



## URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING MAJOR CONCENTRATION

### My Strategy to a Career in Planning?

**P**lanning includes a wide range of career opportunities. No single program prepares you for everything you will ever need to know in a planning career. Even in so seemingly focused a major as this, this is because there are many varieties of planning that focus on different issues and clients. For instance, some issues are important for metropolises. Others are important to smaller cities and towns. Yet others are important to planning at the regional scale where rural-urban issues are important for counties and regions (such as watersheds). This challenge to make communities plan for the future while maintaining steady



Mike Toth, Urban & Regional Planning Senior, will start as a planner in the Troy, Mi, Dept. of Real Estate & Development.

day to day policies is what makes a planning career exciting and dynamic.

You will want to create your own “package” of skills and knowledge that make you into an attractive and competitive planning professional. The package is based on the Urban &

Regional Planning Major Concentration, a related minor, and cognate courses to start you in your career.

After you have entered planning, you will gain more comprehensive knowledge and more polished skills. A Planning Major is the starting point.

The Planning Major is made up of a core of required courses, and choice of elective courses. (See next page.) The electives you select, depending on your interest and depending on the kind of planning you want to pursue.

Your energy, imagination, and drive will define how far you go and in what direction. Good Luck!

#### Planning Careers

- Land Use Planner
- Housing & Community Development
- Historic Preservation
- Tourism Planner
- Transportation Planner
- Environmental Planner
- Rural Planner
- Economic Development
- Site Analysis
- Zoning Administrator

### Starting in Community College?

**I**f you begin at a community college, develop the basic skills you will use in planning. This includes office and computer competence in word processing, spreadsheets, Powerpoint, etc. Take general education

courses needed for graduation. Do not avoid courses that focus on U.S. politics and social issues. A public speaking course is important. Planning is very people-oriented, and good communication skills will be useful. Don't avoid ba-

sic math and critical thinking courses including statistics. You will need these skills sooner than you think. And you might want to take basic business courses like accounting and project management. Website design would help too.

**Who Hires Planners?**

- Local Governments
- State Government
- Consulting Firms
- Non-profit Organizations
- Engineering Firms
- Economic Development Agencies
- Real Estate Development Companies

## University Degree Requirements

**W**estern Michigan University requires all students to have completed 122 semester credit hours to receive a bachelor's degree. This includes any credit hours that have been officially recognized from other colleges or community colleges.

The specific requirements for graduation that will govern you are found in the Western Michigan University Undergraduate Catalog. Since the University changes over time, the version of the Catalog that governs you is

the one that was current when you entered the University.

Your total credit hours will include those of your Planning Major, your related minor, general education, and



Dr. David Lemberg, Urban & Regional Planning Adviser and core faculty member.

elective courses. Please select these in consultation with an adviser or mentor, so that you can make them work together for you effectively.

The Planning Major allows you to arrange a professional internship, to do an independent study project under the guidance of a Planning faculty member, or even study abroad to experience planning issues elsewhere in the world. Please plan far enough ahead of time in to take advantage of these study opportunities.

## Minors for Urban & Regional Planning

**Y**ou should choose a minor as listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. Recommended minors can come from either the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, or Education at Western Michigan University. Business minors require a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Arts & Science Minors include Public Administration, Communications, Journalism, Practical Writing (English), Earth Science, Biology, Economics, Sociology, Environmental Studies, Geoscience, Hydrogeology, History, Political Science, Public His-

tory, Sociology, American Studies, Foreign Languages (Spanish or Asian languages), or Statistics.

Business minors include Marketing, Advertising, Management, Business Communication, Real Estate, and General Business.

## Internship, Study Abroad, or Research Experiences

**W**e recommend that you consider pursuing a professional internship in your planning curriculum. You will gain useful perspectives on the working world before entering it. Many employers use internships as a means of discovering whether a person would make a good employee. A number of our interns have received job offers at the end of their internship, and they learn about day-to-day issues in planning.

We recommend that Planning students consider an optional study abroad experience. This is a good way to learn about the world beyond

the U.S., and it gives insight about planning issues elsewhere.

We also recommend that students consider an optional independent research activity under the supervision of a faculty member. Carrying through an independent research project demonstrates to employers that you can work self-reliantly to generate answers to important questions. These experiences add value to your degree.



Dr. Jordan Yin—core faculty member in Urban & Regional Planning and co-adviser.

**Check It Out:**

- [www.planningmi.org](http://www.planningmi.org)
- [www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com)
- [www.cyburbia.org](http://www.cyburbia.org)
- [www.acsp.org](http://www.acsp.org)

## Urban & Regional Planning

**Y**our complete program of study at Western Michigan University, or at other colleges from which you are transferring credit, constitutes the entire Urban & Regional Planning curriculum. This Curriculum can be supplemented by adding knowledge and skills from other places also. The more accomplished you are, the more likely you will have a satisfying tourism career.

**General Education & Liberal Education Curricular Requirements.** To complete a college degree at Western Michigan University, each student fulfills “General Education” goals. Each student gains understanding of the natural and social sciences; knowledge of the United States and some international issues/regions; computer, mathematics, and critical reasoning proficiencies, etc. Please see the General Education section of the Undergraduate Catalog for a full description. In addition, students in the College of Arts & Sciences take some additional classes as listed in the Liberal Education Curriculum in the Undergraduate Catalog. These together give students a frame of reference on the world that works for them after graduation. (Believe it or not, students who have studied a foreign language frequently report they have been able to use it effectively in their career.)

**Geography Major—Urban & Regional Planning Concentration.** Students prepare for planning careers with private consulting firms and/or city, township, county, or regional governments. This 32 hour major prepares for careers in small-to-medium size planning agencies; these make up the great majority of planning operations in the United States. The major has two parts—a required core of 20 hours, and a choice of courses useful in the planning profession (12 hours). A professional internship (Geog 412 Professional Experience) is strongly recommended.

- *The Core Courses:*

Geography 1050 Physical Geography	4 cr. hrs.
Geography 2050 Human Geography	3 cr. hrs.
Geography 2650 Map, Chart & Air Photo Reading	3 cr. hrs.
Geography 3030 Geographic Inquiry*	4 cr. hrs.
Geography 3560 Introduction to City & Regional Planning	3 cr. hrs.
Geography 5560 Studies in Urban & Regional Planning	3 cr. hrs.

\*Prerequisite: a course in Statistics (Stat 1600, 2160, 2600, or 3660 or equivalent)

- *The Elective Courses:* The remaining 12 hours of the major should be selected from the following: Geog 2440 Economic Geography, Geog 3610 Population Geography, Geog 5010 Introduction to Geographic Information Systems, Geog 3800 United States & Canada, Geog 4120 Professional Experience, Geog 5440 Studies in Economic Geography, Geog 5550 Contemporary Issues in Resource Management, Geog 5570 Environmental Impact Assessment, Geog 5670 Geodata Handling & Mapping, Geog 5690 Intermediate Geographic Information Systems, Geog 5700 Cities & Urban Systems, Geog 5820 Remote Sensing of the Environment, and Geog 5970 Independent Study. At least one GISci course above the 2000 level is recommended.

**The Related Minor.** All Urban & Regional Planning students select a minor to go with their major. These minors are shown on the previous page, and serve as an important complement to the major. Properly selected, the major and the minor strengthen a student for subsequent careers. However, it is not necessary to select a minor that you think will “pay off” later—particularly if you have no personal interest in it. It is often better to select a minor that you have some interest (or “passion” for) because that keeps your motivational level high. We find that students who maintain their enthusiasm often find interesting (even unique) uses for their minors. (Note: It is possible for students to have a second major instead of a minor.)



Department of Geography faculty possess worldwide experience in Geography and Tourism. From left, back row: Kevin Weakley, Jordan Yin, Rolland Fraser, Lisa DeChano, Gregory Veeck., Middle Row: James Biles, David Lemberg, Margaret Pearce, Jay Emerson. Front Row: Deborah Che, David Dickason (Chair), Elen Cutrim, Joseph Stoltman. Not Pictured: Eldor Quandt, Chansheng He, Jeroen Wagendorp, and part-time faculty.



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## Western Michigan University and Urban & Regional Planning

**F**ounded in 1903, Western Michigan University has had a strong Geography program from the start. The University has nearly 30,000 students with a comprehensive variety of academic programs. Usually about 2,000 of our students come from outside the United States, representing more than 100 countries. Western is one of the U.S.'s 40 largest universities by student size, and by international student size.

The Department has offered a Geography major concentration in

Urban & Regional Planning for almost 25 years and WMU is a member of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. The program's alumni work in many areas of the planning discipline, both nationally and internationally, and many of our graduates have gone on to earn professional certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners, the leading professional association in the field.

The University is located in Kalamazoo, Michigan about half way between Chicago and Detroit. Kalamazoo is a safe, small met-

ropolitan area accessible by air, rail and highway, (US-131 and I-94).

The University offers comprehensive cultural and athletic programs. The City offers even more, so there are many recreational opportunities.

Michigan lies in the heart of the Great Lakes Region, one of the wonders of the world. The Great Lakes possess one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water. Michigan is a good "laboratory" for tourism, environmental, and regional planning, with many small (1-4 person) urban and regional planning departments.



The center of the main campus of Western Michigan University. The Planning Program is located in Wood Hall to the right of this photo.