

ACSP President's Agenda: 2017–19

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Since its founding in 1959,¹ ACSP has grown into a sizeable organization with increasingly diverse composition. Today, it is a consortium of more than 137 university departments and programs plus more than 900 individual members. The collegial, collective ethos from our founding days continues. At the same time, we are charting future paths; building on my predecessors' initiatives, particularly developing connections, a key theme in the 2013–15 agenda; and enhancing our relevance, a key theme in the 2015–17 agenda.

In the current two years, the ACSP President's Agenda emphasizes our ambitions of “**Elevating and Connecting, Globally and Professionally.**” The agenda is about increasing our key, long-time efforts and linking across issues, both in our field and beyond the confines of ACSP, with three big parts:

1. globalizing and diversifying to an inclusive planning academy,
2. enlarging public engagement and presence to become the intellectual source for grappling with serious practical issues,
3. educating students for emerging roles, to prepare them as change agents with new knowledge bases and skills.

1. **Globalizing and diversifying to an inclusive planning academy.** Diversity and globalization increasingly are becoming intertwined in discourse within and beyond the academy. There is tension between the two—particularly around the idea of global as “geographic diversity” because some view it as diluting diversity efforts relating to underrepresented groups within the United States. At the same time, we know that our association and its mission are strengthened by both a diverse and global-minded faculty and student body. Our commitment is to sustain growth through globalization and diversity, which calls for us working together to develop and support initiatives essential to the evolving needs of our programs and members and ultimately, the planning profession. Accordingly, we need to move beyond a promising start to foment broad-ranging conversations on the connection between globalization and diversity and, more importantly, bring this thinking to bear on our

programming and planning curriculum. Our focus includes:

- To support the work of the Committee on Diversity and Planners of Color Interest Group in enriching the mix of educators, researchers, and students. The ACSP Governing Board has voted to support an annual workshop for predoctoral students of color to attract and mentor bright young minds. This also complements the ongoing workshop for junior faculty of color that takes place every two years.
- To better understand and help raise the capacity of planning programs to address and integrate global and diversity issues in their curricula and provide constructive academic and career support for the expanding population of international students and students of color.
- To elevate our engagement with GPEAN (Global Planning Education Association Network) and our connections to institutions central to global discourse on the urban agenda (e.g., UN Habitat) and explore the potential role of ACSP in working with planning programs in various world regions in their desire for international recognition.

2. **Enlarging public engagement and presence to become the intellectual source for grappling with serious practical issues.** With the concerted efforts of my predecessors, our linkages with APA and AICP are growing steadily. We are grateful that APA has become a key sponsor of our annual conferences. We need to work together to reach beyond the confines of ACSP and the planning field to strengthen our collective voice and expand our presence in critical discourse and intellectual realms on the future of cities and communities:

- To highlight and enhance our core strength in the ability to envision and implement translational

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research that is often multidisciplinary in nature. Planning faculty and researchers are well positioned to assume leadership roles in a variety of campus programming that involves outreach and partnerships. We will, and have begun to, highlight efforts to institutionalize community-university engagement and scale up collaboration through planning leadership.

- To support our intellectual growth from the continued introduction of broad, critical discourse into planning. An example is the idea of “through care” in the context of incarceration; we are beginning to feature current issues with societal implications and crucial urgency, such as the relationship between planning and the prison and policing systems.
- To provide opportunities for training and professional development at our annual conferences and administrator’s conferences for faculty and students to gain familiarity and competency in advocacy, media communications, writing for the public, and other forms of public engagement.
- To think creatively about how best ACSP should enhance its data collection efforts for the purpose of understanding our organization’s history and growth, raising our visibility through marketing activities tailored to our needs, and potentially collaborating with national ranking entities to explore inclusion of the planning field.

3. ***Educating students for emerging roles, to prepare them as change agents with new knowledge bases and skills.*** Sustained, active engagement requires that the planning academy prepare our students for societal and technological changes, to become visionary thinkers and change makers. This calls for collective, creative thinking about what our curricula should be in order to position our students well for the evolving roles of planners:

- To integrate in a timely fashion new knowledge bases, skills, and tools into planning curricula. Some examples of these include climate change, social entrepreneurship, data science, and urban analytics. Doing so also can help ensure that the core competencies and values planning programs excel at are quickly able to spread into emerging practice areas.
- To introduce more programming and opportunities at our annual conferences and administrator’s conferences to highlight rising scholars, research methodologies, and instructional innovations in these emerging areas.

- To collaborate with APA and AICP to better understand the changing job market for graduates of planning programs and think creatively about the emerging types of work that they can succeed in.

We are already carrying out this agenda. Most important is the much needed expansion of our staff. With the support of the Governing Board, starting with the current fiscal year (July 2017), the ACSP office now has the Executive Director, Conference Manager, Marketing and Communications Manager, Membership Manager, and Communications Coordinator, all full-time except for the last position. The Executive Committee will begin an evaluation of the office in early winter each year before creating the year’s budget proposal that will go to the Governing Board for approval. The evaluation will be based partially on achievement of a set of goals established for the year. With our strengthened staff support, ACSP nonetheless relies on the volunteer work of many members. They animate all our efforts, from conference track chairs, leadership of special interest groups, task forces, special and standing committees, and award committees, to the Governing Board and Executive Committee. We have begun to make the volunteering process more open to sustain this treasured ACSP tradition. I look forward to working with all of you and thank you for your support of ACSP.

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1. For a chronology of ACSP, see the following link: https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/acsp.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Docs/History/ACSP_Past_Officers.pdf (retrieved February 7, 2018).