

**Strategic Plan for Master 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.

**MUEP Mission Statement:**

The mission of the MUEP degree program is to provide professional training for students intending to work as planners or in planning-related fields. The degree program provides the knowledge, skills and ethical orientation central to the field. Our degree stresses distinct elements of community engagement, collaboration, and urban design, as well as emphasizing social and environmental sustainability. This degree provides both generalist and specialist planning training.

**Program Goals:**

The following four goals have been established for the MUEP:

Goal 1: Implement and monitor the newly revised MUEP degree program to produce highly skilled and specialized cohorts of socially-diverse planners with the right mix of soft (e.g., facilitation, mediation, engagement) and hard skills (e.g., technology, quantitative analysis) and knowledge necessary to flourish as professionals and lead the field into its future.

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 BUEP)

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 BUEP)

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

**Measurable Objectives:**

*Goal 1: Implement and monitor the newly revised MUEP degree program to produce highly skilled and specialized cohorts of socially diverse planners with the right mix of soft and hard skills and knowledge necessary to flourish as professionals and lead the field into its future.*

- Objective 1a: The MUEP program attracts a more diverse cohort of high-quality students; DUEP supports their academic success.

Diversity Indicator: Outreach to appropriate feeder schools (e.g., historically black colleges and universities like Virginia Union) and heightened outreach to undergraduates enrolled in the College

- Metric: Events held at identified institutions (2 per year goal); engagement with UVA Career Center and appropriate feeder departments in the College and Batten (e.g., Sociology, Public Policy)

Diversity Indicator: Enrollment numbers for students from communities of color

- Metric: Student body enrolled MUEP has 10% minority or less-represented population enrollment at end of 5 years.

Student Quality Indicator: GPA of student body at admission and average by graduating class

- Metric: Incoming students into SARC: 3.4+ college GPA

Student Success Indicator: Retention

- Metric: Students re-enrolling in year two after matriculation
- Metric: Percentage of students graduating in 2 years

Student Success Indicator: Student performance in final semester practicum.

- Metric: Performance in PLAC 6090 (final reports, evaluation in public presentations/final reviews)

- Objective 1b: Students have access to sufficient courses with breadth and depth to provide meaningful specializations.

Indicator: Course Offerings by the department

Indicator: Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies (survey)

Indicator: Annual Audit of Student Internship Forms with Feedback from Internship Supervisor (Change in process relative to internships)

- Objective 1c: Alumni report high levels of satisfaction with educational experience and its contribution to their career path and satisfaction.

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 BUEP)*

- 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 master's theses.  
Indicator: Faculty hiring of students, production of papers and/or reports for public sector clients  
Indicator: Master'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 BUEP)*

- 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., MUEP students at Design Futures)

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

- 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; 80% participation for student body in MUEP
  - 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: MUEP students completing internships
- Metric: Reported level of satisfaction with MUEP interns as reported by supervisors
- Metric: Engagement with planning professionals through courses (i.e., PLACS) and/or applied research projects.