Strategic Plan 2008-2013

Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in
Urban Design and Planning
University of Washington

Revised October 2008
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1. Overview

The Ph.D. in Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington is one of 39 Ph.D. programs in urban and regional planning in North America, and one of the oldest, founded in 1967. The interdisciplinarity of the program has always been recognized and fostered by the University, reflected in 1991 by the genesis of the Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Urban Design and Planning that we know today.

This program brings together faculty from disciplines ranging from Architecture to Sociology to focus on the interdisciplinary study of urban problems and interventions. Covering scales from neighborhoods to metropolitan areas, the program addresses interrelationships between the natural environment, the built environment, and the social, economic, and political institutions and processes that shape urban areas. The breadth of this program permits students to pursue doctoral studies in the various aspects of urban design and planning as well as in a number of related social science, natural resource, and engineering areas.

The Program seeks to prepare scholars who can advance the state of research, practice, and education related to the built environment and its relationship to society and nature in metropolitan regions throughout the world. The program provides a strong interdisciplinary educational experience that draws on the resources of the entire University and on the laboratory provided by the Seattle metropolitan region and the Pacific Northwest. The program emphasizes the educational values of interdisciplinarity, intellectual leadership and integrity, and the social values of equity, democracy and sustainability. It seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the ways in which public decisions shape and are shaped by the urban physical, social, economic, and natural environment.

The intellectual focus of the Ph.D. program is unique in bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives from the social and natural sciences, humanities, and design and planning disciplines, and applying them to the formation and evaluation of urban and environmental plans and policies.

- It seeks to explore interactions among built urban form; urban markets for real estate, labor, public services and infrastructure; urban social and political institutions and processes; and urban ecological patterns and processes. Study of these interactions draws on the disciplines of economics, geography, history, sociology, political science, and ecology, among others.

- It seeks to explore ways of applying the interdisciplinary understanding of these interactions to informing the development and evaluation of plans and policies related to land use, housing, transportation and other infrastructure, and the environment. These applications draw on the fields of urban planning, urban design, landscape architecture, forest resources, policy analysis, and civil engineering.
• It seeks to employ research methods and approaches that promote advancement of theory and the empirical testing of theory, in order to make contributions to the advancement of scholarship and practice in the areas of urban and environmental planning and policy. Research methods range from qualitative to quantitative techniques, including such tools as GIS and simulation modeling.

The Graduate School Council program review of the Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Urban Design and Planning concluded that the program is “on the brink of becoming a top tier program” and recommended that, “a new round of strategic planning be launched in the immediate future to build on recent accomplishments while engaging a wider range of faculty in charting a clear course for the future.” During the last two years the process of envisioning the Program’s strategic plan has produced broad discussions and reflections of faculty and students in three consecutive initiatives. First, through a process of appreciative inquiry, an initial retreat, held on November 4th, 2006 focused on the broad issues necessary for developing the program’s strategic plan, such as:

• What are the important trends?
• What are the important questions?
• Who are the stakeholders?
• What process should be utilized?
• What are the key elements of the plan?
• What are the indicators or benchmarks?

The retreat was followed by an on-line survey. The survey queried current faculty, students and alumni for their views and recommendations on the Program’s vision, mission, core values, identity, intellectual focus, core competencies and indicators of success. The survey was followed up with a workshop that further explored these topics through a deliberative process. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the process.
Emerging from these collective initiatives was a strategic plan “blueprint” that would guide the program for the next 5 to 10 years towards the goal of national top tier prominence (see Figure 2).
The following sections discuss the details of this blueprint: *first*, emerging changes in society, graduate school education and the field of planning are examined; *second*, the strategic planning elements are outlined; *third*, the Program’s vision, mission and identity are defined; *fourth*, the Program’s goals and benchmarks are described with a focus on curriculum, structure, governance, and sustainability; *fifth*, the implementation mechanism is outlined and *lastly*, on-going operations are discussed.
2. Trends in Society, Research, and Graduate Education

2.1 Emerging Trends in Society

Urbanization
Urbanization at the global scale has been in the works since the beginnings of human life, marked with the relentless pursuit of settlement and increased sedentarization. However, the urbanization of the world population has taken a sharp upward trend since the 1960s, in parallel with the steep growth in world population. Fifty percent of the world population is now projected to live in cities within a few decades. Many are characterizing the 21st century as the century of cities. In the U.S., the ageing of the population and the ongoing re-shaping of nation’s demography through international migrations (documented and not) and the rapid growth of Hispanic and Asian populations, coupled with ongoing shifts in the patterns of racial and ethnic segregation across neighborhoods, will continue to reshape cities in significant ways in the coming decades. Cultural exchange is increasing, as well as social concerns related to national and community identities. There has been a “hollowing out” of the middle income groups and associated rise of very well-paid and very low-paid groups. In addition, the poor increasingly live in suburbs.

Environmental Change
Climate change is currently the major trend in the environment, at all scales. We are now considering global impacts and regional changes in climate, both in terms of precipitation and temperatures. Increasing recognition of regional changes in intensity of storms, increase in the number of hot spells, etc. is leading to increasing concerns for controls of development in environmentally sensitive areas, for example, along coastlines and in desert areas. There is increasing concern for hazard-resistant development in terms of both materials and building processes, in addition to location. There is also concern regarding the legal and fiscal issues related to these changes. Other implications for climate change include increasing importance of water resources, both quantity and quality, as well as their contribution to sustainable energy; more focus on energy efficiency with respect to transportation as well as land use and building energy efficiency; the beginning of a shift from oil dependence to alternative energies; and increasing investment requirements in urban infrastructures, for example transportation (including public), water and sewer systems, drainage, and levees, either to rebuild or to build anew.

Some implications for trends in the urban design and planning (UDP) field include the need to integrate climate into planning and ecology models; increasing research on adaptation, scenario planning, and research in lifestyles and individual behaviors. Urban ecology is an emerging field that addresses how to manage metropolitan growth, maximize human well-being, and minimize impacts on ecosystems. These problems require interdisciplinary approaches at the interface of many disciplines. In Planning, the study of urban ecosystem dynamics involves the study of how development patterns are driven by the interactions between human and biophysical processes, and how these patterns affect ecosystem and human functions. It also
involves integrating the social and natural sciences and rethinking the role of science in planning.

Globalization
Concerns about globalization include many processes at both global and local scales, such as neoliberalization or the concentration of corporate power. “Marketization” and “privatization” of multiple relations involves the rise of competitive market relations in place of state bureaucratic decision-making and increasing movement of capital.

Increasing inter-urban competition is also associated with globalization. This process necessitates “competitiveness” as an urban policy imperative. Environmental and labor regulation have become more difficult because they are seen as less competitive, which similarly makes taxation more difficult. Urban land is valued for its exchange value and its tax increment potential instead of its use value, resulting in more difficulties in land use regulation. This increases development pressures and encourages the commitment of public funds to spur development even if it ends up in the private market. Pressure to provide high quality infrastructure (roads, schools, etc.) with dwindling resources is increasing, often requiring the development of “creative” public financing schemes. In addition, federal grants now value economic growth potential more than social need, so that successful places get assistance while depressed places do not, potentially further increasing inequalities.

Related to globalization and increasing competitiveness, offshoring of economic activity to ‘cheaper’ places is occurring, resulting in a downward pressure on wages. There is increasing industrial sector unemployment in the U.S. (loss to global challenges), leading to associated cities’ and suburbs’ economic decline. At the same time, the economic influence of these ‘cheaper’ places continues to expand. These changes are leading to increasing concern regarding global corporate behavior and consumerism.

Globalization is tied to the increasing trend of outsourcing of government and the increasing role for quasi-public agencies, non-profit corporations, NGOs, for-profits, foundations, public-private partnerships, policy networks, and others. At the same time we see downsizing of government from the federal level to more local levels (e.g. welfare to the counties or public housing to the local authorities), and decline of the welfare state. These trends are leading to an increase in socially marginal people in cities, and increasing disciplining of low-income people (for example Sidran’s “civility” laws, zero tolerance policies, and the prison-industrial complex).

Policy Trends & Politics
Major policy trends reflect changing demographics, for example reforms in Social Security and Medicare will be a major policy focus in the U.S. for next 5-10 years. Continuing concern with security, not only due to terrorism connected to foreign policy, but also due to influence of violent gaming and personalized social networks aided by computers and, in effect, the blurring of the real and the virtual are another concern in policy.
2.2 Emerging Trends in Research

Research vs. practice
Any review of trends in urban design and planning needs to distinguish between the practice and the research components of the field. One of the challenges we face in urban design and planning education is the interplay between these two dimensions and the lag time that exists between the knowledge generated by researchers and its eventual application in practice. This lag time can span a decade or more. This affects our ability to ground research in real world observations and test our hypotheses and theories. This also implies that our students come to the doctoral program expecting to work on issues found in practice (e.g. transportation vows in cities marked by major changes in mode shift), highly motivated by problem solving and limited appreciation for the challenges of scientific research. First, students will find that they have to spend considerable amounts of time and energy learning about research and analytical methods before they can focus on the problem of interest. Then, when students actually complete their research, they find out that their audience is limited to the group of researchers who are specialists in the field, and that their newly acquired knowledge will not trickle down into professional practice for several years.

Planning and Health
New institutional opportunities and demands to link health and planning seem to expand planning’s long-standing focus on environmental planning (air and water quality specifically), to the effects of the quality of environmental systems on human health. This trend is interesting to us as an interdisciplinary program because it begins to compel researchers who are used to dealing primarily with environmental systems to work with other researchers who are focusing on human behavior and “quality of life.” This offers opportunities to bridge the intellectual gap between the study of “natural” systems and that of human systems. It may help put cities and human habitats in general within the radar screen of the larger realm of “life systems.” It may also clarify the link between everyday life and global warming.
Furthermore, the renewed linkages between health and planning will also be likely to affect research methods. It may take urban planning research beyond the traditional economic models focusing on urban functionality and costs to include considerations of opportunities and constraints in everyday life, as well as of long-term sustainability. In the way of an example, the scope of such “old” issues as accessibility, which has been studied primarily in the domain of transport and planning and treated as an “efficiency” and economic problem, may be broadened to include its effect on the life and health of humans and the sustainability of environmental systems.

This possible change in looking at planning problems is paralleled by changes in public health and the health sciences in general, where there has been a push toward changing the conceptual model of health (or the health paradigm), and switching from a disease prevention to a health promotion mode. This switch isn’t quite operational in the health sciences, in that the focus on disease continues to
receive the lion’s share of resources in health, but it is well grounded in the thinking of many health professionals.

**Planning and Ecology**

Urban ecology is an emerging field that addresses one of the most challenging problems humanity is facing worldwide: how to manage metropolitan growth by simultaneously maximizing human well-being and minimizing impacts on ecosystems. These problems require interdisciplinary approaches at the interface of many disciplines. In Planning, the study of urban ecosystem dynamics involves the study of how development patterns are driven by the interactions between human and biophysical processes, and how these patterns affect ecosystem and human functions. It also involves integrating the social and natural sciences and rethinking the role of science in planning.

**Urbanization at a World Scale**

The urbanization of the world population has taken a sharp upward trend since the 1960s, in parallel with the steep growth in world population. Fifty percent of the world population is now projected to live in cities within a few decades. Several universities and some private institutions (the Brookings Institute, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of California, Berkeley) have created new programs aiming at specializing in or focusing on the problematic of urbanization. This trend could have interesting effects on such allied disciplines as sociology and economics, perhaps leading them to apply more of their research to urban settings, and to more locally grounded problems. Planners would benefit from closer ties with social scientist in these disciplines.

**The spatial realm, what about it?**

Mel Webber’s dire predictions have not entirely materialized in that there seems to be on-going, and perhaps even renewed, interest in the nature of spatially bounded “places.” The popularity of the New Urbanism, and concepts such as the urban villages, the TODs, etc., point to the fact that place still matters, and seems to coexist with parallel, and somewhat contradictory concepts, such as the shrinking of the world, the global village, the flat world, instant global communications, etc. In planning specifically, it is interesting to note that the place-focused area of urban design has been re-integrated into practice without much fanfare, after a hiatus of a decade or so when the two “sides” were feuding (1985-1995).

However, if place is an accepted part of planning, much needs to be done to examine the effects of the internet on the spatial dimensions of society and life style, on life in or out of cities, the usefulness of cities, etc. Many theories exist probing the social and economic transformations generated by the new information technology. Yet reflections and empirically based research on what these transformations mean for cities and for different populations are few. A possibly promising field of future research may be how information technology is affecting not only the technology of urban infrastructures, but also the characteristics of infrastructure networks—transportation, fiberoptics, satellites. Research perspectives could include hardware, spatial distribution, and infrastructure management perspectives.
Globalization and Culture
How flat is the world? There is ample evidence that while global trends are ubiquitous, the marks of cultural differences remain extremely strong. For example, it is fashionable to treat Asian cities as one new (exciting) phenomenon, yet the differences between cities in China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, etc. can be just as striking: new housing types, transportation systems, neighborhood structure, etc., all differ considerably from city to city, and from country to country. The management of these cities also takes place within very different political structures, affecting the distribution of decision-making powers, financing strategies, and the use of resources in general.

Planning and Demography
The ageing of the U.S. population and the ongoing re-shaping of nation’s demography through international migrations and the rapid growth of Hispanic and Asian populations, coupled with ongoing shifts in the patterns of racial and ethnic segregation across neighborhoods will continue to reshape cities in significant ways in the coming decades. Sparse research on the housing patterns of ageing empty-nest households is mixed at this point, and whether the ageing baby boom generation will move towards the city and its amenities, or remain in the suburbs, is not well understood. The majority of the poor now live in suburbs, and this trend may have far-reaching consequences for urban social patterns, service delivery, housing needs, and myriad other facets that planners will need to address.

Planning and Individual Choices
Whether to build more new urbanist neighborhoods, or invest in transit systems, or design transferable development rights programs, or any of the myriad other forms of urban design and planning – are ultimately questions that involve understanding how individuals and households and firms will respond to the intervention by making different choices. These choices are made in a complex, dynamic environment that includes market and political institutions, social networks, and physical and environmental frames. Increasingly, research about the potential efficacy of alternative strategies, and the evaluation of past interventions, will need to grapple with understanding and analyzing how people react to these interventions. This will likely include various forms of survey research, choice modeling, and other emerging forms of analysis that generate insights into how choice behavior is influenced by public actions. One potential theme in this emerging area is the development of deeper understanding of lifestyles as organizing frameworks for the multitude of behaviors relevant to planning, including residence location, housing type, travel behavior, children and household structure, work patterns (including part time and multiple jobs, contract labor, consulting, working at home).

Planning and Information Technology
Information technology continues to evolve at an incredible pace, and while it has not made cities irrelevant, it has already begun to change the ways that households and firms choose locations, the way individuals shop and engage in social and recreational activities, and of course – communicate. These changes have not been well foreseen, not have they likely fully played out. What can we anticipate about changes in information technology over the next two to three decades, and what implications will there be for planning? In addition to possibly fundamental changes
in the way cities function and evolve spatially, information technology may also change the way citizens and governments connect. Forms of public participation may change in radical ways as communication technologies evolve. The current trend towards direct democratic involvement through the use of initiatives may take new forms enabled by information technology, allowing more direct and ongoing citizen involvement in local and higher level government decisions.

2.3 Trends in Graduate Education

Graduate schools face challenges both within and outside the academic setting. Most of today's scientific and social problems lie at the interface of many disciplines. Many disciplines in the natural and social science are undergoing rapid change, and many societal changes demand new scientific frameworks and education paradigms. Academia, industry, and governments demand that we prepare new scholars and practitioners. Expanded economic competition, global environmental and health problems, and emerging national-security challenges require new approaches to graduate education. Key trends include the following:

- Global competition for talent across all fields is increasing.
- Scientific expertise is expanding worldwide, which diminishes the U.S. advantage.
- International collaboration is commonplace and is rapidly increasing as many universities around the world are facing similar challenges in their preparation of future scholars.
- International mobility of scholars is increasing. Large numbers of scholars live outside their home countries.
- We are seeing continuing retirement of planning faculty (over next 5 years).
- The numbers of minority and women graduate students completing degree programs is increasing, although still inadequate.
- It is a continuing struggle to articulate graduate education as a public good, not simply a private benefit.
- Trends in global warming have led to increasing complexity and uncertainty on the role of science, and increasing interdisciplinary research to understand complex interactions between climate, human systems, ecosystems and built structures.

Graduate education is therefore faced with some key challenges. It will require more interdisciplinarity, collaboration and team-building, and global citizenship. This demands that we produce scholars who are adaptable and flexible, as well as technically proficient.

The rapid growth and urbanization of the world's population pose unprecedented challenges to the functioning of human settlements and the quality of life for their inhabitants. Urban planning and design scholars are challenged to advance knowledge in areas that have immediate and long term social relevance, which are regional and place-based. Our region creates many opportunities for academic-professional partnerships, analyses of the important problems confronting urban regions, and the design and testing of new approaches.
• **Prominent role of science.** Urban problems are becoming more complex and require increasing evidence-based management strategies and a more sophisticated integration of social and natural science. Students need to be trained to communicate complex ideas and issues to diverse populations.

• **Interdisciplinarity.** Fundamental questions concerning urban and metropolitan regions and their functions require interdisciplinary research aiming at understanding the interactions among the built, human, and natural environments. Emerging urban problems are becoming increasingly complex.

• **Diversity.** Programs need to expand their diversity to increase participation of minorities and women among students and faculty.

• **Teamwork.** Due to the increasing collaborative nature of research, students need to acquire skills, such as teamwork, leadership and time-management, which will allow them to work successfully in a variety of organizations.

• **Adaptability.** Academia, industry, and governments demand that we prepare scholars and practitioners who are adaptable and flexible, as well as technically proficient.
3. Strategic Planning Elements

Through various initiatives, such as a retreat, survey, workshop, and meetings, several key elements of the Program’s strategic plan emerged that align with the goal of achieving national prominence, specifically top three ranking and recognition as the ‘Seattle School of Urban design and Planning’.

During the retreat, the process of exploring the key elements involved breakout groups focusing on specific themes related to key stakeholders involved in planning research, education, and practice, as illustrated below.

The table in the Annex A summarizes the results of those discussions, emphasizing the important questions, key elements, stakeholders, the criteria and process, and the milestones.

3.1 Strategic Issues

Through the various steps of the strategic planning process, five key strategic issues were identified:

- Establish a clear intellectual focus and define the unique contribution of the program to the field to reach for excellence and produce high visibility.
• Create a robust curriculum and structure consistent with the program’s intellectual focus and provide the most up-to-date skill sets to our students
• Provide quality advising and mentorship to attract and retain the best students and generate competitive graduates
• Develop an effective, accountable, and transparent governance structure to ensure program vitality and evolution.
• Generate and sustain necessary resources for the long-term viability of the program, while developing a strategy for resource sharing with other units.

**Strengths**

The Program strength is its interdisciplinarity and involvement of a diverse and productive faculty and relatively high quality students. Being in a research university contributes to such strength by providing opportunities for collaboration across a vast and diverse set of fields.

Building on solid foundations of interdisciplinary research, the Program has now emerged as the 4th best Program in the national ranking in 2007. The vitality and commitment of our students, faculty, and staff have been instrumental to the evolution of our program towards one of the most competitive and innovative PhD programs in urban design and planning in the country with unique research clusters in urban ecology, community development, land use and infrastructure, real estate, and urban modeling. The faculty of our program is one of the most productive and highly recognized with more than $25 Million in research grants from the National Science Foundation and Federal and State Agencies and more than 116 peer reviewed papers only in 2007-2008 (these figures need updating since they account only for one third of the faculty).

Students are an important strength of the program as reflected in the increased number and quality of applicants, percent increase in student publications in peer-reviewed journals, and the collegiality amongst the graduate students across the entire cohort where students are engaged in the Program and as research collaborators. Current students have published more than xx papers and presented to more than xx Conference (figures need to be added). The cumulative actions of faculty and students have all been part of the Program evolution towards one of the most competitive and innovative PhD programs in urban design and planning in the country, as recognized by its national ranking.

**Weakness**

The Program strength is also cause of two key potential weaknesses: limited resources and participation. The diversity of units involved and separation between the departmental (UDP) and administrative (Graduate School) homes create complexities in securing resources and managing both resources and participation. Among the key weakness of our programs are the limited intramural resources to provide the program with a robust competitive advantage to attract the best students and to ensure their timely graduation. Also relying upon extramural resources has
caused inconsistencies in maintaining an effective Program size. Faculty participation, especially junior, is also limited since the faculty are primarily committed to their home departments and have limited flexibility to be fully engaged in the Program.
4. Vision and Mission

Mission Statement

We strive to improve urban wellbeing by preparing scholars and practitioners to advance our understanding of how urban systems and urbanizing environments are shaped by social, economic, and natural processes, and how they function locally and globally.

Vision Statement

Our graduates will be leaders in the international community of researchers, practitioners, and educators who study and work to improve the well-being of human populations and their environment in urban and urbanizing regions.
5. Strategic Plan

Introduction: Overarching Goals, Strategies, and Benchmarks

A successful Ph.D. program distinguishes itself by its ability to provide a rigorous and engaging academic experience, and to prepare its students to be leaders in the international community of researchers, practitioners, and educators in the field of study. To achieve this vision of national prominence in the field of Urban Design and Planning, our strategic plan identifies three criteria of success.

1. **Students success in the job market and publishing**

We define the quality of the program by the student success in the job market and in publishing in peer reviewed journals. Ph.D. programs face new challenges both within and outside the academic setting. Important societal challenges demand new scientific frameworks and education paradigms. Academia, industry, and governments demand that we prepare new scholars and practitioners. Expanded economic competition, global environmental and health problems, and emerging national-security challenges require new approaches in graduate education. We build on our solid foundations of interdisciplinary research and education to meet the challenges that new emerging social, economic, and environmental trends pose to the field of Urban Design and Planning.

2. **Leaders in creating innovation in the Urban Design and Planning field**

The quality of a Ph.D. program is also measured by the ability of its students and faculty to move the field forward and lead innovation through cutting edge research and practice. Our program builds on a strong emphasis on interdisciplinarity. Fundamental questions concerning mechanisms governing urban and metropolitan regions require interdisciplinary research aiming at understanding the interactions among the built, human, and natural environments. Emerging urban problems are becoming increasingly complex, requiring evidence-based planning and management strategies and a more sophisticated integration of social and natural science. Students need to be trained to communicate complex ideas and issues to diverse populations. Ethical issues become even more prominent. We build on our innovative research in urban form, urban ecology, growth management, land use modeling, and the new emerging fields of globalization and public participation to lead innovation in the field of Urban Design and Planning.

3. **Agents of change in bridging urban science and practice**

Our Ph.D. program in Urban Design and Planning is well positioned to bridge the existing gap between the sciences and practices. Our extensive scholarship in key emerging research areas and engagement in problem solving position our program at the cutting edge in achieving this goal. It gives an interdisciplinary program in urban design and planning a central role in research universities such as the University of Washington.
6. Overarching Goals, Strategies, and Benchmarks

This section describes the objectives, strategies, and benchmarks for five key goals identified as necessary for the program to improve. These five goals include:

1. Reach National Prominence: Reach the top 3 for U.S. Ph.D. planning programs.
2. Curriculum and Structure: Align the curriculum and structure with the program’s intellectual focus.
3. Quality Mentorship: Create and support quality mentorship and advising.
4. Governance: Develop an effective, accountable, and transparent governance structure.
5. Resources: Generate and sustain necessary resources for the long-term viability of the program.

These goals are presented in table format in the Appendix.

Goal 1: Reach National Prominence (Top 3)

The program aims to reach national prominence, or the top 3 for U.S. Ph.D. planning programs. The program has defined five objectives to meet this goal:

1. Define the intellectual focus and unique contribution of our school. The Program Director will work with faculty to clarify the identity of the program and convey this identity in the Program's mission and vision statements. They will also develop mechanisms to refine our research agendas. Benchmarks for these tasks include finding evidence of national recognition of the ‘Seattle School of Planning’ using assessment tools such as surveys. They will also use benchmarks of leading schools.

2. Attract and graduate outstanding students. Program faculty will strive to provide all incoming students three years of funding support, introduce interviews as part of the recruitment process, and increase opportunities for TA-ships and RA-ships. Benchmarks include the generation of student fellowships and faculty grants, graduate placement, student publications, and an increasing number of TA-ships and RA-ships.

3. Enhance the educational and research programs in line with the intellectual focus of our school. The Program Director will work with faculty and students to define core skill sets, define interdisciplinary tracts that are aligned with the program’s intellectual focus, and establish an Advisory Board. Benchmarks for student progress will include completion of the general exam, dissertation proposal, and final exam. Other benchmarks will include review of course offerings within the Program and throughout campus, and creation of an Advisory Board composed of diverse stakeholders.
4. *Increase the academic recognition and visibility of faculty and student work.* The Program Director will work with faculty and students to establish requirements for student publication, faculty grant, and publication requirements; obtain nationally recognized fellowships; create a Seattle School of Planning Journal; and work to recognize the strength and uniqueness of the program as place-based. Benchmarks for these objectives include the number of student publications, faculty grants, student fellowships, and faculty publication citations.

5. *Focused program growth.* The Director will work with the Interdisciplinary Faculty to evaluate program size vis-à-vis intellectual focus using the number of faculty and student cohorts, and to align strategic partnerships toward both internal and external funding & collaborations. Benchmarks include number of students, space, faculty lines, and UW funding.

**Goal 2: Curriculum and Structure**

*Align curriculum and structure with program intellectual focus*

Six objectives will help the program align its curriculum and structure with its intellectual focus:

1. *Identify core competencies and align curriculum requirements with program intellectual focus and pedagogy.* The Program Director will work with the Steering Committee to review the current curriculum requirements and course sequence for phase I and II.

2. *Identify core disciplines involved in our interdisciplinary program, and review course offerings for our graduate students.* The Program Director will work with the Steering Committee to develop an annual review of course offerings. This annual review will involve observing trends in course offerings, as well as choices and reviews amongst current students and evaluate existing course requirements accordingly.

3. *Define existing and emerging research clusters in our interdisciplinary program.* The Director will work with faculty to establish or promote “Centers” that align with core program disciplines. Centers will develop seminars, workshops, and other opportunities for exploring research directions. Benchmarks will include invitation of guest speakers, visiting faculty, and hosting of symposiums that align with core disciplines.

4. *Provide guidance in defining an interdisciplinary area of study.* Faculty will work to establish a basic guidance document, to be reviewed annually by the Steering Committee. This guidance document will recognize and promote program strengths, as well as address deficiencies.

5. *Provide guidance for innovative pedagogy.* The Director will work with faculty and students in increasing student teaching opportunities. Strategies include establishing a student teaching requirement, and searching for
interdisciplinary teaching opportunities in campus colleges. Student teaching opportunities and skills will be tracked, as well as evaluation of TAs and RAs.

6. **Identify strategic curriculum partnerships.** The Director will work with faculty and students to evaluate campus or regional programs that align with the program’s intellection focus. For example, a program internal to the UW would be the Evans School of Public Affairs. An external program would be the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia. Strategies include identifying administrative obstacles to partnerships, and potentially holding a symposium as a way to establish working relationships.

**Goal 3: Quality Mentorship**

**Provide quality advising and mentorship to students**

1. **Quality Advising.** The Director will work with the Steering Committee and students to design a system whereby faculty advising students are familiar with the Program requirements and are engaged in the program. Student evaluations should be similar to course evaluations, and students should take participation in Program governance.

2. **Quality Mentoring.** The Director will work with the Steering Committee and students to create a set of ‘frequently asked questions’ that students and faculty can use as guidelines. Questions might include for example “How should I be preparing for my generals?” There will be an increase in informal gatherings between faculty and students to create more opportunities for interactions. Benchmarks include students and faculty using the guidelines and finding them useful, student evaluations, and attendance by both faculty and students in gatherings.

3. **Student – Student Mentoring.** The Director will work with the Steering Committee and students to create a buddy system between senior students and new students. Success of this program can be measured by participation in system and student evaluation.

**Goal 4: Governance**

**Develop an effective, accountable, and transparent governance structure**

The program has created four objectives to help develop an effective, accountable, and transparent governance structure:

1. **Establish an effective process for deliberating on the composition of the steering committee.** The Director and Steering Committee will establish a process for deliberating on the steering committee, as well as create rules on terms of office. Benchmarks will include faculty and student attendance on the steering committee.

2. **Ensure an interdisciplinary faculty.** The Director will establish a rule for composition of the Steering Committee, which will include the rule that only
Interdisciplinary Faculty be included on the Committee. This will require frequent reviews of the composition of both the Steering Committee and the Interdisciplinary Faculty.

3. *Increase faculty participation.* The Director and Steering Committee will create incentives for faulty to participate in the program (or create disincentives for non-participation). They will also use faculty participation to reinvent the annual symposium and create publications. Benchmarks include review of the effectiveness of incentives or disincentives to encourage participation.

4. *Increase student participation.* The Director and Steering Committee will work to develop student leadership skill through providing opportunities to serve a governance role on Steering Committee, and to participate in new faculty selection and in new student application interviews. Part of this goal involves assessing student governance opportunities and roles in other campus programs and those of leading planning schools.

**Goal 5: Resources**

*Generate and sustain necessary resources for the long-term viability of the program*

1. *Generate funding for students through research grants and scholarships.* The Program Director will encourage and facilitate grant writing by providing grant writing training for new faculty and students. Measures of progress include review and recognition of awarded grants.

2. *Create opportunity for sharing resources with other programs,* e.g. Research person(s); train faculty & students in grant writing. The Director will support cross-listing of courses and co-teaching of Ph.D. courses with faculty from other Ph.D. programs. Successful opportunities will be published and recognized.

3. *Allocate resources to expand the capacity of students and faculty to produce and make our program visible.* The Director will see that funding for student conference attendance is provided, encourage participation in significant community initiatives and expand UW resources. Funding opportunities will be identified and promoted, and community initiatives will be tracked, promoted, and publicized.
4. **Assure a strong mentoring program between student peers, faculty / student, and alumni / student.** Mentorship recognition internal to Program will be promoted. The Program Director, faculty, and students will work together to both identify and promote mentorship.

5. **Establish connections with professional / academic organizations.** The Director will work with faculty to promote membership in strategic organizations and identify student leadership opportunities within organizations, committees, and program events.

6. **Promote existing and create new network opportunities.** The Director will work with faculty and the Steering Committee to promote faculty research collaborations, student research collaborations, and to identify interdisciplinary teaching, research, or committee internal / external collaborations. Track teaching is one strategy to meet this objective, in addition to research and committee opportunities and collaborations.

7. **Gauge the Program’s internal / external reputation.** The Steering Committee will design an informal measure of the Program’s reputation by tracking student and faculty committee leadership roles, faculty collaborations, student applications, and student research collaborations.

8. **Assure Program diversity.** The Director will define diversity with respect to the Program in terms of student, applicant, and faculty demographics.

9. **Understand student and Faculty competency with respect to Program’s intellectual focus.** The Director will work with the Steering Committee and with students to define and measure competency with respect to Program’s intellectual focus by tracking publications, grants, fellowships, and committee leadership roles.
7. Ongoing Operation and Monitoring

7.1 Reach National Prominence

The nature of our highly diverse research and link to practice requires that a Ph.D Program simultaneously establish a clear focus while it takes a synergistic approach to achieve success. Our program aims at establishing its own focus and contribution, while working to enhance its interdisciplinarity and collaboration with others units.

Emerging Research Agendas
Institutionalize the Emerging Research Agendas Seminars as biweekly lunch seminars aiming at exploring emerging research areas and creating opportunities for faculty and student exchange across multiple fields.

Clusters of Excellence/ Research Labs
Identify the existing and emerging clusters of excellence in the program and provide mechanisms to attract applicants in these areas. Increase Interdisciplinary collaboration with other universities and other units in these areas to attract funding. Facilitate research collaboration with industry and government programs.

Students and Faculty Publications
To increase the academic recognition and visibility of the program, establish requirements for student publication, and provide ongoing support for students and faculty publication and conference participation by providing incentives (i.e., awards) and training.

Students and Faculty Grants
Provide on-going support to obtain faculty grant and student fellowships by providing updated information and training to increase available resources and enhance academic productivity and timely completion of PhD graduates.

Seattle School of Planning Journal
Establish a team working towards creating a Journal to recognize the strength and uniqueness of the program.

7.2 Curriculum and Structure

First Year Course Sequence
Redefine the course sequence URBDP 591, 592, 593 with the objective of providing a greater opportunity for exploration during the first year, while
simultaneously providing students with the opportunity to experiment and gain skills in identifying research topics and questions in planning that can productively be addressed in their Ph.D. Dissertations. Move the current 593 to the fall of the second year and reintroduce the First Year Paper to be completed during the Spring quarter under the guidance of the faculty advisor and Advisory Committee.

First Year Paper
Introduce a mechanism for early evaluation of students’ progress in acquiring skills in conducting research, and their ability to make progress towards their Ph.D. after one year of common curriculum. This will be accomplished by reintroducing the first-year doctoral paper which will be developed through the sequence of the first year course requirements. It will provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to formulate a research question, frame it within the theory, develop a research design, and address critically issues of conceptualization and measurement through a pilot application. The paper can take the form of a critical review of literature or a pilot research project on a selected topic. The first option emphasizes the ability of students to position their research question and methods. The latter can be based on either existing or newly acquired data to fit within the time constraints. In both cases the paper needs to consider aspects of both urban planning theory and research methods in urban design and planning. The first year doctoral paper could be used to create continuity throughout the sequence of the first year course requirements and provide students guidance in exploring their research interests and experimentation with the skills they are learning. The goal is to provide more continuity between the core courses and better guidance, building on the course sequence.

Theory Courses
Add a theory course to have two required, with one of them offered every year. The two required would be 1) planning theory (Hilda’s course) and 2) urban theory courses, selected from a cohort of courses that provide theoretical understanding of the city from multiple disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. The theory requirements will be satisfied over two years, allowing the student to choose one from the department (in addition to the current Planning Theory Course) and one more related to the student’s interest area, such as urban economics, politics, ecology, etc. The urban theory courses would be a designated set of restricted electives.

New Course
A revised 593 course will be required in autumn quarter of the second year. The course will guide students toward a general exam proposal. The course could maintain the current structure and a focus on a critical synthesis and critique of literature, exploring conceptual frameworks, and developing a thorough literature review. This course would guide the student to develop their general exam statement.
Quantitative Requirements
Develop a series of quantitative courses tailored for our students’ background and research focus. Explore the opportunity to develop such a sequence with the PhD program in Public Affairs. An emphasis will be given to:
- Linear Algebra
- Linear Models
- Bayesian Statistics
- Multivariate Statistics
- Categorical Data Analysis
- Structural Equation Modeling
- Survey Research

PhD Colloquium
The PhD Colloquium plays an important role in ensuring that students at different stages of the program and focused on different research areas have an opportunity to interact and learn from each other. Format should be either a formal presentation (e.g., conference presentation, job talk) or a seminar on a paper. Required are fifteen sessions.

Certificate Programs
Explore opportunities to enhance options to existing (Urban Ecology) and potential CSSS track and Public Affairs dual/certificate Programs.

Emerging Research Agendas
The emerging research agendas seminars aim to define the research contribution of the Seattle School of Urban Design and Planning. Teams of faculty and students lead these discussions with the objective to identify emerging research questions and position their research within the field. We aim to initiate discussions and generate white papers on our long-term research agendas.

Annual Symposium
The Annual Symposium is an opportunity to reflect on a theme that cut across the areas of specialization. This year proposal is to focus on uncertainty and long term scenario planning.

7.3 Quality Advising and Mentorship

Orientations
The Director will work with the Steering Committee and students to design and conduct orientations for faculty advising so that students are familiar with the Program requirements and are engaged in the program.

Panel Discussions
The Director will work with the Steering Committee and students to identify advising topics for panel discussions through the year.

Frequently asked questions
Create a Frequently Asked Question list and post responses on the web.
Update the FAQ regularly.

Student feedback
Establish regular opportunities for students to provide feedback to the Program Director and Coordinator (i.e., Friday Feedback) to improve communication and productively address students’ issues and concerns.

Informal gathering events
Establish informal quarterly social gathering (i.e., Friday Aperitivo) to enhance exchange among faculty and students in informal setting and generate a community.

7.4 Governance

Accountability
Establish accountability and transparency rules to be made available on-line to faculty and students. Publish non-confidential Steering Committee decisions on the web.

Transparency
Establish accountability and transparency rules to be made available on-line to faculty and students. Publish non-confidential Steering Committee decisions on the web.

Diversity
Ensure interdisciplinary faculty participation on the Steering Committee, and provide incentives to participate in the program by negotiating release time with Department Chairs and Deans.

Student Participation
Establish formal procedures to provide students opportunities to serve a governance role on the Steering Committee, and to participate in new faculty selection and in new student application interviews.

7.5 Resources

Research Grants and Scholarship
Expand funding for students through research grants and scholarships. Facilitate grant writing by providing grant writing training for new faculty and students. Assist faculty in the development of training grant proposals like the IGERT.

Resource Sharing
Create opportunities for sharing resources with other programs, e.g. research.
assistants; train faculty & students in grant writing. Negotiate cross-listing of courses and co-teaching of Ph.D. courses with faculty from other Ph.D. programs.

Intramural support
Expand intramural support through new scholarships and funding for travel and writing. Work with the Graduate School Deans to find a solution to the problem of non-resident tuition, particularly for international students.

7.6 Relationships with COE

Our program will work closely with the new UW College of the Environment (CoE); We share the CoE’s vision to improve Earth's well-being by engaging students, scientists, decision makers, and citizens in the generation, teaching, and use of knowledge about the local, regional, and global environment. In particular we play a critical role in training the next generation of leaders who will translate concepts and principles of sustainability in research and practice of urban design and planning. Our graduates also play a critical role in leading and facilitating the work of academia with partners such as governments, NGOs, and the industry.

Urbanization and the human dimension of the environment are two of the key grand challenges identified by the College as key areas. In these areas, our Program will contribute to the four key elements of CoE
- Discovery: producing the next generation of discoveries and leaders
- Learning: fostering interdisciplinary learning experiences
- Development: Find solutions to the most complex environmental problems.
- Application: Team up to translate solutions into action.

While CoE’s structure and relationships with other UW Units are still to be finalized, an implementation plan is being developed and will be finalized this year. Our Program will participate actively in the UW CoE both through its faculty currently involved in the CoE’s activities and through the initiative of the Steering Committee. Preliminary actions will include:
- Identify substantive contributions that our program can provide to tackle the CoE’s grand challenges (i.e. Symposia, working groups, papers etc).
- Identify areas of possible resource sharing (Faculty, Courses, Teaching/Research Assistantships, Labs)
- Identify possible target funding sources and grant opportunities (Research and Private Foundations)
- Identify possible formal degree options that could be developed across the Program and other programs in CoE

The Steering Committee will develop a memo and plan to meet with the CoE administration in Spring 2009 to explore and formalize these actions.
Appendix

Goals, Objectives and Strategies Tables
Overall Program

### Goal 1: Reach for National Prominence (Top 3): How will we know? What are the qualities of the program that will help us reach the top tier? History, size, funding, publications?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>Responsible Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Define the intellectual focus and unique contribution of our school</td>
<td>- Clarify the identity of the program (Rank v. Identity)</td>
<td>- Evidence of national recognition of the Seattle school of planning</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Convey it in the mission and vision</td>
<td>e.g. surveys</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Develop mechanisms to refine our research agendas</td>
<td>- Benchmarks of leading schools</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Attract and graduate outstanding students</td>
<td>- Provide students three-years of funding support</td>
<td>- Student fellowships and faculty grants</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Introduce interviews as apart of the recruitment process</td>
<td>- Graduate placement</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- TAs/RAs</td>
<td>- Student publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Enhance the educational and research programs in line with the intellectual focus of our school</td>
<td>- Define core skill sets</td>
<td>- More TAships/RAs</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Define interdisciplinary tracts aligned with intellectual focus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Establish Advisory Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Increase the academic recognition and visibility of faculty and student work</td>
<td>- Establish student publication reqs</td>
<td>- Student milestone progress: general exam, dissertation proposal; final exam.</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establish faculty grant requirements and publications</td>
<td>- Review course offerings within Program and throughout campus</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Offer nationally recognized fellowships</td>
<td>- Advisory Board composed of diverse stakeholders</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | - Create Seattle School of Planning Journal  
|   | - Is there faculty commitment to this?  
|   | - Describe strength & uniqueness of program as place-based.  
| E. Focused program growth | - Evaluate program size vis-à-vis intellectual focus: Number of faculty and student cohorts  
|   | - Align strategic partnerships both internal and external  
|   | - Funding & collaborations  
|   | - Number of students  
|   | - Space  
|   | - Faculty lines  
|   | - UW funding  
|   | Program Director  
|   | Interdisciplinary Faculty |
## Curriculum and Structure

**Goal 2: Align curriculum and structure with program intellectual focus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **A. Identify core competencies for our graduate students** | - Evaluate existing courses and current trends  
- Establish system to address deficiencies | - Annual review of course offerings | Program Director  
Steering Committee |
| **B. Define the core disciplines involved in our interdisciplinary program** | - Establish or promote “Centers” that align with core disciplines | - Invite guest speakers, symposiums, and visiting faculty aligned with core disciplines | Program Director  
Faculty |
| **C. Provide guidance in defining an interdisciplinary area of study** | - Establish basic guidance document reviewed annually by Steering Committee | - Recognize and promote program strengths  
- Address deficiencies | Interdisciplinary Faculty |
| **D. Provide guidance for innovative pedagogy** | - Establish student teaching requirement  
- Interdisciplinary teaching opportunities in campus Colleges. | - Track student teaching opportunities and skills  
- Fund more TAs & RAs | Program Director  
Faculty  
Students |
| **E. Identify strategic curriculum partnerships** | - Evaluate campus or regional programs that align with our intellectual focus, eg.  
> Internal: Public Policy  
> External: UBC | - Identify administrative obstacles  
- Create symposium? | Program Director  
Faculty  
Students |
| **F. Integrate Emerging Research agendas** | - Create special journal issue | - Create position papers on emerging agendas | Interdisciplinary Faculty & Students |
## Quality Mentorship

**Goal 3: Provide quality advising and mentorship to students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Quality Advising</strong></td>
<td>- Design a system whereby faculty advising students are familiar with the Program requirements and engaged in the program.</td>
<td>- Student evaluations similar to course evaluations.</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Participation in Program governance</td>
<td>Steering Committee Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Quality Mentoring</strong></td>
<td>- Develop FAQ of questions students and faculty can use as guidelines, eg. How should I be preparing for my generals? - Informal gatherings between faculty and students to create more opportunities for interactions.</td>
<td>- Students and Faculty are using guidelines and find them useful; Student evaluations - Attendance by both faculty and students in gatherings</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Committee Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Student – Student Mentoring</strong></td>
<td>- Create buddy system between senior students and new students.</td>
<td>- Participation in system; Student evaluation</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Committee Students</td>
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</table>
Governance

**Goal 4: Develop an effective, accountable, and transparent governance structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>Responsible Agent</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| A. Establish an effective process for deliberating on the composition of the steering committee | - Establish process for deliberating on the steering committee  
- Create rules on terms of office | - Track faculty / student attendance | Program Director  
Steering Committee |
| B. Ensure an interdisciplinary faculty | - Establish rule for composition of steering committee  
- Establish rule for inclusion as Interdisciplinary Faculty | - Review composition of Steering Committee and Interdisciplinary faculty | Program Director |
| C. Increase faculty participation | - Create incentives for faulty (or disincentives for non-participation)  
- Reinvent annual symposium (& publish) | - Review effectiveness of incentives to encourage participation | Program Director  
Steering Committee |
| D. Increase student participation | - Develop student leadership through governance role on Steering Committee; new Faculty selection & student application interviews | - Assess student governance in other Campus programs and those of leading Planning Schools | Program Director  
Steering Committee |
### Resources

#### Goal 5: Generate and sustain necessary resources for the long-term viability of the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A. Generate funding for students through research grants and scholarships | - Encourage and facilitate grant writing  
- Grant writing training for new faculty and students | - Review & recognize awarded grants | Program Director |
| B. Create opportunity for sharing resources with other programs, eg. Research person(s); train faculty & students in | - Cross-list and co-teach Ph.D courses with other Ph.D programs | - Publish and recognize successful opportunities | Program Director |
| C. Allocate resources to expand the capacity of students and faculty to produce and make our program visible | - Provide funding for student conference attendance  
- Participate in significant community initiatives. | - Identify and promote funding opportunities  
- track, promote and publicize community initiatives | Program Director |
| D. Assure strong mentoring program: student peer; faculty / | - Recognize mentorship internal to Program | - identify and promote mentorship | Program Director  
Faculty  
Students |
| E. Establish connections with professional /academic organizations | - Promote membership in strategic organizations  
- Identify student leadership opportunities within organizations | - Student participation in organization Committees; events | Program Director  
Faculty |
| F. Promote existing and create new network opportunities | - Promote faculty research collaborations  
- Promote student research collaborations  
- Identify Interdisciplinary teaching, research or committee internal / external collaborations | - Track teaching; research and committee opportunities & collaborations. | Program Director  
Faculty  
Steering Committee |
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>G. Gauge the Program's internal / external reputation.</strong></th>
<th>- Design an informal measure of Program’s reputation</th>
<th>- Track student / faculty committee leadership roles; faculty collaborations; student applications; student research collaborations</th>
<th>Steering Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H. Assure Program diversity – both Faculty and Students</strong></td>
<td>- Define diversity with respect to the Program</td>
<td>- Track student; applicant; faculty demographics</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Understand student and faculty competency with respect to Program's intellectual focus</strong></td>
<td>- Define and measure competency with respect to Program’s intellectual focus</td>
<td>- Track publications; grants; fellowships; committee leadership roles</td>
<td>Program Director Steering Committee Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>