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Cal Poly Pomona Wins Top LA Planning Award

The Los Angeles Section of the American Planning Association Honors the Golden Necklace Project with Prestigious Academic Award

Cal Poly Pomona's Golden Necklace Project, a community service learning project of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and its 2008 Capstone Community Planning Studios taught by Associate Professor Julianna Delgado have won the 2009 Academic Award from the Los Angeles Section of the American Planning Association. The awards ceremony was held on Wednesday evening, June 17, 2009, in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium's Gold Room and attended by hundreds of LA-area professionals. This is the second year in a row that Delgado's studios have won the prestigious award.

In accepting the honor Delgado stressed that The Golden Necklace Project "furthers Cal Poly's educational philosophy of 'learning by doing'." The project started in January 2008 and envisions a long distance route that connects the San Gabriel Mountains to the ocean in Long Beach, via a grand loop or "golden necklace." Along with creating opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, it also provides much needed recreation space along the way in areas that are park poor and connectivity between the many current plans in place for portions of a potentially integrated park system in the LA basin. The project focuses on designing the gaps in the system while increasing awareness about the watersheds and importance of the region's precious water supply.

The Golden Necklace Project involved about forty graduate and undergraduate students in Delgado's two, 2008 capstone community planning studios: URP 641-642, the Graduate Planning Studio, in Winter/Spring 2008; and URP 431-432, the undergraduate Community Planning Studio, in Summer/Fall 2008. The studios partnered with the Arroyo Seco Foundation, a non-profit founded over

100 years ago by LA booster, journalist Charles Fletcher Lummis, to protect the Arroyo Seco, a major tributary of the Los Angeles River, and increase urban forestry. A Landscape Architecture 606 graduate-student team and other agencies, organizations, and businesses also assisted in development of the project.

In Winter/Spring 2008, Delgado's graduate teams reviewed relevant research and existing conditions, including demographics, the natural history of Southern California's rivers, the location and use of historic trailways, physical inventories and site assessments, current planning efforts to develop multi-use trails and open space opportunities, regulatory planning and zoning measures for parks and open space in affected jurisdictions, potential linkages to public transportation within The Golden Necklace, and an inventory of stakeholders, especially decision-makers. The work is contained in their Final Report. The class also designed and launched a website, produced a number of public service videos available on YouTube, and hosted a well-attended inaugural Community Workshop in May 2008, at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, bringing together diverse stakeholders. Three teams also proposed design schemes for improvements in areas that are parks and recreation poor (Long Beach, Cudahy, and Bellflower), taking advantage of existing rights of way and exploring non-traditional greenways (rooftop connections, green streets, etc.), and recommended policy revisions to implement them.

During the Summer and Fall Quarters of 2008, the capstone undergraduate Community Planning Studio, continued work on The Golden Necklace. Teams developed branding and marketing for the project, revamped the project website, produced a Framework Report, and hosted a second, Community Workshop at the LA River Center in September 2008. The result of the workshop was a set of "Golden Principles," guidelines for future cooperation among stakeholders. By the end of 2008, the students produced three additional design schemes for areas in need of connectivity, led a roundtable on potential Community/University

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partnerships, and explored strategies to continue their work, proposing creation of a potential University institute.

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Or go to <http://www.arroyoseco.org/goldennecklace/>