Hometown: Pune, Maharashtra, India

Possessing a passion for sustainable urban design and natural resource conservation, with a global perspective, CED is providing Deepali with the experiences that will fuel her career. Read more by clicking the “for more information” button below.

Deepali Pavnaskar earned her Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Pune in India. She had always been interested in sustainable architecture, and during her fifth year practical training (similar to an internship) she worked with a community that served as an experimental model for sustainable planning – Auroville. Auroville is an autonomous city with its own governmental system that was being planned from the ground up. Planning committees would conceive of a project and hold community input meetings. Based upon the reception of the ideas at the meeting, projects would be implemented. The city is also a mix of cultures, with the goal of being a model “city of humanity.”

Deepali worked professionally as an architect for two years upon the completion of her undergraduate degree. During this time she contributed to the design of two educational campuses, both in India, one of which is now complete and in use. Also during this time, she was part of a team that earned second place in a competition for educational campus design. The contest submission was a full campus design that incorporated a variety of facilities including lecture halls, recreational facilities, and eateries. While Deepali enjoyed her work, it did not allow for the freedom to focus on the design and construction of sustainable architecture, which she is so passionate about.

Wanting to focus on sustainable built environments, Pavnaskar began searching for graduate programs that would fit her needs. Initially she looked into city and regional planning programs, but the courses offered did not incorporate enough sustainable and ecologic elements for her goals. The College of Environment & Design (CED) at The University of Georgia (UGA) was the only two-year program she found that focuses on these elements of planning. So far, her favorite courses have been an ecology class that she feels opened her eyes to how twentieth
century planning practices have altered the ecological balance and the design charrette course. Design charrettes are intensive two to three day community service projects in which CED students are tasked with presenting design solutions for a local issue.

This summer, Deepali will be serving as an intern with the UGA Archway Partnership. She will primarily be working on a downtown revitalization plan for the City of Varnell in Whitfield County, Georgia. Additionally, she will be coordinating service projects for undergraduate interns, most of them Bachelor of Landscape Architecture students, and managing their work hours. She will serve as a mentor and guide them through the design process for the challenges posed by the communities to which they are assigned.

Pavnaskar was awarded the John F. Crowley Travel Scholarship for the 2011-2012 academic year. This scholarship is given to one student per year based upon academic merit and the wish to travel for scholarly research. Deepali is planning use her award to attend the 2012 American Planning Association Conference in Los Angeles, California.

While she is not sure whether she will remain in the United States, Deepali is positive that sustainable urban design – especially projects dealing with public spaces – is in her future. Her goal is to promote natural resource conservation both through her design work and by eventually teaching the next generation of planners.