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A New Paradigm for Educating Future Planners in Nevada: A Perspective From the Field

Frederick Steinmann, Extension Educator/Assistant Professor
Michael Harper, FAICP

The gulf between theory and practice in the area of planning education in contemporary American graduate planning programs is widening, not shrinking. The development of future planning curriculums in the United States must focus on teaching future professional practicing planners the theory, the methods and skills, and the judgment and good sense they will need to be well-rounded effective and efficient planners. The authors base their analysis and model curriculum on a 2011 survey of practicing professional planners in the State of Nevada, a survey based on the work of previous researchers in this area.

Introduction

Planning, as a profession, has evolved and changed significantly over the past 50 years. From its roots in British town and land-use planning, planning as a profession in the United States has diversified into a number of subfields and specialties including land-use development and planning, economic development and planning, environmental and natural-resource planning, facilities and infrastructure, housing, parks and recreation, planning management, transportation planning, and even urban design. In recent years, professional planners, especially in the public sector, have had to become managers and administrators in addition to their responsibilities as planners. Gone are the days in which planners could be masters of one or two skills. Planners must now be jacks-of-all-trades with extensive training and experience. The authors of this article theorize that the education planners are currently receiving, primarily at the graduate level, is increasingly failing to meet the needs of the practice of planning, and the practice of planning is increasingly failing to incorporate the innovation occurring in classrooms and university campuses in the field of planning. Using a survey of practicing professional planners in Nevada, and based upon past research in the area of planning education in higher education, the authors of this article further theorize that planning education in the United States must evolve further to prepare planners to be better jacks-of-all-trades while still being masters of their particular specialty.

In 2011, the authors developed and mailed a comprehensive 29-question survey based on previous surveys developed by Friedman (1994), Ozawa and Seltzer (1999), Alexander (2001), and Kaufman and Escuin (2007) to current members of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association (NVAPA). A total of 292 surveys were mailed, two were returned as undeliverable, and of the 290 surveys actually received by members, 107

completed surveys were returned. Based on the work of Friedman (1994), Ozawa and Seltzer (1999), Alexander (2001), and Kaufman and Escuin (2007), and based on the results of the 2011 NVAPA survey, the authors outline a theoretical curriculum for master degree programs in planning in the United States. The authors hope that this proposed theoretical curriculum will challenge other researchers in the area of planning education and research, current educators and students of graduate planning programs in the United States, and current practicing professional planners across the country to think harder about how current planning curriculum in the United States can be developed to better meet the demands of practice current and future professional planners will face. As a practitioner field, it is important that the theory of planning taught in the classroom take its cues in developing curriculum from the practice of planning in the field, and it is equally important that the practice of planning learn to incorporate the important innovations and research that theory has to offer.

The Growing Divide Between Planning Education and the Practice of Planning in the United States

Stating that his work was an initial inquiry into planning education in the late 20th century, Friedman (1994) surveyed 40 planning educators throughout the United States, focusing on three central questions: 1) What challenges for planning education in North America do you see arising from current/prospective changes in world conditions and current prospective changes in conditions at home?, 2) What planning roles do you see becoming more salient over the next decade?, and 3) What will be the critical skills required of graduate planners over the next decade?. Using the results of his survey, Friedman (1994) generated a cross-section of

opinions and perspectives on the problems that planning educators in the United States felt were facing American planning education in the 1990s and what changes in graduate-level planning curriculum were needed in order to prepare future planners for the key challenges they would face upon graduating and becoming practicing planners in their respective specialties. Friedman (1994) concluded that, "The present model of education still rests on what was, after World War II, the most advanced thinking about planning. We call it the four pillars of planning wisdom."

These four pillars of planning wisdom include: 1) planning in general, but city planning more specifically, is primarily concerned and focused with making public and political decisions more rational, 2) planning is most effective when it is comprehensive; that planning should be multifunctional and multisectional and should function as an intersection between economic, social, environmental and physical planning, 3) planning should be thought of and taught as both an art and a science and should include a mastery of theory and methods in both the natural and social sciences, and 4) planning should be treated as value-sensitive, emphasizing social justice and environmental sustainability. These four pillars have dominated the education of planners at the graduate level in American graduate planning programs since the end of World War II.

Despite this dominance, Friedman (1994) concluded that, "Over the past 40 years all four of these pillars of planning education have been contested terrain. But as we reach the end of the century, and engulfed as we are by enormous historical changes and challenges, there is a gathering view that these four pillars will have to be rethought, redesigned, and rebuilt." Yes, having to make public and political decisions as a planner is still critical to the functional job of the contemporary American planner. Yes, contemporary American planners must still be multifunctional and multisectional. Yes, contemporary

American planners must be both artists and social scientists while being competent and proficient in the use of various analytical and design tools found in the natural sciences. And yes, the contemporary American planner must still be concerned with social justice and environmental sustainability. But the successful contemporary American planner must be more jacks-of-all-trades than a master of a single set of skills, and contemporary American graduate planning programs must teach their students and future planners how to be a successful jack-of-all-trade. In addition to being planners, they must also be successful public administrators and managers capable of developing, implementing and administering accurate project budgets. As managers, planners must also issue and evaluate proper request for proposals; participate in the design, conducting and analysis of surveys; conduct public meetings; and synthesize large amounts of ambiguous data. An effective planner also negotiates with many different, divergent and often hostile groups while providing policymakers with appropriate recommendations and guidance when making important planning and legislative decisions.

Friedman (1994) concludes that planning education should become more practically focused and socially involved. Relying on past research and on his own research, Friedman (1994) found that the need for planning education to be more practically focused and socially involved was, "...a recurrent theme among planning educators, many of whom feel cut off from professional practice in the pursuit of their research and teaching careers." Concluding that the education of planners in graduate planning programs should emphasize practical reasoning rather than scientific analysis, Friedman (1994) felt that a more practical approach to the education of planners in graduate planning programs could significantly help make theory a reflective inquiry and would allow students and faculty to more easily address the practical issues practicing professional planners face.

Planning education should also prepare action-oriented and community-centered leaders instead of preparing the next generation of planning educators. As the gap between planning education and planning practice has grown since the end of World War II through the end of the 20th century, Friedman (1994) argued that planning education needs to move closer toward merging theory and practice as opposed to emphasizing theory over practice. Friedman (1994) argued that "...planners will need to assume new roles as negotiators, facilitators, organizers, information providers, and practitioners capable of working with diverse constituencies. Consequently, planners must be prepared to address social equity, race, and poverty concerns with professional skill." To be an effective professional practicing planner, the antiseptic conditions of theory and the classroom must embrace more of the dirtiness and messiness of urban life and the problems of society eventual practicing planners will be asked to solve and remedy.

Although the messiness of professional work must be introduced to the classroom, Friedman (1994) also argues that planning education should not lower its standards of high-quality scholarly work, and that planning education must impart a theoretical grounding to both planning students and the practice of planning in the field. Planning curriculum must help future practicing planners reflect on and critique the deeply entrenched normative presuppositions they will face as practicing planners and help them engage in a dialogue with their own and other communities with tolerance and respect for the views of others. In short, in quoting Harper and Stein (1992), Friedman (1994) concludes, that, "Planning curriculum...should include aspects of applied philosophy, normative ethical theory, economic theory, and political theory. Planning education should be integrative and interdisciplinary."

Expanding on the work of Friedman (1994) and specifically the work of Ozawa and Seltzer (1999), Alexander (2001) looked specifically at several questions pertaining to theory (the

substantial and procedural knowledge that planners need to know), methods and skills (or the writing, analysis, synthesis, creativity and design skills planners felt were important) and judgment and good sense (or the attitude and judgment skills planners felt were important). Alexander (2001) found that contemporary planning curriculum, in the core curriculum of many contemporary American graduate planning programs, as the critical link between theory and practice, must move closer to practice and incorporate more communicative practice in the education of prospective future planners. The skills and competencies of individual planners were found to be directly linked to different, specified forms of knowledge, including analysis, communication, design, management, planning history and theory, and writing, as opposed to a limited focus on theoretical classroom-taught paradigms of planning. Alexander (2001) concluded that "...the competent planner is a well-rounded person equipped with a blend of communicate, analytic, and synthesizing skills." Alexander's (2001) conclusion raises a central question that most contemporary American graduate planning programs now face: Should we teach graduate planning students to be future planning academics or should we teach them to be better practicing planners outside of the classroom and university campus? In short, we must do both. The core curriculums of planning programs, without sacrificing a solid and demanding theoretical grounding in the social and natural sciences, must also equip future planners with a wider range of practical skills so that they can be more effective and efficient practicing planning professionals.

Using a 53-statement survey, Kaufman and Escuin (2007) explored the possible existence of a common planning culture or ideology by surveying practicing planners in the United States, Spain and the Netherlands. The questionnaire was designed to study three separate dimensions of planning, including: 1) process, or a planner's attitude about performing different technical and political roles and the public's role in the planning process,

2) substantive, or a planner's attitude toward the environment, mass transit, private developers, and low-income and equity issues, and 3) work setting, or a planner's attitude about the agency(ies) they work for and their willingness to express their personal values in their work.

Based on the results of their questionnaire, Kaufman and Escuin (2007) found evidence of a common planning culture or ideology regardless of nationality. Regarding the political role of planners, Kaufman and Escuin (2007) found that planners do lobby proactively to defeat proposals that they think, based upon their technical experience and expertise, are harmful. In regard to environmental issues, Kaufman and Escuin (2007) also found that while concern for the environment is important, planners, in general, tend to temper their personal concern with a realization that other legitimate concerns, which may come into conflict with environmental protection, may be equally or even more important. Regarding mass transit specifically, Kaufman and Escuin (2007) found that professional practicing planners generally believe that people should be encouraged to use mass transit instead of automobiles and exercise this belief in promoting land use objectives that support and incorporate mass transit over traditional automobile-dependent development patterns. Despite evidence for a political and advocacy role among planners, Kaufman and Escuin (2007) found that planners tend to feel that they should accept and work within the formal rules and social norms of their organizations and departments even if they do not always agree with them.

Although Kaufman and Escuin (2007) do not necessarily critique the relationship between theory and practice in the classroom of American graduate programs in planning, their research does suggest that there is a distinctive difference between the political aspects of planning that planners face in the field and the technical aspects of planning that is often emphasized in the classroom of

American graduate planning programs. University campuses in the United States have a unique opportunity to shape the future of planning and other practitioner-based fields. Contemporary American graduate planning programs must strive to better include the procedural, substantive and work setting attitudes future and current professional practicing planners hold, especially given the number of nontraditional students who are current practicing planners and have returned to the classroom for additional training and education after years of professional experience in the field. The historical walls and divisions between theory and practice in both the professional and academic fields of planning are quickly breaking down. To remain relevant, and to ensure that future generations of practicing professional planners are equipped with the skills they need in order to be effective and efficient, contemporary American graduate planning curriculums must strive to find ways to incorporate and recognize the procedural, substantive and work setting attitudes future and current professional planners already have. By doing so, planning programs in the United States will be able to positively shape the field of planning and other practitioner-based fields.

Friedman (1994), Alexander (2001), and Kaufman and Escuin (2007), demonstrate that planning curriculums among contemporary American planning graduate education programs evolved in order to meet the changing and evolving nature of planning and the responsibilities that future and current practicing planning professionals face. Planners today are expected to be more than technical experts. They are expected to actively and positively engage others, including policymakers, special interests, developers and the public in general, in the policymaking process as opposed to the technical aspect of policy analysis and implementation. Planners are expected to be more than planners. They are also expected to be managers and administrators who regularly engage the public and other key stakeholders in the planning and

policymaking and administration process. Planning education programs across the United States must better consider whether or not their core curriculums are best preparing future planners for the challenges they will face as practicing planners, administrators and managers.

The NVAPA Membership Survey

Using surveys and questions developed by Friedman (1994), Alexander (2001), and Kaufman and Escuin (2007), the authors developed a 29-question survey with the help and support of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association. The survey was mailed to the NVAPA membership in Sept. 2011 and consisted of four sections, with six questions regarding “Demographic, Educational, and Social Characteristics”; 11 questions regarding “Income and Employment Characteristics”; three questions in the “Statements on the Outlook of Planning” section; and a final nine questions pertaining to “Skills and Planning Education.”

The NVAPA membership was chosen as the target population for two primary reasons. First, with a membership of approximately 292 individuals, the population is small enough to make a physical mailing survey feasible but large enough to get a reasonably diverse and varied response without worrying about potential bias in the sample results. Second, Nevada is an interesting state with several interesting demographic changes occurring

over the past several years. As one of the fastest growing states prior to the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009, Nevada’s major population centers experienced significant growth and significant expansion of the statewide planning profession. Despite pockets of population decline in some of Nevada’s largest urban centers since the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009, Nevada remains, according to the Nevada State Demographer (2012), a predominantly urban state with approximately 75.5 percent of the state’s total residential population in 2011 living in established urban communities including incorporated cities and unincorporated towns. This high concentration of the state’s residential population in established urban communities makes planning a very important function of local government in Nevada.

Prior to the survey being mailed out, the executive staff of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association sent an email to the entire membership informing them that each member would receive a survey and that each member should complete the survey and return it in the included self-addressed stamped return envelope. The NVAPA sent additional, subsequent emails to the NVAPA membership reminding them to complete the survey and return it as soon as possible. Table 1 presents the final mailing results of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey including the total number of surveys mailed, the total number of surveys returned due to incorrect addresses and the total number of completed surveys returned.

Table 1
2011 NVAPA Membership Survey Mailing Results

Category	Results
Number of Surveys Mailed Out	292
Number of Surveys Returned	2
Actual Population	290
Number of Surveys Returned	107
Return Rate	36.9%

Of the 292 surveys sent, two were returned with incorrect addresses, leaving a total actual population of delivered surveys of 290. Over the course of one month, 107 completed surveys, or 36.9 percent, were returned. For a 95 percent confidence level with a confidence interval of 10, a sample of 72 for a population 290 would be required.

The total number of returned surveys exceeded this minimal level, leaving the authors to conclude that the results from this survey are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level, indicating that the results presented in the next section are typical

and representative of planners working in Nevada.

Final Results

A few key results from each section of the survey are presented here beginning with demographic, educational and social characteristics.

Demographic, Educational and Social Characteristics

Table 2 presents the results for “Question 2: Please indicate your age.”

Table 2
Question 2: Please state your age.

Age Range	Survey Results NVAPA Membership	2010 US Census Results State of Nevada
18 to 19 Years	0.0% (0)	N/A
20 to 24 Years	0.0% (0)	6.6% (177,361)
25 to 34 Years	15.9% (17)	14.3% (386,326)
35 to 44 Years	31.8% (34)	14.2% (384,597)
45 to 54 Years	28.0% (30)	13.8% (374,073)
55 to 59 Years	16.8% (18)	5.8% (156,804)
60 to 64 Years	4.7% (5)	5.9% (160,597)
65 to 74 Years	2.8% (3)	7.4% (199,995)
75 to 84 Years	0.0% (0)	3.6% (97,606)
85 Years or Older	0.0% (0)	1.1% (29,532)
TOTAL	107	2,704,642

Out of the 107 surveys returned, the age range “35 to 44 Years” had the highest number of responses (31.8 percent, 34 responses); “45 to 54 Years” had the second highest number of responses (28.0 percent, 30 responses) and “25 to 34 Years” had the third highest number of responses (15.9 percent, 17 responses). This “graying” of the NVAPA membership is similar to the “graying” of the state’s entire population. The “graying” of the NVAPA membership also is mirrored by the national APA 2010 survey of planners’ salaries, which showed that the 35 to 54 age group was by far the largest segment of APA members. Although the NVAPA membership, based upon

the results of the survey, shares a similar aging population trend with Nevada’s statewide population, a “graying” of the NVAPA membership may signal that there are fewer younger planners to take over from older planners as they begin to retire. These results may also reflect that in times of economic distress, older and more experienced planners are being retained during reduction-in-force efforts, or are delaying retirement.

Table 3 presents the results for “Question 3: Please indicate your ethnicity.” and Table 4 presents the results for “Question 4: Please indicate your Educational Attainment Level.”

Table 3
Question 3: Please indicate your ethnicity.

Categories	Survey Results NVAPA Membership	2010 US Census Results State of Nevada
Hispanic or Latino	3.8% (4)	26.6% (720,068)
White, Non-Hispanic	91.5% (97)	54.0% (1,461,491)
Black or African American	0.0% (0)	7.8% (210,656)
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0.0% (0)	0.9% (23,628)
Asian	1.9% (2)	7.2% (194,100)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0% (0)	0.6% (15,011)
Other	2.8% (3)	3.0% (79,688)

Table 4
Question 4: Please indicate your educational attainment level.

Associate's Degree 8.4% (9)	Bachelor's Degree 67.3% (72)	Master's Degree 60.7% (65)	Doctoral Degree 7.5% (8)	Technical School/Training 0.9% (1)
AA	BA (4)	MA (1)	JD (2)	Energy Management (1)
AA Drafting	BS (13)	MS (9)	Public Pol./Admin. (1)	
AA Transfer	Urban Studies	Architecture (5)		
AA, AS Geography	Architecture (4)	MPA (10)		
Architecture	Criminal Justice (2)	"Planning" (18)		
General Associates	Geography (13)	Geography (4)		
Geospatial Design	Political Science (2)	Comm. Dev. (2)		
	Pub. Admin. (2)			
	Urban Planning (6)			

Based upon the results of the 2011 NVAPA survey, it is clear that practicing planners in Nevada, in both the private and public sectors, have a varied and diverse educational

background. A total of 72 respondents, or 67.3 percent, indicated that they had a bachelor's degree; and a total of 65 respondents, or 60.7 percent of the 107 returned surveys, indicated

that they had a master's degree. Obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in urban studies, architecture, management and public administration, planning, political science, geography, and community development were very common and suggest that the Nevada planning community is very diverse in terms of its educational background and experience. A majority of survey respondents, 91.5 percent or 97 respondents, indicated that they were white, Non-Hispanic. Although, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, a majority of Nevadans, 54.0 percent or approximately 1.5 million individuals, are also white, Non-Hispanic, the results of the NVAPA survey indicate that the Nevada planning community is not as ethnically diverse as the state's actual population. Compared to the 2010 APA/AICP Planners Salary Survey of planners nationwide, the ethnicity of planners in Nevada is very similar to the national trend (90.0 percent).

Income and Employment Characteristics

Table 5 presents the results for "Question 10: Do you currently work primarily in the public,

for-profit private, or nonprofit private sector?". Table 6 presents the results for "Question 11: If you currently work primarily in the PUBLIC sector, what level of government do you work for?".

A majority of respondents, 75.9 percent or 66 of the 87 survey respondents who answered this question, indicated that they work primarily in the public sector, while just 24.1 percent, or 21 of the 87 survey respondents who answered question 10, indicated that they work primarily in the for-profit private sector. Of those respondents who indicated that they work primarily in the public sector, a majority of respondents, 57.4 percent or 39 respondents, indicated that they work for a municipal government, while 25.0 percent of respondents, or 17, indicated that they work for a county government. These results suggest that planning education programs take into account that a significant number of their students may likely become professionals in the public sector working for a local government.

Table 5

Question 10: Do you currently work primarily in the public, for-profit private, or nonprofit private sector?

Response	Number of Responses
Public	75.9% (66)
For-Profit Private	24.1% (21)
Nonprofit Private	0.0% (0)

Table 6

Question 11: If you currently work primarily in the PUBLIC sector, what level of government do you work for?

Response	Number of Responses
Municipal	57.4% (39)
County	25.0% (17)
State	4.4% (3)
Regional (ex: TMRPA)	10.3% (7)
Federal	0.0% (0)
Other	2.9% (2)

Table 7 presents the results for “Question 15: What areas of planning, in your current position, do you commonly work in?”. Although “Land Use, Codes” was the most common area of planning among respondents, it is clear that planners who responded to the 2011 NVAPA survey also work in many other areas of planning as well. “Economic Planning, Development,” “Environmental, Natural Resources,” “Facilities, Infrastructure,” “Planning Management,” “Transportation,” and “Urban Design” were all other areas of planning in which at least 30 percent of respondents indicated they commonly work in.

For planning education programs, this suggests that existing planning core curriculums should take into account the many different areas of planning, beyond land use and codes, in which planners will eventually work. One area of future potential exploration is whether or not planning curriculums in university planning programs tends to focus on either “practical” or “theoretical” approaches to planning to the exclusion of the other.

Table 8 presents the results for “Question 16: Are you currently responsible for managing other planners or employees?”.

Table 7

Question 15: What areas of planning, in your current position, do you commonly work in?

Response	Number of Responses
Land Use, Codes	74.7% (65)
Economic Planning, Development	37.9% (33)
Environmental, Natural Resources	34.5% (30)
Facilities, Infrastructure	34.5% (30)
Housing	25.3% (22)
Parks, Recreation	23.0% (20)
Planning Management	35.6% (31)
Transportation	36.8% (32)
Urban Design	37.9% (33)
Other	20.7% (18)

Table 8

Question 16: Are you currently responsible for managing other planners or employees?

Response	Number of Responses
No	49.4% (42)
Yes	50.6% (43)

Of the 85 respondents that answered Question 16, 50.6 percent or 43 respondents, indicated that they were responsible for managing other planners or employees. Although there is a near equal split in the answers to Question 16, the fact that such a higher number of respondents indicated that they were responsible for managing other planners or employees suggests that planning curriculums take into account the possibility that graduating planners may one day be responsible for

managing other planners or employees. This suggests that planning curriculums should incorporate at least some instruction in the field of public administration and management, including personnel management and human resources, budgeting, finance and accounting, and organizational behavior and management.

Skills and Planning Education

Table 9 presents the results for “Question 21: Statements Regarding THEORY,” in which survey respondents were asked to rank nine

separate statements regarding the importance of planning theory in their day-to-day work as either very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

Table 9
Question 21: Statements Regarding THEORY

Statement	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important
Understanding of law, legal institutions, codes, ordinances, etc.	88.5% (92)	11.5% (12)	0.0% (0)
Ability to read a zoning code and interpret its case-related application	74.3% (78)	21.9% (23)	3.8% (4)
Understanding basic microeconomic theory and its application(s)	24.0% (25)	65.4% (68)	10.6% (11)
Understanding of physical planning alternatives, what others have tried	64.4% (67)	33.7% (35)	1.9% (2)
Knowledge of the evolution/history of urban forms resulting from economic, political and/or social forces	32.0% (33)	51.5% (53)	16.5% (17)
Understanding of urban structure, space dynamics of a city	44.2% (46)	51.9% (54)	3.8% (4)
Familiarity with laws, ordinances, policies and institutional structures for implementation	79.0% (83)	21.0% (22)	0.0% (0)
Familiarity with the development process and/or procedural theory	54.8% (57)	39.4% (41)	5.8% (6)
Understanding contemporary urban issues and/or alternative strategies for addressing them	55.8% (58)	43.3% (45)	1.0% (1)

The majority of survey respondents indicated that each of the nine statements listed in Table 9 regarding planning theory were either very important or somewhat important in their day-to-day work as practicing planners. These results suggest that practicing planners find it important to have a wide grasp of planning theory and that planning program curriculum take into account the importance of planning theory.

Table 10 presents the results for “Question 23: Statements Regarding PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE,” in which survey respondents were asked to rank three separate statements regarding the importance of procedural

knowledge in their day-to-day work as very important, somewhat important or not at all important. A majority of survey respondents indicated that each of the three statements regarding procedural knowledge listed in Table 10 were very important in their day-to-day work as planning practitioners. A majority of respondents, 60.6 percent, felt that understanding and articulating the “rationale for planning” was very important; 70.2 percent of respondents felt that a familiarity with the interaction of planning, implementation and markets was very important; and 82.7 percent of respondents indicated that an understanding of the planning process was very important.

Table 10
Question 23: Statements Regarding PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE

Statement	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important
Understanding and articulating “the rationale for planning”	60.6% (63)	38.5% (40)	1.0% (1)
Familiarity with the interaction of planning, implementation and markets	70.2% (73)	29.8% (31)	0.0% (0)
Understanding of the planning process (who’s involved, what happens when, etc.)	82.7% (86)	17.3% (18)	0.0% (0)

Table 11 presents the results for “Question 25: Statements Regarding JUDGMENT and GOOD SENESE” in which survey respondents were asked to rank seven separate statements

regarding the importance of personal judgment and good sense in their day-to-day work as either very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

Table 11
Question 25: Statements Regarding JUDGMENT and GOOD SENSE

Statement	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important
Working well with colleagues within the organization	85.6% (89)	14.4% (15)	0.0% (0)
Working well with the general public	95.2% (99)	4.8% (5)	0.0% (0)
Understanding what the public and/or client wants	91.3% (95)	8.7% (9)	0.0% (0)
Ability to express the collective good	70.2% (73)	26.9% (28)	2.9% (3)
Being a self-starter	73.1% (76)	24.0% (25)	2.9% (3)
Ability to complete quality work on time and within budget	87.5% (91)	11.5% (12)	1.0% (1)
Awareness of institutional politics	68.3% (71)	31.7% (33)	0.0% (0)

The majority of survey respondents indicated that each of the seven statements regarding personal judgment listed in Table 11 was very important in their day-to-day work as practicing planners. Working well the general public (95.2 percent, or 99 respondents), understanding what the public and/or client wants (91.3 percent, or 95 respondents) and the ability to complete quality work on time and within

budget (87.5 percent, or 91 respondents) were personal judgment and common sense skills that survey respondents indicated were particularly important to them in their day-to-day work as practicing planners.

Table 12 presents the results for “Question 27: Statements Regarding METHODS and SKILLS.”

Table 12
Question 27: Statements Regarding METHODS and SKILLS

Statement	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important
Clear, concise in-house memo writing	69.9% (72)	30.1% (31)	0.0% (0)
Ability to write findings, draft ordinances, etc.	73.8% (76)	26.2% (27)	0.0% (0)
Ability to write reports, lengthier documents	82.5% (85)	17.5% (18)	0.0% (0)
Ability to write short pieces (brochures, etc.) for the general public	57.3% (59)	38.8% (40)	3.9% (4)
Speaking formally and informally with the public and elected officials	93.1% (95)	6.9% (7)	0.0% (0)
Ability to communicate graphically	57.3% (59)	40.8% (42)	1.9% (2)
Clear, linear thinking	71.6% (73)	25.5% (26)	2.9% (3)
Ability to conduct primary data collection	39.2% (40)	57.8% (59)	2.9% (3)
Ability to perform qualitative and quantitative reasoning	74.3% (75)	22.8% (23)	3.0% (3)
Comfort and willingness to work with numbers	33.3% (34)	59.8% (61)	6.9% (7)
Competency in basic computer programs (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.)	72.5% (74)	27.5% (28)	0.0% (0)
Competency in GIS	19.6% (20)	67.6% (69)	12.7% (13)
Competency in multilinear regression	5.2% (5)	47.4% (46)	47.4% (46)
Ability to use land records and blueprints	57.4% (58)	36.6% (37)	5.9% (6)
Knowledge of the uses and limitations of models and forecasts	31.7% (32)	52.5% (53)	15.8% (16)
Competency in site analysis	61.8% (63)	36.3% (37)	2.0% (2)
Ability to synthesize and reduce four pages into one paragraph	59.0% (59)	34.0% (34)	7.0% (7)
Ability to follow a "thin thread" to collect data and information creatively from diverse sources	45.1% (46)	52.9% (54)	2.0% (2)
Ability to see multiple perspectives and reconcile into a single product	75.5% (77)	24.5% (25)	0.0% (0)
Ability to access and synthesize secondary data	44.6% (45)	49.5% (50)	5.9% (6)
Ability to see multiple perspectives and reconcile in three dimensions	60.0% (60)	29.0% (29)	11.0% (11)
Competency with scenario techniques	40.6% (41)	52.5% (53)	6.9% (7)

The majority of survey respondents indicated that each one of the 22 separate methods and skill sets listed in Table 12 was either very important or somewhat important to their day-to-day work as practicing planners. Speaking formally and informally with the public and elected officials (93.1 percent, or 95 respondents), the ability to write reports and lengthier documents (82.5 percent, or 85 respondents), and the ability to see multiple perspectives and reconcile them into a single product (75.5 percent, or 77 respondents) were the methods and skills that survey respondents indicated were particularly important to them in their day-to-day work as practicing planners.

Discussion – Charting a Future Course for Planning Curriculum in the United States

The primary purpose of the September 2011 NVAPA membership survey was to begin to understand the responsibilities that practicing professional planners in Nevada currently face and the skills these planners feel are important so that we, as scholars and as educators in graduating planning programs in universities across the United States, can begin to craft a new core planning curriculum that balances the rigors of theory with the practicality of practice. Edwards and Bate (2011) outline the difficulty that is inherent in developing a core planning curriculum that equally emphasizes theory and practice:

“Planning practitioners define the scope of practice based on their day-to-day experiences in confronting planning challenges, so they articulate necessary skills and knowledge based on those experiences. Planning faculty, most of whom are academic researchers with doctorates, must meet their pedagogic responsibilities to provide a foundation of knowledge, while at the same time providing useful skills for the professional planner.”

Practicing professionals want to learn what it takes to be successful professionals and academics want to teach what it takes to be successful academics. In unraveling this paradox of contemporary American graduate planning programs, Edwards and Bates (2011) suggest that, “The challenge for schools is to explicitly think through how their core curriculum content defines their own identity; how it answers some key questions, including ‘What is planning?’ and ‘What are essential knowledge and skills for planning?’ and, most importantly, how to express that to students and applicants.” Surveys such as the one presented in this paper, along with periodic review of the core curriculum and the answering of these questions by individual planning programs, will allow individual American graduate planning programs to reconcile the tension between the practitioner and the academic when it comes to the perceived required planning knowledge and skills eventual practicing professional planners will need in order to be successful in their careers and deliver the services their communities demand.

The results of the September 2011 NVAPA membership survey presented in this article support the conclusions of Innes (1995) who found that, “...effective teaching (in the area of planning) requires the teacher to relinquish the authority role while assisting the students to take over their own learning process.” This will not be easy for academics in contemporary American graduate planning programs to do. But in outlining an ideal planning curriculum, Innes (1995) suggests that, “...the object lesson that learning (in the area of planning) by doing has far more power than simply learning by reading or listening and that social learning – learning as part of a group effort – has important advantages over the solitary investigation of the lonely researcher.” A future planning curriculum that balances theory and practice is one in which the planning student is encouraged to explore different aspects of planning in a group setting where the practical

is equally valued and emphasized as the theoretical.

Innes' (1995) work is as true today as it was nearly 15 years ago as evidenced by the results of the September 2011 NVAPA membership survey. Based on the survey results, a significant number of current practicing professional planners in Nevada felt that their own education in planning failed to

adequately prepare them for the demands of their current profession. A wide variety of both qualitative skills (effective public speaking, working in groups and strong writing skills) and quantitative skills (use of basic statistical tools, the use of multi-linear regression and the ability to collect primary data) are needed as practicing professional planners, as evidenced in the results of the Sept. 2011 NVAPA membership survey presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Question 22, 24, 26 and 28: Do you think that your planning education in the area(s) of THEORY, PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE, JUDGMENT and GOOD SENSE, and METHODS and SKILLS, adequately prepare you for the job you are currently performing?

Question Number	"No"	"Yes"
Question 22, THEORY	41.8% (41)	58.2% (57)
Question 24, PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE	50.0% (49)	50.0% (49)
Question 26, JUDGMENT and GOOD SENSE	47.9% (45)	52.1% (49)
Question 28, METHODS and SKILLS	28.6% (28)	71.4% (70)

Although a majority of survey respondents indicated that they felt that, yes, their education did prepare them for their work as professional practicing planners in Nevada (except for Question 24 where 50.0 percent of survey respondents answered "no" and "yes" respectively), a significant number of survey respondents in each category (theory, procedural knowledge, judgment and good sense, and methods and skills) felt that their planning education failed to adequately prepare them for the job that they are currently doing as practicing professional planners.

This result suggests that there is considerable room for improvement in the current approaches to planning education in graduate programs in the United States. And as both Innes (1995) and Edwards and Baner (2011) point out, critical evaluation of graduate planning curriculum is needed in order to effectively match what is taught in the classroom with the actual skill sets and

understanding future practicing professional planners will need.

Implications for Planning Curriculum

This article concludes with outlining a proposed model planning curriculum for American graduate planning programs. The authors hope that the results of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey, combined with the concluding recommendations laid out in this section, help to further the national discussion on how theory and practice in the education and practice of planning in the United States are balanced. Based upon the findings of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey, the authors submit the following outline of what they believe to be a model curriculum, one that equally emphasizes theory and practice, for graduate-level planning degree programs. First, some general assumptions that helped

guide the development of this proposed model planning curriculum are presented here:

Assumption No. 1: The proposed curriculum outlined in this section is better suited to a master's degree in planning. Although the authors are aware of various bachelor and doctoral planning degrees offered throughout the United States, the authors believe that the amount and depth of the proposed curriculum outlined here is better suited to a master's program and degree in planning.

Assumption No. 2: A master's degree in planning, no matter what it is titled (Master of Planning, Master of Urban Planning and Policy, etc.), is widely viewed as a professional degree and, therefore, considered the terminal degree for those intending to work in the planning profession.

Assumption No. 3: The proposed ideal planning curriculum is intended to prepare, without bias, those pursuing a career as a practicing professional planner in either the public or the private sector.

Assumption No. 4: The proposed ideal planning curriculum will likely *not* be sufficient to provide all of the skills that a practicing professional planner will be required to have, but *should* provide the degree holder with a sensitivity to the complexity of planning as a profession and to what skills the individual practicing professional planner might need to master.

Assumption No. 5: The proposed ideal curriculum should meet the current accreditation standards of university planning programs provided by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). Below, the authors have compared their proposal with the recently adopted PAB's (2012) Standards and Criteria, specifically Section 4: Curriculum and Instruction.

Based on these assumptions, the authors present the following planning curriculum.

Unlike the authors' proposal, the PAB provides a topical guideline only.

Theory, Principles and the History of Planning
(One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

The authors believe that this is the first course that a planning student should complete. Any theory, principles and history of planning course should strive to provide the planning student with a context for the remainder of the curriculum. Unlike some university Master of Planning programs that separate the theory, principles and history of planning into several courses taken over the course of the students' program, the authors believe that this single course should tie the history of planning and plans to the theory that has promulgated planning efforts at different periods in American history. This course should identify where theory and history have intersected and what the successes and failures of these intersections have been. Although the PAB appears to follow the concept of separating the teaching of theory, principles and history into distinct courses, the PAB does support the inclusion of these courses as part of a course of study. From Section 4, Part A "Required Knowledge, Skills and Values of the Profession," the PAB (2012) states that:

"The program shall offer a curriculum that teaches students the essential knowledge, skills, and values central to the planning profession. These required components will be taught in such a manner that it is possible to demonstrate that every graduate has studied them. Ordinarily, this means that they are included in core courses required of all students, although other approaches are possible."

Spatial Tools of Planning (Two Classes, Each Semester-Length, 6 to 8 Total Credit Hours)

These courses should cover the technical tools that planners will need to perform their jobs. One of the most important tools that should be

covered is the use of geographic information systems (GIS). According to the results of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey in Question 27, 67.6 percent of survey respondents indicated that competency in GIS was somewhat important, and an additional 19.6 percent of survey respondents indicated that competency in GIS was very important. GIS has become the basic spatial tool used to gather, organize and analyze the information and data planners most commonly use. More traditional tools, such as assessor parcel books, should also be reviewed in this course. This course must not only provide hands-on experience with these various tools, but should demonstrate how they can be utilized in the planning profession. In order to achieve the broader goals of this course, an investment in GIS software and the required hardware (computers, printers and plotters, lab space, etc.) will be required. The use of partnerships with other organizations, either public or private, that have the necessary expertise and equipment might be needed. The PAB (2012) does not directly address this proposed element in the recently adopted Standards and Criteria. However, the PAB (2012) does require instruction in a number of specific tasks required in the practice of planning, including instruction in data collection, analysis and modeling tools for forecasting, policy analysis, design of projects and plans, and other quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative Methods for Planning (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

A significant number of survey respondents who answered Question 29 in the 2011 NVAPA membership survey indicated that a wide variety of various statistical abilities, including the collection of primary data, a comfort and willingness to work with numbers, and a basic competency in multi-linear regression, was somewhat or very important in their ability to perform their jobs as practicing professional planners. Although it is likely that most Master of Planning students will have already received some education in the area of

statistical and quantitative analysis in an undergraduate program, this course is intended to focus on the types of statistical tools that are most common in and relevant to the planning process. These tools should not only include the relevance of them to various planning efforts, but also the hands-on application of the various tools introduced in the course. The PAB (2012) does directly address this proposed curriculum element in the PAB's recently adopted Standards and Criteria, Section 4, Part A, subsection 2, "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods: data collection, analysis and modeling tools for forecasting, policy analysis and design of projects and plans."

Developing, Implementing and Administering the Comprehensive Plan (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

A majority of respondents to the 2011 NVAPA membership survey indicated that all three of the components of procedural knowledge listed in Question 23 were very important to their ability as practicing professional planners to do their jobs properly. This result suggests that a course dedicated to developing, implementing and administering the comprehensive plan, one of the most important procedural elements and aspects of being a practicing professional planner, should be a cornerstone to an ideal Master of Planning curriculum.

This course should provide a Master of Planning student with a familiarity of why a comprehensive plan is vital to successful planning. This course should present the various elements that a comprehensive plan might include, including: 1) the information that will be needed to support the various elements of a comprehensive plan, 2) the differences among vision statements, goals, policies and implementation tools, and 3) the actual structure of the comprehensive plan. An important part of this course should focus on how data is gathered and the process of public involvement and official adoption. The PAB (2012) does address this proposed curriculum

element in the PAB's recently adopted Standards and Criteria most directly in Section 4, Part 1, subsection 1, "General Planning Knowledge." The PAB emphasizes understanding of the relationships among the past, the present and the future in planning domains, as well as the potential for methods of design, analysis and intervention to influence the future with particular focus on plan creation and implementation and different planning process methods.

Planning Law (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

Any planning law course should strive to balance the theoretical legal underpinnings of contemporary planning with the practical legal knowledge that planning students will need to know in order to function as effective practicing professional planners. In Question 21, a majority of survey respondents, 79.0 percent or 83 respondents, indicated that it was very important to have a familiarity with the laws, ordinances, policies and institutional structures needed for proper planning and planning implementation. This course should strive to familiarize Master of Planning students with the various types of federal, state and local government laws that practicing professional planners will encounter during their careers. The course should include a thorough overview of zoning and its legal and constitutional basis. In addition to Euclidian zoning, variations on zoning used by local governments, such as performance zoning, transect zoning and other recent zoning approaches, should be explored.

The concept of unified development codes should also be provided in this course. The Master of Planning student must also be taught how local development regulations are structured based on state enabling statutes and the difference between home rule and Dillon's law statutes. Federal laws that have influenced planning, including key federal and state court decisions, should be the final component of this case. The PAB (2012) specifically addresses the need for instruction

in planning law in a graduate planning program in Section 4, Part A, subsection 1-c, "Planning Law: appreciation of the legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs."

Planning Administration (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

Administration and management has become an increasingly important responsibility of the practicing professional planner. A majority of survey respondents, 50.6 percent or 43 respondents, of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey indicated that they were currently responsible for managing other planners or employees within their organization. Master of Planning students need at least some education in how to be effective managers and administrators before they are asked to manage other planners and employees as practicing professional planners.

The authors do recognize that not all planning professionals will hold an official title of manager, administrator or executive director during their careers but all professionals during their careers will have to utilize different managerial skills. This course is intended to introduce the Master of Planning student to the various types of federal, state, regional and local organizations, agencies and entities that commonly are part of the planning process. This course should also provide basic skills in work program development and different budgeting concepts including incrementalism, program budgeting, zero-based budgeting and other approaches. Although this curriculum element is somewhat inferred in the PAB (2012) criteria, the PAB fails to explicitly outline a proper planning administration curriculum.

Planning and the Market (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

Based upon the results of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey, concepts pertaining to economics, public and private finance, real estate development and finance, and other issues related to markets and development are

proving to be increasingly important to the practicing professional planner. No planning student can be adequately prepared for a career as a practicing professional planner without an understanding of how markets function and the important relationship between how markets function and planning. This course should introduce the Master of Planning student to the basics of real estate development and finance and how the private sector works and functions within different real estate markets.

This course should include how developers conceive projects, identify and purchase property, and finance different real estate projects. This course should also identify the tools that planners might use in assisting the development community in the real estate market. An important component of this course should also include the principles of urban revitalization, redevelopment, and in-fill development strategies and techniques used by government to direct development in accordance with various community plans. The PAB (2012) adequately addresses this curriculum element in Section 4, Part A, subsection 3-c, "Growth and Development: appreciation of economic, social, and cultural factors in urban and regional growth and change."

Planning Ethics (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

Planning ethics is a critical and important subject that should serve as a cornerstone piece of any ideal planning curriculum. Any ideal planning curriculum needs to offer at least one semester-long course in planning ethics and should also include a wider instruction in the ethics of public administration. Any ethics course for planners and public administrators should include the use of and instruction in the ethics codes currently used by professional organizations such as the American Planning Association, the International City-County Manager's Association, the American Institute of Certified Planners and the American Society

for Public Administration. Ethics provisions and standards for the state the particular Master of Planning program is located in should also be included, as well as the interaction of ethics and decision-making. The PAB (2012), in Section 4, Part A, subsection 3-a, "Professional Ethics and Responsibility," and 3-e, "Social Justice," clearly supports and identifies how planning ethics should be included into a model graduate planning education program.

Communication Skills (One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours)

A majority of survey respondents to the 2011 NVAPA membership survey, especially in their responses to the individual questions regarding methods and skills in Question 27, indicated that competency in various communication skills were very important to their job performances as current practicing professional planners. A majority of survey respondents, 69.9 percent, felt that clear and concise in-house memo writing was very important, 73.8 percent felt that the ability to write findings and draft ordinances was very important, 82.5 percent felt that the ability to write reports and lengthier documents was very important, and a significant majority of respondents, 93.1 percent, felt that speaking formally and informally with public and elected officials was very important.

No matter how excellent a plan or application review may be, if it cannot be communicated effectively, it will not be successful. This course should be designed to introduce the Master of Planning student to the various communication tools used by planners. These tools should include, but are not limited to, *visual tools*, such as maps, models, and even digital formats and tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint; *written communication tools*, such as reports and memos; and *verbal skills*, such as formal presentations to elected bodies or testimony before different legislative committees, and even informal presentations, such as staff meetings, town halls, and public meetings. The PAB (2012) clearly addresses this proposed

curriculum element in Section 4, Part A, subsection 2-b, “Written, Oral and Graphic Communication,” and subsection 2-f, “Leadership,” with focus on tools for attention, formation, strategic decision-making, team building, and organizational and community motivation.

Specializations (Two Classes, Semester-Length, 6 to 8 Total Credit Hours)

The planning profession offers individuals a number of career specialties. Although “land use, codes” was clearly the most common area of planning among respondents of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey (74.7 percent of respondents in Question 15), economic planning and development, environmental and natural resources, facilities and infrastructure, housing, parks and recreation, planning management, transportation, urban design, and other areas of planning were also frequently recognized by survey respondents as areas of specialization. Master of Planning students should be encouraged to take courses that are of interest to them yet help them in developing their own specialty. Such an elective course or set of courses should introduce the Master of Planning students to the variety of possible planning specialties. Specialties such as transportation planning, historic preservation or even military base planning should be included in the course outline. The PAB (2012) clearly addresses the curriculum element of specialization in Section 4, Part B, stating that when it comes to area of specialization and electives, “The program shall have sufficient depth in its curriculum and faculty in the specialization areas and electives it offers to assure a credible and high quality offering.”

Internships (Advisor Supervised, Semester-Length, 0 Total Credit Hours)

As already alluded to, the answers to questions 22, 24, 26 and 28 of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey suggest that a significant number of practicing professional planners in

Nevada felt that their education, in the areas of theory, procedural knowledge, good judgment and common sense, and methods of skills, did not adequately prepare them for the practical demands of their job as practicing professional planners. The required completion of an internship as a Master of Planning student could potentially bridge the divide between the academic and theoretical instruction in planning and the practical demands of practicing planners.

Brooks, Nocks, Farris, and Cunningham (2002) argue that, in evaluating the effectiveness of different Master of Planning programs such as the Masters of City and Regional Planning (MCRP) at Clemson University in South Carolina, “The internship is an important practice-oriented element of the curriculum.” They also argue that the internship affords, “...opportunity for students to experience practice models not based on the academic research model and an opportunity for students to synthesize the skill-sets they obtain in more traditional course-work.” The inclusion of an internship in any Master of Planning program, assuming that the Master of Planning is a terminal degree for most practicing professional planners, has also been proven important in helping planning students find gainful and meaningful employment within the field upon graduation. Brooks, Nocks, Farris, and Cunningham (2002) found that, “The internship plays a pivotal role in students’ lives and careers...and the internship has led to permanent employment, as a number of students employed originally as interns have moved into positions at their internship agency on graduation.”

Based on the results of the 2011 NVAPA membership survey, the authors strongly believe that internships must be part of any ideal Master of Planning curriculum. The application of the education received in the classroom to real-world circumstances will prepare Master of Planning students to successfully meet their responsibilities as practicing professional planners after

graduation. This requirement will require the university and the department responsible for the Master of Planning program to identify and sustain internships with partnering

organizations, agencies and firms in both the public and private sectors in order for other required elements of the coursework to be completed.

**Table 14
Proposed Curriculum and Current Accreditation and Criteria Approved by the PAB**

Proposed Curriculum	Planning Accreditation Board Existing Standard (April 14, 2012)
<u>Theory, Principles and the History of Planning</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	<u>General Planning Knowledge</u> Courses to include general instruction in: purpose and meaning of planning, planning theory, planning law, human settlements and history of planning, and the future of planning, global dimensions of planning.
<u>Spatial Tools of Planning</u> Two Classes, Each Semester-Length, 6 to 8 Total Credit Hours	<u>Planning Skills</u> Courses to include general instruction in: research, written, oral and graphic communication, quantitative and qualitative methods, plan creation and implementation, planning process methods, and leadership
<u>Quantitative Methods for Planning</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	<u>Values and Ethics</u> Course to include general instruction in: professional ethics and responsibility, governance and participation, sustainability and environmental quality, growth and development, and social justice.
<u>Developing, Implementing and Administering the Comprehensive Plan</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	<u>Specializations</u> Programs must demonstrate that there are enough courses in the areas of specialization that students get the depth and range of materials to give them a level of expertise.
<u>Planning Law</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	<u>Electives</u> The curriculum shall contain opportunities for students to explore other areas such as exposure to other professionals, other specializations, and emerging trends and issues.
<u>Planning Administration</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	
<u>Planning and the Market</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	
<u>Planning Ethics</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	
<u>Communication Skills</u> One Class, Semester-Length, 3 to 4 Total Credit Hours	
<u>Specializations</u> Two Classes, Semester-Length, 6 to 8 Total Credit Hours	
<u>Internships</u> Advisor Supervised, Semester-Length, 0 Total Credit Hours	

Although the PAB (2012) does provide room for internships as part of any graduate planning education program, the authors would prefer a much stronger emphasis on internships in Section 4, Part B, subsection 2 regarding electives that reads, “The curriculum shall contain opportunities for students to explore other areas such as exposure to other professions, other specializations, and emerging trends and issues.”

Table 14 provides a short summary comparing the proposed curriculum outlined in this article to the current accreditation and criteria as approved by the Planning Accreditation Board approved April 14, 2012. Note that the Planning Accreditation Board does not provide specific guidance on the total number of credits devoted to each area of study, but instead provides guidance on the types of courses that should be provided for each general area of study. For example, according to the Planning Accreditation Board, students studying for a Master of Planning should receive general instruction in the area of general planning and knowledge and that courses included in this general area of study should include the purpose and meaning of planning, planning theory, planning law, the future of planning and global dimensions of planning.

Conclusion

This article is meant to continue a larger discussion regarding how current approaches to the education of current and future practicing professional planners can be improved so that theory and practice are equally emphasized and planners are better equipped to meet the growing demands of their positions in the field. Although a model planning curriculum is presented in this paper, the authors hope that other researchers will use the survey developed for this article in their own communities and their own states. Future research should focus on duplicating our survey results in states with larger populations

where the demands that professional planners face might be greater and further reveal the need for improvements in contemporary American graduate planning programs.

The authors also acknowledge the general limits of the survey used in this article. The authors believe that it is equally important to capture what skills nonmembers of the American Planning Association in Nevada view as important for professional practicing planners. Planners routinely engage with the public and other government professionals who are not members of the American Planning Association, whose education may be different from that of the planner, and whose experience with practicing planners may lead to a different perception regarding the skills that effective planners should have. Future research in Nevada will include a similar survey for non-members of the American Planning Association who may routinely interact with planners, including elected and appointed officials and other government professionals.

Future research, both in Nevada and throughout the United States, should strive to broaden and add to the work summarized in this publication. By doing so, we hope that our efforts here in Nevada can continue to contribute to a national discussion on the future of the planning profession as we strive to improve both the public accountability and transparency of our organizations while also improving overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

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