Strategic Plan
College of Social Work
The Ohio State University
2012-2016
Strategic Planning at The Ohio State University

Ohio State’s future will be defined and driven by the university’s move from excellence to eminence. Making that move requires a strategic vision and a clear path for achieving it.

Strategic planning is a systematic process, one that builds commitment to priorities essential to mission-critical work. Strategic planning establishes the guideposts that chart the journey toward eminence and provides opportunities to assess the steps along the way. Strategic planning also helps ensure that the university remains vital, sustainable, and accountable.

All strategic planning at The Ohio State University is founded in the overarching principles of the institution’s vision, mission, and values.

Ohio State’s Vision
The Ohio State University will be the world’s preeminent public comprehensive university, solving problems of world-wide significance.

Ohio State’s Mission
We exist to advance the well-being of the people of Ohio and the global community through the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

Ohio State’s Values
Shared values are the commitments made by the Ohio State community regarding how work will be conducted. Our values at Ohio State include:

- Excellence
- Collaborating as One University
- Acting with Integrity
- Personal Accountability

- Diversity in People and Ideas
- Change and Innovation
- Simplicity in our Work
- Openness and Trust
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Dear Friends of the College of Social Work:

It is a pleasure to share with you the 2012 College of Social Work strategic plan. Our plan builds upon the long tradition of exceptional social work education at The Ohio State University, and places the College on a continued trajectory toward eminence. The following document describes the challenges and opportunities for our College and specifies our strategic focus over the next two to three years. As we build on the success of this current plan, subsequent planning activities will develop longer term goals. Our plan links closely to our university’s strategic planning effort, and its successful implementation will strengthen both the College of Social Work and The Ohio State University.

Our strategic plan recognizes the importance of the social work profession to the health, safety, and quality of life of the individuals and communities in which our graduates reside. Our students, faculty and staff accept the challenge of advocacy and leadership for the most vulnerable members of society. In the “new” economy we see the potential for a significant shift in service delivery and a potential for further retraction of services for the most needy. Our redesigned undergraduate and master’s curriculum will be highly engaged with the community and prepare students for leadership in responding to today’s challenges, and those that will follow. Concurrently, trends in funded research include a significant focus on intervention and translational research. This represents a movement toward implementing research in a manner that is more participatory and community based, and research that ensures that the science finds its way into the community, and ultimately improves well-being.

Our strategic plan builds upon the spirit of One University. Toward that end the plan emphasizes the creation of a collaborative and supportive work climate where challenging conversations set the stage for inspired accomplishments. Such a climate will embrace diversity and encourage risk-taking and creativity. Our work climate will reflect the belief that individual and organizational successes are dependent on our ability to work well together. This strategy recognizes that our best accomplishments often follow from our most collaborative endeavors. Also contained in this strategy is a plan for communicating our accomplishments to all of our constituents. The results of this successful endeavor will ensure a sense of pride among our faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and enhance the reputation of the College of Social Work nationally and internationally. Our strategic plan considers these and other contexts as we build a better world together.

The movement toward a semester curriculum is a tremendous opportunity for the College of Social Work. We are undertaking significant curriculum redesign at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level. We are
creating a curriculum that is relevant, rigorous, and responsive to the individual and social conditions of today’s environment locally and globally. Our curriculum design requires that the College be highly engaged with the communities in which we will practice, and emphasizes assessment of student mastery of important practice competencies. Our re-designed doctoral program will be among the first in the country to organize its curriculum around intervention and translational research. Our new curriculum will be complemented by the infusion of innovative technology to deliver course content that is creative and a pedagogically sound manner.

The College will move forward by building upon the considerable strengths of our faculty and staff. Our plan describes a commitment to support an exceptional faculty and staff who thrive in a culture of high expectation and high performance. We will accomplish this by creating incentives and rewards, and redesigning policies to create an environment where all members of the community can contribute to its success. We will further increase national recognition for the excellent work we produce.

We are making a significant commitment to the continued growth of our research infrastructure and further expansion of funded research at the College. We will complete the construction of a research center to better support funded research. The hiring of an associate dean for research will bring additional senior mentorship and leadership to our faculty, as will development efforts to create endowed professorships. We will continue to build collaborative research partnerships both within and outside the university. We are well poised to benefit from the overdue emphasis on funding translational research. The coming years will see an expansion in funded research activity by our faculty as we conduct and disseminate research that makes a difference.

Our small College has a huge footprint. From the inception of social work as a profession, the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University has been a leader both in our community and nationally. We prepare professional social work practitioners with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of individuals, couples, and families, and to strengthen communities at the local, national, and international levels. Our graduates amplify the voices of those who are often ignored and ensure their safety, dignity, and quality of life. Our scholarship informs practices, programs, and policies that society depends upon to fulfill its obligations to our most vulnerable citizens. Our strategic plan is written with full knowledge of our profession’s responsibility and a high measure of enthusiasm for our ability to prepare the practitioners and scholars who will change the world.

We look forward to working with many of you as we move the College of Social Work from excellence to eminence.

Sincerely,

Tom Gregoire, MSW, PhD
Dean
College Overview

The Ohio State University College of Social Work is an integral and valuable resource to the State of Ohio and the nation. The social work community and the College readily share their expert knowledge in collaborative efforts to ameliorate and resolve an extensive array of contemporary social problems. Through its BSSW, MSW, and PhD degree programs the College enables students to experience and explore the knowledge, values and skills required for professional social work practice and research.

Social Work has a long and rich tradition at The Ohio State University, starting with our very first social work course offered in 1875. We conferred our first Bachelor of Social Service in 1916, our first Masters degree in 1923, and our first doctorate in 1934. Following the 1927 establishment of the School of Social Administration, our name changed to the School of Social Work in 1960. Eight years later we joined the College of Administrative Science, and in 1976, we were granted independent College status.

First accredited in 1919, the College of Social Work is the oldest continuously accredited public social work program in the country. We received our latest re-accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education in 2010.

The College of Social Work recently completed a comprehensive assessment of its two accredited programs: the Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) and the Master of Social Work (MSW). The program outcomes report was prepared as one component of the College's reaccreditation process with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The assessment measures presented in the report align with the new standards outlined by CSWE that identify the competencies and practice behaviors that students should master upon completing their social work degree program.

Mission

The College of Social Work, through excellence in teaching, research, and service, prepares leaders who enhance individual and community well-being, celebrate difference, and promote social and economic justice for vulnerable populations. The College fosters social change through collaboration with individuals, families, communities, and other change agents to build strengths and resolve complex individual and social problems. As an internationally recognized College, we build and apply knowledge that positively impacts Ohio, the nation, and the world.
Vision

Three principles guide the implementation of the College of Social Work mission:

*Embrace Difference. Seek Justice. Be the Change.*

Values

The College is committed to pursuing its mission within the values of the social work profession:

- The dignity and worth of all people.
- The importance of human relationships.
- Building knowledge through ethically conducted, open inquiry.
- Competence in all aspects of professional practice.
- The maintenance of integrity in professional interactions.
- The pursuit of social justice.
- A commitment to service.
Strategic Scan

The context in which we create our strategic plan is influenced by current trends in research, education, social service delivery, and the recent economic crisis. It is also shaped by the rich history of the College of Social Work as a leader in preparing social work practitioners and researchers. Social work education began at The Ohio State University in 1875 with the offering of course work on poverty. These courses were soon followed by a curriculum based on scientific charity and philanthropy. As early as 1901, students from The Ohio State University were undertaking field work in a local settlement house in concert with their curriculum on social case work.

In 1919, Ohio State became one of the charter members of the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work (ATSPSW), the precursor organization to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). We have been continuously accredited since the 1919 co-founding of the ATSPSW and are the nation’s oldest continuingly accredited social work program in a public university. Today we count over 10,000 alumni who have impacted countless lives across the globe.

Our physical setting plays a prominent role in the tradition of social work education at Ohio State. Our building was constructed with funding from the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration and was dedicated on November 12, 1937 with Harry Hopkins, the New Deal’s principal architect, serving as the principle speaker. Stillman Hall features many examples of both the history and values of our profession. Carved above the main entrance to Stillman Hall are six principles of a “good life” according to Charles Stillman our director at the time of the construction (Justice, Freedom, Democracy, Knowledge, Education, and Happiness). Our building also features a great deal of art work commissioned by the Federal Art Project and photography from the Federal Writers Project. The fourth floor of Stillman Hall contains extensive murals also commissioned by New Deal funding. A 2001 building addition includes tile sculptures honoring prominent social workers Jane Addams, Whitney Young, and Harry Hopkins. Our long and rich history and physical setting clearly helps anchor the current students’ educational experience in the traditions and values of the social work profession.
National Ranking

*US News & World Report* currently ranks the College of Social Work 19th among public universities and 30th among all of the 219 graduate programs in social work. Our plan will facilitate a climb up the rankings and movement into the top twenty of all graduate social work programs. Because all social work rankings are reputational (not part of the NRC), movement in the rankings will be influenced not only by our educational programs and the quality of graduates we produce, but by the visibility of the College and its leaders at the local, state, national, and international levels. In this context communicating our good work becomes a critical strategy.

Technology enhanced education

While the use of technology in the classroom is not new, we are moving toward more mobile technology and multiple methods for students to obtain their instruction. Already underway are our efforts to prepare our faculty and professional staff as instructors in a more mobile environment. This strategy will result in wide adoption of mobile technology, rather than isolated examples.

The impact of technology will extend beyond our classroom. As a community engaged profession, we recognize the need to prepare students for engagement and practice in virtual communities. Many people now live very significant lives in virtual communities. Good practice must include recognition of how to engage and serve individuals in that context. The past few years have seen a number of effective community advocacy efforts in the virtual world. Our students should have those skills.

International Social Work

As higher education becomes a more global experience, we must respond. Our students clearly feel an increased sense of responsibility to international social problems. Social media and the 24 hour news cycle create real-time communication across the globe and an increased awareness of, and sense of responsibility for, responding to social problems. Our responsibility begins with providing students greater opportunities to study social work and social welfare in an international context and working with immigrant communities locally. However, we also find in our mission the challenge to recruit internationally and prepare students from developing countries to return and make a difference after graduation. It is insufficient to prepare students who are simply aware of the global challenges. We must produce global change-agents.
The College currently provides three different opportunities to explore social welfare and social work practice in other countries. Our Poland and India programs have been offered for a number of years. These programs allow students to study the emergence of social welfare in the post-Soviet era or to examine social welfare practice in the context of a developing country. Our newest program allows students to travel to Cuernavaca, Mexico and explore immigration and economic issues in that country. In addition to furthering coursework on international social work, our undergraduate program will provide the opportunity for an international concentration in the semester curriculum. We must also recognize the opportunity to utilize technology, as well, to increase exposure to social work in a global context for all of our students.

**Translational Research**

Translational and systems dynamics research have been identified as the leading edge of social work research. The increasing federal investment in funding of translational research reflects the expectation that science must have a practical application in order to improve the human condition. We anticipate the funding commitment to translational research will continue to expand. We will build much of the College’s research infrastructure around translational research and train doctoral students in the conduct of clinical and translational science.

Social work researchers are uniquely suited to studying the translation of basic research into practice and policy, including examining the contextual aspects of this translational process. However, to maximize the contribution to this important work, research must be conducted in real-world settings. This research must examine recursive effects over time and use standard experimental designs. Additionally, this type of research requires a high degree of collaboration and interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary partnerships. It is situated in complex systems comprised of diverse cultures, constituencies and communities. Thus, we must modify our curriculum to increase the focus on stages of intervention development and testing as well as implementation and dissemination. Although The Ohio State University is one of only 71 colleges and universities in the United States offering a doctoral degree in social work, and the demand for graduates outpaces the supply, the competition for the best positions at our peer and aspirational peer institutions is stiff. New faculty hires need to have sharply honed research skills, multiple publications, and a beginning record of funded research to secure the best positions.
**Service delivery**

Traditional models of social service delivery and program design may not survive the most recent economic crisis and the continued dwindling of resources for social service programming. Services are likely to become increasingly community based and self-help oriented. Volunteer organizations such as local churches and civic organizations may play an increased role in meeting community needs. In that context, there is likely to be an increasing chasm between evidence based practices and service provision for the most needy. Monitoring program outcome and accountability will take on new challenges for service providers and funders.

This significant reshaping provides an important opportunity for community engagement and leadership on the part of the College of Social Work. We have a long history of community engagement and leadership in the social work practice community. Our plan emphasizes expanding community based research and teaching, providing evidence based curriculum in our continuing education programming, and continued engagement with our community.

Technology is also likely to play a significant role in service delivery. Mobile technology has the ability to change and expand the ways in which social workers and other professionals engage with the community. We see technology as a tool to extend the professional to populations that otherwise are un-served, underserved, or who receive services in inappropriate settings such as emergency departments.

**Competency based education**

The role of social work education at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels is to prepare professional practitioners for the wide variety of settings in which social workers are employed. Social workers provide essential services in mental health agencies, schools, child welfare systems, hospitals, substance abuse programs, criminal and juvenile justice organizations, programs assisting the elderly, and other settings that serve the oppressed or marginalized. Social workers are also actively engaged in policy change at the state and national levels. It is essential that social work education work closely with the community to identify and address current needs and anticipate social issues that our graduates may encounter in the course of their careers.

Regardless of the setting, social work education must instill our graduates with the values and ethics of the profession, together with the core competencies required for successful practice.
The Council on Social Work Education, our current accrediting body, has recently adopted new standards focusing on specific competencies, practice behaviors, and methods for assessing mastery of those competencies and behaviors. In light of these new standards and the university’s transition to semesters, the College of Social Work has used the opportunity to design an innovative, student-friendly curriculum that prepares students to address societal needs through micro- and macro-level social work practice. Embedded assessments of the extent to which our students master these critical competencies and practice behaviors will allow us to continually examine our program for ways to improve the curriculum and enhance the educational outcomes of our graduates. To emerge as a leader in social work education, the College of Social Work has engaged in a thoughtful, transparent, and inclusive process of curriculum design. The resulting semester curriculum includes undergraduate and graduate courses that prepare our graduates to address current and future social problems within the local community, the nation and the world.

**The Current State of Professional Social Work**

The current demand for professional social work practitioners is great. The majority of mental health, child welfare, and family services in the U.S. are provided by social workers. Additionally, social workers serve as an integral component of interdisciplinary teams in education, health care, and gerontology. One finds trained social workers in the fields of substance abuse, corrections, juvenile justice, economic security, and employee assistance. A substantial number of social workers also provide counseling and psychotherapy through private practice.

Data from national studies indicate that the demand for professional social workers, particularly those trained at the masters level, will increase significantly in the coming years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts an 18 to 26 percent increase in the demand for new social workers by the year 2014. Our own needs assessment of Central Ohio and our regional campus sites indicates that agencies seeking social workers must often fill positions with less qualified individuals. Finally, as further evidence of the need to expand our production of social workers, national data indicates that social workers in the work force are significantly older than the civilian labor force. The aging of the profession will exacerbate the already increasing demand for professional social workers and challenge the College to meet this important community need.
Diversity and the Social Work Profession

While data suggests that the social work student population is among the most diverse at OSU, we must continually enhance diversity in our student body, faculty, and staff. National studies find that in many fields of practice the majority of those served are from minority populations/cultures while those who serve them are often white and from the majority culture. Empirical data suggest that ethnic and racial matching of clients and social workers is at times associated with differences in the amount and type of service provision and client outcome. This mismatch between the served and service providers suggests the need to both recruit and retain workers from minority racial and cultural populations. Also, programs must develop more culturally sensitive interventions to better insure that interventions will be effective. Increasing the diversity of our students requires targeted recruitment efforts, educational program designs and deployment that support non-traditional students, and increased student financial support.

Achieving our Objectives

The strategic objectives of the College of Social Work are consistent with the larger university mission of enhancing teaching and learning, advancing discoveries through research, and engaging with communities across the globe. Specific strategies for achieving these objectives are based on offering an innovative curriculum for undergraduate and graduate students, creating an infrastructure to support research, promoting a culture and climate in the College to enable eminence, and engaging the community to insure that our educational programs and research continue to be relevant to current social issues and needs. The strategies that we will pursue focus on objectives pertaining to:

Teaching & Learning

- Improve quality of incoming students
- Insure program excellence by implementing an innovative, invigorating, and challenging curriculum that that provides enriching educational experiences to prepare students for successful careers as practitioners, leaders, and scholars in Social Work, and which results in national recognition for the excellence of the program
• Monitor student outcomes pertaining to graduation rates, post-graduation outcomes, and mastery of critical social work competencies and values.

**Research & Innovation**

• Invest in an infrastructure that supports the expansion of funded research to increase total research expenditures

• Create an environment that supports increased faculty scholarly productivity

• Increase the number of faculty who have external funding

**Outreach & Engagement**

• Promote critical workforce development through student internships in community social service agencies

• Engage in community partnerships through non-credit courses, continuing education opportunities, and post-graduate certificate programs

• Increase the number of community based collaborations that provide services to community agencies

**Stewardship**

• Foster a culture of high expectation that provides support, rewards, and recognition to faculty and staff for high performance and offers multiple pathways for demonstrating excellence

• Create a climate that fosters creativity and collaboration and develops leadership within the College

• Increase monetary resources for the College by reducing non-retirement faculty turnover, increasing cash gifts, and supporting efficiencies in expenditures

• Maintain the excellent facilities in Stillman Hall to support the key activities of the College of Social Work

• Increase faculty and staff access to technology in order to create greater efficiencies in teaching, learning, and research.

Each of these four areas is described in more detail below. A summary of the metrics that will be used to assess progress is presented in the Strategic Plan Scorecard at the end of this document.
Teaching & Learning Objectives

- Improve quality of incoming students
- Insure program excellence by implementing an innovative, invigorating, and challenging curriculum that provides enriching educational experiences to prepare students for successful careers as practitioners, leaders, and scholars in Social Work, and which results in national recognition for the excellence of the program
- Monitor student outcomes pertaining to graduation rates, post-graduation outcomes, and mastery of critical social work competencies and values

Overview. We articulate in our mission and vision statements our intent to create leaders who promote positive change for individuals, families and communities through their practice and research. Our university’s transition to semesters occurred concurrently with our accrediting organization’s transition to a competency-based curriculum and a renewed call from the academy for doctoral students who are rigorously trained to conduct translational social science research. Simultaneously, significant upheavals in the social service delivery system demand that the College of Social Work prepare professional practitioners who are able to meet the current and future challenges of a changing social service system. We recognize this rare constellation of events as a once in a lifetime opportunity to design a curriculum that distinguishes the College of Social Work and produces exceptional leaders prepared to change the world.

The College of Social Work prepares practitioners and scholars at three different degree levels. At the undergraduate and master’s levels we prepare students for social work practice with a diverse clientele and in diverse communities throughout Ohio and across the world. At the doctoral level we prepare scholars who conduct and disseminate research that is relevant to social science and social work. We recently re-envisioned the doctoral program to prepare our graduates to engage in translational and intervention research in order to better prepare scholars capable of conducting rigorous and relevant research that contributes to knowledge for individual and social change.

Research & Innovation Objectives

- Invest in an infrastructure that supports the expansion of funded research to increase total research expenditures
- Create environment to increase faculty scholarly productivity
- Increase the number of faculty who have external funding

Overview. Several social factors such as the aging of our population and the current economic crisis are among the many changes which have resulted in the upheaval of the social service delivery system. Social work research often contributes to the design and implementation of
Strategic Plan
College of Social Work

Interventions targeted at a myriad of social problems. Research conducted by social work scholars has a significant impact on addressing social problems and the potential impact for future social work research is magnified in today’s environment.

To advance research and innovation in the College of Social Work we will focus on increasing faculty productivity as measured by the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index Rating, annual research expenditures in the College, the overall percentage of faculty with external funding for research, and the number of interdisciplinary research projects on which Social Work faculty are involved.

Strategies for achieving these objectives include making improvements to our physical structure to support co-location of research projects, and space for additional research assistants, providing additional internal seed grant funds to support pilot studies, and encouraging mentorship by our senior faculty and committing funds to link our faculty to mentorship opportunities from senior scholars at other institutions. The recruitment of an Associate Dean for Research will also play an important role in achieving our research and innovation objectives. Our success in expanding funded research also requires identifying and investing in our current strengths and developing future opportunities. We will target our greatest investments to areas that represent our greatest strengths and opportunities.

Outreach & Engagement Objectives

- Promote critical workforce development through student internships in community social service agencies
- Engage in community partnerships through non-credit courses, continuing education opportunities, and post-graduate certificate programs
- Increase the number of community based collaborations by faculty and staff that provide services to community agencies

Overview. Outreach and engagement are fundamental to the mission of the College of Social Work. Field internships are required for all BSSW and MSW students and we provide non-credit courses and programs to keep community practitioners abreast of research, best practices, and current developments in the field. Furthermore, faculty and staff are actively engaged in the community through board memberships, community-based research, and other supportive services. To assess our continued success in outreach and engagement, we will monitor the percentage of BSSW and MSW students completing field internships, the number of people who participate in our continuing education courses, community lectures, symposia, and certificate programs. We will also continue to monitor the number and type of outreach and engagement activities in which faculty and staff are involved.
Stewardship Objectives

- Foster a culture of high expectation that provides support, rewards, and recognition for high performance and multiple pathways for demonstrating excellence
- Create a climate that fosters creativity and collaboration and develops leadership within the College
- Increase monetary resources for the College by reducing non-retirement faculty turnover, increasing cash gifts, and supporting efficiencies in expenditures
- Maintain the excellent facilities in Stillman Hall where the College of Social Work is located
- Increase access to the latest technology to improve faculty and staff efficiency and student access

Overview. The College’s success in attaining the objectives for Teaching & Learning, Research & Innovation, and Outreach & Engagement rests on our ability to provide the culture, personnel, leadership and fiscal resources to support the activities that will enable us to meet our 2016 goals. Various activities, recognitions and incentives will be used to 1) foster a culture of excellence, 2) identify and support new leadership, and 3) create a climate that is cooperative, collegial, and collaborative. Various measures such as the Workplace Culture Index, the Leadership Continuity Index, and the Non-Retirement Turnover for Faculty metric will be used on the scorecard to assess our progress in these areas.

Procuring cash gifts to the College and ensuring that the College’s fiscal assets are used efficiently to support the mission of the College of Social Work are essential to advancing the College of Social Work. Increasing the number and dollar amount of gifts given to the College enhances our ability to provide offer additional educational programming for our students, attract quality students and faculty, support faculty research, and promote community outreach activities. Raising funds to name endowed professorships and chairs will allow us to recruit senior faculty members who will further enhance the reputation of our College. Our outcomes measures include total cash gifts to the College. Equally important is how funds are used within the College. The Efficiency Metric will be used to evaluate this objective.

The culture and climate of the College are impacted by the condition of the facilities in which faculty, staff, and students interact. Recently we remodeled the second floor of Stillman Hall to create a research center to house ongoing projects and promote collaborative research activities among faculty, students and staff. The basement of Stillman Hall was updated to provide a comfortable space for students to work, study, meet, and relax. Computers and small rooms for class projects are now available for student use. New windows, heating and cooling have also made for a more comfortable work environment. We will work to maintain the facility as measured by the Facility Condition Index.
We intend to make a significant commitment to increasing access of technology, particularly mobile technology, for our faculty and staff. This investment will impact each strategic area. We expect this will result in significant benefits to office productivity, while also providing considerable support for our community based research efforts, and outreach to the community. Our technology commitment will also result in the development of a number of online classes. Further extending our programming beyond Columbus will have many benefits, including contributing to an increase in resources to support the College of Social Work.