

**Texas Southern University  
Department of Urban Planning and  
Environmental Policy  
Strategic Plan**

**October 2012**

## **Vision**

Our vision is to create a program of excellence in instruction and learning, research and scholarship, community engagement and public service in urban planning and environmental policy consistent with the traditions and strategic plan of Texas Southern University to become one of the nation's preeminent comprehensive metropolitan universities. Although our history is about promoting the advancement of African-Americans we accept the challenge of expanding opportunity in education to members of all socially under-represented groups. We take the world as our planning laboratory, starting with Houston and its metropolitan region, encompassing other cities in Texas and along the Gulf Coast, extending to the nation and the world. As the name of our program implies, we consider a concern with the quality of the urban and natural environment as central to the instruction, research, and practice of planning and policymaking. Instruction and research in our program will make the urban environment and the broader natural environment a primary focus. This will include promoting a model of sustainable development that incorporates concepts of social justice as well as environmental quality and economic efficiency.

## **Mission**

The mission of our department is to prepare our Masters students to be professional planners and train doctoral students to be urban planning researchers and professors who are well-prepared to help solve the pressing urban and environmental problems of our city, the region, the nation, and the world. As a state-designated "special purpose institution for urban programming," we embrace the challenge of preparing students to work on demanding urban and environmental problems in complex political and institutional settings and in difficult multi-cultural situations. We understand the diversity of our students – in race and ethnicity, nation of origin, gender, life experiences and cultural background, and otherwise – as a precious resource for our program, the profession and society. Our mission is to develop this resource to advance the public interest and the common good through planning and policymaking.

In order to achieve this mission, we provide:

- quality instruction with innovative teaching and learning techniques
- applied and advanced research and scholarship that is responsive to community issues
- opportunities for public service that benefit our city, the region, the nation, and the world

## **Strategic Goals**

Under this mission, we have identified a number of strategic goals.

- Goal 1. Construct a creative community of learning, large enough and diverse enough to support our collective enterprise.
- Goal 2. Promote effective learning in the classroom and in the community, preparing planners to meet the challenges of contemporary society

- Goal 3. Serve the needs of the community and the profession through research, teaching, and service.
- Goal 4. Conduct engaged scholarship with faculty research addressing pressing needs of the community and enhancing planning knowledge
- Goal 5. Produce graduates who find work in planning and related employment and are contributing to the life of the community and the success of our field

To ensure that the UPEP department achieves these goals, it has identified objectives under each goal and developed quantifiable performance measures for each objective.

<b>Goals, objectives, performance indicators and data</b>	
<b>A. Goal No. 1</b>	<b>Construct a creative community of learning, large enough and diverse enough to support our collective enterprise.</b>
1. Objective	Enroll a sufficient number of students to create creative and active community of learning.
a. Performance indicator:	Enroll 10-12 new students each academic year short term (1-3 yrs.)
Data:	Registrar enrollment data; Departmental student data
b. Performance indicator:	Enroll about 15-20 new students each academic year longer-term (3-5 years).
Data:	Registrar enrollment data; Departmental student data
2. Objective	Enroll students of increasing academic quality without compromising TSU's historic role as an access institution.
a. Performance indicator:	Attract a growing number of applicants – up to twice as many as there are places – to minimize the temptation to admit students who are unprepared for graduate study.
Data:	Admissions data – total applicants, acceptance rates.
b. Performance indicator:	Enroll entering classes who possess academic credentials that, as a group, are improving over time.
Data:	Admissions data – undergrad GPA, GRE scores, student biographies. GRE scores are for comparison purposes only. Texas law prohibits their use as the sole admission criterion.
3. Objective	Enroll a growing diversity of students, maintaining TSU's traditional HBCU base and going beyond.
a. Performance indicator:	Continue to expand service to Latino, Asian, international, and all potential students in the Gulf Coast region, while maintaining service to TSU's core historical constituency.
Data:	Enrollment data
b. Performance indicator:	Provide financial support to students who would not otherwise be able to attend – or to attend full-time.
Data:	Financial aid data
4. Objective	Maintain a strong and diverse faculty capable of guiding and supporting the efforts of our students.
a. Performance indicator:	Achieve and maintain a complement of eight full-time faculty in UPEP.
Data:	Faculty workload reports.

b. Performance indicator:	Recruit and hire a strong senior faculty member to serve as chair.
Data:	Faculty biographies; Faculty CVs
c. Performance indicator:	Maintain the diversity of faculty by specialization, methodology, and place of study, as well as race, gender, ethnicity, and otherwise.
Data:	Faculty workload reports; Faculty biographies; Faculty CVs.
<b>B. Goal No. 2</b>	<b>Promote effective learning in the classroom and in the community, preparing planners to meet the challenges of contemporary society.</b>
1. Objective	Continuously improve the quality of instruction so that students succeed in their mastery of the core curriculum and acquisition of essential knowledge, skills, and values.
a. Performance indicator:	Improve the quality of instruction in terms of the satisfaction of students.
Data:	Course evaluations; Graduate exit interviews.
b. Performance indicator:	Improve student performance on basic measures of success in coursework and examinations.
Data:	Graduate GPA
c. Performance indicator:	Improve the quality of student products that reflect skills in research, analysis, and communication.
Data:	Student papers and exams; Student projects
d. Performance indicator:	Improve graduation rates and time-to- graduation averages, in the context of a program in which many students are inevitably part-time.
Data:	University data on graduation rate; time to graduation data.
2. Objective	Provide useful continuing education opportunities for practitioners and citizens to improve the quality of planning throughout the communities we serve.
a. Performance indicator:	Study, develop, and establish certificate or CM credit-bearing programs in areas needed in our area and appropriate to the knowledge and skills we offer.
Data:	Program materials.
<b>C. Goal No. 3</b>	<b>Serve the needs of the community and the profession through research, teaching, and service.</b>
1. Objective	Promote studio projects, faculty research, and other applied activities that deliver service to residents, neighborhoods, districts, city, and region at-large.
a. Performance indicator:	Studio projects, service learning work, and research projects

	should, among other things, provide direct benefits to local communities, neighborhoods, and the greater Houston-Gulf Coast region.
Data:	Publications from community-based projects; Newspaper coverage of faculty and student activities in the community; Other testimonials to UPEP involvement
2. Objective	Promote faculty and student service to community organizations, especially in areas of programmatic specialization – housing and community redevelopment, transportation and land use, and environment.
a. Performance indicator:	Faculty and students should be well-represented on boards of directors of not for profits, on advisory boards and task forces, on project committees and other venues where their knowledge, skills, and values can support the advancement of the public interest.
Data:	Membership information; Newspaper coverage of the work of organizations and bodies involved
3. Objective	Foster faculty and student service to the profession and the academy through established organizations and others that support the planning enterprise.
a. Performance indicator:	UPEP faculty and students should be actively involved in the work of the Houston Section and the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association.
Data:	Membership information; Faculty CVs
b. Performance indicator:	UPEP should be represented in governance activities of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning and similar academic entities such as Transportation Research Board, Urban Affairs Association etc.
Data:	Membership information; Faculty CVs
c. Performance indicator:	Faculty should also participate in the governance of academic journals in their various sub-fields.
Data:	Membership information; Faculty CVs
<b>D. Goal No. 4</b>	<b>Conduct engaged scholarship with faculty research addressing pressing needs of the community and enhancing planning knowledge.</b>
1. Objective	Promote faculty research that is situated in the communities our program serves and focused on the challenges our neighborhoods, city, and region face.
a. Performance indicator:	Faculty research should focus on the core issues of

	transportation, energy and environment, and housing and community development, as appropriate to the strengths of our department and the needs of our region.
Data:	Data on faculty sponsored research funding. Publications and other work products from faculty research. Media coverage of faculty activities
<b>E. Goal No. 5</b>	<b>Produce graduates who find work in planning and related employment and are contributing to the life of the community and the success of our field.</b>
1. Objective	Ensure the success of our students in finding appropriate employment in planning-related positions or continued study in the field at the doctoral level.
b. Performance indicator:	Within 12 months of graduation, at least 90 percent of graduates not previously employed should find appropriate placement in planning related fields.
Data:	Graduate employment placement data; exit interviews
2. Objective	Support students in the pursuit of careers that are materially rewarding, meaningful, and personally satisfying.
a. Performance indicator:	Our graduates should report, not only the inevitable struggles of work in planning, but clear satisfaction in their career choices.
Data:	Alumni surveys; alumni profiles
3. Objective	Promote the further success of our graduates in distinguishing themselves in employment, achievement in the profession, and contribution to the community.
a. Performance indicator:	The achievements of UPEP graduates should be well recognized by employers and the community at-large.
Data:	Professional awards and honors to alumni; Employer survey; Alumni profiles

**Strategic Planning Committee**

All the faculty members in UPEP department are members of the Strategic Planning committee.