Aggie urban planning faculty are helping to fine-tune a computer tool that will help communities prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

Aggie planning scholars help develop trailblazing natural disaster resilience software

Real progress is being made by Texas A&M [urban planning] (http://laup.arch.tamu.edu/) faculty to help communities better prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

The Aggie faculty members, affiliated with the [Center for Risk-Based Community Resilience Planning] (http://resilience.colostate.edu/) , are working closely with emergency planners in several communities and the center's multidisciplinary group of scholars to refine IN-CORE Ñ a free, open-source, center-developed computer tool that helps local governmentsÕ natural disaster planning.

ÒWeÕre learning how communities want to use IN-CORE and are feeding that information back to the centerÕs physical and computer scientists to improve it,Ó said Shannon Van Zandt, head of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, who has worked on the

project since its inception in 2015. ÒWe want the platform to be used by communities to support decision-making and resource allocation that can really make a difference in how communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters.Ó

Project scholars also include Michelle Meyer, director of the College of Architecture's [Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center] (http://hrrc.arch.tamu.edu/) and Maria Watson from the urban planning faculty, Walter Peacock, HRRC senior research fellow, Nathanael Rosenheim, HRRC associate research scientist, and Maria Koliou, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering.

Based at Colorado State University, the Center for Risk-Based Community Resilience Planning, comprised of a multidisciplinary group of scholars across the country, is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology. It recently received $20 million in new funding for the next five years.

Prior to the centerÕs establishment in 2015, engineers and social scientists studied natural disaster resilience and recovery separately, from distinctly different disciplinary angles, but the center approached it comprehensively by forming interdisciplinary teams to develop IN-CORE.

It brought together more than 90 researchers, programmers, NIST collaborators, postdoctoral scholars and graduate students with expertise in engineering, economics, data and computing, and social sciences.

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