



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Public Policy and Global Affairs



Strategic Plan 2023-2028



VISION:

Build an equitable,
just, and sustainable
world.



MISSION:

Catalyze positive policy
change through a
global focus.

Land Acknowledgment

The School of Public Policy and Global Affairs is located at the UBC Point Grey campus situated within the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people.

As part of the larger UBC community, we are guests and settlers on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Selíl'wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and Syilx (Okanagan) Nations.

As guests and settlers on Indigenous lands, we share an important responsibility in learning with and about our host Nations and strengthening these relationships. We will continue building on existing partnerships with our host Nations through mutual respect and reciprocity.

Our School

The University of British Columbia's School of Public Policy and Global Affairs (SPPGA) offers an unparalleled program that applies a policy lens to emerging and pressing global issues. Our faculty, researchers, students, staff, and partners reflect the international character of the School, originating from and conducting high-impact research in six continents. Our strengths as a School emanate from our multidisciplinary faculty complement, which includes social scientists, humanities scholars, natural scientists, engineers, and public health experts.

SPPGA is home to the highly-respected Institute of Asian Research (IAR) and its five associated, regionally-based centres; the innovative Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions (CSDI); the long-standing Liu Institute for Global Issues; and the Office of Regional and International Community Engagement (ORICE), connecting students with experiential learning.

Our Master's program in Public Policy and Global Affairs (MPPGA) has rapidly grown to produce emerging policy leaders in governments around the world, as well as in public interest groups and industry. The School integrates working policy professionals into its teaching and research through our innovative Policy Practitioners Program.

We partner with government agencies, First Nations, think tanks, community organizations, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and industry in our learning and research.

Our faculty members' expertise spans a wide variety of fields, leading innovation in critical areas including global governance and democracy, security and development, Asia policy, climate change and environmental policy, energy policy, human rights and social justice, trade policy, global health, global Indigenous politics, and science and technology policy. It is against this backdrop that we coalesce and channel our efforts in creating and mobilizing knowledge for global impact.

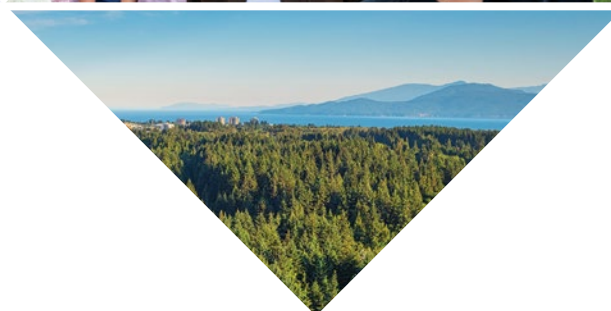
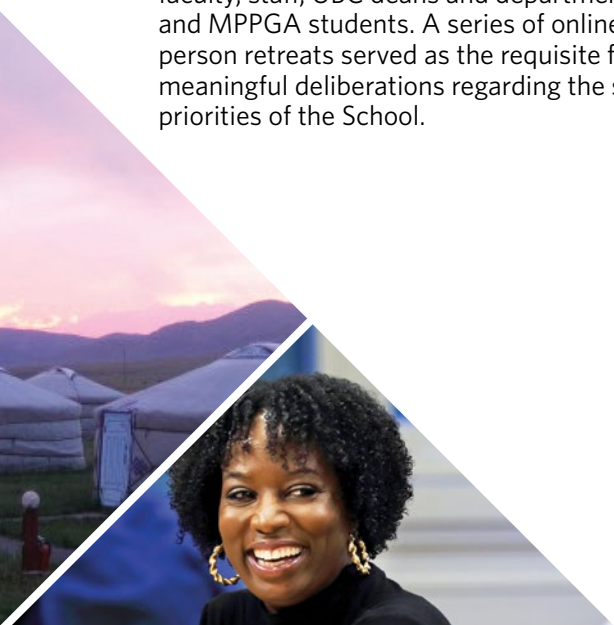


The Planning Process and Purpose

Our strategic planning process was underscored by principles of **collaboration**, **consultation**, and **inclusivity**. As a collective, our goals were to: 1) develop a unified and future-oriented vision; 2) define and catalyze the identity of SPPGA and areas of strategic focus; 3) amplify SPPGA's profile and impact within UBC and beyond; and 4) build excitement and alignment within the faculty membership and staff.

The planning process commenced in summer 2021 and included discussions with SPPGA faculty, staff, UBC deans and department heads, and MPPGA students. A series of online and in-person retreats served as the requisite forum for meaningful deliberations regarding the strategic priorities of the School.

With the leadership of UBC's Strategy and Decision Support (SDS), we developed a thorough strategic framework—including our strategic goals and actions—that will ultimately give direction to our School over the next five years. We explicitly endeavored to tie our plan to UBC's Strategic Plan and the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan.



Vision and Mission

VISION: Build an equitable, just, and sustainable world.

MISSION: Catalyze positive policy change through a global focus.

The UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs (SPPGA) is a catalyst for change by advancing world-class interdisciplinary and collaborative research, offering an innovative learning environment grounded in real-world contexts, and coordinating robust dialogue exchange with policymakers, communities, and the broader public.

We value integrity, innovation, and connection while centering hope for the future. SPPGA leverages engaged scholarship to address pressing local and global challenges, educates the next generation of policy leaders, and transforms knowledge into positive impact on public policy.





Our Aspirations

We are living through multiple overlapping crises including climate change, public health emergencies, threats to democracy, societal inequalities, and a changing geopolitical climate. Our faculty are at the forefront of addressing these pressing issues through policy research, engagement, collaboration, and education. The challenge ahead is immense, and SPPGA is ready to embrace it.

To this end, SPPGA is committed to **engage with partners** to influence decision-making within local, regional, national, and international institutions. Our applied, problem-based research projects build across disciplinary strengths and are informed by deliberative consultation.

SPPGA is committed to **play a convening role**, leading a facilitated process on select major topics of societal importance that bring together academics, government, Indigenous groups, civil society, and industry in dialogues of local and global relevance.

SPPGA is committed to **innovation in pedagogy and experiential learning** that places graduates in positions of influence

in public policy by facilitating the acquisition of professional skills and competencies, expanding applied work through collaborative training, and leveraging a robust network of government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and alumni partners.

Moreover, SPPGA is committed to **investigate global implications of public policies** from diverse levels of government, contexts, and sectors.

SPPGA is well positioned to play a prominent role in working with partners around the world to address complex and ongoing social-economic and political challenges.



Thematic Research Areas

REIMAGINING DEMOCRACY AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY
Human Rights, Nature, Democracy

ENVISIONING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES
Science, Society, Technology, Health

ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND JUSTICE
Oceans, Land, Climate, Energy, Resources

NAVIGATING GLOBAL CHANGE AMIDST THE RISE OF ASIAN POWERS
Diplomacy, Trade, Security

REALIZING A MORE JUST AND INCLUSIVE WORLD
Development, Equity, Indigenous Self-Determination and Reconciliation

As an interdisciplinary school, our work in research, teaching, and public engagement is centered on five unique yet interconnected themes. These draw on the strengths and expertise of our faculty members while also aligning with our institutional aspirations of creating meaningful impact in addressing societal issues of global importance. Within the themes are intersecting sub-themes that represent the breadth of research and teaching expertise at the School.

The framework that underpins our thematic research areas is broad enough to capture the diversity of our work, but also points to where our collective efforts can enrich policy dialogues—both in the classroom and in the field—in innovative ways.

The elements of our framework are defined by our strengths in Asia policy, in parallel with our strengths in area studies, as well as our expanding commitment to Indigenous policy and reconciliation.

Strategic Core Areas

Our work over the coming five years will be centered on four core areas of focus that echo those of the University of British Columbia's strategic plan:

OUTREACH
AND POLICY
ENGAGEMENT

PRACTICAL
LEARNING

ENGAGED
RESEARCH

PEOPLE AND
PLACES

Through these core areas of collective strength and attention, we will channel our efforts to fulfill our commitment to our students, society, and the world. Within each core area we have identified a series of strategic goals that will channel our efforts and help operationalize our plan.



Outreach and Policy Engagement

We are a convening space for partners in governments, First Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and industry to engage on a global scale with critical topics of local, national, and global relevance. We are home to dialogue that connects disciplinary excellence and catalyzes multi-disciplinary knowledge generation and policy impact. We are a host for public engagement that connects our students, faculty, and external communities with topics of relevance that shape and advance our collective knowledge.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Expand external partnerships and engagement

We will leverage convening strengths in partnership with governments, First Nations, NGOs, industry, and other groups, to enhance our profile, catalyze development opportunities for students and faculty, amplify knowledge exchange, and promote the Policy Practitioner Program.

2. Convene on significant global issues

We will activate university assets to strategically convene an internationally-recognized symposium on topics of societal importance every few years, in collaboration with Canadian and international governments, academics, and civil society.

3. Pursue new and expanded cross-campus and institution-wide collaborations

We will pursue new and expanded engagement opportunities across UBC to channel the efforts of other units carrying out similar work and open policy research doors for other UBC researchers.

4. Support Indigenous policy work

In alignment with the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan, we will strengthen work on Indigenous policy through an intersectional lens that applies global knowledge to local contexts.

5. Enhancing our policy impact

We will enhance our capacity for engagement, collaboration, and advising on policy issues. We will explore arrangements that enable us to best connect our expertise to the problems that governments, public interest groups, and others are aiming to solve and that form a source of practical experience for our students.

Practical Learning

Our programs focus on providing real-world learning experiences, supported by innovative pedagogy, embedded practitioners, and active engagement with a robust local and global network of partners and alumni. Our highly sought-after students have the capacity to understand diverse perspectives and the profession-specific skills to contribute in an evolving and complex world.

PRACTICAL
LEARNING

STRATEGIC GOALS

6. Advance curriculum designed for global impact

We will implement educational programming that is responsive to the needs of our students and to the exigencies of the global issues that we aspire our graduates to solve. We will expand practical learning and offer targeted skills courses and allow students more choice in the curriculum.

7. Enhance student experience and support

We will build on the MPPGA's strengths in applied learning by enhancing employment opportunities for our students through new career services offerings, internship opportunities, a revision of co-op positions, leveraging a growing alumni network, and increasing scope for cross-campus project work.

8. Facilitate growth in academic programming

We will strengthen our MPPGA program while exploring new programs that extend our reach and impact.



Photo: Paul Joseph



ENGAGED
RESEARCH

Photo: Paul Joseph

Engaged Research

Our School is home to a collaborative network of diverse faculty and student research expertise, which values research that is embedded in real-world context. Our coordinated engagement with governments, First Nations, non-governmental organizations, and industry supports problem-focused research outcomes that address societally-critical issues.

STRATEGIC GOALS

9. Advance policy-oriented research excellence, discovery, and scholarship

We will foster a collaborative environment that facilitates shared, problem-based research and enables us to build across disciplinary strengths.

10. Bolster our numbers and expertise

We will seek to address faculty gaps in areas of strategic focus and to increase full-time faculty membership with the requisite experience to keep pace with student demand and program growth aspirations.

People and Places

We promote a respectful, inclusive, and equitable work environment that supports well-being and fosters social and professional connections amongst our students, faculty, staff, and the university community.

PEOPLE AND
PLACES

STRATEGIC GOALS

11. Align resources with strategic priorities

We will continue articulating faculty and staff succession plans that recognize our aspirations for growth.

12. Promote internal community-building

We will nurture a supportive, collaborative, and collegial community in accordance with the Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EDI) aims of the university as operationalized in the UBC Inclusion Action Plan.

