

Students contribute to policy discussions in Shanghai

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Student teams in the international planning project course conducted extensive research before travelling to Shanghai and presented the material to their classmates.

Nine School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) students have embarked on an intensive field trip to Shanghai as part of an inaugural international planning project course.

“When I heard about this course, I jumped at the chance,” says Johannes Bendle. “I saw it as a dynamic opportunity to get experience abroad.”

All master of planning students get involved in real-world projects that benefit local urban and rural communities. Professor John Meligrana, whose recent research includes environmental management and urban planning in China, took the initiative to develop an international option that exposes students to land use planning challenges, ideas and visions in Shanghai, a megacity that is experiencing rapid urban growth.

“The field trip will give students a chance to see how their classroom learning about Shanghai compares to the situation on the ground. I hope the experience disorients them, shakes them up and allows a dramatically different policy dialogue to take place,” says Dr. Meligrana.

The students have formed three groups to work on different projects. They include:

- Providing advice to the World Wildlife Fund—China on its involvement in the land use planning issues facing Shanghai;
- Investigating and making suggestions to China’s Ministry of Land and Resources in areas such as agricultural land preservation and land use classifications;
- Exploring and developing recommendations on the relationship between the Canadian Institute of

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Planners and China.

During the two-week trip, the students will attend meetings and visit sites around Shanghai. On the second last day of the field trip, the students must submit their written report and a CD or DVD of their digital images and video clips taken during the field trip.

Dr. Meligrana worked with Zhiyao Zhang, the Queen's-China Liaison Officer, to coordinate the course and field trip. The Queen's professor also collaborated with a professor at Fudan University in Shanghai and the deputy director general of China's Ministry of Land and Resources.

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