physical, social, and economic environment in the metropolitan region, encompassing New York City, Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk Counties), and the Hudson Valley (Rockland, Westchester, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan Counties). The Chapter represents some 1,200 practicing planners and other people involved in the planning and design of the region’s communities.
On May 15 and 16, the Pratt City and Regional Planning program celebrated its 50th anniversary with a celebration and symposium at Higgins Hall. The gathering of alumni, current students, and past and current faculty showcased the strong impacts Pratt has had on the field of urban planning and on New York City communities since George Raymond founded the program in 1960.

Friday night’s soiree brought out over 300 people, who enjoyed food and drinks at Higgins Hall and heard keynote speaker and American Planning Association President Mitch Silver deliver remarks about the importance of a progressive planning education. Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez also joined the event to honor Professor and Pratt Center for Community Development Founder Ron Shiffman for his contributions to community-based planning in New York City.

On Saturday morning, about 150 Pratt alumni, students, faculty, and friends gathered for a symposium examining how Pratt’s pedagogy over the last 50 years has influenced alumni in their work around the city and the world, and how it can continue to do so in the future. City Council members and Pratt planning alumni Brad Lander and Elizabeth Crowley presented the program with a Declaration honoring its 50 years of planning education. Ron Shiffman delivered an inspiring speech tying the history of Pratt’s work with local community development corporations in the 1960s to the type of community-based work the program continues to do today. Participants then broke up into groups for short yet spirited discussions about the Pratt ethic and what it means for work in the fields of sustainability, historic preservation, and economic development.

Finally, author and urban critic Roberta Brandes Gratz delivered a speech inspired by her recent book, which examines the past, present, and future of urban planning in New York City through the lens of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs. A panel discussion on this topic followed, featuring past Chairs of the Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment: Ron Shiffman, Ayse Yonder, George Raymond, and Tom Angotti.

In celebration of the 50th, student (now graduate) Anusha Venkataraman, with the help of other students, alumni, and friends of the program, created a publication on the history of community-based planning at Pratt. Fiftieth Years of Community-Based Planning, titled Intractable Democracy, 50 Years of Community-Based Planning. This publication takes a reflective look at community-based planning as carried out by current and past faculty, students, and alumni, and includes interviews with former Chairpersons of the department.

The book can be ordered for $20, inclusive of shipping. Visit www.pratt.edu/gcpe to download an order form, or send a check (payable to Pratt Institute, with “GCPE” in the memo line) to: Pratt Institute, City and Regional Planning Program, 61 St. James Place, Room 206C north, Brooklyn, NY 11238 (ATTN: Lacey Tauber).

We would also like to invite you to attend a lunch celebrating the release of the publication on Saturday, September 25th, 2010, at noon in Higgins Hall. This event is happening in conjunction with ReIGNITE, Pratt Institute’s annual alumni reunion. Immediately following the lunch at 1 pm, visit the School of Architecture’s Open House, where you can view exhibitions of recent student work and hear from Dean Thomas Hanrahan, as well as our own chair, John Shapiro. From 3 to 5 pm, Pratt Institute Alumni Affairs has organized a symposium entitled “The Art of Critique,” followed by a cocktail reception at 5 pm. Students, faculty, and the public are welcome at all events.
Mitchell Silver: “Planners Bring Value”
Remarks from Pratt Planning’s 50th Anniversary Reception

The following is an excerpt from a speech given by Mitchell Silver at the Pratt Planning Program’s 50th Anniversary Reception, which was held on May 14, 2010. Mr. Silver received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Pratt in 1987 and is the President Elect of the American Planning Association.

This planning program is why I stand before you today as a planner and as the next president of the American Planning Association.

I want to talk about a few things. The value of planning, the purpose of planning, and some of the challenges we will face as a country. As I travel throughout the U.S. I hear horror stories about the profession and the respect or lack of respect for planning. Planners are often perceived as regulators, dreamers, or bureaucrats whose only role in life is to tell people what they can or cannot do with their property. Those perceptions are wrong.

Let me say that you bring value! Planning has value. Planning can transform a place and can transform a local economy. Planning can preserve a place and preserve an economy.

In May 2009, *Time Magazine* identified “recycling suburbs” as one of the 10 big ideas for changing the world right now. In December 2009, the *U.S. News and World Report* named planning as one of the top 50 professions in 2010.

What do they know that we don’t know?

I believe what separates planning from other professions is that we are guardians of the future. We make sure that our generation and future generations have clean air, clean water, transit choices, housing choices, and a sustainable future. Planners are the guardians of the future! We protect the public interest. We have a professional obligation to be concerned with the long range consequences of present actions. The *U.S. News and Time Magazine* understand our role. So I ask you: If we don’t plan for the future or protect the public interest, who will? Who?

We have many challenges ahead of us. Huge demographic shifts, climate change, energy independence, and crumbling infrastructure. Please understand that students and new professionals are facing unprecedented challenges that we as planners in our generation have never faced.

This generation of planners will face the most dramatic demographic change in American history. In 10 to 15 years, the number of single households will surpass family households, and the majority of school age children will be minority. In 15 to 20 years, the majority of working age Americans will be minority. In 30 to 35 years, the United States will be a minority-majority country. How will we stay competitive in a global economy? How will these changes affect our communities? What will our neighborhoods look like? How will the suburbs function?

Planners must also have true vision. What I mean by true vision is hindsight, insight, and foresight. “Hindsight” forces us to look back to learn from our success and mistakes. (The late Donald Krucken-burg said that planning was established 100 years ago for the purposes of civic beauty, scientific efficiency, and social equity. Let’s not forget that – especially social equity.) “Insight” compels us to listen and observe, to ask the critical questions and to understand the heart and soul of a place. “Foresight” challenges us to understand future trends and to plan for resilient cities that can adapt to change.

I firmly believe the smart cities understand their sense of urgency 10 years before it is urgent. Smart cities need smart planners who aren’t afraid to fulfill their role as guardians of the future.

Under your watch, you as the new generation of planners will have to figure out how to plan for these demographic shifts, new energy options, and new transportation and sustainable infrastructure solutions. I envy you. The good news is that you have wise professionals and institutions to support you, like Pratt. Pratt has been at the forefront in planning over the past 50 years and will continue to be a leader over the next 50 years.

As the next president of the American Planning Association, I will reinforce the value of planning. I will encourage a new era of creative thinking to help prepare us for the challenges ahead. I will call upon the wise and seasoned professionals to share knowledge with the new generation of planners.

I thank you for the wonderful homecoming. Happy birthday to Pratt’s Planning Program. Thank you and good night.
The following is a speech given by Roberta Brandes Gratz at the Pratt Planning Program’s 50th Anniversary Conference, which was held on May 15, 2010. Ms. Gratz is an award-winning journalist, urban critic, lecturer and author. Her latest book, The Battle For Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs (Nation Books), is available now.

My relationship with the Pratt Center goes way back to the days when I was a young reporter at the “old” New York Post and Ron Shiffman was a persistent nudge. He badgered me to write stories about what was happening in communities out of the view of the mainstream media. Through the work of the Center, I saw how it was possible to translate community common sense, local knowledge and experienced-based wisdom into realistic plans.

Ron and the Pratt Center did more to implement the work of Jane Jacobs than anyone else. In fact, Pratt became the model for advocacy planning nationwide. And I have not seen any university have a better, more relevant planning program.

But enough of all that heartfelt praise for a group I so admire. My purpose here is to look at our recent history through the lens of the conflicting urban views of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs to gain a new understanding of the city’s recent history, particularly its dramatic turnaround from the 1970s to today.

By using the Moses-Jacobs lens in my book, The Battle For Gotham, I come to a different conclusion than many experts on how the city reached the ultra-successful and constantly adapting condition of today.

Our city’s recent past, as revealed in my book, will surprise many. It is my contention that the Moses policies were largely responsible for the torn apart, fallen city that brought us to our worst in the 1970s.

It is ridiculous to think that we couldn’t build roads, construct public housing or create parks without Moses. Europe rebuilt whole cities after the War without destroying the urbanism that had been bombed away. Alternatives to Moses’ plans were always available that did not erase neighborhoods, undermine social capital and wipe out longstanding economic investment. Once he was gone, alternative options had a chance. For good reasons, the rebound of the city occurred after Moses’ departure.

Observation tells us that the most successful areas of the city today are those Moses didn’t eviscerate; the most troublesome are the ones he did. I am not ready to let the rehabilitation of Robert Moses go unchallenged. The worst of his legacy lives on.

The fall of Moses allowed the city to meaningfully regenerate. And while I don’t think the urban philosophy of Jane Jacobs has prevailed to the degree many observers contend and many planners would like us to think, I do recognize it as the driving force – the foundation, if you will – of the opposition to favored, repetitive Moses-style development policies. It is the defining force – articulated as such or not – of some of the most innovative current citizen-based initiatives. Fortunately, for the city, for all cities in fact, the Jacobs legacy lives on as well. The clash of visions continues.

It is not uncommon today to hear people say that we need a little bit of each, Jacobs and Moses. I argue that that is not possible. It is akin to trying to push together the black and white Scottie dog magnets we used to play with as kids. The more you pushed, the more resistance you felt. No, I argue that if you truly understand what each was saying and what each did, then you understand that this is black and white, one or the other, with no in between.

Purposefully or not, attempts to be a partisan of both seem to be based on a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Jacobs ideas and an ignoring of the insurmountable flaws of popular Moses projects.

That Jacobs advocated only small scale, for example, or that only old buildings are of value and or that all big projects were bad are oft-repeated criticisms but are ideas not to be found anywhere in her own words, written or spoken. And realities often ignored are the fact that Moses starved and diminished our once-admirable and efficient public transit system in order to cover the city with highways, that he demolished deteriorated but functionally strong neighborhoods rich in diverse uses and people to build towers in the park for one class of people.
and that he created predominantly exclusive car-dependant parks not meant for use by a broad population.

But let’s look more closely at some of the ideas floating around these days.

Too many people make the mistake of defining Jacobs’ observations of the Village as advocacy for the replication of its small scale and ‘quaint’ mixtures. This could not be further from the truth. It was not about tall buildings versus short, Modernist versus Federalist, loft versus residential, small business versus large. The Village was her laboratory to observe the larger truths about urban life. Hers was not a prescription of what should happen but an observation of what does happen when certain genuine urban conditions exist. In all her writing, she used specific examples to illustrate observable truths, never intending them to be prescriptive for other places.

She applies those ideas to many urban areas that look nothing like the Village. In the Village were the lessons applicable to authentic urban neighborhoods everywhere.

If there is one overarching Jacobsian lesson, it is how complex cities are. Her observations of the Village and all aspects of urban life only appear simple and are not an argument for similar scaled and designed neighborhoods everywhere. The idea that Jane might advocate a six-story building to be built adjacent to my 32-story apartment house or elsewhere in my neighborhood of 30-40 story buildings is ludicrous. Instead, her observations are a fractal for understanding thousands of streets and neighborhoods everywhere that have the potential to function in similarly vibrant ways but have their own local context, scale and unique qualities.

Whenever these days a big project gets defeated or prolonged, the cry is heard: “You can’t get anything big done in New York anymore.” This lament is coupled with the declaration that we need a Robert Moses to get things done. Well, first I would argue that many big things do get done, second they get done without Moses and third that some big projects get defeated for good reason.

When I hear the lament that you can’t get anything done in New York anymore, I wonder what city they are talking about. Every corner of this city has been transformed by new construction in the last 15 years and some pretty big projects at that. Only the current economic crisis caused the cranes to go into storage.

Is not the rebuilding during the last 20 years of the city’s mass transit big, in fact huge and more complex and beneficial than any singular building project?

One of the largest water filtration plants in the world is under construction in the Bronx in a 10-story deep hole blasted out of bedrock. Opposition that occurred because it is under van Cortlandt Park legitimately questioned the selection of the underground Bronx park site when the city owned an alternative site in Westchester where the plant could have been built above ground. Opponents argued the above ground site would be cheaper and quicker which logically makes sense but it is getting done as first proposed.

Both Yankee and Shea Stadiums have been replaced at the same time. A rail link to JFK was built, no small accomplishment given the dissension that preceded its approval. A connection of the Long Island Railroad to the east side and Grand Central is also under construction. Then there is Central Park, reclaimed and restored to its original Olmsted-Vaux glory over three decades. Prospect, The Battery and Riverside Parks are following similarly impressive paths, as are several new Brooklyn waterfront parks. The Hudson River Park, which would never have emerged in its current vibrant fashion if Westway had been built, is the largest new park since Central Park. That park’s restoration was a big vision accomplished in manageable increments until the large-scale whole was revived by its small-scale components. The park is not big in a build-new way but big in a restorative way.

The revival of Central Park parallels the restoration of the city itself.

None of these projects are about conventional real estate. Instead, they are about critical infrastructure, the kind that makes the city function or adds to the quality of residential and economic life. These are the kind of big, very big, projects that Jane supported. Amazing that New York is addressing these crucial infrastructure needs and more, without a Robert Moses to get things done.

Citywide, one could debate which philosophy, Moses or Jacobs, was victorious. Evidence can be found for both, often simultaneously, here and in all American cities. Planners and developers would like us to think they follow most of Jacobs’ principles. But when one observes the public and private plans being promoted, when one looks at the cataclysmic scale and enormous cost of many proposals, nobody would be foolish enough to claim that her teachings are settled doctrine. But she certainly helped frame today’s debate about urban development. And that alone is an enormous change from when it was Moses’ way or no way.
The impression left by my recent trip to New Orleans for the APA conference will remain with me for a long time to come. Caron Atlas led a Pratt course on the topic of Arts and Culture in New Orleans, examining the role that the arts are playing in the rebuilding of New Orleans communities post Katrina: economically, socially, and culturally.

During the class we visited community arts organizations, participated in discussions with current policy-makers, and were invited to attend several lunch and dinner discussions with local organizers, activists, and professionals from both the arts and planning worlds. Many issues surfaced during our time there, from the preservation of culture to methods for collective healing, unemployment, equity, and housing. It became apparent that the work being done by community organizations in New Orleans is multi-faceted and involves much more than just the arts.

At The Porch, a cultural center in the 7th Ward neighborhood, we learned how the tradition of Mardi Gras Indian beading was used as a youth intervention: afternoons spent beading were both prelude and partner to the GED tutorials also offered at The Porch. The beading is utilized as a way to pass on traditional practices and provide job skill training. Without erasing pride or sense of place, the program provides a way to make independence possible. The people working at The Porch are truly a part of the community and are a second family for many members. In one youth project, portraits of important New Orleans African-Americans were hand printed and hung on telephone poles, replacing public space that had been abandoned to advertising with an inspiring and relevant history.

At Xavier University, a historically black college, we attended a presentation on the second line tradition in New Orleans that featured a panel of both older and younger generation participants. The discussion was peppered with performances by second line bands of the both old and the new tradition. The transition between old-school second line and newer interpretations were teased out and the issue of cultural preservation was addressed by those that are most affected. The event was a powerful example of how an academic setting could be used as not only a think tank, but also the beating heart for the community it resides in. For

By Laura Stinger, CRP

On Arts, Culture, Planning, and Rebuilding: Students Meet with NOLA Cultural Organizations

In April, a group of Pratt students from the Planning, ESM, and Historic Preservation programs traveled to New Orleans to meet with grassroots arts and culture organizations involved in recovery efforts. The class, taught by Caron Atlas, was structured to follow the annual APA conference in New Orleans, which many of the students had attended.
once, the living traditions and voices of a community's cultural core were given higher precedence than books.

At Ashe Cultural Arts Center, community and economic development is combined with the arts through youth programming, artist in residence programs, and exhibitions. The efforts of Ashe have contributed to the revitalization of an entire block in the Central City neighborhood. During our visit, an exhibit was up which had been started pre-Katrina by an artist working with local youth regarding the seven principles of Kwanzaa. When Katrina hit, much of the art was damaged or destroyed by water. The artist returned to Ashe post-Katrina and photographed the damaged works. He then manipulated the photographs, creating an entire new body of work; a ghostly and stunning homage to rebirth and strength. The artwork led to interesting conversations about art for arts sake versus art as social commentary. Some might see creating art for and with a community as a trade-off - social benefit in exchange for quality. However, the art at Ashe was clearly both beautiful and powerful.

At the Backstreet Cultural Museum in the Treme neighborhood, we saw extravagant displays of hand-beaded Mardi Gras Indian costumes and other artifacts of the local African-American community. We were graciously shown art that is truly “of the people”- art that can revitalize communities, preserve culture and tradition, encourage new traditions to be made, and act as the backdrop to both the significant and mundane moments of life- all while simultaneously possessing a unique aesthetic and formal value.

The unique beauty and culture of New Orleans is cherished by all who visit, including our group of Pratt students. Since the Katrina, New Orleans has seen an influx of newcomers, while many native New Orleanians are not able to return- many of whom are musicians, artists, teachers, elders, and entertainers- those best able to create, disseminate, and preserve New Orleans’ cultural capital.

While we know change is inevitable, there is a very distinct difference between change that is community-based and change that is forced on communities. Our lasting impression from the class is that the neighborhoods of New Orleans need many more of the organizations we visited- arms open to outside help, but fiercely determined to be in charge of how things are rebuilt.

This spring’s neighborhood planning studio challenged students to undertake a large-scale strategic plan for the area immediately surrounding the controversial Atlantic Yards site in Brooklyn. The course was co-taught by Professors David Burney, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Design and Construction, and Daniel Hernandez and Matthew Lister of Jonathan Rose Companies.

The proposed Brewery District lies between Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York. Roughly bounded by Atlantic Avenue, Bedford Avenue, Washington Avenue and Bergen Street, the District has a rich history. From its development in the early 19th century as the Bedford Corners transit hub at Franklin and Fulton Streets, the District became home to several successful breweries in the late 1800s. During Prohibition, the City of New York invested in the construction of candy factories to quell residents’ desire for alcohol. The Pirika Chocolate Company, located at Classon and Dean Streets still stands, and has become a central feature of the Brewery District Strategic Plan.

Contemporary issues place the Brewery District in jeopardy of losing these historic assets as development pressures from the north and west threaten broad residential development and pay little attention to the needs of area residents. The District’s location immediately adjacent to the Atlantic Yards site make the area more susceptible to unchecked development.

This strategic plan addresses new development pressure through proactive planning, specifically by implementing a new MX zoning proposal with contextual zoning, increased commercial activity and affordable housing. The need to preserve historic roots while fostering responsible economic development is achieved by supporting local businesses through the creation of a proprietor-run business association. Further industrial growth occurs through the proposed development of key assets: Nassau Market, the Pirika Brewing Company and the Pirika Business Incubator. Finally, the Brewery District Strategic Plan creates a unique sense of place by using design guidelines that accentuate historic buildings and features, create walkable paths to the Franklin Avenue subway station, and activate unused and under-utilized lots with innovative, community-led temporary uses.
In March 2010, an interdisciplinary group of Pratt Students from the Planning, ESM, and Architecture programs traveled to São Paulo, Brazil, for an intensive week-long course that explored the political, economic, and social aspects of safeguarding affordable housing in New York City and São Paulo. The course was led by Professor Perry Winston and coordinated by Ana Barretto (Pratt CRP ’08) and the Gaspar García Human Rights Center, an advocacy organization that provides legal services and popular education on housing rights in São Paulo. The class provided a unique opportunity for an exchange, comparing and contrasting the housing challenges faced by communities in the respective cities. Even though each city has its own history and characteristics, the necessities and struggles of the poorest families have similarities and frequently are almost identical.

It was an extraordinary experience of immersion, to learn directly from the discussions with activists, planners, and community members in São Paulo and New York. We visited many favelas (informal settlements), mutirões (sweat equity housing), cortiços (tenements), senior housing and services organizations, and recycling cooperatives, and we shared a warm meal at a homeless soup kitchen followed by a conversation and walk in the city’s central square with the members of the street people’s network. A seminar on the “Right to the City” was organized by the Gaspar García Human Rights Center, which featured presentations by Pratt students on the various aspects of housing policy and planning history in New York City. Topics ranged from squatting to public housing, cooperatives, senior housing, and homelessness.

The right to the city is one of the biggest challenges for planners and designers seeking to address urban issues. Housing is a key element that allows all citizens legitimate access to their city. Unfortunately, more often than not, this access is not happening. As a megacity, São Paulo has a population of over 11 million, with nearly 20 million in the metropolitan area, making the scale of inequities in regard to access and allocation of resources and services immense and apparent. A clear example of such inequity is the current housing deficit of nearly 800,000 units, while approximately 400,000 units sit vacant and idle in the city center. São Paulo, a city of many contrasts, and with stark disparities in its urban landscape, provided me with new insight, affirming my belief that participatory planning is an integral part in helping people become empowered to exercise and realize their individual and collective rights.
In the spring of 2010, Pratt Institute’s Planning and Historic Preservation students came together in a joint studio to investigate the challenges facing the Columbia Waterfront Neighborhood. A narrow strip along one of Brooklyn’s last waterfronts, the area is situated between Brooklyn Heights and Red Hook. Its east and west boundaries are defined by two vital components of city infrastructure: the Red Hook Container Terminal on piers 7 through 10 and the Brooklyn Queens Expressway.

The history of the neighborhood is inextricably tied to water. Early on, proximity to the waterfront attracted manufacturing to the area and led to the development of the shipping industry. Immigrant laborers who drew their livelihood from the waterfront formed a diverse and vibrant community on this edge of southwest Brooklyn. Though the neighborhood is now largely residential, the port remains a vital stakeholder.

In meeting with neighborhood residents, merchants and other stakeholders, students identified a number of issues that limit the neighborhood’s quality of life and its economic viability, including limited public transportation, a struggling retail thoroughfare, noise and air pollution from the BQE, and habitual truck traffic due to the location of the container port. Despite these issues, students discovered that the residents enjoyed the neighborhood’s “small-town feel” and phenomenal views of the city.

Throughout the semester, the class grappled with how to preserve these positive attributes while planning for impending growth and development. The studio’s client was the Columbia Waterfront Neighborhood Association (CoWNA), which encouraged the use of community planning principles. Through a three-part process of analysis, visioning and planning, students arrived at two creative plans for the neighborhood’s future: a practical plan that aims to address immediate quality of life concerns in the area and a resiliency plan that seeks to prepare the neighborhood for city-wide challenges identified in PlaNYC 2030.

First, students proposed viable solutions that could be implemented in the next five to 10 years. Ideas included installing speed bumps along neighborhood roads, rerouting trucks through port property and designing a bus rapid transit (BRT) line that would bring residents to Manhattan through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Students sought to unite the neighborhood’s restaurants with a focus on slow food and sustainable production. The look and feel of the neighborhood could be improved with visual displays designed to interpret and celebrate its waterfront past. The class also emphasized design guidelines for contextual development to preserve the neighborhood’s low scale and historic character.

In planning for the next 30 to 50 years, the students considered four major issues: rising sea levels, economic uncertainty, transit overload and housing pressures. Emerging from these priorities, the resiliency plan focused on retaining industry along the waterfront while concentrating infill housing and community amenities inland and on the northern pier.

The first component of the plan is to create an industrial park and fresh food market modeled after the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Hunts Point market in the Bronx. Anticipating an influx of residents, students proposed expanding ferry service to Manhattan from the base of Atlantic Avenue. The final component of the plan is to incrementally deck portions of the BQE to improve neighborhood and open space access.
This year, first semester planning students participated in an ambitious community-based studio focusing on the Manhattan Valley neighborhood of Manhattan’s Upper West Side. Working with the Columbus Amsterdam Business Improvement District and New York State Assembly Member Daniel O’Donnell, students conducted research and used community planning tools to develop actionable recommendations with the goal of enhancing an already vibrant neighborhood by connecting residents through the planning process.

Located in the northern reaches of the Upper West Side, Manhattan Valley stands out for its distinct economic and ethnic diversity. The importance of maintaining this diversity within the community’s historic context was reiterated by community members at every step of the research and visioning process.

The initial visioning process was modeled after the Municipal Art Society’s Imagine Flatbush 2030 project, which, according to Sideya Sherman, a senior planner at MAS, “hinged on working with the residents, business owners, and civic leaders to assist them in creating a neighborhood sustainability and livablity agenda.” Along with Pratt Professors Ayse Yonder, Eva Hanhardt and Kate Zidar, Sherman was part of the teaching team that led students through the studio project. Students generated a series of reports on existing conditions, carried out a community visioning workshop and synthesized research and community feedback in a formal set of recommendations for the neighborhood.

Fall semester students examined neighborhood history, demographic trends, local housing and social services, open space, and commercial development, among other topics. On March 6, 2010 spring semester students facilitated a community visioning workshop. Participants, including about 100 neighborhood residents, were tasked with prioritizing community issues and creating specific problem-solving strategies.

About the visioning workshop, student Sara Margolis said, “the community seemed overwhelmingly excited to be able to gather together to talk about important issues…there were lots of side conversations and exchanging of contact information.”

Balancing community feedback with the scope of Assembly Member O’Donnell’s request for the study, students targeted three focus areas for their proposal: youth, seniors, and open space. Specific points of action to achieve enhanced community involvement and connectivity called for: improving educational, employment, and recreational opportunities for youth; creating better connections between the community and its senior citizens by preserving affordable senior housing and developing service and social networks; and increasing the quality of public open spaces through community clean up and greening, public art, and streetscape enhancement.

Students presented their recommendations and analysis to Manhattan Valley residents at a community meeting on May 6 and submitted a full report with detailed implementation strategies for Assembly Member O’Donnell’s office.

The importance of continued involvement has not been overlooked by Pratt; after the project’s end, MAS reached out to Manhattan Valley residents through their Livable Neighborhoods Training Program initiative, and Pratt students volunteered at several street festivals sponsored by the local BID and the New York City Department of Transportation. Students hope that the process of gathering the Manhattan Valley community around a vision for its future will have long-lasting effects.
It is without a doubt that planners will be faced with opportunities to work in different countries, cultures, and contexts during their careers. Not only has the need for internationally experienced planners increased, but also the need for them to be able to address the local emergent issues that are rooted in internationalization and globalization.

In 2009, Pratt’s Comparative Urbanization Studio was tasked by the Agonda Panchayat (the local elected government in southern Goa, India) to help them with their participatory planning process. Working with the Goa College of Architecture, the Council for Social Justice and Peace a regional non-profit, and the elected Agonda leadership, our goal was to develop a series of public workshops, which would inform and produce a planning framework.

With lush coastal landscapes, friendly people and its Portuguese cultural and historical heritage, Goa, India is a popular tourist destination. In 2009, Goa adopted a new Regional Plan (RP2021), which provides a platform for the Panchayats to prepare their respective Development Plans. India’s 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, intended to correct ‘top-down’ governance practices, and to empower the Panchayats with an assigned set of responsibilities, one of which being the production of Development Plans for adoption. The Goa studio is structured within this context. Sustainable tourism and economic development are of special importance to the people of Agonda. The village lies within a region facing pressures and negative impacts of unsustainable development practices from rampant developments without adequate infrastructure investments to keep pace. Agonda is endowed with beaches, hills, rivers, forests, and wildlife habitats. However, these are fragile ecological resources are susceptible to negative development impacts without adequate conservation measures and sustainable practices in place.

The new Goa Studio being offered for 2010-11 builds upon the series of intensive workshops hosted on-site in Goa in 2009-10 and the resultant community and student recommendations (www.sustainabledevelopmentworks.com). This 5-credit studio will be spread over the 2010 fall (3 credits) and the 2011 spring (2 credits) semesters, and will include on-site work in India over winter break. An additional one credit will be awarded to the students who prepare the presentation for the APA studio competition in 2011. The Panchayat, the Council for Social Justice and Peace and students from the Goa College of Architecture will again assist with selected tasks and partner with the Pratt team to facilitate local participation in Goa.

To prepare for the new participatory workshop series in Goa and the subsequent reports, during the fall, the students (working in groups) are expected to conduct research on best practices for sustainable tourism and economic development, conduct and analyze economic and demographic surveys, prepare base maps, information panels and outreach materials, and prepare initial outlines for the Plan and a community web-page. Since the submissions in the form of studies, analyses, reports, maps, and presentations will be used for community planning purposes in Goa, the student work product needs to be of ‘consultant quality’, with a high level of accuracy. The spring semester will be spent on consolidating the information collected during the field trip, making recommendations and preparing a plan for sustainable tourism and economic development for the village of Agonda as well as setting up a community web-page. Varied skill sets are called upon for this studio towards a real-life field experience. Bring your individual and unique skills and energy to class and be prepared for an intensive program!

**FACULTY**

**Meenakshi Varandani** is an Assistant Vice President for Planning at the New York City Economic Development Corporation and a faculty member of the Pratt GCPE. She is also an AICP Certified Planner, an AIA Licensed Architect, and a U.S. Green Building Council LEED Accredited Professional.

**Urvashi Kaul** is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University where she teaches courses in Environmental Finance and Environmental Economics. She is also an Assistant Director at NYCEDC’s Center for Economic Transformation.

For information and registration, contact: ltauber@pratt.edu
The City and Regional Planning program, the Environmental Systems Management program, and the Historic Preservation program have officially renamed their collective identity the Programs for Sustainable Planning and Development, together now with the Construction Management and Facilities Management programs.

The **CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT** program celebrated its scholarship initiatives in late May by awarding scholarships from an array of friends of the Institute and prestigious organizations. Abigail Soper received awards from the Retail Contractors Association and the CMAA. The program itself received a Certificate of Merit from the Construction Specifications Institute, and two new minors were launched: (1) in Architectural Theory and Technology and (2) in Facilities Management. The **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT** program has been accredited by IFMA for six years.

The **CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING** program celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, with events and a conference attended by over 300 people. It also won an award from the NY Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association. The CRP program has reorganized its studios to be more inter-disciplinary than ever, while they also had success in obtaining research grants for studies in Long Island, Seward Park/Lower East Side, Williamsburg and Westchester. A record 13 interns were placed at the Pratt Center, and enrollment has doubled in all the PSPD programs from two years ago.

The **ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT** program, in this summer’s design/build course led by Professor Kate Zidar, will be implementing an innovative storm water capture design selected from *Minds in the Gutter*, a collaborative design competition exhibited at the Museum of the City of New York. Jamie Stein has been appointed full-time Academic Coordinator for the Environmental Systems Management program. As coordinator, Ms. Stein is committed to fostering a curriculum that explores the nexus between environmental science, design, and policy. With a background in international public health and biomedical research, she is interested in the synergies between public health and sustainable development and believes in the role of these synergies in climate change mitigation and adaptation. In addition to her role as Coordinator, Ms. Stein is the Environmental Policy Analyst for Sustainable South Bronx, a non-profit in the Hunts point community of the Bronx, and a Visiting Assistant Professor within the ESM program.

Pratt Professors **GITA NANDAN** and **ELLIOTT MALTBY**, principles of Thread Collective, recently won the ONE Prize, “From Mowing to Growing,” a design competition for creating productive green space in cities that is awarded by Terreform ONE. Their winning entry, titled “Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Farms,” proposes to engage the aging New Yorker population and inaccessible lawns in order to create and cultivate farm plots and social spaces within public housing complexes.

Iconic musician, poet, and visual artist **PATTI SMITH** spoke to graduates at the Pratt 2010 Commencement on June 20 (she also received an honorary degree). Here is an excerpt from her speech: “My greatest urge is to speak to you of dental care. My generation had a rough go dentally. Our dentists were the Army dentists who came back from World War II and believed that the dental office was a battleground. You have a better chance at dental health. And I say this because you want at night to be pacing the floor because your fuse is burning inside of you, because you want to do your work, because you want to help your fellow man. You don’t want to be pacing because you need a damn root canal. So, floss. Use salt and baking soda. Take care of your damn teeth.”
2010 Graduates with thesis / capstone titles

CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JAMES CARRINGTON
Hidden performance: New York City’s theater subdistrict and the challenges of special district zoning

ALISA DROOKER
Power by the people: local energy production and ownership alternatives

ELIZABETH EISENBERG
Built from the (green) roof down: a closer look at rooftops on multifamily affordable housing in New York City

ELLYSON GOETZ
Sustainable livelihoods in the Cangrejal Valley of northern Honduras

MICHELLE HARRIS
Urban forestry planning at the neighborhood level: recommendations for a low-income community: a Bedford-Stuyvesant case study

SIMON KAWITZKY
Envisioning community-owned energy in the Broadway Triangle, Brooklyn, New York

MELANIE MARTIN
What’s “Harlem” in Harlem?: recommendations for an empowered Harlem community

JANICE MOYNIHAN
Urban agriculture and community food security: El Puente in the southside of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York

KEVIN REILLY
Are cluster subdivisions a better option for residential development in the suburban fringe: a case study of Dutchess County

MARIN SCHLOSS
Strategies for fostering green manufacturing in New York City

MOLLY SLEVIN
The role of restored rail in downtown revitalization in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

MATTHEW SLOANE
The privatization of Brooklyn Bridge Park

SETH TAYLOR
Downtown Brooklyn public space: a design and management strategy to activate the public realm

ANUSHA VENKATARAMAN
50 years of community-based planning: in print and practice

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS MGMT.

REBECCA COLLINS
Community planning through design processes: a retrospective on the South Bronx greenway

DIANA HARARI CHEREM
Sustainable open space practices exported to Mexico

MEGAN HOUSTON
New York City energy code analysis

JOANIE LANE
The end of the barriers to prefabricated housing and a resource of strategies to utilize its potentials

CHRISTOPHER MAHASE
A current look at high performance building techniques in NYC affordable housing

KAMDYN MOORE
Campus area biking: cycling report for Pratt Institute

TIMOTHY O’CONNELL
How the Peace Corps can use solar energy to achieve its mission objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa

ELIZABETH PETER
Sustainable seafood: can education and communication force seafood to be truly sustainable?

MICHAEL TIBERIA
Asbestos survey for Pratt Institute at Siloam Presbyterian Church

CARLOS VASQUEZ
A climate safe school for Bangladesh

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PATRICIA GARZA RODRIGUEZ
ZACHARY LEMIE
ANDITO LLOYD
CEQUYNA MOORE
MICHAEL OWEN
LAUREN RADIN
PETER REDA
MEGAN RICKS
CATHERINE STUTTS
MELISSA UMBERGER
SOON YOUNG MOON

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

ISHA K. BATHLA
KAREN HOFFMAN
ROBERT MALLIA
CARLOS RAMOS
The Planning Alumni Association is Revived!

Under the leadership of two alumni, Nancy Campbell and Alison Cordero, the Pratt Planning Alumni Association (PPAA) kick-started its membership drive at the department’s 50th Anniversary party on May 14. The role of the association will be tri-fold. The first is to strengthen Pratt Planning and PSPD networks through the generations. The second is to work with the Pratt Institute Planning Student Association (PIPSA) to connect current and past students to job and internship opportunities as well as mentorship. The third is to raise funds for the program to recruit and support students of all backgrounds – economic, geographic, ethnic, and racial.

The PPAA is working with the GCPE and its student associations to sponsor events throughout the 2010-11 school year. PPAA aims to invigorate our dynamic alumni network, bring the benefits, resources, and expertise of this group to fellow alumni and current students. PPAA Co-Chairs Nancy Campbell and Anna Peccianti would like to form a PPAA Leadership Committee to support the association, much like a Board of Directors.

If you are an alum and would like to serve on the committee, support the PPAA with a financial contribution, or volunteer time, please email Nancy and Anna at: prattplanningalum@gmail.com

Finally, we currently have e-mail records for only 10% of our alumni. If you are an alum, please send us your name and preferred e-mail address so that we can add you to our mailing list.

Thesis Library

The City and Regional Planning Program is transferring all alumni theses to the Pratt Library, and many are missing! If you still have a copy, please send it and a one-paragraph summary to:

electronic: ltauber@pratt.edu

via mail:
Lacey Tauber
Assistant to the Chair
PSPD, Pratt Institute
200 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11205

We are creating two collections of theses. Paper copies will be produced, bound and available at the Pratt Library. Electronic copies will be available at the PSPD offices: Higgins Hall, 61 St. James Place (Room 206).

Mentorship Program

Have you considered becoming a mentor in your field?

The Pratt Career Services office maintains an online mentorship system that students and alumni can use to get in touch about career-related questions and opportunities.

Don’t think you have the time? The program offers flexible levels of involvement. You can determine the number of contacts you want per month or even advise solely via email. Plus, you can opt out of the system when you need to and then return later.

To register, go to: myinterlace.com/pratt/mentor

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**Donations most welcome.**

Feel free to indicate how you would like the money spent:

1. General use.
2. Paid interns at the Pratt Center for Community Development, The Municipal Art Society, the New York Industrial Retention Network, and other civic and community organizations.
3. For $20, order a copy of *Intractable Democracy*, celebrating 50 years of Pratt planning.

Make checks payable to Pratt Institute, with GCPE in subject.

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Programs for Sustainable Planning and Development

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