Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Highlights

Recently the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) and the Center for Real Estate (CRE) received one of the largest gifts in their history, from alumnus Samuel Tak Lee ’62, SM ’64. This historic gift established the Samuel Tak Lee MIT Real Estate Entrepreneurship Lab, which will promote social responsibility among entrepreneurs and academics in the real estate profession worldwide, with a particular focus on China. The gift will fund fellowships to attract both US and international students, will support research on sustainable real estate development and global urbanization, and will make the lab’s curriculum available online to learners worldwide via MITx.

The $118 million gift was formalized during a signing ceremony at MIT attended by Lee; his son, Samathur Li; MIT president L. Rafael Reif; executive vice president and treasurer Israel Ruiz; chancellor for academic advancement Eric Grimson; and vice president for resource development Julie Lucas. In recognition of Lee’s substantial and ongoing commitment to the Institute, Building 9, home to the MIT Center for Real Estate, will be named the Samuel Tak Lee Building.

The new Samuel Tak Lee MIT Real Estate Entrepreneurship Lab will be housed in DUSP and CRE. CRE investigates the real estate transaction from initial concept to market reality through a cross-disciplinary lens, including design, urban planning, environmental studies, construction, management, economics, finance, policy and regulation, and the law. MIT is a pioneer in the study of real estate, becoming the first university to offer a master of science degree in real estate development in 1983.

The lab’s professors and students will seek partners within the School of Architecture and Planning—such as the Center for Advanced Urbanism, the Media Laboratory, and the Building Technology Program—as well as from the MIT Sloan School of Management and such MIT departments as Civil and Environmental Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering, Economics, Anthropology, and others that share an interest in responsible real estate development.

Shortly after the signing ceremony, Yu-Hung Hong was named to serve as the founding director of the new lab. Hong has been a lecturer and member of the DUSP community for many years and is an alumni as well, having earned both a PhD in urban development and a master’s in city planning from DUSP. His research focuses on property rights and obligations, land readjustment/sharing, and local public finance. He has taught urban public finance since 1996 and publishes on topics related to property rights, public land leasing, land readjustment, and property taxation. He is the author of several academic papers and the coeditor of 10 books.

According to the latest edition of the Planetizen Guide to Graduate Urban Planning Programs, DUSP is the top planning program in North America. Planetizen’s guide has included rankings since 2007, and DUSP has consistently been ranked first. This year the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, rounded out the top three.
In addition to the overall ranking, the guide includes top programs in a number of planning specializations. MIT was ranked as a top school in 13 distinct categories, including Community Development, Environmental Planning, Urban Design, Housing, Transportation, International Development, and Technology/GIS. Finally, Planetizen included an additional “top 25” ranking based on a survey of planning educators, and MIT ranked first in that listing.

Faculty in the department, including department head Eran Ben-Joseph and professors Xavier Briggs, Phillip Clay, Dennis Frenchman, Adèle Naudé Santos, and James Wescoat, participated in the Institute-wide MIT 2030 initiative to establish plans for the development of both East and West Campus.

Professor Ben-Joseph, along with DUSP professors Judy Layzer and Lawrence Susskind, worked with colleagues from around the School of Architecture and Planning and across the Institute to establish and announce a major initiative to promote transformative, cross-disciplinary research relating to the environment.

On December 11, 2014, the department held a faculty-wide retreat to discuss and reach consensus on three “big picture” issues: (1) the ongoing multiposition faculty search, (2) faculty norms regarding teaching and advising, and (3) possible changes to the structure of the MCP core requirements and the MCP thesis process.

While the past academic year was full of achievements and joys, it concluded with sorrow and grief with the passing of our colleague Judy Layzer. It was a great privilege for us to know, work with, and learn from Judy. In the coming semester, the department will be organizing a memorial event to celebrate and honor Professor Layzer’s contributions.

**Appointments, Promotions, and Visitors**

In the spring, the department completed a yearlong, multiposition faculty search that resulted in the hiring of four new faculty members.

Assistant professor Mariana Arcaya is a social epidemiologist and urban planner whose work explores dynamic relationships between geographic contexts, particularly neighborhoods, and health. Prior to coming to MIT, Arcaya served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. She holds a doctorate of science from the Harvard School of Public Health and a master of city planning from DUSP. Her professional work experience includes instituting and managing a public health division within metropolitan Boston’s regional planning agency and designing and overseeing the implementation of healthy urban planning strategies under a federally funded Community Transformation Grant.

Assistant professor David Hsu researches and teaches urban environmental policy and planning. Topics of particular interest include energy and water networks, information policies to encourage efficiency, and data analysis. His current projects include research focusing on how information affects energy efficiency in commercial buildings, as well as studies on policies and tools for green infrastructure planning and smart
infrastructure. He taught previously at the University of Pennsylvania and New York University, and he has worked in the fields of engineering, real estate finance, and environmental planning and as a policy analyst for the cities of New York and Seattle. He holds degrees in applied physics from Yale and Cornell and degrees in urban design and planning from the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Washington.

Associate professor Janelle Knox-Hayes researches the ways in which social and environmental systems are governed under changing temporal and spatial scales as a consequence of globalization. She has studied the political and economic interface of financial markets and environmental systems and how individuals and organizations plan and make decisions under conditions of socioeconomic uncertainty. She is the author of a number of peer-reviewed works in prestigious journals and serves as an editor of the Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society. Prior to joining DUSP, Knox-Hayes was an associate professor in the School of Public Policy at Georgia Tech. She received an MSc and a DPhil from the University of Oxford.

Assistant professor Justin Steil conducts research on the intersection of law and urban policy. Broadly interested in social stratification and spatial dimensions of inequality, he writes about property, land use, and local government law and their interaction with community development and housing policy. Before coming to MIT, Steil was a fellow at New York University Law School’s Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. He has worked as an advocacy director for a nonprofit organization fighting predatory lending practices, as an urban planner for an environmental justice organization focusing on brownfield redevelopment, and as a program manager for a project engaging youth and prisoners in critical dialogues about justice. He received an MSc in city design and social science from the London School of Economics, a JD from Columbia Law School, and a PhD in urban planning from the Columbia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Ceasar McDowell was reappointed as a professor of the practice, and Carlo Ratti was promoted to professor of the practice. As noted above, Yu-Hung Hong was named the founding director of the Samuel Tak Lee MIT Real Estate Entrepreneurship Lab. Dennis Frenchman was appointed associate dean of the School of Architecture and Planning.

The department successfully completed third-year reappointment reviews for assistant professors Gabriella Carolini and Sarah Williams.

Professor Jennifer Light of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society was appointed to a joint courtesy position with DUSP. Julie Newman, director of the MIT Office of Sustainability, accepted a courtesy appointment as a lecturer in urban sustainability and policy in our department.

Calestous Juma, an internationally recognized authority on science, technology, engineering, and innovation from Harvard Kennedy School, spent the year at DUSP as a Martin Luther King visiting professor teaching the iHouse seminar in the fall and a graduate seminar in the spring. His visit was hosted by professors Bishwapiya Sanyal, Phillip Clay, and Lawrence Susskind.

Frank Ackerman, lecturer in energy policy and economics, taught two courses, one on climate change economics and policy and the other on electricity and the environment.

Deborah Stone continued to teach and advise in the areas of public policy and doctoral research.

Jim Buckley returned to DUSP to teach 11.201 Gateway: Planning Action and 11.401 Introduction to Housing, Community and Economic Development.


Fadi Masoud joined the School of Architecture and Planning and DUSP as a lecturer and research associate in landscape architecture and urban design through the Center for Advanced Urbanism.


Mary Anne Ocampo and Stephen Gray continued in the department as lecturers, teaming up to teach 4.240J/11.328J Urban Design Skills and 4.255J/11.304J Site and Environmental Systems Planning.

Lecturer Yu-Hung Hong taught 11.483 Housing & Land Use in Rapidly Urbanizing Regions in the fall and two courses in the spring.

Emily Talen and Luc Anselin returned as visiting professors in the fall to teach 11.S952 Neighborhood Planning & Design and 11.S950 Applied Spatial Data Analysis with GeoDa/Pysal, respectively.

Professor Ananya Roy visited the department for two weeks in October, offering the special short course 11.S955 New Geographies of Theory: Urbanism and Planning in the 21st Century.

Following completion of his PhD in DUSP, Jota Samper Escobar continued as a lecturer, teaching 11.488 Urban Development in Conflict Cities.

As usual, the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS)/Humphrey Fellows Program hosted a group of distinguished planners from around the globe. In 2014–2015 we welcomed fellows from 17 different nations, including Argentina, the
Central African Republic, China, Ethiopia, Georgia, Mexico, Myanmar, the Philippines, Peru, Poland, South Korea, and Turkey.

Xav Briggs, Bish Sanyal, and Chris Zegras were on leave during AY2015. In addition, Amy Glasmeier was on leave during fall 2014, and Karen Polenske and Larry Susskind were on leave during the spring.

**Research and Teaching**

The following new courses were developed and offered for the first time in 2014–2015:

- 11.139/11.239 The City in Film
- 11.S195 TechDev: Exploring the Case for Technology in International Development
- 11.S938 Crowd Sourced City: Social Media, Technology, and Planning Processes
- 11.S939 More than Data: Smart Cities, Big Data, Civic Technology, Data Visualization and Policy
- 11.S940 Climate Economics & Policy
- 11.S941 Planning Against Evictions and Displacement
- 11.S942 Regional Innovation Systems
- 11.S943 Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Development
- 11.S944 Institutions of Modern Capitalism and Market Society
- 11.S944 Housing & Land Rights for Planners
- 11.S946 Electricity, Economics, and the Environment
- 11.S948 Resilient Urban Communities
- 11.S949 Theory & Practice of Public Policy
- 11.S952 Neighborhood Planning & Design
- 11.S954 The Politics of Economic Democracy
- 11.S956 Mobility Management in China: Transportation Research Seminar

The department engaged in a number of both local and global practicum/studio/workshop classes, as follows.

- 11.307 Beijing Urban Design Studio (fall)
- 11.360 Community Growth and Land Use Planning Workshop (fall)
• 11.5945 Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative’s (DSNI) Design and Planning Workshop (fall and spring)
• 11.303 Real Estate Development Studio: Complex Urban Projects (spring)
• 11.304 Manila, Philippines Site and Environmental Systems Studio (spring)
• 11.332 Bello, Colombia Urban Design Studio (spring)
• 11.386 Malaysia Sustainable Cities (spring)
• 11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets Workshop (spring)
• 11.320 Digital City Design Workshop: The Future of the City (spring)
• 11.5938 Crowd Sourced City Workshop (spring)
• 11.5942 Advanced Workshop in Landscape+Urbanism (spring)

Major Events

Planning Ideas That Matter
A fall DUSP series brought together students, faculty, and visitors to debate key issues in applied planning theory. The six Wednesday debate sessions, required for all PhD students in the department, explored questions of livability, territoriality, governance, and reflective practice.

People Matter: The Human Impacts of Planned Redevelopment
In September, the department hosted a global symposium to commemorate the 50th anniversary of psychologist Marc Fried’s seminal publication “Grieving for a Lost Home,” a study on the psychological effects of redevelopment in Boston’s West End neighborhood. The event brought together scholars, practitioners, advocates, and others to celebrate the enduring impact of Fried’s contribution to the field, to take stock of what we have learned, and to chart new directions for research, practice, and public policy worldwide.

Governing the Slum
On September 29, special visitor Ananya Roy (professor of city and regional planning and distinguished chair in global poverty and practice at the University of California, Berkeley) delivered a public lecture titled “Governing the Slum: Global Urbanism and the New Poverty Agenda.”

Securing Affordable Housing in Hot Market Areas
An annual event bringing together the four accredited New England planning schools and the Massachusetts chapter of the American Planning Association has been alternately hosted by MIT, Harvard, Tufts, and the University of Massachusetts for the last six years. In 2014, the event was held at Tufts University on October 8. The theme of the symposium, “Securing Affordable Housing in Hot Market Areas,” was developed to honor DUSP alumna and Tufts professor Rachel Bratt for her long-standing contributions to both theory and practice in these topical areas.
DUSP Faculty Research Lightning Talks

On October 16, DUSP continued its new tradition of hosting department-wide “lightning talks” to showcase faculty and student research.

Industrial Urbanism: Places of Production

Since the Industrial Revolution, cities and industry have grown and evolved together. However, despite this shared past, popular notions of urban industry tend to focus on the negative aspects of manufacturing: pollution, environmental degradation, and the exploitation of labor. “Industrial Urbanism: Places of Production,” a project organized by Professor Ben-Joseph and Tali Hatuka, attempted to move the conversation beyond these overly simplified and overly negative characterizations. The project, which consisted of an exhibition in the Wolk Gallery, an international symposium held on October 27, and an interactive website, explored the relationship between current urban planning practices and the types of places that are being designed and designated for the production of goods.

Road Ahead Forum

On November 21, DUSP’s SENSEable City Laboratory convened a conference titled “The Road Ahead: Forum of Future Cities.” The intent of the meeting was to discuss all dimensions of future urban mobility, bringing leading theorists, dreamers, and practitioners—from designers to financiers, from policymakers to provocateurs—into conversation and debate. Conversations and presentations showcased innovations, addressed challenges, and explored “the future of moving from A to B.”

Global Convergences: Strategies Against Evictions and Displacement

On November 21, a global conference organized by Professor Balakrishnan Rajagopal and hosted by the MIT Displacement Research & Action Network and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-NYC brought together prominent activists, civil society leaders, and academics from Brazil, India, South Africa, and the United States, as well as global policy figures from the United Nations system, to discuss strategies to address the increasing incidence of development-induced evictions and displacement.

JoAnn Carmin Memorial Symposium on Urban Climate Adaptation

On December 5, the department held a memorial symposium to honor the late professor JoAnn Carmin, an internationally renowned scholar of the institutional and societal dimensions of environmental governance. The event celebrated Professor Carmin’s life, her dedication to mentoring students, and her scholarly contributions in the field of urban climate adaptation. Two panel sessions were convened to apply and extend her focus on social justice and local adaptation politics to new areas, concluding with thematic working groups that collectively strategized future research directions for the field given Professor Carmin’s legacy.

Industrial Urbanism in Africa

On December 8, Martin Luther King visiting professor Calestous Juma presented a lecture exploring the implications of rapid technological advancement for industrial
urbanism in Africa. Using the case of Lagos in Nigeria, he focused on how technological leapfrogging is likely to create new opportunities for more integrated land use planning approaches in African cities.

**DUSPx Los Angeles**

In January, more than three dozen DUSP alumni from the Los Angeles area convened at the Japanese American National Museum to share their work and to renew and update connections with their classmates and colleagues. The evening was the second in a series created by the department to promote the exchange of ideas and to foster connections among DUSP alumni and current faculty and students. (As described below, additional alumni events were held in Boston, New York, and Washington, DC.)

**Metro Lab Conference**

On April 11, the Metro Lab—a collaborative effort of students in the department and the SPURS program—organized an event to explore a range of “metropolitan gaps” in both theory and practice. The conference brought together practitioners and scholars to discuss metropolitan challenges and envision how the emerging Metro Lab initiative could influence metropolitan thinking.

**SENSEable City Exhibitions**

The SENSEable City Lab presented several projects around the globe, most notably “Local Warming” at the Venice Architecture Biennale. Local warming is a technology that uses motion tracking to direct beams of infrared heat onto building occupants, ultimately increasing building energy efficiency by orders of magnitude. “Cloud Cast,” a corresponding project presented at the Museum of Future Government Services during the UAE Government Summit 2015, does the same with cooling clouds of mist. The lab also developed core concepts for the Future Food District, one of the main thematic areas of the 2015 World’s Fair (“Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life”) in Milan.

**Awards and Research Highlights**

Students and researchers at DUSP and the SENSEable City Lab were members of one of the 11 winning teams in the LinkedIn Economic Graph Challenge.

MIT’s Office of the Dean for Graduate Education recognized a group of graduate women at MIT for their leadership and service contributions at the Institute, their dedication to mentoring, and their drive to make changes to improve the student experience. Included among the honorees were four graduate women from DUSP: Melissa Deas, Mia Goldwasser, Jennifer Ly, and Danya Sherman.

Of nine MIT students and alumni awarded Fulbright U.S. Student grants for 2014, five were from DUSP:

- Mitchell Cook, a PhD candidate in planning from Arkansas, will travel to India to study urban finance reform in Bangalore, part of his research into the causes of social and economic inequalities in cities.
• Sarah Dimson MCP ’14, from Missouri, won a grant to study housing and energy infrastructure in Tanzania. (Dimson subsequently declined the award to work with Power Africa, advancing clean energy generation and access in six African countries including Tanzania.)

• Caroline Howe MCP ’14, from Connecticut, will study unemployment and sustainable waste management practices in Spain, continuing her previous work in sustainability and the environment conducted in Honduras, India, and elsewhere.

• Melanie Bin Jung MCP ’14, from New York, will travel to Mexico to research informal settlements on the edge of Mexico City, part of her interest in social and economic justice.

• Californian Michael Waldrep MCP ’14, as one of five winners of the new Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellowship (out of 860 applicants), will create a documentary video on the neighborhoods of Mexico City; Waldrep has previously done projects for Code for America and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association.

The Urban Affairs Association, the international professional association for urban scholars, researchers, and public service professionals, honored professor Lawrence J. Vale with the 2015 Best Book in Urban Affairs Award for Purging the Poorest: Public Housing and the Design Politics of Twice-Cleared Communities (University of Chicago Press).

DUSP professor Eric Klopfer, director of the Scheller Teacher Education Program, MIT Office of Digital Learning, and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, announced a new collaboration aimed at supporting teachers in their efforts to use emerging digital learning tools and environments, especially in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The effort will promote new ideas, technologies, and curricula along with research related to educator preparation with a focus on STEM subjects for students from prekindergarten through the senior year of high school.

A new research project implemented by the SENSEable City Lab and the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory will analyze sewage to spot diseases. Monitoring city sewage could reveal infections circulating in the population and could one day be applied to create individual “smart toilets.”

The following year-end departmental awards were announced during the DUSP commencement breakfast at the Media Lab on June 4, 2015:


• Outstanding MCP Thesis: Claire M. Evans, “Upgrading from Below: A Collective Approach to the Right to the City in the Federal District, Mexico”
• Outstanding PhD Dissertation: Lili Knorr, “Youth and Cities: Planning with Urban Youth Cultures in New York City and Paris”
• Outstanding PhD Teaching Award: Lily Pollans
• AICP Outstanding Student Award: Elizabeth Kuwada
• Flora Crockett Stephenson Writing Prize: Alex Brady
• O. Robert Simha Prize: Carey Anne Nadeau
• Excellence in Public Service Award: Pritika Hingorani MCP ’10
• Outstanding Contribution to the Intellectual Life of the Department: Thierno Amadou Diallo
• Student Departmental Service Award: Andrew Binet, Danya Sherman
• Rolf R. Engler Award for Outstanding Service: Mike Enos
• Excellence in Advising: Gabriella Y. Carolini
• Excellence in Teaching: Judy Layzer
• Staff or Faculty Contribution to Student Life: Ezra Glenn
• Hebbert Award for Student Contribution to DUSP: Lee Dwyer, Claire Evans
• Faculty Contribution to Social Justice: Jason Jackson
• Student Contribution to Social Justice: Sofia Campos, Jennifer Ly

Graduate Degree Program Enrollment and Activities
The department’s graduate programs enrolled 56 new MCP students, three new SM students, and nine new doctoral students. The department granted 61 MCP, one SM, and 11 PhD degrees. The following table reports data on the 2014–2015 admissions cycle for the department.

DUSP Admissions Cycle, 2014–2015

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<th>Applications</th>
<th>Admitted Students</th>
<th>To Be Enrolled</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCP (including dual)</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
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Undergraduate Program
In 2014–2015, three students graduated with an SB from DUSP. In addition, four undergraduates declared a Course 11 major, bringing the new total to 18 majors for the coming year.
Doctoral Program

As noted above, the department graduated 11 new PhD students. The following dissertations were completed in 2014–2015:

- “Urban Adaptations Observed: The Politics of Governing Climate Resilience in Indian Cities” (Eric K. Chu)
- “Youth and Cities: Planning with Low-Income Youth and Urban Youth Cultures in New York City and Paris” (Lilian M. Knorr)
- “Empowering Cooperation: Dominican Hometown Associations and the Politics of Transnational Community Development” (Deepak Lamba-Nieves)
- “Planning for Land-use and Transportation Alternatives: Towards Household Activity-based Urban Modeling for Sustainable Futures” (Weifeng Li)
- “Planning by Contract?: Negotiated Regulation in Urban Development” (Nicholas Marantz)
- “Physical Space and Its Role in the Production and Reproduction of Violence in the ‘Slum Wars’ in Medellín, Colombia (1970s-2013)” (Jose Samper Escobar)
- “Charting New Territories Together: Laying the Foundations for Mutual Gains in United States-Mexico Water and Energy Negotiations” (Bruno Verdini Trejo)
- “Making Land Fly: The Institutionalization of China’s Land Quota Markets and Its Implications for Urbanization, Property Rights, and Intergovernmental Politics” (Yuan Xiao)
- “Historic Maritime Cities as New Places for Entrepreneurs and Innovators: Lessons from Venice, Amsterdam and Boston” (Laurie Ann Zapalac)
- “Spatiotemporal Learning and Geo-visualization Methods for Constructing Activity-travel Patterns from Transit Card Transaction Data” (Yi Zhu)

Alumni Outreach

Local alumni continue to play an active role in sponsoring internships for students, providing career advice at the alumni career forums organized by each of the program groups, and participating as guest lecturers in numerous classes. Alumni across the country offered summer positions for current students and served as employers for recent graduates. Alumni also continue to play a role in the implementation of the practicum requirement, a significant element in the revised MCP core curriculum.

Alumni once again participated as panelists in each of the four annual alumni career forums associated with the department’s four program groups, as well as serving on panels for alumni in transportation planning and the ninth annual Real Estate Career Day, organized with the Center for Real Estate and the Harvard Design School. They also served on a panel examining professional practice in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; participated in the PhD Alumni/ae Career Forum; and were involved in a pilot PhD alumni mentoring program.
The DUSP career resources website and the DUSP career development director, Mary Jane Daly, continue to serve alumni as well as current students seeking professional development opportunities. They also meet the needs of potential employers of DUSP students and graduates. Over the past year, the department organized a number of alumni employer information sessions on campus for students.

In addition to the signature DUSPx event in Los Angeles, the department organized alumni reunions in New York City and Washington, DC, and hosted a reception at the annual Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning conference in Philadelphia in October. In November the department participated in the first joint DUSP/School of Architecture and Planning “Alumni Connection” event, held at the Media Lab. The event gave alumni the opportunity to visit the School and to catch up on the intellectual life of each department in a series of structured events and a reception.

Eran Ben-Joseph
Department Head
Professor of Urban Studies and Planning