

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

2024–2029 STRATEGIC PLAN



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LETTER FROM THE URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CHAIR

The Bachelor of Urban and Environmental Planning (BUEP) and the Master of Urban and Environmental Planning (MUEP) are accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) with the BUEP receiving the designation in June 1963 and the MUEP in January 1968. However, the University of Virginia’s commitment to, and investment in, the preparation of planners goes back to 1957 for the undergraduate program and to 1963 for the graduate program. Even from those early days, our faculty led with the environment as a priority so much that with the accreditation came the moniker—environmental planning—in our title signaling an important priority in our teaching and research commitment. We were the first department in the United States to add that critical dimension and this priority is now reflected in university and school-wide commitments to climate justice, environmental repair, and the democratic process. The first six decades of our department’s history witnessed both a strengthening and evolution of our teaching, practice, and commitment to addressing wicked problems but, more importantly, has been a continual lens and compass for the future. The challenges of the 21st century are complex, but not intractable. Our department is preparing students to think about the interconnections of issues while also supporting teaching, research, and service to respond to challenges through our core planning course, electives, and exposure to the practice of planning.

Strategic plans are intended to be forward-thinking and aspirational, but they should also be grounded in what is known and unknown. Many of the things that students were learning, and faculty were teaching more than half a century ago have been proven to be ill-conceived in the destruction of whole communities through the heavy hand of urban renewal, the consequences of an interstate highway system that tore through communities of color, and environmental injustice that affected health and opportunity. Planners got some things right with new zoning practices intended to include not exclude; investments in different models of housing that were not concrete towers; and downtown planning that echoed Jane Jacobs’ call for downtowns to be for people—24/7. Further, planning programs, including ours, have added concentrations on the built and natural environment and health, urban analytics, sustainable transportation, community engagement and learning, and the connections between cities and the natural world. As we present our strategic plan, we are mindful as learners that opportunities are ahead for communities and the academy that include new approaches to engagement, analysis, and investment.

This strategic plan emphasizes what is to come but also questions how we can we prepare students with the pedagogy, practice, and research skills needed to make change. They need to know how investments with limited dollars can be best spent to expand economic opportunity, access, health, and well-being for all? How can we mitigate the effects of climate change and compounding disasters? How can we identify new processes and partners to build, engage, and develop a community that collaborates? And finally, how can we ensure that the community voice is inclusive and that democratic processes are respected and sustained?

This strategic plan reflects the ideas and review of faculty, alumni, and current students and builds on more than half a century of thinking, teaching, and engaging in the planning profession. The world is changing but what is equally clear is that the systemic issues we face will not be remedied quickly or easily and instead require interdisciplinary partnerships and thinking in every community where our students will work. The 21st century presents both challenges and opportunities for planning but our disciplinary knowledge, values, and commitment to supporting communities from the local to the planetary scales offers a path forward and hope for a better future for all.

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URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AT UVA

The road ahead is challenging. The world is changing rapidly and planning must adapt. A degree from the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia equips students to become critical thinkers and well-rounded, ethically grounded planning practitioners with the necessary skills to confidently lead in government, non-profit, and private sectors. The Department of Urban and Environmental Planning is one of four academic departments¹ that comprise the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia. The School of Architecture was formed in 1954 when the University's Board of Visitors voted to separate the McIntire School of Art and Architecture (originally established in 1919 as the McIntire School of Fine Arts) into two distinct units².

The School of Architecture launched an undergraduate program and degree in city planning in 1957, which is notable as it was the first of its kind² in the southern United States and initially entailed a five-year course of study. Four years later in 1963, the School began offering a Master of Planning degree and in 1999 the name of the bachelor's and master's degrees were changed to Urban and Environmental Planning, echoing broader trends in the field and reflecting the expertise of the faculty.

The Department of Urban and Environmental Planning has a full-time faculty of 10 and benefits from the contributions of additional practitioners who bring the latest views from the field. Our faculty members bring a range of expertise and training to the department, strengthening the educational mission of the School of Architecture and the University of Virginia. In addition to delivering new courses on global sustainability, informal urbanism, real estate development and design, and preservation planning, our faculty are engaged in initiatives across the school, the university, and the world that involve urgent planning applications, questions, and challenges. Joining with the other three departments in the School of Architecture—Architecture, Architectural History, and Landscape Architecture—our students have the opportunity to learn in a transdisciplinary environment.

Departmental Mission

The Department of Urban and Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia provides professional training and theoretical foundation for students intending to work as planners or in planning-related fields at all levels. Through our teaching mission we educate, challenge, and support the next generation of ethical, collaborative, and effective community leaders, planning practitioners, and researchers to think about, act on, and implement change on the wicked problems that we all face. Our degree programs place distinct emphasis on environmental sustainability, community engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration, while grounding students in the value of systems thinking and critical reflection. Values and ethics are primary and central to our program. Our approach to planning education is motivated by strong concerns for sustainability and protection of natural systems, social justice and equity, and for the values of diversity, inclusivity, collaboration and participation. Both the outcomes and process are important to us, and we believe powerfully in the ability to shape the world—communities, cities, built environments—to profoundly improve the living conditions and life prospects of the least-advantaged, and to maintain and restore the integrity of the natural environment that supports us all. Our research creates innovative and applied knowledge that responds to 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.

¹The others are Architecture, Architectural History, and Landscape Architecture.

²Lay, K.E. (2013). *History of the A-School, A School Built Upon the Foundation of Mr. Jefferson's Principles of Architecture*.

Charlottesville, VA: School of Architecture. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/uvaschoolofarchitecture/docs/aschoolhistory_pages

Drawing upon our decades-long strength in environmental sustainability, planning for social equity³, shaping the built environment, and facilitating democratic governance, the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning supports the University of Virginia’s vision of a diverse and collaborative residential learning environment serving the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world (University of Virginia, 2019). As members of the Planning profession, we share knowledge and experience through conferences and events with planners working in the field. As members of the Charlottesville community, we contribute expertise and support to local planning efforts, especially those in partnership with community members that benefit under-resourced and marginalized communities. This plan represents our efforts to continue to achieve excellence in our teaching, research, and service activities as the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning aspires to a leadership role among planning programs with the United States.



Departmental Vision

Our collective efforts prioritize responding to the threats posed by climate change, social and spatial disparities, sustaining people and communities under accelerating urbanization processes; achieving racial, economic, and environmental justice; serving as effective stewards of the public interest; and strengthening inclusive democratic governance. All require that we bring an appropriate degree of care, humility, and strategic thinking to both the practice and the teaching of planning. The Department of Urban and Environmental Planning believes that each of the values below are fundamental to the work we do as planners and therefore, must inform our actions:

- Integrity, accountability, and ethical practice to one another and the profession.
- Planning as a vehicle for change, engagement and public service.
- Collaboration across disciplines and learning with communities.
- Equity and inclusion in teaching, research, and service.
- Creativity and systems thinking as foundational for problem solving.
- Rigor and excellence in our work and products.
- Care and compassion for people and place.

Environmental stewardship and protection of the natural environment are primary to the curriculum and practice of the DUEP. Environmental Planning in the title of our department signifies the primacy of this issue. The work of our institutes, centers, and initiatives reflects those values.

Our long association with the Institute for Engagement & Negotiation (IEN), a national leader in environmental conflict resolution, leadership, and engagement, has provided courses and internship opportunities for students and has contributed significantly to our environmental reputation. The presence and influence of the Institute for Engagement & Negotiation has been a major asset for students, faculty, and for the larger community and the state for more than three decades. IEN provides unique partnerships and consulting and advisory services to organizations throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

³Defined as “a value-driven correction of identified practices and inequities that provides access to opportunities and needed resources for disadvantaged groups and individuals. An equity approach recognizes the lack of benefits that have accrued to minority communities as a result of past discriminatory practices” (American Planning Association, 2022)

Likewise, other centers and institutes led by DUEP faculty are part of the research and teaching constellation of our mission to create communities that focus on sustainability, wellbeing, and inclusion. The Biophilic Cities Network is a DUEP-based and UVA-led coalition promoting greener cities around the world. Major international hubs including Shanghai (China), Wellington (New Zealand), Edmonton (Canada), San Francisco, and Washington DC to name a few. The Center for Design and Health works with communities to re-design space, processes, engagement, and the built environment with components of health, wellbeing, and inclusion. The Center for Cultural Landscapes (CCL) is an interdisciplinary center led by Urban and Environmental faculty that addresses equity and social justice issues in the context of land and memory. CCL produces research and creates new models of innovative cultural landscape stewardship in the region, the nation, and around the globe. The Community Design Research Center (CDRC) works with communities to create pathways and proposals for sustainable change through design and culture in places as diverse as Appalachia and Ukraine. Students work with each of these centers and often they work closely with communities, clients, and funded research in real world planning challenges and issues. They frequently are given extensive project management responsibilities with community partners.

Our department plays a crucial role in addressing the complex challenges posed by climate change, urbanization, and the struggle for justice and democratic governance by emphasizing and integrating these themes into its teaching and research. These values are reflected in activities such as:

Teaching

- Designing and delivering courses that demonstrate how climate change, urbanization, justice, informal settlements, and governance can and will motivate and guide planning practice in the coming decades.
- Collaborating with communities and diverse partners to support and inform equitable and sustainable planning decisions.
- Integrating local, national, and global case studies as well as practical examples that highlight the real-world implications of these challenges.
- Incorporating perspectives from the humanities, social sciences, environmental science, economics, design, and policy studies to provide a holistic understanding and to complement the knowledge and values of the planning discipline.
- Including topics related to racial and economic justice in required courses and integrating perspectives from diverse cultures, histories, theories, and experiences to provide a well-rounded education for students.
- Developing courses that teach students how to use technology for sustainable urban planning, climate modeling, and social impact assessment.
- Connecting students to professional practice through internships and externships to foster engagement in practical experiences to build hands-on skills and contribute to ongoing projects.
- Embedding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles throughout the curriculum and engagement practice, ensuring that students are equipped to address the diverse needs of communities.
- Promoting diversity in faculty, guest speakers, and community partners to expose students to a range of perspectives and experiences.
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Research

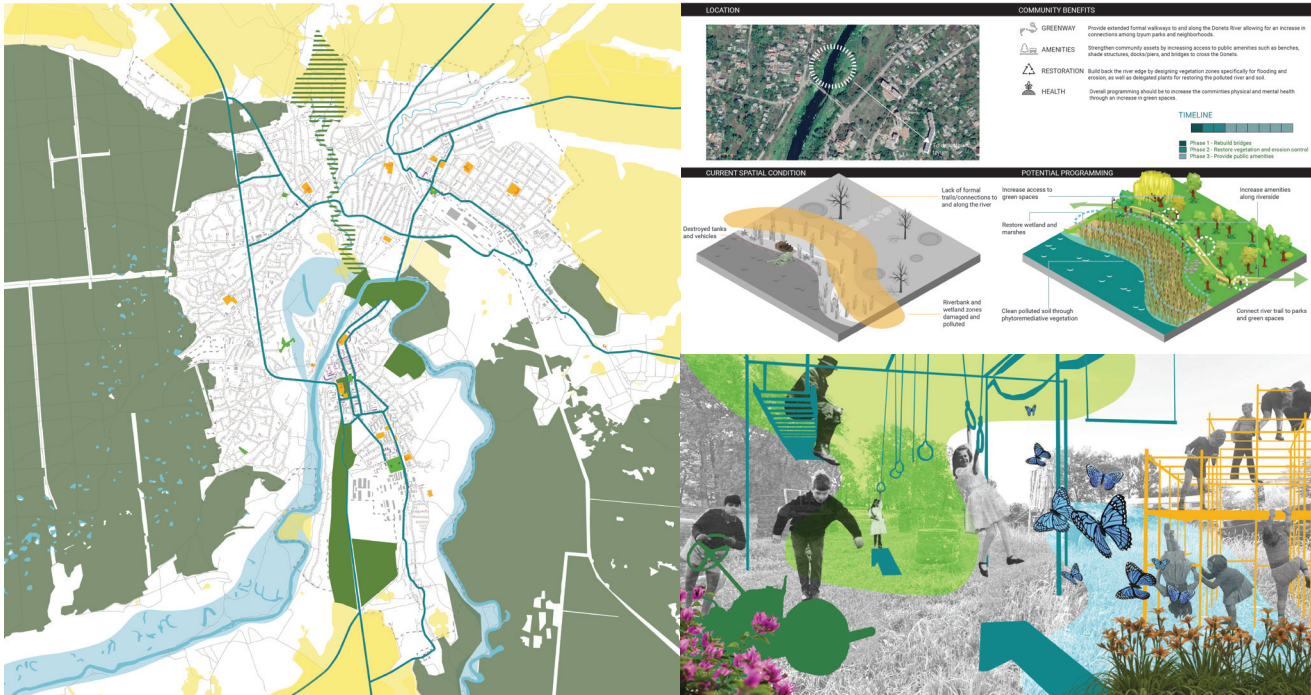
- Conducting research that focuses on climate change adaptation; healthy, inclusive, and sustainable urban development; housing and community development; land use; planning and public history; natural environments and landscapes; and justice in planning processes.
- Encouraging community-engaged research projects that involve faculty, students, community members, and external partners to address pressing issues.
- Promoting research that fosters equity and actively involves communities—with a particular focus on the impact of planning practices on historically marginalized groups—ensuring their needs and concerns are central to the investigation.
- Fostering strong ties with local communities to understand their unique challenges and aspirations.
- Disseminating research findings in venues and media that advocate for sustainable, just, and democratic urban development.
- Leveraging technology and data analytics to enhance research capabilities and inform evidence-based planning decisions.

Engagement, Leadership, and Service

- Implementing courses and applications using community engaged methods that emphasize participatory planning approaches that empower communities to be integral to decision-making processes.
- Hosting public forums and dialogues that bring together community members, planners, policymakers, and academics to discuss racial, economic, and climate justice issues.
- Collaborating with community organizations, NGOs, and government agencies to co-create solutions and policy advocacy and planning policies that address climate resilience, social justice, and equitable governance.
- Using the department’s expertise to raise public awareness of critical issues through workshops, seminars, community organizations, and community forums.
- Establishing mechanisms for regularly reviewing and updating the department’s policies to reflect evolving best practices in climate-resilient, just, democratic, and equitable urban planning.



2024–2029 STRATEGIC PLAN



Planning professionals have the knowledge, skills, and ethical commitment to promote equity by offering a holistic view of impacts and opportunities related to economic development, land use, resiliency and sustainability, cultural preservation and other factors that bridge the worlds of built environment design, policy and full societal potential. Equity is a necessary guiding principle for all planners, who work as advisors, advocates, and decision makers in communities confronting and seeking to deal with historic and ongoing legacies of racism other forms of oppression across the globe.

As planning educators, we believe we can learn important lessons from planning's past and develop new approaches for envisioning, realizing, and sustaining cities, towns, rural communities, regions, and natural environments more equitably. The Covid-19 pandemic was a turning point for planning in many ways, highlighting environmental and health inequalities and catalyzing efforts to build a better future. The current generation of planners will likely be judged by how we respond to the climate crisis, economic and social inequities, and the crisis in health that the pandemic helped to reveal. While it is not possible to dictate or forcibly impart values, our curriculum emphasizes how planning can contribute to more equitable places, and we seek to foster inclusion⁴ and diversity⁵ within our walls and among future planning professionals through active mentorship and support. Our departmental values are consistent with the principles articulated above and build upon the values and mission of the School of Architecture and the University of Virginia in its effort to be great and good in all we do.

⁴Defined as "an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully" (American Planning Association, 2022).

⁵Defined as "inclusion of all in a manner not limited by race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, ability, educational attainment, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs, or veteran status, so as to embrace varied perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, talents, and interests in all human efforts" (American Planning Association, 2022).

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE MISSION AND VALUES

The School of Architecture prioritizes climate resilience and climate justice, which serve as both a pillar and compass for the work that its faculty and students pursue. Climate change impacts are inextricably linked with historic and contemporary inequalities and this reality requires that the lenses of justice and resilience are employed when planning and design interventions are developed. Further, the A-School is committed to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) within and beyond the university and has established the following goals to realize this vision:

- Increasing faculty, student and staff excellence and diversity.
- Expanding student support to make the School more accessible and affordable.
- Enhancing social justice-based pedagogy and disciplinary scholarship around issues of race, identity, culture, power, and belonging.
- Building meaningful, sustainable, and supportive partnerships with neighborhoods, institutions, communities and organizations who are allies in this work.
- Establishing metrics and a structure of reporting to communicate progress.

The School of Architecture is committed to training students to be leaders and change makers through the influence that its departments and disciplines have on the built environment and by extension, the ways in which we inhabit and understand spaces whether they are in big cities, small towns, or rural areas. We cannot overstate the importance of our location in a larger School of Architecture, with the disciplines of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Architectural History in proximity. While there are sometimes healthy tensions, the benefits of this context and multidisciplinary interaction are great indeed. The four departments are finding more ways to collaborate in both teaching and research. Further, there are growing opportunities for collaborations in schools and disciplines across the entire university as we seek to address the wicked problems with a transdisciplinary lens. Many of the benefits are direct and obvious, others less so. The direct benefits include opportunities for Planning students to take classes in these other departments with students from multiple disciplines and to develop their design skills and competencies.

UNIVERSITY MISSION AND VALUES

The University of Virginia's most recent strategic plan was released in August 2019 with the stated aim of achieving recognition as "the best public university in 2030, and one of the very best in the world, whether public or private⁶" by striving to be both *great* and *good*. While the former refers to the standard metrics and indicators that are used to assess the performance of educational institutions (e.g., research productivity, innovation, staff retention, etc.), the notion of the good university emphasizes bringing tangible benefits to people and communities outside the university, preparing students to be effective leaders who also value service to others, and modeling ethical principles in all facets of university operations. The core values articulated in the plan are:

- Our enduring commitment to a vibrant and unique residential learning environment marked by the free and collegial exchange of ideas.
- Our unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community bound together by distinctive foundational values of honor, integrity, trust, and respect.
- Our universal dedication to excellence and affordable access.

⁶University of Virginia. (2019). *A Great and Good University: The 2030 Plan*. Retrieved from <https://strategicplan.virginia.edu/The2030Plan.201908.pdf>

THE ROAD AHEAD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

There are areas of opportunity and challenge that the Department must proactively engage with, incorporate, and navigate to fully realize its own mission and to help advance those of the School of Architecture and the University.

Challenges

1. Create pathways to increase tuition support for graduate students.
2. Expand staffing level to support a dynamic curriculum and expanding research and grant activities.
3. Increase experiential opportunities for students to learn from planning exemplars.
4. Sustain and expand enrollments at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.
5. Continue to increase the physical space available for teaching, research, and service activities within the Department.

In order to successfully recruit the most qualified applicants, DUEP must devote more financial resources to the MUEP program. Our competitors typically offer research or teaching assistantships as part of the financial aid package extended to admitted students that may include tuition remission or reduction. Other schools at UVA (e.g., Engineering, Darden, Law) have the resources and infrastructure to provide tuition remission or reduction, which further disadvantages DUEP faculty collaborating on research that is internally funded or that is supported by small grants because planning research assistants are typically paid hourly rather than receiving a stipend.

Though the size of the full-time faculty has increased significantly over the last three years, it is important to note that not only the numbers but also the commitments of the faculty necessarily fluctuate over time. Ensuring that courses are delivered on a consistent basis is a priority. Part of the fluctuation is due to Urban and Environmental Planning faculty being selected for leadership positions in the university, school, and the department. The ability to attract and retain practitioners in the courses and teaching in our program adds immeasurably to the quality of the experience here at UVA. These practitioners and part-time instructors provide an unusual degree of real world “ground truthing” and provide insight and kinds of knowledge that other programs do not. This impressive cadre of practitioners in turn helps us in providing an unusual balance of theory and practice, indeed a juxtaposing that makes the educational experience at UVA quite rich and stimulating. The School of Architecture has taken great strides to strengthen and expand its infrastructure to support grant-seeking and sponsored research. As a consequence, the School has increased its research funding from \$712,000 in fiscal year 2020 to \$2,199,000 in fiscal year 2024. This has increased opportunities for our graduate and undergraduate students to work with faculty on research awards. Better staffing of research administration, investment in external research development support, ongoing work on clear research policies and expectations for faculty, and acquisition of space to support research in the Department and School are specific examples of this progress. While research activity has increased tremendously in the School and the Department over the past 3 years, this process takes time and is linked to other challenges outlined in this section of the strategic plan through its implications for available funding.

Campbell Hall is the primary home of the four academic units in the School of Architecture and has long grappled with a shortage of physical space for faculty and students. Although there are plans to renovate Peyton House and auxiliary space has been procured at Hospital Drive, dispersion of faculty offices and a lack of dedicated office space in Campbell Hall for planning faculty has arguably, decreased social interaction and social cohesion. Finally, planning students have expressed an interest in having access to studio desks when they are enrolled in studio courses, which has been remedied in the short term with the rotating desks.

Opportunities

1. Build more interdisciplinary linkages inside and outside the school to address major challenges.
2. Engage with the Environmental Institute and the Equity Center at the university to advance our agenda of equitable, sustainable communities in Virginia and beyond.
3. Leverage the vast and talented alumni network cultivated over the past 60 years to connect students to real-world practice.
4. Help students explore the range of professional careers that planning provides in all sectors.
5. Engage at the global scale through faculty initiatives such as study abroad, Biophilic Cities, resilient design, internships and fellowships, and the Diplomacy Lab courses that allow students to both learn and experience different approaches to urban design and development.

As one of the four departments in the School of Architecture, there is an obvious opportunity for increasing both courses and engaged learning that crosses disciplines. This is being explored within the newly launched interdisciplinary curriculum committee that seeks to find points of connections for students in their first days of study at the School of Architecture. Likewise, there is conscious and ongoing outreach to faculty across the university whose interests and research intersects with Urban and Environmental Planning.

In the last decade the University has broadened its support for two areas that directly affect our teaching and research—environmental resilience and equity. Faculty from the department are becoming more enmeshed in these broader research themes and in finding ways to partner on projects and research.

Over the coming years, there will be an increased emphasis on engaging the Department's thousands of alumni. Through site visits, individual mentoring, and engagement in reviews and teaching, we intend to leverage this wide-ranging well of expertise and practical insight in a more intentional way. This process has become with hosting alumni receptions at the APA-VA annual conference and encouraging student member in the organization.

Through our invited lectures, adjunct faculty, and class presentations, we are and will continue to highlight the professional applications of an accredited planning degree. From economic development, philanthropy, non-profit leadership, public sector, public service, consulting, etc., it is critical that students understand the range of employment opportunities that are open to them.

Finally, new opportunities have emerged at the global scale that provide a strong foundation for engagement. The department has a long history of involvement in study abroad opportunities with the most recent example being Sustainable Europe that began in 2011. However, in addition to departmental programs, students have opportunities to engage in for-credit options through other programs at the school or university as well as through initiatives like Biophilic Cities, Urban Forests, and Restorative Landscapes and international visiting lecturers.

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

The Department of Urban and Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia has a long and rich heritage in identifying and implementing solutions that strengthen our ability to address global challenges. While this plan focuses on specific goals by program level, there are some significant areas of focus that synthesize work across degrees but also lift the impact of the department as a leader in the school, university, and the profession.

Goal 1:

Offer faculty more opportunities to develop new skills and capacities to match the changing field of planning.

Goal 2:

Provide opportunities for an alumni-student mentoring program for every enrolled student.

Goal 3:

Build closer connections in the DC Metro and other large metropolitan areas (alumni, planning organizations, research initiatives, developers, etc.) to expand the reach of program impact and research and to connect students to diverse experiential opportunities.

Goal 4:

Expand opportunities for students and faculty to focus on solution strategies through systems thinking, data analysis, and new technologies including AI.

Goal 5:

Develop and sustain collaborations with cities and organizations across the globe who are working to transform planning and to address the most pressing social and ecological challenges of our time.

GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES— MASTER OF URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The mission of the MUEP degree program is to provide professional training for students intending to begin a career as a planner *or* for those seeking to add a graduate credential in planning that enriches and extends their knowledge and skills. The MUEP delivers rigorous training in planning methods, a wide range of opportunities for experiential learning, a deep theoretical understanding of the field, and a specialized course of study (concentrations) that is tailored to the career goals of each student. Our MUEP program emphasizes environmental sustainability, community engagement, and collaborative approaches to decision-making while preparing graduates for success in mid-level or higher positions within the government, non-profit, or private sectors.

Program Goals

The following four goals have been established for the MUEP.

Goal 1:

Implement and continuously improve the graduate degree program to train and support planners with the necessary complement of knowledge, skills (e.g., facilitation, data analysis, engagement strategies, writing and communication, public finance), and competencies (e.g., professional ethics, cultural competence, area concentrations, communications techniques) to flourish as professionals and to lead the field into its future.

Goal 2:

Facilitate and fund impactful research and engagement work by both faculty and students.

Goal 3:

Create and sustain an inclusive culture and an environment conducive to experiential learning.

Goal 4:

Maintain active involvement with the planning profession that increases exposure to public sector demands and opportunities.

Measurable Objectives

Goal 1: Implement and continuously improve the graduate degree program to train and support planners with the necessary complement of knowledge, soft skills (e.g., facilitation, cultural competence, engagement), and hard skills (e.g., research, technology, quantitative analysis) to flourish as professionals and to lead the field into its future.

Objective 1a: Recruit and support a diverse student body comprised of high-caliber students, consistent with School and University policies.

Indicator: Outreach to undergraduates from under-represented groups—including lower income and first-generation students—enrolled at UVA.

- Metric: Engagement with UVA Career Center and appropriate feeder departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering and Applied Science, and Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy during the latter portion of the spring semester (1 per year goal).
- Metric: Percentage of applicant pool from under-represented groups increases each year (matching UVA percentage is goal).

Indicator: Funding opportunities provided to admitted students (e.g., total, mean, and median award amounts)

- Metric: Percentage of enrolled students in first year cohort with merit aid or other financial support increases each year (ultimate goal is 50%).

Indicator: Retention rate for all students and for students from under-represented groups

- Metric: At least 90% of all students and at least 95% of students from under-represented groups re-enroll after completing the first year of the program.
- Metric: At least 90% of all students and at least 95% of students from under-represented groups graduate within 2.5 years.

Indicator: Academic achievement of student body at admission and at the time of graduation

- Metric: Incoming students have an average undergraduate GPA of 3.5 or higher

Indicator: Student performance in final semester practicum course.

- Metric: Performance in PLAC 6090 (final reports, evaluation in public presentations/final reviews) and results of learning outcomes assessment for this course.

Objective 1b: Students have access to an adequate number and variety of courses to design and pursue meaningful specializations that complement learning outcomes of the core curriculum.

Indicator: Course offerings by the department

- Metric: Curriculum map for core curriculum meets all PAB accreditation criteria and is reviewed every three years to ensure consistency and relevance.
- Metric: Number of elective courses delivered at least once within the past two years

Indicator: Alumni evaluation of course offerings

- Metric: Alumni satisfaction with preparation for (e.g., skills and knowledge required) particular pathways while in the program gathered via bi-annual survey (at least 75% of respondents will indicate satisfaction).

Indicator: Annual audit of student internship forms with feedback from internship supervisor

- Metric: Internship supervisors will give positive ratings to student performance indicate that they were well prepared (i.e., 90% rated 4 or 5 out of a maximum 5 rating).

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

Indicator: Conduct a bi-annual survey of recent alumni to gain insight into the quality and relevance of their education, as well as their career trajectory and current employment.

- Metric: Responses will be received from at least 30% of invitees. Responses will be used to inform curricular and other programmatic discussions.
- Metric: At least 75% of respondents will indicate satisfaction with the program and agree that they were well-prepared for professional practice.
- Metric: At least 90% of alumni are employed within the field of planning or pursuing an additional degree within a year of graduation.
- Metric: At least 75% of alumni who sit for the AICP exam in a given year will pass.

Goal 2: Facilitate impactful research and engagement work by both faculty and students.

Objective 2a: Full and part-time faculty research productivity is suitable for Research 1 (R1) university in terms of research volume, quality, and place of publication.

Indicator: Annual reports by faculty

- Metric: One to two peer reviewed publications/year or significant progress toward books or larger projects. (This acknowledges that faculty have different effective course loads.)

Objective 2b: The faculty succeeds in winning external and internal grants.

Indicator: Annual reports by faculty

- Metric: One to two 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 have opportunities to engage in research and engagement work with departmental faculty.

Indicator: Number of MUEP theses completed

- Metric: At least one master's thesis successfully defended each year.

Indicator: Number of students working as research assistants (SRAs)

- Metric: At least 25% of graduating students have experience as paid research assistants while completing the MUEP.

Indicator: Percentage of faculty hiring student research assistants

- Metric: At least 50% of the full-time faculty have hired and supervised an MUEP student as an SRA each year.

Goal 3: Create and sustain an inclusive culture and an environment conducive to experiential learning.

Objective 3a: School and department sponsored events provide forums for learning outside the classroom and support participation in events/forums external to UVA.

Indicator: Number of departmental or School sponsored events held with faculty participation.

Indicator: Budgetary (e.g., travel funding) or other support (e.g., letters of recommendation) to facilitate student and faculty participation in external events (e.g., MUEP students at APA-Virginia conference).

Indicator: Number of Student Planning Association (SPA) events.

Indicator: Number of guest speakers who represent diverse communities (invited and compensated).

Indicator: Climate of inclusiveness in the department.

- Metric: 75% of respondents to recent graduate survey will indicate “Somewhat agree” or “Strongly agree” to sense of belonging and comfort in sharing personal perspectives and experiences.

Goal 4: Maintain active involvement with the planning profession.

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 and 75% participation for student body in MUEP.
- Metric: Student participation in APA sponsored events, including the National Conference, APA-Virginia Conference and other activities (goal of 25% of students attending state or national conference before graduation).

Objective 4b: Widespread dissemination of faculty research and/or community-engaged practice in professional planning venues

Indicator: Faculty participation in conferences as speakers and presenters. Conferences include: ACSP, APA National Conference, New Partners for Smart Growth, Congress for the New Urbanism, TRB, The Society for City and Regional Planning History, Urban Affairs, etc.

- Metric: At least 75% of the full-time faculty deliver at least one conference presentation, keynote address, etc., each year.

Indicator: External recognition of work being done within the department

- Metric: Number and significance of awards received.
- Metric: Profiles of faculty projects in print or digital media.
- Metric: Podcasts, blogs, and social media activity.

Objective 4c: Faculty and students engage with various external communities (i.e., local, regional, national, international) on important planning issues and topics.

Indicator: Faculty participation in community or professional groups/taskforces as members or in leadership positions

- Metric: Faculty role (50% of the full-time faculty) 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 and regional community through class projects and/or internships.

- Metric: Reported level of satisfaction with MUEP interns as reported by supervisors.
- Metric: Number of courses that engage with planning professionals or community-based organizations and produce deliverables for external audiences.

GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES— BACHELOR OF URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The mission of the BUEP degree program is to cultivate the core principles, competencies, and knowledge that are essential to effective and ethical planning practice among undergraduate students. The BUEP is a generalist degree that provides the intellectual and ethical grounding necessary for an entry level position in the field. As an undergraduate program, the BUEP also lays the foundation for future graduate study in planning or an allied field (e.g., law, public policy, public health) if advanced study or a graduate credential is part of a student’s career objectives. Completion of our BUEP program affords undergraduate students the skills and insight necessary to begin a career in planning then to emerge as leaders in the field as they gain professional experience. Contemporary planning practice demands familiarity with and training in several areas including the history of planning and the role it plays in shaping social and environmental futures, its ethical core and legal basis, critical thinking, effective communication skills, analytical methods, and community engagement.

Program Goals

The following four goals have been established for the BUEP.

Goal 1:

Provide students with a comprehensive planning education through a curriculum that provides knowledge of the foundations, practices, skills, values, and responsibilities of the profession and a suite of electives that reflect the diversity of planning domains, skills, knowledge, and opportunities in relation to pressing issues in the built and natural environment.

Goal 2:

Enhance experiential learning across the BUEP curriculum through opportunities with community-engaged learning, undergraduate research, professional development, studios, internships and externships, expansion of study abroad offerings, and opportunities to interact with planning practitioners.

Goal 3:

Strengthen BUEP research output and outreach.

Goal 4:

Strengthen the profession and BUEP by identifying growth areas, establishing partnerships, fostering a culture of inclusive excellence, and dissemination of scholarly activities.

Measurable Objectives

Goal 1: Provide students with a comprehensive planning education through a curriculum that provides knowledge of the foundations, practices, skills, values, and responsibilities of the profession and a suite of electives that reflect the diversity of planning domains, skills, knowledge, and opportunities in relation to pressing issues in the built and natural environment.

Objective 1a: Meet PAB standards through core BUEP courses.

Indicator: Intentional integration of PAB standards into learning outcomes for all BUEP core courses.
— Metric: All PAB standards are met or exceeded through BUEP core curriculum.

Objective 1b: Conduct continuous learning outcomes assessments to refine and strengthen BUEP core curriculum.

Indicator: Completed review of two BUEP core courses per semester and full core curriculum every two calendar years
— Metric: Student Learning Outcomes Assessments for two core courses will be reviewed by two BUEP faculty each semester.

Objective 1c: Build on BUEP program identity and scholarship to provide curriculum that responds to emerging issues in urban and environmental planning.

Indicator: Regular reporting on faculty scholarship and efforts to blend research into BUEP curriculum.
— Metric: Regular faculty meetings and departmental strategy meetings to incorporate faculty reporting on how their scholarship is reflected in core curriculum
— Metric: Offer at least two research forums and lectures on key areas of planning of research and practice each academic year.

Objective 1d: Ensure that a diverse suite of electives is offered that expands knowledge in areas of planning specialization.

Indicator: Bi-annual evaluation and assessment of electives, formats, and times of offerings.
— Metric: Develop strategy for addressing and financing the addition of key areas of planning specialization.
— Metric: Establish and maintain a two-year plan and calendar of elective course offerings within the BUEP program.
— Metric: Increase visibility of course offerings by developing clear marketing and educational information about elective courses to be shared across the university.

Goal 2: Enhance experiential learning across the BUEP curriculum through opportunities with community-engaged learning, undergraduate research, professional development, internships and externships, and expansion of study abroad offerings.

Objective 2a: Integrate community-engaged and experiential learning into the BUEP core curriculum.

Indicator: All BUEP students will have experiential learning opportunities.

- Metric: At least 30% of BUEP course offerings will include community-engaged or experiential learning opportunities.
- Metric: Opportunities will be offered to students to study abroad for either a semester or summer program consistent with the curriculum.

Objective 2b: Establish viable pathways for BUEP students to study abroad.

Indicator: Creation of study abroad or exchange programs that allow BUEP to maintain tuition.

- Metric: Number of students participating in study abroad opportunities.
- Metric: Expansion of topical areas and geographic locations available to students.

Objective 2c: Provide professional development opportunities for BUEP students beyond the curriculum.

Indicator: All BUEP students will have opportunity to prepare for planning job market.

- Metric: Increase internship opportunities both paid and for-credit during the academic year and summer to support 100% of students having at least one professional internship during their BUEP academic program.
- Metric: Regular meeting with SARC Director of Career Development to organize tailored professional development opportunities.
- Metric: Regular opportunities to connect with DUEP alumni.
- Metric: Host at least one Planning as a Profession symposium each year to expose students to planning practice.
- Metric: Percentage of students connected with the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association and the American Planning Association through membership, conference attendance, and presentations of research.

Indicator: Build relationships and extensions for employment pathways, and program learning

- Metric: Number, frequency, and participation in community- and employer- based extracurricular student opportunities.
- Metric: Increase the frequency of connections to alumni in planning practice or related fields by the department.

Goal 3: Strengthen BUEP research output and outreach.

Objective 3a: Provide BUEP students with pathways for undergraduate research.

Indicator: BUEP student participation in Distinguished Major, UVA Undergraduate Research Symposium, and other research forums.

- Metric: Number of 2nd Year Studio and 4th Year Studio Projects Submitted to UVA Undergraduate Research Symposium
- Metric: Number of students applied research and/or design projects through classwork or national competitions.

Indicator: Develop transparent informational material on the BUEP Distinguished Major Program to be shared with students at bi-annual Town-halls

Objective 3b: Increase BUEP students' research skills.

Indicator: BUEP students consistently engage with research.

- Metric: Number of undergraduate students applying and accepted for the Distinguished Major Program (DMP).
- Metric: Non-DMP students completing major 4th-year research project.
- Metric: Survey BUEP students and DUEP faculty on desired course offerings via Town Hall and All-Program Meetings.

Objective 3c: Dissemination of scholarship from BUEP students.

Indicator: Established record of scholarly excellence in BUEP.

- Metric: Dissemination of notable BUEP work through regular applications to planning awards.
- Metric: Sharing BUEP work via SARC Communications Team (biannually).
- Metric: Archiving BUEP Student work in Libra.

Goal 4: Strengthen the profession and BUEP by identifying growth areas, including establishing partnerships, fostering a culture of inclusive excellence, and disseminating applied research and scholarship.

Objective 4a: Clarify and articulate opportunities for growth in BUEP.

Indicator: Explore ways for increased enrollment, January and summer course options, study abroad opportunities and greater university-wide visibility to support program growth.

- Metric: Develop and maintain an Enrollment, Recruitment, and Growth Plan for the BUEP
- Metric: Create a more visible branding of the planning profession for incoming UVA students using social media, student publications, and partnerships with other departments and schools.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The department has adopted a unified approach to monitoring and evaluating progress toward achieving and sustaining the goals articulated in this Strategic Plan. For both the graduate and undergraduate programs, DUEP collects data on each of the metrics identified in the preceding sections of this strategic plan and disseminates the information to the entire faculty at the end of each academic year. This reporting provides an opportunity to review progress toward achieving each of the goals and supporting objectives for our graduate and undergraduate programs. In addition to reporting, the Chair will lead a discussion of progress toward achieving the goals articulated in this Strategic Plan during part of each annual faculty retreat. This monitoring framework is intended to facilitate continuous refinement and improvement in the delivery of our accredited programs. Further, this approach will help to ensure alignment with initiatives at the School and University level because the DUEP Strategic Plan will be regularly revisited every five years by a committee appointed by the department Chair.



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The faculty and students of the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning understand the urgency in their profession in teaching, research, and service. This strategic plan is intended to organize and strategize our efforts to achieve a higher level of excellence within our work, but more importantly, to achieve better results for students and the publics with whom we interact and advocate for. This plan comes at a time when uncertainty, lack of trust, and systemic failures guide and dominate the national and international dialogue. We believe that the planning profession and planning education can and must be a part of changing the narrative.

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For more info:
arch.virginia.edu/programs/urban-environmental-planning

