

A Brief on the Department of Urban & Regional Planning

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1. Background of Establishment

In early 1968, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning was established in the Graduate School of Public Administration, Seoul National University, in response to the changing social conditions and academic development.

One of the widely recognized changes in social conditions was represented by the trends of rapid urban growth estimated by the changing ratios of urban rural population (7:3 in the past to 6:4 in 1965 and 5:5 in the 1970's). Together with the expected changes in spatial configuration caused by the demographic change, changes in perception and physical environment of people required new attitudes, policies and development strategies toward urban growth as a dynamic social development process.

With regard to economic growth, it was also found that economic growth is closely interrelated with regional spatial structure, and that regional spatial problems should be approached in close connection with overall political, social and economic process.

With these changes in social conditions and perceptions, the limitation of traditional design-oriented approaches based on civil engineering or architecture was felt serious. Consequently, the need for interdisciplinary studies of an advanced course for urban

and regional planning was recognized.

In parallel with these developing social tendencies, interdisciplinary approaches and quantitative methods for the study of social problems such as Operations Research and Systems Analysis have been introduced at GSPA. This laid the basis for the interdisciplinary research of the urban and regional problems and dynamics of social development, and made it possible to establish the urban and regional planning program capable to meet the needs of a new planning profession.

2. From the Vantage Point

Within a year and half since its establishment the Department has laid a relatively firm basis for further development.

Among many the following factors can be cited as foundations significant for future development.

(1) **Balanced composition of student body in terms of their undergraduate and professional backgrounds**

In case of day class students, the undergraduate background are well balanced between social sciences and engineering. This has enabled the Department to facilitate comprehensive interdisciplinary study and training in urban and regional planning as initially intended. Furthermore, in case of evening class students, their positions and ex-

perience in governmental agencies cover almost the whole area of urban and regional planning in Korea. Evening class students work in such agencies as the Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Home Affairs and Local Governments including Seoul and Incheon. This balanced and varied academic as well as professional background will contribute not only to cooperation and coordination among planning agencies but also to effective communication between planning and administration as planned in the curriculum of the Department.

(2) Satisfactory progress in faculty development.

Since its establishment, the Department has successfully carried out a Faculty Development Program. At the moment Prof. Rho Yung Hee, Chairman of the Department has just returned from one-year observation tour around Europe and USA, and two assistants of the Department are currently studying urban design and regional planning at MIT and Pittsburgh University. This Program will further be pursued with emphasis on the development of enough number of faculty with varied academic backgrounds.

(3) Books and facilities

the Department has already been equipped with a considerable amount of materials and books. But when ordered books under shipment reach here, the Department will, at least for the time being, stand as the best equipped planning education library in Korea. A workshop was opened at the beginning of this year and served as the place for the first workshop course offered for urban and regional planning.

(4) Continuous contacts with planning policy-makers

The Department has been able to set up very meaningful communication with various sources of information and experience of current problems of planning practices in Korea and abroad.

From these contacts, we have been able to get invaluable information and materials on actual social problems, and be more sensitive to the changing trends of academic research and approaches in foreign countries.

3. Perspective for the future

In planning for the future the Department has set up the following goals for which to organize action programs.

First, this Department be developed into an independent graduate school of planning by the middle of the 1970's. Second, by 1973, approximately 15 full-time faculty members be secured in accordance with the Faculty Development Program. This number is based on the consideration of the needed specialization of teaching and research and the calculation that when the Department become an independent graduate school the total number of students will be 100, the students-faculty ratio being 7 to 1. Third, the total number of students be 100 by the middle of the 1970's. The basis of the estimation is that at least one fourth of the 2,000 planners required in 10 years in Korea will be expected to be supplied by Seoul National University.

(1) Faculty development program.

The Program has been formulated for the period 1968-1973, for training of promising young scholars at foreign planning schools. According to the Program, the trainees are required to obtain at least an M. A. degree in planning or a related discipline in a foreign educational institute recommended by the Department.

The trainees specializations are selected according to the priorities of the courses of curriculum.

In the selection of candidates, the ability and academic background of the candidates for interdisciplinary approaches in urban and regional planning plus a major field in the shortest

possible period are considered. As already mentioned, Mr. Choi Sang Chull and Mr. Hong Sung Chull, two assistants of the Department are now studying regional planning and urban design at MIT and Pittsburgh University, and three other assistants are taking steps for going abroad.

(2) Quantity and quality of Students.

The planned number of students in the mid 1970's is 100 for an independent graduate school of planning and a faculty of 15. The increase in students is to be staged yearly in relation to the increasing number of faculty: 50 up to 1970, 60 in 1971 (when the expected number of faculty is 6-7), 80 in 1973 and 100 in 1975.

In regards to quality of students, we will attempt to maintain a balance in their undergraduate backgrounds between social science and engineering, and especially in the case of Evening Class students, variety will be sought in terms of their positions and practical experience in government agencies.

(3) Curriculum

Present total credit-hours required for the Master's degree is 36. The present curriculum will be maintained at least for the next 2 or so years, until such time when the abilities of the first graduates are tested and a sufficient number of faculty trained are secured.

Any change in the curriculum, however, will not be in disregard of the needs of interdisciplinary studies and skills of problem solution.

(4) Books and facilities.

We plan to secure by 1973, 5,000 publications on urban and regional planning. For other books on related fields, the Main Library of Seoul National University and the Library of the Grad-

uate School of Public Administration will be utilized. In addition to these academic publications, we will try to get as much material and information on planning practices as possible.

So far as other teaching facilities are concerned, they will be fully provided within 2 or 3 years. The Department is already equipped with some facilities required for workshop. Tools for field survey and audio-visual teaching are expected to be fully provided within the first semester of this year. With the prospect of further supplementation of these facilities, we hope that some electronic data processing systems are installed at the Department. As a preparatory step for the use of computers, some basic courses on programming methods has been offered.

(5) Supplementary programs.

In addition to the above-mentioned programs, we are planning the establishment of a research institute for urban and regional planning to be attached to the Department and the publication of a professional journal the near future. The purpose of the institute is to systematically organize researches and to utilize the research results in teaching. Anticipating that more systematic and active participation be required of the faculty, the present participation in research projects or seminars on individual basis should be consolidated into more organized management through the establishment of the institute.

Regarding teaching methods, the workshop course will be strengthened. The Department will also organize short term in-service-training courses, thereby helping the practitioners keep up with the on-going development of skills and technology.