

# Measures of Student Achievement and Public Information

Urban and Regional Planning Program  
Michigan State University  
2017

The Urban & Regional Planning Program at Michigan State University was established in 1946 and offers a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

The Program provides a broad education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with particular expertise in community development, environment and sustainability, real estate and housing, economic development, and transportation. Faculty members have strong academic and professional backgrounds, offering a diverse range of perspectives on the practice of planning. The Program adopts a global focus and provides several international opportunities for students to study abroad, and to work with international students and faculty visiting the Program.

This report summarizes the goals of the Program and provides information for prospective students.

## Vision and Mission

**URP Program Vision:** Creating sustainable cities and communities through leadership, entrepreneurial creativity, social responsibility, and environmentally sustainable planning and policy.

The **mission** of the Urban & Regional Planning Program is to *prepare students to become practitioners in the planning profession*. This is addressed through three broad themes:

- (Teaching) To provide future practitioners the knowledge, practical skills, and values to enable them to become effective planners, and to improve the quality of urban places and regions;
- (Research) To conduct and disseminate research on the “theory and practice” of urban society to plan for more equitable and sustainable communities; and

- (Outreach) To address community problems by linking knowledge and practice, and facilitating mutual learning between community and university.

## Bachelors of Science in Urban and Regional Planning Program Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Provide students with a foundation in planning education practice through a curriculum emphasizing general and specialized knowledge, practice, technical skills, and core values of the planning profession.

Objective 1: Consult PAB list of required core knowledge, skills and values.

Objective 2: Conduct gap analysis between existing core list and PAB list.

Objective 3: Develop pre-/post-test (201/494) to assess student learning.

*Measures: Take excerpt of AICP exam and test knowledge, skills and values; conduct focus groups to talk about what is planning to get individual assessments; interview/oral exam to measure verbal skills, critical thinking skills, etc.; jury reports on practicum; GPA of graduating students; and a technically written essay.*

Goal #2: Enhance the curriculum with a thorough introduction of technical and practical skills applicable to the planning job market, with an emphasis on problem solving, technical writing, and oral presentation skills.

Objective 1: Assess standards and input received regarding curriculum needs.

Objective 2: Consider where suggestions can be incorporated into current curriculum.

Objective 3: Expose students to opportunities for professional development beyond the required curriculum.

Objective 4: Provide students with the knowledge and experience of global trends and practice in urban planning.

*Measures: Survey instrument, survey responses, notes from strategic retreat; matrix showing suggested content against existing courses, updated syllabi and course descriptions; and list of gap content and matrix showing potential external sources, conversations with external sources.*

Goal #3: Ensure BSURP curriculum completion within a reasonable time-frame.

Objective 1: Monitor graduation rates and identify critical factors that achieve satisfactory graduation rates.

Objective 2: Ensure timely completion by scheduling curriculum, prerequisites, and course load appropriately.

*Measures: Program of BSURP degree completion, time to graduation under normal circumstances, GPA of graduating students.*

Goal #4: Enhance and systematize addressing community problems by partnering knowledge and practice, facilitating mutual learning of university and community.

Objective 1: Develop a formalized mentoring program, in both traditional public and non-profit or private sector, and for both domestic and international students.

Objective 2: Improve service learning by ensuring that students are mastering it before reaching Practicum offering a variety of mechanisms to practice it (e.g., internships, guided studies where students are teamed with a community to read a master plan, identify a problem, and then bring solutions to the community).

Objective 3: Link URPSA with identification of internship/ job shadowing opportunities.

Objective 4: Host a research forum, such as with the MSU Institute of Public Policy and Social Research.

*Measures: Participation within the program and in the community, evidence (narrative) of enhanced systematization.*

Goal #5: Foster a sense of community among MSU URP students, alumni and faculty.

Objective 1: Foster an inclusive and active URPSA student organization.

Objective 2: Increase communication among students in the MSU URP community.

Objective 3: Develop a comprehensive communications plan for alumni.

Objective 4: Use relationships built with alumni to foster the creation of professional development opportunities.

*Measures: Increased participation on social media sites; institutionalized student orientation; curriculum guide; increased student and alumni awareness of programmatic information; increased support from School, Dean, President; UP advisory group meets each semester; SPDC board has alumni representatives; communications plan and products; and updated website.*

## Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Prepare students to be professional planners through an advanced curriculum emphasizing core planning knowledge and leadership that contributes to advancing theory and practice.

Objective 1: Consult PAB list of required core knowledge, skills and values.

Objective 2: Conduct gap analysis between existing core list and PAB list.

Objective 3: Develop pre-/post-test (801/894) to assess student learning.

*Measures: Take excerpt of AICP exam and test knowledge, skills and values; conduct focus groups to talk about what is planning to get individual assessments; interview/oral exam to measure verbal skills, critical thinking skills, etc.; jury reports on practicum; GPA of graduating students; and a technically written essay.*

Goal #2: Enhance the curriculum in advanced technical and practical skills applicable to the planning job market, with an emphasis on research, analysis, and critical thinking skills.

Objective 1: Assess standards and input received regarding curriculum needs.

Objective 2: Consider where suggestions can be incorporated into current curriculum.

*Measures: Survey instrument, survey responses, notes from strategic retreat; matrix showing suggested content against existing courses, updated syllabi and course descriptions; and list of gap content and matrix showing potential external sources, conversations with external sources.*

Goal #3: Attract and retain a large and diverse MURP student population that meets PAB criteria in terms of size and diversity.

Objective 1: Achieve a reasonable program size and diversity.

Objective 2: Improve student recruitment program.

*Measures: Program size, graduate student race demographic information, percent minority students, percent foreign students.*

Goal #4: Promote MURP faculty-student partnered research to advance planning for more equitable & sustainable communities.

Objective 1: Assess faculty productivity.

Objective 2: Consider mechanisms to increase productivity.

Objective 3: Define specific research themes that leverage assets (e.g., focus on positioning Michigan globally, involve more outreach faculty on grants, look for cross-unit and cross-university collaboration on research and grants).

Objective 4: Encourage student-partnered research through employment and assistantships. Source and secure funding for student assistantships

*Measures: Productivity (grants, papers), productivity boosting plan, clearly communicated research themes that are publicly available, collaborations.*

Goal #5: Foster a sense of community among MSU URP students, alumni and faculty.

Objective 1: Foster an inclusive and active URPSA student organization.

Objective 2: Target communication and professional opportunities around focus areas

Objective 3: Develop a comprehensive communications plan for alumni.

*Measures: Increased participation on social media sites; institutionalized student orientation; curriculum guide; increased student and alumni awareness of programmatic information; increased support from School, Dean, President; UP advisory group meets each semester; SPDC board has alumni representatives; communications plan and products; and updated website.*

## URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM (URP) –

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION AY 2016-2017

Based on Mary J. Allen’s (2004) book “Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education,” the urban planning faculty developed a comprehensive program assessment plan including specific learning outcomes that is learner-centered and can track individual students across the program. Consequently, we view assessment of student achievement as crucial to improve learning in and beyond the classroom.

The program measures student learning and achievement through direct (tests, capstone projects, rubrics, employer ratings, scores and pass rates on licensure exams) and indirect (course grades, surveys, student self-ratings, alumni satisfaction with learning) assessment methods. Our definition of student achievement and key learning outcome:

**Upon graduation, students demonstrate mastery in knowledge, skills and values of the planning profession preparing students for an entry level position.**

#### Defining desired learning outcomes

We followed Bloom’s taxonomy to design our learning goals for the undergraduate and graduate curriculum during our strategic planning meeting 2014. Our learning objectives cover knowledge, skills, and values.

What should students know?

What should they be able to do?

What should they value?

<b>Bloom's taxonomy</b>	<b>Undergraduate Learning Goals</b>
<p><b>Knowledge:</b> identify and recall information</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> understand material organize and select facts and ideas</p> <p><b>Application:</b> use facts, rules and principles and apply them to new situations</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> separate whole into component parts to understand</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> combine ideas to form a new whole, product of solution</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> make judgments, opinions or decision with reference to criteria</p>	<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Identify general planning knowledge concepts and local planning context of local communities</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> Discuss the purpose and meaning of planning based on history, law, theory and the future of planning</p> <p><b>Application:</b> Apply general planning concepts to real life scenarios, especially local communities</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> Compare and contrast different planning concepts across cultures, countries, and communities</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> Combine theory, law and history in different communities into a consistent perspective on planning</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different planning solutions and create viable planning options, especially for projects assisting local communities</p>
<b>Bloom's taxonomy</b>	<b>Undergraduate Learning Goals</b>
<p><b>Knowledge:</b> identify and recall information</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> understand material organize and select facts and ideas</p> <p><b>Application:</b> use facts, rules and principles and apply them to new situations</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> separate whole into component parts to understand</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> combine ideas to form a new whole, product of solution</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> make judgments, opinions or decision with reference to criteria</p>	<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Recall variety of basic planning skills</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> Distinguish between various planning skills and summarize their differences and importance</p> <p><b>Application:</b> Apply planning skills learned through the curriculum to empirical situations where needed or appropriate, especially in different local communities</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> Inventory specific technical skills to understand the content and purpose for what they address</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> Formulate effective planning outcomes suitable for local communities based on analysis and accepted techniques</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> Assess the utility of solutions based on planning objectives supported by empirical data</p>
<b>Bloom's taxonomy</b>	<b>Undergraduate Learning Goals</b>
<p><b>Knowledge:</b> identify and recall information</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> understand material organize and select facts and ideas</p> <p><b>Application:</b> use facts, rules and principles and apply them to new situations</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> separate whole into component parts to understand</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> combine ideas to form a new whole, product of solution</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> make judgments, opinions or decision with reference to criteria</p>	<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Identify and describe key planning values and recognize ethical practices and responsibilities in the context of local communities</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> Give examples of ethical dilemmas and discuss possible solutions. Explain key planning values and distinguish when they would come into play.</p> <p><b>Application:</b> Illustrate and interpret an ethical planning scenario.</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> Compare and differentiate how values affect the planning process and outcomes.</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> Compile and compose planning methods and approaches in a value-laden framework.</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> Summarize concepts of sustainability including social equity, environmental values, and growth and development.</p>

## Assessment Tool

As a program, we intend to move from norm-referenced assessment (a test in which a student's performance is compared to that of a norm to assign a grade) to criterion-referenced assessment (a test in which the results determine a student's progress toward mastery of a content area or skill. Performance is expected level of mastery). This will have the advantage of measuring student achievement relative to the learning goals we had set, while it promotes collaborative learning vs. competitive learning. We will use rubrics as our base scoring tool that lay out the expectations for the program, so that we are able to trace a student's progress towards such expectations over time. For program assessment we will use holistic scoring (whereby we assign a single score based on an overall performance that takes into account several criteria and how these criteria work together). To note here is that rubrics in particular encourage critical thinking by our students, they level the playing field, they facilitate communication, they provide timely feedback, and help refine our teaching method immediately and permanently.



<b>Student:</b>		<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>General Planning Knowledge</b>	Purpose and Meaning of Planning	Inability to recognize and clearly explain the overall purpose and meaning of planning.	Can identify and explain the overall purpose and meaning of planning.	Demonstrates an ability to compare and contrast different approaches on the overall purpose and meaning of planning.	Demonstrates a professional understanding and presentation of the overall purpose and meaning of planning.
	Planning Theory	Unable to recognize the value and role of planning theory.	Demonstrates an awareness of the role of planning theory.	Demonstrates an effective understanding of the role of planning theory.	Employs a highly developed awareness of the value and application of planning theory.
	Planning Law	Unfamiliar with the basic legal framework for planning.	Show an awareness of the fundamental legal framework involved in urban planning.	Assess the various legal foundations used in planning practice.	Evaluate and apply appropriate legal techniques to solve complex planning problems.
	Human Settlements and History	Lacks awareness of the history and context of human settlements and planning.	Familiarity with the history of human settlements and its role in planning.	Effectively uses planning history to inform current practice.	Critically examines urban history and applies the knowledge to contemporary planning issues.
	The Future	Unable to link planning practice with future conditions.	Can recognize trends that may impact the future of planning.	Able to analyze and describe trends affecting the planning process.	Able to anticipate trends based on empirical research and apply these to future plans.
	Global Dimensions of Planning	Fails to recognize the value of alternate approaches to planning.	Identify global approaches to planning.	Value and apply global solutions to planning issues.	Discriminate among alternative global approaches to planning and translate appropriate techniques for local use.

	<b>Student:</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>Planning Skills</b>	Research	unable to recognize a research question.	able to outline a research problem.	able to define a research problem, phrase an appropriate research question, and suggest various approaches to solve it.	able to identify a complex research question, appropriately choose a research method, and conduct a research project comparing and contrasting alternate methods to solve problems.
	Written, Oral and Graphic Communication	inability to communicate basic concepts.	uses basic communication skills.	demonstrates effective communication skills.	organizes creative, efficient, and imaginative methods of communication.
	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	inability to understand basic techniques.	explain differences between basic techniques.	discriminate between effectiveness of basic techniques.	uses several methods effectively to solve a problem knowing their advantages and limitations.
	Plan Creation and Implementation	unable to understand purpose of planning activity.	outline basic components of the plan and tools.	construct effective plans and implementation methods.	able to critically evaluate and justify a synthesized implementation strategy.
	Planning Process Methods	unable to name components of the planning process.	generalize components of the planning process.	illustrate the effectiveness of methods to advance the planning process.	deconstruct and reconstruct process and methods to find most appropriate technique for efficient planning process.

<b>Student:</b>		<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>Planning Skills</b>	Leadership	inability to recognize effective leadership.	give examples of effective leadership.	distinguish relevant characteristics of leadership skills in specific situations.	demonstrate leadership in various situations.
	Professional Ethics	No recognition of ethical issues or values.	Able to identify and define professional values and ethics.	Able to differentiate and discriminate professional ethics.	Able to synthesize and efficiently apply professional ethics in various ethical dilemmas
<b>Values and Ethics</b>	Governance and Participation	Unable to recognize or appreciate multiple levels of governance, and levels of participation.	Recognize different levels of governance and methods for participation.	Understand and distinguish various levels of governance and methods of participation.	Evaluate and select appropriate levels of governance and methods of participation.
	Sustainability and Environmental Quality	Unable to identify different dimensions of sustainability.	Define sustainability including social, environmental and economic values.	Understand the relationship between 3 E's and recognize trade-offs needed in planning practice.	To evaluate, decide, and justify planning approaches and practices to address sustainability.
	Growth and Development	Unable to identify the role of planning in growth and development.	Give examples of types of growth and development constructs.	Differentiate and compare types of growth and development.	Evaluate types of development and growth and justify their use and their potential benefits and consequences.
	Social Justice	No recognition of the role and importance of social issues and social justice in planning practice.	Give examples and describe issues of social equity and justice.	Able to analyze and explain issues of social equity and justice.	Evaluate, decide, and comprehend consequences of planning actions on social equity and justice.

## BSURP DATA COLLECTED

The Program maintains an ongoing data collection process focusing on two high-value measures for student achievement. The first measure is an objective evaluation by faculty members through the rubric systems, assessing the Program's Culminating Experience (MEASURE I). The second measure is feedback from our capstone clients (MEASURE II). Both are qualified and independent sources that provide specific information about our *program learning outcomes*. We use this information to continuously improve our program. Consequently, we align our curriculum to any changes made to our learning objectives or goals.

### MEASURE I

Accordingly, we have implemented an evaluation tool that helps us track our students' progress over time. This evaluation tool has four levels, with LEVEL I being a beginner in learning about the planning profession and LEVEL IV mastering knowledge, skills and values of the planning profession. As public information, we report the percentage of students at each level upon graduation. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve 80% of graduating students are at LEVEL 4.

Table 1: Undergraduate progress to mastery level upon graduation (2016)

<b>Student:</b>	<b>LEVEL I</b>	<b>LEVEL II</b>	<b>LEVEL III</b>	<b>LEVEL IV</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	0%	0%	27%	73%
<b>Skills</b>	0%	5%	64%	36%
<b>Values</b>	0%	0%	9%	91%

### MEASURE II

Planning practicum is the cap stone project in our curriculum and the final milestone in our student's development. As our students apply their knowledge, skills and values to real world examples, they are evaluated by external stakeholders through a brief survey. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve all ratings at the top level.

Table 2: Evaluation of mastery of the planning profession through cap stone client

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Semi professional</b>	<b>Professional</b>
<b>Quality of research</b>	0%	8%	27%	65%
<b>Visual presentation</b>	0%	2%	23%	75%
<b>Public speaking and professionalism</b>	0%	15%	21%	65%

## MURP DATA COLLECTED

Over the past year, we implement two high-value measures for student achievement. The first measure is an objective evaluation by faculty members through the rubric systems, assessing the Program's Culminating Experience (MEASURE I). The second measure is feedback from our capstone clients (MEASURE II). Both are qualified and independent sources that provide specific information about our *program learning outcomes*. We use this information to continuously improve our program. Consequently, we align our curriculum to any changes made to our learning objectives or goals.

### MEASURE I

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Table 3: Graduate progress to mastery level upon graduation (2016)

<b>Student:</b>	<b>LEVEL I</b>	<b>LEVEL II</b>	<b>LEVEL III</b>	<b>LEVEL IV</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	0%	0%	60%	40%
<b>Skills</b>	0%	20%	40%	40%
<b>Values</b>	0%	0%	60%	40%

### MEASURE II

Planning practicum is the cap stone project in our curriculum and the final milestone in our student's development. As our students apply their knowledge, skills and values to real world examples, they are evaluated by external stakeholders through a brief survey. Because we are striving for excellence in our education, our aim is to achieve all ratings at the top level.

Table 4: Evaluation of mastery of the planning profession through cap stone client

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Semi professional</b>	<b>Professional</b>
<b>Quality of research</b>	0%	0%	25%	75%
<b>Visual presentation</b>	0%	8%	33%	58%
<b>Public speaking and professionalism</b>	0%	0%	42%	58%

## Program Information

### Tuition and Fees

Values below reflect tuition costs for a full-time student for one academic year. Undergraduate costs include tuition for 30 credits while graduate tuition covers 18 credits.

<b>Tuition and Fees 2017-18</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>
In-State	\$ 15,476	\$ 13,078
Out-of-State	\$ 40,028	\$ 25,696
International	\$ 40,028	\$ 25,696

### Graduation and Retention Rates

The retention rate from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 for the BSURP program is 100%, with 100% of the BSURP students graduated within 6 years (Fall 2010 cohort graduated in 2016).

<b>BSURP Student Retention and Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Percentage of degree-seeking BSURP students who began studies in Fall 2015 and continued into Fall 2016	100%
Percentage of degree-seeking BSURP students who began studies in Fall 2014 and continued into Fall 2015	100%
Percentage of single-degree BSURP students graduating within 6 years, entering class of 2010	100%
Percentage of single-degree BSURP students graduating within 6 years, entering class of 2009	100%

From 2015 and 2016 the MURP program had a 100% retention rate, with 100% of MURP students graduated within 4 years of starting their program (Fall 2012-2016).

<b>MURP Student Retention and Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Percentage of degree-seeking MURP students who began studies in Fall 2015 and continued into Fall 2016	100%
Percentage of degree-seeking MURP students who began studies in Fall 2014 and continued into Fall 2015	100%
Percentage of single-degree MURP students graduating within 4 years, entering class of 2012	100%
Percentage of single-degree MURP students graduating within 4 years, entering class of 2011	100%

### Degrees Conferred

In 2016, 18 Bachelor’s Degrees were conferred, while in 2015 14 Bachelor’s Degrees were conferred. In 2016, 7 Masters Degrees were conferred, with 8 degrees awarded in 2015.

### AICP Exam Pass Rate

#### BSURP – AICP Pass Rate

<b>Graduation Year</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Number taking exam	0	0	0	0
Pass rate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

#### MURP – AICP Pass Rate

<b>Graduation Year</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Number taking exam	0	0	0	0
Pass rate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

### Placement and Employment

In 2016, 13 of 18 BSURP graduates in 2015 provided placement information: 7 (54%) continued to graduate education; 5 (38%) were employed as planners; and 1 (7%) worked in a planning related position. All six employed graduates found their positions within one year of graduation.

In 2016, 4 of 7 MURP graduates in 2015 provided placement information: 2 (50%) were employed as planners; 1 (25%) worked in a planning related field; and 1 (25%) continued on to

further graduate study. All three employed planners found their position within one year of graduation.

### Contact Information

For additional information about the Urban & Regional Planning Program please visit our [website](#) or contact Program Leader Professor Mark Wilson by e-mail at [wilsonmm@msu.edu](mailto:wilsonmm@msu.edu). The Program may also be reached by telephone at (517) 432-0704.