

CAPS-ACÉAU | 2011

University of Toronto Department of Geography and Program in Planning

Politics in Planning: Beyond the Landscape

Established in 1933, the University of Toronto's Department of Geography and Program in Planning has since evolved into a leader in planning education, offering a wide range of specializations from social planning to economic policy to urban design. Faculty and students alike are drawn from a diverse array of countries, cities, educational backgrounds and work experiences, reinforcing intellectual and an ethno-culturally rich learning environment. Close ties between Planning, Geography and Architecture add rigor and breadth to its degree programs - Master of Science in Planning, Master of Urban Design Studies and PhD in Planning.

The City of Toronto is a vibrant conglomeration of cultural, social, economic and political forces, acting as a unique urban laboratory for planning students and a challenging setting for professionals. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with a population of over 5.2 million people presents the opportunity to explore the interaction between urban, suburban and rural environments as well as international aspects of planning. From multi-nodal intensification projects and New Urbanist enclaves to Green Belt adjacent development, the GTA presents numerous interactions between urban and rural environments and provides for a variety of case studies for conference discussion.

If selected to host the 2011 CAPS- ACÉAU Conference, the University of Toronto committee members would include Jesse Ajayi (President), Nicholas Gallant (Vice President), Valerie Bryson (Secretary) and Mia Baumeister (Treasurer). The committee members represent cities from across the country, have diverse educational and work experience backgrounds and have extensive leadership and organizing skills through experience with student government and organizing past conferences and events.

The 2011 CAPS-ACÉAU conference would use the City of Toronto as a study of how innovative planning and bold policy succeed and fail in a politically charged environment. Students from across Canada will look beyond the landscape to investigate the political currents that are shaping our cities and Canada as a whole. Students will be welcomed to the city via innovative venue choices, mobile workshops and speakers from world-leading planning institutions right here on campus.

The shaping of urban form is a key function of land use planning and a fundamentally political activity. We will invite submissions to the conference that highlight both the big and little "P" nature of politics in planning and the production of built form in urban, suburban and rural settings. The 2011 conference in Toronto will challenge attendees to question assumptions regarding why and for whom we design, and explore planning as the process by which every voice and every interest compete in the

forum of our built environment.

The Planning Program at the University of Toronto is home to a highly supportive faculty and alumni committee prepared to offer support in hosting the 2011 CAPS-ACÉAU conference at the University of Toronto. Venues are widely available on campus including the historic Hart House, the Munk Centre, Sidney Smith Hall and a wide variety of other university-owned space, in addition to other city venues including large conference halls and breakout rooms available at City Hall and Metro Hall, a twenty minute walk from campus. The City is home to an extensive public transportation system, allowing ease of access from the airport and around the City for the duration of the conference, although most venues are within walking distance. The GTA provides additional opportunities for critical planning exploration such as study of Markham's New Urbanist development of Cornell designed by the world-renowned firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk and the highly controversial Regent Park social housing redevelopment.

The department and university have a number of a highly influential and active faculty, many of whom who are likely to be options as speakers and panel members in the conference. Planning professors with research and professional experience intersecting with the political nature of planning include but are not limited to: Matti Siemiatycki (member of the board of Waterfront Toronto), Paul Bedford (former chief planner of the City of Toronto), Alan Walks (urban form and political ideology; metropolitan governance), Larry Bourne (Canadian urban housing policy), and Enid Slack (municipal finance; fiscal health of cities). Star-power can be drawn from related departments, including the likes of Richard Florida (head of the Creative Class Group and the Martin Prosperity Institute). Other individuals such as outgoing Mayor David Miller and urban design-oriented city councillors like Adam Vaughan could be potent additions to the list of potential keynote speakers and panel members.

The department has close ties to various Toronto planning institutions and associations such as the Cities Centre, Planners Network, The Social Economy Centre, the Munk Centre for International Studies, the Institute on Municipal Finance and Government, the Centre for the Environment, and a strong student society, the Graduate Geography and Planning Students Society (GGAPSS) which could all contribute to providing exceptional resources to the conference. We the committee are confident in our ability to organize and hold the conference, and sincerely hope that you consider this application to host the CAPS-ACÉAU conference "Politics in Planning: Beyond the Landscape" at the University of Toronto in 2011.