



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

Leadership matters. As the premier leadership department at Tennessee's flagship university, we recognize the value and import of strong leadership in the educational setting, and virtually everywhere else. Therefore, we have developed this strategic plan as our blueprint for maximizing our effectiveness in and influence on educational leadership and leadership education here in the Volunteer State. The goals, objectives, and measures outlined below will enable us to meet our ambitious aspirations for our students, alumni, clients, and partners, and the many institutions, communities, and people they beneficially impact.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES

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STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL 1

Prepare and Develop Leaders and Scholars

The core work of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) is to prepare and develop leaders and scholars who will, in turn, educate, develop and support students, and contribute substantively to the research and knowledge base in the field. Our unique ability to integrate education and leadership theory and practice will serve us well in this important mission.

OBJECTIVES

Ensure excellence in coursework, research, and programming. Excellence is an ambitious aspiration, but a necessary foundation for the ELPS Department to be competitive in today's higher education landscape. Perhaps more importantly, excellence in coursework, research, and programming is what our students need and deserve to become outstanding scholars and practitioners.

Prioritize student learning and success. Faculty and staff find many interests competing for their time and effort. Research, service, communication, and networking are all important activities and necessary for success. The most important work we do, however, is to ensure high-level learning and long-term capacity building for our students.

Integrate theory and practice. As a department focused on both leadership and scholarship, one of our strengths is our ability to understand research and apply it to real-world educational contexts. It is in the thoughtful and artful blending of theory and practice where we will maximize the value to our students, as they become research-informed practitioners and practice-informed scholars.

Grow and support innovative and courageous leaders. While technical skill and deep knowledge of theory are both critical to success in education and in leadership, we recognize that additional attributes are essential for truly transformational leaders and scholars. Primary among the characteristics we seek to grow in our students are the ability to think and act innovatively, and having the courage to always serve with integrity and a focus on the needs of young people.

GOAL 2

Make an Impact

As professionals who work in the field of education, we wish to go beyond the traditional intellectual and conceptual role that is sometimes associated with academia. We seek to have a substantive impact. First and foremost, we desire to have a positive influence on the lives, capacity, and careers of our students. We also want our teaching, service, programming, and scholarship to make a difference in the classrooms and on the campuses where our alumni work, in the journals where we write, and in the hallowed halls where policymakers grapple with important decisions.

OBJECTIVES

Produce significant research and scholarship that matters. Research and scholarship should always be of the highest quality and impeccable methodology, but should also be consequential. We seek to not only publish influential articles in the most prominent and widely read journals and books, but also to more broadly influence the scholarly dialogue on topics that matter in the field, and to thereby affect and enhance practice.

Graduate leaders who enable student development and learning. We are not only educators of students, but we are also educators of educators, and educators of leaders. As such, we strive to ensure that our graduates are poised and prepared to have a positive impact on student learning and success in the schools and campuses where they work.

Extend beyond the traditional classroom to enhance leadership. We hold a unique position in academia because our work largely influences the practice of leadership. Through innovative and sometimes non-traditional means, the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies seeks to build leadership capacity and enhance practitioner effectiveness. Whether through experiential learning opportunities, on-line academic programming, creating replicable models of practice, professional learning offerings for educational leaders, executive leadership coaching, or community outreach activities such as ProjectGRAD, the ELPS team will continue to extend our reach and impact on educational leadership across and far beyond our campus.

Influence educational policy and practice. As a department, we are uniquely positioned to have a substantial impact on policy and practice. Leveraging our expertise, our scholarship, our resources, and our networks, we will always endeavor to be a part of the educational policy discourse at the local, regional, state and national levels. We believe as a department that we can have a positive influence on policy and practice, particularly when we commit to purposeful use of our individual and collective voices.

GOAL 3

Communicate and Collaborate

Throughout the strategic planning process, faculty, staff and stakeholders continually spoke with pride of the remarkable work happening within the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. In order to enhance, extend, and amplify our efforts, we must work together across structural and subject matter lines, and we must be prepared to communicate more effectively both internally and externally.

OBJECTIVES

Employ proactive and purposeful external communication. The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies has many interested stakeholders. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, partner schools and districts, community allies, and many others have a vested interest in the work we do and the outcomes we achieve. Enhanced and more intentional external communication will keep our stakeholders informed, engaged, and inspired.

Embrace transparent and consistent internal communication. In order to all be working toward a common purpose in ways that are consonant rather than dissonant, we must prioritize consistent, informative, and transparent internal communication. This internal communication must be two-way, and provide not only information, but offer opportunities for faculty and staff to give candid input and feedback on matters of import to the Department.

Tell our story in a variety of ways. Today, there are myriad ways to communicate our work, our accomplishments, and our stories. Websites, social media, video, and personal interactions are just a few of the avenues available to articulate our most important messages about who we are, what we do, and the impact we have. We have many powerful stories to tell, and we must be proactive and strategic about how we reach our various audiences.

Work together, formally or informally, whenever feasible. Collaboration can be a powerful accelerant to our work. While working together is not always feasible or efficient, there are many opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to enhance the efficacy of their work through leveraging the strengths and skills of other members of the ELPS community. When faculty identify the projects and initiatives they are passionate about, many common interests emerge that could provide fertile ground for collaboration. Additionally, opportunities for students and alumni to work together across ELPS programs and centers could catalyze beneficial and meaningful relationships and synergies.

GOAL 4

Ensure Quality and Sustainability

In order to achieve our ambitious aspirations, our work at all levels of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies must be both exemplary and sustained over the long-term. Ensuring incomparable quality in our teaching, programming, service and scholarship will help make the ELPS Department the preferred provider for leadership education and development regionally and nationally. Attending to sustainability will allow us to broaden, deepen, and lengthen the impact we have on educational leadership, policy, and practice.

OBJECTIVES

Continuously assess and improve our efforts. Continuous improvement requires on-going self-reflection, measurement of outcomes, and a willingness to make necessary changes in order get better. As a department, we are committed to consistently examining our procedures, practices, and results as a means to elevating all of our work to the highest level of quality.

Leverage outstanding work to secure additional resources. Doing consistently superlative work will serve as one strategy for securing additional resources to support our important and impactful work. Experience tells us that the best way for us to attract additional funding for our efforts is to do conspicuously exceptional work. Securing grants, donations, and other resources will be made easier by demonstrating that our efforts in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies are extraordinary investments.

Couple long-term planning with short-term flexibility. Our strategic plan will serve as our long-term road map and blueprint, enabling faculty and staff in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies to make sound decisions and collaborate meaningfully. However, while a clear direction and long planning horizon are healthy for any organization, we will preserve a reasonable level of flexibility to respond to critical needs as they arise. The ELPS Department must commit to its long-term strategic direction, but remain nimble enough to adjust and course correct as necessary.

Recruit more assiduously for a diverse pool of high-potential prospective students. A diverse, high-potential applicant pool is the life blood of any academic program, and the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies must redouble its efforts to recruit, enroll, support, retain, and graduate students of the highest caliber from a variety of backgrounds for each of its programs. Our investments in this regard will pay tremendous dividends in terms of the quality of academic work in our classrooms, our reputation around the region and across the nation, and our future recruitment success.

GOAL 5

Live Our Values

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies has invested significant time and intellectual capital to develop a collective vision and values statement which has been affirmed and validated over time. Among the faculty, staff, and other stakeholders, there was a strong desire to see these values explicitly reflected in the decisions, direction, and every-day life of the ELPS Department. A clear consensus has emerged: If we are to be professionally successful, academically competitive, and personally fulfilled, we must live out our values.

OBJECTIVES

Honor our commitment to equity, opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. As educators and leaders our commitment to equity, opportunity, diversity, and inclusion is a tremendous strength and understood as a sacrosanct responsibility. As individuals in positions of privilege, power, and authority we must remain deeply dedicated to the notions of equity, access, and justice in all that we do. Moreover, we remain deeply committed to addressing barriers to educational access and opportunity for vulnerable and underserved populations. In addition to the importance of preparing leaders for a diverse world, we recognize that our instruction and our students' learning opportunities are simply richer when we employ, teach, and serve a population that includes a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and lived experiences.

Focus on excellence, service, and community. Several of our articulated values appear to be posited firmly in the context of the larger college and university communities. Excellence, service, and community are among the ELPS departmental priorities that are also important aspects of the identity of the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, as well as the University of Tennessee Knoxville. This singular alignment reinforces our focus and commitment to these critical tenets.

Reflect the University's land grant educational mission. As a land grant institution, the University of Tennessee Knoxville has a responsibility to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to the people of Tennessee. In that spirit, we recommit ourselves to the diffusion of knowledge, skill development, and technical expertise, particularly in the areas of leadership and education, that will benefit Tennesseans from all walks of life.

Lead courageously and embody our departmental values. We will embrace and reflect the departmental values identified by the ELPS community in our daily efforts. Integrity shall be our hallmark, and we will aspire to lead courageously as we pursue the important work we do for our students and for those they impact now and in the future.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

We recognize the need and the value of measuring our progress toward achieving the ambitious goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan, and propose the following measures of success:

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Graduate Placement and Impact	✓	✓			✓
Research Productivity	✓	✓		✓	
Instructional Quality (Including Course Evaluations)	✓	✓		✓	✓
Number of Engagement Activities in Policy Leadership		✓	✓		✓
Student and Stakeholder Feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number and Quality of External Communications		✓	✓		
Number and Quality of Alumni interactions			✓		✓
Number of Cross-Program Collaboration Points	✓		✓		✓
Data from Program Evaluation and Accreditation Assessments	✓	✓		✓	✓
Indicators of Influential Practice	✓	✓		✓	
Dollars Raised from Grants, Donations, and Consultancies	✓	✓		✓	
Number and Diversity of Inquiries/Applicants/Enrollees		✓	✓		✓
Number and Quality of Recruitment Activities			✓		✓



CONCLUSION

As scholars and students of leadership, we recognize the importance of having an inspiring strategic vision, and a well-articulated plan to achieve that vision. This strategic plan has been developed in order to give all stakeholders associated with the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies a clear understanding of our future direction, and a detailed blueprint for how we plan to make it happen. This plan is the result of many conversations with faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners and other stakeholders, and represents our best thinking on how we will define priorities, how we will make decisions, and how we will measure success. Our strategic plan will serve as our collective roadmap as we seek to achieve our ambitious goals for the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.