

Alumni Panel Discussion

5:30-6:45pm

“SFSU Alumni at Work: Urban Planning Practice in the Bay Area”

Professor Ayse Pamuk, Moderator

Panel Participant Bios

Laura Ajello earned her BA in Art at San Francisco State University in 1995 and worked steadily in publishing until the dot com bubble burst. In pursuit of a career change, she returned to earn a second BA in Urban Studies in 2004. While at SFSU, she worked as an intern with the City of San Francisco's Planning Division and was on the Urban Action 2003 editorial team. After graduation Laura was hired into a temporary position with the San Francisco Department of Public Works, where she gained practical knowledge in planning while working mainly on subdivisions and condo conversions and acting as a liaison between City Departments. Afterwards, she was hired into a second temporary Assistant Planner position with the City of Sausalito. Her duties increased in range and included the review of various commercial and residential development applications. Subsequently, she was recently hired into a permanent position with the City of Alameda, which allows her to continue to strengthen her knowledge of and skills in current planning and extend into long-range planning.

Alex Amoroso, AICP is a practicing planner with two decades of experience. He received his Urban Studies degree at SFSU in 1986, and has since held a wide variety of positions in local and regional government, and as a consulting planner. Alex's range of experience includes work with housing programs, numerous development types (residential, commercial, industrial), general and specific plan management and more. Alex also participates in the planning community through work with APA conferences and other activities (national, state, local), as a member of the California Planning Roundtable and as a guest lecturer at SFSU and in other venues. Alex is currently the Deputy Director for Policy Planning at Alameda County. He can be reached at alexamoroso@comcast.net.

Sean Gallegos, earned his BA in Public Administration at CSU, Chico (1995) and a second BA in Urban Studies at SFSU (2004), and will begin a Master in Public Administration at San Jose State University in the fall of 2007. While at SFSU, he worked as an intern with the City of San Mateo's Planning Division. After graduating from SFSU, Sean was hired into a temporary Assistant Planner position with the city of Mill Valley. In the city of Mill Valley, he gained knowledge in single-family home, commercial and new second-unit development. Afterwards, he was hired into a second temporary Assistant Planner (Planner I) position with the city of Campbell. His duties increased in complexity and included the review of commercial, retail, institutional, and stealth/non-stealth cellular antennas. Subsequently, he was hired into a permanent position with the city of San Rafael, which allowed him to continue to strengthen his knowledge of and skills in planning and city administration. He was recently promoted into an Associate Planner position with the city of Foster City. As a result, he has gained additional

experience in large-scale development, which includes master plan development, mixed-use retail and high-density residential developments, and city sponsored development.

From his undergraduate years and as a professional planner; he has found that his main field of interest revolves around land use and the built environment and its impact to the community and the greater region. His personal and professional experiences have taught him that historical structures are essential elements in our communities. They provide inherent character to our communities, and they're an important historical link to our past. Sean is a member of the American Planning Association. Along with his regular professional responsibilities, Sean volunteers with the Urban Land Institute's URBAN PLAN program, and participates in other local planning issues in his community. His email address is sgallegos@fostercity.org.

Tom Miller earned his BA in Urban Studies from SFSU (2002) and an MCP (2005) from U.C. Berkeley with an emphasis on land use planning. For the past two years he has worked in the telecommunications industry, providing site acquisition and land use permitting services as a consultant to several wireless carriers. This work has provided him the opportunity to work in jurisdictions throughout the Bay Area and experience what it is like to be "on the other side of the counter." He credits much of the practical planning knowledge he has needed to navigate the various jurisdictional challenges of his job to the hands-on experience he gained at SFSU during internships at ABAG and AC transit, as well as real-world classroom experiences such as the Senior Seminar and working on Urban Action. He was on the editorial team of Urban Action 2001 and 2002.

Art Taylor is currently a Senior Associate with MKThink, an architecture, planning and consulting firm with offices in San Francisco and Philadelphia. As Senior Associate, Art leads the public sector project management division and provides strategic leadership for firm's consultants and planners performing: needs assessments, capital campaign strategies, grant and project fund planning, staff development, program design and performance evaluation, organizational development, strategic planning, and communication/relationship management strategies with government institutions, community-based organizations and education institutions. Client base includes: Stanford University Medical Center – Packard Children's Hospital, San Francisco Recreation and Parks, Embarcadero YMCA – Pier 27-21 Sports and Recreation Complex, Presidio YMCA, Monster Park Interim Use Collaboration, San Francisco Youth Authority (Juvenile Academy's – Log Cabin and Hidden Valley Ranch), New College of California, UC Berkeley – Physical and Environmental Planning.

Art serves on the transition team for Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums' Community and Economic Development/Redevelopment Division, crafting policy and legislation on housing, youth issues and opportunities and the redevelopment policies and procedures. Art has a Bachelor of Art in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin (1988), a Bachelor of Art in Urban Studies (2003) and a Masters in Public Administration (Public Policy) (2006) both from San Francisco State University. Art is also on the Board of Directors of Academy of Friend's, a non-profit organization which grants money to Bay Area organizations providing programs and services for people living with HIV/AIDS. Art has supervised a Senior Seminar student team in spring 2006.

Matt Weintraub is a historic preservation technical specialist with the San Francisco Planning Department. His current work involves documenting and evaluating the many historic buildings and areas that are located in the Mission District of San Francisco. Matt earned his BA in Geography and a minor in Urban Studies from SFSU in 1993. After working in the IT field for a time, Matt returned to SFSU and completed his MA in Geography in 2005. Matt was pleased to present his thesis, which evaluated the San Francisco Giants ballpark as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, to national meetings of the AAG and the APA. Before he attained his current position with the City of San Francisco, Matt worked for city planning departments in Los Altos Hills and Livermore, where he gained experience in historic preservation. In Matt's current job, he is gratified to continue the eternal pursuit of knowledge and understanding. In addition to geography, history, and urbanism, Matt's interests include counterculture art and literature, electronic and hip hop music, science fiction, and athletics. He is supervising two Senior Seminar student teams this spring 2007 semester.