

# **Auburn University Master of Community Planning Program Strategic Plan, 2016 - 2021**

## **Background**

Stakeholder input: This plan emerges from formal and informal input from many stakeholder groups the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years. The plan was finalized in fall 2016 when two new faculty members joined the MCP program and are able to offer their input. Our consultations included a retreat with the MCP professional advisory board (12/2/1015), a second review by the professional advisory board (10/4/2016), consultations with our student group (the Auburn University Student Planning Association) (12/7/2016), a meeting with the regular faculty in the Department of Political Science (12/2/2016), along with numerous informal consultations. The plan was adopted by the faculty on 12/12/2016. Documented results of these meetings are available upon request.

Dissemination: This plan has been distributed to our faculty, students, alumni, professionals, department staff, and the public via our web page.

Organization of the plan: This plan is organized into five primary goals, with long-term, mid-term, and short term objectives following each primary goal. Specific strategies are attached to some of the objectives to further operationalize the plan. Long term goals are more aspirational in nature, with a timeline of five or more years. Short and mid-term goals have a timeline of 2-3 years, and are more specific, and are further operationalized by strategies in some cases.

Linkage to AU Outcomes Assessment: AU requires that the outcomes of every degree program be assessed annually. They focus of this assessment is on measureable outcomes. Some of the outcomes in the MCP strategic plan will be used as part of the annual AU outcomes assessment.

## **MCP Program Mission**

The Community Planning Program at Auburn University is a professionally oriented masters degree program that focuses on the skills that professional planners need for practice in a interactive and interdisciplinary environment. The centerpiece of the program is the opportunity for students and faculty to engage with underserved communities throughout Alabama and the Southeast through outreach, teaching, and engaged research. Through working on projects with communities throughout Alabama and the Southeast, students learn to help diverse and complex communities create and implement plans that improve and protect their quality-of-life, culture, diversity, resource base, built environment, natural environment, and economic vitality.

## Strategic Plan

1. Engagement: Achieve distinction as a program that fosters learning through engagement.

### Long-term goals

1a. (teaching): Provide students with multiple engagement opportunities in order to achieve richer and deeper understanding of holistic planning issues.

1b. (research) Pursue opportunities to turn classroom engagement activities into peer-reviewed research.

### Short and mid-term goals

1c. (teaching): Increase the number of engagement projects, by typology, by scale of inquiry, and by location.

1d. (teaching) focus engagement opportunities on underserved communities in Alabama and the Southeast.

2. Social justice: Increase the diversity of the program and maximize opportunities for all people, especially those who have been marginalized.

### Long-term goals

2a. (teaching): Ensure that diversity and social justice are meaningfully incorporated throughout the curriculum.

2b. (operations): Increase the number of underrepresented students.

2c. (operations): Increase the number of underrepresented faculty, when a new faculty line is available, to create a more diverse environment.

2d. (operations): Pursue formal and informal connections and opportunities with Tuskegee University, including the possibility of an ABM with the undergraduate architecture program.

### Short and Mid-term Goals

2e. (teaching): Annually review the curriculum to assess the inclusion of social justice where appropriate.

3. Education: Foster multi-perspectival education.

### Long-Term Goals

- 3a. (teaching): Increase active and engaged learning in classes.
- 3b. (teaching): Increase global focus of teaching.
- 3c. (research): Increase global focus of research.
- 3d. (teaching): Increase study abroad opportunities for students.
- 3e. (teaching): Explore the possibility of adding a thesis option for the MCP program.
- 3f. (operations): Upgrade the studio to foster engaged student learning and a community atmosphere.
- 3g. (operations): Identify ways to better prepare graduates and planners in Alabama to pass the AICP exam to become certified planners.

### Short and mid-term Goals

- 3h. (teaching): Take advantage of ESL classrooms in Haley and workshops on engaged learning offered through the Biggio Center.
  - 3i. (teaching): Revise the MCP curriculum to meet PAB goals.
  - 3j. (teaching): Revise the MCP curriculum to offer specializations, working with the MPA program to build on common strengths.
  - 3k. (operations): Foster a physical environment for informal interaction and positive culture, including a dedicated studio.
  - 3l. (teaching): Increase the opportunity for planning professionals to engage with classes.
  - 3m. (teaching): Incorporate the AU e-Portfolio project into the MCP curriculum.
4. Program growth: Increase program visibility and student enrollment.

### Long-term goals

4a. (operations): Consistently maintain 50 total students enrolled in the program upon achieving PAB accreditation.

4b. (operations): Increase student quality (undergraduate GPA, GRE scores).

4c. (operations): Gain and maintain accreditation for the program through the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB).

Strategy 1: Annually assess the data required by PAB and collect data and needed.

Strategy 2: Collect examples of student work every semester.

Strategy 3: Annually assess the program based on PAB criteria.

4d. (teaching): Develop an undergraduate minor in Community Planning and an undergraduate minor in Urban Design.

3g. (teaching): Develop accelerated bachelors-masters programs with the undergraduate degrees in Political Science and Public Administration.

3f. (teaching): Develop dual masters degree programs with Rural Sociology and Geography.

3g. (teaching): Develop a graduate minor in Urban Design, and explore the opportunity to develop other graduate minors so that students can earn a minor for specializations.

#### Short and mid-term goals

4e. (operations): Develop a student recruitment plan (including a diversity strategy).

4f. (operations): Improve program marketing.

Strategy 1: purchase an ad for the program on Planetizen.

Strategy 2: Work with CLA to develop new promotional materials for the program.

Strategy 3: dedicate a GRA position to helping promote the program.

Strategy 3: promote the program at regional conferences and educational venues, including ALAPA, Bays and Bayous, and Tuskegee Architecture Career Fair.

4g. (operations): Promote classroom engagement projects throughout the state and regionally.

4h. (Research): Strengthen the presence of research on the web site.

4i. (teaching): Strengthen the presence of student work on the web site, including through the e-portfolio project.

4j. (Operations): Increase participation in Alabama APA.

Strategy 1: Help with the ALAPA newsletter.

Strategy 2: Share results of engaged research locally at the Alabama APA conference and other statewide and regional conferences.

Strategy 3: Establish an annual presence at ALAPA by sponsoring a table at the conference every year.

5. Collaboration: Strengthen the relationship with the programs in the Department of Political Science and the College of Liberal Arts.

#### Long-term goals

5a. (research): Pursue collaborative research with faculty in the Department of Political Science and the College of Liberal Arts.

5b. (Teaching): Share MCPs record of community engagement with faculty in the Department and College, and pursue joint engagement opportunities.

5c. (teaching): Create a new planning class that is required for undergraduate students in the Public Administration Program.

#### Short and mid-term goals

5d. (teaching): Create a new planning class that is included in the university core curriculum.

5e. (operations): Work with the MPA faculty to identify areas of overlap in the MCP and MPA curriculums, in order to consolidate resources and teaching loads.