

Dear Students,

Congratulations on your accomplishment of a big step – gaining admission to the Urban Planning Program at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP).

You now have an important decision to make, matching your interests and aspirations with what we have to offer. As much as we look forward to welcoming you as a member of our incoming class, we want to be sure it’s the right decision for you. Through your conversations with current students and faculty at the Open House and beyond, we hope that you will learn more about what makes the Urban Planning Program at Columbia an outstanding choice.

Among many strengths, I encourage you to explore these highlights of our program:

- **Global outlook** – we look to planning issues in New York City and internationally for studio projects, classroom case studies, and thesis research. By studying the impact of global linked processes (e.g. climate change and immigration) as well as local conditions on cities and communities, we think creatively about planning and policy approaches to improve processes and outcomes in cities around the world.
- **Urban analytics** – we are among the first in planning programs to engage data science and visualization in addition to spatial analysis to address urban problems, collaborate on design projects for the built environment, and inform planning efforts within a variety of contexts and practices.
- **Social justice** – we explore the tensions between market forces, civil society, and the goals of planning, and instill social justice values and practices throughout the curriculum, with the belief that planning education should promote the redistribution of resources in cities as much as the creation of wealth.
- **Flexible curriculum** – we support our students’ interests in planning and related fields, and you can fulfill some or all of elective requirements by taking courses offered in the Urban Planning Program, GSAPP, or other departments and schools at Columbia. Curricular innovations take place regularly, through new courses (e.g. machine learning, social entrepreneurship, design thinking, and resilience planning), as well as practicum and joint studios, to name just a few.
- **Connection to practice** – we draw from the large and diverse community of planners, practitioners, and scholars in New York and beyond to support our extensive curriculum, in addition to our dedicated full-time faculty. Being part of GSAPP, our program also connects with design, preservation, and real estate faculty and professionals to add to ideas and techniques developed by planners and social activists.
- **Career services** – New York City presents unmatched opportunities for internships and jobs. Our extensive career services include alumni panels and networking events, job search workshops, resume and portfolio feedbacks, visits to public planning agencies and private consulting firms, one-on-one meetings with local employers at the Career Fair, as well as a job board with up-to-date postings of employment, internship, and fellowship offerings.

Take your time to talk to current students and faculty, to ask questions, or to observe a class. We are here to help you make the right decision. Our Program Manager, Margaret Wiryaman (mjw2228@columbia.edu) can follow up with you and help connect with students and faculty.

Weiping Wu
Professor and Director