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.
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.