

Nicholas Finio

AY 2017-18 All-S.T.A.R. Fellow

School of Architecture

Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Development

3rd year Graduate Student, RA



I've now been at the University of Maryland for eight consecutive semesters - first as a Master's student in the Urban Planning program, and now as a PhD student. Each semester, I've had a chance to serve as a graduate assistant, and that role has evolved over time. As a Master's student, I had a chance to assist multiple professors with research projects, and notably, serve as an intern with a Maryland state government agency (the Maryland Environmental Trust). That internship was a unique program, organized by the URSP department, which allowed full-time University GA's to work externally and gain real-world experience.

As a PhD student, I've been an RA with the National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG), which is affiliated with the Urban Planning program. My advisor, Gerrit Knaap, has allowed me to work on numerous projects that have real world relevance, including planning for the Purple Line light rail project here in Prince George's County, and a project on regional planning in Baltimore. My position as an RA has given me a unique ability to collaborate with professors on projects that will eventually become academic publications. I am certain that my position as a GA here at UMD has given me a unique position that allows me to apply what I'm learning in coursework to both real-world jobs, and academic research.