School of Public Policy  
University of Maryland  
Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

The University of Maryland School of Public Policy launched work in 2005 to implement a ten-year strategic plan. This document is a mid-course review, written in 2009.

The School’s mission is simple: *We seek to train leaders with the skills and understanding required to make and deliver public policy that is effective and responsive; and we seek to conduct cutting-edge research to advance the public interest.*

We continue to believe that, in order to be recognized as one of the top ten U.S. schools of public policy, public management, and international affairs, the School must get bigger. The School has made substantial progress in expanding its student body while maintaining quality over the last four years, but the corresponding expansion in the faculty has lagged due to a lack of funding. We continue to believe, as outlined in the 2005 plan, that the School must add ten new faculty members by 2014-15.

The School has identified three areas of research and teaching in which it seeks to build expertise and establish national leadership:

1. **Climate change, energy, and security.** With four to five additional faculty members working at the intersection of climate change, energy, and international security, the School would emerge as a clear leader in what will likely be the most important global policy challenge of the coming century.

2. **Health policy.** With health policy undergoing rapid and profound transformation, the School seeks to develop an area of comparative advantage, such as health technology assessment and information management. Two to three new faculty members could expand the School’s already strong base in social policy into health policy issues.

3. **Human capital.** The School’s location inside the Beltway, just a short distance from the Capitol, creates a powerful base from which to chart new strategies for the government’s human capital: how to identify, recruit, and train the people it needs for the increasingly complex jobs it needs to perform. Two to three new faculty members could enhance the School’s ability to lead this debate.
Introduction

The University of Maryland has made great strides over the last twenty years. The University’s 2008 strategic plan is designed to build on past momentum to become—and become recognized as—one of the very best public research universities in the United States. This will require excellent graduate programs.

The School of Public Policy is on the threshold of recognized excellence. The School ranked 8th in the 2007 Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, just behind Berkeley (4th) and Michigan (5th). In the 2008 U.S. News and World Report peer assessment of graduate programs in public affairs, the School ranked in the top 25 schools overall. It is ranked number 8 in policy analysis and in the top 15 in environmental policy, social policy, and public finance and budgeting; Berkeley and Michigan ranked in the top six in these areas. Ten percent of our master’s graduates over the last two years were offered Presidential Management Fellowships—a larger share than Berkeley, Michigan, or Harvard. Nearly 60 percent of our graduates enter the public sector, among the very largest of contributions in the nation to the public service.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

The School of Public Policy can achieve recognition as one of the top ten public policy schools in the United States and as the best public policy school in the National Capital area in the next ten years. We have three key strategic advantages:

- **Location.** No unit on campus can benefit more from the University’s location inside the Capital Beltway. This is an advantage that can never been gained by the policy schools that currently top the rankings and that are located far from the Capitol. Our location allows us to compete with these schools for the best faculty and students. We are in a better position to recruit top government officials when they leave office, and to attract top scholars and public intellectuals who want to be involved in the policy process.

- **Domestic and international.** We are the only comprehensive public policy school inside the Capital Beltway—one that combines domestic and international policy. Like Harvard and Princeton, we combine domestic policy analysis, international affairs, and public management in one school. Other Washington-area universities—Georgetown, George Washington, American, and Johns Hopkins—have separate schools of international affairs and public policy/administration. We are in a better position to attract faculty and students who have strong interests in both areas, and to lead in policy areas where the line between domestic and international is blurred and likely to vanish, such as climate change, energy, and economic policy. It also puts us in a better position to explore international comparisons...
in areas that have traditionally been the focus of domestic policy analysis, such as health care.

- **Research base.** We are the only policy school inside the Capital Beltway that is embedded in a comprehensive research university. In the academic disciplines that are most closely associated with public policy—economics and political science—the Maryland has strong departments. This has given the School an advantage in attracting economists and political scientists who want to be in a research university with access to colleagues at the top of their disciplines. No other university inside the Beltway has as many highly ranked social science and professional graduate programs that are related to public policy, such as criminology, business, and education. Maryland is the only university inside the Beltway with top programs in engineering, physical science, and computer science, giving us a unique advantage in areas of science and technology policy, such as climate change, energy, defense, intelligence, and health technology. We can build strong interdisciplinary programs in these areas.

The School of Public Policy also has several structural disadvantages.

- **Relative youth.** The School of Public Policy was founded in 1982. By contrast, some of the leading schools—the Kennedy School at Harvard, the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, and the Maxwell School in Syracuse—were founded in the 1920s and 1930s. The international affairs schools at Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, and American were founded in 1919, 1943, and 1957; American University’s School of Public Affairs dates to 1934. Modern policy analysis programs were established at Berkeley, Michigan, Duke, Texas, and Carnegie-Mellon in the late 1960s with Ford Foundation funding. These older schools have graduated far more alumni and a greater fraction of their alumni have risen to senior levels in government. We cannot do anything about our age, but we can compensate by being innovative and by nimbly tailoring our teaching and research programs to tackle current policy challenges.

- **Size.** In 2004-05, when the School’s strategic plan was developed, only 61 new master’s students enrolled and the School had only 15 tenured/tenured-track full-time-equivalent faculty members—about the same as the average over the previous decade. A key conclusion of the 2005 plan was that the School should grow considerably in size. That plan called for doubling the size of the student body over five years and doubling the size of the faculty over ten years. Considerable progress has been made in enrolling more students while maintaining high student quality. Relatively little progress, in comparison, has been made in expanding the size of the faculty.

- **Endowment.** The 2005 strategic plan called for increasing the School’s endowment from $7 million in FY05 to $30 million in FY10 and $34 million in FY15. Most of the proposed increase was to come from a $20 million naming gift for the School. In addition, the School has a growing space crunch and needs a new building, whose construction would be supported by external gifts. The School’s long-run potential thus depends heavily on such
gifts and the growth of its endowment. Growing that endowment should be a high priority for the School and for the University.

**Strategic Growth: Areas of Research and Teaching Focus**

We evaluated many options for strategic growth of the School’s research and teaching programs by applying several criteria:

- **University of Maryland strategic plan.** The School’s initiatives will help the University achieve the goals outlined in the University’s strategic plan ([http://www.umd.edu/strat_plan/index.cfm](http://www.umd.edu/strat_plan/index.cfm)).

- **Existing strengths of the School.** It is easier to achieve recognition as a top institution by enhancing an area in which the School already has highly regarded scholars, robust research activities, and an established reputation. The School’s research centers, in particular, offer great opportunity for strengthening its contributions to public policy debates, for enhancing the connections between research and instruction, and for further burnishing the School’s reputation.

- **Existing strengths of the University.** By partnering with top departments on campus, we can accomplish more and attract better faculty and doctoral students.

- **Comparative advantage.** We have a comparative advantage in fields that combine domestic and international policy; that take advantage of strong science, engineering, and economics programs; and that benefit from connections with federal programs and agencies.

- **Importance, visibility, and durability.** We should choose fields that will garner recognition from academic peers, government agencies, and the press. We should choose fields that are likely to increase in relative importance over the next ten to twenty years.

- **Availability of external grant and contract funding.** We should invest in areas where external funding in available. This is particularly important for the support of doctoral students. The School’s research centers can continue to play an important role here.

- **Degree programs and curriculum.** An area of research and teaching focus should be able to attract sufficient numbers of master’s and doctoral students, and there should be good placement opportunities for graduates. New faculty should help satisfy current program needs and help launch new programs, such as an undergraduate program in public policy.
After considering these criteria, the faculty chose three programs for strategic enhancement:

1. **Climate, energy, and security policy.** The faculty has identified the intersection of climate, energy, and security policy as its top priority for enhancement. With four or five new faculty members, the School of Public Policy would emerge as a clear national leader in what is likely to be one of the top two or three policy issues over the next twenty years. This proposal builds on existing School strengths in environmental and security policy, and it takes maximum advantage of our location near Washington, the fact that we are part of a major research university with strengths in science and engineering, and the fact that we combine domestic and international policy.

2. **Health policy.** The faculty selected health policy as a second priority. With two to four new faculty members, we believe that the School can establish a reputation for excellence in this vital policy area. The School could position itself as a major source of expertise in helping understand the skeleton and central nervous system of the government’s emerging health policy initiatives.

3. **Human capital.** The third goal is human capital: identifying the challenges that government faces and the people it most needs to solve them. This is an area that has received far too little attention in either the scholarly or practitioner community, yet it looms as one of government’s biggest problems. With two to three new hires, we believe that the School can have a major impact on this issue and play a leading role in training a new generation of public servants.