

## **Public Administration Research Conference**

The Department of Public Administration, in partnership with the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management, Public Administration Alumni Association, Florida APA-Metro Orlando Section and Central Florida ASPA, co-hosted the Fifth Annual UCF Public Administration Research Conference on March 25, 2011, at the *FAIRWINDS* Alumni Center in Orlando. The conference theme - *Healthy Communities-Healthy Government* - explored challenges in implementing policies that shape the built environment for more equitable and sustainable development, encourage investment and improve environmental quality. 100 participants attended presentations by UCF faculty, doctorate students, practitioners and community partners.

The highlights of the conference included the morning plenary titled *Opportunities and Challenges in Developing "Healthy Communities": Orlando's Lake Nona* delivered by Thad Seymour, VP for Life Sciences at Lake Nona, and four panel presentations. The lunch keynote address by Tim Center, Esq., VP of Sustainability Initiatives at the Collins Center, on *Moving Toward a Sustainable Florida: People-Planet-Prosperity* also provided a thought-provoking discussion on sustainability.

Panel presentation themes on local decision making and governance, water quality and resilient communities provided multiple viewpoints for discussing "healthy communities". Dr. Chris Hawkins and Dr. XiaoHu Wang's presentation on "Participatory Mechanisms for Developing Healthy and Sustainable Communities" spurred discussions on local planning for healthy communities. Dr. Thomas Bryer's presentation on "The Costs of Democratization" outlined online public engagement strategies and opportunities for civic participation. Alissa Torres and Janna Souvorova's presentation on "The Design and the Development of Large Scale Master-Planned Communities" engaged discussions on "healthy" land development projects and utilizing design features to improve lifestyle changes. The panel on developing resilient communities in the context of disasters was lead by Dr. Fernando and Mark Settermbrino from the Department of Sociology. They presented a paper on the role of behavioral and social networks in building resilient communities. Dr. Chris Hawkins, from the Department of Public Administration discussed planning perspectives relating to resilient communities, while a discussion on policy, administration and evaluation of community networks included Dr. Naim Kapucu and students, Fatih Demiroz (PhD) and Rebecca Dodson (Undergraduate).

Practitioners and their insights on building healthy communities were highlighted throughout the conference. Luis Nieves-Ruiz, from Orange County Planning Department, investigated how the concept of healthy communities can be nurtured with home grown produce. Dr. Claire Knox from UCF and Mark Sees from the City of Orlando presented a paper on EPA's numeric water quality standards and Orlando's easterly wetlands. Stephen Miller and John Prowell from the planning and engineering firm VHB provided complementary evidence of water quality in supporting healthy communities.

The Central Florida Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration sponsored the student poster session and the presentation was won by Daniel Stephens, PhD Student, for his research on the topic: "Using Active Transportation to Improve Waistlines and Bottom Lines."

At the conference, students were also inducted into Pi Alpha Alpha, the honor society of public affairs and administration.

Photos:



CPNM PA Research Conference #1 Daniel Stephens



CPNM PA Research Conference #2 Thad Seymour



CPNM PA Research Conference #3 Panel – Bouncing Back: Resilient Communities, Resilient Government



CPNM PA Research Conference #4 Panel – Bouncing Back: Resilient Communities, Resilient Government



CPNM PA Research Conference #5 Panel – Bouncing Back: Resilient Communities, Resilient Government

Photographer: Daniel Stephens