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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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IUP RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE BY SMART GROWTH PARTNERSHIP

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Department of Geography and Regional Planning has been recognized for excellence by Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County.

Smart Growth Partnership is a community-based, nonprofit organization which focuses on encouraging growth to improve the quality of life for current and future generations of Westmoreland County citizens. The awards were given during the organization's 15-year anniversary event in July 2016.

IUP's **Department of Geography and Regional Planning** was recognized in the Smart Growth Collegiate Partnership category for Education and Engagement Excellence.

IUP's Department of Geography and Regional Planning has been working with the Smart Growth initiative for the past six years. Projects have included comprehensive data development, redevelopment strategies, and plans for Jeannette and New Kensington; recreation trail route mapping and delineation for New Alexandria; mapping and recreation planning for Avonmore; and the development of a community revitalization program for Latrobe.

In addition, two IUP graduates from the master's degree program in geography and regional planning, Evan Tobin and Dana Keith, were recognized as Jack Robertshaw Smart Growth Fellows award recipients.

Keith was the first Jack Robertshaw Fellow, receiving the award in November 2014 for her work with the city of Latrobe and the Latrobe Community Revitalization Program.

Tobin, the second recipient, received the award in December 2015 for his work in the New Kensington and Arnold area.

The Jack Robertshaw Fellow is a recognition given to honor one of the founding board members of the Smart Growth Partnership and is to be awarded to a student who excels in their community development work within any Westmoreland County community.



“Our students have greatly benefited from the opportunities and challenges of working with communities in

Westmoreland County,” said IUP Department of Geography and Regional Planning faculty member Whit Watts, who serves as the Smart Growth Projects of Westmoreland County projects chairperson.



“Working alongside those who ‘care enough to act’ has not only been an honor and a privilege, but an important lesson in itself,” he said.

“The work that IUP Geography and Regional Planning has undertaken in cooperation with Westmoreland communities and Smart Growth Partnership has served as a professional laboratory and has been extremely beneficial for our students,” John Benhart, chair of Geography and Regional Planning Department, said.

“I appreciate the efforts that our IUP students and faculty have put in to improve quality of life for communities in our region. These kinds of community-based projects are exactly what we want our students to be doing, as they are applied experiences that both benefit local communities and provide graduates with a track record that leads to success in the job market.”

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