Report on Activities
Fall 2021
Mission Statement

While many of our most vexing urban problems are metropolitan in nature, they are often left unresolved due to the lack of appropriate governmental machinery to deal with metropolitan issues. The Institute for Metropolitan Studies was created to address these problems by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and general spirit of cooperation between San José State University and its surrounding metropolitan community.
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Introduction and Summary of Activities

The Institute for Metropolitan Studies at San José State University is an interdisciplinary center for research, service, and public programming with a focus on issues of significance to San José and the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Based in SJSU’s Department of Urban and Regional Planning, the Institute was founded to bring the expertise of Silicon Valley’s urban university to bear on the urgent challenges facing our city and region. The Institute’s principals are Asha Weinstein Agrawal, Serena Alexander, Gordon Douglas, Richard Kos, Shishir Mathur, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Kathrine Richardson, and Kerry Rohrmeier, Bo Yang, and Ahoura Zandiatashbar.

I became Director of IMS when I came to SJSU in 2017. With funding from the Office of the Dean of the College of Social Sciences, my goal since then has been to breathe new life into the Institute – which had been largely dormant for over a decade – by expanding its presence on campus and beyond through public events and collaboration with faculty and students from across campus on new initiatives.

I’m pleased to say that in the four years since I took the reins, the Institute has begun to thrive. This report presents the progress we have made thus far: public events, a scholarly working group, becoming a home for research on pressing urban issues, and new initiatives for furthering public understanding of urbanization in California.

A major focus of the Institute under my stewardship has been the production of an ongoing series of public events featuring important new books in urban studies. Willow Lung-Amam, assistant professor of urban planning at the University of Maryland, was our first guest when she visited in Fall 2017 to present Trespassers, her book about the influence of Asian Americans on culture, politics, and place in Silicon Valley. We also screened the award-winning documentary East L.A. Interchange followed by a conversation between the director and SJSU Professor Marcos Pizarro and an audience of some 60 students, staff, and community members. In 2018, Derek Hyra, Director of
American University’s Metropolitan Policy Center, spoke about his book on the
gentrification of a historically Black neighborhood; Fran Stewart presented *The STEM
Dilemma: Skills that Matter to Regions*; and sociologist Japonica Brown-Saracino
presented her new ethnography of queer identities in small cities, *How Places Make Us.*

Every semester since has occasioned more exciting book talks, research symposia, and
other events supported by the Institute. We had both editors of the new *People’s Guide to
the Bay Area* share their project with us, and hosted a book launch for *Sparked: George
Floyd, Racism, and the Progressive Illusion*, edited by Walter Jacobs, Wendy Thompson
Taiwo, and Amy August. I collaborated with a student group to bring mobility justice
scholar Adonia Lugo, and with SJSU’s Dept. of Justice Studies to organize a presentation
from McGill University’s Jan Doering on race, crime, and gentrification. Other
highlights include a public conversation with the renowned urbanist Mindy Thompson
Fullilove reflecting on her work that has changed the way we understand cities and public
health; a visit from prominent urban design thinkers Elizabeth Timme and James Rojas,
which tied into a unique SJSU course on community placemaking; and the launch event
for a scholarship initiative from the Rotary Club of San José to fund student research on
housing and homelessness.

Another success was establishing of a University-wide working group for faculty and
graduate students working on urban issues. As a relatively new arrival to campus myself,
it has been an incredibly rewarding and educational experience just to seek out these
people and invite them to help start something new. Over lunches and coffee in whatever
meeting space we can find, I’ve been pleased to find how many others value the working
group culture and relish the chance to talk about research with colleagues. We now have
members from 14 different departments and divisions and from other area universities.

The Institute has long served as an organized research unit for consolidating the
considerable research and community service projects led by its principals. Members of
the Department of Urban and Regional Planning bring in hundreds of thousands of
dollars a year in funding. We have decided to stop reporting all such funding as tied to
the Institute – and instead report only our direct operating budget in the financial
appendix here – but are working instead to make IMS itself a forum for resource sharing
and rapid publishing opportunities for new research and pedagogy on urban and regional
studies among our network.

Having carefully stewarded our initial pot of funding from the College of Social
Sciences, I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish with limited resources.
Today, we continue to grow with help from a dedicated student assistant, Lou Jimenez.
We recently went live with a freestanding website for the Institute, and have welcomed
our first IMS Fellow, Dr. Alex Schafran. And so in 2021 we are visioning again –
expanding our fellows program and launching a major new initiative to make Institute for
Metropolitan Studies a center for cross-disciplinary collaboration on the study and
teaching of urbanization at the megaregional scale in California. Our goal now is to seek external funding and partnership opportunities to help IMS continue to grow and thrive at the center of metropolitan debate and problem solving in San José and beyond.

If this report finds you and piques your interest in the Institute for Metropolitan Studies, please don’t hesitate to get in touch. I look forward to welcoming you to one of our fantastic events or working group discussions, connecting you with the dynamic group of scholars affiliated with the Institute, or simply continuing the conversation about the issues that matter most to our region.

Sincerely,

Gordon Douglas, PhD
Director
The production of engaging public events, bringing big names and important thinkers in urban studies to SJSU while expanding our visibility in the Bay Area, has become central to the Institute’s mission. IMS organized sixteen public events between AY 2017-2021, including book talks, panel discussions, and public forums. A sampling of event flyers can be seen on the following pages. Co-sponsors have included SPUR, CatalyzeSV, the Rotary Club of San José, the SJSU President’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and numerous University departments and student groups.
**“URBAN TRILOGY”**

Join us April 14th, 2021
LIVE on ZOOM! @12:30pm (PT)

“Buildings and neighborhoods and nations are insinuated into us by life; we are not, as we like to think, independent of them.”


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**“SPARKED”**

Join Us May 14, 2021 @ 8:30pm (PT)


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**US vs THEM**

A Conversation on Race, Crime, and Gentrification with author Jan Doering, PhD

Live Webinar

Wednesday March 24, 2021 @ Noon

**New Development Politics in Small City America**

Join us for a presentation and discussion with Richard Ocejo (CUNY Graduate Center)!

The author of books on upscaling downtowns and the rise of craft economy will discuss his new work on the complex redevelopment and gentrification of smaller cities as the middle class flees expensive urban cores.

Light refreshments will be provided.

**Tuesday, November 27th, 2018**
4:30 - 5:30 pm
San Jose State University
MLK Library - Room 255

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**SJSU’s Institute for Metropolitan Studies and the Rotary Club of San Jose Present**

**Seeking Solutions to the Affordable Housing Crisis**

**Tuesday, March 19th**
12:30 pm - 2 pm
MLK Library, Room 255

**Panelists:**
Ray Brancato, Chief Impact Officer, Destination Home
Megan Carbon, Regional Director, PATH
Geoffrey Morgan, President and CEO, First Community Housing
Andrea Ureta, CEO, HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County, Inc.
Moderated by John Kandroski, Senior VP, Colliers International
Featuring San Jose City Councilmember Paul Rodriguez

Join experts on housing and homelessness from across our region for a critical look at the affordable housing crisis in Santa Clara County and what needs to be done now. Learn about an exciting new initiative from Rotary and PATH to support research on the most vexing urban issue of our time.

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**SJSU Institute for Metropolitan Studies**
facebook.com/metstudies

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**TACTICAL URBANISM IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

**OCTOBER 17, 2018**
12-1:30 PM | MLK LIBRARY ROOM 225

TACTICAL URBANISM AND OTHER "LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER" APPROACHES TO RENOVATE PUBLIC SPACE HAVE BECOME PROMINENT IN URBAN PLANNING IN RECENT YEARS. What does it mean to bring such things to less trendy places, traditionally under-served communities, or communities threatened by displacement? And how can leaders make such interventions like these reflect the need and priorities of longtime residents?

Join for a conversation with a panel of experts from cities across California.

*Refreshments will be served!*

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**The Road to Resegregation**

**In Conversation with Alex Schafran (University of Leeds)**

Urban planner and geographer Alex Schafran will present his new book, The Road to Resegregation: Northern California and the Failure of Politics, about how political fragmentation among institutions at all levels have led to a newly segregated geography of NIMBYism, sprawl, and the suburbanization of poverty.

**Tuesday, December 4th, 2018**
12:30 - 1:30 pm
San Jose State University
Student Union - Room 2B
Lunch provided
The Institute for Metropolitan Studies Presents

TRESPASSERS?

ASIAN AMERICANS AND THE BATTLE FOR SUBURBIA

Over the last few decades, California’s Silicon Valley has become not only the world’s technological epicenter, but also one of the fastest-growing and most racially and ethnically diverse regions in the U.S. Surpassed by the rise of tech giants like Google and Facebook, the region has attracted diverse, highly-educated immigrants from across the globe, particularly Asia. These migrants have built new lives among the region’s once predominately white, middle-class suburbs. Trespassers? explores the dreams and struggles of Asian Americans as they have made their homes in Silicon Valley suburbia, and the tensions that have often emerged over the region’s changing character.

SJSU Institute for Metropolitan Studies invites you to join us as Willing Lung-Annam, as she discusses her new book on the role of immigrants in shaping suburban language and culture, and the experiences of Asian Americans as they navigate suburban life.

NOVEMBER 15TH | 4:30PM
Location: DMH 150
Please RSVP by clicking the flyer

The Institute for Metropolitan Studies Presents

East L.A.

Interchange

Free film screening and discussion with Director Betty Kaplan

Date: November 29, 2017
Time: 4:00 pm (doors open at 3:30 pm)
Location: Student Union Theatre

Free Food!!!

Tells the story of working-class immigrants, Boyle Heights, the oldest neighborhood in East Los Angeles and how it has survived discriminatory housing covenants, Japanese-American internment, redevelopement, police policies, the building of the largest freeway interchange system in the nation, and the current forces of gentrification.

Please join us for the screening of this award-winning film followed by a discussion with the director.

The Institute for Metropolitan Studies Presents

RACE, CLASS, AND POLITICS IN THE CAPPUCCINO CITY

DEREK HYRA, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Monday February 5th at 5:30PM
San José State University - ENG 285 (7th & San Fernando)

Presented in partnership with SPUR

“A SOPHISTICATED ACADEMIC APPROACH TO STUDYING SOCIAL TENSIONS AT THE FOREFRONT OF CURRENT POLITICS, DEVELOPMENT, AND CULTURE” – THE WASHINGTON POST

“A POIGNANT, PROVOCATIVE, AND WELL-WRITTEN STUDY OF GENTRIFICATION” – ELIHAY ANDERSON

SJSU Institute of Metropolitan Studies

facebook.com/metstudies

SJSU Institute of Metropolitan Studies

SPUR

How Places Make Us

Novel LBQ Identities in Four Small Cities

May 2nd @ 5:00 PM in BBC 226

JAPONICA BROWN-SARACINO

SJSU Institute of Metropolitan Studies

San José State University

SPUR

SJSU Institute of Metropolitan Studies

SPUR

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
Founded in 2018, the IMS Urban Studies Working Group brings together faculty and graduate students from across San José State and beyond. The group meets regularly (in person when conditions allow), roughly once a month, to build interdisciplinary connections and opportunities for collaboration. It also provides an opportunity for members to share work in progress for workshopping and constructive feedback. Presenters to the working group have included Anthony Raynsford (Art and Art History), Kathleen McConnell (Communication), Matthew Holian (Economics), and MPA graduate student Liz Lange. During the COVID-19 pandemic we kept up our meetings online, and even spun off a “quarantine book club” during the strange summer of 2020. Today, members include both part-time and full-time faculty representing 14 departments, programs, and administrative offices ranging from Anthropology and Environmental Studies to Chemistry, Linguistics, Justice Studies, and the MLK Library, as well as faculty members at UC Berkeley and Mills College.
Affiliated Teaching, Research & Community Service

The Institute for Metropolitan Studies has traditionally accounted for all of the funded research and community service of its principals, the affiliated faculty of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. From large survey analyses to community-engaged service learning projects in Urban Planning courses, these activities often total several hundred thousand dollars a year in grant funding. We are no longer itemizing these projects as part of the IMS financial reporting, but do highlight some of the intersections between Institute activities and teaching and research at San José State.

With funding from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a neighborhood “tactical placemaking” project led by Professors Gordon Douglas and Virginia San Fratello connected students with community members to design and build a new public space in San José’s Northside neighborhood over two semesters in 2018. IMS presented a special event tied to the class featuring prominent urban placemaking thought leaders.

Every year, Professor Rick Kos leads students in the Masters of Urban Planning Capstone Studio course in an intensive community-based planning effort in collaboration with a local partner and CommUniverCity. In Fall 2021, IMS worked with community partner Veggielution to host a topical film screening for the public in the SoFA Pocket Park, the study site for the studio class.
# ORU Financial Report

## SJSU Budget and Activities Financial Sheet for Multi-Year ORU/ORTU Reports

**ORU/ORTU Name:** Institute for Metropolitan Studies  
**Period:** Jul 2019 - Jun 2021  
**70000-1023-660003 (Class code 4677)**

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*Property/InKind Contributions*
Looking Ahead

After four successful years reinvigorating and reimagining the Institute for Metropolitan Studies, IMS is in a strong position today. We are recognized across campus, throughout San José, and around the Bay Area as an increasingly visible and relevant center for and scholarship on urban issues. And we find ourselves now again looking ahead to a new moment of growth and visioning.

In the Spring of 2021, IMS was able to hire its first paid staff member, a wonderful student assistant named Lou Jimenez. Lou has already made a huge impact assisting with event facilitation (no small feat in the era of Zoom webinars and outdoor events) and helping us to launch our own freestanding website, which we are still building out, at sjsu.edu/metropolitanstudies/. And the 2021-22 academic year is already off to an exciting and productive start with a documentary film screening in a public park, a forthcoming book talk, and a busy calendar for the Working Group as well.

In August, the Institute officially welcomed its first visiting scholar, Dr. Alex Schafran, who will be the first in a cohort of IMS Fellows. A respected California policy voice and
prolific scholar of regional urbanism, Dr. Schafran is the author of *The Road to Resegregation: Northern California and the Failure of Politics* and *The Spatial Contract: A New Politics of Provision for an Urbanized Planet*. With more fellows coming onboard in the coming months and an existing group of dedicated SJSU faculty from the Working Group, we intend to spend the Fall semester outlining new directions for the Institute.

Among these will be an initiative focused on advancing civic dialogue about regional systems and governance in the greater Bay Area and, ultimately, throughout California. The project will feature an online portal to coordinate research, reporting, policy, and pedagogical resources on these topics, but will also play out among educators in their classrooms and through innovative gatherings of researchers, teachers, policymakers, and the public. I believe IMS can become a leading resource for educators and anyone working on these important issues. Crucially, I am also confident that we can attract external funding for such a project. Looking to the long term, I can imagine something unique to the CSU system in approach and impact – a coordinated research, teaching and service initiative based at SJSU and led by IMS but effectively system-wide, with contributions and buy-in from people at multiple campuses and external partners.

In these ways and more, the Institute for Metropolitan Studies will continue its mission of furthering public understanding of the issues facing our city and our region, as a forum for the metropolitan conversation that we need to have, for many years to come.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Gordon Douglas  
San José State University  
gordon.douglas@sjsu.edu  
www.sjsu.edu/metropolitanstudies