

Strategic Plan

Introduction

The U-M School of Social Work has an illustrious past with many achievements into the present day. The School is currently planning for its future by developing a five-year forward-thinking strategic plan. The Michigan Social Work Executive Committee and Dean Lynn Videka launched a strategic plan in late Fall, 2016. With a new dean and a 38% turnover of faculty in the past five years, along with the changes in the social work profession, in higher education and society, the Michigan Social Work community agreed that it was time to consider the future of the School. Building on the School's 2012 self-review, the *University of Michigan School of Social Work Strategic Assessment*, this plan is designed to be forward-looking and action oriented.

The School's Core Values

At the April, 2017 retreat, the faculty affirms the School's core work values that include:

- Diversity in people and ideas
- An inclusive learning environment
- Striving for excellence in all we do
- Acting with integrity
- A positive work climate
- Service
- Social justice
- The dignity and worth of every person
- The importance of human relationships

Mission of the School

Advancing the social work profession's vision and values, the University of Michigan School of Social Work seeks to develop a more equitable, caring, and socially just society. Such a society meets basic human needs, eliminates social and economic inequities, and empowers individuals, their communities, and institutions to reach their aspirations and potential. Drawing on an interdisciplinary faculty within a public university seated in a region of enormous need and promise, the School is dedicated to education, research, and service that fosters progressive change at local, national, and global levels.

A Grand Vision for the School's Future

The University of Michigan School of Social work will lead the social work profession -- including education, knowledge development, practice, and positive impact on society -- as it moves into the next generation.

Strategic Goals, Objectives, Action Steps and Outcomes

The following framework provides the basis for action, for achieving the grand vision of the school, and for leadership into the next generation of the social work profession.

An outline of the plan follows:

Goal 1: Deliver educational programs that are original, creative and prepare graduates for leadership in interprofessional and interdisciplinary practice, and knowledge development.

Objective 1: Advance the role of U-M Social Work in undergraduate education, with a focus on expansion.

Action Step 1: The CASC Committee will create a “next steps” plan for the CASC minor.

Action Step 2: Create collaborations with undergraduate education on our own campus and at Dearborn, Flint and other schools of social work in Michigan.

Action Step 3: Collaborate with other UM Ann Arbor academic units and centers (e.g. Poverty Solutions) to create new options for social justice and community action related undergraduate study programs.

Action Step 4: Explore and implement new models of undergraduate education [e.g. BA, BSW, Psychology, Sociology, CASC] that include efficient MSW pathways.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Creation of New Program Options / Proposal for Options Program Enrollments Student Performance and Satisfaction
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Objective 2: Deliver a distinctive, engaging and effective MSW education that prepares the future leaders of social work micro and macro practice.

Action Step 1: Conduct a major review of the MSW program with an eye toward modifying the curriculum in the following areas: (a) student services; (b) curriculum updates, flexibility, and renewal; (c) attention to outreach and reputational; and (d) greater emphasis and integration of technology’s role in social work practice.

Action Step 2: Create changes in field education that prepare students for contemporary and future practice and that support the curriculum restructuring.

Action Step 3: Create a sustainable plan to integrate the intellectual leadership and content of learning communities and faculty research labs in the MSW curriculum in 2018-19 and beyond.

Action Step 4: Expand options to use new educational technologies for teaching excellence including flipped classrooms, remote educational options, and other technologies.

Action Step 5: Strengthen student support services.

Action Step 6: Build excellent career services program and increase networking opportunities for alumni including creating an alumni-graduate online networking tool in collaboration with the Alumni Board of Governors.

Action Step 7: Review lifelong learning offerings.

Objective Attainment Measures:	MSW Program Competency Achievement MSW Program Goal Attainment MSW Student Exit Survey MSW Student Climate Survey Continuing Education Enrollment Continuing Enrollment Satisfaction Utilization of Online Networking Tool by Alumni
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Objective 3: Position U-M' Social Work's doctoral education as a critical component to produce the next generation of international social work education and scholarship leaders.

Action Step 1: Conduct an internal assessment of the dual PhD program.

Action Step 2: Conduct external reviews of the dual PhD program (Rackham Review and SSW-led social work review) to obtain a peer review of the current program.

Action Step 3: Decide on and implement changes to strengthen the program.

Action Step 4: Consider expanded options for doctoral education at Michigan Social Work in addition to the current joint PhD.

Action Step 5: Recruit and retain diverse PhD students in areas of SSW faculty expertise and interest.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Application Numbers and Yield Rate Benchmark PhD Completion (to be determined) Student Publications Graduate Job Placement (% at top ranked universities) Student Satisfaction with Education Student Climate
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Goal 2: Improve access to an affordable education at the U-M School of Social Work.

Objective 1: Create program structures for working and non-traditional students.

Action Step 1: Assess the needs of commuting students and those with family obligations or other circumstances that make it hard to participate, and create engagement opportunities for these groups based on the results of the assessment.

Action Step 2: Create pathways to a full, less costly MSW education, by expanding program pathways such as the Micromasters MOOC, MSW three term options, and the advanced standing program.

Action Step 3: Create an official extended student degree program that involves blended courses and web-based options for completing elements of the MSW program.

- Action Step 4: Enhance educational pathways collaborations with other U-M campuses (e.g. U-M Dearborn, Flint).
- Action Step 5: Increase SSW student employment options including hiring more MSW work-study students at progressive wages and/or creating GSI positions for MSW students.
- Action Step 6: Explore the creation of a non-social work degrees, that are non-accredited, such as a professional doctoral program in management, a non-accredited master’s program in evaluation or management, an executive degree in non-profit management.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Enrollment Stability Student Diversity in Race, Ethnicity, and Income Student Performance (competencies; program completion) Graduate Job Placement (% employment) Student Satisfaction with Education Student Climate
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Objective 2: Optimize financial aid by strong resource development focused on student support.

- Action Step 1: Emphasize student support in the next UM wide capital campaign.
- Action Step 2: Appeal to donor and prospects by creating more media-based student profiles.
- Action Step 3: Promote funding opportunities for student field education travel stipends, as well as, tuition.
- Action Step 4: Consider creating a fund for faculty to contribute to support students.
- Action Step 5: Increase SSW student employment options including hiring more MSW work-study students at progressive wages and/or creating GRA positions for MSW students.
- Action Step 6: Provide incentives and support for faculty to seek grant funds for MSW and PhD students (workforce development, and pre-doc training programs).
- Action Step 7: Focus efforts to increase the endowment for student support in the next UM wide capital campaign.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Amount of financial aid funds available for students
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Objective 3: Enhance financial aid by strong and efficient distribution and management of financial aid.

- Action Step 1: Provide high quality student financial aid counseling to students about the availability of and types of aid.
- Action Step 2: Continue to equalize the cost of a part-time MSW and full-time MSW through financial aid strategies.
- Action Step 3: Recruitment Admissions Student Services and Financial Aid (RAFSSA) will evaluate principles to base future financial aid awards, balancing financial need, academic merit and school mission-driven specialties and make recommendations to the faculty for future financial aid policy.

Action Step 4: Find alternative revenue streams outside of the MSW program, including increasing private support for student scholarship programs.

Action Step 5: Implement efficiency mechanisms to allow for greater grant and scholarship aid for MSW students.

Action Step 6: Consider the following ideas to enhance holistic student support: increase emergency funding, support for caregivers such as child care, support student networks for finding roommates, housing, ride-sharing, and other resource sharing.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Student satisfaction with financial aid counseling Student debt burden upon graduation
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Objective 4: Ensure enrollment strength and stability through marketing the School’s programs to prospective students with contemporary, high yield strategies.

Action Step 1: Identify the most effective student recruitment models for online and face-to-face education and modify recruitment strategies accordingly.

Action Step 2: Expand use of social media marketing.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Enrollment demand Enrollment yield
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Goal 3: Build and sustain a School environment that is based on respect for all and a dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Objective 1: Recruit and retain an increasingly diverse faculty, staff and student body (Corresponds to DEI Strategic Plan Objectives 1, 3, 6, 8, and 9).

Action Step 1: Expand on our diversity recruitment strategy for student enrollment in each academic program (CASC, MSW, PhD).

Action Step 2: Prioritize diversity in all faculty and staff hiring, including full-time tenure track, clinical. Faculty, LEO lecturers, and all staff positions.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Numbers (over time) of faculty and staff recruited Numbers (over time) of faculty and staff of color recruited Retention of a diverse faculty and staff Number of student applicants from underrepresented groups Student diversity of each class Yield and retention of students of color Adopt the University of Michigan ADVANCE Program that encompasses recruitment, retention, climate and leadership development
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Objective 2: Educate faculty, students and staff to value diversity, to have “transformational conversations” and to create learning from conflict and difference in the classroom (Corresponds to DEI Strategic Plan Objectives 9, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 24).

- Action Step 1: Create a working definition of “transformative conversations and learning experiences,” by charging a student-faculty task force to define this standard, which is used throughout the School’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.
- Action Step 2: Schedule diversity, equity and inclusion professional development for faculty and staff including the ability to have transformative conversations.
- Action Step 3: Reward diversity, equity and inclusion leadership among students, staff and faculty.
- Action Step 4: Engage faculty, students and staff in dialog about current events. These should be accessible, well-advertised and regularly offered.

Objective Attainment Measures:	A definition of “transformative conversations” Number of student and professional development training opportunities Attendance at student and professional development training opportunities Performance assessment on diversity, equity and inclusion for faculty, staff and students
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Objective 3: Offer curricula that integrate DEI at all levels (Corresponds to DEI Strategic Plan Objectives 22, 23).

- Action Step 1: Improve orientation and preparation of all students to engage with diversity. This should begin with student orientation and early educational experiences, including assessing the extent to which students experience this preparation in courses.
- Action Step 2: Create coherent and cumulative DEI learning experiences for students.
- Action Step 3: Conduct a database assessment to identifying DEI related support for students.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Measure student readiness to learn diversity skills at orientation Student competency in practicing DEI
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Objective 4: Provide inclusive and equitable School support for a diverse student, faculty and staff community (Corresponds to DEI Strategic Plan Objectives 2, 4, 7, 17, 20, and 21).

- Action Step 1: Provide support for faculty promotion and tenure including participation in the Faculty Success Program (FSP) through the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD) and ensuring that faculty have a clear understanding of the promotion and tenure process and requirements.
- Action Step 2: Continue regular reviews of salary and workload equity.
- Action Step 3: In 2017-18, create a “bias response team.”
- Action Step 4: Offer accessible events for staff, faculty and students that address current events and that integrate the concept of DEI.
- Action Step 5: Modify the DEI plan by including expanded resources, more specific objectives and action steps, with appropriately identified responsible offices/entities.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Measure student readiness to learn diversity skills at orientation Student competency in practicing DEI An operational and measurable DEI plan
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Objective 5: Improve the sense of community and belonging within the School for all faculty, students and staff (Corresponds to DEI Strategic Plan Objectives 18).

Action Step 1: Create a Climate Task Force.

Action Step 2: Enhance communication with students through town halls and responses to current local, national and global events.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Improve the climate and performance assessment on diversity, equity and inclusion for faculty, students and staff at the School Measure level of compassion and competency skills – students, faculty, and staff Faculty, student and staff commitment to DEI
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Goal 4: Engage with local, regional, national and global communities to advance social justice and create progressive change.

Objective 1: Create and implement a research-practice-service agenda for the School with a public scholarship approach in Detroit and other local areas of needs.

Action Step 1: Develop a new, collaborative vision for the School and a social work leadership role in the U of M's Detroit initiative.

Action Step 2: Continue engagement with the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities to lead and deliver the Executive Leadership Institute, a workforce development program for national nonprofit leadership.

Action Step 3: Convene group of faculty and staff to devise other plans for expanding strategic efforts to influence external communities such as Flint, Washtenaw County, Detroit.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Number of partnerships with external entities Amount of media coverage of SSW research Reputation of the University of Michigan for community service and impact
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Objective 2: Use the capacity of the Program Evaluation Group to advance engagement with the School's regional communities.

Action Step 1: Clarify PEG's Mission. Debate and select potential areas of focus and priority for the PEG. Provide training and establish clear expectations, vision, and strategy for PRG. Identify performance goals.

Action Step 2: Create a marketing plan for PEG's services based on its mission and goals.

Action Step 3: Determine the right level of subsidy for the PEG, including its student educational role, its relationship to field education and to promoting engagement with the regional communities.

Action Step 4: Seek philanthropic funding for the PEG’s role in the school’s community engagement agenda (e.g. refugees, immigrants, sovereign nations, Practice Based Research Network with social work at Michigan Medicine).

Objective Attainment Measures:	Mission statement for PEG PEG booked value of projects per year Impact statements from projects Number of students with evaluation experience
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Objective 3: Expand the School’s global program in order to fulfill U-M’s role as a global leader in social work and social work education.

Action Step 1: Pursue collaboration with Tsinghua University in Beijing China to play a role in social work educational and professional development in the world’s most populous country. Document and sustain the relationship and secure continued philanthropic feedback.

Action Step 2: Enhance the development of a global perspective (including serving immigrant and refugee populations in the U.S.) in the MSW program.

Action Step 3: Develop faculty and courses with a global focus (MOOCs – SEED Week certificates).

Action Step 4: Work with the Office of Global Programs to create global service projects; integrate global social work into core classes.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Establishment of Tsinghua collaboration in mainland China Student outcomes on global perspective Number of students with global learning experiences
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Objective 4: Promote and support faculty and students to be action leaders in local, state and national social justice change movements.

Action Step 1: Develop program pathways for students to participate in the NASW legislative agenda in Lansing.

Action Step 2: Work with the student union to create local “chapters” of national advocacy movements and encourage students to participate in these, particularly focusing on local change.

Action Step 3: Create school-led local service and social justice change projects each year by garner funding, and involving students in planning impact projects for societal change.

Action Step 4: Acknowledge and give credit to students (independent study course credits) and faculty (annual review – publications, op-eds, social media) for social justice activities.

Action Step 5: Support faculty and students when engaging in controversial issues through training and support for their work.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Numbers of student involved in advocacy projects Numbers of faculty involved in social engagement projects Evaluation and recognition systems for credit for work done in this domain
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Goal 5: Lead the profession by advancing the scientific basis of social work vocation and enhance interdisciplinary knowledge that informs solutions for social and human problems.

Objective 1: Support team-based as well as individual research programs and achievement.

- Action Step 1: Continue the well-received suite of research supports available to faculty, including seed funding, through piloted studies, editorial assistance in grant proposals and publications, pre- and post-award services, grant reviews and consultation services.
- Action Step 2: Increase supports for obtaining philanthropic funding for social work research through active pursuit of foundation grants and private donor support.
- Action Step 3: Bring together faculty in the school, across and beyond the University in order to promote collaboration and research innovation through conferences, seminars and colloquia.
- Action Step 4: Examine and define options for scholarly work by clinical faculty as called by the provost. This will require developing alternative and expanded definition of scholarship in education, practice and service.
- Action Step 5: Develop incentives and broker opportunities for faculty to assume national research and academic roles (e.g. board membership, abstract reviews, etc.) in associations, councils, and societies (e.g. CSWE, NASW, SSWR) and funding agencies (e.g. Foundations and NIH).
- Action Step 6: Develop the Curtis Center to support the school’s health and behavioral health research and the School’s leadership in the Health Disparities Grand Challenge.
- Action Step 7: Use our web capacities to bring attention to outstanding research and publications of individuals and groups of faculty collaborating in publications, emphasizing the School’s collaborative research and areas of strength.
- Action Step 8: Publicize clear steps and opportunities to create collaborative groups.
- Action Step 9: Convene an SSW task force to identify successful models of collaborative research groups, and address barriers to interdisciplinary research and education
- Action Step 10: Provide short term infrastructure support and other resources such as consultants and pilot funding that will enable individual- and group-led research to reach certain identifiable goals that are central to the School’s strategic plan.
- Action Step 11: Consider the Grand Challenges as an organizing framework for research teams in the School.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Definition of scholarship for clinical faculty Scholarly achievement of every faculty member Number of faculty in research leadership roles and awards List of identifiable areas of significant research impact Reputation for major research areas of excellence
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Objective 2: Support team-based research programs accomplishment, and support for “next-level” achievements in key areas of research excellence, including a diversity-rich scholarship portfolio and strong societal impact.

Action Step 1: Develop mechanisms and strategies for involving social work practitioners, stakeholders, social work clients, and community residents and for disseminating the School’s research through multimedia publications locally, nationally, and internationally. Outlets for dissemination should include community outlets (e.g., local papers), key conferences of strategic importance to the school’s areas of research, and major peer-reviewed publications. This Step will help to bridge research-to-practice gaps and influence policy-making and implementation.

Action Step 2: Provide seed funding for diversity and social justice-focused scholarship, both globally and domestically.

Objective 3: Advance diversity, equity and inclusion through knowledge development that emphasizes social justice through public, engaged scholarship, research and dissemination.

Action Step 1: Outlets for dissemination should include community outlets (e.g., local papers), key conferences of strategic importance to the school’s areas of research, and major peer-reviewed publications. This Step will help to bridge research-to-practice gaps and influence policy-making and implementation.

Action Step 2: Create a communication plan for research findings that includes local, regional and national outlets. Widely share how our School has specifically contributed to the quality of social work research and practice across the country and the world.

Action Step 3: Prioritize recruiting faculty with social justice related research and scholarly agendas.

Objective Attainment Measures:	Measure volume of research on social justice topics Level of media coverage of SSW research Reputation of the University of Michigan for research on relevant to social justice
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