

2017-2022 Strategic Plan

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THE UNIVERSITY *of*
NEW ORLEANS

*Department of Planning and
Urban Studies (PLUS)*

University of New Orleans Department of Planning and Urban Studies Department (PLUS)



The PLUS 2017-2022 strategic plan outlines a roadmap for positioning Planning and Urban Studies (PLUS) as a leader in the south in education, applied research and civic engagement.

UNO strives to be ranked as one of the top 10 Urban and Public Affairs programs in the South. To achieve this milestone and others, the strategic plan identifies key goals to build the capacity, brand, and impact of the unit.

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Vision

UNO's Department of Planning and Urban Studies is nationally recognized for providing a world-class learning laboratory for the cultivation of professionals and civic leaders who are solution-driven social innovators building more livable, sustainable and equitable places in the 21st century.

Mission

Our mission is to educate students to be effective professionals with distinctive technical and problem-solving competencies through an interdisciplinary program of innovative teaching, applied research and community engagement. We strive to develop solutions through the integration and synergy of diverse disciplines that address the policy, design and the practice of urban planning and public affairs. We engage in the practical application of research, scholarship and education that changes lives, generates hope, and builds communities throughout the Gulf South region and world. PLUS serves as an economic and social engine for progress in urban areas. What you learn here, you can take anywhere. We encourage our students to dream it and ignite in them the power to do it.

Values

We value critical and creative thinking, ethics, social justice, environmental and social responsibility, democratic values, diverse perspectives, collaboration, innovation, and interconnectedness of place and people. We seek public planning, policy and design initiatives that maximize mobility and opportunities for all people, especially those who have been marginalized, to participate meaningfully in society.

Goals and Objectives

I. Organizational Structure

Goal: Achieve an organizational position within UNO that allows the department to best excel and support the university's urban research mission. The ultimate principle of effective organizational design is to make it easy and motivating for people to collaborate, innovate and achieve. After multiple departmental and college mergers, PLUS' organizational structure needs review.

Objective 1: Review departmental structure to improve work flow between academic programs and research entities.

Objective 2: Review position with COLAEHD to determine which academic programs/center/institute/certificates should or could be included in the PLUS umbrella and which could or should be relocated.

Objective 3: Review the position of the department within COLAEHD, College of Business, College of Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Interdisciplinary Studies, or other college arrangement.

Objective 4: Determine the appropriateness of the creation of a school and all entities there within.



Measures:

- ◆ PLUS organizational chart
- ◆ Partner development and management strategy
- ◆ Board of Regents approval of any reorganization

II. Students

Goal A: Increase student enrollment, graduation and diversity of undergraduate and graduate students.

Objective 1: Implement curriculum and instruction strategies to increase enrollment by 20% by 2022, including expansion of dual enrollment, implementing general education introduction courses to urban studies, expanding joint degree programs/articulation agreements and increasing skill certification programs.

Objective 2: Create and implement a focused student recruitment and communications strategy, including materials and website, that increases student applications and diversity by 30% over a five-year period (2022), from within and beyond the university.

Objective 3: Financially support 25% of PLUS graduate students through graduate assistantships, internships, and professional development.

Objective 4: Increase student participation in the BSUSP on-line courses to 20% of all BSUSP students by working with UNO Extended Campus to increase the number of on-line courses and improve the quality of interactive and multimedia content for on-line courses.



Measures:

- ◆ Number of applications
- ◆ Enrollment totals
- ◆ Number of graduates
- ◆ Total Student Credit Hours
- ◆ Student Diversity
- ◆ Certificate Completions and Profitability
- ◆ Student Financial Support
- ◆ Number of, enrollment in, and types of pedagogy used in on-line courses

Goal B: Engage students in career exploration and professional development that encourages professional networking, identification of career opportunities and life-long learning.

Objective 1: Expand academic services to include career counseling and placement guidance services for internships and post-graduation employment, in partnership with the university, alumni and professional associations such as the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Objective 2: Provide exposure to and information on careers in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors through internships and coursework.



Measures:

- ◆ Number of professional development activities
- ◆ Formalization and measurement of internships across programs
- ◆ Formalization and measurement of the process for service learning, capstone and practicum courses
- ◆ Formalize reporting and measurement of course guest lectures
- ◆ Student job placement rate

III. Faculty and Staff

Goal: Provide high quality faculty/staff with the necessary resources to meet the teaching, scholarly and applied research, mentoring, outreach, business management, and advising needs of the various programs.

Objective 1: Meet university targets for faculty/student ratio.

Objective 2: Retain and recruit faculty for three new positions (with at least 1 at the associate/full level) for a total of eight full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty with expertise that fits the department's long-term goals.

Objective 3: Increase the diversity of faculty to reflect the demographic diversity of the region through active recruitment of minority candidates.

Objective 4: Secure adequate university resources for salary parity and faculty/staff travel and professional development.

Objective 5: While the department expects faculty to produce high quality research and publications, course instruction and curriculum development, we must also advocate for university performance evaluations and faculty tenure and promotion systems that reward faculty/staff for leadership in interdisciplinary collaboration, experiential education, and community engagement that are crucial to the departmental mission.



Measures:

- ◆ Number and diversity of faculty/staff hired and retained
- ◆ Faculty/staff salary adjustments
- ◆ Funding for travel and professional development
- ◆ Revise performance evaluation and tenure/promotion policies

IV. Curriculum and Instruction

Goal: Evaluate, and if necessary revise, curriculum to ensure dynamic, interdisciplinary programs of study that integrates enhanced experiential learning opportunities and professional skills development by 2022.

Objective 1: Identify core student competencies that should be achieved.

Objective 2: Identify and coordinate learning objectives within and across PLUS programs.

Objective 3: Identify, and if necessary, enhance the integration of analytic and research methods, technical writing, communication techniques and professional tool development (such as Geographic Information Systems) in the curriculum to improve student learning, competencies and success.



Measures:

- ◆ Review of core curriculum for each program to: (a) Identify learning objectives, and (b) conduct content analysis of core competencies by theme and program
- ◆ Create programmatic “Competencies Maps”
- ◆ Coordinate competencies, experiential learning activities and professional skill/tool development across programs

V. Research

Goal: Increase applied research funding and visibility to enhance student learning, faculty/staff scholarship, professional development and community engagement.

Objective 1: Financially and professionally reward faculty and staff for securing research grant funding for student support, equipment, facilities, administration as well as student professional development (i.e., Graduate Research Assistantships or Classroom Projects).

Objective 2: Expand interdisciplinary research partnerships with other UNO departments and colleges.

Objective 3: Increase external grant/contract activity by 30 percent.

Objective 4: Increase exposure of PLUS research by:

- ◆ Participating annually in Innovate UNO and other conferences/workshops;
- ◆ Leading professional and community service projects;
- ◆ Publishing in scholarly and professional publications; and
- ◆ Effectively communicating the impact of PLUS research through university, media, and public relations marketing.



Measures:

- ◆ Number of proposals submitted
- ◆ Amount of research dollars secured
- ◆ Number of research partnerships
- ◆ Number of students engaged in research projects
- ◆ Number and impact of conferences, publications, community service projects
- ◆ University, media and public relations coverage

VI. Community Engagement

Goal: Increase the capacity and visibility of PLUS as a community resource.

Objective 1: Inventory existing community partners and identify new opportunities for student experiential learning, applied research and impactful community engagement.

Objective 2: Create PLUS processes/procedures for community engagement.

Objective 3: Identify organizational structure, staffing and funding for growth of community outreach and pro bono technical assistance planning for nonprofits and neighborhoods.



Measures:

- ◆ Community engagement annual calendar
- ◆ Community applicant RFP process
- ◆ Community engagement reporting process

VII. Alumni Engagement and Professional Development

Goal: Facilitate and support a strong collaborative relationship with alumni and professionals in the field of planning, urban studies, transportation and public administration.

Objective 1: Establish a PLUS Strategic Plan Task Force to champion, guide and support the implementation and funding of the 2017-2012 Strategy to provide input, direction and support for curriculum development, career services and professional development programming, student internships and assessment of student performance.

Objective 2: Partner with professional associations and alumni to host and fund an annual educational forum on key urban issues, research results or alumni leadership (The UNO Forum) that offers meaningful professional development, strengthens alumni relationships and showcases the impact and importance of PLUS.

Objective 3: Establish an alumni/communications staff function within academic services that works with internal and external university partners to increase alumni engagement, program visibility and community partnerships.

Objective 4: Establish an alumni committee that can work with academic services to host events on key urban issues, disseminate research results, provide professional development activities and fundraise for the PLUS foundation account.



Measures:

- ◆ Number of alumni outreach activities
- ◆ Establishment of the alumni committee
- ◆ Number of alumni donors to the PLUS foundation
- ◆ Amount of new donations to the PLUS foundation

VIII. Facilities and Technology

Goal: Establish a visible, functional, well-maintained space that provides an active and engaging academic environment for faculty/staff and students. Refurbish/expand conference facilities to better enable engagement with professional practitioners, community partners, public officials and industry leaders.

Objective 1: Acquire university and external funds to complete the renovations of 273 Milneburg Hall as research laboratory space for the University of New Orleans Transportation Institute and the Center for Hazards Assessment, Response and Technology.

Objective 2: Work with UNO to renovate and update classrooms, the design lab and the computer labs. Expand computer lab information technology support.

Measures:

- ◆ Research suite completion
- ◆ PLUS academic facilities updated
- ◆ Software expanded and upgraded