

Professional Development Plan

Spring 2018

Summary

I am interested in the intersection between built and natural systems, looking at how we can meet community needs and support economic growth while being cognizant of equity concerns and meeting sustainability goals. I plan to specialize in city and regional planning which combines my interests in conservation, urban environments, community vitality, design, environmental justice and public health. I will continue to explore concepts in urban ecology, water resources management, and transportation policy and planning.

Career Objectives

I see myself fitting into multiple job descriptions given my interdisciplinary background in ecology and business and current training in environmental policy and planning. I can see myself as a policy/research analyst for California Air Resources Board, or for one of the local air quality management districts, working on incentive programs that attempt to reduce vehicle miles traveled. I can see myself as a planner at a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) ensuring air conformity in the transportation planning and strengthening SB 375 which attempts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by transforming land use and mobility. Outside of transportation, I can see myself as an environmental planner at a state or local agency, or private consulting company, working on environmental impact reports and with developers to minimize and mitigate impacts to the environment. I can also see myself working on natural community conservation plans to preserve wildlife and natural lands at a local government agency or non-profit organization. Having some knowledge of water resources management and urban planning, I can see myself working at the State Water Board or local divisions to ensure proper wastewater and stormwater runoff management. Overall, I see myself working across disciplines, wearing many hats and being more of a generalist within urban and regional planning, rather than a specialist in a particular area, like emissions modeling. I hope that being a generalist will allow me more flexibility to move up the ladder as I advance in my career.

Practicum

My ideal practicum would involve some research, putting together stakeholder meetings, work on CEQA/NEPA, hands-on practice with spatial modeling (GIS) or some quantitative analysis, and meeting with stakeholders and communicating with the public on matters. In short it would combine some writing and editing, data analysis (using GIS, RStudio, or other relevant programs) and literature review, opportunities to work on my communication skills and working across disciplines with specialists to translate technical information into guides for decision-makers.

Recently I accepted a full-time graduate student researcher (GSR) position with the UC Davis Policy Institute for Energy, Environment and the Economy for summer 2018. The position

involves research on the 3 revolutions of transportation: sharing, electrification and automation and other aspects of transportation as it relates to land-use planning, air quality conformity, and greenhouse gas reduction incentives. Tasks include forming white papers and policy briefs to inform decision-makers, attending and contributing to stakeholder meetings, developing communication materials and giving presentations on findings and developing workshops and conference sessions. The GSR position will not be purely research-focused in the sense of just gathering data, analyzing it and writing technical reports, but translates into perhaps what a policy/research analyst at an agency or non-profit would do. The policy directors who will serve as my supervisors mentioned having me work on several small projects, like writing briefs here and there, and having one big project where I'll get to work with an external partner. They've mentioned connecting me to their many external partners for projects and networking purposes and having me attend local charrettes, conferences and workshops. The position leaves a lot of flexibility to explore new areas of transportation like autonomous vehicle policy and allows me to integrate my coursework in urban planning and transportation policy and planning to come up with innovative ideas for reducing vehicle miles traveled and consequent greenhouse gases.

Specialization

I plan to specialize in city and regional planning which brings together my interests in public health, community vitality, sustainable design and provides opportunities to explore how we can meet community needs while minimizing harms to the environment. Gaining training in CEQA, zoning codes and form-based codes, smart growth principles and familiarizing myself with government structure and planning for cities and transportation in particular will allow me to meet my career goals to work as a planner/policy analyst in a metropolitan area. I would like to gain more training related to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions analysis (modeling, etc.) and spatial modeling.

Electives

Completed:

- Water Resources Management ECI 267 (Fall 2017) – Water planning concepts, some modeling calculations, research paper on reconciliation ecology focusing on aquatic species
- Restoration Ecology PLS 164 (Undergrad, Fall 2017) – 1-unit course traveling to different sites to plant seeds and help with other restoration work
- Environmental Impact Assessments ESP 179 (Undergrad, Winter 2018) – CEQA process, analyzed an EIR, prepared an initial study off of a hypothetical project
- Urban Ecology PLS 162 (Undergrad, Winter 2018) – Covered urban heat island effect, green infrastructure, nutrient and water cycling in urban environments and mitigation, etc.
- Transportation Policy & Planning TTP 220 (Spring 2018) – Covering role of federal, state, regional and local government in transportation policy and planning

- Urban and Regional Planning ESP 171 (Undergrad, Spring 2018) – Covering zoning code, form-based code, taxes, housing, transportation, etc.
- Environmental Justice Seminar ENV 198 (Spring 2018) – Guest speakers from different organizations that work on environmental justice issues

Enrolled for Fall 2018 (likely to change after sampling classes):

- Ecologies of Infrastructure GEO 215: “focus on design practices and theory associated with ecological conceptions of infrastructure, including networked infrastructure, region, bioregion, regionalization, ecological engineering, reconciliation ecology, novel ecosystems and theory/articulation of landscape change”
- Urban Planning & Design GEO 233: “regulation, design and development of the built landscape, planning and land development processes, zoning and subdivision regulation, site planning, urban design goals and methods, public participation strategies, creatively designing landscapes to meet community and ecological goals”
- Energy Environmental Aspects of Transportation ESP 163 (Undergrad): “Analysis and evaluation of energy, air quality and selected environmental attributes of transportation technologies. Strategies for reducing pollution and petroleum consumption in light of institutional and political constraints”

Networking & Mentoring

I am currently a member of the American Planning Association (APA) and am signed up for their newsletters and connected to monthly social networking events. I am also working on forming an Association of Environmental Professional (AEP) chapter at UC Davis. I’ve had informational interviews with a Biologist from CalTrans, Climate Action Manager from California Air Resources Board, Environmental Planner who works on CEQA with a private consulting firm, Senior Transportation Planner with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, and a Communications/Policy Analyst with Strategic Growth Council. I plan to reach out to more professionals who work at regional MPOs and in the private sector and non-profits as consultants. Susan Handy has been a great source and has connected me to many of the people I had informational interviews with.