

### **Students fill key research roles in two major projects**

Major international projects led by UPD faculty feature MUP students in important research roles.

### **Student updates**

Jennifer Min Lee, MUP'14, won the American Planning Association's Charles Abrams Scholarship. A multidisciplinary team featuring three members of the MUP Class of 2014 took first prize in Toyo University's Tohoku Recovery invitational academic competition. The First Semester Core Planning Studio teamed up with a group of big-city planning directors for a design charrette. Two groups of MUPs have been pitching apps developed in the Networked Urbanism studio to municipalities and venture capitalists.

### **Faculty updates**

#### **Neil Brenner**

Neil Brenner, Professor of Urban Theory, published a edited new book, *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014) as well as an article co-authored with Christian Schmid, "The 'urban age' in question," in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. In Fall 2013 he gave various keynote or public lectures: at the Creative Time Summit in NYC; at the Oxford University Center for the Future of Cities; at the Department of Architecture, ETH Zurich; and in the Centenary Lecture Series, The Bartlett School of Planning, University College London. Details about these activities, including links to publications and videos of several lectures, can be found at the newly launched website of the Urban Theory Lab: [urbantheorylab.net](http://urbantheorylab.net)

#### **Diane Davis**

Professor Diane Davis has joined with Professor Ann Forsyth as co-PI of a three-year project funded by Mexico's National Worker Housing Agency (INFONAVIT) to explore new directions in social housing supply in the context of a major national initiative towards the re-densification of Mexican cities. Davis also recently announced the Mexico City Initiative, a new project under her direction, which will provide summer stipend support for GSD students to conduct vulnerability mapping and document innovations in everyday urbanism in Mexico City. This spring Davis will be speaking at a plenary panel at the Latin American Studies Association titled "Latin American Urban Studies and Planning: Present and Future Research Directions" as well as presenting her work in a symposium on Frederick Law Olmstead at the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech.

Other spring conferences in which she will participate include a symposium on the future of the developmental state at the Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies at the University of Pennsylvania; the "Inclusive Cities Conference" at Tufts University, a panel on Civil Society, Violence, and Resilience co-sponsored by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and the Kennedy School Latin American Human Rights Initiative; a conference on the "Legacy of the Orangi Pilot Project (Pakistan) and Architect Perween Reham" at MIT; and a day-long workshop on "Reconceptualizing the Urban/Advancing Urban Humanities Studies" at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Recent

publications include “Urban Informality: Remnant of the Past or Wave of the Future” in the most recent issues of the *Harvard Design Magazine* and “Competing Globalizations: The Transformation of Mexico City’s Historic Center” in the architecture/landscape/political economy journal *Scapegoat*.

### **Ann Forsyth**

With Diane Davis, Forsyth is principal investigator on a new multi-year project on sustainable urban development and housing in Mexico. Forsyth was also the 2014 Harry W. Porter, Jr. Distinguished Visiting Professor at the School of Architecture, University of Virginia. In addition, she has recently published a number of articles in the areas of healthy communities, sustainability, and planning research (full details about collaborators are available on her web site [www.annforsyth.net](http://www.annforsyth.net)).

These articles include: “Alternative Cultures in Planning Research: From Extending Scientific Frontiers to Exploring Enduring Questions” (*Journal of Planning Education and Research*); “Simple, Inexpensive Approach to Sampling for Pedestrian and Bicycle Surveys” (*Transportation Research Record*); “Effect of Street Connectivity and Density on Adult BMI: Results from the Twin Cities Walking Study” (*Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*); “Patterns of Obesogenic Neighborhood Features and Adolescent Weight: A Comparison of Statistical Approaches” (*American Journal of Preventive Medicine*); “Adolescent Physical Activity and the Built Environment: A Latent Class Analysis Approach” (*Health and Place*).

### **Michael Hooper**

Michael Hooper, assistant professor of urban planning, recently published an article in the journal *International Planning Studies* on the politics of renting in African cities. He also presented this research at the first meeting of the newly established UN-Habitat university network on informal urbanism. The meeting took place at the Technical University of Munich and Professor Hooper has since written two articles, published in the journals *Topos* and *Garten + Landschaft*, about the UN's efforts to advance scholarship and policy related to the topic of informal urbanism.

Further afield, he recently received a Milton Fund Grant to begin a new research project on the politics of urban growth in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The first field visit to Mongolia took place in January and several MUP students are now engaged in fieldwork for the project.

### **Richard Peiser**

Richard Peiser, Michael D. Spear Professor of Real Estate Development at GSD, is giving the keynote address at the annual meetings of the Urban Development Institute of Australia in Brisbane on March 26, 2014. In November, he presented at the American Society of Landscape Architects annual meetings in Boston on the session, “Moving beyond the PVC Farm: Smart Growth Solutions to Stalled Communities.”

On the research front, he and Ray Torto are commencing a year-long research project on the Challenges and Opportunities of Mixed Use Subcenter Development, sponsored by Portman Holdings. (Architect John Portman funded a new architecture chair at GSD last year.) Two recent papers that were published are “Recovery Ratios in the Savings and Loan Crisis: Evidence From the Resolution Trust Corporation’s Sale of Bank-Owned Real Estate,” with Daniel Bergstresser, in *Cityscape*, the journal of the Department of Housing

and Urban Development; and “A General Model of Mortgage Failure Tipping Point with an Example from Southern California 2006-2007,” with Guoping Huang, Stephanie Rauterkus, and Grant Thrall in the *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis*.

On April 25, 2014, Ray Torto, Don Conover, and he will lead a symposium on “Designing the Workplace of Tomorrow-Today” at GSD. The symposium will feature the different perspectives of occupiers, designers, and investors.

### **Joyce Klein Rosenthal**

Joyce Klein Rosenthal, assistant professor of urban planning, has recently received grants for research on the planning and governance of urban ecological infrastructure, and a seed grant on the planning and development of housing that may be resilient to coastal storms. In the spring semester, she is teaching a project-based analytic methods of planning module. Through their field research, students will advise the Harvard University Office of Sustainability on campus climate resilience and the Office of Environmental Health and Safety on questions related to personal preparedness and crisis communications. With Professor Diane Davis, she launched a new website discussing student and faculty research on risk and resilience: <http://research.gsd.harvard.edu/riskandresilience/>. Rosenthal’s thesis student, Jennifer Haugh (MDes2) is a finalist in the Deans' Cultural Entrepreneurship Challenge for her project, "Iconic Energy Consulting." The project stems from her thesis research, "Please In My Back Yard: Using Public Art to Mitigate the Aesthetic Effects of Wind Turbines."