Reflecting about our future...

The first Saturday of February marked the Planners Network retreat. The day started at the president's house, with a leadership meeting to discuss the expectations for the year ahead and to facilitate the transition from PN's previous presidents. PN's leading members went over the organization's history on campus and resources – databases as well as people that have been previously involved with PN's work – that could aid the organization moving forward. The team was excited and motivated to start the new year.

In the afternoon, the meeting continued at Pizza M in Urbana. PN had the entire backroom of Pizza M reserved, thanks to the support and effort from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning staff. The afternoon meeting was open to all students and community members interested in working with, becoming a part of, or learning more about PN. The member had a rich conversation on possibilities for the various work groups, while enjoying delicious pizza and drinks. Importantly, the presence of a member of the Keep Central Central movement, from Champaign, led to the creation of a new working group to cooperate in opposition to the relocation of Central High School to the city's outskirts. Overall it was a fun, productive, and relaxing afternoon that ended with a beautiful poem authored and read by one of our members, Efadul Huq, on the feminine perspective in an urban context.

Congratulations to our president, members and DURP for making this awesome event!

Gender Equity
Hosts activities to get people thinking about gender inequity and its intersection with planning. We organize discussions and action events to work toward gender equity. Annie – tractor@illinois.edu, Evan – ekalvar2@illinois.edu, Liz – ebastia2@illinois.edu

PN Readers
Monthly reading events where members contribute articles, experiment with reading/discussion formats, and invite friends from other departments to make this an interdisciplinary activity. Efad – efahuq@gmail.com, Raha – behnams2@illinois.edu

Bristol Place
Works to assist residents and community member affected by the Bristol Place Master Plan. Involvement includes awareness-raising, interviews and data gathering. Natalie – prochask@illinois.edu, Alex – gomespe2@illinois.edu

Immigration Forum
Regularly participates in community outreach events, runs social justice workshop series on immigration and is organizing panels in immigration related discussions. Efad – efahuq@gmail.com, Mayara – mblima2@illinois.edu

Anti-Jail Campaign
Works with CU Citizens for Peace and Justice (CUCPJ) on their Build Programs, Not Jails campaign. PN does research and data analysis to support this community effort to prevent another jail from being built in Champaign County. Erica – ehorton2@illinois.edu, Alex – gomespe2@illinois.edu

Fun Fact
Did you know that PN had a newsletter before? In the Fall of 2013, DURP students made one - the first and only - newsletter issue in the history of UIUC Chapter.

Newsletter produced by Mayara Lima and Alexandre Pereira. Photographs by Efadul Huq
On Wednesday, February 18th, PN had its first General Meeting. Departing from the usual setting, the meeting took the shape of a potluck held in the TBH atrium. The meeting had a great turn out, and it was great to see some new faces joining in! With an informal structure, the potluck served as a joyful way to introduce PN to the newcomers, and share some truly exquisite food (the prize going to Karen’s slow-cooked pork). Following introductions, there was a discussion on the role of gender in planning, an unstructured period of group conversations about PN’s various projects, and later some exciting new ideas for possible working groups. We look forward to seeing even more folks in our next meetings!

When I came to visit U of I last March for the DURP Open House, I knew that Planners Network was something in which I wanted to be involved. The values of PN spoke to me, reminding me why I was seeking a degree in Urban Planning in the first place. From Planners Network’s Statement of Principles:

“We believe that planning should be a tool for allocating resources and developing the environment to eliminate the great inequalities of wealth and power in our society, rather than to maintain and justify the status quo.”

I am absolutely thrilled to be working with such a great team of caring, committed, and passionate individuals. We are continuing partnerships with community groups, such as CU Citizens for Peace & Justice and the CU Immigration Forum, and providing a forum for new projects, such as the Reading Group and Gender Equity and GIS Working Groups. We have many goals for the rest of the year and the upcoming fall semester, some of which are worthy of mention here. Planners Network is for EVERYONE. While based in DURP, one need not be an Urban Planning student to be involved. Our one requirement is that you are interested in building healthy communities. More specifically, the PN leadership team is particularly interested in reaching out to undergraduate students and getting those involved who will be around longer than most of us will. Additionally, we are always looking for feedback. I will be holding office hours in the PN/SPO office (TBH 232) on Thursdays from 11am-12pm. Always feel free to stop by.

Thank you for your interest and know you are always welcome.

Erica Horton

Need to be added to our listserv? Contact Mayara at mblima2@illinois.edu

Our first General Meeting

Letter from the President

Upcoming events