



RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

This plan was never shared with the broader Bloustein community and hence never implemented because of a change in school leadership in January 2022.

BLOUSTEIN SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy will begin celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2022. Much has changed in the school during the past 30 years, including the establishment of new academic programs and research centers, the hiring of a new dean, and the induction of several new university presidents.

Throughout that time, the school has maintained its national and regional prominence, and witnessed large growth in several program areas, bringing new stakeholders into its fold. The 21st century brought advances in information technology and social media that allowed us to connect with others in meaningful ways. The new era also brought unique hardships, including the 9/11 attacks, the 2008 economic recession, and Hurricane Sandy. Of course we are currently assessing the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Period of the plan: The Bloustein School's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan lays out a vision for the school, considering its trajectory over the last 30 years and envisioning the new challenges and opportunities that await us in a post-pandemic world. Given the uncertainty of the times, the strategic plan addresses specific problems we should address and solve this year and where we hope to be in five years.

Format of the Plan: This Strategic Plan represents the Vision and the Mission of the school. To provide clarity and guidance regarding the school's strategic directions, and to promote areas of distinction, innovation, and collaboration, we have identified ten strategic, high-level goals. The ten goals are grouped into three strategy areas: promote our excellence, strengthen our identity, and enhance our future resilience. Specific objectives to achieve the goals, and Key Performance Measures (KPIs), timelines, and other factors needed for the goals to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART), are in a separate Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP is a living document that incorporates new opportunities and challenges, which are scanned and updated by a rotating Task Force.

VISION

The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy seeks to expand innovations in teaching, research, and service for the public good in the local, national, and global contexts.¹

We are committed to academic excellence. Our vision is to be an international leader in research, teaching, service, practice, creative activities, and engagement, as we address existing and emerging challenges in our region, and in a rapidly changing world. Our faculty and research staff's work will inspire new thinking and strategies to address the grand challenges facing our economy and society. We will address specific challenges in healthcare access and social determinants of health, sustainability and environmental resilience, social justice and racial equity, changing demographics and reskilling needs of learners, local and global knowledge-sharing and community engagement, and data and technological advances and their societal and ethical impacts. Our thinking in these and other areas will be infused into our teaching and other strategies for student success, and we will work collaboratively with alumni, businesses, government,

¹ Strategic Marketing & Communications Committee Final Report page 11.

nonprofits, and communities to bring about public good. This vision is underpinned by our aspirations to provide equal access to opportunity for all our students, staff, and faculty, and to celebrate a sense of belonging, empowerment, and appreciation for our diverse backgrounds and values.

MISSION

The mission of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy is to create just, socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and healthy local, national, and global communities.²

In support of our diversity and inclusion goals, we additionally adopt the following Diversity Commitment Statement.

DIVERSITY COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy values Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, and aims to improve and grow these efforts strategically by managing and assessing performance. Accountability is shared among our family of faculty, students, staff, and external partners. Investment of school resources will be enhanced, where required, to realize our vision, mission, and purpose in alignment with our shared institutional values.³

STRATEGY AREAS AND GOALS

Strategy Area I: Promote Our Excellence

- 1) *Academic Excellence – Elevate academic excellence in our research, teaching, service, practice, and public impact and community engagement.* Retain and enhance existing strengths and invest in new areas that support creativity and innovation, have the potential for overall academic excellence, and enhance faculty and staff excellence.
- 2) *Educational Excellence - Provide a world-class educational experience that engages our students comprehensively.* Secure a rich educational environment for our students that responds to needs and links educational experiences with research, service, and engagement.
- 3) *Flexible Learning for Non-Traditional Learners – Enhance innovative learning opportunities for non-traditional students and lifelong learners.* Maximize opportunities for working professionals, senior leaders, and adult and young learners, in partnership with employers, community colleges, and other organizations, using a range of teaching modalities including online and hybrid teaching.
- 4) *Research Excellence - Improve the capacity of faculty, graduate students, and research-center staff to engage in world-leading research in traditional areas as well as emerging niche areas.* Establish mechanisms to enhance the quality, quantity and impact of our research, through our research centers,

² Strategic Marketing & Communications Committee Final Report page 2.

³ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Task Force Mission Statement.

research clusters, and other modes of engagement, interactions, and fund-raising that helps to bring out innovation and our interdisciplinary strengths.

Strategy Area II: Strengthen Our Identity

- 5) *Clarify and Define our Identity - Widely and consistently promote that identity.* Define our identity around our purpose, values and culture, and common areas of strength, in order to achieve institutional clarity, and to have a clear sense of our ultimate strategic and institutional objectives.
- 6) *Internationalization - Grow our international linkages to extend our programs to other parts of the world.* Enhance global interactions for collaborative research and service, and for transnational impact.
- 7) *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Promote a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.* Advance an environment of cultural competency, shared respect, and belonging, in a nurturing and welcoming environment.

Strategy Area III: Enhance Our Future Resiliency

- 8) *Resilience from the pandemic and other disruptions – Plan near-term strategy and operations for stability.* Achieve resilience in terms of finances, teaching, staffing, and other areas such as research and instructional infrastructure, in order to address the pandemic and other challenges we face, by investing in areas of excellence and growth, towards being financially self-sufficient.
- 9) *Strategic Alumni Networks and Local, National and Global Partnerships:* Elevate the quality of engagement with the alumni from all our academic programs, enhance our existing ties with communities, government agencies, and industry, and proactively develop new strategic networks towards having stronger interactions and impact on the public good in New Brunswick and New Jersey, and towards extending the national and global impact of our work.
- 10) *Marketing and Communications - Promote regular, seamless, and far-reaching communications.* Make effective marketing and communications of our activities and achievements, to current and prospective stakeholders including our staff, faculty, students, alumni, peer institutions, and the broader community, a core part of our strategy.

PROCESS

The Strategic Plan has been informed by the following processes:

Shared governance processes: The plan is the consolidation of the outputs of multiple shared governance processes that were undertaken between December 2018 and February 2021. The plan has resulted from faculty and staff committees and town halls, focus groups, and surveys of alumni, students, and other school stakeholders. Several committees carried out this work: the Strategic Marketing and Communications

Committee⁴, the Educational Opportunities Committee⁵, the Educational Priorities Committee⁶ and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Task Force⁷. The goals to help achieve our vision are partly the findings from the committees.

Recent developments: The plan additionally accommodates recent and ongoing developments at the university level in terms of diversity and inclusion, a new (ongoing) Academic Master Planning process, and internal developments within the school, and emerging needs resulting from COVID-19, which have strategic implications for the plan period.

⁴ The Strategic Marketing and Communications Committee (SMACC) consisted of 9 faculty members, 3 staff members, 1 ex-officio administrator, and 4 external stakeholders. A key charge given to the group was to "Draft and vet a new set of vision, mission and goals for the school". The committee worked with an external firm, Melior, to survey 67 full and part-time faculty members, 59 administrative and research staff members, 423 alumni, 203 current students, and 430 prospective students and to qualitatively interview 24 individuals from stakeholder organizations and 38 members of the university community. The SMACC further surveyed 87 responses from faculty, staff and students on the School's vision and mission. Based on this information, the SMACC arrived at the Vision and Mission statements in this document, and 5 final goals for the School that have been incorporated in this Strategic Plan.

⁵ The Educational Opportunities Committee (EOC) consisted of 6 members and their 9 recommendations were on a range of issues, from expanding and marketing current academic offerings, to considering new degree programs.

⁶ The Educational Priorities Committee (EPC), comprising of 7 faculty members, 5 ex-officio members, 1 staff member and 2 external members, recommended 6 specific graduate and undergraduate programs in the short-run, and 2 additional longer-term programs, in response to the charge: "Prioritize new educational programs by building upon the EOC's work, and new opportunities that the committee identifies (including training and capacity-building programs), and recommend a prioritized list of programs and initiatives that should be delivered within short-term (1 to 3 years), medium-term (4 to 6 years), and longer-term (more than 6 years in the future)."

⁷ The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Task Force, consisting of 7 faculty members, 4 staff members and 1 external member, in response to the charge "Recommending Solutions and Strategies: Following the fact-finding step above, the Task Force will provide concrete recommendations for improvement," delivered 6 recommendations.