

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO CREATE A NEW DESIGNATION FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN
URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
SCHOOL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to create a new designation for the Master of Arts and Master of Science Programs in Urban and Regional Planning as the School of Urban and Regional Planning in the Graduate College.

Executive Summary: The proposed designation will reflect accreditation guidelines and other similar units at the University of Iowa and other post-secondary institutions. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of current organization.** The Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning offers a professional degree (either a Master of Arts or a Master of Science) in urban and regional planning. The program is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board and requires two years of study (50 semester hours). It is the primary recognition for individuals in the urban planning profession. The program focuses on enhancing the quality of life for residents of both urban and rural areas and includes the following areas of concentration – economic development; geographic information system (GIS); land use and environmental planning; housing and community development; and transportation.
- ◇ **History of program.** The program was founded in 1964 and has graduated more than 700, including 26 students in Spring 2010. The program has nine full-time faculty and approximately 60 full-time students.
- ◇ **Reason for proposed change.** It is anticipated that the name change will help the unit to be perceived, especially by prospective students, as equivalent to planning programs at other universities. The proposed name change is expected to assist in gaining visibility in Iowa communities, improving the practice of planning, and enhancing the unit’s ability to obtain field experiences for students. On the University of Iowa campus, many professional programs are housed in units with a “school” designation: Social Work, Music, and Library and Information Sciences. The proposed name change will result in consistency with other professional programs on campus.
- ◇ **Administrative organization.** No change is expected in the administrative organization of the proposed unit. The Graduate Program is currently overseen by a director.
- ◇ **Consistency with accreditation agency.** The Planning Accreditation Board specifies the following guideline – “Normally, the planning program will be located in a department or school of planning.”¹

¹ Accreditation document, www.planningaccreditationboard.org, page 13.

- ◇ Comparable name at other institutions. Urban and regional planning programs are housed in colleges or schools in which planning is part of the title, including Arizona State University, Cornell University, University of Michigan, Florida Atlantic University, and Michigan State University.
- ◇ Impact on resources. Little direct or indirect cost is expected as a result of the proposed name change.
- ◇ Effect on students. There will be no direct impact on students because their program will continue to be accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board and the title of their program will not change – Master of Arts and Master of Science Programs in Urban and Regional Planning. Program configuration changes are not expected as a result of the proposed name change.
- ◇ Date of implementation. The proposed name change will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents.