

University of Kansas – Department of Urban Planning Strategic Plan Approved Fall 2015

VISION: Engaging Communities for Better Futures

MISSION: Through our teaching, research and service activities, the KU Urban Planning Department seeks to advance the capacity of public, private and not-for-profit organizations to generate, analyze, evaluate, and administer policy that enhances the quality of communities and regions.

The following goals and objectives reflect the Department's efforts to advance its mission. These goals and objectives were revised in Summer 2015, following a yearlong discussion and a Spring 2015 faculty retreat. They reflect input from all faculty, students, and our Advisory Board.

Guiding Principles:

Through our teaching, research and service we shall:

- Provide high quality, broadly accessible professional planning education to a diverse body of excellent students
- Produce internationally-recognized policy-oriented planning research that advances scholarly knowledge and informs and improves practice
- Contribute positively to communities, the planning profession, the academy, and the University of Kansas
- Ensure the department has the resources and autonomy to focus the overwhelming majority of our efforts on the three principles above.

Goal 1: Prepare students for rewarding professional careers in urban planning and related fields.

Objective 1.1: Continue to offer a core curriculum and specializations that reflect the needs of a dynamic profession.

Objective 1.2: Revisit the curriculum on an annual basis to ensure it is meeting student needs and interests, as well as accreditation standards.

Action Step 1.2.1: Beginning in 2016, include this discussion in the yearly April faculty meeting.

Action Step 1.2.2: By Spring 2017, identify options for students who wish to enhance their knowledge of software tools.

Objective 1.3: Continue to facilitate internship opportunities for students that will provide them with valuable professional skills and financial assistance.

Objective 1.4: Continue to support student participation in professional development activities such as conferences, seminars and workshops.

Objective 1.5: Consult annually with the UBPL Advisory Board on trends in practice that could influence curricular and other program needs.

Action Step 1.5.1: Initiate this consultation in the Spring 2016 Advisory Board meeting.

Objective 1.6: Facilitate annual KAPS visit to professional planning department/firm in the metro area and biennial visit to a professional planning department/firm in the region (within 6 hour drive).

Goal 2: Retain our focus as a high-quality, student-centered program with a low student to faculty ratio, while simultaneously recruiting excellent students.

Objective 2.1 Recruit and maintain new master's class enrollment faculty ratio of approximately 5:1.

Objective 2.2: Continue to teach undergraduate courses that introduce KU students to the planning profession and our department and encourage them to consider studies in planning.

Action Step 2.2.1: Build and sustain combined enrollment of 100-150 students per year in UBPL 200 and 300.

Objective 2.3: Maintain and develop new connections with KU departments whose undergraduate students are likely to be interested in urban planning.

Action Step 2.3.1: Develop informational packet for departmental advisors to distribute during enrollment periods.

Objective 2.4: Continue to send an annual email to KU undergraduate students in policy-related and other appropriate majors inviting them to learn more about the UBPL master's program.

Objective 2.5: Continue to support and develop UBPL joint degree programs as helpful recruitment tools and learning experiences.

Action Step 2.5.1: By May 2016, initiate a conversation with the KU Sociology Department about a possible joint degree program with their M.A. students.

Action Step 2.5.2: Revisit joint degree with Public Administration. If dual degree is prohibitively difficult, investigate alternatives of certificate for public administration MPAs in urban planning processes and a certificate for planning MUPs in department administration.

Objective 2.6: Investigate and develop additional 4+1 (3+2) programs, while continuing to support the current program with Architectural Studies.

Action Step 2.6.1: By May 2106, initiate conversations with at least two departments in the KU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to determine feasibility of additional 4+1 (3+2) programs.

Objective 2.7: Continue to have an annual new student orientation event that reviews departmental expectations and requirements while also giving new students an opportunity to become acquainted with one another and the faculty.

Objective 2.8: Continue to work with the Kansas Association of Planning Students (KAPS) on academic and social events for our student body.

Action Step 2.8.1: Work with KAPS to facilitate student participation in national APA and APA divisions for conference posters, presentations, and awards applications.

Objective 2.8: Maintain an updated and informative website.

Action step 2.8.1: By Fall 2016, include the following on our departmental website: "Ten Reasons to Love KU Urban Planning"; alumni vignettes, online profiles for Advisory Board members, and the like.

Goal 3: Enhance the diversity of students and faculty.

Objective 3.1: Continue to seek KU Student Senate Funding for scholarships to support students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education.

Objective 3.2: Work with KU Graduate Studies to provide UBPL recruitment materials at diversity-oriented graduate fairs.

Objective 3.3: Continue to provide a welcoming environment for international students.

Action Step 3.3.1: Work with KAPS to have an annual party or other event highlighting the traditions (such as Lunar New Year) of our international students.

Objective 3.4: Explore ways to include additional diversity among our lecturers.

Action Step 3.4.1: By 2017, nominate at least one ACSP colleague for a KU Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship.

Objective 3.5: Establish a subcommittee of the UBPL Advisory Board to develop ideas and recommendations for increasing diversity.

Objective 3.6: Work with the KU Office of Multicultural Affairs to initiate and sustain contacts with McNair scholars, first-generation scholars, people of color, and other groups underrepresented in higher education.

Goal 4: Facilitate faculty members' opportunities to engage in excellent research that will satisfy their intellectual interests, increase the knowledge base of the planning field, and complement teaching and service activities.

Objective 4.1: Continue to encourage faculty to disseminate their scholarship in appropriate ways that correspond with the UBPL Faculty Evaluation Plan.

Objective 4.2: Continue to encourage faculty travel to scholarly conferences and to seek School funding to support this travel.

Objective 4.3: Support faculty efforts to obtain internal and external funding to support UBPL students as research assistants.

Objective 4.4: Work with Dean to build institutional support structures for faculty research.

Objective 4.5: Develop departmental relationship with KU Office of Research.

Objective 4.6: Develop departmental relationship with a research institute for grant management.

Goal 5: Increase the level of alumni involvement with the department in order to support key needs such as student financial support, excellent facilities, professional development, guest speakers and other special events.

Objective 5.1: Continue to send an annual newsletter to alumni to inform them of departmental happenings.

Action Step 5.1.1: Beginning in 2015-2016, use the annual newsletter to highlight students supported with scholarship funds and other departmental needs.

Objective 5.2: Encourage faculty in their efforts to support students through research and/or teaching assistantships.

Objective 5.3: Ensure that UBPL students are receiving benefits commensurate with their Differential Tuition payments.

Objective 5.4: Establish strategies for facilitating faculty contact with alumni during faculty conferences and other professional travel.

Objective 5.5: Expand funding sources.

Action Step 5.5.1: Identify 20 department sponsors who would be able to contribute at least \$500 each.

Action Step 5.5.2: Identify 5-10 foundations that could support our program activities.

Action Step 5.5.3: Explore possibility of crowd funding for special events/activities.

Action Step 5.5.4: By 2017, double number of alumni who make an annual donation to UBPL.

Objective 5.6: Investigate possibility of using application fees to fund a planning student as a communications intern to maintain website, collect information for newsletter, and maintain Facebook page.

Goal 6: Raise the profile of the Department within the larger University and beyond.

Objective 6.1: By Spring 2016, determine the best administrative home for our department.

Action Step 6.1.1.: Finalize recent discussions between the School of Public Affairs and Administration and the School of Architecture, Design and Planning.

Objective 6.2: Continue to contribute faculty time and talents to key University committees that serve such groups as Faculty Senate, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Center for Sustainability, etc.

Objective 6.3: Continue to pursue and promote departmental connections to the Strategic Initiative areas KU has articulated in the “Bold Aspirations” strategic plan.

Objective 6.4: Continue to nominate and encourage faculty applications for various awards.

Objective 6.5: Regularly publicize faculty and student accomplishments to the KU community.

Action Step 6.5.1: Beginning in 2015, devote a short period in each monthly faculty meeting to individual faculty updates.

Action Step 6.5.2: Share newsworthy updates with School Communications Director on a monthly basis.

Action Step 6.5.3: In 2016, update website to include advisory board profiles, testimonials from those benefitting from UBPL and feature alumni

Action Step 6.5.4: Update website, highlighting strengths of program, on a regular basis

Action Step 6.5.5: Develop identity as a leader in 4+1/3+2 degrees at KU.

Objective 6.6: Consider the advantages and disadvantages of expanding our department to include a bachelor's and/or Ph.D. degree.

Action Step 6.6.1: In Spring 2017, hold a faculty retreat to discuss this objective.

Action Step 6.6.2: Participate in annual Majors Fair.

Goal 7: Maintain UBPL autonomy with respect to governance over departmental matters.

Objective 7.1 - Maintain decision-making in a democratic fashion, with regular opportunity for input from all faculty members and students.

Objective 7.2: Student Governance - Maintain participation by students in the planning students' organization and encourage interaction between first-year and second-year students.

Objective 7.3: Maintain an advisory board comprised of practicing planners in responsible positions to advise the Department about its current actions and future development.

Goal 8: Encourage faculty members and students to contribute their expertise to organizations beyond KU, including: 1) professional and scholarly organizations, 2) all forms of governmental entities, and 3) community and citizen groups concerned with planning issues.

Objective 8.1: Continue to develop and encourage class projects in which students deal with real-world problems and interact with a variety of clients outside the University.

Objective 8.2: Continue to encourage and recognize faculty service to scholarly and professional journals as reviewers and editorial board members.

Objective 8.3: Continue to encourage and recognize faculty and student participation in professional organizations including the American Planning Association, the Urban Land Institute, and so on.

Objective 8.4: Continue to encourage and recognize faculty contributions to continuing education for planners.