Meredith Davis,
President, Canadian Association of Planning Students

February 3, 2010

Dear Meredith,

Planning students and faculty in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo would be honoured to provide a conference location for the Canadian Association of Planning Students – L’Association Canadienne des Étudiants en Aménagement et en Urbanisme (CAPS-ACÉAU) in 2011.

A highly motivated group of students are prepared to take on each of the respective positions for the 2010-2011 Board of Directors and are excited to make the most of the opportunity that hosting a conference presents. The students of the School of Planning engage in many academic, social and extra-curricular activities throughout the year, providing a wealth of experience that we can draw upon throughout the preparation and hosting of the 2010-2011 conference.

Indeed, we believe hosting the CAPS-ACÉAU conference will be an opportunity to experience that the sum of talents and institutions in the Region of Waterloo are greater than its individual parts. We also believe that hosting the conference in Waterloo is a great opportunity for bringing together planning students from the Bachelor to Master to PhD levels, which hopefully may enrich the overall CAPS-ACÉAU experience for all planning students.

In Waterloo, conference attendees will have the opportunity to both discover and witness planning matters relating to large-scale downtown redevelopment, intensification projects, rapid and innovative institutional infrastructure expansions, and the fascinating juxtapositions between rural and urban development. Each of the aforementioned can be experienced through venues such as St. Jacobs (located just minutes north of our campus), watersheds along the Grand River, Rapid Transit through Kitchener and Waterloo, District Heat projects, Heritage Conservation Districts throughout the Waterloo Region, newly proposed and constructed public spaces (Waterloo Town Square), and the BarrelYards as an example of improving walkability and downtown intensification, all of which can be part of the conference experience to be presented by the University of Waterloo.

**About the planning school, student body and city**

Students attending the CAPS-ACÉAU conference in Waterloo will be offered excellent accessibility and accommodation. Waterloo offers a wide variety of means for accessing the conference and include the Region of Waterloo International Airport, VIA Rail services, GO Transit, Greyhound, as well as the Grand River Transit system. With regard to accommodations, such as Waterloo Inn and Comfort Inn, along with the historic Waterloo Hotel located in Uptown Waterloo, we are able to provide a variety of accommodation opportunities in close proximity to our campus. These will provide both access to conference events as well as cultural experiences associated with the City of Waterloo.

For more than 40 years, the University of Waterloo’s School of Planning has offered both undergraduate and graduate study opportunities in the field of planning. It offers the full spectrum of CIP accredited degrees from Honours Co-op at the undergraduate level, through thesis and course based Master’s degrees to Ph.D. Currently, close to 500 undergraduates and 95 graduate students are in program. The School prides itself on offering a comprehensive planning education with emphases on urban and environmental design, land development, heritage, infrastructure, transportation, healthy communities and decision
making. The complement of 17 full time faculty enthusiastically share their broad ranging expertise and research with students and are highly engaged at the community level – urban, rural and regional interests abound.

A further defining characteristic of the School is the high value realized through our strong connection with the profession and our thousands of alumnus who give back to our program in many ways. The opportunities provided at UW provide students with competitiveness in career development and well recognized higher education programs. The student body is diverse, academically strong, and very engaged in the School and local community. The 2010-2011 CAPS-ACÉAU conference can take full advantage of what Waterloo has to offer with a focus on the important challenges planning will encounter in the coming years as well as the solutions proposed thus far.

**Ideas and themes for the next conference**

Planning, as an interdisciplinary field, transcends the three pillars of economy, society and environment, a perspective we seek to endorse in the theme of resilience for the conference. Today, in times of rapidly changing economic structures, social requirements and expectations, and environmental and climatic conditions, planners must ask: “How resilient are our communities?” In 2011 we envision the CAPS-ACÉAU conference addressing the topic of “Resilience.”

We hope for the conference in Waterloo to be an opportunity for participants to experience planning in both theory and practice, through drawing on the region’s facilities, professionals and student engagements. In addition to the opportunity for students to present their own research, the creative learning resources in this region are numerous. Certainly the University of Waterloo has a wealth of academics to draw upon, but associations with Wilfred Laurier University, the Perimeter Institute, the Centre for Ecosystem Resilience and Adaptation, the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change, the Social Innovation Generation @ Waterloo and the Centre for International Governance Innovation, provide additional assets from which to engage with. Our intention is to utilize all the facilities and expertise available, in order to allow students to experience the positive energy planning can facilitate in a rapidly growing city like Waterloo.

Attendees can also expect to experience a close look at the planning involved in a prominent intensification project – the BarrelYards – that acts as a cornerstone for future intensification plans within this rapidly growing city located on the outer limits of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This case study brings together municipal, private and public interests, which in a creative way illustrate a unique view on a resilient planning project.

We thereby believe hosting a conference in Waterloo has the potential to offer case studies, half-day courses for skill development in areas such as design fundamentals, team management, growth management principles, site tours, and panel discussions. Additionally, we hope to allow for particular events to be accessible to the broader student body not in attendance via podcasts, and, most ambitiously, we intend to produce a collectively drafted “Waterloo Manifesto” submission on resilience planning in Alternatives Journal (located within the Faculty of Environment at Waterloo).

**A committed Board of Directors: 2010-2011**

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Meredith Davis,
President
Canadian Association of Planning Students

February 3, 2010

Dear Meredith

It gives me great pleasure to offer this letter in support of our students’ proposal to host the 2011 CAPS conference. The School of Planning at Waterloo offers its full and unequivocal support of this exciting opportunity. I know the bid committee has expounded on many of the reasons why we would make an excellent choice to be your conference hosts. Here, I offer my own personal perspective as School Director.

Our student body is a sheer pleasure to work with – both in the classroom and as full members of the School and community beyond. The student groups – PSA (Planning Students Association) and AGP (Association of Graduate Planners) organize and host many events which include not only internal but those with strong links in the Planning Profession and external community. They have the institutional knowledge and organizational capacity to consistently put on well received events. Examples include “meet and greets” through OPPI and CIP as well as workshops that deal with pertinent issues – Energy and the Environment comes to mind.

Our Faculty and Staff are wholly committed to our educational programs and the 500 plus enrolled students. It’s a wonderful environment where a strong sense of shared commitment is evident everywhere. From the Staff who work long hours to support research and teaching to the Faculty who strive to keep our program innovative, grounded, and exciting, we all work hard towards providing the best experience for students. This ethos is also shared by our Faculty administration who recognize the value afforded by opportunities like hosting the CAPS conference. Similarly, our strong and vibrant alumnus spread throughout the Canadian Planning community is wholly supportive of our program. I know their response to be involved in this unique opportunity will be overwhelmingly positive.
From a resource standpoint, I’ve given notice that we pledge to work closely with the CAPS organizers to provide whatever support they need. Financially, we’re prepared to provide seed funding to initiate the conference process. Physical facilities at the organizers disposal include our Design Studio, computing environments and classroom facilities which are first rate. Further, I ensure you that our faculty and personnel are at the ready to respond to requests to work with the organizers to ensure the 2011 conference is a memorable one.

I’m personally thrilled and proud of our students for pursuing this opportunity. We have an outstanding program and are fortunate to be in an Institution and community that is world re-known as a place of innovation, attracting many of the best and brightest minds. We’d love the chance to share all that we have to offer with Planning students from across this great Nation. Best of luck with your deliberations and I hope to be able to share the Waterloo experience with you in 2011.
Arron Stauch, B.E.S., CEPIT
M.E.S. Planning Candidate

Amanda Marsh, B.E.S.
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