

## **Department of Urban and Regional Planning Assessment Plan Summary**

### **Master's Program**

The department's Master's degree program in urban and regional planning is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). An extensive self-study is conducted prior to each on-site accreditation visit, which occurs every five years. Therefore, the program is regularly assessed by the faculty and by a three-person accreditation team. The last self-study and (successful) accreditation review occurred during the 2001-02 academic year. Other forms of assessment occur every year.

The department's Curriculum Committee takes the lead in reviewing and proposing revisions of our Master's curriculum. The faculty then reviews and acts on the Curriculum Committee's recommendations. Two years ago, for example, the faculty instituted a new International Development Planning concentration. This has quickly become a popular option with our incoming Master's students. Last year, the faculty considered a proposal to combine and redefine two other concentrations within the Master's program. These discussions among the faculty are continuing this year.

The department uses other routine assessment activities, as well. Student course and instructor evaluations, for example, are reviewed by the faculty member teaching the course, as a method for course improvement. These evaluations are also reviewed by the Faculty Evaluation Committee as part of the annual faculty performance evaluation, and by mentoring committees for strengthening the teaching of junior faculty.

The department also conducts student exit exams and interviews. Each exit exam is conducted by two faculty members. The student is examined on a substantive question or issue in urban and regional planning. For the exit interview, each student writes a critique of their experiences in the department. Student comments may focus on required courses, computing and physical facilities, advising, internships, or anything else that the student considers relevant. Students also fill out forms evaluating courses taken outside the department. These evaluations are kept on file and are available to other students who may want the information during registration.

### **Doctoral Program**

The URPL doctoral program was evaluated, by a campus-level committee, simultaneously with the last reaccreditation review of our Master's program. Several of the committee's recommendations have been subsequently implemented by the faculty. These include the requirement of an annual performance review of each doctoral student. By May 1 of each academic year, each student is required to submit to the Ph.D. Program Committee a two-page statement on their accomplishments for the previous year and their work plans for the upcoming year. The Committee provides written comments to the student and his/her major advisor.