

**UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE KENT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2018 – 2021**

**Mission:** The Kent School of Social Work (KSSW) addresses complex social problems through education, research and service to create a just and better world.

**Core Values:**

1. Diversity and Inclusion
2. Promoting a Multicultural Society
3. Equity
4. Social and Economic Justice
5. Human Dignity and Respect
6. Partnership, Collaboration and Community Engagement
7. Transparency and Trust
8. Empirical Research and Action Research
9. Innovative and High-quality Instruction
10. Evidence Based Practice

**Goal for this Strategic Plan:** In three years KSSW will be on the path to co-location in one building so as to enhance collaboration, partnership and community engagement. Our organizational culture and climate will continue to build on healthy aspects with an emphasis on safety and inclusion. We will be among the top 25 schools of social work in the nation and through careful marketing and communication efforts we will be well known for our scholarship and accomplishments in bringing about positive social change at local, state, national and international levels as we promote values of diversity, equity and social justice through our research, teaching and service. Many students will be supported through scholarships and doctoral assistantships and will be workforce ready upon graduation.

## **Educational Excellence:**

Educational excellence at the KSSW is defined as the application of state-of-the-art pedagogy to guide students to master core social work competencies and inspire them to realize their full professional and personal potential.

Within the lenses of critical inquiry, multiculturalism, and social justice, we prepare our students to become skilled at the core social work competencies to solve complex social problems, empower the vulnerable and oppressed, and engineer change in our rapidly changing world.

To achieve this goal, we will target two outcomes and engage in several initiatives:

**Goal 1:** KSSW educational programs are excellent and recognized in various rankings.

### **Initiative to support achievement of goal 1: Infrastructure and Innovation**

- Invest in infrastructure (including educational technologies, evidence based instructional best practices) to foster teaching innovations and continuous enhancement of teaching and teaching-related activities.
  - Associate Deans, BSW and MSSW Directors design alternative models of course delivery in collaboration with Curriculum Committee

**Goal 2:** KSSW prepares 21<sup>st</sup> Century social workers who are workforce ready (whom employers are clamoring for) with the evidence-based knowledge and skills to solve complex social problems, empower the vulnerable and oppressed, and engineer change in a multicultural context at local, state, national and international levels.

### **Initiative to support achievement of goal 2:**

- The Faculty with leadership from the Curriculum Committee will develop and implement a social justice infused, evidence-based, innovative, and dynamic curriculum that is informed by both research and practice and that prepares students for work.

#### **Curriculum Improvement Strategies**

- Make decisions for our curriculum that are data driven, and strategic given the changing demographics, emerging populations in need and growing workforce needs in our field.
- Crystalize content on critical inquiry, social justice and advocacy across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the student knowledge base and expertise in specific areas of evidence-based practice & policy.
- Enhance opportunities for “classroom in community” approaches to teaching
- Include community participation projects and assignments in online curriculum
- Establish, strengthen, or maintain ties with organizations that are carrying out social justice and advocacy efforts

#### **Strategies to Improve Outcomes**

- Deepen instruction on content significant for licensure and certification requirements
- Deepen instruction and preparation for doctoral student launching
- Meet ongoing education needs of the workforce by having “Just in Time” Post-Masters Specialization or Certificate offerings
- Investigate models of evaluating student learning
- Investigate ways to evaluate former students within the workforce to evaluate student learning.

### **Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity:**

Activity that creates new knowledge, integrates and/or translates knowledge into useful forms for the betterment of the local, national and international community and/or new understanding and/or preserves the knowledge of the past.

**Goal 3:** KSSW conducts rigorous research that is responsive to and positively impacts the local community, state, nation and international settings.

#### **Initiative to support achievement of goal 3:**

- The Dean's Office and Associate Dean for Research will enhance research infrastructure to support writing grant proposals, starting and maintaining grant projects, disseminating findings from grant projects, and securing additional funding to sustain or expand promising or effective grant activities or products.
  - Expand specialized administrative support for pre-award, post-award and post-closure phases
  - Strengthen collaborations with biostatisticians and other experts in diverse analytical techniques
  - Increase support for junior faculty to conduct research, including increasing protected time for research at key times in their professional development
  - Increase infrastructure to support collaboration through the development of research labs to engage BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. students in research

**Goal 4:** KSSW research and its impact is well known

#### **Initiative to support achievement of Goal 4:**

- The Dean, Associate Dean for Research, marketing staff and faculty will raise the internal and external profile of KSSW research and related activities (in class projects and through community engagement, DESJ projects and conversations and other service)
  - Maintain a current repository of research activities and achievements by updating the research directory on an annual basis and disseminating to other Schools of SW, local, state, national and international leaders.
  - Increase dissemination of research through University-wide colloquia
  - Share expertise and research findings using various forms of media

### **Community Engagement:**

The Kent School of Social Work operates within a framework of communities. Our aim is to seek, renew, and build partnerships with local, state, national, and international organizations. We will engage these partnerships towards the improvement of communities. The hallmark of these partnerships will be the leveraging of our resources for the mutually beneficial sharing of knowledge and resources towards improving communities.

**Goal 5:** KSSW is proactive and responsive to cutting edge community issues (at local, state, national and international levels), makes a difference thru research, class projects, community projects, and social action and communicates response and outcomes widely.

### **Initiative that supports achievement of goal 5:**

- The Faculty will create an ad hoc Community Engagement Committee composed of faculty, staff, students and alumni whose purpose will be to:
- The Community Engagement Ad Hoc Committee will meet with the Office of Community Engagement to communicate current activities and how we can collaborate with them.
  - Based on the meeting will determine next steps but minimally will work to align Kent's work with OCE and UL's strategic plan
- Promote better communication and collaboration with DESJ as they engage in direct impact activities and determine if the work of CE can be part of DESJ or if an ongoing committee is needed.
- Communicate and disseminate findings through various venues- Kent website and newsletter, UL Magazine, social media, traditional media
  - Identify, map (in partnership with UL Center on GIS), and assess the full range of Kent School's community engagement/partnership activities (within courses, as part of grant projects, as part of research projects, as part of community service activities such as board and committee memberships) and write a summary report.
  - Catalogue courses that include projects that address community concerns (e.g. SW605 hosts a conference annually to focus on solutions, engage young people in being better citizens- need to add evaluation component)
  - Capture all scholarship being conducted in partnership with community including Kent's active involvement with the Trans-disciplinary Social Justice Research Consortium
  - Capture all service faculty, staff and students are engaged in through board, committee, task force memberships at the university, local, state, national and international levels that lead to policy and practice changes, shape FOAs at grant giving organizations, infuse trauma-informed practices into organizations, etc.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice:**

Diversity pertains to the various types of cultural groups that exist defined by race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic region, national origin, indigenous heritage, language, physical disability status, developmental disability status, religion, and socio-economic status. Equity is a pursuit in ending systemic discrimination by addressing the differences in power and privilege, and ensuring access while creating equivalent outcomes. Creating equitable practices are acknowledging the differences in individuals and circumstances and providing disadvantaged individuals with the resources to help them achieve the desired outcomes. Social Justice is both a process and a goal in which there is equal participation and an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities such that all people feel physically and psychologically safe, secure, valued, and are able to fulfill their potential. Social justice is fostering diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Goal 6:** KSSW has a culture of safety, inclusion, diversity, and equity within the School demonstrating its commitment to social justice. We honor, include, and empower our students, faculty, staff and local community and support social justice activism within local, state, national and international contexts.

### **Initiative that supports achievement of Goal 6:**

- The DESJ Committee will facilitate annual critical dialogues annually among Kent students, community members, faculty, staff and students from other disciplines.
- The Dean's Office will Implement a communications strategy to emphasize diversity equity and social justice work in the KS
  - Advertise on Kent's website, Inside UL, Kent FB page, Kent Twitter upcoming DESJ initiatives and events
  - Share outcomes of DESJ initiatives and events on website, UL magazine, other social media and traditional media outlets
  - Create a regular Dean's blog related to exploring social justice issues, recognizing Kent students, staff and faculty doing work in this area, and starting conversations with the community around diversity and equity topics
- The DESJ Committee will facilitate opportunities for student, faculty and staff engagement in social justice oriented events in the community
  - Conduct at least one broad Kent-wide social justice project annually
  - Encourage students to explore social justice movements outside of Louisville and in other geographic areas
- The KSSW will recognize students, faculty, staff and alumni involved in social activism
  - Recognize staff involvement in activism with an award

### **Creative and Responsible Stewardship:**

The Kent School has three critical elements that are indispensable to achieving its goals: human resources, monetary resources, and physical space resources. The initiatives below address these critical elements and serve as the foundation for Kent School's priorities in the area of creative and responsible stewardship.

**Goal 7:** KSSW acquires a building to house faculty and staff offices, program offices, student organizations, classrooms and space for community meetings

#### **Initiative that supports achievement of goal 7:**

- Dean keeps need for building in front of UL higher administration so that when a building opens up, we can acquire it (ideal- current Business School or Education buildings)
  - In the meantime, KSSW continues space assessment to maximize use of space for faculty and staff
  - In the meantime, KSSW upgrades Kent controlled classrooms with new technology

**Goal 8:** Kent School enhances resources for faculty and staff and fosters a healthy workplace.

#### **Initiative that supports achievement of Goal 8:**

- Dean ensures faculty and staff pay are equitable
- Dean advocates for an increase in the number of full time tenure track and term faculty

**Goal 9:** Kent School acquires more student scholarships and doctoral assistantships

#### **Initiative that supports achievement of goal 9:**

- Dean forms a Community Advisory Board of top leaders to help with strategy, workforce development initiatives, entrepreneurial initiatives, fundraising and PR
- Dean, development staff and faculty develop and execute innovative fundraising events (e.g., small gatherings at homes and local sites, breakfast, speaker series) to facilitate direct solicitations in order to raise funds to:
  - Increase number of doctoral assistantships
  - Increase number of BSW MSSW scholarships

**Goal 10:** Kent is in the top 25 Schools of Social Work in rankings in US News and World Report

#### **Initiative that supports achievement of goal 10:**

- Dean, marketing staff and faculty market and conduct public relations regarding faculty research, teaching and service accomplishments, Kent School student projects and success, Kent School wide social justice events, impact of KS on important social issues.