The PhD program in Regional Development Planning at the University of Cincinnati provides rigorous academic training in planning theory, urban and regional theories, advanced research, and planning practice. The purpose of the doctoral program is to educate and train the next generation of high-level practitioners, policy makers, and scholars who will bring new research ideas and knowledge to the teaching and practice of urban and regional planning. The PhD program is served by the School of Planning’s faculty members with expertise in urban design and physical planning, community and economic development, transportation planning, international development, environmental planning, and sustainable development. The University of Cincinnati School of Planning program stresses the interdisciplinary analysis and solutions to regional development problems from inner cities to rural areas. The spatial emphasis of the program, from neighborhoods to national levels, recognizes that planning problems increasingly transcend geographic boundaries and require spatially-based systems thinking.

**Rainer vom Hofe - Economic Development Planning and Policy Analysis**

The Director of our PhD program, Dr. vom Hofe is a Regional Scientist with a background in urban and regional economics and in quantitative methods for economic development planning and policy analysis. His most recent published work focused on urban amenities and the spatial dynamics of long-term urban retail decline. Currently he is working on developing a regional economic modeling framework to assess the economic costs of urban flooding and in the area of spatial economic resilience.

**Christopher Auffrey - Healthy Urban Planning and Visual Communication in the Public Realm**

Dr. Auffrey’s research is focused on how planning practice impacts the social determinants of health based on the WHO definition, with particular emphasis on a relational view of place and the creation of social capital to address health disparities experienced in structurally disinvested communities. He also conducts research into the visual communication effectiveness of on-premise signage based on regulation, design, and context.

**Na Chen - Transportation Planning and Policy**

Dr. Na Chen’s research interest is transportation planning and policy with a focus on individual activity-based travel behavior, sustainable transportation, and accessibility. In addition, she is interested in the development and application of spatial methods to analyze travel behavior, public infrastructure investment and land-use patterns, motivated by the connections between activity-based travel patterns, land-use and transportation systems, and urban sustainability issues.

**Carla Chifos - International Sustainable Development Planning**

Carla Chifos, PhD, AICP has 30 years of experience and research in sustainable development at the national and local scales in countries circling the globe. This work has revolved around policy and plans for sustainable development and climate change mitigation and adaptation, protection and enhancement of cultural landscapes, working across disciplines to connect communities with scientific data to better inform planning and development practice, and recently bringing issues of justice and equity into green space design, climate action plans, and sustainability initiatives.
David Edelman - Urban Environmental Management

Dr. Edelman’s work centers on the management of the urban environment in developing countries and is based on his twenty-year career as an international consultant for development banks, bilateral aid institutions and UN agencies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He has written extensively on the topic, including books and articles concerning Mysore, Lagos, Manila, Lima, Santo Domingo, Jakarta and Istanbul.

Jan Marie Fritz - Human Rights, Diversity, Inclusion, Environmental Justice and Mediation

Dr. Fritz is a clinical sociologist who specializes in creative, humanistic, rights-based and interdisciplinary interventions. She is the editor of Springer’s Clinical Sociology book series and the editor, co-editor and author of more than 130 publications including two award-winning books. She is a member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and the Mayor of Cincinnati’s Gender Equality Task Force.

Leah Hollstein - Land Use and Environmental Planning, Planning Practice

Dr. Hollstein is engaged in research in the areas of green infrastructure, land use trends, decision-making within the practice of urban planning, and the field of science and technology studies. A common element in her work is the agency of human action within our lived environment, both natural and created.

Johanna W. Looye - International Development Planning and Local Economic Development

Dr. Looye’s primary area of interest is international development planning, with a focus on Brazilian and Latin American urban and regional development, sustainable development, and issues surrounding inclusion and equity. She also has an extensive background in economic development planning, especially small-scale business and business support in the U.S. and in developing nations. Finally, she publishes in the area of pedagogy and critical thinking.

Vikas Mehta - Urban Design and Physical Planning

Dr. Mehta’s work focuses on the role of design and planning in creating a more responsive, equitable, stimulating and communicative environment. He is interested in various dimensions of urbanity through the exploration of place as a social and ecological setting and as a sensorial art. This work emphasizes the sense of place and place distinctiveness, design and visualization of urban places and activities, and cities and regions as just, equitable and sustainable living systems.

Danilo Palazzo - Urbanism and Urban Design

Urbanism and urban design are at the center of Dr. Palazzo’s research activities. His interest in the design and interpretation of physical spaces of the city is linked with the role of community and democratic participation, on how spaces are practiced and used by inhabitants and visitors, and on the role nature and ecosystems have in urban environments.

Xinhao Wang - Environmental Planning and GIS Applications

Inspired and guided by ecological wisdom and socio-ecological practice research, Dr. Wang’s work is in the areas of environmental planning, urban and regional studies of sustainability and resilience, and GIS and modeling applications in planning and decision-making. The focus of his work is the human-environment interactions (HEI) facing the uncertainty of urban futures.

PhD students at the University of Cincinnati also get to take advantage of the many opportunities available to them at a research institution of this size. Our students frequently make use of interdisciplinary collaborations with economics, geography, and architecture, to name a few. We are happy to discuss your specific interests further, please reach out at any time to Dr. vom Hofe, the program director, with any questions about how we might be a good fit for you.