

### The prizes awarded 2002 - 2004

Most students educated in our member schools will become practitioners in the broad field of planning. In order to recognise and encourage Excellence in Teaching AESOP introduced this prize in 2002. Through this award, AESOP has been able to celebrate and disseminate the good practice in teaching to be found in our member schools. The three winning courses from the first three years of the prize from 2002 to 2004 are Inter-professional Issues in Planning from University West of England (UWE), Integrated Course Package from Blekinge Institute of Technology in Sweden (BTH) The town of Children from University of Palermo in Italy (UNIPA). They are all good examples of teaching for practice and will encourage, stimulate and generate ideas for other AESOP member schools to further develop their own courses.

#### Critical reflections on real-life projects

All three winning courses are based on relevant, real world conditions which exercise students' abilities to define and contextualise a planning problem. Thus, students are trained to produce a solution to a real task. "Learning by doing" is the underpinning rationale and, as we can see in the courses, an important way of doing this is by interacting with practitioners as part of the teaching and/or evaluation. The UWE team is working in a multi-disciplinary and interprofessional way. This team work promotes an awareness of the overlap and interfaces with other disciplines. In the BTH course this is achieved by different professionals from different backgrounds supervising each interdisciplinary student group. UNIPA see it as crucial to integrate the expert knowledge of various professionals together with daily life knowledge of the local inhabitants.

These winning entries also demonstrate the importance of including political power realities in the planning problem under study. Such situations can foster an understanding that one's

work must address the needs of a client or the general population, and not simply suit the student's own opinions. As in the BTH course it is seen as important that techniques of political manipulation, selective and biased use of information to influence opinion are addressed, enabling students to identify and possibly counteract manipulative and illegitimate uses of power. At UNIPA this is made obvious by the problems and difficulties of suburbs as is said to be a great but unsophisticated planning issue that all students should practice.

One part of the exercise is to define as well as delimit the planning problem in the task. Another part requires students to analyse a complex real problem in a critical way in order to reflect on and arrive at creative and innovative solutions. This approach is effectively presented in the BTH course which encourages, develops and promotes students' ability to recognize and manage the potential contradictions in thinking holistically. Demonstrating a specialist focus is seen as a key aim of the module. At the UNIPA they are strengthening the interrelations among environmental, urban structure and social components.

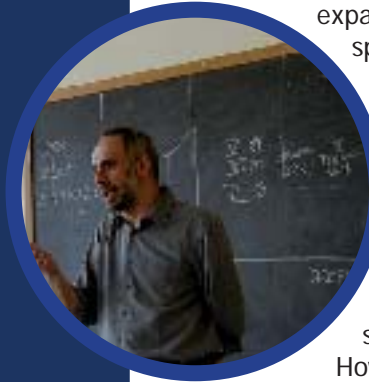
#### Communication practice

All these courses require the students to practice the communication of their ideas to others. The course from UNIPA especially requires students to communicate with others who are not part of the same professional or cultural system as they are, for example children. In UWE and BTH good written and oral communication skills are fostered; in particular, the ability to communicate complex issues to informed lay persons. The students are encouraged to form their own analytical or theoretical constructs by learning to generalise from the specific task at hand to general understanding of their profession-to-be. All this will give the students valuable experiences before they take their own steps as practitioners.



AESOP - Prize for excellence in teaching  
for practice - Prizes awarded 2002-2004





Many reports on the European cities show an increased expansion of urban periphery characterized by spatial and social fragmentation, by rising environmental deterioration and security problems. The new urban reality drives planners to reflect and focalize on renewal and regeneration of existent city and especially its marginal neighbourhoods as widespread and relevant problem towards sustainability that involves spatial, environmental and social issues occur.

However, both traditional and contemporary tools of urban planning do not sufficiently take into account co-ordination among transportation system, housing, services, and environmental sustainability. Above all, planning often neglects weaker and less knowledgeable sections of society as children, in favour of strong interests, making efforts towards equity almost fruitless.

Consequently, it is necessary to activate the listening and involvement practices of the local communities, including associations and organizations that operate at local level, by building an interactive web, in order to fight social exclusion and to reach objectives of equity.

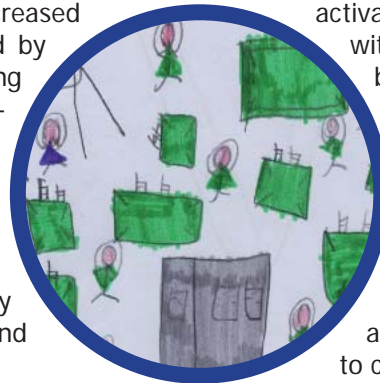
Both knowledge processes and methodological ones thus evolve differently from traditional views because it becomes necessary now to pay more attention not only to the interrelations among environmental, urban structure and social components, but also between "expert voices" and inhabitants.

Thus it becomes crucial to connect the knowledge process emanating from the planner with the local knowledge, integrating different tools and competences.



### Learning objectives

General objective of the course is to explore the spatial and social condition of a marginal neighbourhood of a large town as Palermo activating a communicative planning process. The main learning objective is to train planners who are capable of



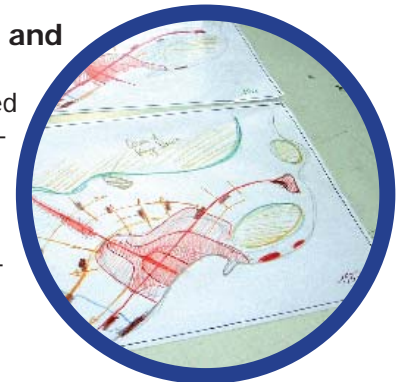
activating, listening and communicative capacities not only with local institutions, but also directly with the local inhabitants, and especially with marginal and less listened categories as children. Children, beside to be able to bring interesting and necessary contributes to the planning process, are also particularly able to bring on their project suggestions, a shared feeling of respect and approval of all community, that is of great importance also for the plan management.

In addition, the workshop team seeks to taking into account reality and desires of the local inhabitants and to confront local public administrations with the possibility of carrying them out. Specific learning objectives are:

- To contribute to shape the identity and the maturation of students and children through a critical knowledge of an area of interest and a positive interaction with local communities;
- To take into account and to interpret the realities and desire of local inhabitants as subjects able to contribute to the enrichment of the planning process;
- To be able to integrate technical knowledge and local knowledge;
- To increase the responsibility of the "learning" planners for the local habitat where they operate;
- To improve the capacity to make spatial, environmental and social analysis;
- To develop the capacity of representation of urban space;
- To increase the value of creative capacity of students and all subjects involved in order to build a sustainability planning process;
- To enable to people understand analysis, collecting data, data interpretations and the results of planning process, involving both local administration and local community

### Pedagogical approaches and techniques

The pedagogical approach is based on participative techniques and listening practices with the aim of increasing the creative capacity of all subjects involved in the program, children, students, professors, ex-





ternal expert, local community, associations, institutions. The techniques used in the course are as follows:

- Guided and individual inspections of the site to meet associations, social workers, elementary and intermediate schools, thus helping students to start to consider the neighbourhood as a whole with its inhabitants. In this first step listening techniques are applied and observation capacities are required.
- Writing individual reportages on the first impressions of the area, using brain storming techniques as a starting point.
- Debates in class on the first impression of the selected area and presentation. This step is fundamental to create the group feeling of the workshop as a local community interacting with a reality that is different from its own.
- Decoding of reportages according to thematic/descriptive areas to build a first notice board of the workshop, focalizing on qualities and problems of the area.
- Lectures and presentations of study cases finalized to provide technical knowledge on urban planning.
- Seminars with external experts, social operators, elementary and intermediate teachers.
- Debates in class on lessons and seminars to build a critical knowledge and capacity to apply urban technique as well as participation techniques in different contexts.
- Drawing up and distribution of surveys addressed to different age categories focusing on their reality and desires. The questionnaires are constituted by different sections related to the themes of the analysis and of the notice board according to a graded language ages of the inhabitant interviewed.
- Workshops with children of elementary and intermediate schools at their respective classes. Students are required to build a method to interact with children.
- Workshop for setting up the analysis system to describe: historical development of the area with respect to the rest of the

city, accessibility, landscape, morphology of the urban fabric, transportation systems, housing, services at urban and neighbourhood scale, leisure amenities, open places of public relations, security, interpretation of survey results.

- Workshop to draw up a synthetic final notice board that takes into account the work produced focusing on problems, qualities and possible actions/strategies.
- To script the music opera "Wir Bauen Eine Stadt" adapted for the neighbourhood, with the help of external experts, utilizing the materials produced by children.
- To design projects of the areas for groups of students.
- Performance of the opera and exhibition of the projects in a significant place of the neighbourhood inviting local institutions, associations, inhabitants and, above all, children.
- Choosing the best projects to be developed and implemented by local administration, in alternative to traditional plans.

## Goals

The laboratory practical classes aim at providing students with suitable instruments to "read", recover and restore, in a systemic and sustainable way, the existing urban and environmental heritage within a complex urban context by creating a set of analytical and interpretative methods (thematic and interdisciplinary surveys), and by highlighting interrelations existing between the various factors, as physical, anthropic and social factors, and interdisciplinary methods.

The process of understanding and definition of choices was carried out by favouring a specific interpretation interlinked with participatory actions and procedures. Such an outlook, based on the idea of a city as a place of socialization and plurality, aims at improving the overall urban "quality", and the consistency of interventions as well as at "revising" the choices made by traditional town-planning from a critical point of view.



# university of the west of england, bristol interprofessional issues in planning education



One of the distinctive features of planning education at the University of the West of England Bristol is that it takes place in a Faculty of the Built Environment in which “interprofessionalism” is a key educational principle. “Interprofessional Issues” is the final year module in a series of modules designed to develop the interprofessional theme in the Faculty’s undergraduate programme of studies.

The emphasis on interprofessional working has been given added salience as awareness has grown of the interconnected nature of urban and environmental issues, and of the need for cross-disciplinary and inter-agency approaches. It is commonly recognised that quality in the built environment comes about not through entrenched attitudes, but through teamworking, consensus and partnership. Planners, for example, are not only required to operate within their own legislative and professional frameworks, but are expected to understand and accommodate the ways in which developers perceive the world and the constraints and pressures that exist upon them. Partnerships are widely agreed to be an excellent vehicle for obtaining private finance for public developments.

Working in a multi-disciplinary and interprofessional way tends to expand, overlap and blur traditional professional boundaries, whether in planning, construction or more generally in business. It also places an increasing importance on correct and appropriate identification of specialist knowledge and competencies. Encouraging, developing and promoting this ability is a key aim of this module.

## **The Interprofessional Issues Module**

The Interprofessional Issues module is the culmination of a “stream” of such work that students follow throughout their courses. The first year interprofessional module, the Process of Development, provides an introduction to the whole development process, including opportunity, feasibility, design, production and occupation. It is designed to help students become familiar with some of the terminology used by practitioners in the Built Environment and the tasks undertaken by them.

The second year module, the Development Project, concentrates on the crucial early stages of a real development project.

It is designed to provide hands-on experience of the way a team representing a number of different disciplines comes together to address the issues involved in assessing a site’s development potential.

The challenge for the third year module was to design a learning experience at a level above this. The focus on identification, analysis and interprofessional debate and presentation of sustainable development issues. The intention is for students to use their accumulated knowledge, analytical skills and interprofessional competencies to identify and appraise, key issues within the context of a current topic of major significance to professionals operating in the Built Environment.

The module is studied by final year full-time undergraduate students from a range of degree courses across the Faculty. As example the student cohort can comprise 220 students from 15 courses:

- Architecture & Planning
- Building Engineering & Management
- Building Surveying
- Business in Construction
- Business in Property
- Construction Management
- Geography & Environmental Management
- Housing Policy & Management
- Planning & Development
- Planning with Leisure
- Planning with Transport
- Quantity Surveying
- Real Estate
- Real Estate & Leisure Management
- Town & Country Planning
- Valuation & Estate Management

## **Professional Competencies**

To reinforce the idea of the final year undergraduate looking forward to life as a professional, the module describes professional competencies to be demonstrated. It is intended to help develop and rehearse skills fundamental to a student’s ability to perform as an effective, competent professional. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate:

**PERCEPTION:** a full understanding of:

- the complexity of issues underlying a basic environmental question;
- those issues which are of particular relevance to the profession represented by the Award for which a student is studying;
- the tension between this specialist interest and the need to formulate balanced professional opinions;
- the interaction and interdependence of Built Environment professionals, working within inter-professional teams;

**IMAGINATION:** the ability to define and contextualise a problem; to think laterally; to challenge the past and propose new ideas for the future;

**COMMUNICATION:** good written and oral communication skills; in particular, the ability to communicate complex issues to informed lay persons;

**KNOWLEDGE:** a good awareness of the knowledge base appropriate to their own discipline, together with an awareness of the overlap and interfaces with other disciplines;

**JUDGEMENT:** the ability to judge their own strengths and limitations, and those of their fellow team members; to negotiate an achievable brief and to successfully deliver their project.



## **Topics: and engagement**

The students work in six-strong project teams. The Module Guide sets a framework for the constraints, within which students develop their project brief, but it is intentionally open-ended in terms of the content of their project. The Guide lists ten topic areas within which students can explore their issues. These can be:

- Accessible Environments
- Sustainable cities
- Regional airports
- Safe & healthy working environments
- The Internet
- Conserving historic environments
- Meeting leisure needs
- Urban regeneration
- UK Membership of the European Union
- Sustainable transport

The students' tasks, for completion of the module, can be summarised as:

- brainstorming the topics for appropriate and relevant issues
- selection of topics – students are given the opportunity to explore and identify their topic preference before being organised into interprofessional project teams
- working within interprofessional teams
- formalising each student's project brief, including identifying the issue within the selected topic area that they will personally study by negotiation with their fellow team members and module tutor
- preparing their individual report on their agreed issue
- giving an oral presentation, as a team, on their team's topic to fellow students and tutors, drawing on the knowledge gathered in preparing their individual report
- preparing an individual critical reflective analysis of the team's groupworking, their interprofessional overview and their learning experience.



**Integrated course package: Metropolitan planning project, Investigation methods and visual communication and presentation techniques.**

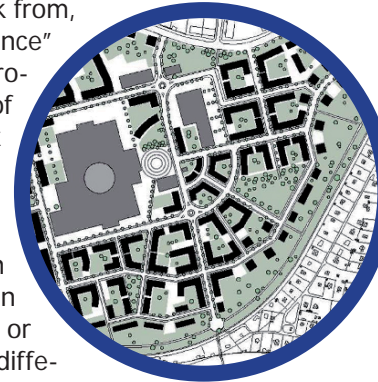
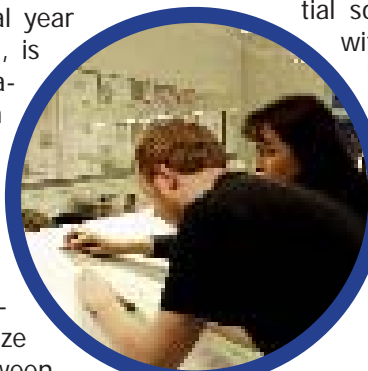
The aim of this module, taught at the final year of a three-year undergraduate education, is to help students develop and demonstrate transferable competencies through the interprofessional exploration of sustainable development issues. The students of the module come from a wide range of degree courses across the faculty, last year amounting to 15 different courses. Encouraging, developing and promoting students to recognize and manage the potential contradiction between thinking holistically and demonstrating a specialist focus is a key aim of the module. The topics of the students' projects are defined broadly, with an aim of avoiding to give students representing some disciplines/professional courses unfair (dis)advantage. The students normally work in project teams of six students, each representing a different degree course.

The teams create their own briefs for the project as well as devising solutions. Two members of the staff representing different professional backgrounds supervise each interdisciplinary student group. The assessment of each student is carried out by one course representative tutor and one interprofessional tutor. The course also encourages reflective practice through self-assessment.

All student projects are presented to, and get feedback from, fellow students and tutors. In addition, a "Dean's conference" provides an opportunity for the best five of the student project presentations to receive feedback from an audience of 100 geography students and teachers, as well as from six senior practitioners.

The course package offers students a possibility to work in self-organized groups with real-life planning problems in a concrete urban context, in cooperation with professional planners and practitioners. There is a focus on one geographical area (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö or Copenhagen) that is studied from several angles in the diffe-

rent courses included in the course package. The courses combine a focus on plan-making skills (the design of physical/spatial solutions for selected areas) with critical analyses of political processes in land use



## Metropolitan planning project

The Metropolitan planning project is intended to introduce students to the complex planning tasks of a larger city. The course regularly rotates between the largest Swedish cities, Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. The city planners suggest areas for the planning exercises, including redevelopment of urban areas, of old industrial districts, of a redundant railway depot and of a peripheral area designated for new low-density housing. They got presentations from city planners and their experts and survey the project areas. Each group was assigned an inventory task - i.e. to describe the traffic system, or the green structure of the city - information, which after a couple of weeks was presented in a set of web pages, as an easily accessible database for all students in the course. In addition to the university teachers an experienced practitioner with long experience of the current city planning served as an external advisor to the students in the studios. All proposals are developed with the aid of digital maps, and presented on screen. The proposals are first examined by three senior teachers at the end of the semester and after two weeks, when improvements could be made, presented to the city planners on location.

## Investigation methods

The supporting course Investigation methods is running in parallel with the planning project. There are two analytical assignments. The first is to write a report on one of six themes, such as traffic problems in the city centre, overcrowded housing, declining retail centres in suburban areas, and remaining barriers to integrating the labour and housing markets. The students are expected, on the basis of selected material, to clarify a problematic issue and come up with recommendations for further studies or specific actions.

The second assignment involves a critical analysis of the lobbying and political decisions leading to the current planning. One basis for the analysis is a comprehensive documentation of the political process. The other basis is an analytical tool-box: a collection of excerpts from books discussing techniques of political manipulation, the selective, biased use of information to influence opinion, the different roles of experts in political processes, etc. As a documentation of their studies, the students wrote a 'manual' of manipulative techniques. communication and presentation techniques is tied to the Metropolitan project.

## Visual communication - presentation techniques

Finally, one exercise in Visual communication and presentation techniques is tied to the Metropolitan project. In preparation for the oral presentation of their designs to the city planners at the end of the course, the students are asked to design a poster, advertising their presentation.

The Metropolitan planning project is one of the twelve planning courses which all involve working with 'real' planning tasks, often in cooperation with a town or municipality, usually in southern Sweden. This is considered the best way of preparing students for professional planning practice. In the more advanced courses, professional planners from the municipality are active as advisors and critics. The metropolitan project is important because it introduces the students to more complex planning tasks of a big city.

The students are expected to further develop their design skills working with complex planning problems, integrating urban design, planning for private and public transport, sustainability aspects, social concerns etc. They are also expected to sharpen their analytical and communicative skills, learning to write concise reports discussing current planning issues as well as produce attractive visual presentations.

The main features of the pedagogical approach are: Working with 'real' planning projects in contact with professional planners and practitioners. Concentration on one geographical area, which is studied from several angles in different courses. Integrating analytical studies and creative design work and working in self-organising groups.

Spatial planning is seen as involving:

- political strategy and manipulation
- critical analysis of both professional and political issues
- creative design of the physical environment and of processes leading to the
- implementation of designs
- communication and collaboration with experts and non-experts

The course is innovative in the way of coordinating different courses that require both analytical and design skills.

on current planning problems of one area is considered innovative. As all material is handled in digital formats, communication, reproduction and presentation is easy and low-cost.



# Technische Universität Dresden, Germany and The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA: Bridging a Gap in Inter- national Planning Education



## Title of Course:

Sustainable Development in the Urban Region in Germany and the US: Dresden and Columbus as Examples. An International Postgraduate Module

## Responsible Persons:

Bernhard Müller, Hazel Morrow-Jones, Andreas Otto

Planning systems vary from region to region and state to state. Although this is well known, international experience shows that these differences are often ignored. The inappropriate transfer of planning philosophies to other cultural settings may lead to the failure of strategies and concepts. During their planning education, students are often exposed mainly to their own planning "environment". There is usually some experience regarding different planning systems in the European context. However, there is little exposure regarding international planning experience. In this context, the U.S. planning philosophy is important as it is widely spread and forms the basis of planning approaches in many countries of the world.

The process of mutual understanding should start as early as possible in the careers of planners. Developing exchange programs for academic institutions in different countries is an effective and affordable means for improving students' educational experiences. The Dresden, Germany and Columbus (Ohio), USA based international postgraduate module on "Sustainable Development in the Urban Region in Germany and the US" forms such an international exchange of academic institutions that is strongly linked to the planning practice.



## The forming of an international exchange

The Technische Universität Dresden and its partner university, The Ohio State University Columbus (Ohio) have cooperated in a joint course in the field of sustainable urban and regional development since the mid 1990s. After a challenging prepara-

tory work including the search for adequate funding and creating ways to involve the planning departments of Dresden and Columbus, the course became operational in 1997. In this year, the Dresden based Leibniz Institute of Ecological and Regional Development, a leading German research institute in the field of spatial planning, started to become involved as another partner. Since 1998 the course has grown and improved steadily and has become one of the most successful cooperative undertakings between the two sister cities of Dresden and Columbus and the two partner universities. Year after year at least 12 students from the U.S. and 12 students from Germany worked on common topics and used the opportunity to gain an insight in urban and regional development processes on the both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Faculty and planners from both cities have also taken advantage of the opportunities to contribute their knowledge and to learn more about planning in a different environment.



## Goals and learning objectives

The pedagogical goals of this course consist in providing an international background and experience to students in their planning education as well as to combine theoretical aspects with concrete planning practice. The learning objectives of the course on sustainable urban and regional development in Germany and the United States are the following:

- Understanding the planning framework of both countries.
- Gaining experience in how day to day planning decisions are made.
- Reading and learning to apply the latest academic research on sustainable development.
- Developing skills in team work, especially across cultures, using the latest technical assistance for distance communication.
- Developing research skills in the completion of seminar papers and projects.
- Enhancing presentation skills and learning to work with citizens and decision makers.



## Course topics with relevance to both sides

Every year the course has focused on a specific issue which is relevant to the sustainable urban and regional development in Germany and the U.S.:

- 2007: Back to the City? - Reurbanisation in the European and US-American context
- 2006: Looking Inward: Culture and Tourism-led Urban Regeneration
- 2005: Living Life on the Edge: Consequences for the Urban-Rural Fringe
- 2004: Major Crises and Hidden Challenges: How Urban

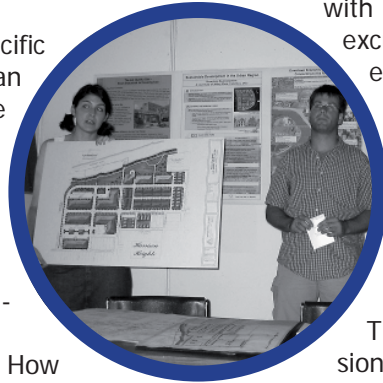
Regions React to Problems

- 2003: Sustainable Development in the Urban Region: A Focus on Revitalization
- 2002: Improving the Livable Environment in the Urban Region
- 2001: Community Redevelopment in a Regional Context: Problems and Strategies
- 2000: Transformation at the Urban Edge: Urbanization in Exurbia
- 1999: Regional Growth and Regional Governance
- 1998: The Americanization of East German cities

## Interdisciplinary approach and involvement of the planning practice

The course gives a unique opportunity of learning how to work together with "future professionals" from different backgrounds. It brings together students from a wide range of fields, e.g. city and regional planning, landscape planning, geography, environmental sciences, international politics, architecture, sociology, and transportation engineering.

Two graduate students each from Germany and the U.S. work together in one group from the beginning of the seminar using e-mail and video conferencing for constant communication. There are no restrictions regarding nationalities, in fact, students from China, India, Arab and other countries have participated. It is required that the students have appropriate language skills because the course is completely taught in English.



One of the specific features of the course is its close connection with the planning practice. City planning staff, guest speakers, excursion guides and interviewees broaden the educational experience for the students. The Planning Departments of the Cities of Dresden and Columbus as well as the MidOhio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) are directly involved in the course. Staff members provide their practical experience to the students, becoming personally involved in the exchange, and offer internships for the students.

## The three main elements of the course

The course consists of three elements, a seminar, excursions, and poster projects. The seminar is the main element of the course. Each year, six topic areas related to the overall focus of the seminar are formulated. The mixed German-American groups work on their collaborative research projects via the internet (video conferences, e-mail). Their work leads to a joint paper on a specific issue in the international planning discussion.

The excursions (study trips) are the second important element of the course. They build on the assumption that although video conferencing may facilitate successful collaborative student work, even over great distances, personal experience and exposure to a different planning environment is required in order to understand the real life situation in the other country. The excursion consists of two parts: one part takes place in Germany and the other part in the U.S., usually two week periods on each side.

The function of the poster projects as the third element is to foster direct exposure to a "real life" development issue and to strengthen the capacity to create alternative solutions to problems. Usually, the poster project consists of background research, data collection, meetings with local experts, site visits and the elaboration of proposals. At the end of the field work session in each locale, students present their results in a public forum.



### **The aim of the prize**

Most students educated in our member schools will become practitioners in the broad field of planning. In order to recognise and encourage Excellence in Teaching AESOP introduced this prize in 2002. Through this award, AESOP is able to celebrate and disseminate the good practice in teaching to be found in our member schools.

The aim of the award is to stimulate the development of planning courses or groups of courses in order to better prepare students for their forthcoming practice but also to further the education of those practitioners involved in teaching. The award's purpose is also to promote and encourage planning schools to apply new theories, pedagogy, technologies and techniques in ways that enhance the knowledge and skills necessary for practice.

The award provides an important opportunity to disseminate effective practice and innovation. It has also supported practitioners to return to planning schools to exchange ideas about new theories and methods with their academic colleagues.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

All AESOP member schools can be nominated for the Excellence in Teaching Prize. The course must have been successfully implemented for at least one year. Applicants can either be:

- A planning school;
- A planning department within a university
- A group of teaching staff.

### **How to Apply**

Use the electronic application form available from the AESOP web site [http://www.aesop-planning.com/Documents/PrT\\_applForm.doc](http://www.aesop-planning.com/Documents/PrT_applForm.doc).

### **The Prize Jury:**

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