



BUILDING ON
100
YEARS
OF EXCELLENCE



UNC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
2019-2021
STRATEGIC PLAN

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The School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was founded in 1920 as the School of Public Welfare under the leadership of Harry Woodburn Chase, Ph.D., LL.D., President of the University, and Howard W. Odum, Ph.D., Director of the School of Public Welfare. President Chase called for the newly formed School of Public Welfare to make distinctive contributions to the University, the development of human capital, and the well-being of all North Carolinians. This clarion call for impact remains our commitment 100 years later as the School of Social Work now stands on the two pillars of the University's Strategic Framework (Blueprint for Next): (a) Of the public, for the public; and (b) Innovation made fundamental. As the School has expanded its contributions to the nation and the world, we have remained committed to promoting the well-being of our state through education, research, and service to the people of North Carolina.

I am pleased to present the abbreviated summary of the strategic plan for the UNC School of Social Work — **BUILDING ON 100 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE**. This plan not only builds upon many exciting initiatives underway in the School but is also intended to add focus and direction to our efforts for the next 3 years (2019–2021). This plan is the collaborative work of a task force convened within the School of Social Work and facilitated by a strategy team from the UNC Kenan-Flagler School of Business. The Strategic Plan Task Force met weekly during the 2018 Fall semester and led open forum sessions with the School's Board of Advisors, Alumni Council, faculty, staff, and students. Feedback was also sought through an online SWOT analysis (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to capture constituents' perspectives. An Advisory Board of 40 internal and external stakeholders met on two occasions to provide invaluable feedback and help crystalize the Strategic Plan as it moved forward.

We are proud to share with you the results from our work as we chart to navigate the next 100 years of excellence in education, research, and engagement.

Respectfully,



Gary L. Bowen, Ph.D., ACSW
Dean and Kenan Distinguished Professor

STRATEGY STATEMENTS

The Task Force devoted considerable time and energy into developing a mission statement, a vision statement, and a list of core values that would shape and inform the priorities of the School of Social Work (SSW) for the next 3 years. Equally important, the Task Force worked to develop statements that built on numerous areas, including the School's unique history, the two pillars of the University's Strategic Framework, the core values of the social work profession, the needs of the social work discipline, and the School's internal competencies and capabilities as an organization. These strategy statements, which frame the statement of priorities and objectives, were greatly informed by input from the stakeholder groups.

OUR MISSION

ADVANCING EQUITY, TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS, IMPROVING LIVES

The hallmark of the social work profession is a dual focus on identifying pressing issues affecting vulnerable, marginalized populations and then developing and implementing novel interventions to assist these individuals, families, and communities—all within a broad environmental context. Building on 100 years of excellence and service to the State of North Carolina and beyond, the SSW is committed to its work in understanding the etiology of social problems and advancing the design, development, and implementation of evidence-informed policies and practices to **advance equity, transform systems, and improve lives.**

OUR VISION

TO BE THE LEADING SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FOR IMPACT: ACCELERATING DISCOVERY AND THE TRANSLATION OF KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Too often a disconnect exists between the science of policy and practice and the application of that science to real-world situations, often referred to as the *know-do* gap. Closing the *know-do* gap compels us to strengthen our commitment to **IMPACT** as the gauge for the success of our efforts—that is, producing real differences for individuals, families, and communities in North Carolina and beyond. A focus on impact requires the SSW and the social work profession to embrace both the scholarship of discovery (the *know*) and the scholarship of translation (the *do*). Our ambition is to be the leading school of social work known for generating knowledge with forceful consequence and effect: impact.

OUR VALUES

TRUSTWORTHY, INCLUSIVE, COMPASSIONATE (How we interact) RIGOROUS, COURAGEOUS, PERSISTENT (How we work)

Our values provide the foundation for our mission and vision statements and inform how we interact and how we work. These statements are cornerstones for launching the next 100 years of excellence. These principles were forged early in the SSW's history by Howard W. Odum, the School's founder and first director, who believed strongly in the dignity and worth of all people and their right to be full and equal participants in a free and just society. Dr. Odum left a legacy of scholarship, leadership, and advocacy. We remain inspired and challenged by his example.

PRIORITIES

Five priorities frame and inform 16 objectives that will focus our efforts for the next three years. The full summary report includes specific initiatives associated with each objective, as well as those responsible for implementation and metrics for monitoring associated outcomes.

SCHOOL CULTURE

PRIORITY: BE A DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

- Objective** ➔ Foster a strong sense of belonging, identity, and shared mission among the SSW community of faculty, staff, field instructors, and students.
- Objective** ➔ Increase diversity of the SSW community and expand accessibility of educational opportunities.
- Objective** ➔ Take action to increase the School's capacity to confront oppression and discrimination.

EDUCATION

PRIORITY: CREATE AND DELIVER ACTION-ORIENTED EDUCATIONAL CONTENT TO PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

- Objective** ➔ Expand educational offerings for MSW students.
- Objective** ➔ Increase continuing education offerings that promote the ability of practitioners to move science into action.
- Objective** ➔ Train faculty, staff, students, and alumni to communicate effectively about social work research and practice.
- Objective** ➔ Focus educational opportunities on translating knowledge into action.

RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

**PRIORITY: INFLUENCE PUBLIC CONVERSATION, PRACTICE,
AND POLICY THROUGH RIGOROUS HIGH-QUALITY,
HIGH-IMPACT RESEARCH, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT,
AND INNOVATION**

- Objective** ➔ Create new capacity for influential and integrated research.
- Objective** ➔ Promote the development and adoption of pragmatic evidence-informed practices.
- Objective** ➔ Build the School's capacity to influence policy at the local, state, national, and international levels.

GLOBAL FOCUS

PRIORITY: ADVANCE A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

- Objective** ➔ Engage in cross-national research to expand knowledge addressing real-world challenges.
- Objective** ➔ Enhance and expand global competence of students.
- Objective** ➔ Develop a visible platform to amplify the SSW's global mission.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

PRIORITY: MODERNIZE THE SCHOOL'S COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRATEGY

- Objective** ➔ Assess the SSW's current communication infrastructure and strategies.
- Objective** ➔ Determine the School's unique brand (identity, reputation, and perception).
- Objective** ➔ Build a communication infrastructure and strategy to maximize the effectiveness and impact of internal and external communications.

STRATEGIC PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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