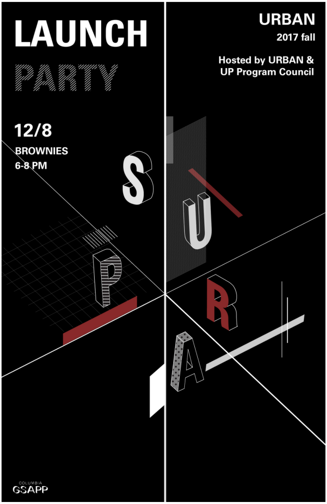
COLUMBIA
GSAPP
URBAN
PLANNING

# URBAN PLANNING NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 24, 2017

Contributions or ideas for this newsletter can be submitted to Nicholas Johannes. Newsletters will be sent on a bi-weekly basis. For jobs, internships, and fellowships, please see career portal.

## SAVE THE DATE: LAUNCH PARTY



Save the date for the Fall Issue URBAN Magazine Launch Party, on **Friday, December 8th**! Together with your Program Council, we invite you for a night to de-stress and play some games, and take home our most recent issue! We will be serving food and drinks as well.

Faculty, PhD students and alumni are invited!

## FIRST-YEAR STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*Shiori Osakata*

**Where are you from?**
I was born in Tokyo and raised both in Tokyo and Osaka.

**What and where did you study for your undergraduate degree?**
I studied Architectural Engineering at Osaka University in Japan and studied Environmental Design for a semester at Texas A&M University as an exchange student.

**Why did you choose to study at Columbia University?**
Studying at Columbia University and living in NYC have been my dream since I first visited the city when I was 17 years old. This April, I attended the open house for Columbia and other schools, but I was not excited when I visited other schools. It's been challenging to study here, but I absolutely love it!

**What is your interest in the urban planning field?**
I am interested in Urban Analytics and Built Environment. Combining this knowledge, I'd like to expand ideas about redevelopment by utilizing existing resources.

**What is your dream career?**
I'd like to work in various countries with people from different backgrounds while traveling and learning new cultures. My secret dream career is to work for Disney Imagineering because I love Disney since I was very young!

**Tell me something that most people don't know about you.**
I love tofu, so I always store five tofus in my fridge, otherwise, I will be upset. I also love walking. I often walk over 50 blocks. The other day, I walked over 30,000 steps. I wanna walk to Brooklyn someday.

# SECOND-YEAR STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*Stephanie Chan*

**Do you have a preferred name?**
I spent my last summer in Taiwan and Hong Kong where friends and family called me Yi Qi/Yee-Kay (猗琪) so I happily respond to that as well.

**Where are you from?**
I was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to the San Francisco Bay Area when I was four years old.

**What and where did you study for your undergraduate degree?**
I studied architecture and urban planning at the University of California at Berkeley.

**Why did you choose to study at Columbia University?**
I was already working in New York City at the time that I applied to Columbia, and many of my co-workers at the time were GSAPP and SIPA graduates. I wasn't yet ready to leave NYC so it made sense to eventually drift into a graduate program at Columbia. Also, the wealth of creative work opportunities in the city never ceases to astound me.

**What has been your favorite urban planning class so far and why?**
I have two! "On Spatial Exclusion and Planning" with Professor Hiba Bou Akar and "Placemaking for Healthy Urban Environments" which was the studio to Rio de Janeiro last Spring with Jose Luis Vallejo. The first brought in incredibly relevant and timely topics dealing with exclusion and displacement in both American society and abroad, and the second was an amazing experience not only being able to travel to Brazil, but also working with a wonderful team of students who I bonded with through the course of the semester. We put in a lot of hard work and creativity into our studio project, including publishing a book, designing weekly graphic designs and producing a professional marketing video.

**What is your interest in the urban planning field? What is your concentration?**
My concentrations are community development and international development. My interests are primarily related to social justice, community, gender, migration, and entrepreneurship. My interests in these fields primarily grew out of a very late discovery in undergrad that my father was a refugee to Hong Kong in the early 60s and spent his childhood living in the Kowloon Walled City, the world's largest slum before its demolition in 1993.

**What is your dream career?**
I would love to stay in areas related to research and bringing people together to teach and learn, perhaps through university-affiliated programs (similar to Studio-X) or community-organizing.

**What is one advice that you have for the first-years?**
Now that you're in New York City, DO get outside of the house and more involved with volunteering in the communities that surround you! It's super easy to sign up for community service events, either through direct emailing or signing up via an organization like New York Cares (and through UP Vision!). Only through visiting neighborhoods and talking to residents and organizations do you get to see the real-life implications of the topics that you read about in class - gentrification, homelessness and housing, education, healthy food and labor. Your help greatly benefits the operations of charities, schools and organizations doing good work around the city even if it was for a couple hours, and in doing so you also can learn more about urban planning and NYC neighborhoods.

*Shengyi Xu*
(It's pronounced "SHENG-YI SHOO")

**Where are you from?**
Shanghai

**What and where did you study for your undergraduate degree?**
Design in architecture and allied arts, University of Sydney, Australia

**Why did you choose to study at Columbia University?**
Student diversity and class flexibility. Also I studied in a high school close to Columbia for some time, so I have always wanted to come back here again.

**What has been your favorite urban planning class so far and why?**
Studio. It's where you learn not only planning theories and hard skills but also communication and leadership skills. I had a lot of studios in college but this has been one of my best studio experiences so far and I met amazing group mates.

**What is your interest within the urban planning field? What is your concentration?**
Built environment. I am interested in environmental and energy issues in design and planning.

**What is your dream career?**
Have my own firm doing small-scale urban design and planning.

**What is one advice that you have for the first-years?**
It is okay that you do not know what exactly you want to do in the future, but you should know what you do not want to do/be. Be bold.

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

*Kaz Sakamoto*

**What is your background and what do you do outside of teaching?**
My academic background is quite diverse which includes biology, ethnomusicology, and urban planning. I've really followed my interests throughout my life and believe it has served me well. I was fortunate to participate in the first data science course being offered at Columbia while I was getting my master's degree, which has had a profound impact on my life. Outside of teaching I'm a senior data scientist at Lander Analytics, where I train and consult large and small firms across many different industries in all matters of data science. I'm also currently a research affiliate with the Civic Data Design Lab at MIT working on a location detection algorithm using natural language processing and region-specific referents.

**What do you teach at Columbia University? Who should take your class?**
In the Fall I'm teaching one of the lab sections for the Intro GIS class and I also co-teach Prototyping for Urban Planners with Clara Chung. In the Spring I teach Exploring Urban Data with Machine Learning. My courses are geared towards students interested in Urban Analytics who are likely looking to gain skills traditionally not offered in planning schools. I believe having a strong understanding of statistics, computation, and programming are keys to a successful candidate in this field, and if not the drive to quickly amass those them. Students will engage in discussions at the intersection of technology and urban planning, both critically and pragmatically.

**How long have you been teaching?**
I've been teaching four years, three of them in the Urban Studies department at Barnard College and one at GSAPP.

**What do you enjoy most about teaching?**
I enjoy cultivating student's interest and creating a space that they can explore in. I try to teach a framework for students to problem solve in ways that may not be what they are accustomed to, and when it clicks, it's very rewarding. My hope is that my enthusiasm for the subject matter ignites the curiosities of those in my courses and motivates them to put a little extra time and ask deeper questions.

**What advice do you have for students who are new to the field of urban planning?**
Get into the mindset of continuous learning, think independently and chase after answers. Thanks to technology, it's easier than ever to get information, whether it's from a website, video, MOOC, or podcast. If you want to better yourself you have to put in the hard work, practice regularly, set up a feedback loop, learn from your successes, learn from your failures, and repeat.

BULLDOZER
THE BALLAD OF ROBERT MOSES

A Musical Tale of Power, Love and Loss.

**Bulldozer Broadway Musical, December 1st**
BULLDOZER: The Ballad of Robert Moses is a new rock musical that dramatizes Master Builder Robert Moses' evolution from a young idealist fervent with a desire to build the greatest city in the world to a power-insulated enemy of the people, corrupted, lost and alone.

Nicholas Johannes is organizing a trip to watch the December 1st performance. Please email him for the discounted student promo code. The promo code gives you access to $30 Choice tickets and $45 Prime tickets (which normally sell for $40 and $65, respectively).

## STUDENT COMPETITION

**2018 Urban Land Institute Hines Student Competition, December 4th Registration Deadline**
Team applications for the ULI Hines Student Competition are due on December 4th, 2017, and the general competition runs from January 15th to 29th, 2018. Now in its 16th year, the competition engages multidisciplinary student teams to devise a comprehensive development program for a real, large-scale site in North America. This is an excellent opportunity for students to engage in solving a real-world planning challenge, and the winning team will receive $50,000. Students interested in entering the competition can talk to Weiping about using the Advanced Research course to earn credit next semester. More info

**2018 Innovation in Affordable Housing Student Design and Planning Competition, December 11th Registration Deadline**
IAH is a graduate student competition, now in its fifth year, that is run by HUD. It brings together students from different disciplines including architecture, planning, policy, real estate, business and others to collaboratively provide a real-world solution. The finalists receive a cash prize of $20,000 for first place, $10,000 for second place, and $5,000 for each third and fourth place teams. More info

**Community Finance Challenge, December 14th Registration Deadline**
Deutsche Bank and MIT are teaming up to ask how we can use 21st century technology and thinking to bring innovation to finance and grow our local economies and communities. From Detroit to the Mississippi delta, from Rapid City to rural Tennessee, we want to build organizations that will revitalize our low-income and distressed communities by putting capital to work for all Americans. Compete for up to $10,000 in prize money this January in the MIT-Deutsche Bank Community Finance Challenge. More info

**APA-TPD Student Paper Competition, January 26th Deadline**
Notice of call for papers APA-TPD Student Paper Competition Deadline: Wednesday, January 26, 2018 Prizes Awards will be given as follows for the three best papers: Grand prize - $1,000 Second place - $ 750 Third place - $ 500 The Transportation Planning Division (TPD) is looking for outstanding student papers on current trans¬portation planning or policy issues. The purpose is to recognize and reward work completed for courses in accredited graduate planning programs. Winning schools receive recognition and acclamation. Winners will be announced at the APA National Conference in New Orleans, April 21-24, 2018. More info

**IDeA International Development in Action's 2nd Annual Place & Displacement Competition, February 1st Registration Deadline** We are writing to inform you of IDeA’s second annual Place & Displacement Design & Policy Competition: Integrating Refugee Populations within Urban Cities. We have launched the competition on IDeA's website which you can find more information here. Registration is on rolling basis running until February 1st. All information can be found on the website and updates will be posted on our Facebook page.

## OTHER NEWS

**Jerusalem Beyond Borders: Deconstructing the Political from the Functional, November 28th**
Join us for a conversation with Nizar Farsakh, former general director of the PLO Delegation in Washington, D.C. and Middle East expert, and Arch. Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, co-founder and design director at SAYA/Design for Change – an organization which envisions and designs for peace through “resolution planning”. Click here to RSVP. More info

**Comeback Cities, November 30th**
Dan Doctoroff, former deputy Mayor of New York, will join experts in New York and London for a discussion on resiliency, based on Doctoroff’s new book Greater than Ever, New York’s Big Come Back With Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Doctoroff developed an ambitious development plan to transform New York’s economy. Join us for this twelfth NYLON dialogue, a key part of the NLA International Programme. More info

**Spatial Data Science Conference, December 1st**
We are entering an era of unprecedented amounts of location-based data. In order to harness it properly we face questions of scale, analysis methods, bias, and complexity. Our first Spatial Data Science Conference will bring together academics, practitioners, industry leaders and technologists to focus on the challenges and promise that spatial data will bring in the coming years. If you use the promo code *STUDENT* at the registration page, tickets will be $10. More info

### APA International Division, December 11th Deadline

APA's Intl. Div. Research Grants, December 11th help students undertake deep research on topics of international interest. The award is a $1,000 grant to fund travel and expenses overseas. It may be combined with other awards and funding sources. Grantees submit a report of their findings to the International Division, adding to a growing body of professional knowledge. Reports are hosted on our website, with summaries published in Interplan newsletter. More info

### APA Student Awards, December 12th Deadline

Students should apply for APA's Outstanding PSO Awards and AICP Student Project Awards by December 12th, 2017. These awards recognize excellence in planning student organizations activities and student projects. Awardees are celebrated at the National Planning Conference.

### Seeking to Interview Black Graduate Students at Columbia University

We're Mario Alvarez and Benji de la Piedra (CC '14, GSAS '16), creators of the Columbia Life Histories Project, an oral history project that investigates the varied backgrounds, experiences, and needs of students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. After completing our initial exploratory phase of interviews—summarized in this brief digital report—we have received funding to conduct another round of interviews in the Spring 2018 semester. The Columbia Life Histories Project will culminate in July 2018 with a series of recommendations to GSAS Dean Carlos Alonso, whose office is funded this independent study, about addressing the widespread feeling of institutional disavowal among the GSAS student body. Students who are interested in participating are invited to drop us a line: cuoralhistories@gmail.com.

### The Columbia Libraries

The Columbia Libraries will be hosting major exhibition on the 50th anniversary of the protests and politics of 1968 this spring. As you may know, a significant factor in the Columbia protests was the university's plans to construct a new gymnasium in Morningside Park, raising profound questions of social and spatial justice. The archives have significant materials related to the plans for the gym, and the curators are hoping that GSAPP students will be able to interpret the historic plans and construct a model of the "Gym Crow" proposal, to be included in the exhibition. They are hoping to have the model completed by the end of the calendar year. If any students are interested in participating, please let Erica Avrami or Josh Jordan know.

### AICP Candidate Pilot Program

Students and recent graduates of PAB-accredited programs can now enroll in the Program any time during the year, register in December–March (for the May exam) or in June–September (for the November exam), use the payment program for exam fees, and take the exam prior to earning professional planning experience. More info

### Siqi Zheng, Samuel Tak Lee Associate Professor of Real Estate Development and Entrepreneurship at MIT

is now looking for a self-motivated student to join her urban and environmental economics research group as new MIT Ph.D. student starting from Fall 2018. Here is her website with all her publications and research projects. This PhD student will work in the China Future City Lab, with the specialization in urban and environmental economics, urban development and real estate market, with a special focus on China. Anyone who is interested in research on Chinese cities is welcome to apply. A solid background in either of the following fields will be a plus: applied microeconomics and econometrics, urban economics, urban planning and policy, real estate, transportation economics. Successful Ph.D. candidates are expected to have a master degree obtained from North America or Europe. For more information, email Siqi Zheng at sqzheng@mit.edu.