



Washington
University in St. Louis

BROWN SCHOOL

One School Strategic Planning Concept Paper

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Background

One School is a shared vision of how the Brown School should be structured, how its members should work together, and how its culture should support integrated research, teaching, service, and administration. *One School* is aligned with the Brown School's work to address the largest health and social challenges for communities locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Finding solutions to these challenges requires transdisciplinary scholarship and excellence and a common mission focused on equity.

The previous Brown School strategic plan, Impact 2020, outlined major goals of adding new programs in public health and social policy. As a result, new programs, faculty, centers, and initiatives have been established. A *One School* task force was convened in early 2013 and was charged by former Dean Eddie Lawlor with producing recommendations for fostering culture, structuring academic and research programs, and taking administrative steps to bring together social work, public health, and social policy. The task force facilitated important *One School* activities, including focus groups, book discussions, case studies, collaboration network mapping, and a faculty retreat.

Accomplishments

Since 2013, the Brown School has made a number of important policy, administrative, and cultural changes that have supported the *One School* vision, such as:

- Structured school-wide (rather than program specific) faculty search and promotion & tenure committees
- Adopted new faculty policies that removed barriers between faculty tracks and moved promotion considerations into a revamped promotion evaluation committee
- Developed new courses (e.g., skill labs, advanced policy courses approved by and available to students in all three programs) and curriculum policies (e.g., doctoral program breadth requirements) that cut across programs and student enrollment
- Supported cross-program mentoring and advising for doctoral students (i.e., social work and public health doctoral students can have committee members from any program)
- Established numerous new interdisciplinary school-wide scholarly initiatives including the Clark-Fox Policy Institute, the Washington University Network of Dissemination & Implementation Researchers (WUNDIR), the Systems Science Interest Group (SSIG), the Brown School Evaluation Center, and others

Despite these successes, additional opportunities remain to achieve and evolve the *One School* vision. This work includes important improvements in administrative structures to advance multiple growing programs, more clearly communicate the rationale and benefits of *One School* to internal and external constituencies and shift the culture of the Brown School to more widely support *One School* structures and activities.

External Environment

While the Brown School is unique in having social work, public health, and social policy together under the same roof, we are not alone in recognizing the importance of trans- or interdisciplinary work. Other universities are also innovating and grappling with how best to coordinate and support trans or interdisciplinary scholarship and practice.

The Harvard Kennedy School, for example, offers five variations of their master's program: Master in Public Policy (MPP), Master in Public Administration in International Development (MPA/ID), Master in Public Administration (MPA), Mid-Career Master in Public Administration (MC/MPA), and joint/concurrent degrees with MPP, MPA/ID, or MPA. To represent student interests across disciplines, the centralized student government known as Harvard Graduate Council (HGC) represents over 15,000 students from 12 graduate

and professional schools. HGC's motto of "One Harvard" aims to promote joint advocacy, closer collaboration, and social interaction. The administrative structure also supports "One Harvard" through an Executive Board of presidents and vice presidents from each school and advocates on behalf of graduate students with central administrators, including the President of Harvard University and the Provost's Office.

Other schools are following suit:

- Washington University's Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts integrates multidisciplinary research and coursework in architecture, urban design, communication design, and art to improve health and community living through design
- Saint Louis University adopted a "one school" approach by combining public health, social work, criminology, urban planning, and health management in the formation of the College of Public Health and Social Justice
- Penn State's College of Agriculture offers inter-college degree programs combining traditional agriculture science with bioinformatics, genomics, biotechnology, ecology, and cellular and integrative biosciences
- Bradford University's faculty of management and law has created interdisciplinary research centers based around collaborations and using research to inform course development

These models -- whether focused on research partnerships, course creation, or administrative structure redesign -- outline approaches that challenge core assumptions about how schools or academic units should be organized and how scholarship should occur. They provide examples of how universities are supporting the convergence and interaction of various disciplines to ensure the generation of new ideas that create a bigger, more positive and community centric impact.

Strategic Themes

Since 2012, *One School* has been driven by a collective mission at the Brown School for social impact and social justice. Leveraging diversity in our professional backgrounds and experience improves planning, decision making, problem solving, and impact. The social problems and challenges the school community strives to address cannot be solved by any of the three disciplines alone, and we embrace the opportunity and responsibility to train the best social work, public health, and social policy professionals who share this commitment. Strategic planning sessions held in spring 2019 solicited a significant amount of feedback and suggestions.

Objective: Implement innovative ways that the Brown School community can build on the strengths of each field and program to advance a shared mission. In line with this thinking, strategic themes can be broadly grouped into four categories: academic and research; administrative; communications, partnerships, and collaborations; and the school's organizational culture.

Academic/Research

Integration of social work, public health, and social policy can serve as the model for solving social issues locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. There is shared value and benefit to increasing skills and commitment in leadership and social action for all students, faculty, and staff. There is immense interest in collaboration – within the Brown School, across campus, and together with external community and stakeholders. Significant collaborative work is being done, and a *One School* model is well positioned to identify, highlight, and amplify these successes.

Administrative

The administrative themes that emerged through the strategic planning feedback process encompassed capacity building and efficiency, as well as investing in systems, structures, and staff to strengthen and support the activities critical to advancing the school's mission. Continuing efforts across departments, efficiency and effectiveness are best aligned when stakeholders share generalist responsibilities and roles

and identify the roles that really need a dedicated specialist. Similarly, program and department administration can be both distinct where necessary, aligned and integrated wherever possible.

Communications

Significant feedback was received around growing new initiatives to advance communications, partnerships, and collaboration that are based on *One School* accomplishments to date. Areas of opportunity for increased work typically included documenting and disseminating successes stemming from or aligned with *One School* priorities and the importance of data to identify gaps and measure success. Connectedness was also a common theme, as was the critical role that communications and collaborations can play in understanding and addressing critical social and health issues.

School Culture and Community

Envisioning and building a widely espoused and enacted *One School* culture of shared vision, values and behavioral norms is essential to support and achieve our mission and commitment to transdisciplinary and integrated research, training, service, and administration. This culture will increase and diversify community engagement, connectedness, satisfaction and cross-school and University collaboration. The goals, importance, and impact of *One School* and how each community member contributes must be communicated consistently through multiple channels to bolster the community's understanding of individual and collective connections to the school's impact.

Options

Academic/Research

- Increase the promotion and communication of co-teaching opportunities for faculty members from different disciplines and consider developing more TPS courses that serve all three programs
- Increase collaboration on global teaching and research; expand curriculum and culture to be more global across programs
- Create a rapid response team to pursue new work and collaborations across disciplines and with partners outside the Brown School
- Develop a research fund supported by the Brown School that provides opportunity for research collaborations/teams that involve all three professions.

Administrative

- Increase and enhance professional development for staff to support *One School* programs
- Strengthen administrative business and research offices with increased efficiency and capacity for support across programs, faculty, and staff
- Build on work aligning school merit and need based scholarship support across programs
- Increase the amount, quality, and coordination of student advising that furthers *One School* opportunities across programs

Communications

- Enhance knowledge and awareness of research and work being done across the school community
- Highlight funding opportunities that are increased through a *One School* approach
- Emphasize the value of social work, public health, and policy professions
- Promote *One School* to increase rank and reputation in social work, public health and social policy
- Increase awareness of dual-degree and individualized specializations to advance opportunities for cross-program curriculum and course opportunities while considering accreditation restraints
- Communicate our common mission to address complex social and health challenges recognizing that their complexity requires multi- and transdisciplinary scholarship and excellence

School Culture and Community

- Develop a document that clearly operationalizes *One School* (vision, values, norms) integrated with other major school values and norms. This document should recognize the goals for growth of each program and identify resources needed to allow each program to succeed. This document should be part of all student, faculty and staff orientations and management trainings
- Create a standing committee to define and measure success and support implementation
- Expand and strengthen work of “Connecting at Brown”
- Formalize and build additional local, regional, national, and global partnerships that involve all three programs/disciplines
- Draw from values of all disciplines to increase collaboration on advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity
- Increase community engagement and advocacy efforts and diversify the communities we serve

Short- and Long-term Plans and Estimated Costs

Short term plans include advancing recommendations around environmental scans, forming a standing committee, and communication of progress made to date and vision looking forward. Longer term activities will be informed by continued dialogue between school stakeholders and community and may include investments in initiatives and infrastructure to advance the *One School* model. Measurable longer term outcomes and financial impacts will be considered as part of the evaluation of success of initiatives.

Costs for advancing *One School* will include time and effort of faculty and staff as well as financial investments. For example, to expand academic/research collaborations across campus, joint or courtesy appointments should be created and financial support in the form of discretionary accounts will be expected (e.g. five \$2,000 accounts would require a total commitment of \$10,000).

Capacity building and increased efficiency might be addressed by investing in human capital, which would benefit from cost projections and commitments for supporting school-wide professional development and employee wellness. Expenses may include additional FTEs', training, memberships to national organizations, and a budget for Connecting at Brown. To be intentional about staff training relate to advancing *One School* priorities, we recommend developing a plan that enables the school to commit and allocate funds per FTE staff per semester or year (e.g. N=50 @\$1,000 total cost per year \$50,000).

Influencing our communications will require identifying opportunities within current budgets as well as gaps. For example, communications can improve without further investments; but we will need funding for building additional national and global partnerships that reach across disciplines. Projected costs will include; memberships, travel expenses, cost of attending and presenting at regional, national, and international meetings, and publication costs.