

**CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies
Strategic Plan
2016 – 2020**

Extended to 2024

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SLU Mission, Vision, Values

Mission:

To expand higher education opportunities for workers; prepare students who aspire to careers in public service and movements for social justice; promote civic engagement; provide leadership development for union and community activists; and help workers achieve greater economic security. Its perspective is unique, addressing the needs of its constituents while helping New York City and State fulfill their needs for a well-educated, highly skilled public and private workforce.

Vision:

The School of Labor and Urban Studies will be an international leader in labor, urban studies and workforce development. Bringing together renowned faculty and leading practitioners, it will provide students with a world-class educational experience. It will offer students opportunities for personal enrichment and professional advancement, and will deepen their understanding of and participation in the political, social, and cultural life of the city, state, nation, and global community. Its cross-campus collaboration will broaden students' educational options, in addition to enabling student engagement with partner organizations. It will conduct research and public programming vital to the work of partner organizations. The School will serve as a hub for labor, academics and community leaders to discuss and debate issues and policies that impact workers, and working-class communities.

Values:

1. Education for all working people

The School of Labor and Urban Studies:

- Upholds CUNY's founding mission of providing equal access to a high quality education for all.
- Provides support for our diverse learning community; and respects and engages the experiences, perspectives, as well as the social, political and occupational aspirations that working adults bring to the classroom.

2. A just society

The School of Labor and Urban Studies:

- Affirms that strong, democratic unions and worker organizations are essential to social and economic justice and to a democratic society.
- Supports the development of an engaged and empowered citizenry in local, national, and international political, social, and cultural life.

3. Diversity

The School of Labor and Urban Studies:

- Recognizes the need to analyze and address the ways in which economic inequality and inequality based on race, gender, sexual identity, and ability affect power and privilege in the larger society and the world.
- Seeks out diversity, and encourages faculty and students to embrace and examine it.
- Supports partnerships with unions and community-based organizations representing diverse sectors of the city and its workforce.

Strategic Priorities

To realize its vision over the next five years, The School of Labor and Urban Studies will seek to realize four key interrelated strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority I: Enhance student access, retention, and success

Reflecting the principles of its founding, the School aims to provide access to higher education at all levels, with particular emphasis on recruiting, enrolling, and ensuring the academic success of workers and adult students from diverse poor and working-class communities. Toward this end, the School maintains a commitment to reduce barriers to admission, provide robust academic support, and facilitate timely graduation for students.

Strategic Priority II: Enrich and expand the academic experience

The School has developed a national reputation for its graduate degree programs in Labor Studies and Urban Studies. Building on this reputation, the School will broaden, diversify and strengthen its academic and workforce development programs, and increase co-curricular opportunities for students.

Strategic Priority III: Build organizational effectiveness and capacity

The School will seek to enhance its structure, facilities and processes to build capacity and support continuous improvement.

Strategic Priority IV: Advance broader mission of the School

Central to the identity of the School is its engagement with local and global labor and community-based organizations. Also central to our vision is the study, discussion and promotion of social and economic justice and the revitalization of democratic institutions. The School will continue to develop its curricula, course offerings, scholarship, and public programming in service of this commitment.

Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

Strategic Priority I: Enhance student access, retention, and success

The School of Labor and Urban Studies was established over 30 years ago to serve the educational needs of union members, workers and their communities, including those who have never attended college, as well as those interested in pursuing graduate study. Reflecting the principle of its founding, the School aims to provide access to higher education at all levels, with particular emphasis on recruiting, enrolling, and ensuring the academic success of workers and adult students from poor and working-class communities. Toward this end, the School maintains a commitment to reduce barriers to admission, provide robust academic support, and facilitate timely graduation.

Goal 1: Expand access to the School and CUNY

Guided by CUNY's historic mission of access and excellence, the School endeavors to expand access to its degree programs and collaborative programs with other CUNY colleges through strategic recruitment efforts and by easing obstacles to admission and enrollment.

Objectives:

- a. Expand enrollment in existing programs through strategic recruitment and partnerships with unions and community-based organizations
- b. Increase access to the School's degree programs for students with no prior college credits
- c. Develop alternative admissions criteria for students in the School's collaborative programs with other CUNY colleges

Goal 2: Improve retention, and progress toward degree completion

The School strives to support student retention and timely completion, with particular attention to the needs of adult students.

Objectives:

- a. Increase the number of students retained through enhanced retention efforts
- b. Increase the number of students who transition from certificates to degrees
- c. Facilitate degree completion through pathways such as stackable credentials, credit for prior learning and other options to increase credit accumulation
- d. Develop strategic course planning process to maximize student progress toward degree
- e. Expand scholarship opportunities to support student retention

Goal 3: Provide targeted student support to enable all students to succeed

The School aims to provide a broad range of academic and student support services to foster student success. The School will continue to strengthen and expand support services to its current student body.

Objectives:

- a. Provide proactive support to at-risk students
- b. Enhance student advisement across academic programs
- c. Integrate student academic support services across collaborative programs
- d. Improve access to student support services

Goal 4: Foster and increase student co-curricular engagement

As a School founded upon a commitment to a reinvigorated labor movement and revitalized urban communities, we seek to provide extensive and innovative vehicles for student engagement with unions, community-based organizations, and in the civic life of the city, state, nation, and the world.

Objectives:

- a. Increase opportunities provided for student involvement in a broad range of projects, and campaigns with labor and community-based organizations
- b. Enhance student engagement in designing, organizing, and participating in workshops and public programs offered at the School
- c. Strengthen the infrastructure for students to build community within the School, including peer mentoring, career services events, and other events

Strategic Priority II: Enrich and expand the academic experience

The School has developed a national reputation for its graduate degree programs in Labor Studies and Urban Studies. Building on this reputation, the School will broaden, diversify and strengthen its academic and workforce development programs, and increase co-curricular opportunities for students.

Goal 1: Strengthen and expand academic programs

The School is committed to providing a world-class education with curricular and pedagogical approaches that strengthen critical thinking, highlight and examine working-class perspectives and experiences, and encourage student social, political and cultural engagement in the world.

Objectives:

- a. Build on existing programs by creating dual and joint degrees, new undergraduate and graduate certificate programs
- b. Conduct bi-annual curricular reviews of certificate and degree program
- c. Cultivate curricular connections between Labor Studies and Urban Studies programs
- d. Increase the number and diversity of courses offered by each academic program
- e. Increase skills development within courses and across the curriculum, with an emphasis on student writing, critical reading, and research skills
- f. Expand experiential learning opportunities

Goal 2: Expand workforce development programs and collaboration with other CUNY Worker Education programs

The School's worker education and workforce development programs serve as a gateway to higher education and CUNY for adult learners and provide academic and professional skills and career pathway programs. The School has developed successful educational programs for workers, including the Leap to Teacher (LTT) Program for para professionals created in collaboration with the UFT, DOE, and four CUNY colleges. The School seeks to build on the successes of these programs by expanding its workforce development programs and collaborating with other CUNY Worker Education programs to help meet the City and State's most critical workforce development needs.

Objectives:

- a. Expand current programs and create new programs to fill workforce and union needs
- b. Expand the integration of basic skills instruction in college level courses/academic programs
- c. Increase collaboration with Worker Education programs in CUNY and throughout New York City to expand existing programs and create new programs
- d. Strengthen and integrate the School's Worker Education program at Queens College

Goal 3: Build connections between the classroom and public programming at the School

In addition to its academic programs, the School hosts public discussions of contemporary labor and urban issues through an array of public programming and the publication of its influential journal, *New Labor Forum*. We seek to increase the impact of this work, as well as its further integration with our academic programs.

Objectives:

- a. Develop public programming in greater coordination with course and capstone themes
- b. Expand student engagement in designing and organizing public programming, and writing for the School's journal, *New Labor Forum*

Goal 4: Attract, hire, and retain a diverse faculty

The School of Labor and Urban Studies has brought together a highly distinguished faculty that includes consortial faculty from the CUNY Graduate Center and other CUNY Colleges, tenured faculty who are nationally and internationally-recognized experts on unions and working-class social movements, promising junior faculty members conducting innovative research on cities and urban policy, and leading practitioners in labor and urban studies fields. The School will continue to grow and increase the diversity of its faculty and provide significant professional development opportunities for faculty.

Objectives:

- a. Increase the number of full-time faculty consistent with program needs and growth
- b. Broaden the diversity of full-time, consortial and adjunct faculty
- c. Expand the number of consortial faculty and practitioners in distinguished lecturer positions
- d. Provide professional development for full-time and adjunct faculty

Strategic Priority III: Build organizational effectiveness and capacity

The School will seek to enhance its structure, facilities and processes to build capacity and support continuous improvement.

Goal 1: Expand/transform the structure of the School of Labor and Urban Studies

The School aims to expand its structure to support growth. Toward this end, the School will increase enrollments and program offerings; improve operations by enhancing organizational roles and processes, promoting democratic structures that value faculty and staff engagement, integrating assessment of programs and services, and providing significant opportunities for professional development. The School will also seek to increase its visibility, revenues and funding support to achieve its goals.

Objectives:

- a. Build enrollment, program offerings, and organizational capacity to expand the School
- b. Increase revenues and secure additional funding to supplement existing resources and support capacity to serve more students
- c. Review and enhance organizational roles, communication and decision-making policies and procedures
- d. Improve data collection processes to promote ongoing assessment of the School's programs and services
- e. Recruit and retain adequate staffing at all levels to grow and sustain the School's capacity
- f. Increase professional development and training opportunities for all staff

Goal 2: Develop integrated marketing & communications plan to increase visibility of the School of Labor and Urban Studies

The School will seek to build a distinctive identity and increase its visibility.

Objectives:

- a. Create a brand for the School that conveys its distinctive attributes
- b. Develop comprehensive communications plan to enhance the School's presence

Goal 3: Upgrade facilities to enhance students, faculty and staff experience and facilitate operations

The School will modernize its aging facilities to promote the use of current and emerging technologies. We will also seek ways to optimize the use of our existing space and to add additional space to support program growth and build the community.

Objectives:

- a. Improve classroom technology to optimize the use of current and emerging technologies in instruction
- b. Upgrade information technology infrastructure
- c. Manage existing space and identify and secure additional space to support program growth, student services, and create physical space to build community among students, faculty and staff

Strategic Priority IV: Advance broader mission of the School

Central to the identity of the School is its relationship to and engagement with labor and community partners and with the city, state, nation, and world. Also central to our vision is the study, discussion and promotion of social and economic justice and the revitalization of democratic institutions.

Goal 1: Increase and strengthen the School's partnerships

Founded as a partnership between organized labor and the City University, the School and its union partners have increased their collaboration with community-based organizations. We seek to deepen our relationships with union partners and expand the participation and voice of community-based organizations in the programming of the School to enable us to better serve the needs of our community partners.

Objectives:

- a. Add a full complement of representatives from community-based organizations to our Advisory Board
- b. Strengthen and expand the School's collaboration with labor and community-based partners
- c. Promote collaboration and development of partnerships among labor and community-based groups and social movements
- d. Expand non-credit educational programming to meet the needs of labor and community-based partners
- e. Cultivate an active student alumni community

Goal 2: Enhance the School's ability to respond to local, national, and international developments

The School seeks to play an increasingly vital role as an intellectual hub for efforts to create a more just and democratic society that will build on the successful public programming, accomplishments in advancing the field of labor relations in both China and Vietnam – and its newly established International Program on Labor, Climate Change, and the Environment.

Objectives:

- a. Ensure that public programming and curricula stay relevant with crucial issues
- b. Strengthen strategic planning with labor and community-based groups to ensure that curricula, public events, publications and research address vital issues at the intersection of urban life and worker's movements
- c. Advance the School's role as an intellectual hub for scholarship, research, and service on essential labor and urban issues

Appendix

Strategic Planning Process

In anticipation of establishing a self-standing CUNY School, its Murphy Institute embarked on a strategic planning process in Fall 2014. The process engaged, constituents, including faculty, staff, students, adjunct faculty, labor advisory board and union training fund directors to help envision the future direction of the School. The Strategic Planning Committee used the feedback from these constituents to draft mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, goals and objectives.

Key planning activities included:

- **Team Meetings:** Faculty and staff identified the Institute's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).
- **Faculty and Staff Surveys:** Faculty and staff responded to a survey about the future School's priorities. Adjunct faculty also participated in a survey about the School's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- **Institute-wide meetings:** Two Institute-wide meetings convened to gather faculty and staff feedback on the SWOT analysis, and development of strategic priorities, goals, and objectives.
- **Faculty & Staff Small Group Meetings:** Faculty and staff provided comments on draft of the future School's Mission/Vision/Values.
- **Students and Training Fund Directors Focus Groups:** Three focus groups convened with students to ascertain student perspectives. A focus group was also held with training fund directors representing some of the Institute's union partners.
- **Strategic Priorities Working Groups:** Working groups that included Strategic Planning Committee members and faculty and staff convened to develop draft goals and objectives related to strategic priorities.
- **Labor Advisory Board Meetings:** Labor Advisory Board members provided recommendations on priorities to consider in developing the Institute's strategic plan — and as part of that process identified the institutional strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth.