## Overall Alumni Themes

**Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews**

### Future Timeline

**Alumni**

04.04.19

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Overall Alumni Themes

Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

Future Timeline: Alumni
Overall Themes
4.9.2019

- Possible reduction in funding for social programs - results in presidential elections
- Politics/ Political changes (3)
  a) Passage/ repeal of laws
  b) City-county laws
  c) Public discourse of profession
  d) Sustainability
  e) Climate/ environment changes
- Technology (3)
  f) Influence of social media
  g) Automation
  h) Technology leading to mental health issues
  i) Will social skills be the same -> how it impacts students and professionals
- Economic issues of university
  a) Wealth gap
  b) Student debt increase
  c) Access to Brown school
- What is WUTLS role in this wealth gap?
- How will we take responsibility in its role and the impact we have on the community (eg. Our development) buying land, economic impact)
- We have a real opportunity to identify how we can solve, address, etc
- Aging population
- What are the resources? Aging well
- How are we as SW playing a role in this?
- Need to recruit more students to aging field
- Need more cross-pollination in class
- Children- youth + families -> include aging
Overall Alumni Themes
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Alumni
Future Timeline Theme Session 2
4.20.19

- Cost of education/student debt (5)
  o Who can afford it? >dictates your student body
  o Pay gap and lower in SWers, overall b/c of financial
  o Masters is the new bachelors
- Expansion (or no) of healthcare (Medicaid/Medicaid) (3)
- Who wants to go to Brown? What are the issues happening locally that would drive them to come to school?
- How policy and admin be impacted by students coming? (2)
- Trends in HC>having awareness within school>value added
- Local STL issues (2)
  o City/county merger
  o Homelessness/housing stability
  o Gun violence
  o Education equity
  o Imbalance of WU power + $
    ▪ & having so many issues in STL communities
- Polarization & political landscape (5)
  o Regionally and nationally
  o Tax law changes>impacts peoples thinking and giving to nonprofits
  o People will give less due to higher federal taxes
- Technology (3)
  o Providing services
  o Use tech to improve service provision
    ▪ Outside
  o How SW + PH use tech to provide services
  o Should tie tech systems to nonprofits>provide this support to NP
- Telemedicine is becoming more common
- Train students to use Excel since its common software
- Major shift in whole judiciary system (Supreme Court) that will affect us
  o Series of rulings, more conservative, undo specific policies that will pact SW, PH + SP
- International trends-will impact School
  o Climate change
  o Forced migration
  o Shift in policies will affect funding + opportunities available

Notes

- Cost of education and associated student loan debt (all groups agreed)
  o Who can afford education dictates who can pay for “quality” education
  o Necessity of having a college degree feeds this – “masters is the new bachelors”
- Expansion (or not) of healthcare (three groups)
Overall Alumni Themes

Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

- Program isn’t only focused on health administration, but emphasizes policy and policy research
- May be meaningful to include healthcare admin if expansion occurs
- Certain areas of healthcare are gaining awareness in corporate arena (e.g., social determinants of health), which could situate Brown to be a thought and action leader
- STL local context has many complex problems that intersect (e.g., city/county merger, homelessness, gun violence, education equity)
  - Brown School may be a powerhouse of resources, but is situated in a city with many problems that have yet to be solved—is an irony, possibly hypocritical
- Polarization and political landscape
  - Big driver for donations may be due to changes in the tax laws; the amount of $$ folks donate may be impacted by the higher tax bill that occurred as a result of Trump administration
  - Even if this is walked back, will have lasting repercussions
- Increasing integration of technology into service delivery model
  - Can create an opportunity to improve delivery
  - Brown School currently does not incorporate tech use into education
  - There are very few useful, affordable data systems—Brown could be strategically placed if they could support low-resource orgs
  - Necessity of using Excel is important—was a neglected skill through education despite being a huge tool used in professions
- Judiciary system will shift to a conservative majority; will likely result in more conservative policy decisions
  - Code of ethics of the field has distinct language about impact of disparate outcomes on people
  - Programs and policies that have been center to social work ethics may be shifted to a more conservative mind
    - May put orgs in a bind on accessing funding as it currently stands
    - May push Brown to grow their advocacy arm
- International trends—will impact the school
  - Climate change
  - Forced migration
  - The shift in policies will effect funding and opportunities available for global development
Overall Alumni Themes
Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

Alumni
Strategic Questions
04/9/19

Question #1: What challenges will we need to deal with effectively over the next five years?

- Rising cost of tuition (9)
- Competition with online programs (1)
- Retirement of school leaders (4)
- Political polarization (8)
- Jobs insecurity of grads: domestic and international (5)
- Maintaining diversity thru rising wealth gap (2)
- Maintain quality of graduates & resulting school reputation in context of increased class size (1)
- Accommodating language barriers (2)
- Keeping up with technology- telehealth/counseling (2)
- Prepare for IT based job markets (3)
- Pay scale for human service jobs (4)
- Learning/ developing skills – i.e. Data visualization – daily + macro work (2)
- Signal vs. noise - being heard -> advocacy research enrollment (2)
- Influx of social/ emotional needs of students due to worldly changes, personal conflicts and other unmet needs (2)
- Continuing to broadcast definition of social work & training students accordingly (1)
- Volatile swings of working public opinion (1)
- Comfort living in uncertainty (1)
- Navigating the gray in a black or white world (1)

Question #2: What school values must we preserve at all cost?

- Excellence- EBP (4)
- Community involvement (8)
- Leadership (5)
- Emphasis on diversity and inclusion (5)
a) Real institutional transformation
- Student centered-ness (2)
- Making scholarships & affordability a top priority (8)
- Innovative transdisciplinary (7)
- Collaborative problem solving (4)
- Non-traditional/ unconventional agile mindset (3)
- Management & capacity building for nonprofits (5)
- Social justice (5)
- Ethical practice (4)
- Coordinate/ facilitate alignment amongst different disciplinary (politics, legal, development) (3)
- Not just ideas -> action (3)
- Commitment to EBP (1)
Question #3: What key opportunities must we pursue if we are to achieve excellence as a school?

- Center for community partnership structure like Sam Fox (1)
- Networking (4)
- Take advantage of the brilliance within each school @ WU & the strength of community partners/members (3)
- Co-definition of excellence with students (1)
- Ongoing PD for students and grads (1)
- Demonstrated community impact (1)
- Providing more opportunities for shadowing/observing within the field without practicum being a requirement. Professional representation within the classroom. Real life testimonials from the field. (6)
- Brown school reputation positions for advocacy for broader public to value MSW, MPH, MSP, professions - and as a result- compensate professionals that dignifies the change they make and value they create (lets raise that median salary! We’re behind teachers + nurses)– increase societal understating of difference between BSW and MSW (6)
- Connecting practicing alumni with current students to build practical skills in the field (1)
- Research/evidence based practices samples and collaborations in the St. Louis region (1)
- Investments and results in community based programs (3)
- Provide strong (clinical) training certification in evidence-based treatments so students graduate with a strong clinical foundation for their first jobs (4)
- Continue to push the envelope in class, training + practicum offerings that fall outside the box of traditional social work jobs. Roles. Social workers can do anything (7)
- Focus on scholarship to attract top talent to the school & reduce financial burden of initial low post-grad wages/debt (4)
- Continue to strengthen career services — networking (4)
- International partnerships for greater exposure to global SW and issues (1)

Question #4: What is the one thing we must change (e.g. do more of, do less of, get rid of) if we are to be successful in the future?

- More investment in teaching- retain high quality teachers not just researchers (7)
- Focus on quality skills - stop building buildings, start building people – more emphasis on practical skills, application to people and systems (11)
- Interdisciplinary – strong integration with other WUSTL schools. If SW/MPH/SP professionals are truly able to implement & sustain change we need to know the business/law/environment outcomes & speak their language (5)
- Experience implementation beyond traditional journals - open access to knowledge
- Add professional input from the field via pros/cons of the opportunities available in the field (2)
- Offer scholarships to nontraditional students seeking support without questioning their “why” For returning to school under which ever circumstances they have/are experiencing (2)
Overall Alumni Themes
Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

- Focus more on ensuring the Brown graduates will be at the top of their field vs. seeming prioritization of research – elevating teaching (1)
- Increase transparency (1)
- Increase communication across programs, faculty, staff and with students (1)
- Lower cost of education (1)
- Less paper mailed to community (1)
- Continuously update curriculum to align with current roles and practices (or allow more flexibility within tracks) (2)
- Follow model of Buder center in focus on career and connection (2)
- Promote EBP outside of costly academic journals (1)
- Keep expanding in terms of reach of social work roles - non-traditional positions/ roles in addition to traditional social work. It seems as if the world is trending that way (2)
- Improve advising system (1)
- Improve what we have before adding more - not try to be everything to everyone (2)

Question #5: What in our school culture needs to change for the future?

- Increase diversity culture across student body + faculty + staff. Keep doing! (6)
- Continue to evaluate facilities for diversity - prayer rooms/ gender-neutral restrooms- what else ?? (4)
- Encourage professionalism among students (8)
- Expect academic accountability (3)
- Create cohort model to build community (4)
- WUSTL doesn’t always have the answer & that’s a good thing! (1)
- Create a warmer + more welcoming environment, despite expansion of physical space (2)
- Professors exhibiting an elitist persona (3)
- Mentor, not hand-hold students (1)
- Students helping and mentoring/ skill share (1)
- DE stigmatizing for- profit and or lucrative work (1)
- Perspective- decrease the “bubble” effect (tolerance of differing perspectives) (5)
- Greater focus on ethics (1)

Notes

Question: What school values must we preserve at all costs?

I. Carousel Design Activity
   a. Question 1
      i. Rising cost of tuition
      ii. Retirement of school leaders
         1. Jack Kirkland, ending career
      iii. Political polarization, swings of public opinion
         1. Things that are hard to talk about
      iv. Job insecurity
   b. Question 2
Overall Alumni Themes
Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

i. Community involvement—most check marks
   1. Community leading the school on how to engage
   2. Brown School did not have the reputation for effective engagement
      a. Sam Fox School has infrastructure to support this

ii. Innovative curriculum with emphasis on collaborative problem solving

iii. Emphasis on diversity and inclusion

iv. Management and capacity building for nonprofits

c. Question 3
   i. Continue to push the envelope in roles that fall outside of traditional social work box – social workers can do anything
   ii. Compensate and dignify the MSW, MPH, and MSP profession by emphasizing the value
      1. Gap in societal understanding of the value of the profession; folks that care about social change
      2. By the time you are engaging with folks at the school, have already committed to a career that isn’t held in the highest esteem
      3. Want to change the narrative for folks who haven’t yet considered this field as a career
   iii. Strengthen career services & networking support
   iv. Attract top talent & support folks financially by limiting debt burden
   v. Provide more opportunities for shadowing “real time” social work, public health, and social policy – want to show what’s really happening

d. Question 4
   i. Raise quality/focus on teaching to be on par with research
      1. If school had same emphasis the culture would be stronger and profession would be benefitted
   ii. Focus on quality skills; stop building buildings and start building people
      1. De-emphasize expensive communications & use more sustainable, affordable avenues and put greater emphasis on
   iii. Promote evidence-based practice outside of expensive academic journals
      1. If all of good research is only going into journals, how is it getting to the field
      2. This institution leads the nation in implementation science; is a huge game changer for research – putting novel treatments into standards of care practice, but aren’t actually used at the medical school
      3. When writing a grant and it’s asking for evidence-based practice, is tough to find – school could do better at communication AND implementation of findings

e. Question 5
   i. Increase culture of diversity, inclusion, and equity at school – keep doing and keep improving
   ii. Implement cohort model
      1. Can be difficult to build a culture of community because of the varied directions across all students
Overall Alumni Themes

Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

iii. Expect academic accountability
iv. Perspective—decrease the “bubble effect”
   1. Was mirrored across several other questions

II. Timeline Activity
   a. Influence of political change
      i. Sustainability
      ii. City/county merger—big influence, repeated several times
      iii. Public discourse around profession
      iv. Funding for social programs
      v. Climate change
   b. Technology influence
      i. Robotics and IT
      ii. Social media
      iii. Automation & artificial intelligence
      iv. Increased mental health challenges
      v. Social skills of incoming students
      vi. Social skills of professionals
      vii. Teaching methodologies
   c. Finance and Economic Issues
      i. Increase of wealth gap
         1. Wash U’s influence on this wealth gap
            a. Buying up land and doesn’t pay taxes, which influences the inequity in school funding & availability
            b. Seems counterintuitive to mission to improve academic outcomes
            c. Not a situation for pointing fingers and naming what’s wrong, but great opportunity for collaboration across disciplines to address the inequity
            d. Promote the role that social work, public health, and social policy has in supporting aging population to retire well and healthy
               i. Is a growing field, but focus at the university is really small; over-emphasis on children and youth
               ii. Unaffordable tuition, student debt increase
               iii. Inequitable access to high-quality programs with huge price tag
            d. Expanded practice and advocacy with older adults
               i. Working with older folks should be included in curriculum around children, youth, and families
                  1. Aging people are staying well longer—is an opportunity for growing practice into the future
                  2. Accountability to building the economic achievement of STL residents

III. Next Steps
   a. What influence does Wash U have on this process?
      i. The whole university will start strategic planning over the next year
      ii. Chancellor-Elect Martin supports Brown School in doing their strategic planning; many schools just wrapped up
Question 1: What challenges will we need to deal with effectively over the next five years?

- Technology (e.g. how does that impact classes/practices, how is tech used to impact PH/SW, class on PH/SW tech) (3)
- Push for equitable development policies to prevent displacement (2)
- Climate change (partnerships, classes, advocacy, etc.) (2)
- Changes in the volume & type of employee/leaders—Baby Boomers are out + leaving opportunities
- Lack of integration of public + social services in STL region—How do we bridge these gaps? (2)
- No one stays in St. Louis (because practicums can't pay for students to stay; because lack of connection to STL people, community, orgs/businesses, universities) (3)
- Tuition costs/future generations going into debt (8)
- Focus and interests for students who are going to grad school “just because” (Does this mean advising them to wait or what the cost/benefit analysis would be? (1)
- Define what resources are available to alum/community
- Diversify employer access/pool (how do we educate students on types of jobs they are qualified for (5)
- Public Health and SW advocacy within healthcare providers (4)
- Strong PhD program on research & leadership
- Lower Civility and collaborative efforts among opposing views and Higher polarized political/social views (2)
- (-)Transparency between orgs/institutions and the community (2)
- (-)the unsustainable way in which we fund non-profits (paid practicum, SW union, working with nonprofits with similar missions) (2)

Question #2: What school values must we preserve at all costs?

- Inclusiveness (5)
- Affordability (5)
- Person-centered (1)
- Transdisciplinary (6)
- Research/evidence-based (5)
- balance research/practice (3)
- professional development (1)
- community building (internal + external) (5)
- equity (6)
- innovation (3)
Overall Alumni Themes
Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

- volunteerism
- international (2)
- accessibility (2)
- leadership (1)
- diversity (2)
- student/community feedback loop (1)
- rigor/high quality education/training (3)
- face-to-face learning
- student-driven

*Question #3: What key opportunities must we pursue if we are to achieve excellence as a school?*

- Big change/vision: tech + social services
- Integration of media (film, photography, podcast)
- International development in 3D (1)
- Payment for practicum (4)
- Consistency in adjuncts
- Practicum opp. in diverse fields (5)
- Substantial/integrated career development support (4)
- Opportunities for leadership development (2)
  - $ for conferences/trainings (1)
  - Facilitation skills for macro work
- More tailored feedback from professors and students on papers, presentations, etc. so that students can improve their writing + public speaking skills more
- Tap into trend of making higher education more affordable—especially in social work + public health (6)
- More opportunities to engage with other schools on campus (e.g. business school) (8)
- Knowledge-sharing with alum
- Leader/management courses
- Strong research dissemination to community/STL region
  - Practice implications for community agents
- STL is growing—make big changes with the city
- More political/government opportunities (6)
- Implementable projects students can lead (1)
  - In the STL community
  - Integrated throughout courses
- More substantial social justice/racial justice training (ABAR) employees + students (4)
- More policy/SED classes (2)
  - Make them experiential
- Leveraging online tools and expanding online options (hybrid, flipped models, etc.)
- Opportunities to engage with diverse field and schools from a learning and professional perspective (business, politics, etc.)
- Affordability of program and development of sustained and integrated professionals

11
Overall Alumni Themes
Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

- Ensuring a 360 implementation of diversity, inclusion and equity knowledge, skills and values in students, faculty, and staff
- Further involvement and commitment to a transdisciplinary skillset for students

**Question #4: What is one thing we must change (e.g. do more of, do less of, get rid of) if we are to be successful in the future?**

- Offer more night classes (3)
- Consider part-time options (2)
- Online course/program options (1)
- More paid practicum opportunities (6)
- Career center to provide more options (1)
- Help students develop brand/articulate value of SW/PH ($$) (8)
- Don’t lose face-to-face programs/classes but offer more flexibility for part-time students
- Bring in more guest speakers/alum into the classroom (3)
- More opportunities to engage faculty (1)
- Consider class sizes
- Stronger connections/cross collaboration across universities in STL & communities
- How we teach/educate, increase diversity of learning strategies (Didactic heavy) (2)
- Project-based (real grand challenges) courses (3)
- Build connections with social work grand challenges (1)
- International development (do more and strategically) (1)
- Skill labs to match industry trends (Excel) (Academic writing) (3)
- Partnerships with rural initiatives
- Coach alumni development to not solicit brand new grads; cultivate the new donors more (1)
- Work on rebranding social work—not bleeding hearts (3)
- More alumni meaningful engagement even in nontraditional capacities (1)
- Recruiting MSW/MPH/MSP, etc. from diverse backgrounds (3)
- Stronger connections to STL for students (break the Wash U bubble, and better marketing of current partnerships) (1)

**Question #5: What in our school culture needs to change for the future?**

- Practicality (1)
  - Connecting classroom concepts to “real world” applications (1)
- Less talk>more action (2)
  - Long term planning and communication to stake-holders
- More intentional (1)
- Genuine inclusivity efforts
  - Include students in planning/staffing (2)
- Working with communities in more sustainable/less harmful ways (3)
Overall Alumni Themes

Future Timeline, Strategic Questions, Focus Groups, Individual Interviews

- More responsive to community needs across the Brown school collective/across the silos within the school (2)
- More collaboration between MSW/MPH/MSP and other grad programs across campus (2)
- Unhealthy competition (2)
- Sustainable investment in the Promise Zone; make higher ed accessible to PZ students - local, major needs there (3)
- Continuity of content/experiences through classes + practicum experiences
- Authentic inclusion—we need a culture that doesn’t shame some ideologies/political views/beliefs (dialogue not silence) (5)
- ( - ) divide between the M’s
- Nontraditional careers/paths (3)
- Macro thinking > policy action (3)
- POC led theories/community work (1)

Notes

Question 1
- Tuition costs/future generations going into debt
- No one stays in STL – lack of connections to STL, organizations, communities
- Unsustainable way that we fund non-profits
  - Funders ask for a lot of NP for not a lot of money
  - Paid practicums should be mandatory; funder see that NP get free labor
  - We should have a SW union that we shouldorganization and demand higher wages
  - How do you have professionals entering a space who see a very fragmented system and how to do equip them to collaboratively work together? It’s unsustainable to fund so many NP in STL but could they work together
  - Educate students what soft dollar funding looks like and the grant world
  - WUSTL (university) has ties to incredibly wealthy people and it would be nice if the university could tie the passion of donor to an organization to support sustainably

Q2
- Equity
- Community-building—internal and external
  - Connect students to each other and then to the larger community
- Research and evidence-based practices—it isn’t a core skill set that everyone is taught; brown can set itself apart
- Interdisciplinary/ transdisciplinary
  - How to connect to different fields
  - We have diverse fields and subfields—that we should connect to

Q3
- Increase opportunities to engage with diverse fields and schools from a learning and professional perspective
  - Tap into other schools to get more transdisciplinary perspective
- Affordability of program and development of sustained and integrated professionals
  - How do you get the professionals integrated in our development
Overall Alumni Themes
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- Ensuring a 360-degree implementation of diversity, inclusion and equity knowledge, skills, and values for students, faculty, staff
- Further involvement and commitment to transdisciplinary skillset for student
  - Make it easier to take courses from other schools
  - Be able to translate our skills into other areas

Q4 – One thing to change
- Help students develop their brand and articulate their value of SW/PH/SP
- Don’t lose face-to-face classes; tailor course work so flexibility
- More strong connections and collaborations across university
- More Project–based courses – real grand challenges and real project

Q5
- Less talk, more action – focusing the classroom concept to real-world application
- More intentional with inclusivity efforts; authentic inclusion
- Working with communities in less harmful and more sustainable ways
- Fostering more collaboration among the programs within the school
- More non-traditional career paths
- More macro-thinking – policy action