



Educating Planners for the New Challenges of Sustainability, Knowledge and Governance: Report from a EU/US Exploratory Collaborative Project in Planning Education

Laurence Carmichael

WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Urban Environments
University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

Laurence.carmichael@uwe.ac.uk



Content

- ❑ Atlantis Programme and Plan-Ed project: rationale and activities
- ❑ Project outcomes
- ❑ Analysis: parameters for building transnational courses in planning
- ❑ Conclusion: reflections on project and Atlantis funding stream for planning education: what have we learnt?



Atlantis: addressing challenges of globalisation through education policy

- ❑ Neoliberal rationale: economic cooperation, economic growth => education sector will deliver skills and reinforce knowledge base economies, answer transnational and global agenda
- ❑ To meet evaluators' criteria: transnational tuning of learning outcomes and planning skills
- ❑ EU and US funding
- ❑ Bottom-up approach/seed funding for policy measure



PLAN-ED project

- ✓ €70000 + \$70000+ institutional funding
- ✓ Partners: VCU, PSU, UWE, LUH - with city links

- exposure of faculty to local planning practices
- Enhancing teaching and research
- model for transnational planning skills, joint provisions

- ✓ **4 themed one week seminars+ staff exchange**
 - Sprawl
 - Urban regeneration
 - Public health and planning
 - Governance



Results and outcomes

- ✓ Seed funding for identifying common challenges and skills needed for planners to deliver sustainable communities
- ✓ Exposed teaching staff and students to different planning cultures, professions, practice (studios, outreach)
- ✓ Internationalisation of curriculum
- ✓ Long-term plans for webinars, distance learning, exchanges



What we did not do

Little resources to reflect on theoretical issues for integrating planning curricula and developing mobility

- Validity of transnational planning?
- Identity of planning as an academic subject and a profession?
- Politics and economics of course development

How to reconcile:

- Need to respond to market and need for new skills and
- Scope of transnational planning research and skills required by planning practice and profession



Validity of transnational planning ideas?

Validity of “planning knowledge” sharing, transnationality of curriculum/and mobility

➤ Role of planning? Think global, act local...

spatial justice, healthy and sustainable cities and economic growth (Healy and Upton, 2010)

⇒ Planning culture, local contexts?

➤ Risk if ignored? Policy tourism



Identity of planning as an academic subject/profession in comparative contexts

Are roles similar in USA and Europe? Revisit Myers's anchor points in JPER (1997) in the age of social networks and global warming... and politics:

- ✓ improvement of human settlements
- ✓ interconnections among distinct community facets
- ✓ future and pathways of change over time
- ✓ identification of diversity of needs and consequences in human settlements
- ✓ open participation in decision-making
- ✓ linking knowledge and collective action

+ compare US and EU sets of values for the profession



Conclusion on PLAN-ED - I

- ✓ Fit the conditions for a policy-orientated measure or policy change: basis for change = set of common problems
- ✓ Knowledge sharing first`
- ✓ Exploratory exercise: examining planning practice across continents... and inform a theoretical comparative model that would support knowledge exchange...



Conclusion on PLAN-ED - II

- How can we ensure that our graduates leave with more than a toolbox of analytical and presentational abilities?
- How can we connect them to the values of the field and making them more effective idealists?
- What is the appropriate balance between structure and interdisciplinarity?
- Are we teaching practice or research?
- Are we promoting bureaucracy or advancing a progressive agenda?



Conclusion on Atlantis

- Different targets for scientific and social science subjects
- Consider structure of Higher Education in different contexts
- Move away from market driven rationale
- At least introduce sustainability targets



Thank you

Laurence.carmichael@uwe.ac.uk