

2015 Planning Student Organization (PSO)

Welcome From the Planning Student Organization!

Dear Incoming MRPs, PhDs, and Dual Degree Students,
Congratulations on your decision to join the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) at the University of Massachusetts! On behalf of the Planning Student Organization, we would like to welcome you to the Regional Planning Program. This student guide will provide you with some information about UMass, LARP, and the Amherst area that may be helpful for you as incoming MRP and Dual Degree students.

The Planning Student Organization (PSO) is an organization of Regional Planning students that is a requirement for the MRP program's accreditation by the American Planning Association. This voluntary organization contains first and second years, dual degree, and part-time Master's and PhD Regional Planning students. The PSO works together to improve the Department's curriculum, our academic and community experiences as students, and our professional networks. PSO officers and students help to organize social gatherings, such as potluck lunches, gatherings at local venues, orientation, hikes, graduation festivities, and fundraisers. The PSO also supports a portion of a student's cost of attendance at planning-related conferences, as well as alumni panels and other networking events.

Fundraising is a very important aspect of the PSO. As a student, you are expected to volunteer for at least one fundraising event during the school year. Without all of us pitching in some of our time, we would not be able to support students attending conferences as well as the end of the year LARP graduation ceremony and celebration. In addition, it's a great way to bond with classmates, take a break from studies, and have fun!

We already have a couple fun and exciting fundraising activities planned for this semester. They include:

§ Yard Day - Faculty, staff and friends hire us to rake their leaves! Welcome to New England!

§ Triathlon - A triathlon at Puffer's Pond. This will take place one of the first weekends after school starts so if you are the competitive type, start your training! You can participate in teams or come out to volunteer and cheer on fellow students and faculty.

Please check your email for more information about orientation, the first PSO meeting and other social gatherings. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact any of the PSO officers. Welcome and we're looking forward to another great year!

Sincerely,

2016 PSO Officers

- Co-Presidents: Desiree Hamelin & Meredith Savage

- Treasurer: Ola Smialek
- Secretary: Ken Kirkland
- Social Chairs: Laura Dowd & Brett Gallagher
- GEO Liaison: Angelica Carey
- APA Liaison: Sierra Pelletier
- Student Senate Liaisons: Angelica Carey & Jeremy Price
- Communications Coordinator: unfilled (If you are interested in the Communications Coordinator position, please contact wither Meredith Savage at mssavage@umass.edu or Desiree Hamelin at ddemskih@umass.edu)

2015 Planning Student Organization Bylaws (excerpts)

Purpose:

1. To facilitate communication among Regional Planning students and between Regional Planning students and faculty.
2. To represent the Regional Planning program within the University, the community, the American Planning Association, prospective students, and alumni.
3. To support members of the organization with academic and professional development opportunities.

Membership:

The membership consists of students pursuing a doctorate or Master's degree in regional planning and is consistent with the University's policy and language of non-discrimination...[University non-discrimination language]...Membership is also open to undergraduate students, especially those in the Sustainable Community Development (formerly Environmental Design) program, who are on track to enroll in the MRP program; however, leadership positions are only open to those students who have been accepted into the graduate program.

Membership Dues:

For a member of the PSO to obtain the full-membership rights within the student organization, dues of \$30 will be required at the beginning of each semester.

A waiver for semester dues can be achieved through the participation in at least one field day per semester. The waiver can only be achieved by participating in field day during the current semester. Participating in more than one field day a semester will not grant a second waiver for future semesters.

Elections:

The executive committee positions are to be elected from a slate of nominees compiled by the Election Committee (see definition below). Nominations are to be compiled and elections are to be held in November. Students interested in running for a position must submit their name and the position(s) they are running for to the Election Committee by the date the Election Committee sets forth. Elections will be conducted by the departing administration and be based on a plurality voting system. All elected officers are to assume their responsibilities beginning at the close of the Fall semester for the period of one year. The month of December is to serve as a transition period with both incoming and outgoing officers actively involved in the PSO. The chair will make appointments to any office vacancies as needed.

Election Committee:

Consists of the President, Treasurer, Secretary, Student APA Reps, Communications Coordinator, and the Events Coordinators. The Faculty Advisor will be involved in the Election Committee but will not have a voting seat.

Meeting Frequency:

The executive committee is to meet, physically or electronically, at least two times a month. A general meeting of the membership is to meet at least twice a year at the beginning of each semester.

2015 Planning Student Organization Bylaws (2013 version)

Article I. Name: The official name of this organization is the Planning Student Organization (PSO) at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst.

Article II. Purpose: The purpose of this organization is:

1. To facilitate communication among Regional Planning students and between Regional Planning students and faculty.
2. To represent the Regional Planning program within the University, the community, the American Planning Association, prospective students, and alumni.
3. To support members of the organization with academic and professional development opportunities (such as APA conferences and meetings).
4. To generate revenue to fund academic and professional development opportunities for Regional Planning students.

Article III. Membership: The membership consists of students pursuing a doctorate or Master's degree in Regional Planning (including all dual degree students) and is consistent with the University's policy of non-discrimination. The University of Massachusetts – Amherst

prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, or treatment of, students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment.

Membership is also open to undergraduate students, especially those in the Environmental Design program, who are on track to enroll in the Regional Planning program; however, leadership positions are only open to those students who have been accepted into the graduate program. The Faculty Advisor will notify the Executive Committee of any undergraduate students who are on track to enroll and should be included in PSO communications.

Membership Expectations: It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to outline the scope and expectations of PSO members within one month of assuming responsibility of the organization. Expectations should include, but are not limited to, meeting attendance rules, fundraising participation requirements, involvement in committees and membership dues.

Membership Rights: A full member within the PSO has the right to attend sponsored events, E-Board meetings, and receive organizational support for any board-approved academic or professional development opportunities. A non-dues-paying member will have all the same rights except they will not receive support for academic or professional development opportunities.

Membership Requirements: Opportunities provided by the PSO, including academic and professional development opportunities and the annual Graduation Party, are funded by a combination of fundraising activities and membership dues. The average cost per member for PSO operations is \$120. Each member is responsible for contributing this amount by the time they graduate from the program. Contributions can take the form of participation in fundraising activities or membership dues. If a member participates in at least one approved fundraising activity per semester (for four semesters), that member will be exempt from paying membership fees. A member is responsible for contributing \$30 of membership dues to the PSO for every semester during which that member does NOT participate in a fundraising activity. The PSO Treasurer will collect dues by contacting each member who has not contributed the minimum amount of time to fundraising activities by the end of the semester. Students who do not meet membership requirements through fundraising activities or dues before that member's Graduation Party will be required to pay the \$120 contribution or will not be granted tickets to the Graduation Party.

At the beginning of the semester, the Executive Committee will decide which activities will be eligible for a due waiver and will communicate eligible activities to the general membership.

Article IV: Organizational Structure: The organization structure consists of the following officers:

An Executive Committee that consists of eight core members: President, first-year class representative who is appointed in the fall of each new academic year (president-elect), treasurer, secretary, student representative to the American Planning Association (APA), liaison to the GEO, liaison to the GSS, and social chair. Positions may be filled by more than one student, or not filled, as needed. The Faculty Advisor is appointed for a 2-year term without term restrictions.

1. A President who is responsible for convening the general and Executive Committee meetings and for coordinating ongoing organizational activities. The President is to communicate as necessary to the LARP Department Head, the Regional Planning Graduate Program Director, Faculty Advisor, and other faculty about matters of concern to the PSO. In addition, the President is to serve as the chairperson of the Executive Committee. The President is to serve on the Executive Committee throughout the spring semester. Once the incoming students assume responsibility, the President's title will change to Past-President and will be responsible for mentoring the current chair and other officers as needed. The Past-President is a voting member of the Executive Committee. The President will also serve as a co-signatory for the People's Bank Account.
2. A Treasurer who is responsible for maintaining the treasury in a PSO bank account and coordinating all financial management of the treasury with the LARP Office Manager. The Treasurer is responsible for collecting any annual membership dues and distributing and reimbursing funds. The Treasurer will also serve as a co-signatory for the People's Bank Account.
3. A Secretary who is responsible for the minutes of the general and Executive Committee meetings and for any necessary correspondence related to the business of the PSO.
4. An APA Student Representative who is responsible for participation in APA meetings and will act as the liaison between the Massachusetts Chapter of the APA and the PSO as well as coordinating all applications for conference funds.
5. A Communications Coordinator who is responsible for creating and maintaining communication and outreach tools including but not limited to the PSO listserv and blog, coordinating communication and outreach efforts with the LARP Department, especially in terms of LARP's website and Facebook page, and is the co-chairperson of the Orientation Committee.
6. Two Social Chairs who are co-chairpersons of the LARP Graduation Party Committee and responsible for planning other social and fundraising events. Events and activities are to be designed to promote camaraderie, social support, and PSO communication.
7. A Faculty Advisor who acts as a resource for the Executive Committee.
8. Graduate Employee Organization (GEO) Representative
9. Landscape Architecture Liaison

Article V. Elections: In November of each year (or when a vacancy arises), the Executive Committee will put out a call for nominations for the available positions. The elections need to be conducted at least one week before the bi-annual University of Massachusetts GSO budgeting orientation meeting. Any PSO member, not graduating in the coming spring/summer, can nominate themselves or be nominated by another person. All nominees who are up for a position that has more than one nominee should write a short paragraph describing their interest

in and qualifications for the position. The Secretary will collect the paragraphs, set up a voting survey, and send out the list of nominees and paragraphs to all PSO members. All current PSO members are eligible to vote.

Also during these elections, any PSO member can nominate a new faculty advisor. The nominees for faculty advisor will be included on the same ballot as the rest of the positions.

Article VI. Administration Transition Duties: During the month of December, after the new administration has been voted in, the departing administration will host a meeting to go over the duties of the new administration and answer all questions. During this meeting, the keys to the locker in the Planning Studio will be transferred, as well as all the pertinent log-in information for the online Bank Account. Access will also be given to the PSO Google Drive folder and Facebook group. The President(s) and Treasurer will also register for the GSO orientation training meeting. The co-signatories of the People's Bank Account will schedule a time to bring the new co-signatories to the Bank to transfer ownership rights. Ahead of this meeting, the new administration must update and ratify the new PSO By-laws.

Article VII. Committees:

1. The Academic and Professional Development Opportunity Committee determines events that are suitable for PSO to sponsor. Full members can present any event for board evaluation that they feel will benefit them/their peers academically and/or professionally. The board will determine if an event is appropriate for PSO support. If deemed appropriate, the amount of financial support per student will be determined. The board is co-chaired by the Treasurer and President and is open to any full members who desire to be involved with the approval/denial process.
2. The LARP Graduation Party Committee coordinates the planning of the LARP Graduation Ceremony and Party held each spring. Committee membership is comprised of volunteers from the general LARP Department and is meant to be a collaborative committee between both MRPs, PhDs, and MLAs. A representative from the MLA student body is to co-chair the committee with the PSO Events Coordinators.
3. Orientation Committee organizes events involving prospective and incoming Regional Planning students. It is co-chaired by the Communications Coordinator and the Events Coordinator.

Article VIII. Meetings: The Executive Committee is to meet, physically or electronically, at least two times a month. A general meeting of the membership is to meet at least twice a year at the beginning of each semester.

Article IX. Finances and Dues: Every January a budget is to be compiled by the Executive Committee. The budget should include, but is not limited to, membership dues, fundraising events and goals, and expenditures such as student conference allowances. The budget must be submitted by the University of Massachusetts GSO deadline (usually in late March) to receive funding from the university.

Article X. Amendment of Bylaws: Amending the bylaws is to be based on need as determined by the executive committee and/or the general membership and approved and disapproved by a majority vote of the membership.