



Strategic Plan

2025-2030

Dear colleagues, students, alumni, and community partners,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I share with you the School of Social Welfare's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, which charts our course for the next five years. This plan reflects the collective wisdom, dedication, and aspirations of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community collaborators.

Grounded in our mission to build a more equitable society, the plan advances five key priorities:

- Strengthening research and knowledge for justice.
- Fostering a dynamic learning environment that promotes teaching, learning, access, and student success.
- Deepening community impact and partnerships.
- Advancing anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Reimagining organizational culture and sustainability.

Together, these priorities position us to be a leading force in addressing the urgent social challenges of our time.

This plan also signals our deep commitment to preparing the next generation of social work leaders, advancing cutting-edge research, and driving meaningful change across local and global communities. It emphasizes not only what we aspire to achieve but how we will hold ourselves accountable—through clear goals, strategies, and measures of progress.

I am grateful to everyone who contributed their time, insights, and passion to this process. With your continued partnership, I am confident that we will fulfill our shared vision of transforming systems, advancing social justice, and strengthening the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the School of Social Welfare. I look forward to working alongside all of you as we bring this vision to life.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shari E. Miller'.

Shari E. Miller, PhD
Dean and Professor

Introduction and Context

The School of Social Welfare's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan emerges at a time of profound social transformation, heightened awareness of systemic inequities, and urgent demand for innovative, justice-centered responses to complex social problems. As part of a leading public research university, and as a school deeply rooted in the values of human dignity, diversity, inclusion, and equity, we embrace our responsibility to lead with integrity, imagination, and impact.

Our mission—to prepare social work professionals and scholars who will advance individual and collective well-being, challenge structural inequality, and foster resilient, inclusive communities—anchors every dimension of this plan. Grounded in a context-responsive orientation, our approach to education, research, scholarship, and community engagement seeks not only to respond to the needs of individuals, communities, and society but also to transform the systems and structures that produce injustice in the first place.

We recognize that structural inequality exists in overlapping and interlocking forms, shaped by race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, age, religion, and other dimensions of identity and experience. These realities call us to embed anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI) across our organizational culture, our teaching and learning practices, our research enterprise, and our engagement with community partners. This strategic plan reflects that imperative.

In developing this plan, we engaged in a collaborative process that brought together students, faculty, staff, and other partners. Their insights helped shape a shared vision for the future—one that builds on our strengths while boldly addressing the challenges and opportunities ahead. The result is a forward-looking roadmap that prioritizes innovation, impact, sustainability, and belonging.

The plan is organized around five strategic priorities, each operationalized by an overarching goal and guiding actions:

1. **Advancing Research and Knowledge for Justice:** We will strengthen the school's research infrastructure and capacity, support faculty and student scholarship, and promote interdisciplinary, community-engaged research that is responsive, and drives meaningful change.
2. **Fostering a Dynamic Learning Environment that Strengthens Teaching, Learning, Access, and Student Success:** We will support faculty development, elevate inclusive pedagogical practices, expand access to our academic programs, and ensure that students are equipped with the skills and perspectives needed to lead as practitioners, scholars, and leaders in an expansive justice-oriented context.

3. **Deepening Community Impact and Partnerships:** We will cultivate reciprocal, sustainable relationships with community partners, expand our training and workforce development programs, and position the school as a leader in policy innovation and advocacy.
4. **Advancing Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ADEI):** We will foster a school culture that is actively anti-racist and equity-driven, and we will institutionalize practices that promote representation, belonging, and justice for all members of our community.
5. **Enhancing Organizational Culture and Sustainability:** We will continue to invest in developing a thriving framework for shared governance, inclusion, and institutional resilience, while advancing strategies for sustainability, alumni engagement, and responsible stewardship of our physical and digital spaces.

Each of these priorities includes clearly defined goals, strategies, and implementation steps, as well as mechanisms for assessment, accountability, and continuous improvement. A phased timeline and key performance indicators (KPIs) will guide our progress, and annual reviews will ensure the plan remains responsive to emerging needs and opportunities.

This plan is both a reaffirmation of who we are and a declaration of who we are becoming. It is rooted in the belief that schools of social welfare must be agents of transformation—educating ethical leaders, producing rigorous and relevant knowledge, and partnering with communities to create a more just and compassionate world.

As we move forward, we do so with humility, purpose, and a steadfast commitment to equity, excellence, and impact.

Priorities, Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives

Priority 1: Advancing Research and Knowledge for Justice

Goal: Strengthen the School's research enterprise to advance equity, community well-being, and social change.

- **Objective 1.1:** Nurture a dynamic and sound research culture
- **Objective 1.2:** Enhance infrastructure
- **Objective 1.3:** Support faculty development
- **Objective 1.4:** Enhance investment in student research

Priority 2: Fostering a Dynamic Learning Environment That Strengthens Teaching, Learning, Access, and Student Success

Goal: Ensure academic excellence and student support through inclusive, innovative, and globally aware education.

- **Objective 2.1:** Enhance opportunities for faculty development
- **Objective 2.2:** Foster student-centered learning environment
- **Objective 2.3:** Innovate with technology
- **Objective 2.4:** Ensure curricula are responsive to shifting social contexts
- **Objective 2.5:** Increase access to academic programs

Priority 3: Deepening Community Impact and Partnerships

Goal: Expand community engagement to inform, innovate, and strengthen social work practice.

Objective 3.1: Address workforce development needs

Objective 3.2: Strengthen practicum and professional partnerships

Objective 3.3: Lead in policy innovation

Priority 4: Advancing Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ADEI)

Goal: Embed ADEI across all dimensions of the school's culture, structure, and pedagogy.

- **Objective 4.1:** Build critical awareness
- **Objective 4.2:** Promote Equitable Practices

Priority 5: Enhancing Organizational Culture and Sustainability

Goal: Nurture a healthy, inclusive, and resilient work environment aligned with institutional values and community needs.

- **Objective 5.1:** Foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration
- **Objective 5.2:** Continue to shape shared governance
- **Objective 5.3:** Enhance use of physical and digital space
- **Objective 5.4:** Enhance infrastructure and engagement for sustainability

Implementation and Assessment

- Phased timeline:
 - Years 1–2: Infrastructure development, baseline KPIs
 - Years 3–4: Evaluation, scaling of pilot initiatives
 - Year 5: Comprehensive review and strategic refresh
- Evaluation methods:
 - Annual progress reports in the dashboard
 - Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - Community and stakeholder feedback
- Leadership and governance:
 - Led by the dean, associate deans, and strategic priority champions

Closing Statement

The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan marks a pivotal step in the School of Social Welfare’s ongoing journey to lead with integrity, innovation, and impact. Grounded in our unwavering commitment to equity, justice, and community well-being, this plan charts a bold and actionable path forward—one that builds on our strengths, responds to the pressing needs of our time, and embraces the opportunities ahead.

As we implement this plan over the next five years, we do so with a deep sense of purpose and responsibility. We are called not only to educate and prepare the next generation of social work leaders, but also to engage in rigorous, justice-centered research, foster reciprocal community partnerships, and cultivate an organizational culture that reflects our highest ideals. Through collaborative leadership, transparent evaluation, and sustained engagement with our many partners, we will transform vision into action—and action into lasting change.

This plan is not an endpoint, but a living document that will continue to evolve. As we assess our progress and adapt to new challenges and opportunities, we will remain guided by our mission and values. Together, we will work to advance a future where systems are more just, communities are more inclusive, and people can thrive.

This plan was shaped by the insights and commitment of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. With these continued partnerships, we are confident in our collective capacity to advance knowledge, lead with compassion, and serve as a catalyst for equity and transformation—locally and globally.