Director's Message

The School of City and Regional Planning (SCaRP) at Georgia Tech has been at the forefront of planning education and research for over six decades by strategically redefining its scope and focus in line with the fundamental changes in social, technological, economic, and environmental spheres. As we think in the ‘Next’ and look to the coming five years, our starting point is the rich legacy established in the culture of scholarship, creativity, and shared commitments that is reflected in our academic tradition.

Yet, with the escalating pace of global change, we must continually evolve to play a more significant role in shaping the future of planning education, rather than react to what has transpired. As our Provost, Raphael Bras, has noted -- “I am convinced that the future belongs to those institutions that are nimble enough to stay in front of the wave of change and, more importantly, help define what will be next in education.” While we reassess our own goals and objectives, we have also continued to reaffirm the core values that commit us to advance a just, sustainable, and resilient future for our communities, both near home and across the globe.

Our strategic priorities for the next five years are shaped by the need for a deeper understanding of the forces that are impacting planning practice and education. We began the strategic planning process by commissioning a series of White Papers on the potential disruptions that could impact planning practice and the planning academy. In addition, several thought leaders in planning were invited to present their insights about the future of planning practice and education. We are also clear-eyed about the importance of creating an organizational culture that is both strong and flexible to meet the complex future challenges.

Several of our goals reflect our commitment to building an inclusive and diverse SCaRP community that has a strong sense of shared identity and belonging. We believe that our shared experience in community building within the school will inspire our students and stakeholders to aspire towards creating analogous communities in their practice.

We engaged each of our key stakeholders throughout the development of this strategic plan. Faculty, students, staff, alumni and the many employers of our graduates contributed insights and ideas that shaped this plan. The conversations happened in “listening labs” and in a series of surveys and one-on-one interviews. The varied information collected from this process was discussed at a two-day retreat, which resulted in the goals outlined in this document. Together, over a period of eighteen months, we set into motion the strategic direction that will propel SCaRP forward over the next five years and well into the next decade.

Being a part of Georgia Tech, a world-class institution of technology, SCaRP has embodied the tradition of excellence in its teaching and research, especially in the technological domain. The graduates of our programs have a well-established reputation for technical proficiency. Many of them have become transformative leaders of organizations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

We are also fortunate to have an excellent metropolitan laboratory within our home base in the Atlanta Metropolitan region. This testbed near home has allowed us to integrate our learning environment and creative energy with on-the-ground societal needs. Given our legacy of excellence, our unique strengths, and our commitments to the goals stated in this document we are poised to extend our leadership in the next chapter of planning education, research, and practice.

Subhrajit Guhathakurta
Chair, School of City & Regional Planning
Programmatic Challenges and Opportunities

Since the last strategic planning process, the teaching mission of the School has grown from a core focus on the Master of City and Regional Planning and a newly authorized Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning to one with a wider focus on allied degree programs. The School has initiated a new Master of Science in Geographic Information Science and Technology, a dual degree between the MCRP and MS-GIST, an undergraduate minor in Sustainable Cities, and (with the School of Architecture) a Master of Science in Urban Design. The School has also collaborated with Tongji University to create a new dual degree program in Global Planning. These additions to the curriculum added substantially to the four dual degree programs (in Architecture, Law, Public Policy and Transportation Engineering) and certificate programs.

The faculty are proud to note several strengths in the current programs and course offerings, including:
1. its strong foundation in knowledge synthesis from multiple academic disciplines and interdisciplinary collaborations across units and institutions
2. the integration of cutting edge research conducted by affiliated research centers and labs in course offerings; and
3. the extensive engagement with neighborhoods, cities, regions, and states to promote more effective and equitable communities, thereby testing our understanding of the consequences of policies, plans, and planning processes.

At the same time, the school faculty identified several opportunities to strengthen our programmatic offerings. First, our curriculum and programs can better reflect the increasingly interconnected impacts of human activity on the planet, climate, environment, health and on vulnerable populations. These impacts are being felt around the globe through interconnected cities and mega-regions of networked metropolises. Second, we have a responsibility to emphasize how the increasing inequities in most parts of the world are magnifying existing challenges. Third, we are well placed to lead in showing how disruptive technologies and the rise of big data can support planning as well as pose challenges for data privacy and participatory democracy. Fourth, we must challenge ourselves to find avenues for increasing affordability of, and access to quality education, especially for diverse populations.

We can address the challenges and opportunities by building on existing strengths, through the expansion of curricular offerings, by developing and implementing pedagogical innovations in existing and new courses, and by linking more fully to teaching resources afforded by our research centers and by other degree programs allied to SCaRP at Georgia Tech and beyond.
Our Mission

The School of City and Regional Planning is dedicated to crafting communities that are sustainable, just, resilient, healthy, and inclusive through world-class education and cutting-edge research.

Our Core Values

**Sustainability** - Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Justice** - Expanding choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic equality.

**Resilience** - Enabling individuals and communities to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

**Health** - Valuing the elements of our natural and built environment for their contribution to the well-being of humans and other species.

**Inclusiveness** - Improving the ability of individuals and groups to effectively engage in community decisions and governance.

Our Vision

The School of City and Regional Planning will be a global leader in education and research that fosters more sustainable, prosperous, just, resilient, healthy, and inclusive neighborhoods, cities and regions around the world.
Our Goals

The faculty, staff and students of the School of City and Regional Planning have identified the following seven goals to best achieve our vision.

1. Project and articulate cross-cutting themes in resilience, urban analytics, and inclusive communities to inform the larger community about the School’s focus areas and research directions.

2. Design and implement a one-year interdisciplinary MS degree in Urban Analytics in cooperation with the College of Computing and the School of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

3. Revitalize instructional programs and the curricula.

4. Establish a Formal Global Development Focus Area.

5. Recruit, mentor, and retain a balanced, inclusive faculty.

6. Build a balanced, inclusive, and diverse SCaRP community where students, faculty, and staff experience a strong sense of shared identity and place.

7. Raise the School’s philanthropic endowments by at least 100% by 2024.
Goal One: Cross-Cutting Themes

Project and articulate cross-cutting themes in resilience, urban analytics, and inclusive communities to inform the larger community about the School's focus areas and research directions.

- **Resilience**: We advance the capacities of cities and regions to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of stresses and shocks to achieve sustainable futures. We promote improvements to urban form, infrastructure, and social capital in order to advance prosperity, environmental quality, social justice, and economic and political equity.

- **Urban Analytics**: We leverage the power of informatics and spatial analytics to better understand the forces that drive urban systems, thereby helping to inform community-driven future planning based on our core values of sustainability, justice, resilience, health, and inclusion.

- **Inclusive Communities**: We facilitate the involvement of the full range of affected stakeholders in decisions concerning the future of cities and regions, with particular attention to under-represented groups, in order to reduce inequality through plan implementation.

**Strategies**

1. **Communications**:
   - Revise the School website to highlight the three themes, reinforcing these in discussions of curriculum, research, and outreach.
   - Reinforce the three themes by regular news postings that highlight work in the School tied to each theme.
   - Reinforce the three themes in written promotions, banner stands, and other hard copy promotional materials. Consider preparing flyers or brochures highlighting work in each of the themes.

2. **Curriculum development and faculty hiring**:
   - Screen new faculty for research and skills relevant to resilience, urban analytics, and inclusive communities.
   - Open new faculty positions in these areas.
   - Ensure that the curriculum for the core classes is up to date on these topics.
   - Develop a plan to provide more specialized classes, or short courses, in these areas.
   - Review curriculum with practitioners and key stakeholders in the field to ensure that skill sets match needs on the market.

3. **Studios**:
   - Support student-driven studios in these areas (like the Spring 2019 Puerto Rico studio).
   - Studios should focus on incorporating these three themes, and integrating them through studio work, both internationally and locally.

4. **Program development**
   - Develop a program to allow input from practitioners and key stakeholders in these areas.
   - Enhance our cross coordination with other departments throughout Georgia Tech that are in or need to be in these areas.

5. **Screen for priorities to make sure the themes stay relevant over time**:
   - Interviews, conversations, and surveys with students, practitioners and stakeholders.
   - Alignment of themes with International, national, and local projects, plans, and policies (eg: SDGs)
Goal Two: Urban Analytics

Design and implement a one-year interdisciplinary M.S. degree in Urban Analytics in cooperation with the College of Computing and the School of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

The term “Urban Analytics” refers to an emerging field that encompasses areas such as big data, smart cities, urban informatics, urban science, and/or urban decision science.

Strategies

1. Designate members from the School of City and Regional Planning, the College of Computing, and the School of Industrial and Systems Engineering to form an Urban Analytics degree program design committee. This committee will research the field of urban analytics/informatics to develop a forward-thinking curriculum and robust degree program that focuses on new and emerging forms of data, urban management, planning, and policy analysis, and technology for future cities.

2. Build a framework of major skill areas around which the curriculum will be constructed.

3. Identify current courses in the participating units that can be included in their current forms.

4. Design new courses for areas in the framework for which there are no existing courses.

5. Write a Technology Fee proposal for an urban analytics virtual/physical computer lab.

6. Designate a program director who will develop an implementation plan for new degree startup in coordination with the Urban Analytics Design Committee and Chairs of the participating units.
Goal Three: Revitalize Curricula

Revitalize instructional programs and the curricula.

The School of City and Regional Planning continues to expand its curricular offerings, seeking to provide students with the highest quality education while remaining accessible to a diverse student body. Systematic review and revitalization of these curricula will help increase student opportunity while addressing new constraints facing planning as a profession and Georgia Tech as an institution of higher education.

Strategies

1. **Develop curricular coherence around three substantive thrusts identified in the strategic plan: community resilience, equity and inclusion, and urban analytics.**
   - **Community resilience**
     - Propose a new certificate program
     - Restructure economics core course to include content on economic resilience and human settlements content with an orientation towards environmental resilience
     - Restructure theory and history core course to incorporate ideas of community resilience
   - **Equity and inclusion**
     - Restructure core courses, including the studios, to include content on equity and inclusion
     - Develop planning practitioners with skillsets to help solve challenging community issues in polarizing environments
       - Develop and provide tools to communities to enhance the capacity for discourse and inclusion in a polarized world
     - Strengthen capacity of students to promote local engagement with communities and region
       - Explore the potential for a certificate in community engagement and conflict management
     - Establish ongoing partnership with Westside and other Atlanta communities for student research and involvement
   - **Urban analytics**
     - Develop a coordinated set of course offerings in the GIS/spatial analytics field, coordinate the SCaRP curricula offerings for this new degree with the existing MS GIST by co-managing the two degrees under one program committee and director.

2. **Expand the flexibility of degree programs by innovating in course delivery.**
   - Increase diversity of course delivery modes, including a) modularizing course material; b) offering short courses; and c) offering online courses
   - Collaborate with other schools and universities to develop interdisciplinary curricula, including dual degrees, certificates, and possibly new specializations.
     - Explore the potential for dual degrees with the new MS in Real Estate Development, public health (with either Emory or GSU), and civic engagement (with Kennesaw State’s School of Conflict Management).
     - Integrate the MS-GIST program and MS-UD program into the SCaRP community more effectively.
Goal Three: Revitalize Curricula

Revitalize instructional programs and the curricula.

Strategies (continued)

• Expand the undergraduate minor in Sustainable Cities by linking more extensively with the Institute-wide Serve-Learn-Sustain initiative. Explore new resources needed and strategies for gaining those resources.

• Prepare planning leaders to address interdisciplinary planning issues more fully.
  • Expansion of leadership training within SCaRP’s degree programs
  • Continuing education/mid-career

3. More fully engage the globalization of planning theory and practice.
   • Continue to strengthen the School’s International Focus and Global Connections
     • Expand study abroad opportunities, including classes and internships
     • Collaborate with the Shenzhen campus; identify other international universities with overlapping interests in education and research

   • Establish a Formal Global Development Focus Area
     • SCaRP has strengthened its international engagement, expertise to become a leader in addressing global planning issues
     • Certificate in Global Development
     • M.S. in Global Development

   • Hire a faculty member in International Development with a major appointment in planning to strengthen both curricula and research capacity in this field.

4. Develop and implement new modes of learning that promote affordability of and access to quality education.
Goal Four: Global Development

Establish a Formal Global Development Focus Area.

The School of City and Regional Planning (SCaRP) prepares planners for globally active careers, is instrumental in advancing global planning objectives, and brings the best international planning ideas into US debates.

Strategies

1. Implement a Graduate Certificate in Global Development, jointly with the Nunn School of International Affairs.

2. Propose and implement a master’s degree in Global Development, jointly with the Nunn School of International Affairs.

3. Have direct faculty expertise in each of the three key world developing regions: Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Establish and maintain at least one active university partnership in each continent of the world.
Goal Five: Balanced, Inclusive Faculty

Recruit, mentor, and retain a balanced, inclusive faculty.

The School of City and Regional Planning is dedicated to providing a top-tier faculty committed to teaching, research, scholarship, and service. We must be conscientious in recruiting faculty who share the same values, goals, and philosophies as Georgia Tech; aim to mentor and cultivate a space for continuous learning and growth once recruited; and focus on retaining a balanced and inclusive faculty.

In researching faculty recruitment, mentorship, and retention strategies by peer institutions, we discovered three prevailing themes:
1. Focus on a climate of inclusivity, support, and open and transparent communication;
2. Ensure there are opportunities for development – both in terms of leadership roles and compensation; and
3. Equip faculty with the ability to provide feedback on their experiences without fear of retaliation and then using that information to make necessary changes.

Strategies

1. Build a culture of respect and dignity where all faculty members feel included and well-respected. This includes promoting and encouraging attendance at cultural sensitivity, implicit bias, and cross-cultural communication trainings and workshops.

2. Set forth clear expectations pertaining to requirements for promotion and tenure. Also, make transparency a high priority, addressing any concerns of inequity internally.

3. Create formal and informal mentorship networks among faculty and for graduate students who have an interest in becoming future faculty. The first 3-5 years of a faculty member's appointment are essential for retention, and a mentorship network can help identify and mitigate issues early on, while inspiring faculty and graduate students to propel themselves forward.

4. Conduct annual workload assessments to ensure faculty (especially minority and female faculty) are not overburdened by service to the School, College, and Institute.

5. Conduct climate surveys about faculty satisfaction within the School. Surveys should aim to examine compensation, promotions, and other rewards to assess disparities, and evaluate overall well-being in the School.
Goal Six: Diverse Community

Build a balanced, inclusive, and diverse SCaRP community where students, faculty, and staff experience a strong sense of shared identity and place.

**Balance** means our community members experience sufficient work-life balance and that there is equal representation at events and School functions across faculty and staff (which includes varying levels of seniority).

**Inclusivity** means the students, faculty, and staff have presence, ownership, and connection in the School and within our community.

**Diversity** means to celebrate, respect, and value the multiplicity of races, ethnicities, genders, economic strata, religions, and sexual orientations within our community.

**Strategies**

1. Reestablish a Diversity Committee within SCaRP to recruit and promote diversity within the School. This committee would also be charged with ensuring students, faculty, and staff from all racial and ethnic groups participate in diversity events, which will help build an inclusive environment where people feel supported, respected, and valued.

2. Expand SCaRP's programming events across fall and spring semesters. Current examples include the Thanksgiving Potluck, end-of-year banquet, and PARKing Day, but we aim to add four additional School-run events to encourage participation and build community.

3. Provide more opportunities for students to present their work (options papers, theses, internship overviews, etc.) in the form of a mixer or petcha kucha. This will allow the SCaRP community to experience a variety of research interests and promote inclusivity within the School.

4. Celebrate achievements through “acts of appreciation.” Examples could include promoting the Center for Teaching and Learning’s Thank a Teacher program in the fall and spring semesters; exchanging Boo Grams in October or having a Secret Snowflake event in December. And throughout the year, on an ongoing basis, we will encourage group lunches and socials for students, faculty, and staff to intermingle in a non-academic setting.

5. Focus on the recruitment, mentorship, and retention of students, faculty, and staff from a variety of backgrounds. Advertising and targeting minority populations and minority-specific resources will help grow the pool of diverse applicants. SCaRP will also actively engage the FOCUS program to seek out scholars and fellows from diverse backgrounds.

6. Charge the MCRP, MS-GIST, and PhD program committees to reassess course readings so that a multiplicity of voices and viewpoints are included in classroom learning.
Goal Seven: Philanthropic Endowments

**Raise the School's philanthropic endowments by at least 100% by 2024.**

The School of City and Regional Planning has built a strong national and international reputation that is reflected in its top-10 Planetizen ranking. Yet, given its 65+ year history and more than 1,400 alumni – many in leadership positions – its philanthropic resources have been modest compared to its peers.

The Chair and faculty of the School believe that increasing endowments through private giving will expand the school’s ability to be more competitive in attracting the best students, faculty, and staff; thereby advancing its reputation and standing among peers.

**Strategies**

1. **Constitute a SCaRP Advisory Board by August 2019.** The Advisory Board shall include alumni, prominent employers, and community and business leaders engaged in planning and community development. The Advisory Board will reflect the diversity of SCaRP community and offer advice to the chair about key strategic directions for the School. The Board will serve as effective ambassadors of SCaRP programs and help in bringing new resources to expand and elevate the School’s reputation.

2. **Develop promotional materials that can project a unique “brand” and can be distributed widely through brochures, invitations to events, and branded merchanidize.** The branded merchanidize should be priced to generate some revenue to the School.

3. **Plan annually a series of events – including high-profile lectures, receptions and banquets, short courses and workshops – that engage alumni and other community leaders.** The objective is to increase the number of opportunities for the alumni and other stakeholders to engage with the School and its activities.

4. **Use the SCaRP spring banquet as an opportunity to engage employers who would like to meet graduating students and are willing to buy seats at a table.** This source of revenue would help cover much of the expenses for the spring banquet. This would also transfer some of the costs that the students bear to this new source of revenue.
Acknowledgments

Strategic planning is a large undertaking. The course for the School of City and Regional Planning’s 2019-2024 Strategic Plan could not have been set without our local partners and planning leaders, our alumni, and the following individuals:

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