

Irayda M. Ruiz

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Irayda Ruiz, graduated from the School of Architecture of the University of San Carlos in Guatemala (1996), and obtained a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning, with a concentration in international planning from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2002.

As the Assistant Director of Operations of the School of World Studies, her responsibilities include directing the School's advising office, coordinating internships, course scheduling and assessments, developing grant proposals and assisting the Director in spearheading public relations and advancement initiatives. Ms. Ruiz is responsible for teaching a graduation seminar for Spanish majors as well as other advanced topics on Latino American Studies offered by the School.

Prior to joining VCU in 2006, Ms. Ruiz taught courses in Research Methods and Introduction to Design Theory at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, from 1996 -1998.

Her research experience includes being co-author of 3 books and several professional publications and articles.

Between 1993 and 1996, Ms. Ruiz worked under the direction of Dr. Mario Monteforte Toledo, professor emeritus at the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Together, they studied seasonal migrations between Guatemala and Mexico. Their study was published in 1997 under the title "The Moving Border" "*La Frontera Movil*".

In 1997, Ms Ruiz received a national award for the best thesis of the year presented by the Guatemalan Association of Architects, *Colegio de Arquitectos de Guatemala*, for her thesis work "Urban Growth in the City of Esquipulas, Chiquimula and the Central American Parliament," "*EL Crecimiento Urbano en la Ciudad Sede del PARLACEN, Esquipulas Chiquimula*".

During 1996 and 1997, she was part of research team lead by Professor Mabel Hernandez that studied the influence of the banana plantations and the urbanization of the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of Guatemala. "The Architecture and Urbanism of the Banana Plantations: The United Fruit Company and the Victorian Style in Guatemala" "*La Arquitectura y Urbanismo en las Plantaciones Bananeras: UFCo y el Estilo Victoriano*" was first published in 1998.

Between 1998 and 1999, Ms. Ruiz led a research project entitled "The Homes of the Widows, in the Ixil Region : Nebaj, Cotzal and Chajul" "*Las Viviendas de las Viudas de la Region Ixil Nebaj, Cotzal and Chajul*". This study dealt with the implications of reconstruction of three Mayan towns located in the North of Quiche in Guatemalan

highlands. She and her team developed a methodology to promote public participation from the victims of the civil war in Guatemala.

In 2000, she moved to the US and entered graduate school at VCU. There she worked under the direction of Dr. Robert Rugg and Dr. John Accordino as a research assistant for the Richmond Urban Indicators Project, funded through a grant from the Ford Foundation. Between 2001 and 2002, under the direction of professors Robert Rugg and Weiping Wu, she participated on a research project titled "Urban Indicators at the Sub City Level in Guatemala City and Shanghai, China" funded by the University Consortium of Geographic Information Science through funds from HUD.

Prior to her graduation from VCU, she interned with the Guatemalan Office of the United Nations Development Program (2001) and prepared a proposal for the creation of a GIS system to help decision makers plan development, disaster prevention and management in medium and small municipalities in Guatemala.

Her main areas of academic interest include: long-term impacts of globalization, sustainability, multiculturalism, cultural patrimony and identity and how all those elements are reflected in the urban form. More recently, she also developed a strong interest in comparative studies between Mesoamerican countries and the US.

Education/ Certifications:

2004	Certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
2002	Masters in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP), with concentration in International Development, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).
1997	Post Graduate Diploma: Facilitation and Peaceful Conflict Resolution, Central American Superior Council (CSUCA).
1996	Licenciature* in Architecture, University of San Carlos of Guatemala(USAC).

* Professional degree conferred in Guatemala, includes 10 semester course-work, one year of internship, oral examination and Thesis dissertation.

Languages:

Spanish (native language)
English: Fluent

Academic experience:

2006-	Assistant Director of Operations	Current responsibilities include: Directing the School advising office, coordinating internships, course scheduling and assessments, managing the school's fiscal and reporting requirements, identifying
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funding sources and developing grand proposals, Assist Director in spearheading public relations and advancement initiatives and Teaching a graduation seminar for Spanish Major students as well as other advanced topics on Latino American Studies.

- 2001-2002 Research Assistant** Assisted the Research team in the "Urban Indicators sub-city level in Guatemala and Shanghai" sponsored by UCGIS. Prepared and digitized thematic maps using Arc View and Arc Info software.
- 2000-2001 Research Assistant** Assisted the Research team in the "Richmond Urban Indicators Project" and gave technical support to users of GIS system created by VCU-URSP in the Local Indicatives Support Corporation (LISC) offices. Winter 2000 to Spring 2002.
- 1998 Coordinator
Infrastructure Division
Planning Office** Elaboration of plans, programs and projects related to new infrastructure on the academic campus and other properties of Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC).
- 1996 - 1998 Assistant Professor** Taught courses on Research Methods and Theory and work as Thesis Advisor at the School of Architecture, University of San Carlos of Guatemala.
- 1995- 1998 Academic Researcher** Worked as research associate in fields related to Urbanism, Housing and Historic Preservation.
- 1992 - 1994 Research
Assistant** Collection of data, assisted the research team in the Department of Research of the School of Architecture, USAC.

Professional experience:

- 2004-2006 Senior City Planner** Working for the City of Hampton as a senior member of the comprehensive plan team. Assist the Planning Director as project manager of Downtown Hampton and Kecoughtan Corridor Master Plans. Lead community outreach and participation and manage public communications strategy. Assist Planning director with managing consultants and sub-consultant's work, schedule and product delivery. Organize multiple events and activities to facilitate stakeholder input such as design charettes, public

meetings, update website, etc. Conduct research, analyze data, writing staff reports and making presentations to elected officials.

2002-2004 City Planner Worked within the Comprehensive Plan Team of Planning Department to develop plans and ordinances. Performed GIS analysis on information received from a variety of data sources in order to provide tailored, value-added information to the final products delivered to customers. Provided mapping, statistical and other technical support when needed.

2002 Planning Intern Worked for James City County, Va. Planning Division. Conduct research on several projects, preparing maps, writing reports, summarizing documents and making recommendations. Organize staff and community meetings; prepared agendas, recorded discussions and memorandums.

Summer 2001 Interned with the United Nations Development Program-Guatemala Office. Worked as an Intern with the United Nations Development Program office in Guatemala in which she developed a proposal to be used by the Guatemalan Government to seek funding for developing GIS-based tools to facilitate the development of polices for disaster prevention while managing future development in rural areas, small towns in Guatemala.

1993 - 1998 Architect Designing, planning and supervision of private construction projects as partner of a private firm of architecture in Guatemala, City.

Memberships:

2006- International Planning Division of APA
2005- Co-Chair and Founder of the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee of VAPA
2005- Member Woman in Planning Division of APA
2004- Member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
2004- Member of the Hampton Roads Hispanic Community Dialog
2004-2006 Co-Chair Tidewater section of American Planning Association
2002- VCU Alumni Association
2000 - Member of American Planning Association (APA)
2000- Member of American Planning Association Virginia Chapter (VAPA)
2000-2002 Member of Urban Studies and Planning Graduate Students Association at VCU (URPSA)

- 1996- 2003 Member of the Colleague of Architects' of Guatemala (CAG)
- 1993 - 94 Honorary Member of the Superior Council from the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala.
- 1991 - 92 Representative for the students at the Directive Council School of Architecture.

Awards

- 2002, '03 & '04 Achievement Awards, Planning Department, City of Hampton.
- 2000-2001 Graduate School Scholarship, College of Humanities, Virginia Commonwealth University.
- 1997 Awarded for the "Best Thesis of the Year" from the College of Architects of Guatemala.
- 1994 Research Fellowship from the Department of Academic Research, DIGI- USAC.

Research papers and Publications:

- 2006 Hampton Community Plan, (Senior Planner and principal co-author).
- 2006 Kecoughtan Corridor Master Plan, (Project Manager and Reviewer).
- 2004 Downtown Hampton Master Plan, (Project Manager and Reviewer).
- 2002 James City County Comprehensive Plan (Research Assistant)
- 2001 Urban Indicators at Sub-City level in Guatemala City and Shanghai, China. University Consortium for Geographic Information Systems - US Department of Housing and Urban Development. (Research Assistant)
- 2000 Richmond Neighborhood Indicators. Local Initiative Research Corporations - Department of Urban and Regional Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University. (GIS Research Assistant).
- 1998 Las Viviendas de las Viudas en la Region Ixil; Estudio de tres poblados indigenas in Guatemala: Nebaj, Cotzal and Chajul "The Homes of the Widows, in the Ixil region the Study of Three Mayan Towns in Guatemala: Nebaj, Cotzal and Chajul" (Research Coordinator and Principal Author) 300 pp.
- 1997 "The Architecture and Urbanism of the Banana Plantations: The United Fruit Company and the Victorian Style in Guatemala" "La Arquitectura y Urbanismo en las Plantaciones Bananeras: UFCo y el Estilo Victoriano. DIGI- USAC, (Senior Researcher) 60 pp
- 1996 "The Moving Border" "La Frontera Movil: Migraciones Temporales entre Mexico y Guatemala", UNAM, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 233 pp (Senior Researcher)
- 1995 "Post Modernism in the Historic Downtown of Guatemala City" "Postmodernismo en el Centro Historico de la Ciudad de Guatemala" DIGI, USAC. Guatemala 55 pp. Author
- 1991 "The Architecture of Plastic Integration: the Modernism in Guatemala" "Arquitectura de Integracion Plastica: El Modernismo en Guatemala" conducted by the Research

Center of the Faculty of Architecture (CIFA), USAC Research Assistant.