What Is UrbanPlan?
UrbanPlan harnesses the power of experiential learning to help participants gain an understanding of the complex nature of land use decisions and the role each of us plays in creating better communities.

Developed by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) in partnership with the Fisher Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics at UC Berkeley, the UrbanPlan curriculum engages undergraduate and graduate university students in a powerful, interactive case study that puts them in the middle of a fictional city's development project.

UrbanPlan is practical, realistic, dynamic, and challenging—and that’s on purpose. By providing the chance to put theory into practice, UrbanPlan helps students think critically about the fundamentals of their future careers, how to view development from a viewpoint different than their course of study, and leave their university a more sophisticated, compassionate, and effective professional.

How Does UrbanPlan Work?
During this one-day workshop, available in person and online, students develop a real-life understanding of the various stakeholders in the development process and the challenge of reconciling the stakeholders’ often-competing agendas to create a well-designed, sustainable, project. Here’s how:

- Student teams form “development firms” tasked with responding to a request for proposals for the development of a disinvested neighborhood in a fictional city. Each member of the team is assigned a role: financial analyst, marketing director, neighborhood liaison, environment & equity director, or site planner.
- Each team collaborates on the proposal, working through challenging financial, social, political, and design issues; developing a pro forma; and building real models to bring redevelopment vision to life.
- Students are visited by industry professionals who serve as “facilitators” to guide students in the critical assessment of their vision, site plans, and financials.
- The teams use their final site plan and pro forma to pitch to a “City Council” volunteer industry professionals, and one team wins the contract!

Learn More about UrbanPlan
For more information about the program and how to bring a one-day workshop to your university or college, visit www.urbanplan.org or contact urbanplan@uli.org.
Bringing UrbanPlan to Your Campus

What Professors & Students Are Saying About UrbanPlan

“UrbanPlan was the most hands-on experience I have had in my MBA degree program. It was an eye-opener for what city planners and developers go through, and it was a great learning experience presenting to industry professionals who acted as a mock City Council.”

-Mike Herbison, MBA student, University of Calgary

“UrbanPlan helped my students to internalize the complex, interrelated, economic, and political aspects of public/private development. The UP roles forced students to experience the impact of each development decision and tradeoff through the lens of a particular stakeholder, developer, politician, or neighborhood group. That will have a positive impact on communities where they will work.”

-Hilary Nixon, PhD, assistant professor, Urban & Regional Planning, San Jose State University

Join the Growing List of UrbanPlan Participants

- Boston University
- Bowie State University
- College of Charleston
- Emory University
- Fordham University
- Georgetown University
- Georgia Tech
- Louisiana State University
- San Jose State University
- Southern Methodist University
- St. Louis University
- Tulane University
- University of Baltimore
- University of Buffalo
- University of Calgary
- University of Hawaii at Manoa
- University of New Mexico
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Texas at Arlington
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Virginia Commonwealth University

Volunteers Make UrbanPlan Possible

ULI volunteers are professionals in a variety of disciplines in land use and development and selected for their depth of experience and knowledge. They see UrbanPlan as a way to give back to their community by partnering in a meaningful way with professors and students. It is our hope that this unique opportunity for students to work side by side with — and network with — local land-use professionals leads to better educational outcomes in the classroom and better career outcomes after graduation. In fact, student participants have been recruited by the volunteers they met through UrbanPlan!