



Webchat Transcript October 23rd, 2019

Q: Was your undergrad in a similar field to City Planning? If so, would you say the curriculum was redundant or was it something that really enriched yourself as a planner? If not, how challenging was it to move into the planning field at a master's level? Thanks!

A: No, my undergrad was more in the landscape realm, so the planning was an entirely new major for me. The move was relatively smooth, some of that though was because I started out in landscape architecture my first year then moved in to curriculum for planning the following. I would say if you have little to no background, there are a few things that are a learning curve but certainly nothing to be worried about. You also have people in all different walks of life and experiences as well so you as a class lean on each other for help as much as from the instructors.

Q: What type of work are you looking for in the portfolio for the urban design concentration of MCP?

A: while we can't speak for the faculty admissions committee, we do know that they generally advise that you include a few different projects that represent your best work, being as visual as possible. It really depends on your background - what is your academic background?

Q: I have a question regarding the application process, if I am interested in applying for both City Planning and Landscape Architecture at the same time, I must submit a separate application to both Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture Department. It seems like I cannot start two applications at the same time. Since I am still taking the GRE exam, can I just submit my application and request the GRE test center to send the score later?

A: You are correct, you must complete and submit your first application before you can begin the second application. You will not be prompted for a second application fee. Please just ask ETS to send your GRE score to school code 2926, and it will then automatically link to both applications once both applications are submitted. All supporting documents (transcripts/evaluations, test scores) will automatically link to both applications but your recommenders must submit their letters separately to each of your applications...

Q: I'm interested in the MCP program, and I'm wondering if you could speak to the flexibility of the concentration curriculums. For example, it seems like the PPD concentration consists of only a few specific classes-- are you able to double concentrate?

A: So, you can only select one concentration. however, many of the course requirements overlap and can fulfill many of course requirements. for examples, i am concentrating in CED but i

can take a housing class that also satisfies PPD requirements. also, you we had a nice selection of certificate programs as well!

Q: I have a question about the content of the studio classes. Is there a certain direction that Weitzman has for its students, such as technology or theory-driven? Or is there a more diverse array of topics offered?

A: I wouldn't say we've ascribed to either technology driven, or theory driven. Each studio professor will have their own pedagogy. Some will be activist driven, some will be more formally driven, and some will be very theoretical. We have a good mix

Q: what sort of balance is there between studio and theory/technology classes or electives? Have you found that other classes are intended to support or inform the studio or that they're kept separate?

A: your other courses are intended to help support your studio curriculum. More specifically your visual studies course or bim courses are meant to help develop work and drawings being produced in studio.

Q: I am also a prospective student applying for Master of Urban Planning - Fall 2020 Intake. I did my under-graduation in Architecture and recently completed a one year post graduate diploma in the built environment. I am keen on research related to city planning from a point of well-being and health. I would like to enquire and know more about any ongoing research projects or professors in the MCP program engaged in something relevant?

A: yes, we have many professors who are interested in these areas! the CED concentration covers as vast array of topics, and you can strategically focus on the topic of health & well-being during your coursework, papers, and projects. Also, one of my fav classes was with Amy Hillier who does a ton of work in health and she also sits in the social work/social policy as well.

Q: I am applying to the MCP program with a concentration in Community and Economic Development. I was wondering if any current students contribute to the Panorama journal, and what the application process is like (if any) to work on the publication.

A: yes, panorama is student ran and all student designed! two of my good friends in the program work on the publication. as for the process, typically students will send out an email inviting interested parties and then you submit a little about yourself/clubs. then from there on, it's your usual club organization style (ex. meetings, submission deadlines, design, etc.) again, completely led and ran by students!

Q: M.Arch- I wanted to know more about students in the program who do not have an undergraduate degree in architecture...How did they find their first year? Any disadvantages to look out for?

A: I had an architecture undergrad but know many people in the program who did not come in with architecture backgrounds. They all took courses over summer just before coming in which taught them the basics of architecture history, modeling, drawing, etc. It was essentially a boot camp to prepare them for the fall. I found that the students adapted well. I have even learned some from their unique perspectives and styles. I would say if you are excited to be there then the combination of professors and students with backgrounds will help you adjust and excel.

Q: I'd like to know more about a what service projects WSD works with in the Philadelphia area-- particularly those related to housing and transit equality?

A: unfortunately we don't have too specific of an answer just from the few students logged on right now, but I would encourage you to look into and connect with PennPraxis, which tends to be the hub for community outreach and projects:

<https://www.design.upenn.edu/pennpraxis/pennpraxis>. Additionally, I would suggest reaching out to the MCP program to see if they have any current or recent studios or workshops working specifically on housing and transit issues - I know there likely are!

Q: Hi, MCP: What is general split in post-graduation employment between public, private, and non-profit positions? And are there some examples of specific jobs graduates have had in each sector?

A: that is a great question for the Director Career Services! She keeps many of those records. Her name is Kali Meeks (kmeeks@design.upenn.edu) You also may find this 2018 career survey plans helpful: https://cdn.uconnectlabs.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/74/2019/08/2018_PennDesign_Career_Plans_Survey_Report.pdf you can see older surveys here: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/post-graduate-outcomes/>

Q: Hi, MLA: I would like to learn more about is there any professor working on Public health or combining ecotherapy with landscape architecture design?

A: I don't know that anyone is studying that specific combination. However, Nick Pevsner, an MLA professor is doing similar research and work focusing more on urban ecologies and policies relating to landscape development. He would be an excellent person to reach out to and learn more about research initiatives. You should be able to find Nick Pevsner's contact information on the people portion of the PennDesign website.

Q: MArch: How are reviews conducted for studios? Do faculty prefer presentation or round table style critiques and how often would they include peer review or feedback from outside the studio?

A: each professor will have their own style. Most reviews are standard - presenting in front of a jury and receiving critique/discussion afterward's. However, I've taken studios where we always have round table reviews, and some were exhibition style. As far as outside reviewers, every

review I've been on has included outside professors from Penn, other schools, and professionals.

Q: dual MCP MBA program: Can someone provide more details as to what this program looks like? I know you must finish one application before you begin a new one, but what does the timeline look like? Would PennDesign come before the Wharton classes or is it flexible? Are courses taken in tandem or split in 2-year blocks? If I complete one program but not another am, I still awarded the degree I completed? Is there any additional access to financial aid since you are at UPenn longer? Thanks!

A: please email us at admissions@design.upenn.edu so that we can link you with a student who is currently in that dual degree. As far as which school comes first- this can be up to you. As far as I know you take one year with one school, the next year with the other school and then the third year is split between the two schools. Yes, if you complete one program but not the other you would still receive the degree of the program that you completed. For financial aid- yes. If you are offered a scholarship it will remain with you throughout your entire academic career if you stay in good academic standing.

Q: I was keen on the concentration which focuses on understanding environment health indicators and how they impact community health and vice versa. I am unable to understand whether CED or LU-EP?* which of the two would be a better fit?

A: in my opinion, it really depends on what you want to get out of the program and where you plan to go afterwards. for the CED concentration (I'm speaking on my experience), i found it flexible to sprinkle in some really cool electives in other areas. I've taken classes in the ed school and I've also taken classes relating to historic preservation. so i found the concentration to be really broad in a way that i could tailor it to my interests. so, for you, if you were CED, you would definitely have room to take classes outside of the school of design to tailor to your specific interests. as for the luep, remember that it's land use & env planning...so you will learn about two core topics, and the concentration requirements are the luep concentration requirements are different. i would strongly suggest that you look at the course requirements as well as read up on some of the offered classes for each concentration. see what feels/sounds right. and if you come to any open house, please talk to students from each concentration. students will be your best resources as we are pretty creative and span a ton of niche interests.

If you are interested specifically in environmental health, then LU-EP would be a better fit

Q: What are some of the Financial Opportunities that will be under consideration as a Low-Income student?

A: All master's applicants are automatically considered for merit-based scholarships, and that is how most of our scholarship funding is awarded (based on your application materials and the review by the faculty admissions committee). However, if you file your FAFSA by February 1st and have it sent to Penn, then the chair can consider financial need when making final

scholarship determination. Usually having high financial need will just increase a merit scholarship if you are already being considered for a merit scholarship.

Q: How does consideration for TA positions work? What is the likelihood of being considered for these opportunities?

A: TAs are handled by the individual academic departments, so you would need to work directly with the staff in the Architecture Department if you are interested in being a TA. Most M.Arch. students are not considered for TA positions until their 2nd year of the program so that the faculty can assess your strengths and where you may be most helpful as a TA. That being said, there are a lot of other student work opportunities, such as our Fabrication Lab and student positions in the departments and offices not just in the school but across the university.

Q: What is Student life like in at Weitzman / Philadelphia?

A: In my experience this school is really tight knit and there are always things happening to take your mind off the pressures of school. For example, we have yoga nights, movie nights, Friday happy hours, ping pong at Houston hall, not to mention tons of groups and extracurriculars to get involved with. Philadelphia is also a great city to live in. You can take public transit everywhere, tons of really nice bars and restaurants around university city and center city, and really great hiking/biking trails around.

Q: How important has the idea of a studio culture been overall?

A: The idea of studio culture is not pushed here, simply because it doesn't need to be. As I kind of touched on in answer 3, we are all very tight knit. The activities going on around the school, especially happy hours, brings us together.

Q: How does Advance Standing work specifically? (Coming from an Environmental Design Program)

A: Advanced standing is very rarely given, but there have been cases where people with a BS in Architecture are granted advanced standing, again though, this is seldom.

Q: What are some things that are important to your experiences at Penn that you would have liked to have known during the Admissions Process?

A: I wasn't able to visit campus before deciding so I made sure to reach out and speak to students. I really appreciated this but only managed to get an architecture perspective. If you are considering multiple degree tracks, try and gather as many student perspectives as possible. I feel that the perspective was pretty accurate and useful in getting to know Penn.

Q: MCP - What is the placement rate for new students in grad assistant ships? How much of tuition cost do these positions cover?

A: Here at WSD, placement of assistantships is based on interest and are typically not done through the department. The amount available, whether teaching assistantships, graduate assistantships, or research assistantships varies depending on the need of the professors, funding, and class sizes. You are provided a stipend on a monthly basis so it's not remission from your tuition. I have had several teaching assistantships over the course of my time here as well as a research assistantship with the McHarg Center, which is separate research center affiliated with the university and WSD. So, there are even opportunities outside of the program directly.

Q: Are any current MCP students working as research assistants? If so, could you speak to your experiences? Are efforts cross-collaborative between programs/studios?

A: - I am a current research assistant for the McHarg Center here on campus. It has been a great experience! I have learned a lot and have had many other opportunities that have been offered to me from the work I have done and the people I have worked with there. There are about 4-5 current students working as RA's just at the McHarg Center right now so that's excluding any students working within each of the departments at WSD. All of us are from different majors so there is certainly interdisciplinarity. to clarify, they are done through the department, but they are based on academic performance and your interest in working on specific research or directly with a professor.

Q: as a follow up, what is the best way to go about inquiring for these positions, both internal to the external to the department?

A: your best bet is to reach out to the city planning office and see what positions are available or would be coming on line. When you are here, you will get tons of emails about opportunities. If you have specific people you are interested in working with or affiliated University centers, just reach out to them directly.

Q: Are there any class trips (national or international) in the MCP program?

A: yes, you will have the opportunity to travel. during your first year, you will focus on philly and other local communities for your projects and the workshop course/studio 1. then in your second year, you will have the opportunity to travel during studio 2. for example, i chose a studio in Austin, Tx and some of my peers went to Puerto rico, Rhode Island, cypress, etc. additionally, UPenn has many opportunities to travel in and outside of the school. for example, several peers opted to fulfill their internship requirement with international gigs...France, Vietnam, and Liberia.

Q: MArch. How have your experiences been with the travel studios? How do they relate to the rest of your semesters?

A: Travel studios occur in your last year. This is also when you get to select which studio/professor you wish to work with. It is a wonderful time to explore your interests in unique places outside of taking on your own thesis proposal.

A: I will be unable to attend any of the open houses now. I was wondering if I were to make a visit later in January 2020, would it be possible to interact with the students and professors of the MCP department? I would like to spend some time understanding more about the ongoing research and studio offerings.

Q: Yes, you can absolutely schedule a visit! Please reach out to the City and Regional Planning office directly and they will be able to coordinate their schedule with yours and hopefully schedule time for you to meet with students and faculty- cityplan@design.upenn.edu

Q: I'm applying with a BS in Architecture and hoping for advanced standing. Is that based on my transcript and the courses in my undergraduate program, or on the quality of my portfolio submission?

A: It is determined by your portfolio