

**Strategic Plan for Bachelor of Urban and Environmental Planning
University of Virginia
August 2019**

Department Mission Statement:

Our community-engaged teaching, educates, nurtures and supports the next generation of ethical, collaborative, and effective community leaders, planning practitioners, and researchers who help to achieve our shared vision. Our research endeavors seek to create useful knowledge and build data-informed theoretical perspectives through interdisciplinary collaborations that address the profound social and ecological challenges of our time. In our service to the school, university and community-at-large, we endeavor to be change agents leveraging our energy, expertise, and resources to advance community welfare through partnerships of mutual respect.

BUEP Mission Statement:

The mission of the BUEP degree program is to prepare students for careers in the planning profession or planning-related fields. The BUEP is a generalist planning degree that provides the intellectual and ethical grounding necessary for an entry level position in the field. It also prepares the students for future graduate study in planning or an allied field (e.g., law, public policy). In our generalist BUEP program, students gain the key skills necessary to pursue a career in planning and to emerge—over time—as leaders in the field. Our BUEP curriculum provides a comprehensive education in the humanities, social and natural sciences. It provides training in areas that are critical to modern planning practice including knowledge of planning’s history, its ethical core, and problem-solving orientation; critical thinking and concise writing skills; problem identification and formulation; research design and analytical methods; as well as grounding in law, government, urban design/spatial planning, and community engagement.

Program Goals:

The following four goals have been established for the BUEP:

- Goal 1: Create and maintain an enhanced BUEP program to intellectually ground a diverse student body for careers in planning and planning-related fields.
- Goal 2: Facilitate an environment for discovery that supports research by both faculty and students through adequate levels of internal and external funding and appropriate teaching and service loads. (Shared Goal with MUEP)
- Goal 3: Continually stress the profession’s core values—equity, inclusion, environmental sustainability, and democratic governance—in the learning process and in the practice of planning. Confront and discuss challenges and ethical failures by the profession, both past and present. (Shared Goal with MUEP)
- Goal 4: Maintain active involvement with planning profession; engage with professionals in the classroom and in our community. (Shared Goal with MUEP)

Measurable Objectives:

Goal 1: Create and maintain an enhanced BUEP program to intellectually ground a diverse student body for careers in planning and planning-related fields.

- Objective 1a: The BUEP program continues to attract and retain high quality students who succeed academically.
 - Indicator: GPA of student body (at admission and by class)
 - Metric: Incoming students into SARC: 3.4+ high school GPA
 - Metric: Transfer students from elsewhere in UVA: 3.2 GPA
 - Metric: Transfer students from outside system (e.g. community colleges): 3.2 GPA
 - Metric: Number of students enrolling in “Distinguished Major” (new endeavor) over time
 - Metric: GPA by graduating class
 - Indicator: Retention
 - Metric: Students re-enrolling each year after declaration of major
 - Metric: Percentage of students graduating in 4 years (if entering 1st year at UVA)
- Objective 1b: The BUEP program attracts greater numbers of students from historically under-represented communities so the program becomes reflective of the diversity of the State of Virginia.
 - Indicator: Enrollment numbers for student from communities of color
 - Metric: Student body for BUEP parallels / meets goals laid out in university’s own strategic plan. (This reflects the fact that we have limited control over undergraduate admissions.)
- Objective 1c: The BUEP curriculum is appropriately revised (Academic Year 2019-2020).
 - Indicator: Curriculum evaluation conducted in conjunction with current BUEP students and graduates in the last 5-year cohorts.
 - Metric: Curriculum revisions completed and approved by SARC curriculum committee, Faculty Senate, and other approving bodies.
- Objective 1d: The quality of course instruction in BUEP remains high.
 - Indicator: Implement processes of continuous teaching and course improvement. At end of each academic year in retreat, faculty discuss their courses and teaching challenges and offer peer-to-peer sharing of teaching skills/advice. As student evaluations are controversial and potentially biased, the objective of this process is to work together to improve our course content (eliminating redundancy), improve syllabi and assignments, and improve classroom interactions.
 - Metric: Minutes of the meeting; changes made to syllabi
- Objective 1e: Students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a planning or planning related position. This includes the ability: to analyze complex social and environmental issues through qualitative and quantitative research methods, to write and present their analyses in ways that are accessible to non-experts in the field; to engaged and facilitate community interactions in ways that are respectful and productive.

- Indicator: Students performance in capstone project or 4th year PLAC/Studio. Latter requires student work in teams on a real-world project and apply their knowledge and skills for problem-solving analysis/solution.
 - Metric: Performance in PLAC4010 (at present) or 4th year project.
- Indicator: Learning Outcomes Survey. We ask student to self-evaluate their proficiency in a wide range of areas (core knowledge, skills, values/ethics).
 - Metric: Percentages over time by question (no % cut off set at present; our objective is to use the lower percentage reporting as part of curricular review / on-going improvement)
- Indicator: Bi-Annual Alumni Survey. Conduct a survey of recent alumni to ascertain alumni opinion about the quality and relevance of their education, as well as their career trajectory and current employment.
 - Metric: Survey issued, and responses received. Responses used in curricular and other programmatic discussions.
 - Metric: Alumni job placement rates in planning or planning-related fields.
 - Metric: Alumni pass rates on AICP exam.

Goal 2: Facilitate an environment for discovery that supports research by both faculty and students through adequate levels of internally and externally supported funding and appropriate teaching and service loads. (Shared goal with MUEP)

- Objective 2a: Full and part-time faculty research productivity is suitable for R1 university in terms of research volume, quality, and place of publication.
 - Indicator: Annual reports by faculty
 - Metric: 1-2 peer reviewed publications/year or significant progress toward book or larger project
- Objective 2b: The faculty succeeds in winning external and internal grants.
 - Indicator: Annual reports by faculty
 - Metric: 1-2 grants pursued in any one academic year; success in internal grants is considered baseline measure for meeting expectations. (This acknowledges that external funding opportunities can vary by planning specialization.)
- Objective 2c: Students engage in research with faculty (as research assistants), but also independently for 4th year projects or honor's theses.
 - Indicator: Faculty hiring of students, production of papers and/or reports for public sector clients
 - Indicator: 4th year projects or honor's theses completed and successfully defended

Goal 3: Continually stress the profession's core values—equity, inclusion, environmental sustainability, and democratic governance—in the learning process and in the practice of planning. Confront and discuss challenges and ethical failures by the profession, both past and present. (Shared goal with MUEP)

- Objective 3a: Issue of values and performance is mainstreamed across courses in the curriculum. Students should engage with issues multiple times over their degree program.

- Indicator: Syllabi and course reflection processes (Objective 1d above.)
- Objective 3b: School and department sponsored events provide forums for learning outside the classroom; support for students and faculty to participate in events/forums external to UVA
 - Indicator: Departmental/School events held
 - Indicator: Budgetary support or other support (letters of recommendation) to facilitate student and faculty participation in external events (e.g., BUEP students at Design Futures)

Goal 4: Maintain active involvement with planning profession; engage professionals in the classroom and in our community. (Shared goal with MUEP)

- Objective 4a: Faculty and students are actively engaged in professional association activities.
 - Indicator: Membership in American Planning Association for both faculty and students
 - Metric: 100% participation for Full Time Faculty; 60% participation for student body in BUEP
 - Metric: Student participation in APA sponsored events, including the National Conference, APA-Virginia Conferences and other activities.
- Objective 4b: Widespread dissemination of faculty research and/or community-engaged practice in professional planning venues
 - Indicator: Faculty participation in conferences as speakers. Conferences include: ACSP, APA National Conference, New Partners for Smart Growth, Congress for the New Urbanism, TRB, etc.
- Objective 4c: Faculty and students engage with various external communities (local to national or even international) on important planning issues and topics
 - Indicator: Faculty participation in community or professional groups/taskforces as members or leadership
 - Metric: Faculty role in such organizations as reported in Annual Reports (e.g., serving on Board of Directors, providing keynote speech, working on local task force)
 - Indicator: Student engagement with local / regional community through class projects and/or internships
 - Metric: BUEP students completing internships (Note: not a requirement of the program, heavily encouraged)
 - Metric: Engagement with planning professionals through courses (i.e., PLACS) and/or applied research projects.