Proposal for a Joint Degree Program in Law and City and Regional Planning from Georgia State University College of Law and the Georgia Institute of Technology College of Architecture

Abstract: This is a proposal to create a joint (dual) degree program in law and in city and regional planning for students at Georgia State University, College of Law and the Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Architecture. Successful candidates will earn a Juris Doctor degree (J.D.), which is awarded for completion of the law program at the College of Law, and a Masters degree in City and Regional Planning (MCRP), which is awarded for completion of the Program at the College of Architecture. This proposal does not entail the creation of a new program or degree but will allow students who wish to earn a J.D. degree from the College of Law and a MCRP degree from the College of Architecture to pursue both degrees concurrently in a shortened period of time. This proposal accomplishes this objective by allowing certain courses in the J.D. program and in the MCRP program to count toward both degrees and thus help students pursue their study of law and urban planning in an integrated fashion.

I. Program Objectives

The objectives of this joint degree program are 1) to broaden the intellectual horizons of both Georgia State University College of Law and the Georgia Institute of Technology College of Architecture by facilitating interdisciplinary study, 2) to support the interests of students who wish to pursue study in the fields of both law and urban planning, 3) to provide a focal point for exploring the connections between the two disciplines; and 4) to provide an educational opportunity that reflects the fact that land management law and city and regional planning have become increasingly integrated and interdisciplinary in nature and that training for today’s land use law or planning professional requires expertise in both disciplines.

II. Need and Justification

The proposed joint degree program would offer to the citizens of Georgia the only program of its kind in the state. While joint degree programs in law and city and regional planning are offered in many of our nation’s leading universities (see list attached), no such program is offered at any institution within the State of Georgia. It is important as well that the establishment of such a program within Georgia be based at institutions that lie in the heart of the state’s leading urban center, Atlanta. As the two leading public research universities located in Atlanta, Georgia State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology meet that objective. The Atlanta region provides a living laboratory for the study of critical law and city and regional planning issues relating to the quality of our lives, such as the challenges of smart growth, transportation management, housing, water, and the environment.

The proposed joint degree program would serve not only the needs of the region but the needs and expectations of the planning and legal professions. The disciplines
of land development law or environmental law and city planning have become so complex and integrated that those who seek to enter this field, whether from the law or planning side, are well-served to be trained in both disciplines.

III. Student Demand

The College of Law currently offers several courses related to urban planning issues (Land Use Law, Growth Management Law, Environmental Law, Water Rights, Natural Resources Law, and International Environmental Law). Enrollment in these courses is strong, ranging typically from 25-40 students, thus reflecting a significant level of law student interest in urban-related issues and a potential source of enrollees in a joint degree program. The same is true at the College of Architecture, where enrollment in the MCRP program usually numbers about 75 students. All of these students take courses in law, legislation, and legal approaches to influencing development patterns.

Evidence of student interest in the joint study of law and planning can be seen from our recent experience with Growth Management Law, a course that is offered both by the law school and the City and Regional Planning Program in the College of Architecture. Last year, the College of Law and the City and Regional Planning Program collaborated for the first time to offer this course jointly to law and MCRP students under the joint leadership of Professor Julian Juergensmeyer, the Ben. F. Johnson Chair in Law, and Dr. Arthur C. Nelson from Georgia Tech. Eleven law students and 30 MCRP students enrolled in the course and combined in small groups to explore various growth management issues and present their findings to the class. Enrollment in this course shows the potential student interest that exists for the joint study of law and city planning and for successful collaboration between Georgia State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology.

III. Furtherance of Strategic Missions

The strategic plans of the Boards of Regents, Georgia State University, and the Georgia Institute of Technology all support the objectives of the proposed joint program as they each recognize and underscore the importance of interdisciplinary education and of programs that can help meet the needs of the region. The Board of Regents' mission statement for the University System of Georgia provides that the core characteristics of a research university must include “a commitment to public service, economic development and technical assistance activities designed to address the strategic needs of the State of Georgia,” as well as “a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic programming.”

The Strategic Plan of Georgia State University more specifically emphasizes its role as a research university in an urban setting. It identifies as a goal the need to “advance a multidisciplinary approach to future complex problems and needs.” The plan expressly encourages the development of more joint degree programs, “including those with national and international universities,” as an important way of advancing this goal, and points specifically to the College of Law’s plan to develop “a joint degree program in law and urban planning with Georgia Tech.”
The College of Law’s Strategic Plan echoes these themes about interdisciplinary programs and urban problem-solving, noting that “the downtown Atlanta location is a core part of the law school’s identity and strength,” that “it is strongly committed to improving its urban environment, the Atlanta metropolitan region, and the state by providing legal expertise and assistance,” and that today’s law curriculum must prepare students for the demands of a multi-disciplinary environment that will require “collaborations with professionals and experts in a multitude of disciplines.”

Georgia Tech’s Strategic Plan similarly underscores the need for an “expanded local, regional, and global outreach” and to serve our local community and neighbors in the Atlanta region. Similarly, the College of Architecture’s and the City and Regional Planning Program’s strategic plans call for greater interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration both in education and in research.

A joint degree program in law and city and regional planning would significantly advance these strategic goals and objectives. It would promote interdisciplinary collaboration between the two premier public research universities in Atlanta; it would promote the study of the kind of academic and policy issues that are of critical importance to this region; and it would provide for the training of law and planning professionals in a way that would truly reflect the multidisciplinary demands of this area of expertise.

III. Institutional and Programmatic Quality

Georgia State University College of Law has achieved remarkable success in its still brief twenty year history. It attracts a highly qualified and diverse student body, and in admitting approximately one of every four applicants who apply, is among the more selective law programs in the nation. Applicants want to attend the College of Law because of its location, affordable tuition, capacity to support law study on a full- or part-time basis, its reputation as a school that bridges theory and practice, its successful live-client Tax Clinic, Legislation Clinic, and Externship Program, and its outstanding 38-member faculty. The proposed joint degree program in law and urban planning would be modeled on the College of Law’s three other successful joint degree programs: the J.D./M.B.A. (law and business), the J.D./M.P.A. (law and policy studies), and the J.D./M.A. in Philosophy.

The College of Law’s curriculum and faculty have the kind of depth and strength in the land use and planning area which make it well-suited to offer the proposed joint program. Existing Land Management courses include Land Use Law, Environmental Law, Natural Resources Law, Water Rights, Growth Management Law, and International Environmental Law. Related courses in Local Government Law, Legislation, Administrative Law, Constitutional Law, and Public Health Law offer students an important, wider perspective. Julian Juergensmeyer, Professor and Ben F. Johnson Chair in Law, will coordinate the proposed program from the law side. Professor Juergensmeyer is a nationally recognized scholar in land management law, is the author of the leading treatise in the area, and has a long history of providing advice to governmental units on land use and growth problems. Since coming to the College...
of Law from the University of Florida in 1999, Professor Juergensmeyer has developed an outstanding working relationship with his counterparts at Georgia Tech, having served on Georgia Tech chair search committees and having organized and co-taught the joint law and MCRP course in Growth Management Law. Professor Jim Bross, also an expert and scholar in land use law, as well as in water rights and natural resources law, will join with Professor Juergensmeyer to comprise the core faculty on the law side of the curriculum, along with a new law faculty member to be hired this year in environmental law. In addition, Janice Griffith, Dean of the College of Law, will bring expertise in the important area of local government law.

The Georgia Institute of Technology’s College of Architecture offers degrees at the baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral levels. It provides educational and research leadership in architecture, art and technology, including music, building construction, city and regional planning, and industrial design. The College combines a strong intellectual core focusing on the built environment with substantial inter-disciplinary interactions with units across Georgia Tech in the related areas of civil engineering, computing, cognitive science and psychology, management, earth and atmospheric sciences, international affairs, public policy, economics, among others. With College research centers in Advanced Wood Products Technology, Construction, Geographic Information Systems, and Assistive Technology and Environmental Access, the College of Architecture numbers over 140 faculty and staff.

The College of Architecture has recently established a new research and outreach initiative in the area of “smart growth” that has strong linkages to this joint degree proposal. The new Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development provides a forward-looking vision regarding the issues of metropolitan growth, land use and development, environmental conservation, transportation, quality of life and new and innovative development alternatives. Prof. Juergensmeyer is currently serving on the search committee to hire the Director of this Center. Even greater involvement is expected for law students and faculty alike in this new research center.

The City and Regional Planning Program is fully accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board and has enjoyed high national rankings for many years. The Program currently has nine faculty members and a student body consisting of 75 masters and 12 Ph.D. students. The program offers specializations in environmental planning, transportation planning, land use, economic development, urban design, land development, and computerized information systems. The Program currently has several other joint master’s degree programs, in Architecture, Transportation Planning, Public Policy, Water Resources Planning, and Environmental Engineering and Planning. The addition of a joint degree program in Law and city planning would complement these existing programs.

VI. Resources

The proposed program will not require the allocation of additional funds or resources. This is because the proposal here is not to create a new program or to add new course offerings but to make the existing J.D. program at Georgia State and the existing MCRP program at Georgia Tech available to law and graduate students on a
joint or concurrent basis.

VIII. Program Requirements

A detailed description of the joint program requirements, including a list of the courses that the colleges will jointly recognize, is attached as an appendix.

List of Universities offering a Joint Degree with Planning and Law

Columbia University
Cornell University
Florida State University
Hunter College of the City University of New York
Ohio State University
Pratt Institute
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Cincinnati
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Maryland at College Park
University of Minnesota
University of New Orleans
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Pennsylvania
University of Rhode Island
University of Texas at Austin
University of Washington
Summary of Program Requirements

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<td>Joint program hours required for graduation</td>
<td>34</td>
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Appendix

Program Requirements

The joint J.D./MCRP program will permit students to use credit hours earned in one program to satisfy some of the elective course requirements of the other program, thus permitting them to earn both degrees in a shorter time than would be possible pursuing both degrees separately.

Credit hour Requirements: The College of Law requires all J.D. candidates to earn 90 credits hours, 43 of which are filled by taking required courses and 47 of which are filled by taking elective courses. For students enrolled in the J.D./MCRP program, the College of Law will accept as course credit 12 semester hours earned from approved courses in the MCRP program. Students must earn a grade of B or better to receive law credit for their MCRP course work.

The College of Architecture requires all MCRP candidates to earn 55 credit hours, 28 of which are filled by satisfying core course requirements, 12 of which are filled by satisfying a specialization requirement, and 15 of which are satisfied by taking electives. For students enrolled in the J.D./MCRP program, the College of Architecture will accept as course credit a maximum of 21 semester hours from approved law courses in the J.D. program. Students may use 6 of these law hours toward satisfying their MCRP specialization requirement, and apply the balance toward their electives. Students must earn a grade of 80 (which is the equivalent of a B) or better to receive MCRP credit for their law course work. To complete the joint degree, students must have a minimum of 18 semester hours of law courses.

Admissions and Timing of Entry into the Joint Program: Candidates for the joint program will need to meet the separate admissions requirements of the College of Law and the College of Architecture. Admission into one college will create no presumption favoring admission to the other. To be admitted to the joint program, an applicant must be separately admitted to both the J.D. and the MCRP programs and then must request to proceed in the joint program.

Students interested in the pursuing the joint program may apply for admission into the College of Law and the College of Architecture simultaneously but they are not required to do so. For students who are admitted first into the J.D. program, they should seek admission into the MCRP program as soon as possible and must be admitted into that program no later than the beginning of the fall semester of their third year of full-time law study. For students who are admitted first into the MCRP program, they should seek admission into the J.D. program as soon as possible and must be admitted into that program no later than the beginning of the fall semester of their second year of full-time study as an MCRP student.

The College of Law will not permit a student to enroll in the joint program after the student has completed 31 hours of course work in the MCRP program. Similarly, the College of Architecture will not permit a student to enroll in the joint program after the student has completed 65 hours of course work in the J.D. program.
**Sequencing of Course Work:** Students who have been admitted to both programs and intend to pursue the joint degree must, at their first opportunity, complete the first 31 semester hours of required courses in the J.D. program. After the completion of these 31 hours of law courses, course enrollment in either program or both concurrently is permitted.

**Law Courses that Will Count Towards the MCRP Degree:** Students can apply a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 21 hours of law electives toward their MCRP degree from the following law courses:

- Law 5050 Property I
- Law 5051 Property II
- Law 7010 Administrative Law
- Law 7060 Alternative Dispute Resolution (Environmental Planning)
- Law 7117 Constitutional Law II: Individual Liberties (Land Use)
- Law 7118 Constitutional Law: State Constitutions (Land Use)
- Law 7196 Law and Economics
- Law 7200 Environmental Law (Environmental Planning)
- Law 7201 International Environmental Law (Environmental Planning)
- Law 7202 Environmental Justice (Environmental Planning)
- Law 7203 Natural Resources (Environmental Planning)
- Law 7238 Law of Hazardous Waste (Environmental Planning)
- Law 7244 Public Health Law
- Law 7320 Land Use Law (Land Use)
- Law 7375 Legislation
- Law 7385 Local Government Law (Land Use)
- Law 7433 Race, Ethnicity and the Law
- Law 7500 Water Rights (Environmental Planning)
- Law 8008 Alternative Dispute Resolution Externship (Environmental Planning)
- Law 8120 Federal Environmental Law Externship (Environmental Planning)

The MCRP program requires students to earn 12 credit hours toward a planning specialization. Of particular interest to law students are the specializations in Environmental Planning or Land Use. Certain of the law courses listed above may be used to satisfy up to six hours of these specializations. These specializations are noted above in parenthesis next to the qualifying law courses. Students with interests in other planning specializations (land development/housing or transportation, for example) may propose other sets of law courses that would qualify as planning specialization courses. Approval of these alternate courses is needed from both law and planning program coordinators.

**CRP Courses that Will Count Towards the J.D. Degree:** Students can apply 12 hours of MCRP course work toward their J.D. degree from the following City and Regional Planning courses:

- CP 6031 Economic Analysis for Planning
- CP 6112 Introduction to Land Use Planning
CP 6214 Environmental Planning Impact Assessment
CP 6223 Policy Tools for Environmental Management
CP 6241 Water Resources Planning
CP 6311 Introduction to Transportation Planning
CP 6452 Urban Development Policy
CP 6630 Government and Housing Markets
CP 6811 Negotiation, Facilitation, and Conflict Management

Awarding of Degrees: Neither the J.D. nor the MCRP degree will be awarded until completion of the requirements of both degree programs.

Program Coordinators: For the purposes of coordinating, monitoring, and reviewing this joint degree program, the Director of the City and Regional Planning Program at Georgia Tech and the Associate Dean of the College of Law at Georgia State will serve as Program Coordinators.

Faculty Advisors: Students enrolled in the joint degree program will have faculty advisors at each institution to assist them in advising, scheduling, and curriculum decisions. These faculty advisors will work closely with the Program Coordinators to ensure that students are making appropriate progress toward the completion of the joint degree requirements.
Typical Schedule

For a student who begins in the Law School and is then admitted to the MCRP program at the beginning of their third year in law school, a sample curriculum is shown below:

First Year Law School – Fall (Tuition paid to GSU Law):

- Contracts I 3 hours
- Property I 3 hours
- Torts I 3 hours
- Civil Procedure I 3 hours
- Research, Writing and Advocacy I 2 hours
- Legal Bibliography 1 hour
- Total 15 hours

First Year Law School – Spring (Tuition paid to GSU Law):

- Contracts II 3 hours
- Property II 3 hours
- Torts II 3 hours
- Civil Procedure II 3 hours
- Criminal Law 3 hours
- Research, Writing and Advocacy II 1 hour
- Total 16 hours

Second Year Law School/Fall (Tuition paid to GSU Law):

- Constitutional Law 3 hours
- Evidence 4 hours
- Law Electives 7 hours
- Total 14 hours

Second Year Law School/Spring (Tuition paid to GSU Law):

- Litigation 3 hours
- Professional Responsibility 2 hours
- Law Electives 10 hours
- Total 15 hours
Third Year Law School/First Year Planning—Fall (Tuition paid to GT):

- CP 6002 Introduction to Fields of Planning 2 hours
- CP 6012 Planning History and Theory 4 hours
- CP 6019 Intro to Quant and Computer Methods 4 hours
- Specialization Course (CP prefix) 3 hours
  - Total 13 hours

Third Year Law School/First Year Planning – Spring (Tuition paid to GT):

- CP 6016 Growth Management Law and Implementation 3 hours
  - Or LAW 7242 3 hours
- CP 6023 Advanced Planning Methods 4 hours
- CP 6031 Economic Analysis for Planning 3 hours
- Specialization Course (CP prefix) 3 hours
  - Total 13 hours

Fourth Year Law School/Second Year Planning – Fall (Tuition paid to GT):

- CP 6052 4 hours
- CP Option Paper 2 hours
- Law Elective (count toward planning specialization) 3 hours*
- Law Electives 4 hours*
  - Total 13 hours

Fourth Year Law School/Second Year Planning – Spring (Tuition paid to GSU Law):

- CP Option Paper 2 hours*
- Law Elective (count toward planning specialization) 3 hours
- Law Elective 8 hours
  - Total 13 hours

* Cross Registration

Note: Cross Registration is available each semester, if a student chooses to take a course at the other institution. Students may then use the facilities (library, computers, etc.) at the other campus without additional cost.