

URP Strategic Plan 2026

Department of Urban and Regional Planning
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

The mission of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (Department) is to prepare students to be leaders in the planning profession through a multi-disciplinary professional education that builds planning knowledge and skills while fostering critical thinking and a reflective ethical perspective on planning. The Department's programs seek to link theory and practice, model engagement and collaboration, and broaden access to the profession to serve social and environmental equity, justice and inclusion.

The Department provides professional programs in urban and regional planning, focusing on planning practice. The faculty emphasizes teaching, enriched by research activities, professional involvement, and community service.

Important characteristics include:

- We are student-centered. Faculty members provide extensive contact hours in classes, studios, and office hours. All lectures, seminars, laboratories, and activities are taught by faculty. Faculty consistently encourage and support students' active learning, actively mentor students through advising, individualized feedback, career suggestions and faculty network support. Through their active involvement in graduate and undergraduate student planning organizations, department and college committees, and faculty meetings, students play an important role in the governance of the department. Collaborative studios, peer mentoring programs, and interdisciplinary projects foster active learning and leadership. The department values diversity and inclusion, ensuring that all students feel represented and supported. As a result, our students graduate with strong professional readiness, leadership capacity, and commitment to community engagement.
- We employ active learning techniques . This includes community-based projects, client projects, or projects with external partners that are built around the products of professional practice, studio pedagogies, and engagement through dialogue, team projects, and role plays. We actively cultivate partnerships with planning agencies and professional organizations across Los Angeles, leveraging our strong alumni network to build bridges between academic learning and professional practice. Practitioners are regularly invited to contribute through guest lectures, project critiques, and career mentoring, enriching students' understanding of real-world planning challenges at local, regional, national, and global levels.
- We embrace our multidisciplinary setting. Courses draw on a variety of disciplines that provide the knowledge and skills needed for effective planning. We value interdisciplinary engagement within the College of Environmental Design and with other colleges. This plan assumes that URP will continue to be housed in a College of Environmental Design that includes both design and policy concerns. We also actively engage with emerging trends and professional practices from related fields— including geography, public policy, environmental management, and economic development—ensuring that our curriculum remains current, interdisciplinary, and responsive to the evolving needs of the planning profession.
- We are devoted to social equity, justice, and inclusion. We seek to diversify the profession through our student body, critically examine structural elements of inequity in the profession's

past and present, and build anti-racist forms of community planning.

- We recognize the diverse nature of the planning profession and provide a curriculum allowing students to focus on their specific area of interest. For example, the undergraduate program currently offers options in urban design, community development and social justice, infrastructure and transportation, and sustainability, resilience, and environment. The graduate program offers Planning and Public Policy and Leadership and Entrepreneurship Track tracks. We regularly assess changes in the profession and make adjustments.
- We understand that communities have different needs, availability of data, and modes of public participation. We aim to create agile problem-solving planners while also instilling in them planning approaches that amplify community voices and local knowledge. We encourage students to participate in projects, providing them with opportunities to engage in real-world problem-solving while expanding their professional networks and practical experience.
- We have a commitment to a comprehensive notion of sustainability and resilience that considers the interrelations between environmental, economic, and social/political systems. We prepare students to advance sustainability in a way that understands and anticipates social change and we build students' skills so that they can be effective change agents.

The undergraduate and graduate programs seek to provide the knowledge, skills, decision-making abilities, and judgment required to become an effective practicing professional in urban and regional planning and/or to pursue advanced degrees. While strongly supporting students' goal of professional attainment, we seek to balance instrumental elements of planning education with an emphasis on fostering imagination, innovation, and reflection.

The primary learning outcome demonstrated by graduates of the Bachelor of Science and Masters programs in Urban and Regional Planning is effectiveness as urban and regional planning professionals. Effectiveness means the application of planning knowledge and skills to facilitate the development of visions and goals, create and implement plans, and resolve urban and regional problems. We regularly update and define our learning outcomes in the URP Statement of Learning Outcomes. Planning work may take the form of creating physical designs, developing and implementing plans, programs, and policies, and engaging and empowering communities. This work is done with a long-term, comprehensive perspective, that addresses environmental sustainability and social justice.

The secondary learning outcome is that graduates develop critical thinking skills and have a reflective perspective concerning the creation of knowledge, use of planning skills, and professional practice and ethics. The intention is that graduates continually consider their own values and those of their clients and communities in undertaking professional planning and are reflective regarding democratic participation, social justice, structures that underpin planning, and environmental sustainability. These outcomes are assessed in students' ability to reflect and engage with others on key planning issues in capstone professional practice seminars and community studios.

These outcomes are assessed through external review of capstone studios and individual research projects, surveys of alumni and exiting students, and other measures such as student competitions and award programs, including student participation in those sponsored by outside professional organizations.

The graduate program assumes that students have a greater level of maturity, experience, and general knowledge. The graduate program expects that students will bring the contributions of their respective undergraduate majors and professional experiences to discussions and tasks. The program also focuses on

preparing individuals for leadership roles in urban and regional planning. Theoretical issues related to planning are discussed with more rigor and in greater abstraction at the graduate level than the undergraduate level, while still applying these theoretical issues to real-world projects.

The faculty's Vision for Teaching and Learning is as follows:

We have a clear commitment to the fundamental qualities that create an effective educational program in the design, planning, and management of built and natural environments. We are dedicated to and passionate about enhancing individuals so that they are:

- receptive to the world through the sharpening of senses;
- comprehending the world through the exercise of intelligence;
- engaging the world through interaction, collaboration, and communication;
- creatively envisioning other worlds through imagination;
- effective in the world through the practice of skills;
- ethical in their professional practice and sensitive their own lived experience and those of others;
- committed to civic engagement and democratic practice; and
- conscious of planning values such as a future orientation, equity, justice and sustainability.

We realize the value of our individual role and service but also recognize we are part of something larger than our College. We nurture a spirit of support and cooperation and an acknowledgment of the importance of each individual to the future well-being of society.

Department Goals and Objectives

The following tables summarize the goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the Bachelor of Science and Master of Urban and Regional Planning programs (next pages).

GOAL #1: Student-centered graduate and undergraduate programs in urban and regional planning that implement Cal Poly Pomona’s “become by doing” educational philosophy and are centers of excellence for the University and the profession.

Goal #1 Objectives	Policies and Programs
<p>A) Excellence in undergraduate and graduate planning education that prepares students for leadership positions in the private, non-profit, and public sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Achieve continuous curriculum innovation and improvement that links theory and practice, anticipates the future of the planning profession, and encourages a multiplicity of career paths based on an articulated URP Learning Outcomes Statement. Curriculum innovation will include the integration of professional collaborations, community partnerships, and alumni engagement to ensure applied learning and relevance to the planning profession. ii. Conduct regular assessment and feedback on curriculum and program quality, including annual external review of capstone products, surveys of alumni and graduating students, and other feedback. iii. Maintain continuous accreditation for both degree programs. Establish partnerships with Los Angeles and Southern California planning agencies and industry organizations to provide students with project-based and experiential learning opportunities. iv. Assess the success and relevance of existing electives and explore new coursework in emerging areas. Service learning experiences will increasingly focus on issues of sustainability, resilience, and social equity, reflecting regional and global planning challenges. v. Promote significant faculty and student participation in social change and social equity issues via service-learning experiences vi. Facilitate timely graduation rates through ongoing evaluations of bottleneck classes, tracks, and high-quality advising. vii. Develop and offer topical courses such as Planning for Climate Change, Equity Planning, and Sustainable Urban Systems to address contemporary planning issues and train students in applied, context-specific problem-solving.
<p>B) Significant contribution to the quality of planning practice in California and beyond through the work of faculty, students, and alumni</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Achieve positive program ratings by external bodies and external recognition of student and faculty work through APA and other awards programs. Encourage faculty and student participation in APA conferences, regional symposia, and other professional forums to showcase applied research and innovative practices ii. Expand the reach and impact of the annual Dale Prize colloquium in creating a theory/practice dialogue around key planning issues. Apply the approach to other events, such as the Margarita McCoy lecture. Leverage the Dale Prize to foster dialogues between academia, practitioners, and communities around emerging planning issues. iii. Link faculty scholarly activity to pressing California public policy issues iv. Support continued growth of the alumni association and alumni involvement. Create structured alumni mentorship and internship

	<p>programs linking students to professional opportunities across California.</p> <p>v. Diversify the planning profession by attracting underrepresented students from high school, community colleges, and other majors through programs such as the undergraduate minor, attention to articulation programs with community colleges, and consideration of a 4+1 program to encourage undergraduate students to obtain a masters in planning. Collaborate with regional planning agencies to co-develop applied research and community projects that address emerging issues.</p>
<p>C) A faculty that is of a size, caliber, and ethnic and gender diversity that fosters excellence, defined as a tenure and tenure-track faculty size</p>	<p>i. Recruit new diverse tenure-track faculty with an emphasis on the teacher-scholar model combined with community service.</p> <p>ii. Recruit diverse temporary faculty in needed specializations from extensive resources in Southern California. Strengthen recruitment pipelines through partnerships with regional universities, planning agencies, and professional associations in Southern California</p> <p>iii. Create an institutional and collegial atmosphere that is supportive of diversity among current and future faculty, including an active mentoring program for new hires. Implement a structured mentoring and peer support program to enhance faculty development and collaboration across teaching, research, and community engagement.</p> <p>iv. Attract regular participation of diverse outside scholars and practitioners to enrich the department's activities through teaching, leading seminars, giving guest lectures, mentoring, conducting professional workshops, and serving on thesis committees. Expand opportunities for local practitioners, alumni, and public officials to co-teach short modules, workshops, and studios, integrating real-world insights into the curriculum.</p>
<p>D) A student body that is of a size, caliber, and ethnic and gender diversity that fosters excellence</p>	<p>i. Adopt enrollment management activities that align incoming class sizes with available faculty resources. In the undergraduate program, manage enrollment through the second choice majors policy, change of majors, and articulations with junior colleges. In the graduate program, manage class size through admission standards. Monitor eligibility index scores for undergraduate students and minimum GPAs for graduate students to balance student quality and capacity.</p> <p>ii. Create and maintain outreach programs that attract creative, collaborative, and innovative students.</p> <p>iii. Undertake recruiting and retention programs targeting underrepresented groups based on assessment of enrollment patterns.</p> <p>iv. Exploit opportunities to recruit and attract students through their enrollment in URP lower division general education courses and the URP minor.</p>
<p>E) Contribution to the knowledge and practice of planning through innovative professional, creative and research activities.</p>	<p>i. Achieve active participation by faculty in APA, AICP, ACSP, Planners Network and/or other planning or planning-related organizations and develop partnerships with other design-related organizations, such as the AIA, ACSA, ASLA, and AEP.</p> <p>ii. Achieve external funding for department activities through grants and</p>

	<p>contracts.</p> <p>iii. Disseminate faculty research through conference presentations, peer-reviewed journals, books, essays, professional reports, courses and workshops for practitioners, and web publishing.</p> <p>iv. Acquire resources and establish a department fund to allow release time from teaching for significant research projects. Provide leadership in university administrative programs and policies concerning the environment, design, transportation, and community engagement.</p> <p>v. Promote mentoring students' research and projects</p>
F) A high level of multidisciplinary education and research.	<p>i. Undertake at least one multidisciplinary research or community service project annually.</p> <p>ii. Initiate joint courses, studios, and workshops with faculty and students from Architecture, Art, Landscape Architecture, Civil Engineering, Ethnic and Women Studies, Geography, Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies (LCRS), or other departments and to enrich educational experiences and also to attract non-majors to URP</p> <p>iii. Promote the URP minor to target majors, including Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Political Science.</p>

GOAL #2: A supportive environment for teaching and learning, research, service, and University and Department governance, built upon a sense of community among students, faculty and alumni.

Goal #2 Objectives	Policies and Programs
A) A Department culture that places student learning and growth at the center of all activities.	<p>i. Support undergraduate and graduate planning student organizations and include students in Department governance.</p> <p>ii. Provide students with opportunities for frequent contact with faculty advisors for program advice and mentoring to increase student retention. Take advantage of ENV advising staff in student success, internships and professional development.</p> <p>iii. Encourage alumni participation in student activities and financial support, e.g., Dale Prize and other student scholarships; speaker series, colloquiums, and panels; APA Student Travel Grants; Student/Alumni Mentoring Program.</p> <p>iv. Offer workshops and provide individual advising to students to promote graduate education and career development.</p> <p>v. Promote students' research through faculty participation as advisors to students in programs such as Research Scholarship and Creative Activity program, conference papers and posters, McNair Scholars, Achieve Scholars Program, and so on.</p>

B) Regular activities that support faculty development, collaboration and a sense of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Encourage attendance of Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ) workshops to support the development of faculty teaching skills. ii. Provide regular opportunities for faculty, student and faculty/student interaction outside of class and administrative meetings, such as seminars and social events. iii. Foster faculty satisfaction and retention through a culture of mutual support and commitment to shared governance in Department affairs.
C) Instructional technology, space, and facilities that support innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Work with the College to provide access to adequate space for research, classrooms, studios, seminars, meetings, and on-line teaching studios. ii. Adopt and implement new technologies and applications as they are developed and become available. iii. Pursue new models for furnishing studios to allow flexible arrangements for teaching and student work. iv. Acquire and/or develop space suitable for seminar activities.
D) Engagement and leadership in University governance, education, and service initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bring planning values and ethics to governance in college and university committees, including the Academic Senate and other committees ii. Offer general education classes that enhance understanding of cities and regions and the role of planning in society and participate in the CSU Ethnic Studies General Education curriculum. iii. Participate in college/university committees promoting faculty scholarship and creative activity.

GOAL #3: *A proactive approach toward community change at the local, regional, national, and international level, and commitment to a high level of responsiveness and service to communities.*

Goal #3 Objectives	Policies and Programs
A) Community engagement (service learning) activities that are integrated in lecture, studio, and other courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Conduct multiple community-based projects annually. ii. Recruit and include part-time faculty who have experience and knowledge that can help engage specific communities. Use regularly community activists and other community members as guest lecturers, part-time faculty, presentation jurors, etc. iii. Encourage faculty involvement in community service on a pro bono basis to develop community/university relationships and service-learning courses through the University's Center for Community Engagement. iv. Encourage faculty to develop international research/teaching topics by building collaboration with universities in other countries. v. Promote students to participate in the study abroad program.

<p>B) A proactive Department role in serving the community and the profession regarding communities and planning and being recognized and trusted by community groups as a reliable partner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Cultivate relationships with local, regional, state, national, and global communities and community organizations. ii. Support community change by addressing problems, building social capital, and supporting community groups. iii. Encourage faculty and student service on commissions, non-profit boards, community organizations, and planning organizations, as well as grassroots organizing efforts. iv. Providing continuing education/professional courses/workshops . Collaborate with the APA and other organizations on training needs. v. Support and reward the scholarship of community engagement in the Rappointment, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) process. vi. Disseminate knowledge about department community service activities using venues such as social media, the department's webpage, seminars and research exchanges.
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