

Graduate Assistantship Availability

Urban Affairs and Planning at Virginia Tech

Urban Affairs and Planning (UAP) seeks to fill two doctoral level research assistantships in the Planning, Governance, and Globalization (PGG) Ph.D. program and one master's level graduate research assistantship in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program beginning Fall 2015. Minority and first generation college students are especially encouraged to apply. Only new applicants will be considered, based on the qualifications and the personal statement provided as part of the Graduate School application for either the PGG or MURP degree programs. These are not available to current/continuing students.

Applicants will support ongoing research efforts by UAP faculty, in the following areas:

1. Sustainable Transport: Research topics span the conceptual design of sustainable transportation systems to targeted field measurements of environmental hazards including:
 - a. Exposure to air pollution while cycling and walking (Steve Hankey).
 - b. Sustainable transport infrastructure with an emphasis on performance measurement and decision-support systems (Ralph Hall).
 - c. Determinants of travel behavior and sustainable urban transport systems (Ralph Buehler).
2. Community Resilience & Resilient Systems: Research topics include domestic, comparative, and international planning solutions in multiple domains, including:
 - a. Natural hazards and coastal planning (Yang Zhang); coastal climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (Anamaria Bukvic).
 - b. Economic/community development strategies in distressed communities, regional resilience (Margaret Cowell).
 - c. Leadership, Community Development, and Social Change (Max Stephenson).
 - d. Resilience of water supply and sanitation services in developing countries (Ralph Hall).
 - e. Transnational perspectives on resilience and sustainability (Sonia Hirt).
 - f. Risk planning, decision making under uncertainty, and the bridging of engineering, social, and ecological sciences (Kris Wernstedt).
3. Information and Communications Technologies: Research topics include information systems, social media, and "big data" applications for urban planning and management:
 - a. Using ICT's to make cities smarter, particularly user generated data to inform public services (Tom Sanchez).
 - b. Relationship between digital technologies, empowerment/disempowerment, urban space, and social change (Shalini Misra).
4. Post-Conflict Social Reconstruction and Peacebuilding for Development: Research examines the roles of government and civil society institutions related to conflict amelioration and peacebuilding dynamics in post-conflict nations (Max Stephenson).
5. Global Planning and International Development. Research investigates and compares planning institutions and processes in different countries:
 - a. Urban and peri-urban agricultural production systems (John Browder, Emily Van Houwelling)
 - b. Urban sanitation, infrastructure, and public health in emerging economies of the Global South (Ralph Hall, MPH program).
 - c. Urban household survival and wellbeing strategies (John Browder).
 - d. Cross-national lessons in planning practice (Sonia Hirt).
6. Urban Re-enlivenment and Planning. Vacant and/or abandoned built environments as opportunities to encourage "nature" to return to urban settings.