

NEWSLETTER

ISUS UOS - AUGUST 2025

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF URBAN SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF SEOUL



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01

2025 Global Friends Night – Celebrating Diversity, Welcoming New Beginnings

On August 21, 2025, ISUS officially welcomed the Fall Semester with its annual tradition, Global Friends Night (GFN). Held at Centennial Hall, the event brought together students, faculty, and international guests for a lively evening celebrating culture, community, and new beginnings.

The evening opened with warm remarks from President Won Yong-kul of the University of Seoul, who commended ISUS's contributions to global collaboration and sustainable development. Dean Prof. Shin Lee emphasized the value of cultural events in fostering reflection and connection. Several ambassadors and diplomatic representatives also shared congratulatory messages and toasts.

Guests were treated to vibrant student performances, highlighting ISUS's diverse and talented community. The audience enjoyed the Lucky Draw, led by faculty and special guests, with exciting prizes for winners. A buffet dinner followed, offering time to mingle and share stories across cultures.

The event closed with thoughtful remarks from Vice Dean Prof. Chunho Yeom, who spoke on the power of shared experiences and global friendship.

Beyond the festivities, GFN set a thoughtful tone for the academic year ahead—bringing together community, culture, and shared inspiration. (J.T)





02

ISUS Commencement Ceremony – August 2025 Edition



The International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS) held one of its 2025 Commencement Ceremonies on August 22 at the Natural Science Auditorium, marking a significant academic milestone for its students.

This biannual ceremony honored graduates from the Master of Urban Administration and Planning (MUAP-16) program, as well as students from ISUS's Korean-program tracks—Global Construction and Sustainable Urban Development—including one doctoral graduate who completed a Ph.D. in International Urban Development.

The event commenced with opening remarks by Dean Prof. Shin Lee, who commended the graduates for their hard work, resilience, and commitment throughout their studies.

A short video presentation followed, highlighting memorable moments from the students' academic journey, adding a personal and reflective touch to the occasion.

Certificates were then formally presented to each graduate, marking a proud moment for both students and faculty. The ceremony concluded in a warm and celebratory atmosphere, as graduates shared smiles and a sense of pride for the journey completed and the paths ahead.

Friends, family members, and faculty joined the graduates afterward to take photos and extend personal congratulations. It was a meaningful and memorable day, celebrating both achievement and the beginning of new journeys. (J.T)





03

2025 ISUS Policy Sharing Conference



On August 21, 2025, the International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS), University of Seoul, hosted the 2025 Policy Sharing Conference at the International Conference Room in the Natural Science Building. The event gathered alumni, faculty, and international experts to exchange knowledge and policy innovations addressing urban and regional challenges across the globe.

The conference opened with welcoming remarks from Dr. Shin Lee, Dean of ISUS, followed by a group photo of participants. Presentations in the morning featured diverse themes, ranging from strategic planning in Colombia and climate resilience in Cambodia's rural roads, to new approaches to urban planning in Ecuador, alumni experiences from Kenya, and advancing gender equality in Indonesia.

In the afternoon, discussions turned toward the role of Korea as a partner in global urban transformation. Highlights included public-private partnership solutions for Jakarta's urban rail system, sustainable water management initiatives in Mexico, and cooperation between Korea and Sri Lanka for resilient urban futures. The final part of the program showcased how ISUS alumni are applying their learning to career leadership, with examples from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Peru.

The event concluded with closing remarks and a group photo, reaffirming ISUS's identity as a global hub for dialogue and collaboration in sustainable urban development.(K.S)







04

ISUS Bridges Phnom Penh and Seoul: Urban Planning Internship Program for RUPP Students

The International School of Urban Sciences successfully hosted the "Internship Program on Capacity Building for Sustainable Urban Planning and Development" for undergraduate students from the Department of Sustainable Urban Planning and Development (DSUPD) at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Cambodia. Held from July 28 to August 14, 2025, the three-week program was planned by Professor Hyeon PARK and Junwon SEO as part of an educational cooperation initiative supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF).

Designed to strengthen students' practical knowledge and explore career opportunities in Korea's urban sector, the program brought ten RUPP students to UOS. The first week featured lectures,

expert talks, and site visits on land use planning, urban development, and design, followed by two weeks of internship placements at public and private institutions in urban planning, real estate, and GIS.

Heng Seangfu, a fourth-year DSUPD student, reflected: "This program helped me understand urban development not only technically but also within historical and cultural contexts. I hope to apply this knowledge to Cambodia's future cities."

By combining academic learning with professional experience, the program enhanced students' capacities and opened pathways to future employment in Korea. UOS plans to expand such initiatives linking global education with career development in sustainable urban development.(H.K.)





05

MUAP, MUD and MUDSIP Students

Join 6th LH Global Business Conference in Busan

On July 16, 2025, MUAP, MUD, and MUDSIP students from the International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS), University of Seoul, participated in the 6th LH Global Business Conference in Busan, hosted by Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH).

Under the theme “Smart Technology and Global Partnership for Disaster Response and Urban Resilience,” the event explored innovative solutions for disaster preparedness and sustainable urban growth. For ISUS students, the conference provided valuable exposure to global practices and underscored the role of smart technologies and partnerships in shaping resilient cities.(K.S)

06

MUD, MGLEP and MUDSIP Students

Gain Hands-On Experience with leading Korean Organizations



During the summer of 2025, MUAP, MUD, and MUDSIP students from the International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS), University of Seoul, participated in internships with Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH), K-water, the Korea Environmental Corporation (KECO), and the Korea National Park Service.

These placements offered hands-on experience in housing development, water management, environmental sustainability, and park conservation. Through field visits, project briefings, and exchanges with professionals, students gained valuable insights into Korea's best practices while strengthening their capacity to apply lessons in their home countries.(K.S)





GREENTECHINC



ISUS Student Represents UOS at ICPP7 in Thailand

In July 2025, Khurram Shahzad, Master of Urban Development student at the International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS), University of Seoul, represented the university at the 7th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP7) in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

His research, Dynamic Panel Data Analysis of Induced Traffic Using

Generalized Method of Moments Estimation: Evidence from the Gujrat Division, Pakistan, was presented among studies from over 80 countries. The conference provided a platform for global exchange on transport policy, sustainable development, and urban governance, reinforcing ISUS's presence in international policy dialogue. (K.S)





08

Alum of the Month:

Natali Rocio
DUARTE
BERMUDEZ
(MUAP 7)

Natali is driving Colombia's territorial governance and digital transformation. After graduating from the University of Seoul's MUAP 7th cohort in 2016, she has led major national initiatives, including coordinating a 90-member team under the National Planning Department to modernize cadastral systems and strengthen local governments.

- **Could you briefly introduce your current role and responsibilities, and how your career has evolved since graduating from ISUS in 2016?**

Since I earned my Master's in Urban Administration and Planning from the University of Seoul in 2016, I've become a prominent figure in Colombia's territorial governance landscape. I currently leads the Territorial Strengthening component of the National Multipurpose Cadastre Policy, coordinating one of the country's most ambitious knowledge transfer strategies—"Territorial Technical Cooperation"—under the National Planning Department.

My leadership spans a multidisciplinary team of over 90 professionals working nationwide to enhance institutional capacities and foster inclusive, data-driven territorial planning. This national role builds on her early work as a territorial liaison, where I supported over 120 municipalities in developing master land-use plans, marking a pivotal shift from technical urban cartography to strategic empowerment of local governments.

Over the past decade, my career has been anchored in institutions central to Colombia's territorial development, including the Bogotá Secretariat of Planning and Mobility, the Ministry of Housing, and the National Planning Department. Her contributions span policy design, technical implementation, and strategic coordination. A standout achievement was my role as national coordinator of the "Green Territories" project, funded by the European Union and implemented by the French Development Agency.

Through this initiative, I led cadastral updating and capacity-building efforts across multiple domains—property formalization, land-use planning, municipal finance, disaster risk management, environmental governance, and community participation—cementing my reputation as a visionary and collaborative leader in sustainable territorial development.

- **How do you see Korea's experience and your time at ISUS contributing to Colombia's geospatial digital transformation or territorial governance?**

My time at the International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS) at the University of Seoul was truly transformative—not just academically, but in how I came to understand the strategic power of geospatial information in shaping inclusive, resilient, and future-oriented territories. Korea's experience showed me what's possible when digital infrastructure, institutional coordination, and citizen-centered planning come together. I saw how cadastral systems, urban data platforms, and smart governance tools could be integrated to support real-time decision-making, transparent land management, and equitable development. These lessons deeply influenced my thinking and approach when I returned to Colombia.

ISUS gave me the language, frameworks, and confidence to reimagine territorial governance from a systemic perspective.

It helped me evolve from a technical specialist in urban cartography to a national leader in knowledge transfer, institutional strengthening, and digital transformation. Today, through the "Territorial Technical Cooperation" strategy, I'm applying many of the principles I learned in Korea—adapted to Colombia's diverse realities—to empower municipalities, modernize cadastral systems, and foster inter-institutional collaboration. I don't see Korea's model as something to replicate blindly, but rather as a source of valuable lessons in scalability, interoperability, and long-term vision. My role now is to translate those lessons into public value—bridging global innovation with local needs and ensuring that Colombia's geospatial transformation is not only technically sound, but socially meaningful.



- **You'll be joining the 2025 ISUS Policy Sharing Conference this month. What do you hope to share with the participants, and what are you most looking forward to?**

I arrived in Korea at 29, still unsure of the professional path I wanted to follow. I had solid technical training, but I hadn't yet discovered the social purpose that would give deeper meaning to my work. Living in Korea changed that. It helped me become more visionary, empathetic, and open-minded. Sharing a classroom with peers from over 19 nationalities—Nigeria, China, the Philippines, Cambodia, Poland, and many more—pushed me out of my comfort zone and taught me to listen, connect, and build lifelong friendships. One of those friends, Maria Emilia Zielinska from Warsaw, is now Director of Urban Renewal for the Polish capital. We keep in touch and visit each other. I also fell in love with Korean culture—the food, the music, the celebrations, and of course, karaoke (noraebang!). I still seek out traditional Korean restaurants in Colombia to relive those beautiful memories. Seoul left a permanent mark on my heart.

Eleven years later, I feel incredibly proud to be a graduate of UOS and ISUS. The program gave me tools I use every day—case studies, field trips, and classroom discussions that helped me understand how Seoul became a world-class city despite its challenges. That experience now informs my leadership in Colombia's national territorial modernization strategy. I often draw on what I learned in Korea to inspire my team, spark new ideas, and build bridges between global best practices and local realities.

I always encourage students to ask questions, engage with professors, and explore the places where real change happens. Field trips are especially powerful—they help you internalize lessons and see solutions in action. My advice to future participants: make every moment count. Study hard, prepare well, and give your best academically. But don't miss the chance to truly experience Seoul—walk through its universities, take the metro, visit the mountains and the Han River, spend weekends in Sokcho or evenings in Gangnam. Thirteen months will fly by. For me, they weren't enough—I believe I'll never have enough of Seoul.





Lastly, do you have any messages or advice for your fellow alumni, current ISUS students, or faculty members?

To everyone beginning this journey, and to those proudly closing this chapter, I want to share something deeply personal: the opportunity to learn and grow here is truly infinite. Every class, every conversation, every walk through the city plants a seed of transformation. Make the most of those around you—professors, classmates, staff—because each one holds something valuable that can shape your vision of the world. Think about your own cities. Imagine what you can build with what you learn. We all come from territories with unique challenges and complex realities, but also with collective dreams. And the most beautiful, most courageous thing we can do is choose to return and help transform them. For me, that commitment is captured in a phrase that guides my work: “with my work, I build my country.”

Study with discipline, share generously, speak with curiosity, and give your very best. Being part of these programs changes us forever. It makes us better professionals, but above all, better human beings. This time will remain etched in our memory as one of the most meaningful chapters of our lives. Today, as a proud alumna of the University of Seoul and the MUAP 7 program, I remain deeply motivated. Every day, I strive to keep learning, growing as a professional, and sharing that knowledge so that the municipalities in my country have better tools to build more just, sustainable, and humane territories. A warm embrace to all readers. I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who shaped my academic journey: Professor Man-Hee Han, Mr. Gumin Jung, Professor Hyeon Park, and especially Professor Shin Lee, who was my thesis advisor and a guiding light in key moments. To all of you, my infinite thanks and eternal appreciation.

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