

Proposal for conversion of the MS in Urban and Regional Policy (MURP) to an MS in Urban Planning and Policy (MUPP) – Effective Spring 2019

School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

School of Architecture, College of Arts, Media, and Design

Master of Urban and Regional Policy Program

Gavin Shatkin, Director, Master of Urban and Regional Policy Program

Formal School of Architecture Vote: 10 Yes, 0 No, 0 abstentions

Date of Formal School of Architecture Vote: February 7, 2018

Formal CAMD Academic Affairs Committee Vote: 6 Yes, 0 No, 0 abstentions

Date of Formal CAMD Academic Affairs Committee Vote: February 7, 2018

Formal School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs Vote: 16 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain

Date of Formal School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs Vote: February 12, 2018

Formal CSSH Graduate Academic Affairs Committee Vote: 4 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain

Date of Formal CSSH Graduate Academic Affairs Committee Vote: February 15, 2018

Program Description

The School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs (SPPUA) proposes to change its existing MS in Urban and Regional Policy (MURP) into an MS in Urban Planning and Policy (MUPP), and to undertake modest changes to the curriculum of the program. Under this proposal, the MUPP program would be a joint degree with the School of Architecture within the College of Arts, Media and Design (CAMD). The College of Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH) will be the home College of the program, meaning that CSSH will be the College of application and will take primary responsibility for the governance and oversight of the program. The Director of the MUPP program will be appointed by the Director of the SPPUA. SPPUA and the SoA will undertake co-marketing and shared investment in the program proportional to the credits hours generated by the program for each college. This change will be effective beginning in the Spring semester of 2019.

The proposed curriculum changes have the following objectives:

- Strengthen the curriculum in the areas of urban planning history and theory, and planning law, in order to align the curriculum with graduate programs in urban planning
- Integrate design, physical planning, and data visualization content both in the core curriculum and in the focus areas
- Create substantive focus areas, building on areas of strength that are distinct to Northeastern University

Besides, the name change, key modifications to the existing MURP curriculum include:

- Creation of a new ARCH listed course that focuses on the role of planners in shaping the built environment of cities
- Addition of a required law class
- Creation of four focus areas

- Expansion of capstone options to include design and spatial planning studios in the School of Architecture

Rationale for the program change

Since admitting its first class in the Fall of 2009, the MS in Urban and Regional Policy (MURP) Program at the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs (SPPUA) has matriculated more than 140 students, and has had a strong record of placing graduates in positions within municipal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector developers and consultants.

However, with the addition in the past three years of a new Master of Urban Informatics and a Master of Public Policy programs in SPPUA, prospective applicants have had increasing difficulty distinguishing the distinct strengths of MURP from these other programs. At the same time, the expansion of SPPUA faculty, and the possibility of partnering with the College of Arts, Media and Design to draw on its substantial strengths in urban design, physical planning, real estate, and data analytics and visualization, have created an opportunity to convert MURP into an MS program in Urban Planning and Policy. The name change will not only signal curricular changes to prospective students, but will also open the possibility for the program to seek accreditation through the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). The PAB requires programs that seek accreditation to contain the word planning in their title. Changing MURP to a planning and policy program will make the program more visible and appealing to a substantial pool of students seeking a planning degree.

The formation of the Masters of Urban Planning and Policy also creates significant opportunities to better align emergent areas of faculty expertise in both CSSH and CAMD with the focus areas that students can pursue. The revised program will include four focus areas: Urban Design and Physical Planning; Urban Analytics; Urban Sustainability and Resilience; and Housing, Community and Economic Development. The distinct opportunities presented by each of these focus areas will help to differentiate the MUPP degree from other urban planning degrees, and will allow students to tap into rich areas of research, instruction and practice at Northeastern University. The recent development of curriculum at SPPUA and CAMD on urban informatics and data visualization have propelled Northeastern to the forefront of this growing area of student interest. SPPUA and CAMD also host an unusually strong and interdisciplinary mix of faculty with expertise in urban coastal sustainability, and urban climate change mitigation and adaptation. The proposed partnership with the School of Architecture around the focus area in Urban Design and Physical Planning provides an opportunity to combine a planning education with focused instruction on design, data visualization, real estate, physical planning, and urban redevelopment. SPPUA's substantial engagement in applied research in housing, community development, economic development, and transportation provides students with access to excellent study, research, and internship opportunities in these areas as well. Each of these focus areas is likely to be a significant magnet for prospective students.

Program clientele analysis

The MURP program has existed for more than a decade, and currently there are 19 students enrolled in the degree. Discussions with numerous current and prospective students, and

experience in student recruitment, indicates that Master programs in urban planning are the most significant competitors to the MURP degree. Prospective students have frequently asked why ours is an urban policy program, and how it differs from an urban planning program. Our transition to an urban planning and policy program is likely to continue to attract applications from the existing applicant pool for MURP, while also drawing new applications from students who are interested primarily in planning programs. The PAB currently accredits 70 planning programs, which enrolled an average of 4859 students annually between 2011 and 2015.

The MURP program already experiences some competition from SPPUA's existing Master of Public Policy and Master of Urban Informatics programs. The change to MUPP is likely to help differentiate the program for prospective students. The program is also unlikely to have a major impact on other existing programs.

Educational objectives

Educational objectives: The primary educational objective of the MS in Urban Planning and Policy program is to train students to work as urban planners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The curriculum will provide a solid foundation in planning and policy, while allowing students to develop substantial expertise in a specific field, including urban design and physical planning, urban informatics, urban sustainability and resilience, and housing, community, and economic development.

Admissions criteria and process: The admissions criteria and process will remain largely the same as for the existing MS in Urban and Regional Policy. Admissions decisions will be made by an MS in Urban Planning and Policy Admissions Committee, staffed by faculty from both SPPUA and the School of Architecture. Students will be required to submit a GRE score, although this requirement can be waived if applicants demonstrate substantial professional experience.

Degree requirements: Degree requirements will remain the same as with the existing MURP degree. The degree requires 48 credit hours of coursework. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 to remain in good standing. In addition, students must complete an experiential requirement for the degree, which can be achieved through one of three ways: completion of an internship of at least 270 hours; participation in CSSH's or CAMD's graduate co-op program; or achievement of substantial professional planning and policy experience before the completion of the program.

Learning outcomes: The learning outcomes are as follows:

- Explain the major socioeconomic and spatial forces that shape issues in contemporary cities, including issues related to the environment, housing, poverty, race and ethnicity, economic development, regionalism, and growth management.
- Explain and critique major theories of the politics and practice of urban planning and policy.
- Identify major historical urban policy shifts, and contemporary trends and debates in urban planning and policy in the United States.

- Explain changes to cities in the United States and other parts of the world within a context of increasing global economic and social interconnections.
- Explain the ideas of microeconomic theory with a focus on their application to urban planning and policy issues.
- Explain roles played by actors in the public, private and nonprofit sectors in addressing the challenges facing urban areas.
- Explain how different planning and policy strategies evolve in the interplay between branches and levels of government.
- Interpret and critique social science research that applies statistical techniques.
- Conduct a research project by collecting and analyzing socio-economic and other data to answer an urban planning and policy research question.
- Utilize skills of teamwork and project management necessary to work effectively in professional settings.
- Give public presentations that effectively communicate information to a range of audiences and stakeholders, including community residents, public officials, and others.
- Write clear, evidence-based analyses of planning and policy issues for professional audiences and the broader public.
- Explain contemporary issues related to race, gender, and class, in the practice of urban planning and policy.
- Demonstrate advanced knowledge in a focus area within urban policy planning via report, presentation, proposal or exhibition as appropriate to the subject matter.

Curriculum requirements

The revision of the existing MURP program involves the following curricular changes:

- *Addition of a new course, ARCH 5XXX: Planning and the Built Environment:* This course will be co-taught by a faculty member in the School of Architecture and either a faculty member from the SPPUA or a local urban planning professional. This course will explore the role of planners in shaping the urban built environment, focusing on the role of planning in integrating design, physical planning, community engagement, policy, and regulation to produce desired outcomes.
- *Addition of LPSC 5201: Law and the City as a required course:* Planning law is one substantive curriculum element that is usually included in planning curricula, and that is required for accreditation, that is not currently part of the core of the MURP degree. LPSC 5201 is an existing course that had previously served as an elective.

- *Elimination of PPUA 6204: Urban Development and Politics from the core:* This course will remain as an elective for the MUPP program.
- *Addition of learning objectives to existing core classes:* Most of the curricular elements that are found in planning programs, and specifically the PAB accreditation requirements, are largely met in the current MURP curriculum. However, some need to be accentuated and institutionalized through the addition of learning objectives to existing core classes. Specifically, we will institute learning objectives on the purpose and meaning of planning, and planning history and theory to PPUA 6201: The 21st Century City, which is already a core class in the MURP degree.
- *Creation of new focus areas.* These are Urban Design and Physical Planning, Urban Informatics, Urban Sustainability and Resilience, and Housing, Community, and Economic Development. Each is a three-course focus area. Students may either choose from one of these focus areas, or define their own focus area in consultation with the program director.

The revised MUPP program will consist of 12 courses totaling 48 SH. These will include:

- Six core courses
- Three courses in an focus area
- Two free electives
- One capstone course

All courses listed below are 4 SH unless otherwise specified.

I. Core classes

- PPUA 6201: The 21st Century City
- ARCH 5XXX: Planning and the Built Environment
- PPUA 6502: Economic Institutions and Analysis
- Statistics requirement: LPSC 7305: Research and Statistical Methods, or POLS 7202: Quantitative Techniques, or INSH 6500: Quantitative Analysis, or PPUA 5301: Introduction to Computational Statistics. Students will normally take LPSC 7305, but students in the focus area in Urban Analytics are encouraged to take PPUA 5301
- PPUA 6205: Research Design and Methodology
- LPSC 5201: Law and the City

II. Focus area requirements

Focus areas consist of sequences of three classes. Model curricula for these are detailed below, although the final content of the focus area is to be determined in consultation between students, their academic advisor, and the program director.

Urban Design and Physical Planning focus area

1. Gateway class: ARCH 5XXX: Principles of Urban Design: This is a new class that will be developed to provide students who have no design background in the fundamentals of urban design theory, practice, and representation.

2. Students with background in architecture or urban design may choose three CAMD electives in consultation with a faculty advisor. Students who have no background in architecture or urban design will take Principles of Urban Design and choose one of the following sub-tracks, consisting of two classes:
 - Sub-track in *Urban Design and Real Estate*: Students who adopt this core sequence will be able to implement principles of urban placemaking through the application of ideas in urban design and real estate development in the planning and policy making process.
 - ARCH 5310-02: Design Tactics and Operations: Urban Design and Real Estate
 - ARCH 5330: Case Studies in Urban Development
 - Sub-track in *Physical Planning and Design for Sustainable Urbanism*: Students in this core sequence will be able to realize ecologically sustainable urban development through the application of principles of environmental and urban design in the planning and policy process.
 - SUEN 7230: Urban Ecologies and Technologies I
 - SUEN 7240: Urban Ecologies and Technologies II
 - Sub-track in *Urban Experience*: Students in this core sequence will learn methods for analyzing and visualizing the city as a data environment, and designing for human interaction within urban systems.
 - ARTGXXXX – 5000, 6000 or 7000-level Information Design and Visualization course to be designated by Art and Design
 - ARTGXXXX – 5000, 6000 or 7000-level Experience Design course to be designated by Art and Design

Urban Analytics focus area

1. Gateway class: PPUA 5262: Big Data for Cities
2. Take the following two courses:
 - PPUA 5263: Geographic Information Systems for Urban and Regional Policy
 - ARTG 5XXX: Info Visualization Principles and Practices: This course is already being reviewed as an addition to the curriculum in information design and urban analytics.
3. In addition to the above requirements, students in the Urban Analytics focus area are required to take one class that provides an introduction to the programming language R. If they take PPUA 5301 to fulfill the statistics requirement of the MUPP core, this will fulfill this requirement and allow them to complete the concentration with three classes. If they do not, they may take either PPUA 5301 or ARTG 6100 01: Information Design Studio to fulfill this requirement

Urban Sustainability and Resilience focus area

1. Gateway course: SUEN 6310: Cities, Nature & Design in Contemporary History and Theory or LPSC 7312: Cities, Sustainability, and Climate Change
2. Take at least one of the following methods classes:
 - PPUA 5261: Dynamic Modeling for Environmental Decisions
 - PPUA 5263: Geographic Information Systems for Urban and Regional Policy
 - SUEN 7230: Urban Ecologies and Technologies I
3. Take at least one of the following Urban Sustainability and Resilience electives:
 - POLS 7331: Environmental Policy and Politics
 - PPUA 5260 Ecological Economics
 - PPUA 5261: Dynamic Modeling for Environmental Decisions
 - PPUA 7231: Transportation Policy
 - PPUA 7234: Land Use & Urban Growth Policy
 - PPUA 7238: Climate Change and Urbanization in Developing Countries
 - PPUA 7249: Urban Coastal Sustainability in a Rapidly Changing Environment
 - SUEN 6110: Graduate Studio I: Sustainable Urban Sites
 - SUEN 6120: Graduate Studio II: Sustainable Urban Systems
 - SUEN 6210: Implementation and Visualization for Urban Environments I
 - SUEN 6220: Implementation and Visualization for Urban Environments II
 - SUEN 6310: Cities, Nature & Design in Contemporary History and Theory
 - SUEN 6340: Topics in Urban Environmental Design
 - SUEN 7230 Urban Ecologies and Technologies I
 - SUEN 7240: Urban to Ecologies and Technologies II
 - SUEN 7320: Pro Seminar: Issues in Designed Urban Environments

Urban Development Policy and Planning focus area

- Gateway course: PPUA 7230: Housing Policy or PPUA 7233: Contemporary Community Development: or PPUA 7231: Transportation Policy or PPUA 6204: Urban Development and Politics.
1. Take at least one of the following methods classes:
 - PPUA 5263: Geographic Information Systems for Urban and Regional Policy
 - PPUA 7236: Introduction to Real Estate Development for Urban Policymakers
 2. Take at least one of the following Urban Development Policy and Planning elective classes:
 - PPUA 5270: Food Systems and Public Policy

- PPUA 5263: Geographic Information Systems for Urban and Regional Policy
- PPUA 6506: Techniques of Policy Analysis
- PPUA 6533: State and Local Public Finance
- PPUA 6551: Nonprofit Organizations and Social Change
- PPUA 7230: Housing Policy
- PPUA 7231: Transportation Policy
- PPUA 7232: Immigration and Urban America
- PPUA 7233: Contemporary Community Development
- PPUA 7234: Land Use & Urban Growth Policy
- PPUA 7236: Introduction to Real Estate Development for Urban Policymakers
- SUEN 6110: Graduate Studio I: Sustainable Urban Sites
- SUEN 6120: Graduate Studio II: Sustainable Urban Systems
- SUEN 6340: Topics in Urban Environmental Design
- SOCL 7250: Seminar in Urban Social Policies
- SOCL 7251: Community Analysis
- SOCL 7264: Urban Poverty and Social Policy

III. Free electives

Students can choose two free electives from the following list:

- ARCH 5310-02: Design Tactics and Operations: Urban Design and Real Estate
- ARCH 5330: Case Studies in Urban Development
- ARCH 5530: Innovative Models in Real Estate
- ARCH 6340: Graduate Topics in Architecture: Real Estate Development
- ARCH 6100: Graduate Skills Studio
- ARCH 6330: Seminar in Modern Architecture
- ARTG 5100: Information Design Studio 1: Principles
- ARTG 5120: Information Design Research Methods
- ARTG 5130: Visual Communication for Information Design
- ARTG 5330: Visualization Technologies
- ARTG 6330: Information Design Mapping Strategies
- DA 5020: Collecting, Storing, and Retrieving Data
- DA 5030: Introduction to Data Mining/Machine Learning
- DSSH 6302: Informational Design and Visual Analytics
- PPUA 6506: Techniques of Policy Analysis
- PPUA 6551: Nonprofit Organizations and Social Change
- PPUA 6533: State and Local Public Finance
- PPUA 7245: Education Policy in the United States
- POLS 7330: Education Policy in the United States
- POLS 7331: Environmental Policy and Politics
- PPUA 5260 Ecological Economics
- PPUA 5261: Dynamic Modeling for Environmental Decisions
- PPUA 5263: Geographic Information Systems for Urban Regional

- PPUA 5270: Food Systems and Public Policy
- PPUA 5302 - Information Design and Visual Analytics
- PPUA 7230: Housing Policy
- PPUA 7231: Transportation Policy
- PPUA 7232: Immigration and Urban America
- PPUA 7233: Contemporary Community Development
- PPUA 7234: Land Use & Urban Growth Policy
- PPUA 7236: Real Estate Development for Urban Policymakers
- PPUA 7237: Advanced Spatial Analysis of Urban Systems
- PPUA 7238: Climate Change and Urbanization in Developing Countries
- PPUA 7249: Urban Coastal Sustainability in a Rapidly Changing Environment
- SOCL 7250: Seminar in Urban Social Policies
- SOCL 7251: Community Analysis
- SOCL 7264: Urban Poverty and Social Policy
- SUEN 6110: Graduate Studio I: Sustainable Urban Sites
- SUEN 6120: Graduate Studio II: Sustainable Urban Systems
- SUEN 6210: Implementation and Visualization for Urban Environments I
- SUEN 6220: Implementation and Visualization for Urban Environments II
- SUEN 6310: Cities, Nature & Design in Contemporary History and Theory
- SUEN 6340: Topics in Urban Environmental Design
- SUEN 7230: Urban Ecologies and Technologies I (4 credits)
- SUEN 7240: Urban Ecologies and Technologies II (4 credits)
- SUEN 7320 Pro-Seminar: Issues in Designed Urban Environments

IV. Capstone

Students in the Urban Design and Physical Planning focus area will take the following capstone course:

SUEN 6120L Graduate Studio 2: Sustainable Urban Sites (6 SH)

Students in other focus areas will take the following capstone course:

PPUA 7673: Capstone in Public Policy and Urban Affairs (4 SH)

Non-Urban Design and Physical Planning students may take SUEN 6110 as their capstone option if they have taken ARCH 5XXX: Principles of Urban Design as a pre-requisite.

Program assessment

Assessment of student achievement of the learning outcomes will remain the same as under the MURP program. Assessment will be conducted by a Curriculum Committee, composed of the MUPP Program Director (who chairs the committee and comes from SPPUA) and two additional faculty members, including at least one faculty each from CSSH and CAMD. The Curriculum Committee will normally meet twice a year to discuss issues in the curriculum as they arise, to

propose revisions to the curriculum, and to coordinate the collection of assessment data. The Committee will conduct a full curricular review every five years.

Student Capstone evaluation: All capstone projects will be collected annually, and will be assessed annually to gauge student achievement of specific program outcomes. In addition, a sample of other individual capstone assignments (including a research memo) will be collected and analyzed to assess students' individual abilities in the areas of research design and analysis, and professional writing.

Student Internship Evaluation: Internship experiences are evaluated at the end of each cycle through a questionnaire sent to internship hosts as well as through a student paper. The host includes questions regarding the usefulness, professionalism, and skills of the student intern. Questions are sent to hosts at the beginning of the internship experience so they are aware of what to be thinking about in terms of evaluation, and a follow-up reminder is sent at the end of the experience to collect the answers. The student paper is a course requirement that asks students to either write about their internship experience and how it related to course concepts or write a research paper on a topic relevant to their internship.

In year five of the assessment cycle, the Curriculum Committee will meet in the Fall semester to review all assessment data collected during the preceding five years. The review will result in a set of recommendations for revisions in the curriculum.

Program accreditation

The Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) is the body that accredits planning programs. The curricular revisions outlined above were intended in part to align the program with the PAB's accreditation standards. The Program Director has discussed the possibility of seeking accreditation with staff at the PAB, and has attended a training meeting regarding accreditation at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning annual meeting in 2016. If the MUPP program decides to pursue accreditation, it will first have to apply for candidacy, after which it will write a self-study report. The program will then host a site visit team, which will develop a report that the PAB board would use as a basis to make a decision on accreditation. The application for candidacy would likely be submitted in April of 2020, which would put the MUPP program on track to become an accredited program in 2022 if successful. SPPUA will use existing staff and faculty resources throughout this process, so that it will require no additional resources.