

# Department of Urban and Regional Planning Florida State University

## Strategic Plan

Adopted May 2016

Revised May 2018

### **Background**

The Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) adopted this Strategic Plan to define its vision and mission, and identify supporting goals and objectives that aid the unit in its pursuit of greater excellence in planning education, research, and service. The Strategic Plan emerged from a six-month-long process that included engagement with faculty, students, alumni, and professionals who helped to shape the vision, mission, goals, and objectives that are the heart of the plan. The planning process is described in the Appendix.

The Strategic Plan provides direction to the Department so that it can make decisions that support fulfillment of its mission and attainment of its goals. The Strategic Plan is a living document. The Department will engage with the plan on an annual basis to: measure the unit's progress toward meeting its goals; assess the unit's fulfillment of its mission; identify strategies that enhance our ability to fulfill our mission; and determine the need for plan revision. The Strategic Plan is crafted to be sensitive to the resources needed and/or available to serve our educational, research, and service activities.

### **Vision Statement**

***The Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University strives to: train professionals who are change agents in their communities; create research that transforms practice and scholarship; and promote sustainability, social justice, and the well-being of all persons.***

The vision statement reflects the Department's strong belief in the potential of planning to improve the lives of all persons. The statement positions the unit as striving to be a key contributor to this effort through the training of our students to be engaged professionals in their communities and the potential of our research to transform practice and scholarship. The statement holds up the promotion of sustainability, social justice, and the well-being of all persons as core values of the unit that are central to everything that it does.

### **Mission Statement**

***The Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University enrolls a diverse set of students and educates them to think critically, exhibit technical competence, and effectively engage the political process. The Department conducts research and provides service that contributes to a better understanding and shaping of resilient communities and ecosystems in order to promote human capabilities, equity, sustainable livelihoods, and healthy and safe places locally and globally. The Department recognizes a particular responsibility to document, examine, and enhance planning in the State of Florida.***

The mission statement encompasses an educational mission to enroll a diverse set of students and educate them to be well-trained planners, a research mission to produce research that informs practice and scholarship, and a service mission to contribute to the academy, profession, and community. The mission statement also articulates a special responsibility, due to our status as a state-supported university in Florida, to use our educational, research, and service activities to contribute to planning in Florida. Both the vision statement and mission statement are publicized on the Department's website at: <http://coss.fsu.edu/durp/node/49>

### **Departmental Goals and Objectives**

The Department has established a set of goals to help the unit attain greater excellence as it pursues its vision and mission. The Department set goals in three areas: education, research, and service. Each of the goals serves to advance the mission of the Department and reflects its overall vision. Along with goals, the Department identified a set of objectives and associated outcome measures that are used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

### **Educational Mission of the Department**

The Department adopted four goals to help advance the **educational mission** of the unit, which is to enroll "a diverse set of students" and educate "them to think critically, exhibit technical competence, and effectively engage the political process." The combination of these four goals reflects our vision of being a program that trains professionals who are capable of serving as change agents in their communities.

- **Goal 1: The Department of Urban and Regional Planning will enroll students who reflect the State of Florida's gender, racial, and ethnic diversity.**

The Department holds diversity as a core value. The Department strongly believes that a diverse student body brings diverse perspectives into the educational environment, which deepens student understanding of critically important issues and enhances their ability to work with diverse communities. As a program located at a state-funded University in Florida, as a program whose students predominantly come from Florida, and as a program whose graduates predominantly find work in Florida or nearby states, the Department defines the State of Florida as the community which it serves while also recognizing that out-of-state and international students add significantly to our student diversity on many levels. The Department's goal is to enroll students who reflect the community's (i.e. Florida's) diversity.

The Department has identified four objectives and associated outcome measures that are used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

**Objective 1:** *Within three years of the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Department will adopt and implement a Diversity Strategic Plan to aid its efforts to enroll students who reflect the State of Florida's gender, racial, and ethnic diversity.*

**Measurable Outcome:** Progress toward adoption and implementation of Diversity Strategic Plan.

**Rationale:** The adoption and implementation of the Diversity Strategic Plan will assist the Department's efforts to recruit and retain a diverse set of students. The unit's progress toward adopting and implementing the plan is a direct measure of the objective.

**Objective 2:** The Department will enroll students who reflect the State of Florida's gender balance as reported in the most recent decennial census.

**Measurable Outcome:** At the end of each academic year, the Department will measure the number/percent of all students, classified by gender (male, female), who enrolled in the program over the preceding three academic years.

**Rationale:** The enrollment of students who reflect the gender balance of the State of Florida supports the larger goal which is to better reflect the composition of the community (i.e. Florida) in which we are located. The assessment of the gender balance of our enrolled students against the actual gender balance of the state is a direct measure of whether the students reflect the larger community.

**Objective 3:** The Department will enroll students who reflect the State of Florida's racial mix as reported in the most recent decennial census.

**Measurable Outcome:** At the end of each academic year, the Department will measure the number/percent of domestic students, classified by racial group (Black, White, Asian, Other), who enrolled in the program over the preceding three academic years.

**Rationale:** The enrollment of students who reflect the racial mix of the State of Florida supports the larger goal which is to better reflect the composition of the community (i.e. Florida) in which we are located. The assessment of the racial mix of our enrolled domestic students, particularly the level of African American or Black enrollment, against the racial mix of the state is a direct measure of whether the students reflect the larger community.

**Objective 4:** The Department will enroll students who reflect the State of Florida's ethnic mix as reported in the most recent decennial census.

**Measurable Outcome:** At the end of each academic year, the Department will measure the number/percent of domestic students, classified as Hispanic or Non-Hispanic, who enrolled in the program over the preceding three academic years.

**Rationale:** The enrollment of students who reflect the ethnic mix of the State of Florida supports the larger goal which is to better reflect the composition of the

*community (i.e. Florida) in which we are located. The assessment of the ethnic mix of our enrolled domestic students, particularly the level of Hispanic enrollment, against the ethnic mix of the state is a direct measure of whether the students reflect the community in this area.*

- **Goal 2: The Department of Urban and Regional Planning will educate students to think critically.**

The Department strongly believes that critical thinking skills are essential to the ability of planners to effectively engage with complex issues and to make challenging decisions. The education of students to think critically, and to be able to apply critical thinking skills to a complex planning project, problem, or question, is an essential component of our program whose ultimate test is the successful completion of the master's degree capstone project that draws on the knowledge, skills, and values the student acquires across the entire MSP course of study.

The Department has identified two objectives and associated outcome measures that are used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

**Objective 1:** *100% of students enrolling in studio for their MSP capstone will pass.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *For each academic year, number/percent of students enrolling in studio for their MSP capstone who pass.*

**Rationale:** *The MSP capstone provides an opportunity for students to apply knowledge, skills, and values obtained throughout their course of study. The studio capstone requires students to apply critical thinking skills to a real-world planning project for an external client. Students are required to establish a research design, collect data, analyze data, and make recommendations grounded in the analysis. Successful completion of this project requires successful application of critical thinking skills.*

**Objective 2:** *100% of students completing a master's paper for their MSP capstone will pass.*

**Measurable outcome:** *For each academic year, number/percent of students completing a master's paper for their MSP capstone who pass.*

**Rationale:** *The MSP capstone provides an opportunity for students to apply knowledge, skills, and values obtained throughout their course of study. The master's paper capstone requires students to apply critical thinking skills to a planning problem or question. Students are required to establish a research design, collect data, analyze data, and identify findings and recommendations grounded in the analysis. Successful completion of this paper requires successful application of critical thinking skills.*

- **Goal 3: The Department of Urban and Regional Planning will educate students to exhibit technical competence.**

The Department places a high priority on using the MSP curriculum to educate technically competent planners. Planners must be trained and knowledgeable in the processes and tools required by the profession in order to be successful in their careers. The Department believes that external assessment of student technical competence through internship performance assessment, job placement rates, and AICP examination pass rates are important indicators of the success of the MSP program in this area.

The Department has identified three objectives and associated outcome measures that are used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

**Objective 1:** *100% of internship employers will report that they would rehire their student intern.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *For each academic year, number/percent of student interns whose employers report that they would rehire their intern.*

**Rationale:** *Students are placed in internships with planning or planning-related firms, agencies, or organizations. The employers expect their interns to be technically competent. If internship employers report they would rehire their intern, the intern has met their expectations of being a technically competent planner.*

**Objective 2:** *100% of graduates who do not pursue more advanced study will be placed in planning or planning-related jobs within one year of graduation.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *For each academic year's graduating cohort, number/percent of graduates who do not pursue more advanced study that are placed in planning or planning-related jobs within one year of graduation.*

**Rationale:** *Employers will only hire individuals that they deem technically competent for the position. If an employer hires an applicant, the applicant has met their expectation of being technically competent.*

**Objective 3:** *AICP Examination Pass Rates for MSP Graduates will exceed the average pass rate for all PAB Accredited Programs.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *The AICP Examination Pass rate for MSP graduates over the examination results reporting period versus the average pass rate for all PAB Accredited Programs over the same period.*

**Rationale:** *The AICP examination assesses the technical competence of planning professionals. A pass rate that exceeds the average pass rate for all*

*PAB accredited programs reflects strong preparation by the MSP curriculum in training technically competent professionals.*

- **Goal 4: The Department of Urban and Regional Planning will educate students to effectively engage the political process.**

The Department recognizes that planning is an inherently political activity because of its consequences for the various stakeholders affected by planning decisions. Further, the Department believes that planners must understand how to engage in the political processes around planning in order to effectively fulfill their professional responsibilities. The Department believes it is important that students are educated in how to engage the political process throughout different parts of the MSP curriculum, including in both required courses and specialization courses.

The Department has identified one objective and associated outcome measure that is used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

***Objective:*** *100% of students who complete the program will be exposed to course instruction in at least one core course and one specialization course on how to engage the political process in the pursuit of planning objectives.*

***Measurable Outcome:*** *On an annual basis, the MSP Policy Committee will survey the curriculum to determine that at least one core class and at least one required course in each specialization provides instruction to students on how to engage the political process.*

***Rationale:*** *The Department recognizes that planning is an inherently political activity because of its consequences for the various stakeholders affected by planning decisions. Further, the Department believes that planners must understand how to engage in the political process around planning in order to be successful in fulfilling their professional responsibilities. The Department believes it is important that students are educated in how to engage the political process throughout different parts of the MSP curriculum, including in both required courses and specialization courses.*

### **Research Mission of the Department**

The Department adopted one goal to help advance the **research mission** of the unit, which is to conduct research that “contributes to a better understanding and shaping of resilient communities and ecosystems in order to promote human capabilities, equity, sustainable livelihoods, and healthy and safe places locally and globally.” This goal reflects our vision of being a department that creates research that transforms practice and scholarship.

- **Goal: The Department of Urban and Regional Planning will produce research that informs practice and scholarship.**

The Department sees the production of research, including both scholarly and applied works, as being central to the transformation of practice and scholarship that is encapsulated in our vision statement. Research is fundamental to the advancement of knowledge and improvement of practice and collaborative research with doctoral students contributes to the ongoing development of the discipline. Further, the Department sees a special responsibility to produce research that examines planning in the State of Florida, and thus contributes to the advancement of the profession within our own community.

The Department has identified six objectives and associated outcome measures that are used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

***Objective 1:*** *The Department's faculty will publish an average of at least two peer-reviewed publications per full-time, tenure-track faculty member per year.*

***Measurable Outcome:*** *In each calendar year, the number of published peer-reviewed publications divided by the number of full-time, tenure track faculty members.*

***Rationale:*** *Peer-reviewed publications are considered to be the sine qua non of research publications as the blind peer review process is seen as the primary mechanism by which research quality is assured. The number of peer-reviewed publications produced per tenure-track faculty member is an indicator of ongoing, quality scholarly activity.*

***Objective 2:*** *The Department's doctoral student body will publish an average of at least three peer-reviewed publications and participate in at least five conference presentations each year, either as individuals or in collaboration with a faculty member.*

***Measurable Outcome:*** *In each calendar year, the number of peer-reviewed publications published by doctoral students and the number of conference presentations participated in by doctoral students.*

***Rationale:*** *Recognizing that doctoral students contribute meaningfully to the research mission of the department and are the future researchers who will advance knowledge and improve practice in the field, nurturing and building the capacity of our PhD students as capable scholars is important to the program's research objectives. As such, faculty mentors and PhD students are encouraged to publish peer-reviewed work and present research at conferences.*

***Objective 3:*** *The Department will attract at least \$350,000 per year in new contract and grant activity.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the total value of all new contracts and grants received.*

**Rationale:** *The Department requires contract and grant funding to support the applied and scholarly research activities of the Department. A baseline level of funding (defined as \$350,000 per year) is necessary to maintain an active research program in the unit.*

**Objective 4:** *The Department will disseminate the results of research through at least one presentation per full-time faculty member per year at scholarly and professional conferences, meetings, and other fora.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the total number of faculty research presentations at scholarly and professional conferences, meetings, and other fora divided by the number of full-time faculty members.*

**Rationale:** *Presentations represent an important mechanism for informing practice and scholarship of the results of research activity. Regular engagement with practitioners and other scholars is necessary to fulfill the unit's mission to disseminate knowledge.*

**Objective 5:** *The Department will be recognized for the contributions of its research through the receipt of external awards, honors, recognitions, and invited speaking appearances.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the number of external awards, honors, recognitions, and invited speaking appearances.*

**Rationale:** *External recognition is an important indicator of the high quality and impactful nature of the work produced by the Department.*

**Objective 6:** *The Department will produce research that examines planning in the State of Florida.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the number of research products (papers, reports, presentations) that examine planning in the State of Florida.*

**Rationale:** *As a program located at a state-funded University in Florida, as a program whose students predominantly come from Florida, and as a program whose graduates predominantly find work in Florida or nearby states, the Department sees a special responsibility to produce research that examines planning in the State of Florida, and thus contributes to the advancement of the profession within our own community.*

## **Service Mission of the Department**

The Department adopted one goal to help advance the service mission of the unit, which is to provide service that “contributes to a better understanding and shaping of resilient communities and ecosystems in order to promote human capabilities, equity, sustainable livelihoods, and healthy and safe places locally and globally.” The goal aids our efforts to engage the academy, profession, and communities in ways that advance our mission and reflects our vision of using service to promote sustainability, social justice, and the well-being of all persons.

- **Goal: The Department of Urban and Regional Planning will provide service that contributes to the academy, profession, and community.**

The Department sees service to the academy, profession, and community as being central to our mission and as reflecting our vision to promote sustainability, social justice, and the well-being of all persons. Further, the Department sees a special responsibility to provide service that contributes to planning in the State of Florida.

The Department has identified four objectives and associated outcome measures that are used to assess progress toward goal attainment.

**Objective 1:** *The Department will provide service to learned societies.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the number of offices, leadership positions, or committee memberships held in learned societies.*

**Rationale:** *Service to learned societies and scholarly associations is an important means of contributing to the betterment of the academy. The Department values faculty service to the academy as it advances our service mission.*

**Objective 2:** *The Department will provide service to professional bodies.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the number of offices, leadership positions, or committee memberships held in professional bodies.*

**Rationale:** *Service to professional bodies or associations is an important means of contributing to the betterment of the profession. The Department values faculty service to the profession as it advances our service mission.*

**Objective 3:** *The Department will provide service to communities.*

**Measurable Outcome:** *In each calendar year, the number of offices and memberships on government or non-profit boards, commissions, task forces, or working groups.*

***Rationale:*** Service to communities is a means of advancing the Department mission and fulfilling our vision to promote sustainability, social justice, and the well-being of all persons.

**Objective 4:** The Department will provide service that contributes to planning in the State of Florida.

***Measurable Outcome:*** In each calendar year, the number of memberships on Florida-serving professional or community-based boards, commissions, task forces, or working groups.

***Rationale:*** As a program located at a state-funded University in Florida, as a program whose students predominantly come from Florida, and as a program whose graduates predominantly find work in Florida or nearby states, the Department sees a special responsibility to provide service to planning in our community, the State of Florida, as a means of aiding the advancement of the profession and bettering communities.

#### **Resource Requirements to Fulfill the Plan**

The Department requires resources sufficient to enroll diverse students into our degree programs, assist the faculty in their pursuit of research and creative activities, and support the service mission of the Department. The Department draws on financial resources obtained from state appropriations, our endowments, and contract and grant activity to support our efforts. The Department's staffing level is set by the University.

Like programs at most state universities, the Department has found itself in the position of relying more on locally-generated funding to support its activities in recent years. The Department has developed several endowment accounts that have been used to assist its student financial aid budget. The Department has proven successful in obtaining contract and grant funding that has supported faculty and students. The Department anticipates a need to continue to pursue these local revenue generating efforts, in order to have the resources needed to fulfill our mission in a period of declining state budgets and significant enrollment pressures on planning programs. The Department will use its own fiscal and faculty/staff resources to assist these efforts.

The Department's 11-member full-time faculty is adequate to serve the current mission of the program at an anticipated student enrollment of between 35 and 42 new master's students and four doctoral students per year. This size faculty is sufficient to support the advising, instruction, research, and service activities of the unit, and to maintain the current diverse curricular structure which is regarded as an important strength of the program. If it is deemed necessary to increase enrollments beyond this range, the need to maintain the high quality of instruction in our courses, particularly in the core curriculum, would require additional faculty resources. Under the present University and College fiscal circumstances, this is highly unlikely.

### **Process for Evaluating Progress in Attaining Plan Goals and Fulfilling Mission**

The Department assesses progress toward attaining the plan's goals, and thereby fulfilling our mission, on an annual basis. The Department Chairperson presents a report on the results of our outcome measures for faculty discussion at either the end of year (May) or start of year (August) faculty meetings. The resulting assessment and discussion is used to develop the Department's work plan and committee assignments for the academic year to follow. These discussions may also inform the use of departmental resources or lead to requests for additional resources from the College, University, or other sources that aid the unit in its efforts to attain its goals and fulfill its mission.

Every three years, the Department will engage in a more substantive discussion of the Strategic Plan to take place at the end of year (May) faculty meeting. This discussion will consider the various components of the plan, identify the need for any revisions to vision, mission, goals, and/or objectives, and develop a timeline for the development and implementation of any desired changes. If the faculty identifies a need for substantial changes, a new Strategic Planning process will be undertaken that engages faculty, students, alumni, and local planning professionals through a participatory and collaborative planning process.

The Department defines fulfillment of our mission as the attainment of our goals. However, the Department also recognizes that its mission will evolve based on changing circumstances. A program of ongoing assessment and regular engagement with our Strategic Plan will allow the unit to track its progress and to initiate changes in the mission or goals of the Department as deemed necessary.

## Appendix. 2015-2016 Strategic Planning Process

In Fall 2015, the Department commenced a Strategic Planning Process. Faculty members Butler, Chapin, Miles, and Brown plus PhD student Wood agreed to serve as a Strategic Planning committee to take charge of the effort. The Committee began with a review of the Strategic Plans of other planning programs that were available on program websites, the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy (COSSPP) Strategic Plan, and the Florida State University (FSU) Strategic Plan. These reviews provided inspiration and guidance to the development and content of the Department's Strategic Plan. The Committee developed a timeline for a Strategic Planning process that included the participation of students, faculty, alumni, and planning professionals. The table below reports the numbers of participants engaged in each phase of plan development.

**Table. Number of participants in strategic planning process (2015-2016)**

Plan Development Phase	Faculty (in person sessions)	PhD Students (in person sessions)	MSP Students (in person sessions)	PhD and MSP Students (web-based surveys)	Alumni/Planning Professionals (conference call; web-based surveys)
1: Vision and Mission	11 (Jan 2016)	8 (Feb 2016)	21 (Feb 2016)	6 (Feb 2016)	35 (Feb 2016)
2: Goals, Objectives, and Outcome Measures	11 (Mar 2016)	9 (Apr 2016)	21 (Mar 2016)	4 (Mar-Apr 2016)	17 (Mar-Apr 2016)

*Source: Count of participants who took part in each stage of the process.*

The timeline for the process is presented as follows.

October 2015-November 2015: Review of Strategic Plans (FSU, COSSPP, Other Planning Programs)

December 2015: Draft Vision Statement and Draft Mission Statement prepared by Strategic Plan Committee

January 2016: Draft Vision Statement and Draft Mission Statement revised by Faculty

February 2016: Feedback received from students, alumni, and professionals on Draft Vision Statement and Draft Mission Statement;  
Draft Vision Statement and Draft Mission Statement revised by Strategic Plan Committee;  
Draft Goals and Draft Objectives developed by Strategic Plan Committee

March 2016: Vision Statement and Mission Statement finalized and adopted by faculty;  
Draft Goals and Draft Objectives revised by Faculty

March 2016-April 2016:

Feedback received from students, alumni, and professionals on Draft Goals and Draft Objectives; Draft Goals and Draft Objectives revised by Strategic Plan Committee

May 2016:

Goals and Objectives finalized and adopted by Faculty;  
Strategic Plan adopted by Faculty