




New Heights

From the Chair

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In 2006, several students approached the Chair of the Urban and Regional Planning Program in the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, noting that Michigan Planning did not have its own student planning journal for disseminating the work of students and faculty. How could this be? They urged that the time had come to establish such a forum, and they offered to undertake the task of starting a journal. They chose the term Agora for its title, speaking to the agora of Athens in ancient Greece -- the central gathering place for trading ideas and goods and the center of civic life. Agora has been especially remarkable in two respects. First, it has always been a student-initiated effort. While the planning program and Taubman College have provided some financial support and faculty advising, passionate students are its heart and soul. Second, while each year the scope and quality of the journal has increased, that progress has evolved through several distinct stages. First came a substantial

increase in student participation through formalization of the editorial board. Then came a notable focus on heightening the quality of both content and presentation of the final journal. This year's Agora staff have taken the journal to new heights, leveraging modern multi-media fora to transform Agora into a truly modern gathering place for trading ideas through a journal, a web presence, a blog, and more. This is exciting! It speaks to the quality, passion, and initiative of our students, and it makes a real contribution to intellectual development and public service at the University of Michigan and beyond. I am immensely impressed by our students' accomplishments, and as participants in this modern gathering place for intellectual and civic life, I hope you will be too.

Sincerely,

Richard