Introducing the Master of Arts degree program in

Community Planning, Policy, and Design

Empowering graduates to become community builders and placemakers
Pushing traditional design forward by making it more culturally diverse, socially inclusive, sustainable and beautiful

Learn the lessons of Charleston, for the benefit of the world.

Apply Now

go.cofc.edu/cpad
The Graduate School of the University of Charleston, South Carolina at the College of Charleston proudly offers a unique urban design MA degree program in Community Planning, Policy, and Design (CPAD). It is innovative in many ways. First, CPAD blends architecture and urban design studio courses with classes in public policy, infrastructure planning, architectural history and real estate. This interdisciplinary curriculum empowers graduates to succeed as skilled practitioners in today’s complex development field. They become valuable contributors to any given development company, city government or design firm precisely because they are capable of serving any and all of the above. In short, CPAD graduates are trained to speak the language of law, know the realities of business, and wield the design skills needed to create and enhance inclusive, sustainable, beautiful places.
CPAD CURRICULUM

SEMESTER ONE
CPAD 605 Drawing Charleston
CPAD 615 Introduction to Urban Design (studio course)
ARTH 565 The City as a Work of Art

SEMESTER TWO
PUBA 611 Urban Policy
CPAD 619 Architectural Design (studio course)
ARTH 535 American Architecture

SUMMER
CPAD 790 Independent Urban Design Field Study (online course)

SEMESTER THREE
PUBA 617 Urban Transportation: Problems and Prospects
CPAD 860 Sustainable Design and Adaptive Reuse (studio course)
CPAD 631 Introduction to Real Estate

SEMESTER FOUR
CPAD 895 Urban Design Graduate Thesis (studio course)

ELECTIVES
Two electives are also required. These can be selected from CPAD special topics courses or approved PUBA urban planning courses.
The placemaking skills of our students are strengthened by the second unique feature of the CPAD program: its “progressive traditional” design ethos. Most design schools around the world teach modern architecture; a few tolerate classicism, but only a handful actively promote traditional design. CPAD is counted among the latter, but with a unique and important twist: our students are taught to understand and appreciate traditional design from a global, pluralistic perspective. They know how to draw upon the specific forms and details of local sites, but they are also capable of thoughtfully engaging with any and all traditions when crafting architecture and urbanism to serve diverse populations. Furthermore, our students are encouraged to engage with modern ideas, materials and aesthetic innovations, to aid them in their quest to make places that are beautiful by classical standards but successful and sustainable by any standard.
At the core of the progressive traditional philosophy of CPAD is a conviction that all cultures in every part of the globe have made valuable contributions to the realm of design. We celebrate the ennobling truth that all human beings are bound together by abundant commonalities, many of which have been elegantly etched in the history of architecture. We also acknowledge the present and growing need for people to work together and use every tool in the box—whether old or new, and no matter where it was invented—to build a more functional, resilient and delightful world.
The Perfect Classroom

Charleston is one of the best places on the planet to teach good, walkable, mixed-use urban design, and our historic downtown campus puts students right in the heart of the action. The subtropical city’s world-renowned historic center grew out of the colonial confluence of European, Caribbean and West African crafts and aesthetics, creating a city that is powerfully diverse in both heritage and population. As a popular coastal city, it is also on the front lines of many pressing global issues, including gentrification and sea level rise. Real improvement was made in the social, economic and physical fabric of Charleston during the four decades of innovative and inclusive governance by the famous Mayor Joe Riley, whose legacy and support is part of CPAD’s foundation. Much work remains to be done, however, here as elsewhere. The Graduate School of the University of Charleston, South Carolina at the College of Charleston is launching the new program in Community Planning, Policy, and Design to empower graduates become the professional urbanists that cities and companies require.
A HOST OF OPPORTUNITIES

A deep engagement with the major components of modern public policy via the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Center for Livable Communities

A broad commitment to the issues of sustainability and resilience

A unique “progressive traditional” design ethos drawing upon the vibrant, multicultural classical architecture of Charleston

A dedication to incorporating the economic realities of urban development into design education

Engagement with leading voices in the design field; past guest lecturers and critics have included David M. Schwarz, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Peter Pennoyer, Andres Duany, Robert A.M. Stern and others

A choice of electives dedicated to contemporary issues, such as ameliorating the social costs of gentrification, or designing neighborhoods for automated vehicles

Internship opportunities with the City of Charleston and a large number of world-class design and development firms