

MAKING AN IMPACT

STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Below are the recommended strategic priorities from the Dean's Advisory Council (DAC) for the current planning period, which is fiscal year 2009–2010. Many of the recommended initiatives are related to multiple proposals. For a more detailed explanation of each of these priorities, please refer to the dean's memo dated September 24, 2009, which is available at www.sog.unc.edu/intranet/planning or blackboard.unc.edu.

The DAC's recommended strategic priorities are organized into these categories:

- Category #1: Cross-Cutting, Highest-Impact Priorities for Immediate Action
- Category #2: Discrete, High-Impact Priorities for Immediate Action
- Category #3: Lower-Impact Priorities for Action When It Will Not Interfere With Higher Priorities
- Category #4: Proposals Receiving Further Consideration
- Category #5: Deferred or Rejected Impact Proposals

Category #1: Cross-Cutting, Highest-Impact Priorities for Immediate Action

■ Initiative to Assist Public Policy Decision-Makers

For a number of years, we have discussed thoroughly whether the School should become more involved in helping policymakers gain access to information in ways that will allow them to make more informed and better decisions. This recommendation resolves those discussions in favor of moving forward with greater work to assist public policy decision-makers in North Carolina. Much already is being done in this area, and the dean will appoint a committee to implement how we do more of it and in a more coordinated way. The first objective of this initiative is to increase the profile of the School at the General Assembly by better integrating our existing expertise into policy discussions. It will include an evaluation of the Legislative Reporting Service. A longer-term objective is to help state and local policymakers understand and apply policy-relevant research generated by others at Carolina.

The implementation committee will consider the following related impact proposals and any others that may apply:

- Applied Public Policy Network (#3a)*
- Work with the Legislature (#3c)
- Annual Convening and Scoping on Public Policy/Emerging Issues (#3b)
- Eliminate Legislative Services (#21a)
- Evaluation and Measurement Working Group (#4)

■ Information Resources Project

Many of the impact proposals touched on different aspects of how we manage and share information. This project responds to our need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to creating and disseminating information. It represents a commitment by the School to completely review its sources of information for public officials and develop an implementation plan for maximizing access to them. It also will focus on maximizing revenue from the information we create. The DAC emphasized that this project must help the School make progress on two critically important issues: (1) the evaluation of strategies for our advising work with public officials and (2) the electronic delivery of course materials. It also will determine how we share information previously communicated through *Popular Government*.

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*The designation that appears after each related proposal in this document refers to the more comprehensive "Summary of Impact Proposals," which is available at www.sog.unc.edu/intranet/planning or blackboard.unc.edu.

The implementation committee will consider the following related impact proposals and any others that may apply:

- Assign a Higher Priority to Using More Instructional Technology (#20h)
- Broaden the SOG's Customer Base (#20e)
- Future of *Popular Government* (#21b)
- Make Publications More Accessible (#20i)
- SOG Resource Center (#19a)
- Building SOG-Supported Online Communities of Practice (#19b)
- Strategies for Handling Daily Advising (#19c)
- Improving Our Response to Telephone and E-mail Questions (#19f)
- Electronic Delivery of Course Materials (#22c)

■ **Initiative to Create a More Collaborative, Effective, and Inclusive Work Environment**

The DAC's Organizational Development Subcommittee, chaired by Audrey Williams, was charged with developing proposals that address Guiding Question #3: *How can we use and promote the qualities of a high-performing organization in support of all of our work?* The subcommittee analyzed information from surveys, roundtable discussions, focus groups, and past organization-wide events. It identified the following key issues: communication (sharing internal information—projects, processes, achievements—across the organization); employee relations (interpersonal skills needed to work effectively across hierarchical roles and different job functions); and collaboration (team-based approaches to solving problems and a need for cross-functional groups for decision-making).

The DAC recommends a major initiative to create a more collaborative, effective, and inclusive work environment at the School. One goal of this initiative is to achieve a collaborative work environment by actively promoting fairness, integrity, inclusion, and respect among all employees. A related goal is to improve effectiveness and employee satisfaction through communication, employee relations, and collaboration across job functions.

The implementation committee will consider the following related impact proposals and any others that may apply:

- Implement Team-based and Cross-Functional Approaches (#23a)
- Focus on Communication Issues (#26a)
- Increase Cross-Discipline Work (#21l)
- Reduce Specialization Silos (#21m)
- Model Collaboration (#23m)

Category #2: Discrete, High-Impact Priorities for Immediate Action

The DAC believes the following strategic planning priorities are important and recommends that they go forward. Unlike the three major initiatives in Category #1, the following priorities tend to be more discrete and are less likely to have the same kind of School-wide impact.

■ **Strategic Public Leadership Assistance**

The DAC recommends that the public leadership group focus on increasing the School's impact in strategic planning for our clients through project implementation, accountability, and follow-up as it proposed. There always has been a strong demand for our help with strategic planning, and this proposal commits the School to doing more work in this area and doing it more effectively. If strategic planning by local governments is more effective because they are translating their ideas into measurable goals and action plans, our work in helping them will have improved the lives of many people in communities across North Carolina. There is a sort of multiplier effect involved in this kind of planning work that is harder to determine in working with individual officials on their leadership skills.

■ **Streamlined Curriculum in Local Government Budget, Finance, and Taxation**

The impact proposals revealed a significant interest in taking a more curriculum-based approach to our work, especially among some members of the local government law faculty. The DAC strongly shares that interest but does not believe that we have the internal capacity to work on a core local government curriculum this year. The DAC strongly encourages the Local Government Budget, Finance, and Taxation working group to proceed with their proposed development of a more streamlined curriculum using technology for basic subjects and by reducing instructional overlap. The DAC endorses this proposal as a pilot project to test the creation of a curriculum in a more limited area of the School's work.

This project should generate information that will relate to the following impact proposals:

- Develop Core Local Government Curriculum (#20c)
- Make Teaching and Writing Less Client-Specific (#20g)
- Integrated Course Content Management (#20b)

■ Incentives and Infrastructure to Support the Diversification of Funding Sources

The DAC recommends that the School make it a strategic priority to diversify its sources of revenue. This is more crucial than ever given the current economic crisis, but it will be important to the School's fiscal sustainability even after the economy has recovered.

The DAC believes that we must take two strategic steps now for the School to succeed in generating more diverse sources of revenue—meaning more grants and contracts:

1. **Incentives:** There must be greater incentives for individuals and programs to support their work through grants and contracts. For example, the School's current faculty salary policy prohibits considering whether a person generates revenue as a factor in allocating salary increases. The DAC recommends amending the salary policy so that the generation of revenue may be considered as one factor in determining a person's salary. The Faculty Salary Committee and the Management Team should consider whether other incentives appropriately could be used to encourage more grants and contracts.
2. **Administrative Support and Infrastructure:** The DAC also recommends that the School improve the internal administrative support that is required to generate more grants and contracts. We need to provide a clear and supportive path for people who are working on grants and contracts.

This project will consider the following related impact proposals and any others that may apply:

Change Faculty Salary Policy to Provide Incentives for Generating Revenue (#25a)

Build Infrastructure to Go for More Grants (#25b)

■ Enhanced Ethics Education for State and Local Officials

The General Assembly recently adopted legislation that requires local governing boards to adopt codes of ethics and receive ethics training. The impact proposal submitted by Fleming Bell and Norma Houston recommends helping local governing boards meet those requirements, and the DAC agrees that they should go forward as soon as possible. They should do it in a way that produces a net increase in revenue for the School. This impact proposal also recommends working with the State Ethics Commission (SEC) to develop an online and web-based ethics education program and to enhance the current state ethics curriculum. The DAC believes that the work with local governing boards should be the highest priority because of the new legal requirements, and that the work with the SEC should proceed only if funding is available to generate a net increase in revenue.

Category #3: Lower-Impact Priorities for Action When It Will Not Interfere with Higher Priorities

The DAC believes that the following impact proposals are worthwhile initiatives, but that they should be a lower priority than the proposals already mentioned. Most of these proposals are much narrower in scope, and it may be possible to implement them quickly and without much administrative effort. If that is not the case, however, the DAC recommends that we work on them only if it does not come at the expense of delaying other initiatives that have been recommended as higher priorities. The School lacks the capacity to work on every good idea that was sent forward—there simply is a limit to the number of initiatives that we can work on productively at one time.

■ Review SOG Layers of Management

The management team already had begun to review the School's management structure, and it is something that the University has encouraged in response to the Bain Report and recent coverage by the *News & Observer*.

■ Use Outlook Calendar

A number of people recommended that the School require the organization-wide use of the Outlook calendar feature to improve efficiency and effectiveness in scheduling meetings.

■ Reduce Sets of General Statutes

The Courts Group recommended that the School save money by asking faculty members to share sets of the North Carolina General Statutes.

■ Recognition and Monetary Awards for EPA Professionals

The Organizational Development Subcommittee recommended that the School develop recognition and monetary awards for EPA professionals. They are the only category of School employees who do not participate in one of our existing recognition programs.

■ Reduce Outsourcing of Services

A submission in the suggestion box recommended that the School eliminate the outsourcing of services that can be done in-house, such as design, editorial, production, and printing.

■ Network of Off-Site Locations

The DAC brainstormed a recommendation earlier in the process that the School establish a dependable, easy-to-use network with competent staffing, so that remote programming is efficient and effective.

■ Environmental Sustainability

The SOGreen group recommended that the School commit to becoming a leader in environmental sustainability for public organizations by adopting goals to improve our environmental impact.

Category #4: Proposals Receiving Further Consideration

■ PhD in Public Policy and Administration

There was significant interest by the DAC in favor of the proposed doctoral program, but also a consensus that a number of key questions must be answered before it can be recommended as a strategic priority. The justifications for creating a doctoral program are worthwhile—producing graduates for careers in engaged scholarship, providing applied research to state and local governments, enhancing research assistance for SOG faculty, and enhancing the MPA program’s reputational ranking. As we move into more work with public policy decision-makers, doctoral students and a new faculty position for the PhD program could be helpful in supporting that initiative.

The Department of Public Policy remains keenly interested in a proposed partnership with the School of Government to create a PhD program. The DAC will consider this issue as soon as possible and make a recommendation.

Category #5: Deferred or Rejected Strategic Impact Proposals

The DAC reviewed all of the impact proposals and decided not to recommend many of them as priorities in this round of planning. The DAC believes that it has recommended the proposals with the greatest chance to increase our impact, and in some cases they should generate much-needed revenue this fiscal year. What happens to all of the other good impact proposals? Those that require new resources or substantial administrative support (whether from the management team, marketing, information technology, etc.) will be deferred until a future round of planning. We want to focus most of our time and resources on advancing the School’s highest priorities, which is the point of strategic planning.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

You are encouraged to review these recommendations and share your thoughts and concerns about the priorities in one of the ways listed below. In providing feedback, please give special attention to the scope of the priorities and the issues that are likely to emerge as we work through their implementation. It may be helpful to consider the following questions as you provide feedback to the dean and the DAC:

1. Do you have a major concern about any of these recommendations? Did the DAC miss something?
2. Are there connections between priorities that should be emphasized?
3. Are there connections between a recommended priority and existing programs and activities?
4. What issues should the School and the DAC be careful about during the implementation phase?
5. Are you interested in following and possibly working on a strategic priority as it is developed and implemented?

Of course, you may offer any other feedback about the process and the recommended priorities that you think will be helpful.

How to Share Your Thoughts

- Visit blackboard.unc.edu between now and October 16 to post a comment to the discussion board (see “Provide Feedback on DAC Recommendations”)
- Attend an Open Forum with the dean and DAC members
 - Friday, October 2, 11 AM–12 PM, Room 2321
 - Tuesday, October 6, 4–5 PM, Room 2321
 - Thursday, October 8, 9–10 AM, Room 2321
- E-mail or talk with the dean or any member of the Dean’s Advisory Council:

Maureen Berner
Frayda Bluestein
Jim Drennan
Jeff Hughes
Katrina Hunt
Will Lambe

Kara Millonzi
Brian Newport
Kelley O’Brien
Julie Seger
Carl Stenberg
Tom Thornburg

Aimee Wall
Jeff Welty
Richard Whisnant
Audrey Williams