

Measures of Student Achievement and Public Information

Urban and Regional Planning Program

Michigan State University

2016

The Urban & Regional Planning Program at Michigan State University was established in 1946 and offers a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning; a Master of Urban and Regional Planning; and a Master of International Planning Studies.

The Program provides a broad education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with particular expertise in community development, environment and sustainability, real estate and housing, economic development, and transportation. Faculty members have strong academic and professional backgrounds, offering a diverse range of perspectives on the practice of planning. The Program adopts a global focus and provides several international opportunities for students to study abroad, and to work with international students and faculty visiting the Program.

This report summarizes the goals of the Program and provides information for prospective students.

Vision and Mission

URP Program Vision: Creating sustainable cities and communities through leadership, entrepreneurial creativity, social responsibility, and environmentally sustainable planning and policy.

The **mission** of the Urban & Regional Planning Program is to *prepare students to become practitioners in the planning profession*. This is addressed through three broad themes:

(Teaching) To provide future practitioners the knowledge, practical skills, and values to enable them to become effective planners, and to improve the quality of urban places and regions;

(Research) To conduct and disseminate research on the “theory and practice” of urban society to plan for more equitable and sustainable communities; and

(Outreach) To address community problems by linking knowledge and practice, and facilitating mutual learning between community and university.

Bachelors of Science in Urban and Regional Planning Program Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Provide students with a foundation in planning education practice through a curriculum emphasizing general and specialized knowledge, practice, technical skills, and core values of the planning profession.

Objective 1: Consult PAB list of required core knowledge, skills and values.

Objective 2: Conduct gap analysis between existing core list and PAB list.

Objective 3: Develop pre-/post-test (201/494) to assess student learning.

Measures: Take excerpt of AICP exam and test knowledge, skills and values; conduct focus groups to talk about what is planning to get individual assessments; interview/oral exam to measure verbal skills, critical thinking skills, etc.; jury reports on practicum; GPA of graduating students; and a technically written essay.

Goal #2: Enhance the curriculum with a thorough introduction of technical and practical skills applicable to the planning job market, with an emphasis on problem solving, technical writing, and oral presentation skills.

Objective 1: Assess standards and input received regarding curriculum needs.

Objective 2: Consider where suggestions can be incorporated into current curriculum.

Objective 3: Expose students to opportunities for professional development beyond the required curriculum.

Objective 4: Provide students with the knowledge and experience of global trends and practice in urban planning.

Measures: Survey instrument, survey responses, notes from strategic retreat; matrix showing suggested content against existing courses, updated syllabi and course descriptions; and list of gap content and matrix showing potential external sources, conversations with external sources.

Goal #3: Ensure BSURP curriculum completion within a reasonable time-frame.

Objective 1: Monitor graduation rates and identify critical factors that achieve satisfactory graduation rates.

Objective 2: Ensure timely completion by scheduling curriculum, prerequisites, and course load appropriately.

Measures: Program of BSURP degree completion, time to graduation under normal circumstances, GPA of graduating students.

Goal #4: Enhance and systematize addressing community problems by partnering knowledge and practice, facilitating mutual learning of university and community.

Objective 1: Develop a formalized mentoring program, in both traditional public and non-profit or private sector, and for both domestic and international students.

Objective 2: Improve service learning by ensuring that students are mastering it before reaching Practicum offering a variety of mechanisms to practice it (e.g., internships, guided studies where students are teamed with a community to read a master plan, identify a problem, and then bring solutions to the community).

Objective 3: Link URPSA with identification of internship/ job shadowing opportunities.

Objective 4: Host a research forum, such as with the MSU Institute of Public Policy and Social Research.

Measures: Participation within the program and in the community, evidence (narrative) of enhanced systematization.

Goal #5: Foster a sense of community among MSU URP students, alumni and faculty.

Objective 1: Foster an inclusive and active URPSA student organization.

Objective 2: Increase communication among students in the MSU URP community.

Objective 3: Develop a comprehensive communications plan for alumni.

Objective 4: Use relationships built with alumni to foster the creation of professional development opportunities.

Measures: Increased participation on social media sites; institutionalized student orientation; curriculum guide; increased student and alumni awareness of programmatic information; increased support from School, Dean, President; UP advisory group meets each semester; SPDC board has alumni representatives; communications plan and products; and updated website.

Masters of Urban and Regional Planning Program Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Prepare students to be professional planners through an advanced curriculum emphasizing core planning knowledge and leadership that contributes to advancing theory and practice.

Objective 1: Consult PAB list of required core knowledge, skills and values.

Objective 2: Conduct gap analysis between existing core list and PAB list.

Objective 3: Develop pre-/post-test (801/894) to assess student learning.

Measures: Take excerpt of AICP exam and test knowledge, skills and values; conduct focus groups to talk about what is planning to get individual assessments; interview/oral exam to measure verbal skills, critical thinking skills, etc.; jury reports on practicum; GPA of graduating students; and a technically written essay.

Goal #2: Enhance the curriculum in advanced technical and practical skills applicable to the planning job market, with an emphasis on research, analysis, and critical thinking skills.

Objective 1: Assess standards and input received regarding curriculum needs.

Objective 2: Consider where suggestions can be incorporated into current curriculum.

Measures: Survey instrument, survey responses, notes from strategic retreat; matrix showing suggested content against existing courses, updated syllabi and course descriptions; and list of gap content and matrix showing potential external sources, conversations with external sources.

Goal #3: Attract and retain a large and diverse MURP student population that meets PAB criteria in terms of size and diversity.

Objective 1: Achieve a reasonable program size and diversity.

Objective 2: Improve student recruitment program.

Measures: Program size, graduate student race demographic information, percent minority students, percent foreign students.

Goal #4: Promote MURP faculty-student partnered research to advance planning for more equitable & sustainable communities.

Objective 1: Assess faculty productivity.

Objective 2: Consider mechanisms to increase productivity.

Objective 3: Define specific research themes that leverage assets (e.g., focus on positioning Michigan globally, involve more outreach faculty on grants, look for cross-unit and cross-university collaboration on research and grants).

Objective 4: Encourage student-partnered research through employment and assistantships. Source and secure funding for student assistantships

Measures: Productivity (grants, papers), productivity boosting plan, clearly communicated research themes that are publicly available, collaborations.

Goal #5: Foster a sense of community among MSU URP students, alumni and faculty.

Objective 1: Foster an inclusive and active URPSA student organization.

Objective 2: Target communication and professional opportunities around focus areas

Objective 3: Develop a comprehensive communications plan for alumni.

Measures: Increased participation on social media sites; institutionalized student orientation; curriculum guide; increased student and alumni awareness of programmatic information; increased support from School, Dean, President; UP advisory group meets each semester; SPDC board has alumni representatives; communications plan and products; and updated website.

**URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM (URP) –
LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION AY 2015-2016**

Based on Mary J. Allen's (2004) book "Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education," faculty developed in three planning sessions (January 9, 2014; April 15, 2014 and April 21, 2015) a comprehensive program assessment plan including specific learning outcomes that is learner-centered and can track individual students across the program.

The program measures student learning and achievement through direct (tests, capstone projects, rubrics, employer ratings, scores and pass rates on licensure exams) and indirect (course grades, surveys, student self-ratings, alumni satisfaction with learning) assessment methods.

Our definition of student achievement and key learning outcome:

Upon graduation, students demonstrate mastery in knowledge, skills and values of the planning profession

- **preparing students for an entry level position.**

Consequently, we view assessment of student achievement as crucial to improve learning in and beyond the classroom.

1) **Defining desired learning outcomes**

We followed Bloom's taxonomy to design our learning goals for the undergraduate and graduate curriculum during our strategic planning meeting 2014. Our learning objectives cover knowledge, skills, and values.

- What should students know?
- What should they be able to do?
- What should they value?

GENERAL PLANNING KNOWLEDGE	
Bloom's taxonomy	Undergraduate Learning Goals
<p>Knowledge: identify and recall information</p> <p>Comprehension: understand material organize and select facts and ideas</p> <p>Application: use facts, rules and principles and apply them to new situations</p> <p>Analysis: separate whole into component parts to understand</p> <p>Synthesis: combine ideas to form a new whole, product of solution</p> <p>Evaluation: make judgments, opinions or decision with reference to criteria</p>	<p>Knowledge: Identify general planning knowledge concepts and local planning context of local communities</p> <p>Comprehension: Discuss the purpose and meaning of planning based on history, law, theory and the future of planning</p> <p>Application: Apply general planning concepts to real life scenarios, especially local communities</p> <p>Analysis: Compare and contrast different planning concepts across cultures, countries, and communities</p> <p>Synthesis: Combine theory, law and history in different communities into a consistent perspective on planning</p> <p>Evaluation: Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different planning solutions and create viable planning options, especially for projects assisting local communities</p>
PLANNING SKILLS	
Bloom's taxonomy	Undergraduate Learning Goals
<p>Knowledge: identify and recall information</p> <p>Comprehension: understand material organize and select facts and ideas</p> <p>Application: use facts, rules and principles and apply them to new situations</p> <p>Analysis: separate whole into component parts to understand</p> <p>Synthesis: combine ideas to form a new whole, product of solution</p> <p>Evaluation: make judgments, opinions or decision with reference to criteria</p>	<p>Knowledge: Recall variety of basic planning skills</p> <p>Comprehension: Distinguish between various planning skills and summarize their differences and importance</p> <p>Application: Apply planning skills learned through the curriculum to empirical situations where needed or appropriate, especially in different local communities</p> <p>Analysis: Inventory specific technical skills to understand the content and purpose for what they address</p> <p>Synthesis: Formulate effective planning outcomes suitable for local communities based on analysis and accepted techniques</p> <p>Evaluation: Assess the utility of solutions based on planning objectives supported by empirical data</p>
VALUES AND ETHICS	
Bloom's taxonomy	Undergraduate Learning Goals
<p>Knowledge: identify and recall information</p> <p>Comprehension: understand material organize and select facts and ideas</p> <p>Application: use facts, rules and principles and apply them to new situations</p> <p>Analysis: separate whole into component parts to understand</p> <p>Synthesis: combine ideas to form a new whole, product of solution</p> <p>Evaluation: make judgments, opinions or decision with reference</p>	<p>Knowledge: Identify and describe key planning values and recognize ethical practices and responsibilities in the context of local communities</p> <p>Comprehension: Give examples of ethical dilemmas and discuss possible solutions. Explain key planning values and distinguish when they would come into play.</p> <p>Application: Illustrate and interpret an ethical planning scenario.</p> <p>Analysis: Compare and differentiate how values affect the planning process and outcomes.</p> <p>Synthesis: Compile and compose planning methods and approaches in a value-laden framework.</p> <p>Evaluation: Summarize concepts of sustainability including social equity, environmental values, and growth and</p>

to criteria	development.	
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2) Assessment tool

As a program, we intend to move from norm-referenced assessment (a test in which a student's performance is compared to that of a norm to assign a grade) to criterion-referenced assessment (a test in which the results determine a student's progress toward mastery of a content area or skill. Performance is expected level of mastery). This will have the advantage of measuring student achievement relative to the learning goals we had set, while it promotes collaborative learning vs. competitive learning. We will use rubrics as our base scoring tool that lay out the expectations for the program, so that we are able to trace a student's progress towards such expectations over time. For program assessment we will use holistic scoring (whereby we assign a single score based on an overall performance that takes into account several criteria and how these criteria work together). To note here is that rubrics in particular encourage critical thinking by our students, they level the playing field, they facilitate communication, they provide timely feedback, and help refine our teaching method immediately and permanently.

Student:		Unacceptable	Acceptable	Good	Exemplary
General Planning Knowledge	Purpose and Meaning of Planning	Inability to recognize and clearly explain the overall purpose and meaning of planning.	Can identify and explain the overall purpose and meaning of planning.	Demonstrates an ability to compare and contrast different approaches on the overall purpose and meaning of planning.	Demonstrates a professional understanding and presentation of the overall purpose and meaning of planning.
	Planning Theory	Unable to recognize the value and role of planning theory.	Demonstrates an awareness of the role of planning theory.	Demonstrates an effective understanding of the role of planning theory.	Employs a highly developed awareness of the value and application of planning theory.
	Planning Law	Unfamiliar with the basic legal framework for planning.	Show an awareness of the fundamental legal framework involved in urban planning.	Assess the various legal foundations used in planning practice.	Evaluate and apply appropriate legal techniques to solve complex planning problems.
	Human Settlements and History	Lacks awareness of the history and context of human settlements and planning.	Familiarity with the history of human settlements and its role in planning.	Effectively uses planning history to inform current practice.	Critically examines urban history and applies the knowledge to contemporary planning issues.
	The Future	Unable to link planning practice with future conditions.	Can recognize trends that may impact the future of planning.	Able to analyze and describe trends affecting the planning process.	Able to anticipate trends based on empirical research and apply these to future plans.
	Global Dimensions of Planning	Fails to recognize the value of alternate approaches to planning.	Identify global approaches to planning.	Value and apply global solutions to planning issues.	Discriminate among alternative global approaches to planning and translate appropriate techniques for local use.

Planning Skills	Research	unable to recognize a research question.	able to outline a research problem.	able to define a research problem, phrase an appropriate research question, and suggest various approaches to solve it.	able to identify a complex research question, appropriately choose a research method, and conduct a research project comparing and contrasting alternate methods to solve problems.
	Written, Oral and Graphic Communication	inability to communicate basic concepts.	uses basic communication skills.	demonstrates effective communication skills.	organizes creative, efficient, and imaginative methods of communication.
	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	inability to understand basic techniques.	explain differences between basic techniques.	discriminate between effectiveness of basic techniques.	uses several methods effectively to solve a problem knowing their advantages and limitations.
	Plan Creation and Implementation	unable to understand purpose of planning activity.	outline basic components of the plan and tools.	construct effective plans and implementation methods.	able to critically evaluate and justify a synthesized implementation strategy.
	Planning Process Methods	unable to name components of the planning process.	generalize components of the planning process.	illustrate the effectiveness of methods to advance the planning process.	deconstruct and reconstruct process and methods to find most appropriate technique for efficient planning process.
	Leadership	inability to recognize effective leadership.	give examples of effective leadership.	distinguish relevant characteristics of leadership skills in specific situations.	demonstrate leadership in various situations.

Values and Ethics	Professional Ethics	No recognition of ethical issues or values.	Able to identify and define professional values and ethics.	Able to differentiate and discriminate professional ethics.	Able to synthesize and efficiently apply professional ethics in various ethical dilemmas
	Governance and Participation	Unable to recognize or appreciate multiple levels of governance, and levels of participation.	Recognize different levels of governance and methods for participation.	Understand and distinguish various levels of governance and methods of participation.	Evaluate and select appropriate levels of governance and methods of participation.
	Sustainability and Environmental Quality	Unable to identify different dimensions of sustainability.	Define sustainability including social, environmental and economic values.	Understand the relationship between 3 E's and recognize trade-offs needed in planning practice.	To evaluate, decide, and justify planning approaches and practices to address sustainability.
	Growth and Development	Unable to identify the role of planning in growth and development.	Give examples of types of growth and development constructs.	Differentiate and compare types of growth and development.	Evaluate types of development and growth and justify their use and their potential benefits and consequences.
	Social Justice	No recognition of the role and importance of social issues and social justice in planning practice.	Give examples and describe issues of social equity and justice.	Able to analyze and explain issues of social equity and justice.	Evaluate, decide, and comprehend consequences of planning actions on social equity and justice.

BSURP DATA COLLECTED

Over the past year, we implemented two high-value measures for student achievement. The first measure is an objective evaluation by faculty members through the rubric systems, assessing the Program's Culminating Experience (MEASURE I). The second measure is feedback from our capstone clients (MEASURE II). Both are qualified and independent sources that provide specific information about our *program learning outcomes*.

MEASURE I

Accordingly, we have implemented an evaluation tool that helps us track our students' progress over time. This evaluation tool has four levels, with LEVEL I being a beginner in learning about the planning profession and LEVEL IV mastering knowledge, skills and values of the planning profession. As public information, we report the percentage of students at each level upon graduation. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve 100% of graduating students are at LEVEL 4.

Table 1: Undergraduate progress to mastery level upon graduation (2015)

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
Knowledge	0%	0%	25%	75%
Skills	0%	5%	8%	87%
Values	0%	0%	11%	89%

MEASURE II

Planning practicum is the cap stone project in our curriculum and the final milestone in our student's development. As our students apply their knowledge, skills and values to real world examples, they are evaluated by external stakeholders through a brief survey. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve all ratings at the top level. Because our capstone projects are made up of teams from the undergraduate and graduate level to foster interaction between both of our programs, the results are reported jointly.

Table 3: Evaluation of mastery of the planning profession through cap stone client

	Weak	Acceptable	Semi professional	Professional
Quality of research	0%	12%	52%	36%
Visual presentation	0%	14%	40%	46%
Public speaking and professionalism	0%	20%	40%	40%

3) Using

We use this information to continuously improve our program. Consequently, we align our curriculum to any changes made to our learning objectives or goals.

MURP DATA COLLECTED

Over the past year, we implement two high-value measures for student achievement. The first measure is an objective evaluation by faculty members through the rubric systems, assessing the Program's Culminating Experience (MEASURE I). The second measure is feedback from our capstone clients (MEASURE II). Both are qualified and independent sources that provide specific information about our *program learning outcomes*.

MEASURE I

Accordingly, we have implemented an evaluation tool that helps us track our students' progress over time. This evaluation tool has four levels, with LEVEL I being a beginner in learning about the planning profession and LEVEL IV mastering knowledge, skills and values of the planning profession. As public information, we report the percentage of students at each level upon graduation. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve 100% of graduating students are at LEVEL 4.

Table 1: Graduate progress to mastery level upon graduation (2015)

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
Knowledge	0%	0%	20%	80%
Skills	0%	0%	5%	95%
Values	0%	8%	10%	82%

MEASURE II

Planning practicum is the cap stone project in our curriculum and the final milestone in our student's development. As our students apply their knowledge, skills and values to real world examples, they are evaluated by external stakeholders through a brief survey. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve all ratings at the top level. Because our capstone projects are made up of teams from the undergraduate and graduate level to foster interaction between both of our programs, the results are reported jointly.

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	Weak	Acceptable	Semi professional	Professional
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Visual presentation	0%	14%	40%	46%
Public speaking and professionalism	0%	10%	45%	45%

4) Using

We use this information to continuously improve our program. Consequently, we align our curriculum to any changes made to our learning objectives or goals.

Program Information

Tuition and Fees

Values below reflect costs for a full-time student for one academic year.

Tuition and Fees 2015-16	Undergraduate	Graduate
In-State	\$ 13,600	\$ 16,800
Out-of-State	\$ 36,400	\$ 31,700
International	\$ 37,900	\$ 31,700

Graduation and Retention Rates

The retention rate from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015 for the BSURP program is 87%. 86% of the BSURP students graduated within 6 years (Fall 2009 cohort graduated in 2015).

In 2014 and 2015 the MURP program has 100% retention rate. 100% of the students graduate within 4 years of starting their program (Fall 2011-2015).

Degrees Conferred

2014 Bachelors Degrees Conferred: 24

2015 Bachelors Degrees Conferred: 14

2014 Masters Degrees Conferred: 5

2015 Masters Degrees Conferred: 8

AICP Exam Pass Rate

Since 2004 we have had 54 students take the AICP exam and have a pass rate of 75.5%. 67.5% of them took the exam within 5 years of graduation. Our scores reflect the National average.

AICP Reporting Years	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bachelor's Program Graduates Who Take the Exam within Five Years of Graduation								
Number Taking the Exam	13	10	10	8	9	7	0	1
Pass Rate	78%	79%	82%	77%	79%	79%	n/a	100%
Master's Program Graduates Who Take the Exam within Three Years of Graduation								
Number Taking the Exam	4	3	6	2	3	1	2	0
Pass Rate	50%	100%	66%	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a

Placement and Employment

In 2014, 81% of students were employed at the time of graduation. 62% of students were in planning positions and 19% of students were in planning related positions. 14% of students planned to continue their education.

In 2013, 83% of Master graduates are placed in professional planning jobs within the first year after graduation. In 2014, 90% of Master graduates are placed in professional planning jobs within the first year after graduation.

Contact Information

For additional information about the Urban & Regional Planning Program please visit our website at www.spdc.msu.edu or contact Program Leader Professor Mark Wilson (wilsonmm@msu.edu). The Program may also be reached by telephone at (517) 432-0704.