

**MASTER OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING (MCRP)
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON**

STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted March 29, 2024

MCRP Mission

The mission of the MCRP program is to equip students with knowledge about planning functions and policies to become active professional planners and community leaders for the real world.

This mission statement is built on several core values of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at UTA, as well as the wide range of issues and complexity in the planning field under the current social and political environments and the fundamental purpose of planning education as provided by the participants in the planning retreat. QEP emphasizes student leadership, teamwork, research, community engagement, and career preparedness. Planners need knowledge and skills highlighted in QEP to engage with communities, assess policy effects, and propose actions for community development in the real world. All of these constitute the building blocks of our mission statement.

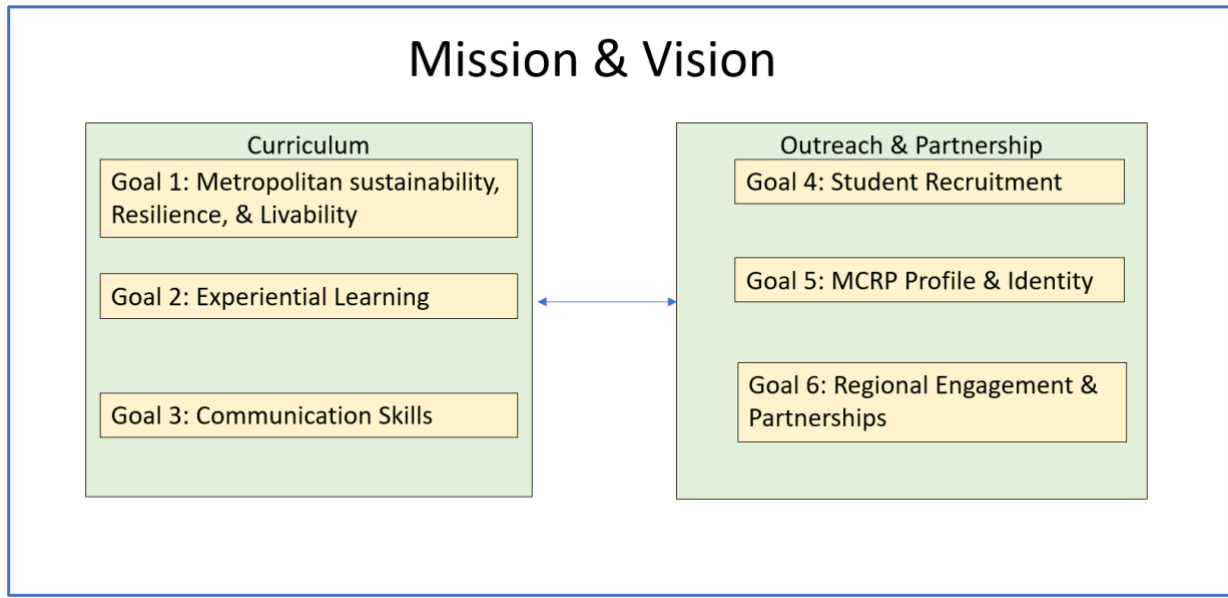
MCRP Vision

The vision of the MCRP program is a world in which UTA planning students, faculty, and alumni are characterized with curiosity, inspiration, adaptability, and versatility and can successfully engage and collaborate with all stakeholders to create, lead, and support resilient and sustainable communities.

The mission and vision statements incorporate the aspirations and priorities of the MCRP program and its key stakeholders. They reflect the important traits required for planning in the contemporary environment. Together, they serve as the principles guiding the modification and development of the MCRP program's goals, objectives, and action plans.

MCRP Goals

Six goals are identified to advance MCRP's mission and vision through curriculum design/education and partnership with communities. Their relationships are illustrated in the figure below. The goals are described thereafter.



Goal 1: The MCRP program shall prepare students to address the challenges and opportunities of planning for communities, maintain metropolitan sustainability and resilience, and improve quality of life and livability.

The program places much emphasis on metropolitan sustainability, resilience, and livability. The Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metroplex is one of the largest and fastest-growing metropolitan regions in the nation. The region encompasses more than 200 cities and 12 counties with a broad range of local views about urban growth, challenges, and strategies for development. The complexity of the region provides a rich laboratory for planning education. Being the only accredited graduate planning program in the region, the MCRP program has a unique advantage for preparing future planners to lead the urban growth without undermining sustainability, resiliency, and livability.

Goal 2: The MCRP program shall prioritize experiential learning in preparing professional planners.

By leveraging the region as a well-rounded planning laboratory, the MCRP program embraces the spirit of experiential learning embodied in studios, theory, internships, and service learning. Balancing the traditional courses and hands-on experiential learning equips students for thriving careers as professional planners. Integrating experiential learning with traditional courses enables students to better serve the DFW metroplex and maintain and improve the sustainability, resiliency, and livability of the region.

Goal 3: The MCRP program shall enhance oral, written, graphic, and multimedia communication skills.

Communication skills are important for public engagement in planning. Inconsistent with the previous inputs from stakeholders and the 2017 site visit team, the 2024 strategic planning retreat participants reinforced the importance of oral, writing, graphic, and multimedia communication skills for planners. Most students and alumni in the 2024 Surveys rank oral and written communication competencies as two of the top three important skills besides critical thinking. The writing and visual/graphic communication competencies were also ranked

as the first and third most important skills based on the project studio exit survey in spring 2023.

Goal 4: The MCRP program will raise its profile and identity with a focus on and promotion of faculty scholarship and research.

This goal was emerged from the 2017 strategic planning retreat and further underlined by participants in the 2024 retreat. Stakeholders in both retreats were urged to publicize faculty research and student and alumni accomplishments and leverage the vast alumni network and reputation historically linked with the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS). As pointed out by the participants in the 2024 retreat, raising the MCRP’s profile and identity will have multiple ripping effects including, but not limited to, expanding the visibility of MCRP in the DFW region and beyond, cultivating the relationship between local communities and MCRP, attracting potential students, and help realize the MCRP’s mission and vision. This goal is also in line with the themes of people, student success, research, and innovation as outlined in the UTA 2030 Strategic Plan.

Goal 5: The MCRP program shall improve student recruitment, retention, and graduation.

Recognizing the national trend of decline in demand for planning master studies and the increasing competition within the state and campus, the MCRP program will retain this goal and ramp up recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts. It’s believed that this goal is an important element toward MCRP’s mission and vision, as the size of the program speaks its volume and effect. This goal would be achieved with the support of goals #4 above and #6 below.

Goal 6: The MCRP program will focus on regional engagement and partnerships.

This goal is to attain the MCRP’s mission and vision. This goal is intertwined with goals 4 and 5. It is a necessity to complement goal #4 as community engagement and partnerships are effective ways to raise the MCRP’s profile and identity, as well as attract new students and prepare them to become future leaders of planning by taking advantage of DFW as the rich laboratory in education. This goal is also in accordance with the UTA’s 2030 Strategic Plan, which affirms its firm commitment to community engagement.

MCRP Objectives and Action Plans

Goal 1: The MCRP program shall prepare students to address the challenges and opportunities of planning for communities, maintain metropolitan sustainability and resilience, and improve quality of life and livability.

Objective:	Performance Indicator/Measurement Tool:	Action Plan:
1.1. Increase & maintain the # of core and elective courses with SLOs emphasizing community or metropolitan sustainability & resilience	1.1.1. # of courses with sustainability and environmental quality student learning outcomes	1.1.1.1 Instructors of selected core and elective courses add one or more sustainability & resilience and/or environmental quality SLOs to their course syllabi

1.2. Use the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, the 4th largest region in the country as a community sustainability laboratory

1.2.1 #, of course, projects, assignments, and professional reports or thesis addressing aspects of the community or regional sustainability and/or resilience and environmental quality. i.e., walkability, transit equity, green infrastructure, etc., in the DFW area

1.2.1.1. Instructors of selected courses produce sustainability/resilience projects and coordinate public display through various media or present/submit for competition in local communities or professional conferences

1.3. Strengthen partnerships with faculty in other units to develop courses/certificate programs for preparing students to address real-world challenges

1.3.1. Number of courses/certificate programs via partnership with non-planning units on campus and beyond

1.3.1.1. Develop & maintain courses or certificate programs through partnership with non-planning units in CAPPA & UTA

Goal 2: The MCRP program shall prioritize experiential learning in preparing professional planners

Objective	Performance Indicator/Measurement Tool	Action Plan
2.1. Cultivate an orientation towards experiential and service learning within the curriculum	2.1.1 Number of Experiential Learning Delivery Modes Studios and/or service-learning projects/courses	2.1.1.1 Leverage UTA's Service-Learning resources to raise faculty's knowledge in experiential pedagogy.
2.2. Provide students the opportunity to engage with communities in the DFW to tackle complex real-world planning problems	2.2.1. Number of Experiential Learning Projects	2.2.1.1 Increase the # of experiential Learning projects with a community client and produce professional-client deliverables in PLAN5332: Planning Studio and other Service-Learning courses.
2.3. Enhance student practical competencies and readiness to work as professional planners with public, private, & non-profit organizations	2.3.1. Number of internships with public, private, & nonprofit organizations 2.3.2. Supervisor evaluations of student performance in Planner-In-Training Internship and elective PLAN 5361 Internship.	2.3.1.1. Expand MCRP's Planner-in-Training Program partnerships with private and non-profit organizations and other cities beyond the City of Arlington. Enlist MCRP's Advisory Board for assistance. 2.3.2.1. Track and report outcomes on collected supervisor's evaluations. 2.3.2.2. Further promote student benefits of internship for credit at orientation and through advising.
2.4. Strengthen leadership, career preparedness, and community engagement skills through experiencing planning firsthand	2.4.1. Number of alumni- mentor, and student mentee pairs. 2.4.2. Number of reported (in exit	2.4.1.1. Provide one-on-one mentorship to new students, creating opportunities for attending planning events,

via the DFW alumni network.	surveys) mentoring-related activities.	conferences, etc.
	2.4.3. Number of employees at the Planning Career Fair.	2.4.2.1. Include mentoring activities in the MCRP student exit survey. 2.4.3.1. Enlist MCRP's Advisory Board for assistance with planning employers of planners at UTA's Annual Career Fair.
2.5. Hone student leadership skills, professional ethics, and professional networking	2.5.1. Number of professional leaders in planning invited as guest speakers in PLAN 5363 Leadership and Communication in Planning. 2.5.2. Number of courses with SLOs addressing planning ethics.	2.5.1.1. Instructor of PLAN 5363 Leadership and Communication in Planning invites leaders in planning organizations to talk about leadership & professional networking in practice. 2.5.1.2. MCRP program director works with SPA to host a leadership speaker series. 2.5.2.1. Include the AICP code of ethics as an SLO in PLAN 5303 Planning History and Theory, PLAN 5308 Metropolitan Sustainability, and PLAN 5363 Leadership and Communication in Planning.
2.6. Increase students' knowledge of global dimensions of planning.	2.6.1 Number of courses with SLOs addressing global dimensions of planning	2.6.1.1. Increase the # of courses with an SLO addressing the global dimensions of planning. 2.6.1.2 Increase the # of courses with a focus on global planning in the CAPPA Study Abroad Programs

Goal 3: The MCRP program shall enhance oral, written, graphic, and multimedia communication skills

Objective	Performance Indicator/Measurement Tool	Action Plan
3.1. Improve students' overall quality of written and oral communication skills.	3.1.1. Percent of student oral presentations at pass or better level assessed via the MCRP Defense Rubric in PLAN5332, PLAN5397, PLAN5698. 3.1.2. Percent of student writing performance at the pass or better level assessed via the MCRP Defense Rubric in PLAN 5332, PLAN 5397, and PLAN5698.	3.1.1.1. Monitor oral communication performance according to the MCRP program's UEP outcome assessment process. 3.1.2.1. Monitor writing communication performance according to the MCRP program's UEP outcome assessment process.

3.2. Build student graphic communication skills	3.2.1. Percent of research posters and graphics communication performance at the pass or better level assessed via the Defense Rubric in PLAN5332, PLAN5397, PLAN5698	3.2.1.1. Monitor Graphics Communication & Professional Quality performance according to the MCRP program's UEP outcome assessment process.
3.3. Build student competency in multimedia, including social media communications.	3.3.1. Number of graphics or multimedia applications demonstrated & assessed in PLAN5332, PLAN5333	3.3.1.1. PLAN5332 and PLAN5333 include an SLO that addresses social media applications.
3.4. Strengthen student ability to apply analytical techniques to projects.	3.4.1. Percent of student analytical/evidence and technical quality performance at the pass or better level assessed via the Defense Rubric in PLAN5332, PLAN5397, PLAN5698	3.4.1.1. Monitor Analysis/Evidence & Technical Quality performance according to the MCRP program's UEP outcome assessment process

Goal 4: The MCRP program will raise its profile and identity with a focus on and promotion of faculty scholarship and research.

Objective	Performance Indicator/Measurement Tool	Action Plan
4.1. Raise MCRP's profile & Identity.	<p>4.1.1. Number of conference/event activities organized jointly with CAPPA, the IUS, CTEDD, or independently.</p> <p>4.1.2. Number of CAPPA-sponsored alumni events at ACSP, National or Texas APA conferences</p>	<p>4.1.1.1. Feature a planner or planning academic of national/international stature in MCRP-organized/sponsored conferences/events to raise the program's profile and awareness of the program's new home in CAPPA</p> <p>4.1.2.1. Increase funding for alumni events at ACSP, national, or Texas APA conferences</p>
4.2. Increase faculty, student, or faculty/student coauthors hip publications.	<p>4.2.1. Number of faculty or student conference presentations</p> <p>4.2.2. Number of faculty, student, or faculty/student co-authorship publications</p>	<p>4.2.1.1. Increase funding for faculty or students' conference participation.</p> <p>4.2.2.1. Showcase faculty or student research and accomplishment via website, flyers, newsletters, & other social media distribution</p>

Goal 5: The MCRP program shall improve student recruitment, retention, and graduation

Objective	Performance Indicator/Measurement Tool	Action Plan
5.1. Raise awareness of planning	5.1.1. Number of undergraduate	5.1.1.1. Direct promotion: every

as a profession, the MCRP, and PLAN courses among campus undergraduates & advisors.	class visits to promote MCRP	semester promotional visit by the MCRP program director or SPA and volunteer planning students to targeted undergraduate classes.
5.2. Enhance the undergraduate student pipeline by teaching undergrad PLAN courses in the Urban & Public Affairs Minor (UPA) and in the Environmental and Sustainability Studies (ESS) Minor.	5.1.2. Number of undergraduate or graduate credit hours for planning	5.1.2.1. Market planning courses to target students
5.3. Increase awareness of the MCRP program in planning professional market.	5.1.3. Number of undergraduate students & advisors reached for MCRP marketing via email or other social media	5.1.3.1. Advertise the MCRP program to senior undergraduate students' campus-wide
5.4. Increase the program size and retain quality students.	5.2.1. Number of students from CAPP and UTA undergraduate majors enrolling in the MCRP program.	<p>5.2.1.1. Secure teaching assignments for PLAN 1101: Intro to Urban Life; PLAN 3301: The Metroplex; PLAN 4310: Planning the American City; PLAN 4320: Sustainable Communities; PLAN 4305: Foundations of Environmental Protection.</p> <p>5.2.1.2. Promote MCRP by teachers of the undergraduate courses.</p> <p>5.2.1.2. Provide credit hour incentives to undergraduate Minors.</p>
5.5. Increase the size of students with multibackground.	5.3.1 Number of domestic students enrolling in the program	<p>5.3.1.1. Enlist alumni and the MCRP Advisory Board's assistance in advertising for the MCRP program.</p> <p>5.3.1.2. Network with PAB, TX APA regional sections, NCTCOG, and potential employers to increase awareness of MCRP.</p> <p>5.3.1.3. Update MCRP website content and improve navigation for prospective students.</p> <p>5.3.1.4. Increase Social Media Presence. Engage the SPA to produce twitter and LinkedIn content; link SPA website with CAPP/MCRP</p> <p>5.3.1.5. PLAN 5332 contributes exciting and innovative projects & contents for the MCRP's website and social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram).</p>

5.6. Increase collaboration with foreign universities to recruit international students.	5.4.1. Number of new incoming students.	5.4.1.1. Increase funding opportunities for recruiting and retaining quality students
	5.4.2. Number of MCRP GRAs	5.4.2.1. Increase the number of IUS GRAs
5.7. Increase MCRP's students & PLAN credit hours.	5.5.1. Number of full-time and part-time students with multibackground	5.5.1.1. Enlist the MCRP Advisory Board to help identify Planner-In-Training Partners and to recruit students with multibackground.
		5.5.1.2. Recruit students from UTA's Center for Mexican American Studies (CEMAS).
	5.6.1. Number of international students	5.6.1.1. Recruit students from Universities in Mexico.
		5.6.1.2. Recruit international students via formal /informal contacts with foreign countries
	5.7.1. Number of dual degrees or certificate students	5.7.1.1. Engage with other units within CAPPa & UTA to recruit dual degree or certificate students or to develop new programs
	5.7.2. Number of PLAN credit hours	5.7.2.1. Market PLAN classes to other units in CAPPa and UTA

Goal 6: The MCRP program will focus on regional engagement and partnerships

Objective	Performance Indicator/Measurement Tool	Action Plan
6.1. Fully capture support/resources from the MCRP Advisory Board.	6.1.1 # of Formal & informal consultation with the board	6.1.1.1. Leverage the knowledge and resources of the board members regarding planning skills and competency to inform MCRP curriculum decisions.
6.2. Forster a closer relationship with alumni/local communities including cities and other public and private planning organizations.	6.2.1 # of sponsored or cosponsored planning activities	6.1.1.2. Establish regular communication with the board and gain opportunities for MCRP students & faculty to engage in community planning activities timely.
6.3. Fortify the partnership with IUS & Arlington Design Center (ADC). Expand partnerships with other	6.3.1 # of sponsored or co-sponsored planning projects	6.2.1.1 Host/co-sponsor annual speaker or social events with local communities to showcase alumni,

cities & local communities.

students, & faculty accomplishments, and to create opportunities for community engagement.

6.3.2 # of Students/faculty involvements in Sponsored Projects

6.3.1.1. Incorporate relevant subjects in sponsored projects into PLAN5332 & appropriate courses

6.3.2.1. Encourage students/faculty to participate in partnership projects