

# Creating the Future for Undergraduate Education in Planning

*The ACSP Commission on Undergraduate Education*

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## ■ Introduction

The potential of undergraduate planning education is compelling. If planning were more available at the undergraduate level, the numbers of students attracted to the field and the variety of interests they bring would be a multiple of what is found in all of our graduate programs put together. Students would take planning for many different reasons — as an elective, a minor, a major selected out of pure interest, a major with intention to pursue law, business, or some other profession in graduate school, or as a step towards full status as a professional planner. Introducing so many young people at points of identity formation and career choice to a field that touches every facet of organized society and without which the global community cannot maintain its ecological balance or achieve its human potential — this is something beyond a speculative idea, or an administrative dilemma. It is a requirement.

## ■ Undergraduate Education in Crisis

Sharp criticisms of many kinds have been leveled at undergraduate education in recent years, and many academic institutions are scrambling to make adjustments, to increase their commitments, and to improve their performance. Our assessment is that three criticisms are crucial and that they are strongly interdependent.

### Proficiency

Large numbers of undergraduates cannot perform the rudimentary tasks that are required to deal with a complex world, much less to participate in shaping that world. David Gardner has focused the issue: College-bound adolescents typically cannot make inferences from written materials and cannot write a persuasive essay or solve a mathematical problem requiring more than a few steps (1983). Evidence of this is extensive

## Abstract

In 1988, ACSP appointed a National Commission on Undergraduate Education. The Commission was asked to explore how planning education might respond to the widespread concern about the quality of undergraduate education. It was also asked to consider what changes would need to be made in the relationship between undergraduate and graduate planning education. The full report has been published and distributed to all the planning schools. What follows are the principal observations, understandings, and recommendations of the Commission.

*The Commission was chaired by Paul Niebanck, University of California, Santa Cruz. Members were: Linda Dalton, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; Wes Hankins, East Carolina University; Michael Hibbard, University of Oregon, Eugene; Gill-Chin Lim, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Beth Moore Milroy, University of Waterloo; David Phillips, University of Virginia.*

and by opening up channels through which those habits can be changed. And planning education has enormous potential in response to the need for relevance. Planning is a powerful lens through which to understand society. It provides students a basis for criticism and constructive action. It can empower students with a way into and a way through the times in which they live.

To be specific:

1. Planning education is explicitly concerned with basic values. Purpose and intention are inherent in the planning idea. Very few planning activities are undertaken without reference to such concerns as ends, legitimacy, and effects. Hence, planning education is designed to enhance students' abilities to discover values, to assert values, and to negotiate differences among values.
2. Planning education is multidisciplinary. It is comfortable with both science and art, and its character is simultaneously philosophical and practical. It brings situations to life, revealing their full dimensions and their possibilities. No single point of view, no single explanation, and no single approach is sufficient in situations requiring planning. Planning education encompasses the whole subject and does not depend on disciplinary dogma. Whether through intuitive and creative processes or through rigorous analysis, students learn to combine variables, to seek synthesis, and to leave systems open to new information.
3. Planning education is applied education. Planning is not meaningful outside of real situations; neither is it complete without action and evaluation. Thus, planning education is constantly at work to apply principles and analyses to actual events. It is also dedicated to learning from experience.
4. Planning education is self-aware and self-critical. It practices what it preaches about the importance of shared decision making, concern for externalities, and future effects of present choices. It responds to its setting, and it is open to change. Students select it not because of its established status but because they discover it to be the kind of education that is responsive to them and that, indeed, depends upon them.
5. Planning educators treat their students as individual persons. Planning undergraduates tend to feel less personal distance between themselves and their faculty than in other majors. A common message from undergraduate planning students is that they feel that they are respected as adults, that the department cares about them personally, and that they have a comfortable "home" in the major. Thus, planning programs attempt to embody in the educational process some of the principles espoused by professionals in working with communities.

Planning education, thus, has in its character precisely

what undergraduate education seems to need. That is, it would tend to correct for, rather than reinforce, the unfortunate current drift towards routine, specialized, formal education. Therein lies the irony and the opportunity. Occupied with preparing a relatively small number of professionals for careers in land use, environmental regulation, urban design, economic development, and other important areas, planning education may be denying itself a place of leadership in the larger educational arena.

## ■ Undergraduate Planning Today

Undergraduate planning education is presently a very small field of activity (see Figure 1). It includes several score of faculty, in a few dozen programs, yielding several hundred graduates each year. Only one out of every several thousand baccalaureate degrees is a planning degree. Furthermore, the field has not grown significantly during the last decade or so. New programs are being initiated (at UC Berkeley, Ohio State, MIT, and Cornell, for example), and one (the University of Washington) has been revived; but others (Moorhead State, Western Kentucky) have closed, and the overall numbers have hovered at about the same level.

According to the best current records, there are thirty-four undergraduate degree programs in planning (ACSP 1982, 1988). Nine of these are small programs with links to graduate planning degree programs. Seventeen are small programs without such linkages. Eight are relatively large programs, with student bodies ranging in size from 60 to 250.

Among the first group, enrollment averages just under thirty, and the median full-time faculty equivalent is five. More than twice that number of faculty are typically available to students, however, because of the graduate program affiliation, and half of the faculty have degrees in planning. These are rich environments for students, characterized by low student-faculty ratios, diverse opportunities, and, for four of the programs, professional accreditation status.

Programs in the second group average just over twenty students and three FTE faculty. Far fewer faculty are available to students than in the first group, and only one in six faculty has a planning degree. Only one of these programs is accredited. Twelve programs are sponsored by or associated with geography programs. Two are free-standing. The rest are aligned with earth or environmental sciences.

The large programs average 121 students and seven FTE faculty. About twelve faculty members are available to students, the same as in the small, affiliated programs. Two-thirds of these faculty have planning degrees. All of the programs are in schools or departments with "planning" in their titles, and six of the eight are accredited.

Figure 1

College or University	Department	Accredited	Year Established	Total Enrollment	Faculty FTE
<b>Small Programs Linked to Master of Planning Degree Programs</b>					
Arizona State University	Planning		1977	44	6
Ball State University	Urban Planning		1985	10	5
University District of Columbia	Urban & Regional Planning	*	1968	50	9
Eastern Washington University	Urban & Regional Planning	*	1969	30	5
M.I.T.	Urban Studies & Planning		1970	5	3
University Miami — Coral Gables	Urban & Regional Planning		1987	NA	NA
Michigan State University	Urban Planning	*	1946	25	8
University of Virginia	Urban & Environmental Planning	*	1954	22	4
University of Washington	College Architecture & Urban Planning		1940	38	5
<b>Small Programs Not Linked to Master of Planning Degree Programs</b>					
University of Alabama	Regional & Urban Planning		1975	12	3
Appalachian State University	Geography & Planning		1974	5	2
Brigham Young University	Geography		1975	35	3
Carroll College	Geography		1973	17	1
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Geography & Regional Planning		1974	21	3
Miami University, Ohio	Geography		1976	12	1
New Mexico State University	Earth Sciences		1977	25	1
Northern Arizona University	Geography		1973	23	3
Northern Michigan University	Geography & Earth Sciences		1983	10	3
Nova Scotia College	Environmental Planning		1972	35	3
Rutgers University — Cook College	Environmental Resources		1970	20	4
University Saskatchewan	Geography		1969	36	2
University of Southern Mississippi	Geography & Area Development		1972	20	2
Southwest Missouri State	Geosciences		1972	12	2
State University College — Buffalo	Geography & Planning		1975	27	2
University of Utah	Geography		1979	23	3
Western Washington University	Geography & Regional Planning		1964	25	NA
<b>Large Programs</b>					
California Polytech — Pomona	Urban & Regional Planning	*	1967	148	9
California Polytech — San-Luis Obispo	City & Regional Planning	*	1970	146	9
University of Cincinnati	School of Planning	*	1961	99	10
East Carolina University	Geography & Planning		1974	62	3
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Urban & Regional Planning	*	1920	110	4
Iowa State University	Community & Regional Planning	*	1967	93	4
Ryerson Polytechnic	Urban & Regional Planning	*	1969	240	11
University of Southern California	School of Urban & Regional Planning		1983	60	6

These large programs vary considerably in style and emphasis. Four have a strong technical focus (Pomona, San Luis Obispo, Cincinnati, and Ryerson). This is evident in the larger number of total credit hours required in planning, the larger number of structured studio or workshop courses, and a greater apparent emphasis on the applied approach to teaching. Others have a more general program, concentrated in upper-division course work surrounding the prescribed areas of a planning curriculum and differing numbers of studios, workshops, or outreach courses. Each responds to its particular institutional and marketplace environment. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Iowa State University, for instance, are large research universities with graduate planning programs and related disciplines in which students can take electives. The University of Southern California draws heavily on the public administration courses available in its school, and there is a decidedly

urban focus to its program. East Carolina has a small faculty without a graduate planning program with concomitant faculty resources, yet it provides both a broad general planning curriculum and the technical specialties necessary for planning jobs in rural areas and small cities.

Clearly, only a small proportion of the undergraduate degree programs have sufficient number of students and faculty to ensure quality and continuity. A few of them are situated in environments where faculty are contributing aggressively to the definition, refinement, and growth of the field and where their research actually enriches the undergraduate offerings. A few others, while not at universities with major research commitments, still manage to provide course offerings of high and consistent quality for students headed for entry-level planning jobs.

## ■ Hopeful Signs

In the face of the facts of small numbers, one cannot expect an early or dramatic expansion or multiplication of these undergraduate planning programs. There is, on the other hand, no reason for despair. We note several realistic grounds for hope:

1. The introduction of planning to undergraduates can take a variety of forms, as demonstrated by the diversity of programs summarized here. We need not be doctrinaire in our prescriptions or expectations.
2. Many more students than we realize are currently being exposed to the field of planning. Numerous colleges and universities offer parts of courses, single courses, or clusters of courses on planning. Herein lies an opportunity for rationalization and creative advance and for significant influence on students' world views and career choices.
3. Planning, when seen as applied social or natural science, can be expected to respond to career motives of undergraduates. Depending upon local institutional histories, geographic factors, and faculty personalities, some programs that offer majors, minors, and concentrations in planning but do not offer planning degrees may be defining areas of specialty and distinguished competency and adding notably to the planning field.
4. Many of the larger master's degree programs in planning, currently without undergraduate components, contain rich and relatively abundant faculty resources. Several of these are considering undergraduate majors at this time. They may provide models for other schools to emulate.
5. Certain of the existing undergraduate planning programs, large and small, represent significant resources. These programs have concentrated on undergraduate education long enough to have accumulated considerable experience with undergraduates and expertise in teaching them. They have a reservoir of knowledge about what material is appropriate, what modes of presentation or interaction work, and what types of exercises are most successful. We sense a readiness and a solid body of expertise in undergraduate planning education.

## ■ Issues and Distinctions

Three difficulties will inhibit the expansion of undergraduate planning in the short run. First, faculty in the large, independent, undergraduate programs typically have heavy teaching loads and are in institutions that offer few rewards for research and publication. On the other hand, faculty in small undergraduate programs situated in the research universities often face negative incentives with regard to teaching (especially undergrad-

uate teaching) and to writing and publishing about pedagogy.

Thus, there is some mismatch between the experience and insights involved in teaching planning to undergraduates and the institution-specific incentives for faculty to share that information with colleagues at other institutions. Meanwhile, we are short of texts, case studies, exercises, simulations, field work problems, and other materials to help undergraduate planning programs expand, and we need ways to encourage their preparation and production.

Second, there is a general need to wrestle with what planning is, what disciplines planning is associated with, and through what subject matter planning is mediated. The Commission's perspective is that planning programs should help students explore the problems associated with deliberate social and environmental change. This task should be undertaken with at least as much energy and care as is devoted to teaching the applications of technical or social science knowledge as such.

This clarification is especially important — and especially difficult — for undergraduate planning programs that are not affiliated with a graduate program, with its research or public service features. Such programs lack the incentives for articulating and advancing the field of planning. A few of these programs have been able to distinguish themselves by defining a special focus. Others depend on allied fields for their identity, however, and live with the risks attendant on dependency. Of particular concern would be programs whose faculty have little planning education or experience themselves.

Our third concern is the expressed fear that widespread expansion of undergraduate planning would undermine the legitimacy and the health of the existing professional master's programs. We believe that quite the contrary is true, that undergraduate planning education would contribute to a demand for more and better graduate planning education in a wide range of substantive areas. But our perspective is not yet shared by planning educators across the board.

Our belief is based in part on several fundamental differences between undergraduate and graduate education. For one thing, an undergraduate major is imbedded within a complex set of institutional expectations regarding the bachelor's degree. Students in planning must satisfy any number of general education requirements, as well as take courses within the major. This means that undergraduate planning programs are relatively less focused than their graduate counterparts. Furthermore, undergraduates do not identify as strongly with their major as graduate students. For many, the primary objective is to obtain the bachelor's degree, and the major is almost incidental. Most undergraduates are uncertain about their choice of major and career when they begin college, and even at graduation, most students have only a tentative commitment to the field of their major.

Another distinction has to do with expectations about

academic sophistication and personal maturation. An undergraduate major may serve as much to confirm (or challenge) a student's personal worth as to prepare the student for the job market. Course offerings in planning, as well as certain other fields, therefore have a vocational as well as an occupational responsibility. To put it another way, undergraduate planning is more concerned with the longer run — the student's lifetime, whereas graduate planning education is more concerned with the short run — the immediate needs of the profession.

Finally, graduate education assumes what undergraduate education cannot assume: that the student brings to the field a certain degree of perspective and accomplishment. Undergraduate planning education cannot make these assumptions. Undergraduate planning education is in a sense "deeper" education than graduate planning education. Whereas graduate planning students can presume to "generalize" in planning and "specialize" in a substantive area, undergraduate students could reasonably expect to delve deeply into the nature of planning itself. The "speciality" would be planning, as such.

We regard the gap between the present small scale of undergraduate planning and the ideal of widespread and multifaceted undergraduate planning as much narrower than is generally perceived. We are encouraged by the attractiveness of the undergraduate planning programs that do exist and by evidence that planning is being highlighted in places other than traditional planning programs. Furthermore, there are exciting differences among programs. Undergraduate planning seems able, for the most part, both to encompass the whole requirement and to concentrate on selected aspects. Finally, and fundamentally, planning education is serving many undergraduate students' needs for self-definition and vocational choice very well indeed. Our conclusion is that undergraduate planning education is at the threshold of considerable growth.

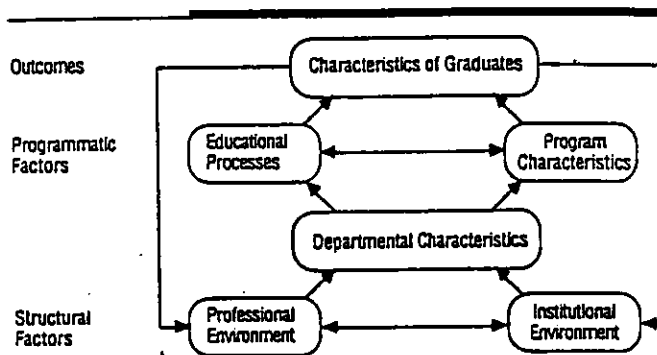
### ■ Dimensions of the Opportunity

If it is important for undergraduate planning education to expand and improve, it is first important to know what the opportunity looks like (see Figure 2). The Commission sees three dimensions: outcomes, structural factors, and programmatic factors.

#### Outcomes

We refer here to competencies, attitudes, and other attributes of planners that are generally regarded as desirable. Among these are certain technical, social-interpersonal, critical, and synthetic skills. Beyond these common traits, however, several different outcomes are possible. One of these is strictly occupational or professional; a program is intended to prepare the graduate for entry-level, professional employment. This is the only form of undergraduate planning education that is cur-

**Figure 2** Framework for Describing Undergraduate Planning Programs



Source: Adapted from J. S. Stark et al., "A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Preservice Professional Programs in Colleges and Universities," *Journal of Higher Education*, 57(3) (1986), pp. 231-58.

rently eligible for accreditation, and it characterizes the largest existing programs. Another outcome would be to prepare students for graduate study in planning or other professional fields such as public administration and law. A third outcome would be to prepare undergraduates to enter doctoral programs, or, more broadly, an undergraduate planning program could be framed as a liberal arts major.

#### Structural factors

The structural factor that has proven to be reasonably stable and supportive of planning education is the relationship between the schools and the profession. Professional planning programs generally benefit from strong relationships with the nearby professional community, and, traditionally, graduates of professional undergraduate programs work in local, metropolitan, or regional public agencies, or in private consulting firms. This strength of relationship is also a limitation. Supported by other structural linkages, more programs might gear their curricula toward regional, national, or international issues, and/or toward nonprofit corporations, public-private partnerships, or the corporate sector. We perceive no inherent limitation here, nor any reason to impose one.

A structural factor that we find troubling is the relationship between the planning education programs and their host universities. Planning is typically not a central university commitment, and the concomitant financial support for planning is inadequate. On the positive side, planning programs benefit from university resources outside the planning program, such as research institutes, computer facilities, and support courses in other fields. There is a decidedly negative side, however, having to do with the perception of planning as a technical and professional field of limited academic value.

The type of institution and its mission are of key importance here. For example, some schools, by law, must emphasize undergraduate over graduate education. Some may be committed to a professional approach by charter. Other universities, by contrast, may be so oriented to the doctorate or to research that they are comfortable only with a more theoretical approach to planning. In a college or university that values liberal education, the planning program will similarly carry the culture of that institution. Or if a planning program is located in a school of design, it will typically assume a different form than one in a social science division. The message is that one has to be extremely alert to the particulars of the institutional structure, history, and culture when one projects a change in undergraduate planning education.

In the face of the above, it is refreshing to observe a third structural factor — the department itself. Here is usually found a nonstereotypical perspective and a commitment to adaptation and improvement. Many departments are operationally autonomous irrespective of where they are located in the university bureaucracy. Fortunately for undergraduate planning education, therefore, the freedom of choice and adventuresome spirit that characterize many planning departments often outweigh the restrictive influences of institutional location and traditional definition. And, as we will propose, these last two can actually change on behalf of improvements in planning education.

#### Programmatic factors

We observe two basic programmatic factors: the characteristics of planning programs and the characteristics of educational processes. With respect to the former, an undergraduate major in planning can follow one of several models:

1. It can be offered like a social science discipline or departmental major which specifies about one-third of an undergraduate's courses, plus support courses in other disciplines, and is concentrated in the junior and senior years.
2. It can be arranged as a professional major, which specifies about two-thirds of the total undergraduate curriculum distributed over three or four years.
3. It may be set up as interdisciplinary, in the sense that planning courses draw on or combine with courses in specified other departments, such as geography or political science, art history or economics.
4. It may take a social issues or problems approach, similar to many environmental studies and urban studies majors. These models are all represented among current undergraduate planning programs, although there is still a great deal of territory in which to experiment.

With respect to educational processes, the main ques-

tions are these: What is the importance of the faculty member as role model? How do academics and researchers teach practice? How do academics from other disciplines teach planning? How effective are practitioners as educators? What texts and other teaching materials may we reliably turn to for undergraduate planning education?

Existing programs vary with respect to the proportion of courses that involve experiential education and direct applications, contrasted to lecture, discussion, and seminar formats. Some undergraduate programs emphasize "learning by doing" through strong and extensive dependence on workshops. In addition, programs vary as to the sequencing and purpose of such studios. Some function as skill-building courses in the middle of the program, while others serve as "capstone" or synthesizing courses at the end. A few schools use cooperative education as a means of integrating field experience with formal learning. All these are important defining qualities, as is the manner of program or departmental governance. Teachers teach at least as much by example as by instruction.

#### ■ Alternative Undergraduate Programs

Taking into account the nature of the current educational crisis, the condition of undergraduate planning education today, and the outcomes, structural, and programmatic factors of most importance, the Commission has identified eight combinations of elements that represent the strongest candidates for improvement and expansion at the undergraduate level (see Figure 3). We present first some modifications of existing approaches that seem reasonable, there are four of these. Then we turn to a few more innovative ideas. These, too, seem reasonable to us and within the planning field's capacity to achieve.

##### 1. Conventional accredited professional/occupational

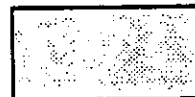
Currently, accredited occupational or professional undergraduate majors have strong enrollments, and their graduates perform well in the profession. Such degrees provide an opportunity for young people who may not be able to afford the additional years of school required for a master's degree to enter the field of planning. In many cases, they are members of ethnic minorities or represent the first generation in their families to have the opportunity to attend college. Thus, while tension will continue to exist between the undergraduate and professional master's degrees, the demand for and role of the undergraduate professional degree must be recognized. Such programs could be strengthened by course work that prepares their graduates for careers in planning beyond entry-level positions. In other words, they must avoid focusing too narrowly on technical subjects and narrowly defined issues by balancing such material with courses with broad and challenging perspectives.

Figure 3

Realms of Undergraduate Planning Education

STRUCTURAL FACTORS					
ACCREDITATION STATUS	Accredited		Ineligible for Accred.		Accreditation not Relevant
GEOGRAPHIC MARKET-PLACE FOR GRADUATES	Local	Metro/region	State	National	International
ORGANIZATIONAL MKT-PLACE FOR GRADUATES	Public Agency	Consultant	Private Corporation	Public/Private	Non-profit
TYPE OF INSTITUTION	Research	Doctorate		Comprehensive	Liberal Arts
PROGRAM SETTING WITHIN INSTITUTION	Design	Geography	Public Affairs	Other	
REL. TO OTHER PLNG. PROGRAMS IN INST.	Alone	With Prof. Masters	With Masters & PhD	With PhD Only	
SIZE	Small Student Enroll/ Small Faculty	Small Student Enroll/ Mod. Faculty	Large Student Enroll/ Small Faculty	Large Student Enroll/ Mod. Faculty	

PROGRAMMATIC FACTORS					
NATURE OF PREPARATION	Exposure-Minor	Occupational-Professional	Graduate-Professional	Graduate-Disciplinary	Citizenship
STYLE OF PLANNER	System Maintenance		System Change	System Transformation	Research
MODEL OF UNDER-GRADUATE EDUCATION	Professional	Disciplinary	Multi-disciplinary	Inter-disciplinary	Problem-Solving
SUBSTANTIVE FOCUS OF CURRICULUM	Physical/Land Use		Social/Economic		Generic Policy
MODE OF TEACHING/LEARNING	Limited Studio-Applied Learning		Moderate Studio-Applied Learning		Extensive Studio-Applied Learning



Primary Realm of Existing Programs



Potential Realm for Future Programs

2. Critical professional/occupational

Graduates of existing professional/occupational programs find employment in local, public agencies and consulting firms. A critical professional/occupational program would be explicitly designed for a different market — e.g., larger geographical areas, public-private partnerships, nonprofit organizations — to pursue a

more ambitious social agenda. That is, whereas the graduate of the conventional program might be a staff planner reviewing subdivision applications or designing a planned-unit development, the graduate of the critical program might be a crusader for affordable housing or water conservation. Or, if the graduate worked in proje review, she or he would explicitly consider the social

consequences of development proposals. Such a program would thus orient the planner more toward system change than system maintenance. To accomplish this, the curriculum might be based on the problem-solving rather than professional model and have a broader substantive focus than the conventional degree. The overall orientation would be for professional practice following graduation, however, and such a program should be acceptable under existing accreditation guidelines. The critical, professional approach might find a more comfortable home in a doctorate-granting or research university than in a comprehensive or technically oriented institution.

### 3. Nonaccredited occupational

Small, undergraduate degree programs offered by geography departments are typically ineligible for accreditation because of their institutional setting and limited resources. Nevertheless, such programs educate students who enter the field, often in the same employment market as the graduates of conventional accredited programs. These majors commonly follow the disciplinary model of undergraduate education, typically focusing on planning during the last two years. Some of them require a minor in addition to the planning major, which qualifies them as multidisciplinary programs. These programs could be strengthened by acquiring greater institutional support and, in part, by developing strong ties with other disciplines or majors (since they are in institutions without master's or doctorate degrees in planning). Further, and perhaps more importantly, such programs could benefit from better definition of their purposes and the nature of the preparation they provide. For example, some might consider limiting themselves to minors or becoming pre-professional majors (to be discussed shortly).

### 4. Minors and concentrations

Minors can serve as means to expose students to planning, either to attract them to graduate programs or to orient them as citizens to a planning perspective. Structurally, many existing minors resemble the nonaccredited majors — often limited in resources, small in size, and offered by geography departments. However, another group of minors exists in departments that already offer master's and doctorates in planning and consequently benefit from their faculty resources. Because the curricula for minors vary extensively, perhaps the primary way that they can be strengthened is by making their structure and purposes clear within their institutions. Further, it should be made clear that minors are not occupational or professional programs, therefore not eligible for professional accreditation. Some minors might become explicit preprofessional programs, of course.

### 5. Preprofessional

A number of other professions have explicit undergraduate preparation that occurs prior to admission to a graduate professional program. Some of these constitute majors; others are the equivalent of a minor or concentration. In some instances, a preprofessional credential permits a student to waive a substantial portion of a graduate curriculum; in others, it serves as a prerequisite. So long as the master's degree remains the dominant professional preparation in planning, a preplanning major or minor would provide an attractive educational sequence for students who want to enter the field as undergraduates. Acknowledgement of such preparation by master's programs and accreditation authorities would help to establish a clear principle for excusing qualified students from a specified portion of a graduate program. A pre-professional program might be located in an institution that has a graduate, professional program already, although this would not be a necessary condition.

### 6. Pre-public service

A variation on the preprofessional approach would be an undergraduate program that prepares students for a variety of professional schools. Examples of these are public administration, social work, and law. The breadth of this approach would require a full major. Structurally, it could resemble existing professional programs or the proposed preprofessional program. It could operate independently, in a school of public affairs, or possibly in another institutional setting. The problem-solving model of undergraduate education might be most appropriate, with a strong emphasis on theory and a moderate amount of applied learning. It would require a broad or generic substantive focus.

### 7. Disciplinary

Another option would be to teach planning as a discipline rather than as professional practice, with the purpose of preparing students for going directly to a doctoral program. Such a program would promote research into the phenomena with which planning is concerned, as in an urban studies program. And it would address the nature, the consequences, and the social importance of planning itself. Logically, such a program would be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. It would try to capture the range of the field and would involve few or no studio or workshop courses. Such a major would fit best in a research or doctorate-granting institution where a Ph.D. program in planning already exists.

### 8. Education for citizenship

One of the most interesting approaches to undergraduate education would emphasize planning as a point of



view about the world and the way it works rather than as a profession or discipline. The citizenship purpose would suggest an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or problem-solving model for undergraduate education, and it would deal with a broad range of substantive issues. Such an approach would not primarily prepare a student for occupational or professional work, not even in the preprofessional or preservice sense of the approaches discussed earlier. Thus, a school with a citizenship approach would not be concerned with accreditation. Such a program could be located in a research university but might be more suited to a liberal arts college, especially one with a long-standing commitment to innovative education and/or social issues.

## ■ Creating the Future

There is much that planning education could contribute to the revitalization of undergraduate education generally. Understood as a generic activity, planning can actually be seen as central to that revitalization effort. Our position of influence is far from optimal, however. Much as we may wish it were otherwise, undergraduate planning education is a small-scale, low-visibility, low-prestige activity in postsecondary education. Even if we had scale, visibility, and prestige, we lack an explicit, shared vision of how undergraduate planning education relates to the broader dialogue on undergraduate education or the changing nature of practice. In addition, the practice community itself seems to be in a mood to preserve the status quo, which reinforces the absence of a vision among ourselves as educators. There does not seem to be much interest in getting involved in these issues.

The Commission believes that ACSP and its member institutions must confront this situation. Planning education (and practice) should be in an expansionist mode. Planning has a great deal to offer to our campuses and to the world of the next century. Planning educators must involve themselves at an institutional level in the current discussions and activities regarding the future of undergraduate education and the changing environment for planning practice. We recommend one way that every graduate program in the United States and Canada can get involved in undergraduate education. We also recommend six actions that ACSP can take to place undergraduate planning education squarely in the middle of the action.

### 1. Survey courses

Whatever else is done, every graduate program that does not already have an undergraduate component should feel under an obligation to provide an undergraduate survey course of the very highest calibre. By neglecting this obligation, we overlook a major constituency of planning, and we confirm the popular view among academics that planning is just a minor profession.

Survey courses can take any number of legitimate forms. In some situations, the best approach will be to describe the history of the planning profession and allied professions. In others, the history and culture of cities might be the best focus. An approach of a more adventuresome kind might offer a reinterpretation of modern history as a planning phenomenon. Another departure would be to compare cultures according to their uses of planning. Still another would examine planning in everyday life; planning would be seen as definitional for individuals and groups. The survey course could even be a "methods" course, introducing students to many methods of importance in planning: visioning, problem-solving, consensus-building, evaluation, and so on. There is no end of viable and exciting possibilities. As they are tried, the faculty who participate in them are guaranteed new horizons and rich contexts for their other work.

### 2. Experimental programs

Four innovative undergraduate programs are suggested above, and a great many other initiatives are possible. A variety of experiments should be tried, using a variety of conceptions of undergraduate planning education. ACSP should provide strong leadership to help the field decide which experiments might be most promising and to encourage relevant actions by individual schools.

One way to promote such experiments would be for ACSP to organize a tightly focused meeting on the topic. The purposes of the meeting would be to: (1) direct attention to a few actual or potential experimental programs; (2) identify potential linkages among programs; and (3) bring the potential of undergraduate planning education to the attention of the higher education "establishment," especially prospective institutional sponsors and sources of funding for experimental programs.

Several concrete activities for ACSP should emerge from this meeting or some similar effort. First and most important, ACSP would use its good offices to facilitate federal and/or foundation funding for a limited number of experimental programs that show particular promise. This may raise difficult political questions within ACSP, but such questions should not be allowed to impede so important an initiative.

Second, ACSP should facilitate formal relations between Ph.D. programs and all undergraduate programs that are in schools without a Ph.D. program in planning, but most especially the experimental undergraduate programs. The future of undergraduate planning education is in the doctoral programs, and we have more to say about this below.

Third, it is essential that these experimental programs be evaluated. Innovations in education are ephemeral. We need an analysis and a record to help us learn from this effort. ACSP is probably not the organization to do

the evaluation itself, but it would be well placed to "broker" the effort and disseminate the results.

Finally, as the major organization in planning education, ACSP has a responsibility to make the experiments visible through a public relations effort directed at all of planning education, the practice community, and the larger educational community. As a part of the effort, ACSP should also help the experimental programs to be visible on their own campuses.

### 3. Accreditation standards

Undergraduate planning programs are currently accredited by the same standards as professional master's programs. The fact that the standards are shared provides an essential sense of legitimacy to undergraduate planning programs. It is the result of their long struggle for acceptance. It also means that under most circumstances only programs that follow what we have called the professional/occupational model of undergraduate planning education are currently eligible for accreditation. ACSP needs to consider whether accreditation practices will unduly limit experiments in undergraduate planning education. How can we encourage a wide variety of programs and still retain the quality-control and legitimating benefits of accreditation? Should the accreditation standards be different for undergraduate programs than for the MCP/MUP and, if so, how? Does accreditation of undergraduate programs matter? These questions raise issues far beyond the purview of this Commission, but we have to note them and to suggest ways that they might be addressed to the benefit of all concerned.

At the risk of oversimplification, there are two sorts of accreditation: professional and academic. Bodies such as the PAB accredit professional programs in a large number of fields. Meanwhile, general academic programs such as English, chemistry, and sociology are not specifically accredited. Instead, they are sanctioned through campus-wide accreditation, by review associations of schools and colleges and commissions of higher education.

The professional/occupational model of undergraduate education clearly falls under the aegis of the PAB. But accreditation for programs that follow other models is less clear. Perhaps at least a few of them might be more appropriately viewed as general academic programs for accreditation purposes. Another approach would leave all the action with the PAB, which would establish some kind of "acknowledgement" for nonprofessional programs. In effect, PAB would develop criteria for the use of the term "planning" in the title of a major, degree, or concentration. We recommend that ACSP work with the PAB to review the options regarding undergraduate accreditation. The two groups need to explore ways to retain the central features of the present professional accreditation while developing a mechanism to encour-

age, evaluate, and legitimate a variety of other types of undergraduate planning programs.

### 4. Linkages with master's degree programs

Our work has identified several possible relationships between undergraduate and professional master's programs in planning. These range from no relationship — an individual with a bachelor's degree enters practice directly or selects a different field for graduate study — to close integration whereby a student with a bachelor's degree would be given advanced placement in a graduate program. ACSP needs to continue to articulate these relationships from two perspectives: that of the student who might progress from one level to another, and that of the academic department that might offer degrees at several levels.

Students would benefit from having clear expectations regarding preparation for graduate work. Specifically, they need to know whether an undergraduate program might actually permit them to reduce the magnitude of the master's degree requirement. The meaning of accreditation could be strengthened if students from accredited undergraduate programs received a head start in professional master's programs.

Academic departments have a different stake in clarifying the relationship between undergraduate and graduate education in planning, particularly for professional programs at both levels. The Commission has observed that undergraduate and graduate professional programs generally appeal to different students; they are not competing directly with one another at present. A significant expansion of professional bachelor's degree programs would certainly introduce more trained planners into the job market, however. Thus, academic programs must consider whether they are educating students at the undergraduate level for the kinds of professional positions as master's students. More research needs to be conducted comparing the careers of planners holding professional bachelor's degrees with those holding master's degrees. Further, academic programs and the PAB need to consider how much and what kind of specialization is appropriate at each level.

### 5. Linkages with doctoral programs

It is encouraging to note that a few of our most prestigious doctoral programs are developing undergraduate programs. But the relationship between doctoral and undergraduate education in planning remains ill-defined. For undergraduate planning education to emerge fully, it needs to become a focus of doctoral training. Doctoral students should be encouraged to recognize themselves as future teachers in undergraduate programs. Students and faculty should be encouraged to conduct research on undergraduate planning education and to help the field develop visions of how undergraduate planning ed-

ucation relates to the broader dialogue on undergraduate education and the changing nature of planning practice.

As a beginning, ACSP's Commission on the Ph.D. should consider the appropriate relationship between doctoral and undergraduate programs from the doctoral program's viewpoint. By the end of that Commission's work, or sooner if possible, ACSP should identify two or three doctoral programs that are interested in working with nearby colleges or universities and provide them with the technical assistance to achieve this. The purposes of these consortia would be to create a variety of experimental undergraduate programs in places that have no graduate program and to begin to implement the agenda outlined in the previous paragraph.

#### 6. Heightening the salience of undergraduate education

Thus far, undergraduate planning education has simply not been very visible, even within its own field. It needs to become a focus of ACSP. We acknowledge that the major responsibility for this must fall on those who are most interested in undergraduate planning education. But ACSP can help in three general ways.

First, ACSP should serve proactively as a vehicle for program development and information exchange for those involved in the experimental programs. It should organize and sponsor workshops for the participants, both at the Annual Meeting and outside it. It should publish a newsletter that would be a medium of exchange for the participants and a window into the experimental programs for nonparticipants. And it should act as a clearinghouse for syllabi, reading lists, model courses, and other materials.

Second, ACSP should work with interested planning educators to develop an awards program for undergraduate students, faculty, and programs that have demonstrated excellence in a variety of areas. They might be offered in the usual areas of teaching, research, and service, and they should recognize exceptional contributions to the development of undergraduate planning education.

Third, innovations of the sort we are proposing here will require the production and distribution of new teaching materials — texts, readers, case studies, exercises, videos, and so on. Interested individuals will surely develop such materials, but their dissemination is not an undertaking that is likely to appeal to the usual commercial sources of such materials. And it is too onerous a task to be left to the individual creators of the

material, even assisted by some sort of clearinghouse. ACSP can make a statement about the importance of undergraduate planning education and provide a valuable service by assisting in the production and distribution of these materials.

#### ■ Conclusion

Colleagues within ACSP have shown increasing interest in undergraduate education during recent years. By the time ACSP President Donald Krueckeberg appointed a commission to consider the matter, it was already a widespread concern with deep legitimacy.

The Commission recognizes that undergraduate planning education is at a turning point. It will continue to produce competent entry-level planners to staff the basic practice jobs. It can also seize the opportunity presented by the flux in undergraduate education and the changing environment for planning practice. This Commission has tried to outline the argument for doing the latter and to describe what it would take to do so.

The work that we have done together on the Commission is important work, and we are committed to sustaining the momentum that has carried this report to completion. We have said what needs to be said to this point, within our abilities. We want now to share the next moves with our colleagues. □

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An extensive bibliography on general education and planning education is appended to the full report of the Commission on Undergraduate Planning Education. Copies of the bibliography may be obtained from Paul Niebanck, College Eight, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.