

## **Master of Urban Planning Strategic Plan - 2025**



## I. Introduction

This plan outlines the foundational principles that guide the Masters of Urban Planning Program at San José State University (SJSU), including our vision, values, mission, and objectives. The original strategic plan was developed in 2016-17 through a reflective and inclusive process that gathered input from students, alumni, local professionals, and other community supporters at multiple stages. The current plan, updated in 2024-25, builds on that foundation while incorporating necessary updates to align with revised Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) guidelines and other relevant factors.

To prepare this updated plan, the Master of Urban Planning (MUP) core faculty met five times during the Fall

2024 semester to carefully review and revise its content. Following these revisions, the plan was circulated to students, alumni, and key stakeholders for additional comment and review, ensuring it reflects a broad range of perspectives and priorities.

The plan begins by reviewing key guidelines that shape our work, including those from the Planning Accreditation Board, SJSU, and SJSU's College of Social Sciences. Section III presents the core content: our vision, values, mission, and objectives. Section IV details the plan implementation process, with specific performance indicators used to track progress. Finally, the appendices include supporting materials that explain the strategic planning process used to update this plan.



## II. Context Shaping the SJSU-MUP Strategic Plan

The faculty prepared their plan to support the mission of three entities that guide our work: the Planning Accreditation Board, San José State University, and the SJSU College of Social Sciences.

### Planning Accreditation Board Guidelines

The mission of the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), which accredits university programs in North America leading to bachelor's and master's degrees in planning, is to "ensure high quality education for future urban planners." PAB requires that MUP graduates learn the following essential knowledge, skills, and values central to the planning profession.

An accredited degree program must ensure that each graduate demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for competent professional planning in diverse occupational and institutional settings. The criteria below provide a framework for judging the scope and quality of minimum educational outcomes.

#### A. PAB Guiding Values

The Program shall address in its strategic plan its commitment to fundamental ethical and normative principles and ensure that these principles are embedded in a range of required courses, specifically:

1) *Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion:* key

issues of equity, diversity, and social justice, including planners' role in expanding choice and opportunity for all persons; planning for the needs of disadvantaged groups; reducing inequities through critical examination of past and current systems; and promoting racial and economic equity.

2) *Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice:* environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable communities, reducing impacts of climate change, and creating equitable and climate-adapted futures.

3) *Professional Ethics and Responsibility:* key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision-making, research, and client representation (including the provisions of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and APA's Ethical Principles in Planning).

#### B. PAB Required Knowledge and Skills of the Profession:

The Program shall offer a curriculum that teaches students the essential knowledge and skills central to the planning profession. These required components will be taught in such a manner that it is possible to demonstrate that every graduate has studied them. Ordinarily, this means that they are included in courses required of all students, although other approaches are possible. Programs are encouraged to keep their curriculum in tune with emerging trends in the profession and engaged with contemporary issues, specifically:

**1) General Planning Knowledge in Global Context:** The comprehension, representation, and use of ideas and information in the planning field, in the U.S. (or Canada) and internationally including appropriate perspectives from history, social sciences, design, and other allied fields.

*a) Planning History and Theory:* The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has advanced and hindered the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works; past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future; the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis.

*b) Planning Law and Institutions:* Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally.

*c) Urban and Regional Development:* Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development; relationships

between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts; interactions – flows of people, materials, ideas, and cultures –across world regions.

**2) Skills and Tools for Planning Practice:** The use and application of knowledge to perform tasks required in the practice of planning.

*a) Planning Process and Engagement:* Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future.

*b) Analytical Skills and Tools:* Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting; methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization; data analytics and urban technology.

*c) Professional, Communication, and Leadership Skills:* Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication.

## San José State University's Mission, Vision and Values

### **Mission**

Honoring our roots as the first public university in the West, SJSU is an empowering institution enrolling historically underserved students, driving inclusion, and embracing talent from diverse cultures from our region and across the globe. SJSU's spirit of innovation and creativity drives academic excellence, teaching, research, and service in a learning environment where all students belong. Together, we nurture leaders to thrive and transform our community, Silicon Valley, and the world.

### **Vision**

San José State University will be a nationally and globally recognized, student-centered public urban research university cultivating equity-minded social impact, global innovation, and community engagement.

### **Values**

We are champions for student success  
We are visionary and community-minded  
We are inclusive and equity-minded  
We are trustworthy and act with integrity and accountability  
We are collaborative and embrace teamwork

### **Inclusive Excellence Framework**

The Inclusive Excellence Framework serves as a roadmap for fostering an equitable, inclusive, and empowering environment at SJSU. It integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion across all facets of the university, aiming to create meaningful and lasting transformation.

### **Action Plan Framework**

Read the full [Campus Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Action Plan Framework](#), which provides a roadmap for the campus that is specific to diversity, equity and inclusion.

## College of Social Sciences (CoSS) Strategic Plan

In 2023-2024, the College of Social Sciences, faculty, staff, students, and alumni engaged in a strategic planning process to develop a vision, mission, and strategic priorities to guide our work.

### [Examples of Strategic Plan Initiatives](#)

#### **Vision**

The College of Social Sciences supports students and faculty to be change leaders through critical inquiry, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community engagement to build a prosperous, just, and sustainable future.

#### **Strategic Priorities**

- 1) *Be Visible* - We dedicate attention and resources to critical social problems and their solutions by articulating our contribution and spotlighting our programs.
- 2) *Be Interdisciplinary* - We collaborate across diverse disciplines, discourses, and contexts of learning in the social sciences by facilitating inclusive opportunities for collective action and impact and working to instill a sense of community spirit and belonging in our students, staff, and faculty.
- 3) *Be Engaged* - We partner with the community, government, and private sector to realize the impact of our work through strong alumni connections, meaningful community relationships, and government and industry partnerships.



### III. MUP Values, Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

#### Values:

*Inclusivity* - appreciating that creative and effective work comes from considering different perspectives and fostering an inclusive environment.

*Equity* - serving and providing opportunity for all, with a special commitment to those less advantaged.

*Innovation* - exploring, testing, and creating new processes and techniques that create value.

*Integrity* – working with the highest respect for the AICP Code of Ethics, best practices in planning practice, and rigorous scholarship.

*Sustainability* – creating environmentally, socially, and economically resilient communities.

#### Vision:

Be a graduate program of choice for students and faculty who empower and strengthen diverse communities by developing and applying transformative planning practices

#### Mission:

Leveraging our location in Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay megaregion, we prepare diverse planning leaders who effect transformative change and create just, sustainable, and vibrant communities.

#### Goals and Objectives

*Goal 1: Our graduates excel in their work in planning and related fields in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.*

- Objective 1A: Students graduate with a broad-based understanding of planning theory and practice.
- Objective 1B: Students graduate ready to apply interdisciplinary and innovative planning concepts and techniques.
- Objective 1C: Students graduate with excellent written, oral, visual, and collaborative communication skills.

*Goal 2: The MUP curriculum offers students outstanding learning opportunities through community-engaged learning, exposure to diverse viewpoints/perspectives, and excellent resources.*

- Objective 2A: Students engage directly with a diversity of stakeholders through community-based research and learning experiences, with a special focus on Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay region.
- Objective 2B: Students learn from an accomplished and diverse faculty of both academics and practitioners who expose students to multiple perspectives and models of excellence in planning and related fields.

- Objective 2C: The program offers students the opportunity to specialize in one or more planning subfields.
- Objective 2D: Students have access to state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, and resources.
- Objective 2E: Students and faculty maintain strong connections with alumni and the professional community.

*Goal 3: The MUP program recruits and graduates a diverse student population.*

- Objective 3A: The student body reflects the diversity of the Northern California region.
- Objective 3B: The MUP program accommodates the scheduling, advising, and curricular requirements of both full-time and part-time students.
- Objective 3C: A high proportion of admitted MUP students graduate within 5 years.
- Objective 3D: Maintain a critical mass of students to support a robust educational experience (enroll range of 30-40 students/year).

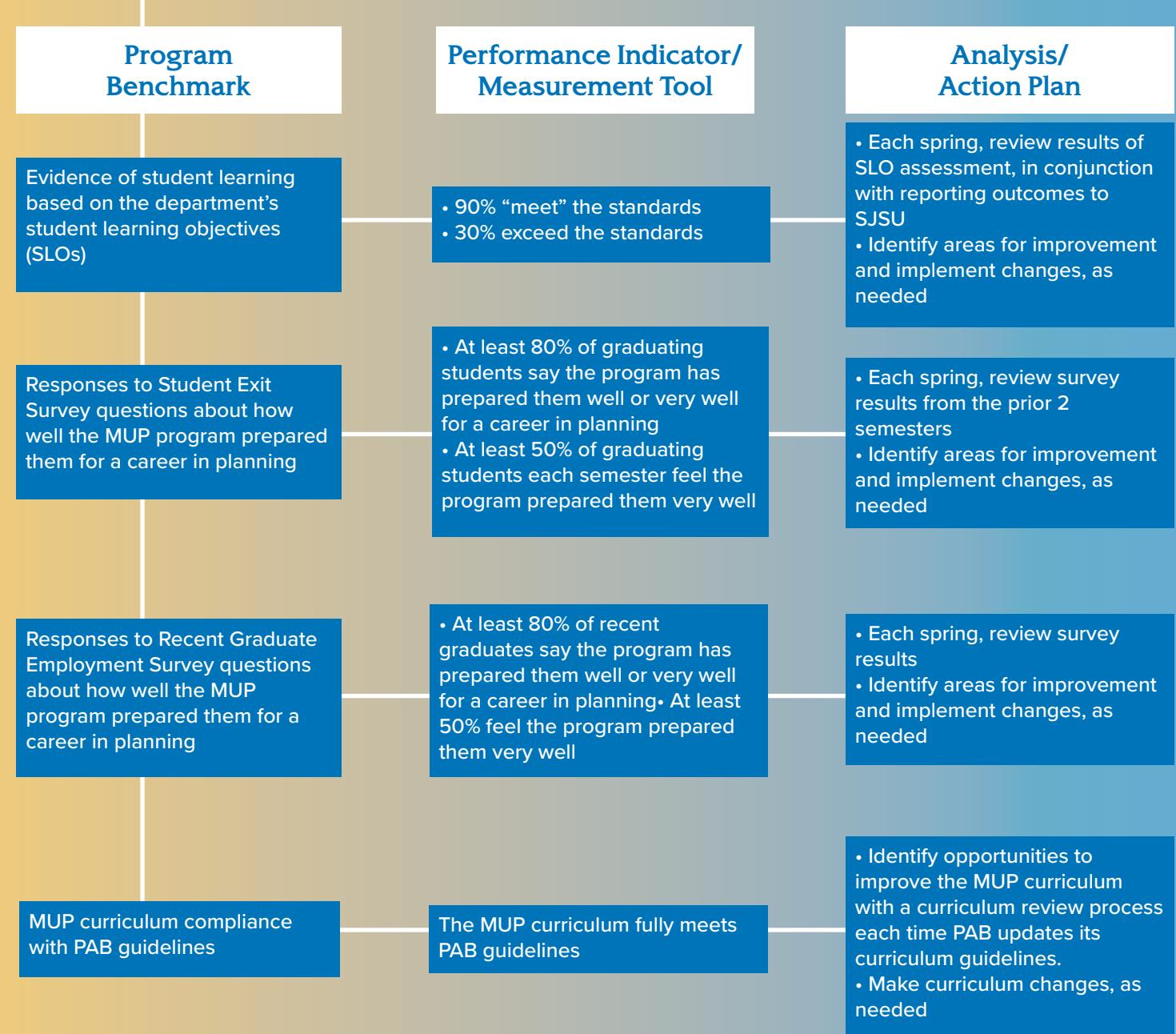
*Goal 4: Department faculty and students advance planning practice and knowledge through professional work, civic engagement, and scholarly research.*

- Objective 4A: Faculty and students work with and for government agencies, communities, nonprofits, and the private sector to shape just, sustainable, and vibrant communities.
- Objective 4B: Faculty and students develop new knowledge and innovative planning practices.
- Objective 4C: Faculty and students earn external recognition for the excellence of their professional and scholarly contributions.



**Goal 1: Our graduates excel in their work in planning and related fields in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.**

**Objective 1A: Students graduate with a broad-based understanding of planning theory and practice.**



## Objective 1B: Students graduate ready to apply interdisciplinary and innovative planning concepts and techniques.

MUP courses are offered in which students learn to apply these concepts, methods, and techniques

Every semester, the MUP program offers at least 4 courses with this type of learning

- Review results of Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA Activity
- Need to set up criteria for how to identify these courses
- Every spring, review course syllabi from that academic year to document relevant courses
- As needed, make curriculum changes

Partnerships between the faculty and partners external to the department who can support student learning in these concepts, methods, and techniques

Every year, have at least 1 such partnership active, and develop at least 3 new partnerships over the next 5 years

- Review results of Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA Activity
- Annually review syllabi to identify relevant courses
- Encourage faculty to develop partners outside the department

Public lectures, symposia, conferences, etc., sponsored by the department, the Institute for Metropolitan Studies (IMS), and/or the Urban Planning Coalition (UPC) that address cutting-edge and innovative planning concepts, methods, and techniques

At least 2 public events a year

- IMS will develop a new lecture series
- Collaborate with the UPC to incorporate these topics into their symposia/conferences

The department alerts students to educational opportunities in the community

At least 25 relevant announcements per year sent out over SJSU\_UrbanPlanConnect listserve

- Every spring, review SJSU\_UrbanPlanConnect postings to document relevant events
- If more postings are needed, ask UPC to help and/or assign one faculty member to find and post items

## Objective 1C: Students graduate with excellent written, oral, visual, and collaborative communication skills.

Results of the department's assessment of SLOs on communication skills (SLO 2a, 2b, 2c)

- 90% "meet" the standard
- 30% "exceed" the standards

- Each spring, review results of SLO assessment, in conjunction with reporting outcomes to SJSU
- As needed, modify the curriculum to help students improve their skills

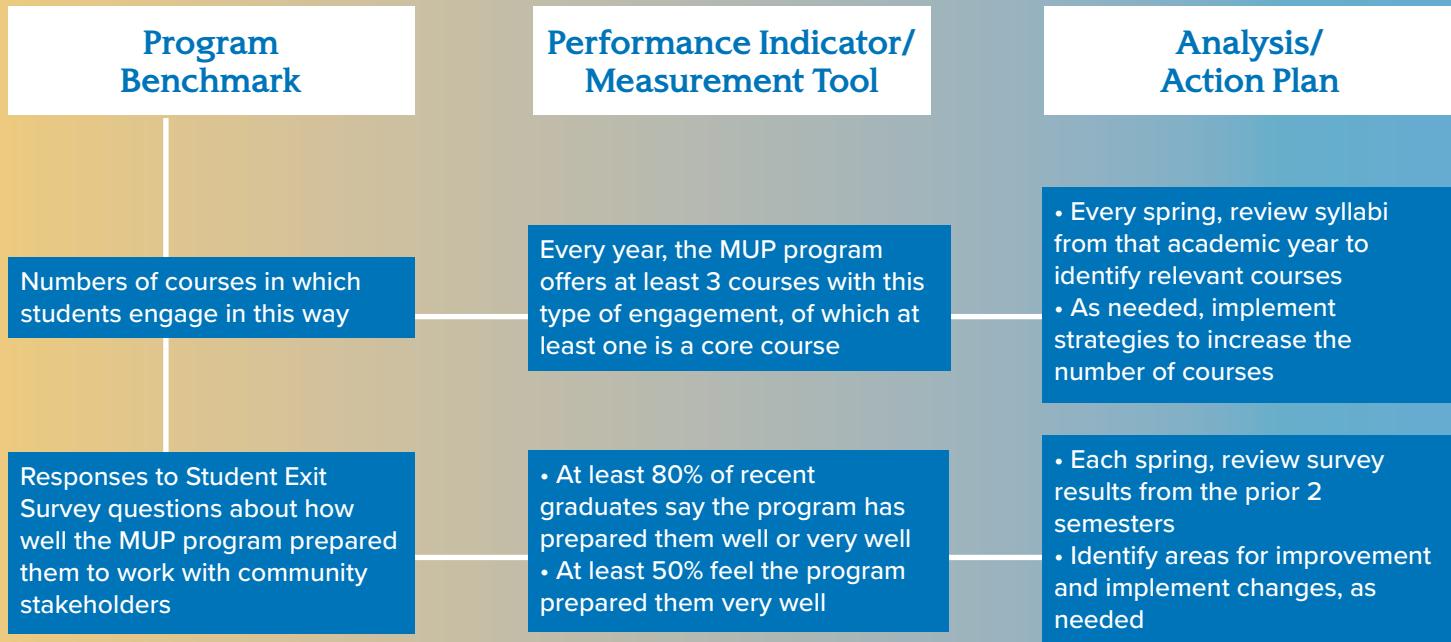
Response to Student Exit Survey questions about communication skills

- At least 80% of recent graduates say the program has prepared them well or very well
- At least 50% feel the program prepared them very well

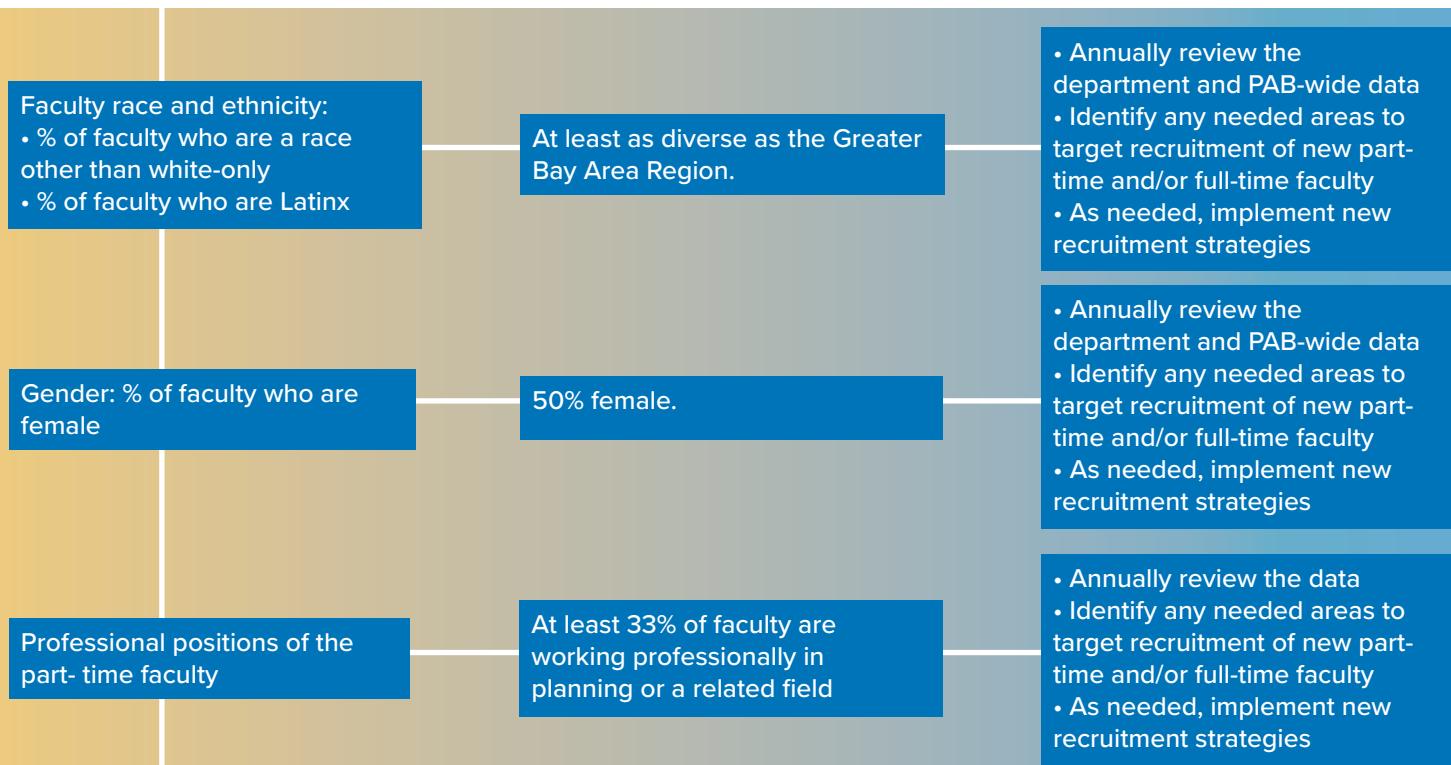
- Every semester collect and analyze data, and identify areas for improvement
- As needed, implement changes
- Update exit survey to add question on collaboration

**Goal 2: The MUP curriculum offers students outstanding learning opportunities through community-engaged learning, exposure to diverse viewpoints/perspectives, and excellent resources.**

**Objective 2A: Students engage directly with a diversity of stakeholders through community-based research and learning experiences, with a special focus on Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay region.**



**Objective 2B: Students learn from an accomplished and diverse faculty of both academics and practitioners who expose students to multiple perspectives and models of excellence in planning and related fields.**



Disciplines in which the faculty hold undergraduate and graduate degrees

Faculty hold prior degrees in a wide range of disciplines

- Annually review the data
- Identify any needed areas to target recruitment of new part-time and/or full-time faculty
- As needed, implement new recruitment strategies

## Objective 2C: The program offers students the opportunity to specialize in one or more planning subfields.

Number and content of “Focus Areas” and Graduate Certificates offered

The department offers at least 4 Focus Areas accompanying Graduate Certificates in planning subfields of current professional interest

- Review the Focus Areas and accompanying Graduate Certificates every 2 to 3 years to (1) identify ways to improve the curriculum content, and (2) consider adding or deleting Focus Areas/Graduate Certificates
- Make curriculum changes, as needed

## Objective 2D: Students have access to state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, and resources.

Students have access to well-functioning computers with up-to-date software, in both the department computer lab and WSQ 218 “lounge”

- Computers are efficiently running the latest version (or one version earlier) of needed software
- Computers are upgraded to dual-booting capacity, so that students can run either the Windows or Mac operating system
- Facilities have been updated to more flexible spaces where students can hook up their own laptops, as desired, to power, keyboards, and large monitors

- Every 2 years, assess the state of computer facilities to identify needs
- As needs and funds permit, upgrade the computers and facilities

Students have access to physical meeting spaces for collaborative work

Meeting spaces on campus are regularly available for students to reserve/use

- Every spring, assess and document available spaces on campus, such as the WSQ 218 lounge and meeting rooms in the SJSU library
- If meeting space becomes unavailable, look for alternative spaces on campus to advertise to students

Students have access to technology tools that facilitate collaborative learning

A wide range of technology tools are available

- Every spring, assess and document relevant tools (e.g., course management systems, conference call services, traditional websites, and social networking spaces)
- As needed, look for and teach students to use new free or low-cost options

## Objective 2E: Students and faculty maintain strong connections with alumni and the professional community.

Students interact with alumni and the professional community through class activities

At least 6 classes a semester have students interact with alumni and/or other members of the professional community

- Gather information on alumni interactions in MUP classes from Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA Activity
- Every spring, review course syllabi from that academic year to document relevant student/alumni interactions
- In MUP alumni surveys, ask for the names of people willing to participate in MUP class activities and share this information with relevant instructors
- As needed, work with the Alumni Steering Committee to identify additional alumni willing to support students

Student interaction with alumni and the professional community through events

Support at least 4 events a year where students and alumni interact (e.g., symposia, career development workshops, and social events like the winter holiday party)

- Gather information on alumni interactions in MUP classes from Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA Activity
- Every spring, document events from the past year
- Encourage our partner event organizers (e.g. UPC, the Institute for Metropolitan Studies) to plan for student-alumni interactions
- In MUP alumni surveys, ask for volunteers to participate in events
- As needed, work with the Alumni Steering Committee to produce additional events

Students, alumni, and others in the community participate in the SJSU\_UrbanPlanConnect

The group maintains a healthy membership and there are at least 200 postings a year sharing information on Bay Area planning-related jobs, internships, educational events, and networking events

- Every spring, document the number of postings

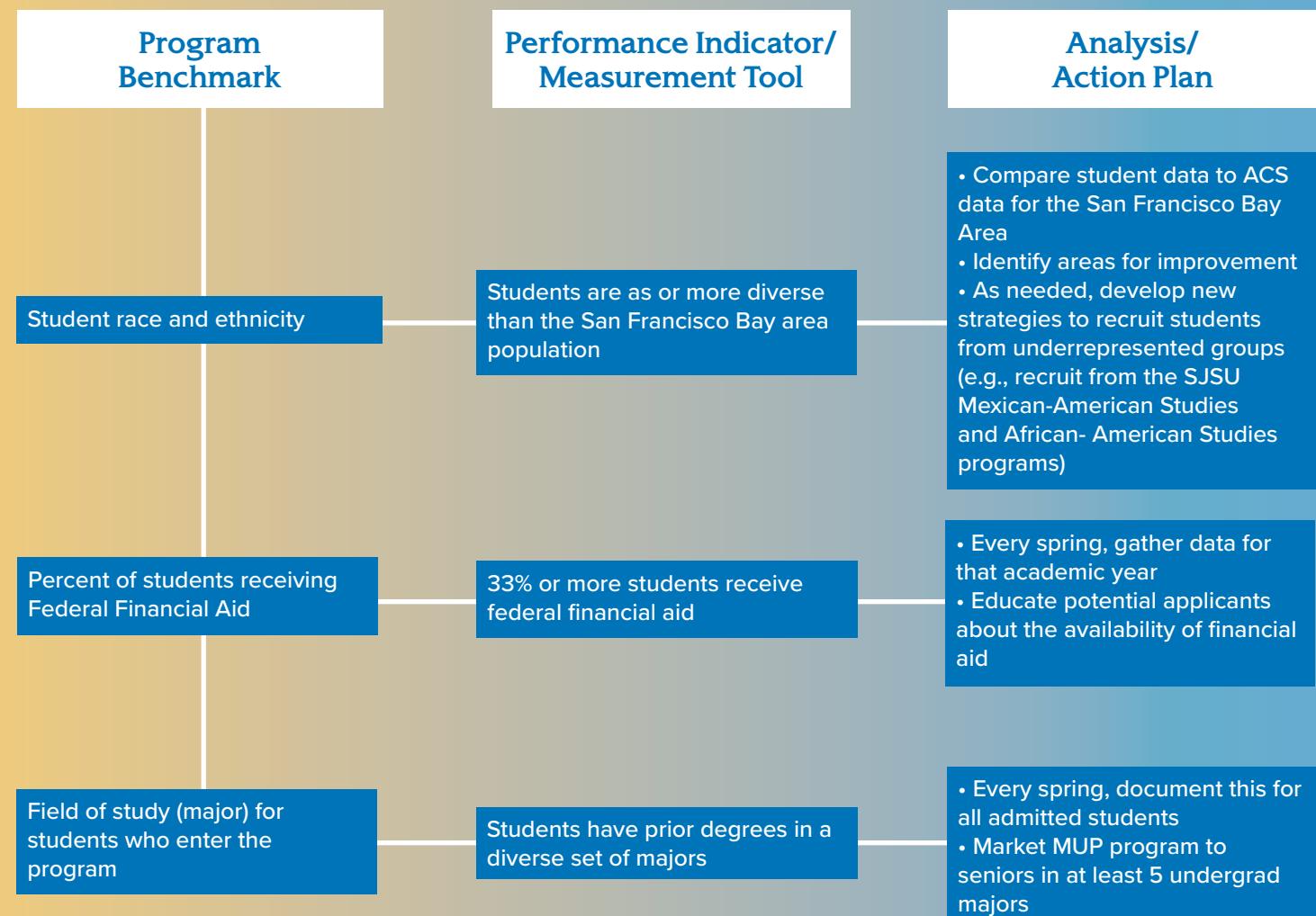
Students and alumni share news and job opportunities through private LinkedIn group  
- <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3338342/>

At least 100 posts per year

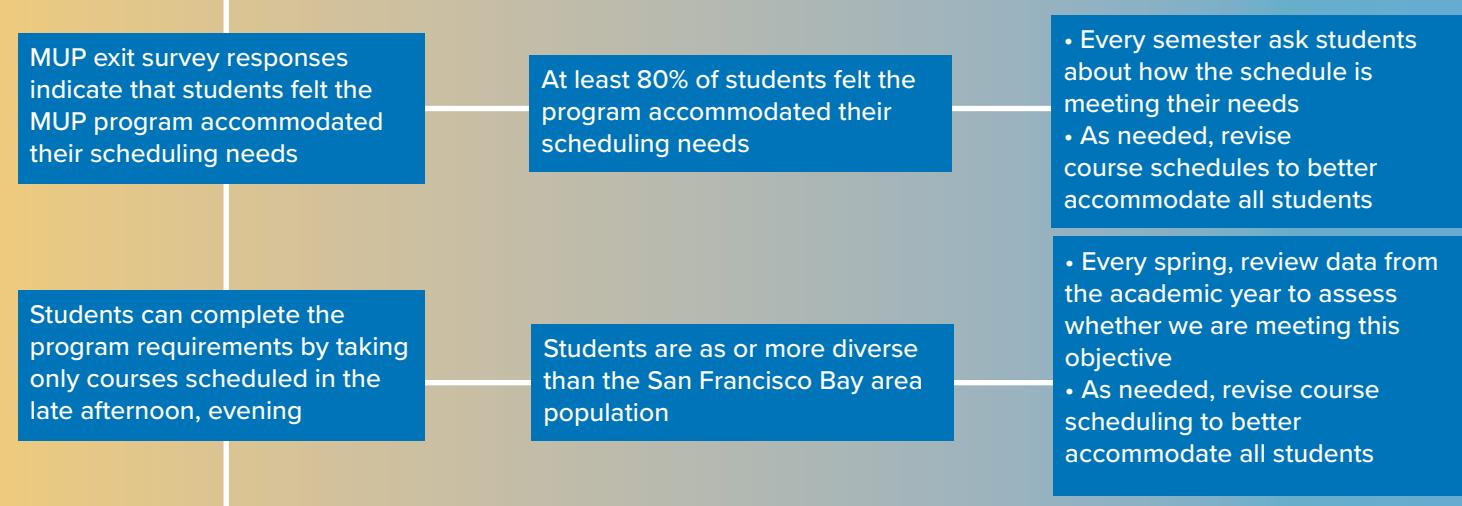
- Every spring, document the number of postings

## Goal 3: The MUP program recruits and graduates a diverse student population.

### Objective 3A: The student body reflects the diversity of the Northern California region.



### Objective 3B: The MUP program accommodates the scheduling, advising, and curricular requirements of both full-time and part-time students.



Faculty offer office hours that accommodate the needs of students with workday scheduling constraints

Faculty offer office hours in the late afternoon/ evening, and/ or schedule office hours “by appointment” to meet students schedules. Faculty offer a choice or in-person and remote office hours

- Every spring, review syllabi from the academic year to assess whether changes are needed.
- As needed, work with faculty to help them better match their availability with student preferences

### Objective 3C: A high proportion of admitted MUP students graduate within 5 years.

One-year retention rate for MUP students

1-year retention rate of at least 85%

- Every spring, review retention rate data collected for PAB annual reports
- As needed, implement strategies to improve rates

5-year graduation rates

5-year graduation rate of 80% or higher

- Every spring, review graduation rate data collected for PAB annual reports
- As needed, implement strategies to improve rates

### Objective 3D: Maintain a critical mass of students to support a robust educational experience (enroll range of 30-40 students/year).

Admissions data:  
• # of applicants  
• % of admitted students who enroll

• At least 80 applicants.  
• At least 75% of admitted students enroll (called the “show rate” in SJSU data)

- Every spring, review admissions data and discuss strategies to improve, if needed
- Maintain and expand the department's Marketing Database (email addresses)
- To increase demand for the MUP program, widely market the MUP degree and the certificates, as well as professional and scholarly contributions

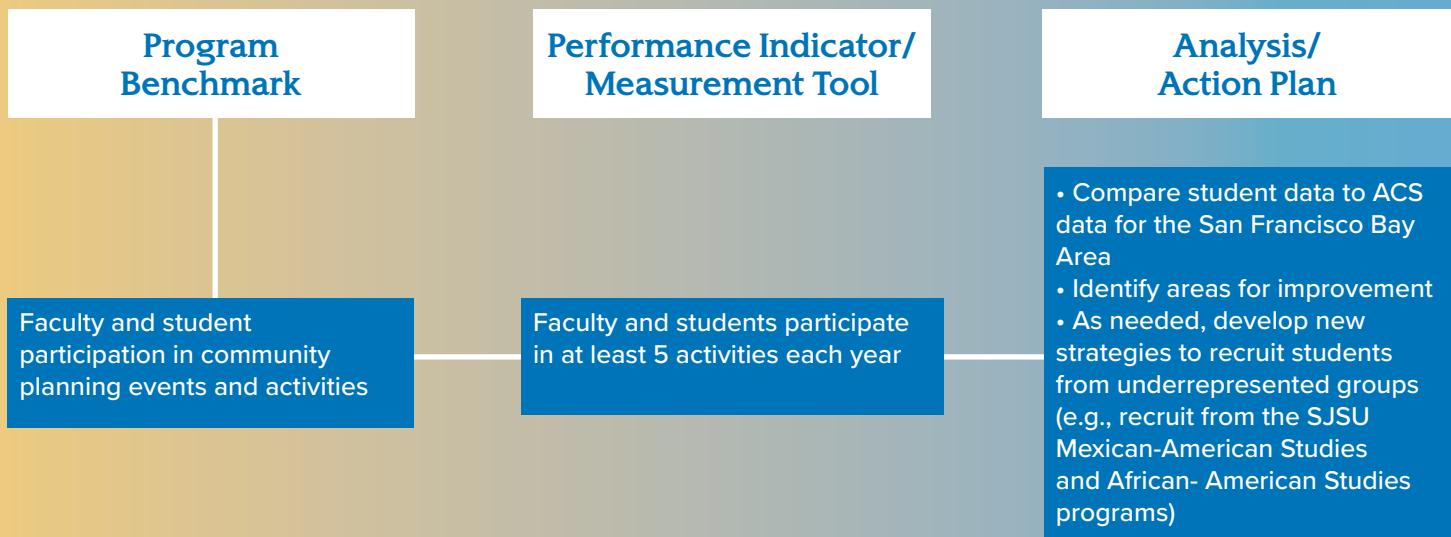
Number of active MUP majors each fall

90 active majors (taking a class and/or are planning to register the following semester)

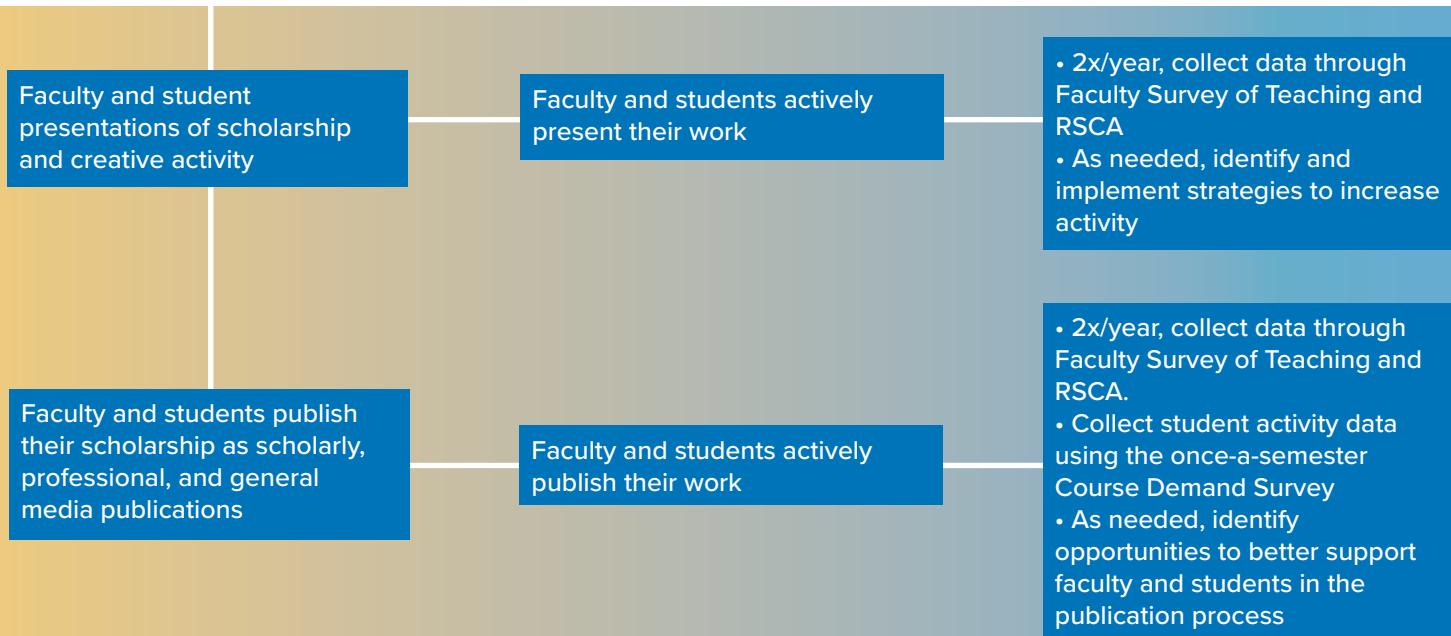
- Every spring, review graduation rate data collected for PAB annual reports
- As needed, implement strategies to improve rates

**Goal 4: Department faculty and students advance planning practice and knowledge through professional work, civic engagement, and scholarly research.**

**Objective 4A: Faculty and students work with and for government agencies, communities, nonprofits, and the private sector to shape just, sustainable, and vibrant communities.**



**Objective 4B: Faculty and students develop new knowledge and innovative planning practices.**



## Objective 4C: Faculty and students earn external recognition for the excellence of their professional and scholarly contributions.

Awards won by individual students, class or group projects, and faculty

Students and faculty win competitive awards

- 2x/year, collect data through Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA
- Collect data annually from students
- Actively encourage students and faculty to apply for awards
- Assess curriculum and advising changes to raise the quality of student work

Media stories mentioning the department's students, class projects, or faculty

At least media 10 stories per year

- 2x/year, collect data through Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA

Faculty activity in scholarship and service to the profession

- Faculty are actively involved in publishing and presenting their work
- Faculty serve in a wide range of capacities

- Each year, ask faculty to report on their professional accomplishments. When possible, link collection of this material to the SJSU RTP process and/or the College of the Social Sciences collection of data on professional accomplishments AND/OR Faculty Survey of Teaching and RSCA Activity
- Review the data and identify areas where more faculty activity is needed
- As needed and as resources permit, provide faculty with additional support for scholarship and service