

**SCARP CURRICULUM REVIEW REPORT
SCHOOL DISCUSSION SESSION – MARCH 23, 2005
MINUTES (VERSION 2 – JENNIFER NIECE)**

Three main issues to consider (from Tony)

1. To what extent is SCARP the same/different from other planning schools?
2. To what extent does SCARP address the needs of students with respect to professional planning experience? With respect to academic experience?
3. To what extent should SCARP emphasize generalist versus specialist planning education?

Reflection from the CAPS conference

- SCARP is the only school with a close relation to the municipality and to practicing planning professionals
- SCARP offers more flexibility in selecting our own research interests
- SCARP has a high diversity in the range of courses/skills offered by the faculty
- UBC projects were very well (the most well) received by other students – generated the most questions
- SCARP appears on the leading edge of education in many topics (e.g. gender and cross cultural planning)

Contrasting – this diversity means less depth in more areas because many professors only cover a specific topic area

John Friedman – commented that students have more real world experience entering SCARP (older average age) than other schools. BC has a strong culture of sustainability and activism – reflected in SCARP students

SCARP has a strong history re: participatory planning (need to keep this – perhaps by keeping a more diverse approach to curriculum requirements)

-over the past couple of years, SCARP has become more of an ivory tower

Vancouver has a reputation for being a good planning city – continue to keep ties with the municipality strong

However, partly due to relationship with Vancouver, SCARP teaches a “utopic” planning which is often not reality for graduates who work in other provinces or in BC's suburbs. Need to balance the utopic vision with an appreciation for the process in other jurisdictions

Need to be clear that SCARP is a generalist school (this is a strength for many, but not for all students) – need to clarify this generalist approach in marketing of school so that students looking for more specifics/focus recognize this

There is value to being at SCARP even for those who do not want to be traditional planners – strong intellectual environment (is re-inspired to be an idealist)

Appears to be growing focus on specialization and getting finished faster – this is not seen as an asset; students should be considered capable of directing their own progress

SCARP doesn't have many courses that fit environmental stream – some are valuable but want more flexibility to take courses in other programs to complement SCARP offerings
New requirements (in proposal) have more credits – less flexibility

Need a warning to existing/prospective students before shifting to a different model. Movement from streams to AOCs will catch interest

Courses within the same AOCs should be offered by a range of professors (not just by one prof) – shouldn't have all of one AOC depending on the strength of one prof

Legal and administration context – needs to be maintained and developed through consultation with practitioners

Disappointment with the process of the curriculum review – would have liked more opportunities for student input and more promotion that the process was being undertaken

Like generalist approach – generalist program may be jeopardized if moving toward specialties.

Need to have enough faculty to support a specialty (i.e. can't depend on one prof to develop and maintain a whole specialty; need to have range of profs contributing to each AOC)

Core course requirements should include land use planning

Don't want a whole term of qualitative and whole of quantitative – maybe keep existing survey course and then supplement with something elsewhere (i.e. another more technical methods course more related to individual's area of study)

Likes generalist/holistic perspective – courses do exist enough to specialize if desired (if you know what you want you'll be able to get it)

Feels like we are not being challenged enough about “real politique” - need to be pushed more by practitioners who don't all agree/adopt sustainability principles that are standard fare in SCARP

Core distributional requirements – a lot of course work to finish in 2 years

Why does studio require 6 credits when all other distributional requirements only demand 3?
Need to develop a design credit that is worth only 3

Need to address imbalance of workload between classes (earning three credits varies greatly between professors)

Want SCARP to continue to be accredited – with accreditation at SFU for environmental planning program SCARP may now lose the natural resource planners to REM

Happy to see a course on rural and northern communities in the core credits of the new curriculum

Given the high learning value of internships, can the number of allowable credits for this be increased (e.g. to 6) to increase student's amount of real world exposure

Need to work to keep natural resources planners

Reorganization to AOCs – in theory but not in practice. Having reviewed what AOC she would qualify for (based on the courses already taken) does not feel qualified to market herself based on either of these specialities.

Most planning history comes from Doug Aberley's class.

Opposed to the dilution of the law course – wants more courses with higher depth, but maintain the broad range of options.

Emphasized that 6 credit urban design course is a great experience

SCARP to partner with other schools on campus (e.g. RMES) to help create the specialties (increase content offered for specific AOCs)

Need to make clear in application process that streams aren't hard and fast

Larry Beasley's course is a great asset – general perspective shared by many students

Specialization versus generalization – there is value in both for those students that want them. The two options are not mutually exclusive.

Unrealistic to complete the program in 2 years and cover all the bases that seem to be expected.

Need a few professors in each specialty – e.g. International development planning is currently short

Why is there an international development stream? Doesn't seem to be different from CED. If separate streams then need to discuss (e.g.) the policies of international development agencies (UN, CIDA, etc)

Law course – not useful for students who will not be practicing in Canada

re: AOCs as committee sees it (John Friedman)

-need to deal with existing faculty including those approaching retirement (because that's what we have)

-student sees school as a consumer of courses – doesn't see the production side (i.e. effort required to develop a good course)

-listing of courses under AOCs in current draft proposal is based on existing courses. Would have a group of faculty associated with it and would (over time) evolve the area with new courses/cross listing to other departments in consultation with students in that stream

Like specialization but also ability to generalize

-perhaps need to build up the core a little bit more but don't need to stream

-anxiety re: employment. Need more practical experience type courses; understand constraints that planners will work within

-foundational courses – keep us from getting too compartmentalized

-want option to opt out (take own direction)

-idealism is unique, also a benefit in Vancouver; Vancouver as an example of planning is an Ivory Tower among cities

-Larry Beasley's course must be maintained – keep connections to the real world

-more stimulating debates – e.g. Jay Wollenberg – challenges typical SCARP thinking (e.g. re: real estate perspective)

-can't call ourselves a planning school without the Land use component in the law class

-Need more debate about foundational credits – more rationale/explanation for what core competencies were in mind when these were selected

Missing from the core is Land Use planning

Studio courses and Larry Beasley's class bring together theory and practice – very important

Master's degree in planning is considered terminal professional degree but does not provide enough practical experience. Other topic ideas (not currently covered)

-professional writing

-computer skills (e.g. CAD)

-plan drafting and reading

-FSR calculations

-administrative support

additional requirements – prohibitive to have 3 required courses in the first semester (e.g. if 2 data/methods credit were required) – this leaves out the option to take studio in the first semester – studio first term seen as a major benefit to most students

-proposal doesn't have to be “A” or “B” - combinations of “A” and “B” options are possible