



Making a Difference

USF School of Public Affairs



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA



**UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA**

A PREEMINENT RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

USF School of Public Affairs

SPA.USF.EDU

Urban and Regional Planning

A Professional Master's Degree from the
USF School of Public Affairs



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FOR AN URBANIZING WORLD: OUR MURP PROGRAM

Planning Resilient, Equitable, and Livable Communities.

Our Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) and has been in existence since 2009. The program prepares students to tackle the environmental, economic, and social challenges facing the cities of today and tomorrow. Whether you want to promote transit and bicycle solutions, enhance local agriculture, expand green infrastructure, organize community-based art, promote equitable redevelopment policy, improve post-disaster outreach, or strategize automated vehicle technology, our flexible and diverse program allows you to take a broad view of complex urban systems. Our courses of study prepare you to develop socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable solutions that work both locally and globally, with elective coursework enabling our students to focus on any number of areas, including land use planning, housing, hazard mitigation, community and economic development, and geographic information systems.

Whatever Your Career Aspirations.

Whether you're seeking your first planning job, looking for a career change, or preparing yourself for a promotion, a USF MURP will help get you ready for the challenge. The MURP program helps students build marketable skills in critical areas, including real estate development, geographic information systems (GIS), public involvement, plan and code writing, and government finance.

EXPERIENTIAL, COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING IN A VIBRANT METRO AREA

A Growing Region with Deep and Diverse Employment Opportunities.

The Tampa Bay area is a growing and dynamic urban setting in which to live, work, and play. It is also home to Florida's largest section of the American Planning Association (APA) members—meaning vast opportunities to intern, network, and grow your career in a wide variety of government and consultant planning organizations.

Real-World Learning.

Our MURP degree incorporates local and global community-engaged learning. For example, a recent class project had students in Land Use Planning write comprehensive plan amendments for the City of Dunedin, to assist with the City's compliance with Florida's Peril of Flood Act. MURP students also take on local planning leadership roles. The president of the Student Planning Organization (SPO) serves on the local APA executive committee, and several students serve as appointed members of advisory committees for local planning organizations.

Exciting Internship Opportunities.

Internships are an important part of our learning strategy, and our program connects students to a wide variety of these opportunities with public and private planning organizations. We also have competitive Graduate Assistantship opportunities for students to work at local planning agencies and firms, while receiving tuition assistance. Just a few of the places MURP students intern include the Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization, Benesch, Forward Pinellas, and USF's Center for Urban Transportation Research.

Mentoring, Collaboration, and Networking.

We've established strong relationships with local planners and planning firms, and many serve on our program's Advisory Board, volunteer to mentor our students, and provide networking, education, and placement opportunities. We partner with the Suncoast Section of the APA to offer the Mentor a Planning Student (MAPS) program, which allows students to shadow planning professionals and learn about different planning career pathways.

WHY NOW? OPPORTUNITIES COULDN'T BE BETTER!

There's no better time to complete your MURP, as job prospects couldn't be better. Our close relationships with Tampa Bay's professional community contributes to a nearly 100% job placement rate for our graduates. Our program's alumni have gone on to careers with the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, Kimley-Horn & Associates, the Florida Department of Transportation, and many others.

LEARN FROM A WORLD-CLASS FACULTY

Our faculty is dedicated to serving our community and the planning profession, and we are all committed to student success... in the classroom and in life.

- **Peng Chen, PhD;** Assistant Professor: Focuses on land use and transportation issues, including mode choice and safety.
- **Amber Dickerson, MRED, AICP;** Assistant Instructor: Focuses on innovative community-based planning projects for the planner-in-residence program.
- **Robin Ersing, PhD;** School Director and Professor: An established international scholar who focuses on community responses to natural disasters, including vulnerable populations and spatial disadvantages.
- **Steven Fernandez, MA, GISP, CCM;** Associate Instructor: A nationally-recognized geographic information systems (GIS) expert and a licensed drone pilot.
- **Evangeline Linkous, PhD, AICP;** Associate Professor and MURP Program Director: A Fulbright scholar and certified planner who focuses on land use planning. She's also the faculty sponsor for the Student Planning Organization (SPO) and actively participates in the American Planning Association (APA) Florida initiatives.
- **Kevin Martyn, PhD;** Assistant Instructor: Focuses on environmental policy and sustainability, urban affairs, and civic/community engagement.
- **Elizabeth Strom, PhD;** Associate Professor: A Fulbright scholar and political scientist who focuses on urban politics and policy, as well as housing issues.



ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Individuals interested in applying for our MURP program must meet the following requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution, with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Two letters of recommendation (preferably from both an academic and professional reference)
- Statement of intent/career goals
- Resume or curriculum vitae

Visit our [MURP Admissions page](#) for additional information, including application deadlines and requirements.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Our MURP degree requires a total of 48 credit hours of graduate coursework, comprising of 8 required core courses (24 credit hours), 7 elective courses (21 credit hours), and a mandatory 3 credit hour internship requirement. In addition, exiting MURP students must take a final comprehensive exam or defend a thesis. The following are the core courses:

URP 5277 GIS for Urban & Regional Planners

URP 6058 Community Development Planning

URP 6100 Planning Theory & History

URP 6115 Planning Policy & Politics

URP 6201 Quantitative Analysis

URP 6232 Research Methods

URP 6316 Land Use Planning

URP 6549 Urban & Metropolitan Economic Development

GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

We also offer cutting-edge Graduate Certificates that are open to both graduate degree-seeking and non-degree seeking students.

Community Development (15 credit hours). Take an applied, interdisciplinary approach to learning how communities are defined and fit into broader social systems, and how they can be developed responsibly.

Leadership for Coastal Resiliency Planning (15 credit hours). Learn how to help coastal communities prepare for environmental and climatological challenges without interrupting essential services.

Smart City Technology (12 credit hours). Get advanced hands-on training in lidar and geospatial technologies, as well as GIS and 3D modeling applications designed for urban planning.

Students who complete any of the above Graduate Certificates with a GPA of 3.50, or higher, can apply and be admitted to the MURP program without the GRE requirement. Once admitted, all courses completed in the certificate program may be eligible for transfer into the MURP program. Visit our [Graduate Certificate Programs page](#) for additional information, including application deadlines and requirements.



SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Our School offers three scholarship awards and various Graduate Assistantship positions.

Mark R. Hafen MURP Diversity Scholarship. Named after (and established by) the former MURP Program Director Dr. Mark Hafen, this scholarship provides support to MURP students, with preference given to diverse students from historically underrepresented groups.

Mark Bentley APA Sun Coast Section Scholarship. Named after (and established by) Mark Bentley, a Florida eminent domain attorney specializing in land use law and zoning, this scholarship was established to support MURP students.

James E. Blanton III Veterans Scholarship. In memory of Dr. J. Ellis Blanton's son—James E. Blanton III—this scholarship is awarded to MURP student veterans who honorably served in a branch of the U.S. military or the National Guard.

MURP Graduate Assistants/Fellows. Several positions are available to fully admitted MURP students. To qualify for the tuition waiver that accompanies the assistantship/fellowship stipend, the students must be enrolled full-time.

USF also offers a number of financial/funding opportunities to graduate students. Visit our [Graduate Funding page](#) for additional information.

For More Information

Visit [USF's School of Public Affairs website](#), where you'll find all you need to know about our MURP program, as well as how and when to apply.

You can also contact our MURP Program Director, Dr. Evangeline Linkous, via email at elinkous@usf.edu or by phone at (813) 974-7982.





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