Newsletter | November 2014

MRED Fall Lecture

Omar Blaik, Co-Founder of U3 Advisors, based in Philadelphia, presented the 2014 Fall Lecture to MRED students, faculty and the Colvin Council of Advisors. Mr. Blaik is the special advisor to President Loh for real estate matters. Mr. Blaik fascinated all in attendance with his work in Philadelphia and Detroit where he has advised "eds and meds" institutions on how to re-position and transform the neighborhoods around them with marketing and place making strategies. Mr. Blaik's impact can already be seen in College Park with new development along Route 1 and the hotel project David Hillman, President of Southern Management, is set to undertake in early 2015. Mr. Hillman is a founding advisor of the MRED Institute Council of Advisors.

Crowdfunding with Dr. Susanne Cannon

Dr. Susanne Cannon, the Chairman of the Department of Real Estate and the Douglas and Cynthia Crocker Endowed Director of the Real Estate Center at DePaul University, was the guest speaker on Monday, October 13, for the combined classes of Structured Finance and Entrepreneurship. The topic crowdfunding. Dr. Cannon covered the history of crowdfunding back to microfunding, and more specifically how real estate firms can take advantage of crowdfunding
sources, such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo, to support their projects. She pointed out that crowdfunding as a form of real estate investing may create accessibility for smaller investors and developers to benefit from this relatively new trend, leading to a more efficient and transparent market.

Alumni Profile: Shahid Rana

Shahid Rana, MRED '09, was recently appointed as the Executive Director for Fairmount Community Development Corporation (FCDC) in Philadelphia, PA. Shahid comes to this new position from a background of community development and planning, urban design, and creative marketing and branding.

As the Executive Director, he manages the Greater Art Museum Business Alliance (GAMBA), coordinating community planning efforts in the Greater Art Museum neighborhoods as well as overseeing the redevelopment of historic West Girard Avenue. His role is to ensure that businesses are built to stay in business by providing them with the resources needed for sustainability and growth.

Shahid’s organization is hosting an exciting upcoming event November 20, the annual Philadelphia FOOD FIGHT, a culinary challenge featuring Philadelphia's top restaurants. Proceeds from the fundraiser go towards community development initiatives such as capacity building, promoting businesses of GAMBA, and the local Food Cupboard's food drive.

Diversity & Inclusion Meet & Greet
Over 40 students from MRED and HISP came together for a workshop style meet and greet to discuss issues regarding diversity and inclusion within the UMD community. Topics such as community engagement, university climate, and leadership were covered with specific goals in mind for each issue. The discussion was coordinated by Master of Historic Preservation candidate, Imania Price, the HISP Student Representative for the Diversity Task Force. At the white board is Theodore Megginson, shown above, participating in the interactive exercise on ways to make the University, the School and the MRED program more inclusive and diverse.

Meet New Student: Meghan Leahy

Meghan Leahy is a dual degree student working towards her masters in real estate development and architecture. Originally from Bridgewater, MA, Meghan's passion for development and architecture led her to the MRED program. She moved here from Boston where she earned her BFA in architectural design from Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Meghan is a licensed real estate agent and architectural intern. She is interested in exploring how the relationship between development and architecture can result in a promising career.