



DEPARTMENT OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING

Fall 2011
Newsletter



Department Organizes First-Ever Student-Led Conference

Read more on page 3.



www.durp.jsums.edu

Our Department

Department Grows, Secures More Accolades



Dr. Otha Burton
Associate Dean and Chair

Jackson State University's 2011-12 Academic Year is welcomed by the Department's faculty, staff, students, and administrative team with excitement and optimism. Dr. Carolyn Meyers enters as our new President and is primed to build upon our rich history and elevate us to an even higher level of performance and productivity as a Research Intensive University.

The fall enrollment of 86 doctoral and master level students will be the largest in the twelve-year history of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. We have added a new faculty member who will also become the first Director of our Center for Urban Planning and Planning Assessment. With regard to the undergraduate Urban Studies Program, we have secured an Interim Advisor and full-time faculty member.

The past year again provided many highlights for our programs. One that I am

proud to mention occurred on March 25-26. Our students hosted the initial southeast region Student Planning Conference on campus. This was a student led initiative that was fully supported and facilitated by the Department.

Planning programs in the region participating included Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of New Orleans, Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, the University of Memphis, and Jackson State University. Program chairs and leading scholars from these schools participated as key presenters, and conferees totaling approximately 90 came not only from this region, but also from as far away as Cornell University.

The Department strives to maintain 1) a "student's first" foundation to teaching, research, service and character development, and 2) its proud status as a nationally accredited master's program. I encourage you to visit our website, www.durp@jsums.edu, call us at (601) 432-6865, or email me at otha.burton@jsums.edu. Be a part of our vision to "Become a program of choice that prepares the next generation of urban and regional planners."

Thank You to Our Community Partners

We could not perform on the level of excellence that we do without the help of our community partners! These organizations have supported our students' endeavors, from help with our first-ever student-organized conference to real-world experiences through internships. We thank you for your assistance in preparing the next generation of planners.

This year, we have collaborated with Neel-Shaffer Engineering to offer internships for students in several disciplines, including urban planning. This new partnership gives students the opportunity to spend up to 12-14 weeks with the firm, gaining real-world experience in their fields. Thank you Neel-Schaffer for this important endeavor.

Our Partners

- American Planning Association –Mississippi Chapter
- City of Jackson
- Miss. Dept. of Transportation, Public Transit Division
- Neel-Schaffer Engineering
- Southern Consultants, Inc.
- Center for University Based Development
- IMS Engineers, PA
- Duvall Decker Architects, P.A.
- Garrett Enterprises, Inc.
- Jackson State University Center for Defense Integrated Data
- Mississippi State University School of Architecture
- Waggoner Engineering, Inc.
- Jackson State University, School of Social Work, Associate Dean's Office
- Environmental Management Plus, Inc.
- Richard Wright Center for the Written Word
- Human Capital Development Division
- Holmes County School District
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Hinds County Human Resource Center
- Margaret Walker Center

Our Student Conference

SPA Organizes First Student Conference

By Dwayne Baker and Catherine Lee

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) at Jackson State University recently hosted an innovative event, the Student Planning Conference: *Emerging Issues in Southern Cities*. In hosting this conference, DURP invited students, faculty members, professionals, and community members in urban planning and related fields to engage in presentations and discussions that explored issues pertaining to the social, physical, economic, environmental, political, and historical aspects of planning in southern cities.

The event was a student driven program created to give those currently pursuing degrees and recent graduates an opportunity to present information on research subjects of their choice. Event programming also exposed the audience to scholars and professionals who are currently driving urban development in the south.

The regional focus of event programming allowed participants to address issues that are currently affecting their cities and also present information on trends in urban development facing the next generation of planners in the southeast.

While many conference participants are active in urban planning initiatives in the Jackson Metro area, scholars from cities throughout the region contributed to the discussion of what makes southern urban development unique. Dr. Ellen Dunham-Jones of the Georgia Tech College of Architecture gave the keynote address on topics covered in her newest book, *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*. Dr. Dunham-Jones, a world-renowned expert on urban and suburban design, and board member of the Congress for the New Urbanism, spoke to the audience about adaptive reuse of the built suburban environment for a nation undergoing significant demographic transitions.



Dwayne Baker presents a paper at the Student Planning Conference held in March 2011 at Jackson State University.

More than 80 people attended the conference and participated in several interactive events and presentations throughout a two-day period. The key program participants, leading scholars from southeastern planning programs, represented the primary student bodies attending the event: Dr. Mukesh Kumar of Jackson State University, Dr. Constance Wilson of Alabama A&M University, Dr. John Pittari of Auburn University, Dr. Jane Brooks of the University of New Orleans, and Dr. Ken Reardon of the University of Memphis. These scholars led both a plenary discussion, *Connecting Communities, Universities and Professionals in the Planning of Southern Cities* and a symposium, *Overcoming Divides: Planning, Education, and Practice*. In addition to the five key programs represented at the conference, students also came from Cornell University, Florida State University, Emory University, University

Thanks to Panelists and Moderators!

- Dr. Otha Burton, Jr., JSU
- Dr. Joan Wesley, JSU
- Dr. Mukesh Kumar, JSU
- Dr. Edmund Merem, JSU
- Dr. Moe Chowdhury, JSU
- Dr. Gloria Billingsley, JSU
- Dr. Kimberly Hilliard, JSU
- Dr. Constance Wilson, Alabama A&M
- Dr. David Powe, University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Dr. Louis Lee Woods, Middle Tennessee State University
- Dr. Ken Reardon, The University of Memphis
- Dr. John J. Pittari, Jr., Auburn University
- Mr. Ed Shambra, American Planning Association – Mississippi Chapter
- Dr. Jane Brooks, The University of New Orleans
- Mr. Jassen Callender, The University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Dr. Ellen Dunham-Jones, Georgia Institute of Technology

of Alabama, and Middle Tennessee State University.

The conference's concurrent session period gave students an opportunity to present both individual and group research. In these sessions, students presented projects, thesis and dissertation research relating to issues facing the southern cities they study. Research areas included transportation development, gambling and economic development, environmental planning and conservation issues, community development and citizen empowerment, neighborhood transition, housing infill strategies, the prison system, and planning method evaluation. Student presenters were able to participate in insightful discussions with peers, professionals, and faculty members and received helpful feedback regarding their on-going research.

Our Students

Wilcox, Grayson Learn About Life, Planning in Ghana

By Heather Wilcox

This past summer I had the opportunity to study aboard in Ghana, Africa for 28 days. The trip was part of my graduate studies at JSU's Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and I made the trip with fellow graduate student Kimberly Grayson. Although West African faces many obstacles, I believe city planners can have a significant influence on the expanding populations.

My previous research revolved around clean water and the diseases associated with unclean water. While touring the small townships throughout the area I was particularly drawn to the drinking wells in the villages. Women and children were smiling, laughing, and relaxing. Witnessing 50 or so women and their children standing at a well, waiting for clean water, still seems surreal.

I left with a pondering spirit. My initial vision would be to zone public spaces through out neighborhoods and incorporate drinking wells, rainwater capturing systems and small water fixtures for children to play.

The knowledge I have acquired perusing my masters, helps me make my aspirations come true. My time aboard was life altering and I encourage everyone to take advantage of studying abroad.



Master's student Heather Wilcox poses with a crocodile in Ghana.



Planning Internship Proves Educational

By Heather Civil-Ayers

For about eight weeks, I had the pleasure of interning with the City of Jackson Department of Human and Cultural Services Senior Services division. During that time, I was tasked with assisting the department in finding creative ways to improve attendance at several senior citizens' centers. It was decided to start with one center and go from there.

The plan I developed with the help of staff includes a survey to be administered to seniors living within five miles of the Bob Sikes Senior Citizens' Center. After drafting the survey, I created fliers to also be distributed in that area. The idea being that the city needs to get a clear idea of what seniors want and whether the center is known about before the city can truly make improvements.

It was an interesting process to draft the survey and fliers and have the chance to gain valuable knowledge from the staff and the senior citizens during my time on this project.



Fritscher Interns with USDA-NRCS

Masters student Justin Fritscher interned this spring with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. He worked on the agency's public affairs team, drawing up communication plans and creating community gardens through the People's Garden Initiative. The internship was extended to a full-time job.



Our Student Conference

(Right) Dr. Otha Burton, masters student Catherine Lee, Robert Lunardini and his daughter enjoy a reception at Koinonia Coffee House, part of the Student Planning Conference. (Below) PhD students Joan Blanton and Corinne Kinebrew take a break from the conference.



(Right) Masters student Dwayne Baker and Florida State University masters student Chris Currington were among the attendees of the Student Planning Conference. (Below) Garrad Lee and masters student Adam Carson pose for a quick shot at the conference reception.



(Above) Dr. Joan Wesley speaks with University of New Orleans' Natalie Craddieth at the Student Planning Conference. (Left) Dr. Mohammad Shahbazi, chair of the Department of Behavioral and Environmental Health, and Dr. Otha Burton review the poster competition at the conference.

Our Students

Upkins Works to Restore West Jackson

By Curnis Upkins

When an area experiences a period of decline, the symptoms are evident. Businesses close or relocate, residents vacate their homes, and the transition begins as people search for greener pastures. In Jackson, these greener pastures are undeniably conceived as the suburban counties of Madison and Rankin. Nevertheless, West Jackson may one day be the land of opportunity.

While the initial remedy that many prescribe in curing a community's ailments is economic development, a small public-private team of organizations is seeking the first dose of cure in the form of home ownership. This team refers to its effort as WESToration.

The premise behind WESToration is simple. Just as suburban development was prefaced by new homes and accented with new businesses, redevelopment in the inner city can occur in the same manner. The attraction of new homeowners to the mix of existing residents in an area can eventually create the market needed to convince entrepreneurs to open up shop. The ultimate goal is to revive the neighborhoods in West Jackson through direct market forces as opposed to the more traditional reliance on grants.

At the core of WESToration is the Federal Housing Administration's 203(k) Program. Since 1978, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has offered the FHA 203(k) as a tool to assist home owners and home buyers in the purchasing or refinancing of a home for renovations. Nevertheless, with the housing boom this country experienced a couple of decades ago, the program was vastly underutilized--until now.

The FHA 203(k) offers a strong benefit to home buyers since it allows them to purchase and renovate a house with a single mortgage. That means that if someone buys a foreclosed or outdated property, they aren't stuck with the house in its as-is condition. Utilizing the pro-



gram will allow them to make the home as good as new without a buyer having to raid his or her savings or to seek a supplementary loan for improvements.

Existing homeowners can make improvements to their homes by refinancing through the 203(k) program or taking advantage of an Energy Efficiency Mortgage. This mortgage allows homeowners to make upgrades that will help to reduce their monthly energy bill. These upgrades may include installing tankless water heaters, insulating walls and attics, and replacing exterior doors among other things.

Those interested in WESToration must first get pre-approved for a mortgage and must agree to live in the home that they are purchasing (this program is

not for investors). First-time homeowners who choose to live in Jackson and meet predefined income qualifiers can elect to combine this program with grants that are offered by the City of Jackson to such buyers.

Greener pastures are ahead, and with potentially lower energy bills, down payment amounts, and a decreased commute time, locating in West Jackson may help homeowners save some green as well.

Note: WESToration is a joint effort by Cornerstone Home Lending, JSU's Center for University-Based Development, Atmos Energy, LeahCim Real Estate, and Wright Concepts. Visit <http://westjxn.com/WESToration> for more details.



Dr. Santos' urban design class worked with the Center for Community-Based Development to create a sign for the University Park Neighborhood. Curnis Upkins designed this sign as part of his class project.

Our Students

Baker Learns about Planning through Tutoring Students

By Dwayne Baker

During the Spring 2011 semester, I undertook an internship at Jackson State University's Richard Wright Center for the Written Word as a writing tutor.

The purpose of working as an intern here was three-fold: to learn about strategic planning, grant-writing/fundraising, and to work one-on-one with students in an academic setting.

My internship was overall beneficial. Strategic planning and grant-writing skills are needed to work within the community development field. Similarly, working as a writing tutor also enabled me to work one-on-one with students aiding in their academic development, as my career goals involve working in academia. Overall, the internship allowed me to fulfill personal career goals, as well as internship course goals.

Svenkeson Receives Scholarship

Masters student D'Angelos Svenkeson received a scholarship from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) because of his academic achievement, community service and desire to impact the lives of others. Svenkeson was selected as the TMCF Costco recipient.



Students Travel to Ocean Springs for APA-Mississippi



(Left) Catherine Lee placed first in the student poster contest at the two-day conference on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. (Below left) Students stop for a quick pose before heading to the conference.

(Right) Jennifer Johnson, Kimberly Grayson, Andrea Semms, Shannon Edgerson, Jasmine Williams and Shauncey Battle were among the students who traveled to Ocean Springs for the APA-MS conference.



PhD Student Researches in N.C.

Bennetta Robinson completes summer research at UNC-Chapel Hill. A native of Port Gibson, the town revered "too beautiful to burn" by Ulysses S. Grant, it seems only logical that Bennetta developed a desire to protect, preserve, and promote community assets. With the use of geospatial sciences, such as GIS and remote sensing, her primary goal is to paint a clear picture of varying atmospheric conditions in order to translate environmental interests into environmental policy.

The DHS Center of Excellence DIEM summer research project has



provided Bennetta the opportunity to assess how many areas, particularly coastal counties, are preparing for natural hazards and disaster occurrences. These events wreak havoc on the natural and built landscape, and the brunt of the destruction is usually more disruptive to marginalized populations who lack the access to the resources most needed during hazard occurrences. Under these circumstances, the ability to prepare, respond, and recover is lessened in vulnerable populations.

The DIEM summer project has allowed her to analyze, in great depth, underlying relationships between the quality of hazard mitigation plans and their strength in planning for, or acknowledging, those populations deemed socially vulnerable.

Our Students

Urban Studies Student Spends Summer Studying Civil Rights

Urban studies student Loretta Johnson was selected to partner with Brandeis University to study under Dr. David Cunningham, a civil rights historian. JSU's Margaret Walker Center gave stipends to several JSU students to make the trip. Johnson was able to collaborate in a research program that focused on oral history and archival work associated with the civil rights

movement and its legacy.

The students studied with the Brandeis students in Jackson, Natchez and Philadelphia. Johnson and the other JSU students served as "hosts" for the Brandeis students' studies in Mississippi.

Dr. Cunningham views this trip as the beginning of a partnership between the two universities.

New Urban Studies Officers for 2011-2012

Four bachelors students served as officers in the urban studies club. Urban studies officers include Derek McCain, president; Tiffany Bush, vice president; Kendria Gray, secretary; and Varnecia Price, treasurer .

College of Public Service Awards Ceremony



Students and faculty were honored for their academic achievements at the College of Public Service Award Ceremony. (Back Row) Dwayne Baker, Curnis Upkins, Derick McCain, Ferlon Van Buren, Joan Blanton, D'Angelos Svekenson, Lisa Johnson. (Front Row) Dr. Edmund Merem, Dr. Joan Wesley, Dr. Curtina Moreland-Young, Randall Grove, Daphine Foster, Catherine Lee, Eunice Akoto, Melverta Bender-Brown, Dr. Otha Burton, Jr. and Dr. Mario

Williams & Blanton to Attend ACSP Conference

Two PhD students plan to attend the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning Conference (ACSP), which is being held Oct. 13-16. Jasmine Williams received a scholarship to attend the conference in Salt Lake City. Joan Blanton is presenting at the conference.

Another team including DURP faculty will present at the ACSP Conference. The collaborative team: Dr. Joan M. Wesley, Assistant Professor is Presenter/Lead Collaborator; Dr. Edmund Merem, Associate Professor; Henry D. Fuller, Associate Planner, City of Jackson; and Jasmine Williams, doctoral student.

Foster Receives Grant for NY Conference

PhD student Daphine Foster received a diversity scholarship for the Historic Preservation Conference that will be held this October in Buffalo, N.Y. . Foster received the scholarship from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This year's conference revolves around the theme of Alternating Currents.

The National Preservation Conference aims to keep attendees on the cutting edge of preservation. Buffalo was selected because the city serves as a exemplary laboratory for historic preservation. For more information on the conference or the National Trust for Historic Preservation, visit www.preservation.org.

Four Master's Students Graduate

Four students from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning graduated this school year. They are Shauncey Battle, Narvell Wright, Andrea Simms and Dwayne Baker.

Our Faculty

Welcome Dr. Rosalind Greenstein!

Joining the Department of Urban and Regional Planning this year is Dr. Rosalind Greenstein, a well respected planning practitioner. Dr. Greenstein has worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as served as a senior fellow and chair of the Department of Economic & Community Development at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Greenstein received her PhD in city and regional planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her bachelors in economics from the University of California at Santa Cruz.



Dr. Kumar Studies Perception of Mass Transit in Metro Area

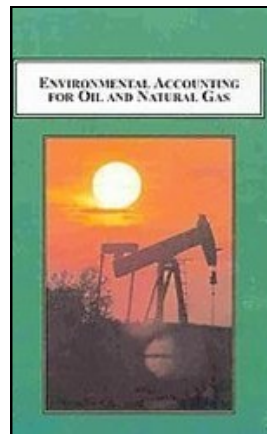
Dr. Mukesh Kumar is researching the perception of public transit in the Jackson metro area. The title of the study was “Overcoming Barriers to Public Transportation in Mississippi-A Pilot Study for Jackson Metropolitan Statistical Area.”

The sponsor of this study was the Institute for Multimodal Transportation. The purpose of the study was to identify the extent and nature of demand for public transportation and the related barriers to transit system use in the Jackson Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).



Dr. Merem Publishes 2nd Book

Dr. Edmund Merem published a new book, called “Environmental Accounting for Oil and Natural Gas: A North American Case Study.” This is the second book Dr. Merem has published. In the book, Merem analyzes the oil and gas depletion and environmental damage costs of the Southeastern U.S. and Canada. Dr. Merem was also selected by the College of Public Service as the Researcher of the Year.



Dr. Santos Publishes Book on Curitiba

Dr. Evandro Santos published a book called “Curitiba, Brazil,” named for the city that has been an innovator in urban and transportation planning. The book was reviewed by masters student Dwayne Baker and edited by the Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. in Saarbrücken, Germany.

Dr. Wesley to Present at Conference

Dr. Joan Wesley was awarded a travel scholarship to attend the Environmental Justice Conference in Detroit, which is being held Aug. 22-26. I will present research, participate in a training session, and attend the general conference. The Conference is co-sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Dr. Burton Named to Planning Board

Dr. Otha Burton, Jr., associate dean of the School of Policy Planning and chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning was appointed this year to serve on the Planning Accreditation Board’s Site Visit Pool. Dr. Burton will serve as an educator member on the board that accredits and reaccredits planning programs.

Our Alumni

City of Jackson Experiences New Generation of Urban Planners

By Ashlee Theodore

The City of Jackson's Planning and Development Department is experiencing a movement of young and motivated planners ready to build a sustainable Capital city. The diversified (Asia, Chicago, Texas, Ohio and Louisiana) group of planners, from ages 25 to 39 are visible in areas such as Zoning, Historic Preservation, Grants, Community Development, Brownfields and Policy. With various academic backgrounds, we are working together with the more seasoned planners to improve land use, promote public participation and social interaction, and encourage economic and infill development.

In June, we assisted the Administration with the submittal of EPA's "Greening America's Capitals" project. Our targeted area was downtown Jackson and the proposed project was to create a "Green Government Center". In our Green Government Center, we are requesting technical assistance in developing guidelines and design strategies for Stormwater Management, Solar Technologies, Urban Forestry and recycling through Smart Growth Principles and Green Infrastructure. Overall, the goal of this project is to develop and



Kelly



Theodore

enhance civic pride that is green-centered in the Capital City. In July, EPA informed us that we were one of five cities chosen for Greening America's Capitals projects in the coming year.

Currently, there are 8 planners under 40 with 6 planners having a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning (4 of those planners are graduates of Jackson State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning). Two of our Associate Planners are in their last semester in the graduate planning program. One planner is AICP certified.

Planners with a JSU background include Henry Fuller, Bennie Hopkins, Jennifer Johnson, Akili Kelly, Ashlee Theodore, Joseph Warnsley and Kendra Wright.

Alumna Serves as Project Manager



Makida Zackery

Former MA student Makida Zackery serves as the project manager for the City of New Orleans' Disaster-CDBG Program Management Unit. Zackery is responsible for managing programs and projects that receive Disaster-CDBG funding. She offers advice to students, telling them to polish their writing skills and broaden their knowledge on public programs. Math skills are a definite asset as well.

Breeland Helps Communities with Emergency Plans

MA alumnist Larry Breeland II serves as a hazard mitigation community planner for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Breeland is responsible for reviewing local, tribal and state standard hazard mitigation plans for the state of Mississippi. Breeland provides technical assistance to groups developing and implementing plans. He

recommends for graduating students to begin scouting for job opportunities 6-8 months before graduation. Learning ArcGIS is a plus for many jobs as well as staying current on planning trends and issues. Good sites to visit include www.usajobs.com, www.planning.org and www.planetizen.com.

Alumnus Chosen for Development Team

Master's graduate Aubrey Thagard serves as the assistant deputy chief administrative officer for economic development and public infrastructure in Prince George County. Thagard joined the Office of Planning in 2002 as a neighborhood planning coordinator. Recently, Thagard was tapped to work for the county's economic development team. The county recently announced a \$50 million economic development incentive.

Our Department

More Alumni Advice

Sudha Yerramilli

Sudha Yerramilli works as a GIS specialist for the National Center for Biodefense Communications at Jackson State University. Yerramilli was a PhD graduate of the department. Yerramilli advises students to be organized and have a course plan and stick to it.



Pamela Daniel

Pamela Daniel, former MA student, was recently hired to the planning department in Tupelo. She started working this summer as an assistant planner.

Alfred Martin

PhD graduate Alfred L. Martin, Jr. is the president/CEO of Environmental Management Plus, Inc., a Mississippi-based environmental consulting, contracting and urban and regional planning firm. Martin recommends students to start developing a planning “niche” while matriculating through the program. “Bring something to the table more than just a piece of paper,” Martin says.

Whitney Kelly

Masters graduate Whitney Kelly, AICP, is the City Planner for the City of Creve Coeur, MO, and is a member of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners. Before joining Creve Coeur, Whitney was an associate with Eldred & Associates in the Seattle area of Washington. Project Manager with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, in Lake Tahoe CA/NV, a contractor with FEMA following Hurricane Katrina providing long-term community recovery planning along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Project Manager for the Atlanta’s Downtown Improvement District, and a planner for the City of Champaign, IL.

Students Conduct Asset Mapping in Jackson Neighborhood

By Heather Wilcox

The Virden Addition encompasses the area bounded by Northside Drive, West Street, Woodrow Wilson, and Livingston Road. Currently, the largest asset to the community is the Jackson Medical Mall. It provides medical services to the area, while also attracting economic development such as the newly constructed grocery store, Save-A-Lot.

The neighborhood continues to face many obstacles in terms of land resources. The relocation in the 1930’s continues to have an impact on the community. During the restructuring process, zoning allowed residential units to be in close proximity to industrial sites. Currently, all the industrial sites have been abandoned, leaving the neighborhood with many brown fields.

The area in which the residents relocated is also a floodplain. The map details the boundaries of the community and the floodplain areas. FEMA has listed many areas in the neighborhood as moderate to high risk areas for flooding. This is attributed to the watersheds coming from Lake Hico.

Asset mapping is a good way to locate the gifts in a community. Virden Addition is one of the many historical neighborhoods in Jackson, MS. The relocation process of the 1930’s was a strategic plan to displace African Americans residents. This relocation continues to have influence on the residents today.

Students in the class, taught by Dr. Angela Gobar, include Cassio Batteast, Shannon Edgeron, Francine Sutton and Heather Wilcox.

College of Public Service Awards Ceremony



College of Public Service Dean Mario Azevedo presents the Researcher of the Year Award to Dr. Edmund Merem (left) and Instructor of the Year to Dr. Joan Wesley (right).



Our Department

New Students of 2011



(Above) DURP welcomed new PhD and masters students in fall 2011. Pictured are (back row) Lloyd Sturgis, Stacey Roberts, Chandra Richardson, Samu Lwehabura, Alexander Brooks, Willie Davidson, Ernest Jackson, Marshand Crisler, Adrian Brown, (front row) Candace Davis, Tara Dunn, Heather Civil-Ayers, Vernea Blackmon, Ariel Jackson, LaFunya Robinson and Sholanda Carlisle.

Know Your Front Office Staff

Ms. Lisa Johnson, Student Development Coordinator

Hometown: Vicksburg, MS

About: She has been working with DURP/JSU for four years. Presently, she going to graduate school at The University of Southern Mississippi for Higher Education Administration and is working on her EdD. She has also worked in public education, corporate America and the federal government. In her spare time she is often busy with the many community service organizations and clubs where she holds membership. She also likes to travel and watch football. She wants the students to know that your preparation for the future should never be taken lightly. The competition is tough so, be ready for the challenge to obtain knowledge and understanding always.

Mrs. Christine Nielsen, Office Manager

Hometown: Detroit, MI

About: She has four children (all boys) and five grandchildren. She has a total of six years working at DURP/JSU. She has worked in the Mayor's Office and was the city's archives manager. Her hobbies include snow skiing, cooking and hiking. She wants the students to know that your time in the program goes by quickly. As soon as we're saying hello, it is time to say goodbye. Students make this department come alive with their energy and thoughtfulness.

Ms. Varnecia Price, Administrative Assistant

Hometown: Jackson, MS

About: Presently, she is enrolled as a junior at Jackson State University pursuing a bachelor's degree in Accounting. She has four children, three girls and one boy. Her future plans are to become a Certified Public Accountant. She has been working at JSU for six years. Most of that time was working at the main campus library. Her hobbies include: coordinating events, traveling, bowling. She describes her personality as relaxed.



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Department of Urban and Regional Planning FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Otha Burton

Associate Dean, School of Policy and
Planning

Chair, Department of Urban and Regional
Planning

Faculty:

Dr. Edmund Merem, Associate Professor, PhD
Coordinator

Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Associate Professor,
Master's Coordinator

Dr. Joan Wesley, Assistant Professor

Dr. Evandro Santos, Assistant Professor

Dr. Rosalind Greenstein, Assistant Professor

Dr. Moe Chowdhury, Visiting Assistant
Professor

Dr. Yaw Twumasi, Visiting Assistant Professor

Attorney Terry Wallace, Visiting Assistant
Professor

Dr. Jim Borsig, Visiting Assistant Professor

Staff:

Lisa Johnson, Student Development
Coordinator

Christine Nielsen, Office Manager
Varnecia Price, Administrative Assistant

Newsletter Designed by Lisa Johnson and Justin
Fritscher

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to
this newsletter!