

UConn School of Public Policy

Mission, Draft Vision Areas, Goals, and Values

2025-2030

(Condensed 5-11-25)

Current Mission

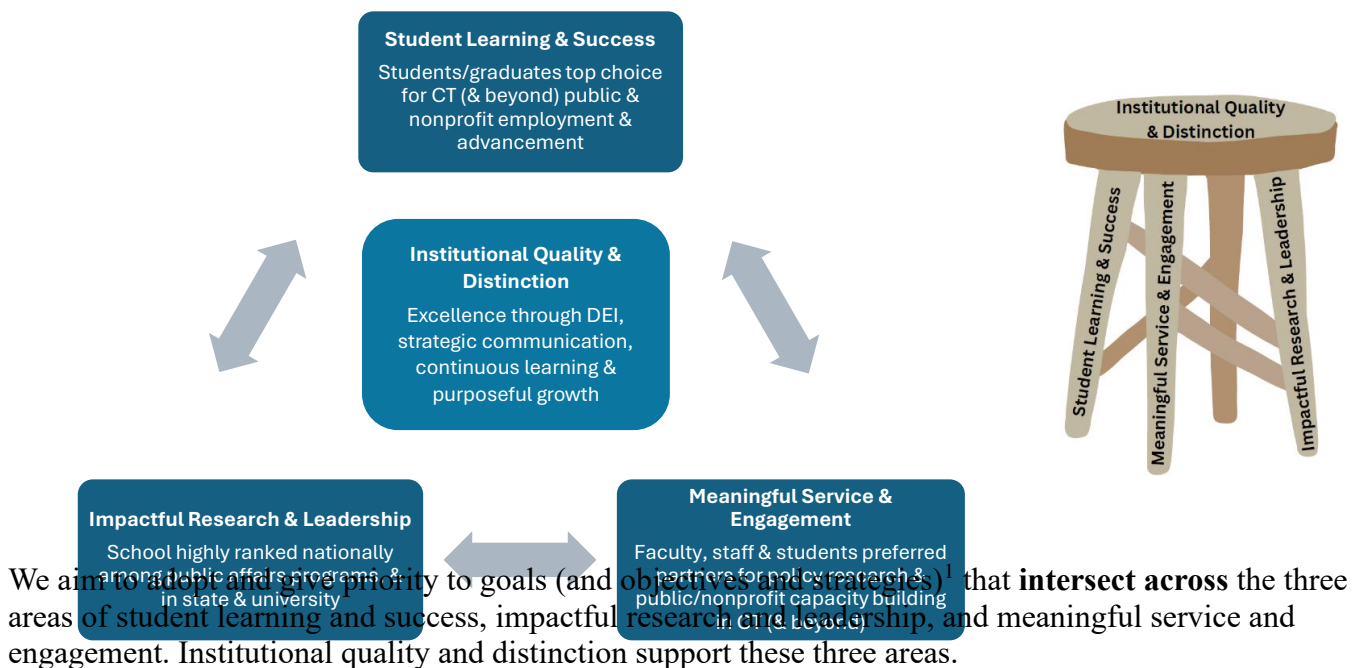
The University of Connecticut's School of Public Policy (SPP) is dedicated to solving pressing societal problems through cutting-edge scholarship, high quality instruction, and relevant service to the profession and society. We are committed to preparing diverse leaders employed in a wide range of professions and prepared with the important skills and competencies to be highly successful in their chosen careers.

Draft Vision Statement

Draft Vision Areas & Goals

This draft vision articulates four **mutually reinforcing** areas, with several goals articulated for each area, to be achieved over the next five or more years.

Figure: Visual Representations of Draft Vision Areas for the UConn SPP



¹ Not included here are strategies to reach these goals and vision areas. In previous rounds of data collection with stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, alumni council and other key stakeholders) we have generated a wide range of strategies that we will integrate into the plan once we have clarity on the vision and goal areas. We will also be adding a timeline and benchmarks. The vision areas and goals outlined here were created based on previous data collected and a School-wide Strategic Planning forum held on March 24, 2025.

1. Student Learning & Success - SPP students and graduates will be the top choice for Connecticut (and beyond) public and nonprofit agency employment or advancement.

The SPP is committed to empowering a diverse student body through inclusive, flexible, and career-aligned academic pathways. By embedding real-world experiences, mentorship, and cutting-edge skill-building into its programs, the SPP prepares students for meaningful public and nonprofit service.

- a. We attract a diversity of top-level students, providing access to high-quality, impactful, engaged and relevant curriculum that prepares all students (regardless of program, location, background, learning style or circumstances) for management and leadership positions in public and nonprofit agencies in CT and beyond. This includes the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to engage productively with a diverse workforce and citizenry and that prepares students for job market changes, structures and policy needs.
- b. We provide access to meaningful paid internship and professional development opportunities for all students that build capacity and lead to meaningful employment or other advancement.
- c. We provide all students with holistic, inclusive and flexible support, including access to the knowledge, tools and resources they need to achieve academic and professional success. We will provide targeted support for first-generation, non-traditional, and full-time working students.
- d. We create opportunities for all faculty (full-time and part-time) to develop and enhance teaching and mentoring for all students, particularly considering a rapidly changing policy environment.

2. Meaningful Service & Engagement - SPP faculty, staff and students will be preferred partners for collaborations on policy research and public and nonprofit agency capacity building in Connecticut (and beyond).

The SPP cultivates trusted, mission-driven partnerships that connect its academic community with the real-world needs of public and nonprofit institutions. By linking student learning and faculty and staff expertise to pressing workforce and policy challenges, the SPP will enhance agency capacity, promote equity, and contribute to inclusive, community-centered solutions.

- a. We strengthen collaborations and partnerships, particularly to:
 - i. Enable students to engage in research that both enhances learning and provides meaningful support to public and nonprofit agencies and policymakers in CT and beyond
 - ii. Enable faculty, staff, and students to serve the policy and public and nonprofit management training and capacity development needs of public and nonprofit agencies and policymakers in CT and beyond.
 - iii. Enable faculty, staff, and students to stay up to date on emerging workforce, technology, and policy challenges.
- b. We encourage local, state, and national public engagement among faculty, staff and students, especially that addresses diversity, equity, and/or historically underserved or marginalized populations.

3. Impactful Research & Leadership – The SPP will be highly ranked among U.S. Public Affairs programs (top 20) and recognized for its research excellence, leadership, and impact across the state and beyond.

The SPP advances policy and practice through cutting-edge, rigorous, and community-engaged scholarship that informs and strengthens public institutions. Research will be deeply embedded in

teaching and public engagement to expand the SPP's impact and visibility. Through this integrated research approach, the SPP aims to become one of the nation's top-ranked public policy schools.

- a. We expand research capacity and impact in alignment with faculty and staff strengths, relevance to the state and region (and beyond), and that enhances student learning.
- b. We encourage and garner funding support for high-quality research among faculty and staff that addresses diversity, equity, and/or historically underserved or marginalized populations.
- c. We strengthen our visibility, presence and participation in local and national public and nonprofit administration and policy professional associations, conferences and publications.

4. Institutional Quality & Distinction– The SPP will achieve organizational excellence through diversity, equity, and inclusion, strategic communication, continuous learning, and sustainable growth.

The SPP seeks institutional excellence by fostering purposeful growth, expanding academic and research offerings, and cultivating a distinct identity rooted in public service impact.

- a. We attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds, especially from historically excluded or otherwise underrepresented backgrounds.
- b. We nurture a welcoming, respectful, supportive, and collegial climate for all faculty, staff, and students, with special attention to the climate for SPP members from historically excluded or otherwise underrepresented backgrounds.
- c. We create greater awareness among all our stakeholders about our research, teaching and engagement impact.
- d. We explore opportunities to expand programs that build on current strengths and capacities and respond to emerging needs in CT and beyond, including:
 - i. Continuing to build and recruit for MPA Fellows in the Stamford area
 - ii. Exploring creating a fee-based undergraduate major (such as in CJ or public administration/policy) and/or graduate major (such as implementing a nonprofit master's program), grad certificate programs (such as in local govt), and/or a doctoral program.
- e. We pursue a continuous learning culture that enables us to respond to and shape the emerging workforce, technology and policy environment.
- f. We align our budget, incentives, staffing and fundraising with core values and the vision areas and goals articulated above, striving to support balanced integration across the areas of student success, research, and service/engagement.

Draft Values

These values were compiled inductively from input provided by internal stakeholders (faculty, staff, students and alumni council). We may be consolidating these further and welcome feedback on these as most reflective of the SPP and where it is headed.

- **Community & Collaboration** – Strong emphasis on teamwork, collaboration, collegiality, networking, and community engagement.

- **Data-Driven Impact** – Importance of data-driven decision-making, experiential knowledge, evaluating policy and practice critically, and making meaningful impact
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging** – Commitment to DEI, fairness, and creating a welcoming, accessible environment.
- **Excellence & Rigor** – A focus on high-quality education, continuous improvement, and academic rigor.
- **Innovation & Leadership Development** – Preparing the next generation of leaders through exposure to opportunities and real-world policy challenges.
- **Integrity & Professionalism** – Highlighting ethical standards, transparency, honesty, intention, resourcefulness, and a high level of professional conduct.
- **Local, State, & Global Engagement** – Emphasis on connections within Connecticut’s policy, governments, nonprofits and research opportunities, while aspiring to expand our collaborations and impact globally.
- **Practical Application & Career Support** – Hands-on learning, networking, internships, work-place preparedness, and skill development for careers.
- **Public Service & Mission-Driven Values** – Emphasizing service to others, civic duty, advocacy, and a commitment to and pride in government and nonprofit sectors.
- **Student-Centered**– Prioritizing student success, career preparation, and professional development.
- **Supportive & Caring Environment** – Faculty and staff providing guidance, mentorship, flexible and supportive environment.