



Master of Urban and Regional Planning

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024



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INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The University of South Florida (USF) is part of the State University System of Florida. Located in the Tampa Bay region, USF was founded in 1956 and today serves nearly 50,000 students. USF is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. In 2023, USF became the first public university in Florida in nearly 40 years to be invited to join the Association of American Universities (AAU), a prestigious group of the leading universities in the United State and Canada. High-impact global research is central to USF's mission as one of only three Preeminent Research Universities, as designated by the Florida Board of Governors. The Preeminence program rewards high-achieving universities based on multiple metrics, including graduation rates, student retention rates, research expenditures and the number of patents awarded. U.S. News & World Report has ranked USF as one of the nation's top 50 public universities for five consecutive years, and in 2023 USF earned its highest ranking ever among all universities public or private. Rhea Law is President of USF. Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs Prasant Mohapatra oversees all academic functions.

The USF Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program is located on the Tampa campus of USF and housed within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

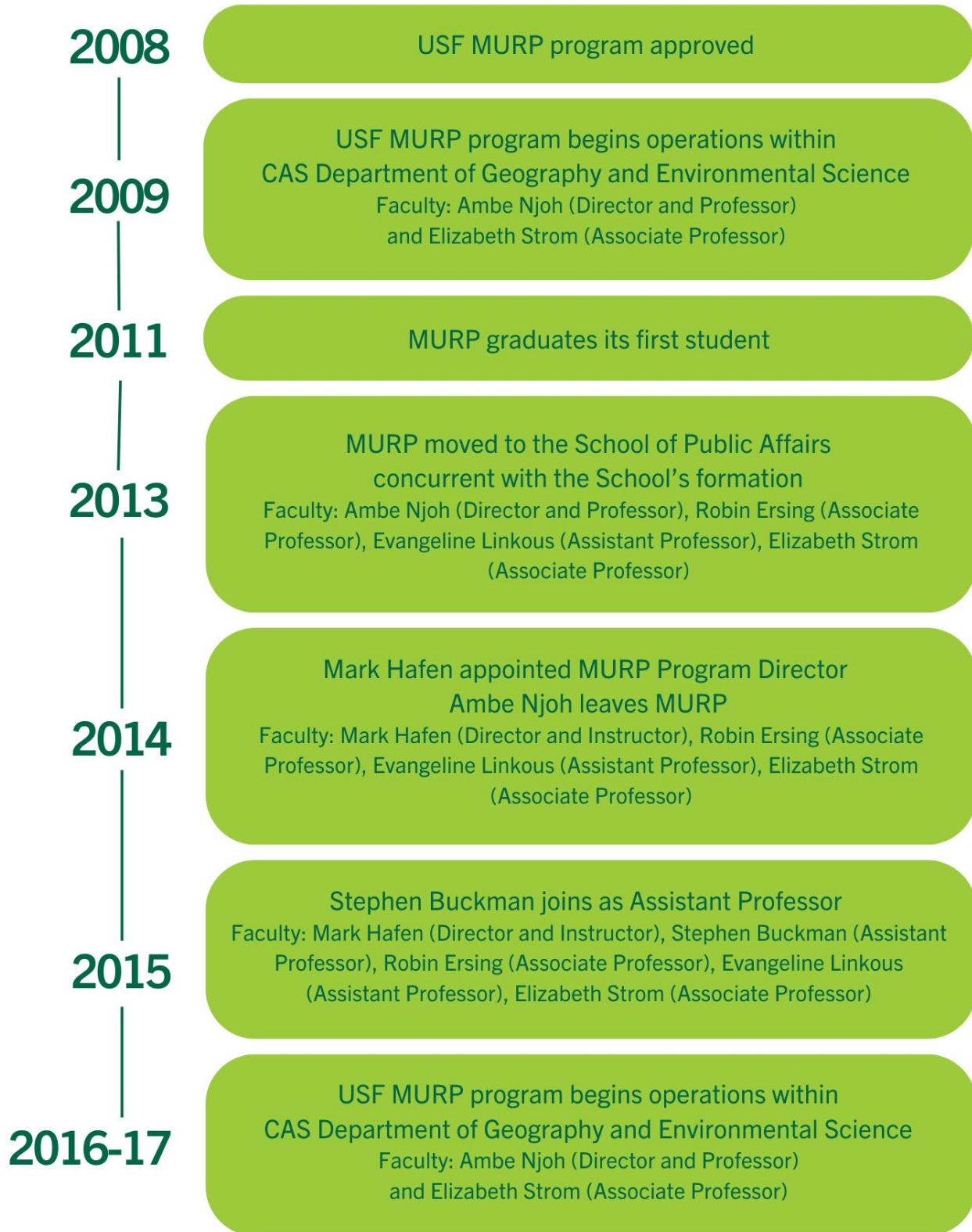
USF MURP is part of the School of Public Affairs (SPA). SPA was formed in 2013. SPA administers two Master degree programs: the MURP degree as well as a Master of Public Administration. SPA also offers two undergraduate minors: the Minor in Urban Studies and the Minor in Public Service & Leadership. SPA also offers several graduate certificate programs and is home to the John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government, which provides applied research, training, and technical assistance to Florida local governments.

The MURP program was approved in 2008, began operations in 2009, and graduated its first student in 2011. Initially part of the Department of Geography and Environmental Science and Policy, MURP moved to SPA concurrent with SPA's formation in 2013. During 2016-2017, MURP successfully completed its first academic program review for the State University System Board of Governors. In November 2020, the Planning Accreditation Board granted MURP a 5-year initial accreditation.

As the time of writing (following the conclusion of the Spring 2024 semester), USF MURP has graduated 137 students. MURP started with just two full-time faculty members in 2009 and will have eight full-time faculty beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.



USF MURP PROGRAM HISTORY



USF MURP PROGRAM HISTORY (CONT.)

2018

Stephen Buckman leaves MURP

Steven Fernandez joins MURP as Research Assistant Professor
Faculty: Mark Hafen (Director and Instructor), Robin Ersing (Associate Professor), Steven Fernandez (Research Assistant Professor), Evangeline Linkous (Assistant Professor), Elizabeth Strom (Associate Professor)

2019

Peng Chen joins MURP

Evangeline Linkous promoted to Associate Professor
Faculty: Mark Hafen (Director and Instructor), Peng Chen (Assistant Professor), Robin Ersing (Associate Professor), Steven Fernandez (Research Assistant Professor), Evangeline Linkous (Associate Professor), Elizabeth Strom (Associate Professor)

2020

MURP creates first Strategic Plan

Planning Accreditation Board grants MURP a 5-year initial accreditation

2021

Mark Hafen retires

Evangeline Linkous appointed MURP Program Director
Faculty: Evangeline Linkous (Director and Associate Professor), Peng Chen (Assistant Professor), Robin Ersing (Associate Professor), Steven Fernandez (Research Assistant Professor), Elizabeth Strom (Associate Professor)

2022

Robin Ersing promoted to Full Professor

Kevin Martyn joins MURP as Assistant Professor of Instruction
Faculty: Evangeline Linkous (Director and Associate Professor), Peng Chen (Assistant Professor), Robin Ersing (Professor), Steven Fernandez (Research Assistant Professor), Kevin Martyn (Assistant Professor of Instruction), Elizabeth Strom (Associate Professor)

USF MURP PROGRAM HISTORY (CONT.)

2023

Amber Dickerson joins MURP as Visiting Instructor
Steven Fernandez promoted to Associate Instructor
Faculty: Evangeline Linkous (Director and Associate Professor), Peng Chen (Assistant Professor), Amber Dickerson (Visiting Instructor), Robin Ersing (Professor), Steven Fernandez (Associate Instructor), Kevin Martyn (Assistant Professor of Instruction), Elizabeth Strom (Associate Professor)

2024-25

MURP creates second Strategic Plan
Youjung Kim joins MURP as Assistant Professor
Amber Dickerson joins MURP as Assistant Instructor
Faculty: Evangeline Linkous (Director and Associate Professor), Peng Chen (Assistant Professor), Amber Dickerson (Assistant Instructor), Robin Ersing (Professor), Steven Fernandez (Research Assistant Professor), Youjung Kim (Assistant Professor), Kevin Martyn (Assistant Professor of Instruction), Elizabeth Strom (Associate Professor)



STRATEGIC PLANNING

State University System, USF, and CAS

The MURP Strategic Plan nests within a State University System and university-wide framework. The 2025 State University System Strategic Plan, as approved by the Florida Board of Governors in October 2019, focuses on three points of emphasis for the State University System 2025 Goals: Excellence, Productivity, and Strategic Priorities for a Knowledge Economy. The 2022-2027 USF Strategic Plan, In Pursuit of Excellence, was approved by the Florida Board of Governors in 2022.

The USF Strategic Plan centers around five goals:

- Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond
- Goal 2: Faculty excellence in research and innovation
- Goal 3: Partnerships and engagement with local, national, and global impact
- Goal 4: A diverse and inclusive community for learning and discovery
- Goal 5: A strong, sustainable, and adaptable financial base

The USF Strategic Plan also identifies five Strategic Areas of Focus:

- Analytics and Data Science Integrating USF Digitally
- Biology by Design
- Design, Arts, and Performance
- Global and National Security
- Health, Society, and Biomedical Science
- Social Justice and Human Rights
- Sustainability, Environmental, and Oceanographic Sciences



CAS has a Mission, Vision, and Strategic Priorities that build on the university plan. Additionally, SPA has a Mission and Vision and conducts strategic planning through each of its degree programs.

For more information, please visit:

- [Florida Board of Governors State University System Strategic Plan](#)
- [USF Strategic Plan](#)
- [CAS Mission/Vision](#)
- [School of Public Affairs Mission/Vision](#)



MURP Strategic Planning

MURP created its first strategic plan in 2020 concurrent with initial Planning Accreditation Board review and accreditation. This strategic plan was developed with MURP's 2024-2025 accreditation cycle. MURP intends to update its plan concurrently with each accreditation cycle, approximately every five to seven years.

USF MURP Strategic Plan, 2021-2027

As part of MURP's initial Planning Accreditation Board accreditation process, MURP developed its first Strategic Plan in 2020. The plan was developed through surveys, focus groups, discussion forums, and workshops with faculty and the USF MURP Advisory Committee. The plan identifies 16 goals grouped into five major themes that define key components of the program. The five themes are:

1. Student Professional Development
2. Faculty Engagement
3. Community and Campus Collaboration
4. Relevance of Curriculum
5. Identity and Culture

This plan identified five priority plan goals. These are:

- A.2: Ensure student readiness for professional practice
- B.1: High quality faculty scholarship
- C.2: Fellowship program to provide stipends for students as a way to provide additional resources to students through community partnerships
- C.4: Planner-in-Residence Program
- D.2: Student success, retention and graduation rate

Complete details on the plan and its implementation are provided in the next chapter.



USF MURP Strategic Plan, 2024

This strategic plan was developed in 2024 and establishes strategic priorities to guide the program's efforts through to the next accreditation cycle, anticipated to be in five to seven years.

While the initial MURP Strategic Plan presented a valuable foundation for planning, the context in which it was adopted and implemented presented significant challenges. In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. In April 2020, the initial MURP Strategic Plan was completed. In 2021, USF MURP Program Director Mark Hafen retired and Evangeline Linkous was appointed Program Director starting with the 2021-2022 academic year. However, Evangeline Linkous was away on a Fulbright for six months of 2021-2022 (the Fulbright had been delayed one year due to the pandemic), during which time Elizabeth Strom served as Interim MURP Program Director. Also in 2021, USF President Steve Currall resigned abruptly, resulting in the Interim appointment of Rhea Law in 2021, who was ultimately appointment President of USF in 2022.

Following these challenging years and transitions, MURP has enjoyed more stability in recent years and has embraced the current strategic planning process as an opportunity to advance the program in unprecedented ways, including the program's first major curriculum update, a new studio program, and the addition of two new faculty members.

The Strategic Planning Process for the 2024 MURP Strategic Plan began in August 2023 and was completed in summer 2024. The process included involvement from MURP stakeholders including students, alumni, faculty, and the USF MURP Advisory Committee. Plan implementation will begin August 2024 with the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. Implementation will be ongoing through to the next Planning Accreditation Board reaccreditation cycle. Detailed information about the updated plan is included in the latter part of this document.



PROGRESS REPORT: USF MURP STRATEGIC PLAN, 2021-2027

This section reports on progress made on the USF MURP Strategic Plan, 2021-2027, which identifies 16 goals. The plan was finalized in April 2020, but COVID and leadership transitions meant that the deep work of implementing the plan and enhancing the program was largely on hold until Fall 2022 when a permanent Program Director, Evangeline Linkous, was in place. By this time, Faculty were already focused on anticipating reaccreditation and taking advantage of new opportunities and investments in the program by CAS. As a result, the Department elected to focus their efforts to implement the plan primarily on fulfilling the top five priority plan goals.

These are:

- **A.2: Ensure student readiness for professional practice**
- **B.1: High quality faculty scholarship**
- **C.2: Fellowship program to provide stipends for students as a way to provide additional resources to students through community partnerships**
- **C.4: Planner-in-Residence Program**
- **D.2: Student success, retention and graduation rate**

Reflecting this focus, this section begins with narrative progress reporting for each of the five priority goals with all linked objectives. Progress related to the other 11 goals is summarized in a table at the end of the section and reported at the goal level.

Priority Goals

Goal A.2: Ensure student readiness for professional practice.

Objective A.2.1: Support alumni success in taking AICP exam

Progress: After careful consideration and consultation with students and alumni, faculty decided that second-year MURP students should be the focus of Department efforts to enhance AICP testing and pass rates (rather than alumni). This is because the One Path to AICP program launched by the American Planning Association in 2017 allows students to sit for the AICP exam. As a result, the Department focused efforts on Objective A.2.2, discussed next. However, the Department regularly and actively supports the Florida Chapter and Sun Coast Section of APA in their AICP preparation efforts, including serving as instructors for training sessions and providing mock test questions for prep events. As of 2024, Program Director Evangeline Linkous is collaborating with APA Florida President Whit Blanton to study how major Florida planning employers value AICP credentialing.

Objective A.2.2: Offer career readiness training annually

Progress: Beginning in 2022, MURP commenced a major effort to launch a Planner in Residence program. This program provides professional development activities for students centered around community-engaged studio projects and to inclusive of career readiness training. For the 2022-2023 academic year, the program worked to educate CAS about the value of this program and ultimately received permission to pilot the program with a one-year Visiting Instructor line for 2023-2024. To implement this objective, the Visiting Instructor offered a new course in Fall 2023 entitled Planning for Professional Practice. This course included AICP exam preparation and instruction on career readiness, with curriculum content based on consultations with the MURP Advisory Committee, which includes many of the major area planning employers. Following a successful pilot year, CAS granted a permanent Assistant Instructor line to continue the program. Amber Dickerson, who served as the Visiting Instructor, will begin a permanent Assistant Instructor role in 2024-2025 and will continue to offer this course on an annual basis.

Objective A.2.3: Engage professional community to support student career readiness

Progress: MURP fulfills this objective through several efforts. MURP has regularly engaged the MURP Advisory Committee to provide feedback to the program on desired job skills. The committee meets twice a year and is extremely active and vocal in guiding the program. While the Student Planning Organization took an active role in organizing social and educational events with area professionals for many years prior to COVID, these efforts diminished during the pandemic but are slowly coming back. The Student Planning Organization maintains strong interactions with the APA Sun Coast section through a dedicated seat on that group's Executive Committee. Finally, both the Planning Studio and the Planning for Professional Practice courses that were piloted in 2023-2024 and will be offered regularly moving forward will include guest speaking and jury/advisor roles with local professional planners to ensure that students interact with and understand professional planning perspective.

Goal B.1: High quality faculty scholarship**Objective B.1.1: Increase faculty publications/reports per year****Objective B.1.2: Increase faculty grant submissions**

Progress: MURP faculty tenure and promotion guidelines encourage grant submissions.

Progress: MURP faculty tenure and promotion guidelines encourage production of high-quality, impactful publications and grant applications/awards. MURP faculty have numerous notable accomplishments in scholarship including:

Peng Chen: Dr. Chen has published articles in top transportation planning journals, such as *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, *Journal of Transport Geography*, *Journal of Transport and Land Use*, and *Urban Studies*. His current research is funded by the National Institute for Congestion Research (NICR), the Center for Transportation, Environment, and Community Health (CTECH), and the U.S. Department of Education. Peng boasts more than 1,800 citations of his work.

Robin Ersing: Dr. Ersing has been PI or Co-PI on over \$1,000,000 in external grant awards, resulting in extensive publications in journals and book chapters; she has served on multiple editorial boards and has held leadership positions in professional associations and academic societies. Dr. Ersing was promoted to Professor in 2022 in recognition of her scholarly achievement.

Steven Fernandez: As an Associate Instructor, Mr. Fernandez is prolific in producing community-engaged research that leverages spatial technology. He is especially valued locally for his contributions to local coastal and historic preservation planning. For example, he has produced research on king tide flooding in Shore Acres, tracked erosion at Egmont Key, and produced digital twins of Tampa's Union Station and the TECO Streetcar.

Evangeline Linkous: Dr. Linkous is a recognized expert in Florida land use planning issues and is regularly invited to advise local governments and the professional planning community in Florida. A recent (May 2024) example of this is her invited speaker role in a 1000 Friends of Florida webinar on land use tools for wildlife protection in Florida attended by over 800 participants. Dr. Linkous's research is published in journals including the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *Land Use Policy*, *Urban Affairs Review*, and the *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Sustainability*.

Kevin Martyn: Dr. Martyn has published in journals including *Corrections: Policy, Practice & Research* and the *Journal of Risk Research*. Dr. Martyn has also produced a wide variety of technical reports for government agencies and governance institutions. He has served as PI or Co-PI on four funded research grants.

Elizabeth Strom: Dr. Strom has published on urban development and affordable housing issues in such journals as the *Urban Affairs Review*, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, and *Housing Policy Debates*. She is the author of two books, *Building the New Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany's Capital* (Lexington Books 2001) and *The Urban Politics Reader* (Routledge 2007). She has been active in carrying out assessments and evaluations for local governments and community-based organizations. Working with graduate students, in recent years she has provided a needs assessment of affordable housing in Dunedin, FL and a needs assessment/baseline study of the Sulphur Springs and East Tampa neighborhoods of Tampa as part of a grant-funded project through the Community Development Corporation of Tampa, and housing studies for two area counties.

Goal C.2: Fellowship program to provide stipends for students as a way to provide additional resources to students through community partnerships

Objective C.2.1: Research criteria for fellowship partners and develop a formalized process

Progress: The Strategic Plan indicates that MURP should increase fellowship program partners by one additional partner annually and establish a formalized process for fellowships. Firm interest in participating in the fellowship program has been strong due to growing demand for planners in the Tampa Bay region. In 2021-2022 there were five fellowship partners and in 2023-2024 there were eight—so the objective of increasing by one partner per year was achieved.

For 2023-2024 the eight fellowship partners offered 12 fellowship positions—an all-time high. As a result, every MURP student who wanted a fellowship was able to obtain one—an unprecedented achievement. However, students, faculty, and partners observed some issues in the quality of the experience for all participants. The Program Director invested a great deal of time interacting with USF, CAS, partners, and students to evaluate how to improve the program. For 2024-2025, a decision was made to reduce the program to only the partners that were able to offer outstanding professional development opportunities based on partner internal organization and fellow feedback. Partners are participating in the program because they want to recruit high quality students, and these reforms also refine the program to best meet this objective.

This objective also aims toward a formalized fellowship process. The fellowship process has always include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Beginning in 2023-2024, the program renewed all MOU agreements and implemented a new annual amendment process that will provide clarity about Work Expectations and Payment Schedules. Additionally, the Program Director worked with the Office Manager to improve clarity in offer letters provided to students about fellowship expectations. These updates indicated that this objective has been met.

Goal C.4: Planner-in-Residence Program

Objective C.4: Planner-in-Residence program

Progress: The Strategic Plan indicates that MURP should offer a Planner in Residence program with a studio course, seek Advisory Committee guidance to implement the program, and obtain funding for and seek CAS support for the program. Progress toward this goal has truly been the central effort of the program over the last several years, especially in the 2022-2024 period when MURP was meaningfully able to invest in strategic planning efforts following pandemic and leadership disruptions. MURP is pleased to report that all of these objectives have been accomplished.

MURP sought to develop a Planner in Residence program to address several goals, including providing a regular studio course to students to improve professional development, enhancing program engagement with the community, and better orienting the program to pursue project awards and increase awareness about the program. As has already been discussed, MURP solicited Advisory Committee guidance and CAS support for the program during the 2022-2022 academic year. CAS granted support for a pilot program for 2023-2024, and MURP brought on Visiting Professor Amber Dickerson as Planner in Residence. Amber led a Fall 2023 studio in partnership with the St. Petersburg Innovation District that went on to win a Florida Chapter of the APA Student Project Award. CAS then committed to ongoing funding and MURP hired Amber Dickerson into a permanent Assistant Instructor line to lead the Planner in Residence program on an ongoing basis.

MURP is truly proud and delighted about this accomplishment and new program offering. However, the work is not done. Now that MURP has a permanent line supporting this program, MURP is working to update the curriculum to leverage this opportunity. Work toward this goal will be ongoing in 2024 and will include updates to the program's exit requirements, required courses, and course offerings.

Goal D.2: Student success, retention and graduation rate

Objective D.2.1: Access MURP student competencies

Progress: The Strategic Plan aims for 100% of the comprehensive exams and ongoing curriculum and Student Learning Outcome assessments (with annual reporting). Student success is a primary goal of the MURP program and all of these objectives have been achieved. The primary outcome of these efforts is the decision of the faculty to do the first major update of the program curriculum since the program was launched in 2009 (see Curriculum chapter for more information). In Spring 2024, Faculty identified the core courses to be included in the new curriculum. In Fall 2024, the electives and other supporting curriculum components will be established and submitted for University review and approval for a 2025-2026 launch.

Objective D.2.1: Maintain a 90% rate of student retention for year two of the program

Progress: The 2023 Annual Report to PAB indicates a 100% retention rate for full-time students and an 80% retention rate for part-time students. The 2022 Annual Report to PAB indicates a 100% retention rate for both full-time and part-time students. These post-COVID retention rates generally indicate success in meeting this target.

Other Goals

This section summarizes progress toward the remaining 11 goals in the Strategic Plan.

OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS
Goal A.1: Enhance the internship program to best serve students and employers	The MURP Program Guidebook was updated for 2023-2024 to improve clarity about the internship program. The annual survey of student internships has not been implemented evenly during the pandemic and period of leadership transition. With the addition of a decided Planner in Residence position overseeing student professional development, MURP will seek to improve participant satisfaction with and reporting related to internships.
Goal B.2: Faculty professional involvement, service, and community outreach	<p>MURP faculty engage with the community through leadership roles in several community and professional organizations. Select examples are included here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Fernandez: Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commissioner, 2021 - present • Evangeline Linkous: Executive Committee, Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association, January 2023 - present; Executive Board, Fulbright Association, Mid-Florida Chapter, June 2023 – present; Executive Board, Urban Land Institute Tampa Bay, August 2021 – August 2023; Planning Commissioner, Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission; February 2021 – December 2021; Chair, 2021 Project Awards Committee, Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association. • Elizabeth Strom: Affordable Housing Advisory Board, Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners, 2018 - 2020; Hillsborough County Community Land Trust board, 2022-present; Housing Leadership Council of Tampa Bay, executive committee, 2023-present.
Goal B.3: Teaching excellence and responsiveness to student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The USF Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE) offers regular workshops to assist faculty with course development and teaching techniques. Peng Chen, Evangeline Linkous, and Elizabeth Strom have participated in ATLE training. • USF’s Innovative Education offers training and support for faculty teaching online. Kevin Martyn, Evangeline Linkous, and Elizabeth Strom have earned Online Instructor Certification through Innovative Education and have also developed courses through Innovative Education’s Quality Matters online course development program.

Other Goals (cont.)

OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS
<p>Goal B.3: Teaching excellence and responsiveness to student needs (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evangeline Linkous participated in USF Library’s 2024 Special Collections Summer Institute, a weeklong training designed to help faculty incorporate special collection materials into the curriculum. • Advising: The MURP Program Director meets one-on-one with all newly admitted students who accept an initial advising appointment. All faculty participate in an initial program orientation scheduled just prior to the start of the academic year. Once enrolled, all MURP students are assigned a faculty advisor, typically just after orientation. In addition, the Program Director makes herself available for advising to all MURP students by request. • Thesis Committee Membership: MURP faculty serve on committees for MURP students who do thesis projects. Additionally, MURP faculty serve as committee members for USF honors undergraduate thesis projects, USF doctoral work, and external committees. Faculty serving on MURP thesis committees in AY 2023-2024 included Peng Chen, Robin Ersing, Evangeline Linkous, Kevin Martyn, and Elizabeth Strom. • Student Planning Organization: Evangeline Linkous has served as Faculty Liaison to the Student Planning Organization since joining USF in 2013. This group is very active in creating professional development and networking opportunities for students. Every summer, Dr. Linkous hosts a planning session at her home for the incoming Student Planning Organization to help the students generate a calendar of activities and identify goals. • Internships: MURP faculty rotate teaching of the internship course and advise students about internship opportunities. This includes posting opportunities via Canvas and one-on-one discussion. • Mentor a Planning Students (MAPS): MURP faculty support the program’s mentoring initiative in partnership with APA Sun Coast. MURP faculty oversee the program, including the application process, program launch, and program evaluation. • Competitions: Faculty volunteer time to support student participation in national, state, and local contests. In 2023, MURP faculty Elizabeth Strom, Evangeline Linkous, and Amber Dickerson advised the student group who placed 3rd in the APA National Student Planning and Design Competition. Working under the supervision of MURP faculty Peng Chen, MURP student Aditi Hoti won 1st place in the APA Transportation Planning Division student paper competition. • Awards: Faculty recommend students for honors and awards. This may include mentoring students in the application process and writing/submitting nominations. In 2023, Evangeline Linkous nominated MURP student Beneetta Mary Jose for APA Florida Student Planner of the Year, which Beneetta went on to win! • Special Events: Faculty organize or co-lead a wide variety of events to engage students beyond the curriculum. Some recent examples include the November 2023 event on Russian emigration to Tbilisi organized by Evangeline Linkous and the May 2024 screening of the film Basic, for which Elizabeth Strom participated in a panel discussion.

Other Goals (cont.)

OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS
<p>Goal B.3: Teaching excellence and responsiveness to student needs (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Placement: MURP faculty actively work to ensure a strong relationship among the program and area planning employers for job placement. Some specific ways this is done is promotion of student achievements and sharing information about collaboration opportunities with the MURP Advisory Committee; regular engagement through a wide array of activities including event partnership and conference participation with the Florida Chapter of APA; and ongoing support of the MURP Fellowship Program which provides students with employment in the field.
<p>Goal C.1: Engagement with local community partners in the Tampa Bay region</p>	<p>This objective essentially duplicates the goal of starting a Planner in Residence program, which was achieved as documented in progress reporting for Objective C.4. Other evidence of engagement is summarized here:</p> <p>Curriculum in General The MURP program strives to offer a curriculum that is deeply engaged with and relevant to planning practice. Many courses include applied research that addresses local planing challenges, often in partnership with a community partner. For example, Steven Fernandez’s URP 6256: Urban Spatial Analytics course regularly partners with local community or planning groups to contribute spatial analysis. Examples include a tree canopy study done for the City of Temple Terrace and an analysis of potential medical marijuana dispensary locations for City of Tampa. Evangeline Linkous has oriented her 6316: Land Use Planning to professional practice, with most assignments using or analyzing real local planning data and decisions. Robin Ersing always offers URP 6232: Research Methods for Urban and Regional Planning as an applied course, requiring students to do asset mapping, interviews, and focus group studies that develop their skills as planners.</p> <p>Studio Program The introduction of a new studio course to be offered every semester is one of the biggest changes in the MURP curriculum and one of the most important ways the program will be engaging students in the profession. MURP believes the studio offers exceptionally rich, community engaged learning opportunities for student. The studio was offered for the first time in AY 2023-2024 through a Visiting Instructor line and will be offered regularly through a new, permanent Assistant Instructor line beginning in AY 2024-2025. In the program exit survey results of students who graduated at the end of AY 2023-2024, three of six respondents indicated that the studio was the MURP experience they enjoyed most or benefitted most from (note that not all students took the studio).</p> <p>MURP will be refining the studio program through implementation and responding to lessons learned over the coming semesters. At the time of writing, MURP plans to always partner with a real community or planning organization on a real planning issue each semester. The course will be taught by new, permanent Assistant Instructor Amber Dickerson, who is AICP certified and has over 20 years of professional planning experience. The course will also regularly engage a Community Expert and subject matter expert to help advise students in the studio about their concepts. Students will present their work to clients and stakeholders.</p>

Other Goals (cont.)

OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS
<p>Goal C.1: Engagement with local community partners in the Tampa Bay region (cont.)</p>	<p>MURP plans to submit studio project reports/documents for the APA Florida Planning Conference Student Project Award each year, and may also submit to present conference sessions to showcase studio findings. This will provide further opportunities for MURP students to present their work and get feedback from planning professionals.</p> <p>New Planning Professional Practice Course In addition to offering a studio course each semester, MURP will be regularly offering a new Planning Professional Practice course (taught for the first time in AY 2023-2024). The new permanent Assistant Instructor, who is AICP certified, will be teaching this course. At this time, the course is proposed for inclusion in the updated MURP core curriculum. The course will focus on preparation for professional practice. It will include guidance about getting a first job, information about AICP and other planning certifications, and learning opportunities centered around professional soft skills. The course will also feature a rotating set of guest speakers from the community who will speak about various aspects of professional planning practice, promoting engagement between the MURP program and area professionals.</p> <p>Mentoring The Mentor a Planning Student (MAPS) mentoring program in partnership with APA Sun Coast provides students with an informal opportunity to seek guidance about their career and build their professional network. MURP students may participate in MAPS each year they are in the program, allowing for different mentor matches.</p> <p>Partnership with APA MURP partners with APA at the national, state, and local levels to provide student support and promote student engagement with the profession. Specific initiatives related to student engagement with the profession include: 1) the Mentor a Planning Student program is a partnership between MURP and APA Sun Coast for mentoring; 2) APA Sun Coast provides an annual scholarship fund of \$1000 to support MURP student attendance at the annual APA Florida Planning Conference; and 3) the President of the Student Planning Organization has a position on the APA Sun Coast Executive Committee--a terrific professional development and networking opportunity. Many MURP graduates go on to leadership roles within APA Florida and Sun Coast.</p> <p>MURP is committed to regular student and faculty attendance at the annual APA Florida Planning Conference. MURP faculty submit student projects for the Student Project Award and/or partner with students to present research at conference sessions. For the September 2024 Florida Planning Conference, Dr. Linkous will be co-presenting research with MURP student Samad Agha. In her Program Director role, Dr. Linkous has raised funding to provide every MURP student with a scholarship covering the cost of conference registration. In 2023, a MURP student team attended the Florida Planning Conference and was awarded a Student Project Award for the St Pete Innovation District studio report. MURP provided funding to support student attendance at this conference. Also in 2023, a MURP student group was invited to APA National to present their submission for the APA National Student Planning and Design Competition. MURP raised funding to allow the whole team to attend the conference, where they placed third in the nation.</p>

Other Goals (cont.)

OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS
Goal C.1: Engagement with local community partners in the Tampa Bay region (cont.)	<p>Student Planning Organization</p> <p>The Student Planning Organization (SPO) is an official USF Student Organization with elected officers, bylaws, and a university budget. SPO has a professional development and networking mission and regularly organizes events to engage students with area planning professionals. A recent example was an opportunity where (SPO) invited a MURP alum to talk about their work at the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission administering a land use map amendment on USF property.</p>
Goal C.3: Cross campus collaboration	<p>While MURP faculty participate in cross-campus collaboration, the Department has not identified or implemented a systematic way of reporting this information. A notable example of MURP cross-campus collaboration is the MURP program’s ongoing partnership with the USF Access 3D Lab, which provides students with access to cutting-edge 3D GIS and LiDAR technology and instruction.</p>
Goal D.1: Annual Graduate Program Survey disseminated each Spring semester for students and Fall for alumni	<p>MURP conducts a variety of surveys to assess program quality and perception and disseminates the results. All graduating students complete an exit survey conducted annually. Additionally, concurrent with reaccreditation processes, MURP surveys graduates since the prior accreditation cycle and conducts a market survey of area employers. Results of these surveys are distributed to students, alums, and the MURP Advisory Committee.</p>
Goal D.3: A curriculum designed with strong stakeholder input and contributions	<p>The MURP Program Advisory Committee has been extensively and ongoingly engaged in advising the program about the curriculum. In addition, MURP interfaces with area planning employers to refine courses to ensure relevant content. For example, in 2022, MURP organized a meeting of local transportation planning experts to identify specific content needed in the program’s transportation courses since this is a major area of employment in the region.</p>
Goal E.1: Use of local urban corridor to create a sense of community between the students and public/private sector	<p>The intent behind this goal is unclear to MURP faculty. The goals speak largely to marketing the program—something MURP has worked hard to advance. MURP purchased a Loomly subscription in 2023 to enhance its social media presence. Additionally, MURP has focused the program GA role to include more marketing activities. Finally, MURP has been working with the CAS Marketing team to update and launch a variety of MURP marketing materials (both print and social). MURP has a robust following (relative to other planning problems) on social media. At the time of writing, MURP has 653 Facebook followers, 680 LinkedIn followers, and 374 Instagram followers.</p>
Goal E.2: Advisory Committee guidance and oversight	<p>The MURP Advisory Committee adheres to all program guidelines and enjoys strong participation in its two annual meetings.</p>
Goal E.3: Strategic Plan Dashboard	<p>MURP did not develop or implement a Strategic Plan Dashboard due to limited time and resources as well as the low anticipated impact of this goal.</p>
Goal E.4: Quality and Diversity	<p>The USF MURP program reflects student diversity, with 10% international students, 15% Hispanic students, and a roughly equal mix of male and female students. Among MURP students who are US Citizens and permanent residents, 12% are Black or African American. . Student and faculty diversity continues to be reported to PAB annually. The searches conducted for two new hires that will begin in 2024-2025 followed USF recruitment procedures.</p>

USF MURP STRATEGIC PLAN, 2024

Concurrent with the current reaccreditation effort, USF MURP updated its Strategic Plan. The USF MURP Strategic Plan, 2024 includes an updated mission, vision, and inclusion values statement, as well as new goals, objectives, and benchmarks. The updated strategic plan aims to focus the Department's work on our core commitments (teaching, research, and engagement) while investing in strategic initiatives that ensure program relevance, quality, and sustainability.

The Strategic Planning Process for the 2024 MURP Strategic Plan began in August 2023 and was completed in summer 2024. The process included extensive faculty involvement, including regular discussion at faculty meetings and two dedicated retreats. Given USF MURP's relatively small faculty size, all strategic planning was done with all faculty members rather than by committee. Additionally, the Department dedicated the bulk of two USF MURP Advisory Committee meetings to engagement with this group around strategic planning. Finally, the draft plan was shared with students and alums for feedback.

Plan implementation will begin August 2024 with the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. Implementation will be ongoing through to the next Planning Accreditation Board reaccreditation cycle. Implementation will occur through actions undertaken at the end of each semester, annually, and at reaccreditation as identified in the timeframes provided for each objective.

2024 Strategic Plan Timeline

August 2024 Faculty Meeting

- Launch process
- Ensure familiarity with PAB Standards

December 2024 Faculty Meeting

- Identify Mission and Vision

December 2024 Advisory Committee Meeting

- Share information on process
- Feedback on Mission and Vision

January 2025 Faculty Retreat

- Develop goals with measurable objective
- Identify Values Inclusion Statement
- Identify definition of diversity

January 2025 Faculty Meeting

- Develop goals with measurable objective
- Identify Values Inclusion Statement

February 2025 Faculty Retreat

- Finalize Student Learning Outcomes

February 2025 Faculty Meeting

- Launch Strategic Plan drafting process

March 2025 Advisory Committee Meeting

- Obtain feedback on process/draft documents

March 2025 Faculty Meeting

- Faculty review Strategic Plan and Student Learning Outcomes

April 2025 Faculty Meeting

- Faculty review/drafting of Self Study data

June 2025

- Draft Strategic Plan shared with Advisory Committee, Alums, and Students

Mission

The University of South Florida Master of Urban and Regional Planning program conducts planning education, research, and community-engaged service that fosters critical thinking, innovative skills, ethical conduct, and a global perspective in a diverse and inclusive environment. In partnership with our community, we deliver a learning experience that promotes excellence among planning professionals, serves workplace needs, and positively shapes community futures in the region, state, nation, and world.

Vision

As part of a public university with deep connections to our region and state, the University of South Florida Master of Urban and Regional Planning program educates planners for professional success and community impact. The University of South Florida Master of Urban and Regional Planning program will be recognized as Florida's premier program for applied planning research and professional development.

Inclusion Values

USF MURP elected to adopt and commits to USF's Inclusion Values Statement.

University of South Florida Master of Urban and Regional Planning program is committed to inclusion through:

- Diversity of students, faculty, and staff in safe campus environments.
- Respect and recognition of each individual through a commitment to justice, equity, and anti-racism.
- Community engagement and public service.
- A welcoming campus life with broad academic, cultural, and athletic opportunities.



Goals and Objectives

This section identifies the goals for the program through to the next reaccreditation cycle, anticipated to be in five to seven years. We first provide an overview of the program's four goals and supporting objectives. We then provide detailed benchmarks, timeframes, results, and action plans associated with each objective.

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond

To promote the success of well-educated, highly skilled, and adaptable alums who, as lifelong learners, lead enriched lives, contribute to the democratic process, function as engaged community citizens, and thus thrive in a dynamic global market.

- Objective 1.1: Current students are satisfied with instruction.
- Objective 1.2: Graduating students are satisfied with the MURP Program.
- Objective 1.3: Alumni are satisfied with the MURP Program.
- Objective 1.4: Graduating students obtain employment in planning-related jobs.
- Objective 1.5: Employers are satisfied with their USF MURP employees.
- Objective 1.6: USF MURP students pass the AICP exam.
- Objective 1.7: Students are satisfied with their MURP internship experience.
- Objective 1.8: Studios—an important experience in the curriculum—are offered annually.
- Objective 1.9: The curriculum provides a strong basis for teaching students the guiding values, knowledge, and skills of the profession.
- Objective 1.10: The Program values and champions student diversity.

Goal 2: Faculty excellence in research and innovation

To conduct high-impact research and innovation to advance frontiers of knowledge, solve global problems, and improve lives.

- Objective 2.1: Foster faculty research productivity and impact.
- Objective 2.2: Ensure faculty assignments reflect stage of career and research expectations.
- Objective 2.3: Promote research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.
- Objective 2.4: Support faculty research productivity and professional development.
- Objective 2.5: Recruit new faculty who show promise in distinguishing themselves and according to institutional best practices for diversity.

Goal 3: Partnerships and engagement with local, national, and global impact

To be a major social and economic engine creating robust global, national, and regional partnerships to build a prosperous and sustainable future for our regional communities and the state of Florida.

- Objective 3.1: Foster faculty participation in professional and academic associations and state and local government and community planning organizations.
- Objective 3.2: Promote public awareness of program through systematic marketing efforts and faculty participation in media.
- Objective 3.3: Engage MURP Advisory Committee.
- Objective 3.4: Partner with a diverse array of stakeholders for teaching, research, and service.

Goal 4: Strategic initiatives

To be responsive to emerging trends and needs that ensure a relevant and resilient Program.

- Objective 4.1: Enhance robustness of studio program.
- Objective 4.2: Enhance curriculum for and strategic focus around MURP Graduate Certificates.
- Objective 4.3: Enhance undergraduate offerings as a recruitment strategy.
- Objective 4.4: Ensure Program is meeting needs of increasing share of full-time working students.

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- Objective 1.6: USF MURP students pass the AICP exam.
- Objective 1.7: Students are satisfied with their MURP internship experience.
- Objective 1.8: Studios—an important experience in the curriculum—are offered annually.
- Objective 1.9: The curriculum provides a strong basis for teaching students the guiding values, knowledge, and skills of the profession.
- Objective 1.10: The program values and champions student diversity.

Objective 1.1: Current students are satisfied with instruction.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Current students are satisfied with instruction.	USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting, particularly “Overall Rating of Instructor.”	Students are highly satisfied with the majority of the courses, with a score of 4.0 or better for overall course quality.	Every course, every semester.	Report percentage of courses receiving 4.0 or greater for Fall and Spring semesters.	Faculty and the Program Director review Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting results each semester. The Program reviews courses that need revision, shift in instructors, or additional mentoring and support through USF’s Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning.
USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting is collected and reported at the University level. Results are provided to faculty and the public via an online portal. Scores are collected along eight measurements of course quality. The program focuses on the “Overall Rating of Instructor” measurement which most aligns with overall course quality. The ranking scale is from 1-5 where 5 is the highest score (“Excellent”) and 1 is the lowest score (“Poor”).					

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond (cont.)

Objective 1.2: Graduating students are satisfied with the MURP Program.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Graduating students are satisfied with the MURP Program.	Exit survey of graduating students, particularly “Overall Rating of Program.”	Students are highly satisfied with the program, with a score of 4.0 or better for “Overall Rating of Program.”	Exit surveys completed for each graduation date.	Report percentage of graduates rating the program as Excellent or Very Good each graduation date.	Faculty and the Program Director review annual exit survey results each fall. The Program incorporates exit survey results into curriculum and Program revisions on an annual basis.
The information is collected by the program. The Program Director administers the survey each graduation date and shares results with Program faculty annually. The Program considers historical comparison and potential improvement opportunities.					

Objective 1.3: Alumni are satisfied with the MURP Program.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Alumni are satisfied with the MURP program.	Survey of alumni, particularly “Overall Rating of Program.”	Alumni are highly satisfied with the program, with a score of 4.0 or better for “Overall Program Quality.”	Reviewed at submission of self-study for Planning Accreditation Board for timeframe since previous self-study.	Report percentage of alumni rating the Program as Excellent or Very Good.	Faculty and the Program Director review results. The program incorporates survey results into curriculum and Program revisions.
The information is collected by the Program. The Program Director administers the survey. The Program considers historical comparison and potential improvement opportunities.					

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond (cont.)

Objective 1.4: Graduating students obtain employment in planning-related jobs.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Graduating students obtain employment in planning-related jobs.	Percentage of all graduates obtaining professional planning, planning-related, or other positions within 12 months of graduating.	A majority of graduates (90%) for previous year graduating class obtain professional planning, planning-related, or other positions within 12 months of graduating.	Annual for previous year graduating class.	Report percentage of graduates obtaining employment in planning-related jobs.	Faculty and the Program Director review annually and share with MURP Advisory Committee. The MURP Advisory Committee advises MURP about job readiness.
The information is collected by the program and reported to the Planning Accreditation Board annually through the annual reporting process.					

Objective 1.5: Employers are satisfied with their USF MURP employees.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Employers are satisfied with their USF MURP employees.	Survey of Employers particularly “Overall Rating of USF MURP Graduates” and employer interest in hiring more graduates.	A majority of employers (90%) are highly satisfied with USF MURP Program graduates and would consider hiring more graduates.	Employer survey conducted every five years.	Report percentages for Overall Rating of USF MURP Graduates and interest in hiring more graduates.	Review the results of the employer survey with the Program faculty and MURP Advisory Committee.
The information is collected by the Program.					

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond (cont.)

Objective 1.6: USF MURP students pass the AICP exam.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
USF MURP students pass the AICP exam.	Percentage of graduates taking the AICP exam within three years.	A majority of graduates (90%) taking the AICP exam within three years pass.	Report annually for graduating class from three years prior.	Report percentage of graduates (graduating class from three years prior) who pass the AICP exam.	Faculty and the Program Director review annually and share with MURP Advisory Committee. AICP exam preparation is offered within the curriculum each year.
The information is collected by the Program and reported to the Planning Accreditation Board annually through the annual reporting process.					

Objective 1.7: Students are satisfied with their MURP internship experience.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Graduating students are satisfied with their MURP internship experience.	Exit survey of graduating students, particularly “Overall Rating of Internship Experience.”	Students are highly satisfied with their internship, with a score of 4.0 or better for “Overall Rating of Internship Experience.”	Exit surveys completed for each graduation date.	Report percentage of graduates rating the internship experience as Excellent or Very Good each graduation date.	Faculty and the Program Director review annual exit survey results each fall. The program incorporates exit survey results into curriculum and program revisions on an annual basis.
The information is collected by the program. The Program Director administers the survey each graduation date and shares results with program faculty annually. The program considers historical comparison and potential improvement opportunities.					

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond (cont.)

Objective 1.8: Studios—an important experience in the curriculum—are offered annually.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Studios—an important part of the curriculum—are offered annually.	Studios are offered annually and receive strong course evaluations based on USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting, particularly “Overall Rating of Instructor” for studio course.	Students are highly satisfied with the studio courses, with a score of 4.0 or better for overall course quality.	Every studio course offering, at least annually.	Report percentage of students rating the internship experience as Excellent or Very Good.	Faculty and the Program Director review Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting results each semester. The Program reviews courses that need revision, shift in instructors, or additional mentoring and support through USF’s Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning.
<p>USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting is collected and reported at the University level. Results are provided to faculty and the public via an online portal. Scores are collected along eight measurements of course quality. The program focuses on the “Overall Rating of Instructor” measurement which most aligns with overall course quality. The ranking scale is from 1-5 where 5 is the highest score (“Excellent”) and 1 is the lowest score (“Poor”).</p>					

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond (cont.)

Objective 1.9: The curriculum provides a strong basis for teaching students the guiding values, knowledge, and skills of the profession.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
<p>The curriculum provides a strong basis for teaching students the guiding values, knowledge, and skills of the profession.</p> <p>The program offers a mix of strong core courses and relevant electives, an appropriate mix of course modalities, and integrates coordinated assessment.</p>	<p>Triangulate data from: USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting, student exit surveys, student learning outcome reporting, employer surveys, and Advisory Committee feedback.</p>	<p>Students, faculty, alumni, employers, and the MURP Advisory Committee agree that the curriculum provides a strong basis for the guiding values, knowledge, and skills of the profession.</p>	<p>Annual review of curriculum by faculty.</p>	<p>Report results of annual review.</p>	<p>Faculty and the Program Director triangulate data then review, discuss, and revise the curriculum. Students, employers, the MURP Advisory Committee are consulted on curriculum revisions.</p>
<p>USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting is collected and reported at the University level. Results are provided to faculty and the public via an online portal. Scores are collected along eight measurements of course quality. The Program focuses on the “Overall Rating of Instructor” measurement which most aligns with overall course quality. The ranking scale is from 1-5 where 5 is the highest score (“Excellent”) and 1 is the lowest score (“Poor”).</p>					

Goal 1: Student success at USF and beyond (cont.)

Objective 1.10: The Program values and champions student diversity.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
The program values and champions student diversity.	Share of minority and international students. The program offers a range of opportunities that support pathways to and through graduate planning education.	A minimum of 30% of students are from US historical minorities or from outside the US. USF MURP offers funding and engagement to promote diversity in planning education.	Annual measurement.	Report percentage of minority and international students annually. Report on USF MURP funding and engagement to promote diversity in planning education.	Faculty and the Program Director review data and recruitment strategies annually.

The information is collected by the Program and University.

Goal 2: Faculty excellence in research and innovation

To conduct high-impact research and innovation to advance frontiers of knowledge, solve global problems, and improve lives.

- Objective 2.1: Foster faculty research productivity and impact.
- Objective 2.2: Ensure faculty assignments reflect stage of career and research expectations.
- Objective 2.3: Promote research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.
- Objective 2.4: Support faculty research productivity and professional development.
- Objective 2.5: Recruit new faculty who show promise in distinguishing themselves and according to institutional best practices for diversity.

Objective 2.1: Foster faculty research productivity and impact.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
The program values and champions faculty research productivity and impact.	Total number of refereed papers published in academic journals. Total number of book chapters published. Total number of community-engaged reports. Faculty presence in media.	For all tenured and tenure-track professors, an average of two scholarly articles, book chapters, grants/contracts, and/or high-impact community engaged reports per year.	Annual measurement.	Report total and average publications.	Celebrate faculty scholarly achievements. Assist and encourage faculty to continue regular publication after tenure. Champion impactful community-engaged research.

The information is collected by the program and University.

Goal 2: Faculty excellence in research and innovation (cont.)

Objective 2.2: Foster faculty research productivity and impact.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Ensure faculty assignments reflect state of career and research expectations.	Percent service, teaching, and research for faculty at different career stages and/or with different administrative responsibilities.	USF standard distribution with exceptions for tenure-track, high-performing research faculty, and faculty with administrative appointments.	Annual review.	Faculty review annually and modify as appropriate.	Support limited service loads for tenure-track faculty. Allow high-performing research faculty opportunity to buy-out of teaching in support of research opportunities. Allow course releases for administrative responsibilities.
The information is collected by the program.					

Objective 2.3: Promote research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Promote research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.	Faculty are active in producing research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.	For all tenured and tenure-track professors, an average of one research output annually that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.	Annual review.	Report total and average publications.	This activity should be valued in promotion and annual reviews. Faculty and Program Director will review and discuss annually.
The information is collected by the program.					

Goal 2: Faculty excellence in research and innovation (cont.)

Objective 2.4: Support faculty research productivity and professional development.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Support faculty research productivity and professional development.	Faculty travel funding for conference presentations and research collaboration. Dedicated MURP graduate assistant. Funding for faculty academic and professional organization memberships.	Funding and graduate assistant support will remain stable or increase.	Annual budget process.	Report changes to funding.	Faculty and Program Director will review and discuss annually and bring Chair attention to identified needs and opportunities.

The information is collected by the program.

Objective 2.5: Recruit new faculty who show promise in distinguishing themselves and according to institutional best practices for diversity.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Promote research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.	Faculty are active in producing research that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.	For all tenured and tenure-track professors, an average of one research output annually that aligns with USF strategic areas of focus and state/regional issues.	Annual review.	Report total and average publications.	This activity should be valued in promotion and annual reviews. Faculty and Program Director will review and discuss annually.

The information is collected by the program.

Goal 3: Partnerships and engagement with local, national, and global impact

To be a major social and economic engine creating robust global, national, and regional partnerships to build a prosperous and sustainable future for our regional communities and the state of Florida.

- Objective 3.1: Foster faculty participation in professional and academic associations and state and local government and community planning organizations.
- Objective 3.2: Promote public awareness of Program through systematic marketing efforts and faculty participation in media.
- Objective 3.3: Engage MURP Advisory Committee.
- Objective 3.4: Partner with a diverse array of stakeholders for teaching, research, and service.

Objective 3.1: Foster faculty participation in professional and academic associations and state and local government and community planning organizations.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Foster faculty participation in professional and academic associations and state and local government and community planning organizations.	Number of faculty in leadership positions in professional and academic associations. Number of faculty in leadership positions in state and local government and community planning organizations.	For all full-time faculty, an average of one leadership position in professional and academic associations and state and local government and community planning organizations.	Reviewed at submission of self-study for Planning Accreditation Board for timeframe since previous self-study.	Report total and average number of positions held.	Faculty and Program Director will review and discuss annually.

The information is collected by the program.

Goal 3: Partnerships and engagement with local, national, and global impact (cont.)

Objective 3.2: Promote public awareness of Program through systematic marketing efforts and faculty participation in media.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Promote public awareness of Program through systematic marketing efforts and faculty participation in media.	Number of faculty quoted in or contacted by the media, or faculty producing op-eds, blogs and other media content. Average number of social media posts per week during academic year.	For all full-time faculty, an average of one media feature annually. An average of one social media post per week during academic year.	Reviewed at submission of self-study for Planning Accreditation Board for timeframe since previous self-study.	Report total and average number of media features. Report average number of social media posts	Faculty and Program Director make enhanced efforts to promote public awareness.
The information is collected by the program.					

Objective 3.3: Engage MURP Advisory Committee.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Engage MURP Advisory Committee.	MURP Advisory Committee meets twice annually. MURP Advisory Committee membership maintained according to Committee guidelines.	Two annual meetings of MURP Advisory Committee. At least 30 members of MURP Advisory Committee in any given year, with regular meeting attendance.	Reviewed at submission of self-study for Planning Accreditation Board for timeframe since previous self-study.	Reporting meeting dates and membership.	Program Director oversees meetings and membership in partnership with MURP Advisory Committee leadership.
The information is collected by the program.					

Objective 3.4: Partner with a diverse array of stakeholders for teaching, research, and service.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Partner with a diverse array of stakeholders for teaching, research, and service.	Annual studio conducted in partnership with a community organization. Number of faculty partnerships for teaching, research, and service.	Diversity of studio partnerships (geographic reach and types of projects). For all full-time faculty, an average of one partnership per year.	Reviewed at submission of self-study for Planning Accreditation Board for timeframe since previous self-study.	Report total and average number of community partnerships.	Faculty and Program Director make enhanced efforts to promote community partnerships in teaching, research, and service.
The information is collected by the program.					

Goal 4: Strategic initiatives

To be responsive to emerging trends and needs that ensure a relevant and resilient program.

- Objective 4.1: Enhance robustness of studio program.
- Objective 4.2: Enhance curriculum for and strategic focus around MURP Graduate Certificates.
- Objective 4.3: Enhance undergraduate offerings as a recruitment strategy.
- Objective 4.4: Ensure Program is meeting needs of increasing share of full-time working students.

Objective 4.1: Enhance robustness of studio program.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Enhance robustness of studio program.	Student enrollment in studio. Increase program revenue from studios. Ten-year goal of offering an international studio bi-annually.	A minimum of eight students enrolled in the studio course each semester it is offered. Annual increase in program revenues from studios.	Reviewed at submission of self-study for Planning Accreditation Board for timeframe since previous self-study.	Ongoing strategic planning to ensure studio best meets studio and partner needs.	Faculty and Program Director review annually.
The information is collected by the program.					

Objective 4.2: Enhance curriculum for and strategic focus around MURP Graduate Certificates.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Enhance curriculum for and strategic focus around MURP Graduate Certificates	Student enrollment in MURP Graduate Certificates. Faculty research in areas related to Graduate Certificates.	Overall trend of increasing in certificate enrollment, average of all three certificates.	Enrollment reviewed each semester.	Ongoing strategic planning to ensure certificates are attractive to students and aligned with faculty expertise.	Faculty and Program Director review annually.
The information is collected by the program.					

Goal 4: Strategic initiatives (cont.)

Objective 4.3: Enhance undergraduate offerings as a recruitment strategy.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Enhance undergraduate offerings as a recruitment strategy.	Student enrollment in undergraduate courses with URP and URS prefix. MURP courses crosslisted for undergraduate enrollment.	Number of students enrolled in undergraduate courses with URP and URS prefix. Number of MURP courses crosslisted for undergraduate enrollment.	Enrollment reviewed each semester.	Reassess curriculum annually in fall and amend accordingly.	Faculty and Program Director review annually.

The information is collected by the program.

Objective 4.4: Ensure Program is meeting needs of increasing share of full-time working students.

OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PROGRAM BENCHMARK	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	ANALYSIS/ ACTION PLAN
Ensure Program is meeting needs of increasing share of full-time working students.	Program modalities. Course meeting times. Relevant curriculum.	Triangulation of data including USF Student Assessment of Instruction Reporting, exit surveys, employer surveys, and feedback from MURP Advisory Committee.	Annual curriculum review in fall.	Reassess curriculum annually in fall and amend accordingly.	Faculty and Program Director review annually.

The information is collected by the program.

CURRICULUM

Current Curriculum

The MURP core curriculum has remained the same since the program launched in 2009. The program has added numerous, changing electives over the years reflecting faculty expertise.

Core Requirements: 27 credit hours

Foundational Core Courses: 15 credit hours

- URP 6058 Community Development Planning (3)
- URP 6100 Planning Theory and History (3)
- URP 6115 Planning Policy and Politics (3)
- URP 6316 Land Use Planning (3)
- URP 6549 Urban and Metropolitan Economic Development Strategies (3)

Analytical Methods Core Courses: 6 credit hours

- URP 6201 Quantitative Analysis (3)
- URP 6232 Research Methods for Urban and Regional Planning (3)

Planning Practice and Techniques Core Courses: 6 credit hours

- URP 5277 GIS for Urban and Regional Planners (3)
- URP 6940 Internship in Urban and Regional Planning (3)

All MURP students are required to complete at least 180 hours of work in a planning agency to earn the 3 credit hours stipulated as part of the core requirements, as listed above. This requirement is waived for students with at least 5 years or more of relevant planning experience.

Elective Requirements: 15-21 credit hours (minimum)

The rest of the required coursework allows our students the opportunity to explore one or more fields of urban & regional planning through approved electives within and outside of the School of Public Affairs. Twelve (12) credit hours of electives (4 courses) must be taken from the Urban & Regional Planning or Public Administration programs. In some cases, an appropriate class from another department may be approved. Depending on personal interest, students may choose coursework in the following areas:

- Housing and Community Development
- Environmental and Natural Resources Policy
- Geographic Information Sciences
- Land Use and Comprehensive Planning
- Transportation Planning

Non-Thesis Track

Non-thesis students must complete all of the 27 credit hour core course requirements and 21 elective credit hours.

Thesis Track

- URP 6971 Thesis (6)

Students approved to pursue this option must complete all of the 27 credit hour core course requirements, 15 elective credit hours, and a minimum of 6 credit hours of thesis. The thesis must be completed and approved for the credit to be received.

Comprehensive Exam

This is the default option for the MURP major. All MURP students are required to take this examination towards the end of, or during, the last semester of the major coursework. The examination is waived for students who elect, with the approval of the Program Director, to pursue the thesis option.

Updated Curriculum

In 2024, MURP faculty conducted a comprehensive process to update the curriculum. This is the first major curriculum update for the program. At the time of writing, the Department has identified a new proposed core. With the exception of the adjunct-taught Planning Law course, each core course in the proposed curriculum corresponds to a Planning Accreditation Board curriculum criteria to be assessed and an identified Method of Assessment.

It is critical to note that that the proposed curriculum update is draft only at the time of writing and subject to change.

MURP degree = 48 credit hours
 MURP core = 30 credit hours (ten courses)

Proposed Core Courses

CORE COURSE	PAB CRITERIA ASSESSED
URP 6100 Planning Theory and History	2.1 Planning History and Theory
URP 6316 Land Use Planning	2.2 Planning Law and Institutions
URP 6115 Planning Policy and Politics merged <i>with</i> URP 6058 Community Development Planning	1.1 Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion
URP 5277 GIS for Urban and Regional Planners	2.3 Urban and Regional Development
URP 6201 Quantitative Planning Methods	3.2 Analytical Skills and Tools
URP 6232 Qualitative Planning Methods	3.1 Planning Process and Engagement
URP 6XXX Planning Data and Design	1.2 Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice
URP 6XXX Planning Studio	3.3 Professional Communication and Leadership Skills
URP 6XXX Planning Professional Practice	1.3 Professional Ethics and Responsibility
URP 6XXX Planning Law	No PAB Criteria assessed

The updated curriculum is also proposed to reflect the following:

- A 0-credit internship will be required.
- The exit requirement options will be either a Planning Studio or Thesis; comprehensive exams will be eliminated as an exit requirement.

Implementation of the updated curriculum is anticipated to occur as follows:

- August and September 2024 – Faculty finalize updated curriculum
- October 2024 – Updated curriculum submitted for CAS and USF review/approval
- 2025-2026 Academic Year – Updated curriculum launches



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