

Analysis of Stakeholder Participation in the SWOT Analysis, Fall 2008

School of Community and Regional Planning

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to the Strategic Planning Committee
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Introduction

The following is a review of the levels of agreement with the continuing faculty and staff SWOT analysis of the School of Community and Regional Planning. The faculty and staff meeting was held in the fall of 2008, and then various stakeholder groups were invited to participate via electronic survey. There were two parts to the survey; an opportunity to indicate levels of agreement with the statements generated by the faculty and staff group (yes/no agreements), and an opportunity to offer alternative statements or modifications in free text boxes. Phase One of this analysis is focussed on the range of agreement. This analysis may help to identify areas of comment that are ambiguous and require further clarification, and areas where there is strong agreement. The second phase of analysis will focus on analysis of the free comments and the dynamic connections between themes.

The method is outlined in more detail below, but the procedure in the analysis of agreement involved breaking down statements into smaller units of meaning, and then reuniting the parsed bits (codes) with the degree of agreement for the whole statement for an intensity grading of each theme. The combination of intensity and codes permits recombining parts of the statements to see where meaning agrees and disagrees across the statements. As in most qualitative research, the original faculty and staff statements were freely generated in response to fairly open-ended questions put forward in the SWOT workshop. The statements were therefore be treated like “focus group data”.

There are two appendices. The first is a list of all the original continuing faculty and staff statements, organized according to the SWOT rubric. The second appendix contains some definitions and links to definitions of ICTs. ICT stands for information communications technology, which was referred to in one of the original SWOT statements. ICT includes ways of extending the reach of education through electronic media and is being explored as a way to enhance education experiences.

Limitations of the Data

This data might be classified as focus group data with an extensive participant check in the form of the stakeholder SWOT survey responses. The original staff and faculty meeting where the statements were generated stands for the original focus group. The strengths of focus groups are that having multiple participants can encourage deepening or expansion on themes, or present new themes for exploration by multiple participants. The results of group discussion can help amplify complex themes. One of the disadvantages of focus groups, though, is that sometimes alternate opinions are not voiced for various reasons of social or professional restraint. As this focus group was composed of people who know each other well and will continue to work together, it can be anticipated that the typical work-day restraints would be self-imposed. Also, in this setting as in focus groups more generally, it is likely that common themes, known to the participants as public knowledge, were raised first. It is often helpful to follow up focus groups with some individual interviews to elicit more unique perspectives, to pursue particular themes in more depth, or to surface alternate points of view which may not be expressed in group settings for various reasons including awareness that particular concerns

are not relevant to all in the group. At the time of the SWOT, this was part of the plan, and thus the continuing faculty and staff SWOT statements and the responses form just one part of the Visioning process.

If the initial faculty meeting is considered as focus group data, it should be acknowledged that the SWOT survey is more like a broad ‘participant check’ than like a 2nd focus group. In a participant check, members of a “user group” are often invited to comment on how valid they perceive findings to be, or to clarify issues. That is what occurred here, and the agreement ratings can be understood as an external validation of the statements generated by the faculty and staff group. However, in the context of considering the SWOT survey as a participant check involving multiple stakeholders with interests in SCARP, it must be acknowledged that the opinions of others are also valuable additions, not just clarifications. This makes the “free statements” from the SWOT responses of particular interest, and suggests that further explorations of the themes suggested in the free statements will be highly useful.

Phase One: Quantitative Analysis of Levels of Agreement

Figure 1 Strength of Agreement by Major Themes

1. Here the major codes (re-assembled out of the parsed bits) are shown with the percentage of agreements (percentage of agreement with “retain statement”).
2. Method: Agreement with positive statements (strengths and opportunities or S, O) were assigned a positive numerical value, while agreement with negative statements (weaknesses and threats, or W, T) were assigned a negative numerical value. Thus if 2 out of three responses agreed with a positive statement (S, O) then the percentage of agreement was positive 66%. If the coded bit was about enrollment, for instance, and enrollment was also coded in a statement concerning a threat, then 33.3% of the rating would have negative value. (-33%). The average of -33% and +66% gives the result for this chart. Thus it is possible to have strong agreement but to have a zero on this chart because thematically the SWOT cancels (something can be both a weakness and a strength and thus cancel out).
3. Interpretation: What is most important is to look at the extremes, which indicate (usually) that there are no opposing opinions in that thematic area. For instance, it may be assumed that the comments about research, relevance, multi-disciplinarity, the institutional context and governance were almost all positive, otherwise such a high average could not have been attained. This can be confirmed by looking at the raw SWOT scores. Similarly, the decision to retain negative statements about teaching, facilities and accreditation may be assumed to be almost entirely in agreement. this was confirmed by looking at the raw SWOT scores. Areas where there is more ambivalence are indicated by bars closer to zero on the y axis.

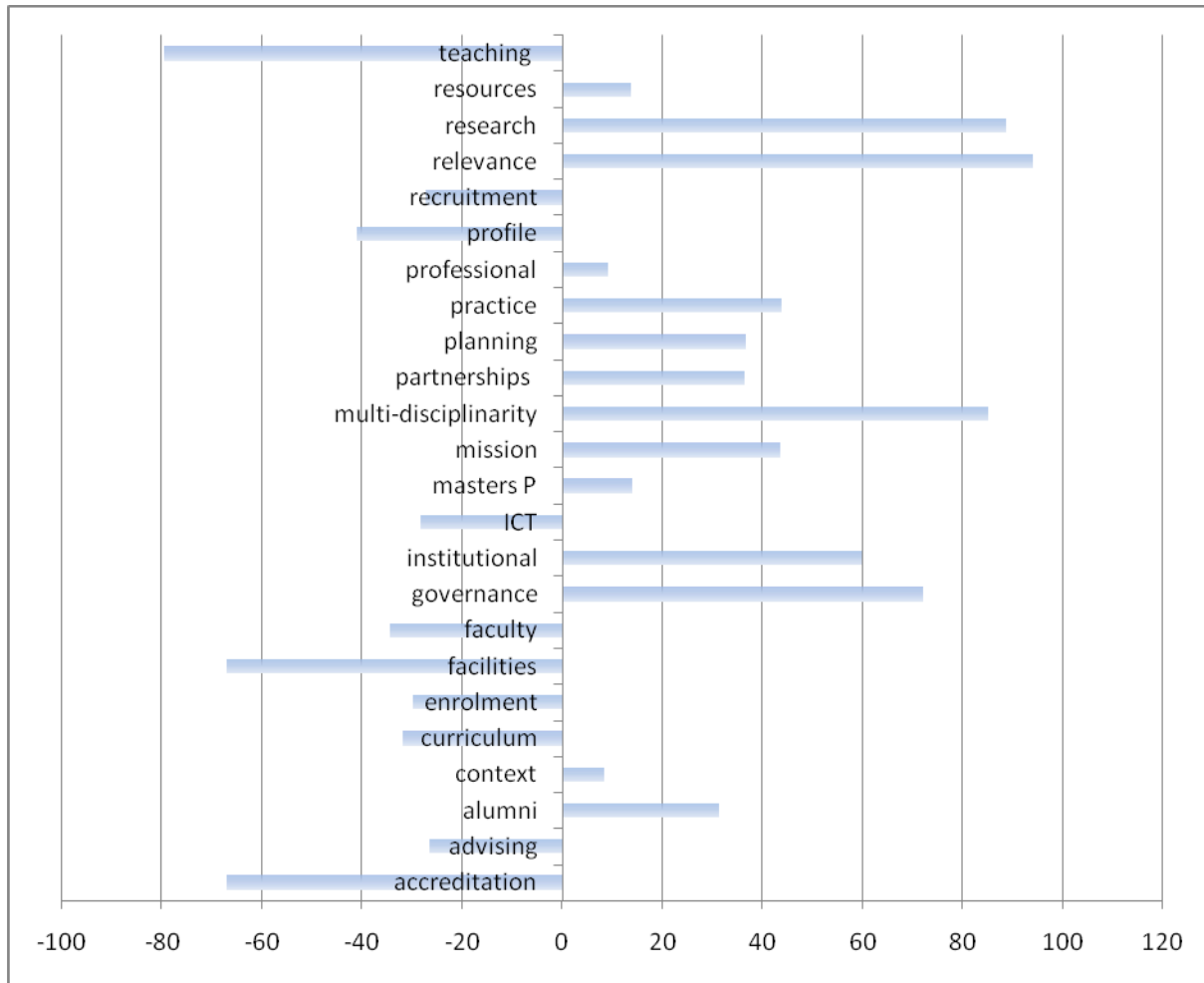


Figure 1 Strength of Agreement by Major Themes

4. **Limitations No. 1:** The scores tend to centre toward the middle because of the cancelling effect of averaging positive and negative. To help counter this tendency, a second table is shown with all scores calculated (averaged) as if they were only positive. This is called an intensity rating, as it reflects the intensity of agreement for each thematic area, rather than whether the agreements were about S, O or W, T.
5. **Limitation No. 2:** The strongly positive or negative ratings may also reflect a small number of statements referring to the item. For instance, only one statement referred to facilities, and all the comments were negative. No other statement referred to facilities. Even though there was only one statement, only 70% of respondents agreed with the SWOT statement. Thus this indicates a poorer external validity or weaker correspondence to shared perception. This suggests that although the comments regarding facilities are important, (important enough to be included in the SWOT), further work may need to be done to clarify whether this score will hold if details are considered.

Figure 2, Showing Intensity of Agreement by Major Themes

1. Here the major codes are shown with the average of the agreements, not including the directionality of the code.
2. Method: The percentage of agreement (discarding whether this was agreement with a positive statement S, O or negative statement W, T) is shown here. These are averages of are based on the net number of responses (i.e. excluding skipped answers).
3. Interpretation: It can be seen, in comparing with the above Figure 1, that some intensity ratings are the same as the positive/negative averages (e.g. Facilities). This indicates that the average above does not include any contravening statements (positive S, O and negative W, T).
4. Limitations: As with the above Figure 1, these averages are for the whole group.

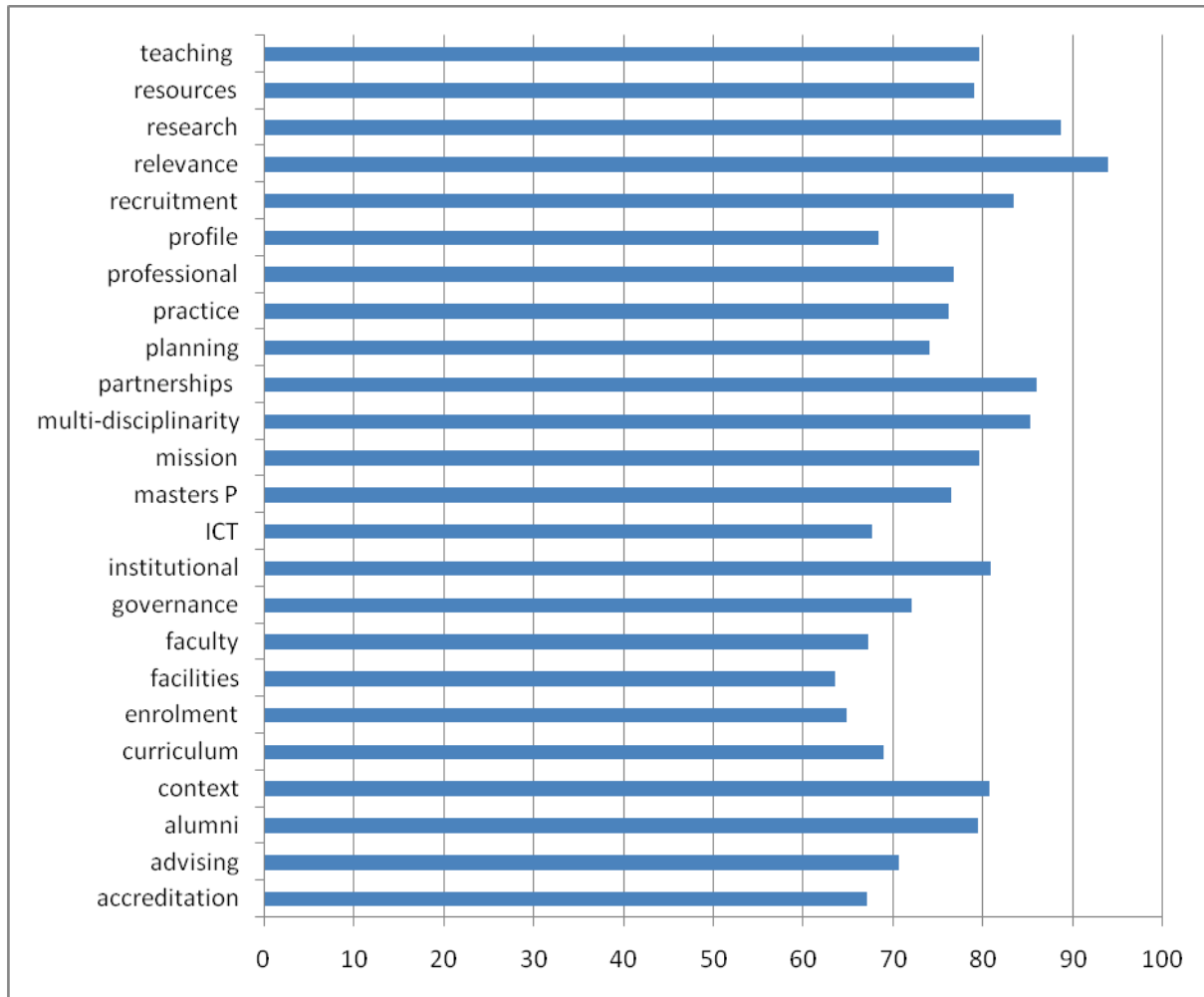


Figure 2 Showing Percentage Agreement to Retain Statements by SWOT Theme

Discussion of Gaps and Themes

Here, an overview of the highlights is reviewed; what is focused on are the gaps and overlaps which suggest areas for further exploration. The detailed code by code comments will be included in Appendix One of the full report.

Masters Program

The Masters program received much comment but some asymmetries emerged which suggest the need for additional clarification. First, areas which received much comment included enrolment, and the anticipated pressure to expand, quality of instruction in contrast to who is carrying the load of accreditation-required material (adjuncts or permanent faculty members), the quality of advising and ways to improve it, the inability to offer resources as incentives to encourage top students to come to SCARP, and, finally, the quality of the school and its reputation as a draw. These issues are likely commonly known within SCARP. What is perhaps more interesting are the way comments about strengths of the school seem to be disconnected from the concerns about the Masters program.

1. Incentives to enrolment. The first statement clearly notes that the School has a strong reputation, built over years of exceptional work. There is also strong agreement that the mission and multi-disciplinarity of the faculty members is attractive and a strength. High quality adjuncts bring a wealth of teaching experience, and the strong, sustained growth of the region makes SCARP an attractive place to enrol and study. These powerful incentives seem to be overlooked in the lament for lack of financial incentives to encourage enrolment. This suggests the possibility of exploring a more complete assessment of how financial incentives can be structured, along with intrinsic strengths, to draw students, and how intrinsic strengths can be highlighted to compensate for lack of financial incentive.
2. Quality of the students. Several statements refer to the high quality of students, noting that the student body is engaged in governance, committed to critical inquiry, and actively involved in the issues the school is concerned with. Further, it is noted that there is a body of distinguished alumni. These evident strengths seem to belie the concern with lack of incentives for enrolment as reviewed in the previous paragraph. There are two cautions, however, about strengths (framed as threats) that should be addressed or explored: one is about the emerging competition from SFU or other similar programs, and the other caution is about the deficit in some technical aspects of the curriculum which may disadvantage immediate graduates. This latter aspect is framed speculatively and the statement has low agreement, so whether alumni are actually discouraging the hiring of graduates needs to be investigated more thoroughly.
3. Advising and Faculty Quality. There are two contradictory threads here in respect to the Masters program, but the anticipated pressure to increase enrolment suggests this

needs further clarification soon. On the one hand, the quality of the advising is perceived to be uneven, and seen to generate inequalities. There is modest agreement on this. One solution suggested here is to use ICTs (information communications technology) to assist in tracking student progress and ensuring consistent quality in advising. The suggestion needs more detail to understand what the statement refers to specifically, but even if followed through, this would not appear to address a second issue, which is the tension between the benefits of having a multi-disciplinary faculty engaged in research, having low individual course enrolments which encourages high quality interaction, having strong adjuncts who bring a wealth of practical experience, and the need to pass many students through to professional preparation. It seems unlikely that an information tracking system could assist with creating a more even advisory experience unless what is meant is a move towards more support from group engagement with technologies (see Appendix One to this brief report). This could, for instance, mean that a web ct “course” set with stages, blogs, examples, and so on, could be available for students enrolled in their thesis or projects. Moving students through in “pods” might be quite helpful to the students, and permit a sharing of advising load, but it could also change the nature of the advising relationship. One of the strengths of the school, noted in the multi-disciplinarity and research comments, were the opportunities students received for mentoring with faculty and practitioners. Utilizing ICTs to even-out the advising experience could be contradictory to the strengths of the school, or it may not resolve the problem that it is intended to resolve without causing other problems.

4. Mission of the Masters Program. Throughout the comments, references to students, enrolment, curriculum, quality of advising, and accreditation were referred to without clarifying whether this was the Masters program or the Ph.D. program. From the context given in the statements, it seems that most of these comments can be assumed to refer to the Masters program. However, although the Ph.D. students have been working on a vision statement for the Ph.D. program, the lack of clarity in the SWOT statements suggests that there is not a clear definition of the Masters program either. One statement referred to the “professional program”. It may be helpful to identity the professional training intention in the Master’s program, as this is clearly connected to some recruitment incentive issues, reputation, enrolment and curriculum pressures, and the usefulness of adjuncts. While the Masters program also serves the dual purpose of preparing students for further academic studies the suggestions about ways to cope with increased enrolment, such as by having cohort-driven group projects for final thesis requirements, might provide more effective training in practical skills for those seeking a professional career. Identifying and clarifying the professional opportunities may also support those Ph.D. students who are not seeking academic careers, but who have returned to study some particular issue and who intend to return to practice.
5. Gaps. It was interesting that some features did not arise at all.
 - a. The streams / concentrations received only one minor comment, about the potential loss of key faculty in the environment and natural resources planning stream. Given the way the streams have featured in other conversations at

SCARP, it is interesting that this did not come up in relation to advising, enrolment, or strengths of the school.

- b. Facilities. The facilities were remarked on as inadequate for teaching, but without further information as to why or for what purpose. It would be interesting to hear from staff, Adjuncts, Masters students and Ph.D. students as to how they perceive and use the space.

Partnerships

1. Partnerships and relationships with practitioners are cited as strengths and opportunities repeatedly, even though a concern is expressed with having Adjuncts carrying too much load for accreditation requirements. Various statements refer to opportunities for expanding partnerships at multiple levels:
 - a. Institutional (within UBC, with CHS, and within CfIS)
 - b. Private sector
 - c. International
 - d. With alumni
 - e. Extra-regional (beyond lower mainland or even beyond the City of Vancouver)
 - f. With professional associations
2. The benefits that were mentioned included the following. However, the benefits of increasing these partnerships requires further articulation, given the investment in time and energy that would be required.
 - a. Increased practical mentoring
 - b. Increased opportunities for group thesis projects
 - c. Increased research funds
 - d. Increased student incentives for enrolment
 - e. Increased opportunities for employment for graduates
 - f. Increased community engagement
 - g. Continued high quality of teaching within the school
 - h. Contribution toward school governance
 - i. Increased strategic opportunities for resources (primarily within institution partnerships)

The statements appear to contain an enthusiasm for partnerships expressed in these opportunities for multiple benefits which may accrue from increased partnership activity. However, it may be helpful to consider the strengths of the school and to strategically target those partnership development activities which are most likely to provide strong rewards in the context of known weaknesses (such as enrollment incentives or teaching facilities). For example, the increased institutional partnerships might be most productive in addressing the identified challenges of developing consistency in quality of advising, supporting increased enrolment, or supporting increased research funds. Engaging a wide array of practicing professionals in governance may not be helpful, given the positive feeling about

governance that already exists in the school, or it may be more useful for some particular targets but not others. This seems to require some narrowing and articulation in order to target activities.

Strengths: Governance

1. Governance received many comments, almost all positive, with strong agreements. It appears that people are well satisfied with the governance within the school, perhaps not surprising given the focus of the planning! However, some issues stand out.
 - a. Planning. In various ways, there were negative comments about lack of proactive planning. These were mostly in relation to regularizing curriculum review and planning for faculty renewal. To this might be added anticipating changes in the regional context, because context seems to play an important role as an asset to the school, as well as a threat. Anticipating regional changes may also be something that adjuncts and alumni would be well-positioned to contribute to, both with insights and as partners in growth and strategic planning. This may also help define emerging opportunities for student activity and community service.
 - b. Longevity and stability played a strong role as an asset to the school. In addition to faculty renewal, it may be anticipated that staff will also go through a period of renewal. It may be important to include thoughts about preservation of the “corporate history” of the school in a systematic and public way.
 - c. Institutional Inclusion. While within-SCARP inclusion seems to be a strong asset, it is less clear that SCARP has an institutional impact beyond the School (at least from the comments). The comments suggest some perceived lack of impact or profile beyond the school. The school may have much to contribute to UBC as a unit with a strong internal governance. Modelling innovative governance may be a means to promote a stronger profile within UBC.
 - d. Moving forward. If the governance of the school is positively perceived, then it may be beneficial to articulate how this benefits the School. It may be common knowledge, but articulating why the model serves the school may help identify ways to enhance its working, and may help identify some of the reasons behind the strong reputation of the school.

Gaps

Ph.D. program

1. The Ph.D. program only received one comment, in respect to lack of financial incentives for enrolment. The lack of comment raises questions about how the program fits within the identity of the school.

CHS

2. The recent focus on CHS has been on what the mission could be. The data here contained some comments that reflect on the mission of CHS, and this analysis can be pulled out. For the purpose here, though, the comments about CHS were reviewed from the perspective of the interests of the school. What is apparent is a general lack of comment of how CHS could benefit the school in the areas of identified weakness or identified growth opportunities. For example, if the school sees a benefit in increasing partnerships within UBC, with adjuncts or alumni, or with external practitioners, could CHS play a role? Can CHS operate like a partner in offering students practical opportunities? (in fact, this is already the case, but not reflected in the statements). It may help both CHS and SCARP to articulate what SCARP wants from CHS, i.e., demands, as part of the work of clarifying the mission of CHS.

Staffing

3. How well does the current staffing model serve the school? It appears to work well, but the absence of comment also raises the possibility that staffing could be different. Is all the support that is necessary available? What are inefficiencies? Do the staff have the support they need? The constant turnover in the Ph.D. Secretary position (which hopefully is ended) may signal a systemic problem with that position.

Areas of Concentration

4. The almost complete absence of comments about streams of concentration in the Masters program bears revisiting to see if this was intentional. It may be that the streams bears little relationship to SWOT of the School. If so, this would be interesting in itself, as it may not be an issue of much relevance for governance, fundraising, partnerships, practice preparation, graduation or other issues, even though it plays a prominent role in admissions.

Research

5. It is notable that research received only a few comments, mostly in two areas; the potential (opportunity) to generate more grants by cultivating partnerships and the benefits of having a multi-disciplinary faculty. The comments about multi-disciplinarity related to the Masters curriculum, and seems to be founded on individual faculty members' research programs. Given that UBC is a research intensive university, and that current faculty members are noted for their diverse interests and vigorous streams of research, the lack of comment suggests that the relevance of research to the SWOT bears further exploration. Perhaps there is a disconnect between the self-identity of the School as a research institution and its actual activity.
 - a. The comments about further fundraising through partnerships suggests that some immediate clarification is needed on how helpful this would be to current research programs, because if it diverts current faculty activities there may be a negative impact for the school.

- b. The fact that research is not highlighted in the profile of the school may indicate that the ambiguity of the relationship between CHS and SCARP is partially a result of lack of clarity on the part of SCARP as to its role. It may be worth exploring the responsibilities for (functionalities of) research activities that are housed in SCARP versus CHS.
- c. The noted strengths of the school, particularly in terms of its multi-disciplinarity and the attractiveness of this for students, stands in contrast to the expressed concern with a faculty-dependent curriculum. Another point of view may suggest that the faculty bring their strengths to the curriculum and share these freely with students. Moving to a less faculty-dependent curriculum may therefore disconnect the school's offerings from programs of research and activity, and may weaken the attractiveness of the school to future recruits. This is just one suggestion: the tension needs to be further explored and articulated.

Summary

This quantitative review was based on faculty and staff-generated statements, thus limiting the external validity of these conclusions. The 2nd phase will look at statements generated by other stakeholders, and will provide stronger external validation of the quantitative findings by triangulating between-group agreements. However, multiple interpretations of qualitative data are always possible; the findings are presented here to stimulate debate.

Among the gaps, absences of information which might be presumed to be important, such as research, are noted but not confirmed by the data. These gaps require further exploration if they are suspected to be important to the school. The lack of presence in the statements may indicate a low level of concern, non-contentiousness, or satisfaction with the status quo, but this is important to build on in strategic planning. The lack of apparent clarity about the Masters program mission and the SCARP mission appear to be important to definition of CHS and the Ph.D. program.

The primary findings point to the excellent asset of strong regional growth, which promotes the relevance of planning approaches, helps attract and retain high quality adjuncts and students (partners of all kinds), and provides good practice and learning opportunities. The strength of faculty research programs appears to be an overlooked draw. Research contributes to strength in diversity of program offerings, even while it may potentially cause too much breadth. Areas of concern focus on curriculum and advising quality, pressures to expand, and institutional instability. Many of the threats also appear as opportunities, and interestingly, there appears to be agreement on the need for more strategic planning to engage with opportunities.

SWOT Summary by Thematic Areas

Strengths

- Reputation of the school
- Multi-disciplinarity and expertise of the faculty
- Excellent quality and availability of practitioners and Adjuncts
- Longevity and stability of the school
- High quality of the students
- Low individual class enrolment and diverse course offerings

Weaknesses

- Accreditation being carried by non-core Faculty; low level of certification among core faculty
- Inconsistencies in Masters advising
- Breadth of curriculum (also cited as strength in diversity)
- Facilities insufficient
- Information technology support is insufficient for current needs
- Profile of SCARP low outside of Canada, not rated
- Student recruitment hampered by lack of financial resources
- Teaching quality uneven due to lack of resources

Opportunities

- Context: strong regional growth
- Anticipated enrollment expansion
- Strategic synergies with CHS and UBC
- Developing partnerships to support enhanced learning opportunities, fundraising and research relationships
- Enriching Ph.D. program by partnership and teaching expansion
- Faculty renewal
- Strategic planning to enhance opportunities
- Increasing relevance of planning theory

Threats

- Heaving advising load
- Potentially dissatisfied alumni (*to be confirmed due to low agreement)
- Competition from similar programs
- High regional living costs
- Institutional transition (CfIS, Environment and Natural Resources Concentration)
- Imposed growth targets
- Institutional budget cuts
- Decreased international research funding
- Faculty teaching buy-outs and insufficient teaching resources

Phase Two: Thematic Summary of Free Statements

Introduction

This section of the report, Part II, focuses on the comments which supplemented the suggestions made by faculty. Members of seven stakeholder groups responded:

- 1st year Masters students
- 2nd year 'and beyond' Masters students
- Ph.D. students
- Alumni
- Adjunct faculty
- Employers
- Continuing faculty and staff
- Others

As with the quantitative analysis, this report reflects the contributions of the stakeholders in the SWOT analysis process. The free comments provided through the survey may be considered as both reaction and enrichment to the original faculty SWOT analysis. Respondents clarified, refined, critiqued, strengthened or added new ideas to the original list. In addition, this section of the report reflects on areas of “silence”, one of the most prominent being lack of comment on the centrality of research to SCARP as a UBC school. Another “silence” was a lack of complaint. Although various issues were debated, a high morale was in evidence. These and other “silences” are added into the analysis, typically in the “summary reflections” sections.

Method of the Qualitative Analysis

Similar to the faculty-generated statements, the statements generated through the survey were complex and sometimes lengthy. Thus, as with the process for analyzing the faculty-generated SWOT statements, these statements were parsed, or broken up through coding into “meaning bits”. The codes were organized using the network and family functions in the software program, Atlas-ti. The coding was tagged by a category of respondents (e.g. 1st year Masters’ students) into the four sectors of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

The free statements that people generated were not always directly related to the four SWOT sectors, and sometimes each statement related to both strengths and opportunities, or referred to several issues at once, such as recruitment of new students, quality of teaching, and the strength of adjuncts. As a result, a single sentence might be coded several times, and cross referenced to strengths and opportunities.

In the material presented here, the results of the coding are either summarized in bullet points or represented by a quote, with comments on variations appearing alongside. At the end of sections of data, there is an interpretive comment in the “summary reflections” section, referencing readers to other sections of the report, or summarizing my impression, from having worked with the data. Occasionally I fill in a gap with an observation of something that seems to be implied by its absence in the statements, or because it is an interest of one group and not another.

Organization of Phase Two of the Report

This phase is organized first by dominant areas of comment, and then with reflections on strengths and opportunities, threats and weaknesses. There were many comments in the areas of curriculum content and course offerings, and many comments about issues that referenced connections to practice skills and knowledge.

A. Teaching, research and practice

- Instructors: Adjuncts and Faculty members
- Instructional quality and style
- Mentorship and Advising
- Ph.D. Program
- Masters’ Program
- Employability and career progression
- Areas of Concentration (AoCs) and curriculum content
- Sustainability vision in the curriculum
- Curriculum planning

B. Research, Comments on

C. Strategic planning, Assets, Opportunities and Threats

- Governance Processes
- Assets (Resources; Opportunities)
 - Location, location, location
 - Personnel assets: staff and alumni
 - Partnerships
 - Public profile
-C
ompetition and External Threats

D. Vision and Mission of the School

E. Concluding Remarks

A. Teaching, Research and Practice

The first two thirds of this report addresses comments on teaching, curriculum, instructors, curriculum content and curriculum planning. The structure of the school and the deployment of the mission and vision are discussed in the context of curriculum although there is separate section on developing the vision and mission of the school within the context of the strategic planning process at the end of this report. As with this first section, sometimes the relevant faculty SWOT statements are summarized to ground the reader in the reactions that commentators had, or to highlight a contrast to the free statements.

Faculty SWOT Statements on teaching

The following are excerpts from the faculty SWOT statements which relate to teaching and curriculum. The numbers in brackets refer to the original statements; see the Appendix for the full statements.

	Positive – Strengths, Opportunities	Negative – Weaknesses, Threats
Internal	(1) focus on sustainability, particularly for the Master’s program (3) One of only 2 Canadian Masters in Planning with US accreditation (4) multidisciplinary faculty covering a wide range of subjects (6) highly committed Adjunct Professors (8) multi-disciplinary professional program offers a breadth of courses	(1) lack of funds and resources (3) Weak application of vision (4) Poor coordination between overall learning objectives and individual course (5) Lack of standing committee on curriculum review (6) Need to rationalize course offerings (7) Too many Areas of Concentration (AoCs) (8) The PhD program is not competitive due to lack of funding for students (9) inconsistencies in advising and supervision (10) Inconsistency in the quality of teaching (14) No Continuing Education or Professional Development (17) Adjuncts are not involved with the school beyond teaching
External	(5) Collaboration with SALA (6) New types of courses (7) Could expand (by 50%) our admissions (10) UBC emphasis on improving teaching and learning (11) Tracking tools using ICTs ¹ (14) SCARP’s ties with the community (15) few accredited faculty members (17) government’s desire to expand graduate enrolment	(1) Diminished overall reputation of the School (2) Dissatisfied alumni (6) buy-outs result in lower numbers of courses taught by continuing faculty (7) visible as having expansion capacity (8) Expanded enrolments without increased resources (9) project/thesis supervision overload (10) increased competition from better funded Canadian universities (12) Accreditation requirements (15) Local competition as SFU

Figure 3 Summary of Faculty and Staff Themes on Teaching and Curriculum

¹ ICTs – information and communication technologies, also a discipline within educational studies.

Strengths: In summary, the “Strengths” comments focus on uniqueness of vision; accreditation; the contribution of Adjuncts; and multidisciplinary.

Weaknesses: (Many of the “Weakness” comments (11 of 19) focus on curriculum and the Masters’ program. These included too few resources; weak integration of vision; poor coordination and planning; too much breadth; inconsistency in teaching; lack of integration of Adjuncts beyond teaching and lack of outreach with alternative offerings. Other issues include lack of funds and resources, lack of Continuing education programs, and lack of engagement of Adjuncts.

Opportunities: The “Opportunities” focus on collaborations; expanding the program to offer new types of programs (continuing, diploma); synergies with UBC and government priorities; and the potential opportunities provided by digital technologies.

Threats: The “Threats” are be concerned with external competition, pressure to expand in the context of heavy workloads and insufficient resources; diminishing public reputation; and dissatisfied alumni.

Teaching

Adjuncts and Practice

Overall, Adjuncts were seen to:

- Bring a "breath of fresh air"
- Practice in a diversity of fields
- Be committed and involved
- Be accredited

Adjuncts were given high credit for the courses they taught, the investment they made in spite of having commitments elsewhere, and the expenses they bore. It was noted that they added valued diversity and practical experience to the school, and that as accredited practitioners, they balanced the complement of theoretically oriented faculty and thus supported a greater range of course offerings and styles, from practice to theory. An Adjunct commented that in some other professional disciplines, professors commonly have active practices while being professors, and that such disciplines may provide a better model for SCARP than the current separation of ‘academic’ and ‘practitioner.’ In the current model, the concern is that faculty may be unaccredited or too removed from practice, while practitioners are not engaged enough.

Threats to the continued involvement of adjuncts were seen as:

- Out-of-pocket expenses incurred by coming to the campus, and non-competitive remuneration
- Lack of engagement with the school, though it was noted that given the lack of relevant levels of remuneration, this would be hard to support.

- Adjuncts themselves emphasized, in a positive way, the value of what they were doing, and pointed especially to their ability and commitment to taking students into the field.
- Adjuncts reflected that they had low awareness of how their courses articulated to others within the curriculum, not surprising since they are not involved in curriculum planning.
- Although students called for increases in technical skills training, only one Adjunct mentioned this as an issue. In contrast, many comments attested to the employability of graduates. Even the Adjunct who commented on the need for more skills training described a successful career progression to a senior position (he was a SCARP graduate).
- Reflections on the skills and assets of SCARP graduates, including themselves if they were alumni, was very positive among Employers and Adjuncts.

Summary reflections

The relatively extensive commentary on the involvement of Adjuncts points to the value and quality of individual instructors, as well as to the value of having the practice/learning connection. Students, and faculty and staff all commented on this as a strength. The “weakness” of lack of engagement generated some thinking about opportunities, such as exploring what particular value-added knowledge, skills, connections, or audiences adjuncts had recourse to. In addition to these more service-oriented skills, there was a strong call to engage with other units at UBC and in the corporate and governmental spheres to explore key concepts, changing models and the future of what planning is and means. Associates such as Adjuncts may be ideally suited to facilitate these conceptual partnerships.

The desire to explore ways to extend the vision of sustainability by learning from and working with practitioners and decision-makers suggests that Adjuncts may be a particularly strategic resource for engaging in partnerships with others on this agenda. This may help to address a perceived weakness, which is the lack of engagement of Adjuncts in the school beyond teaching (time would require remuneration) and the feeling expressed through some Adjunct comments that they are not sure how their courses articulate with the rest of the program and the School vision. This latter relates to curriculum planning (see below), but the comments here suggest ways this might be accomplished within the context of limited resources, by focussing more closely on the vision and mission. As a final comment, although students called for more technical skills training, neither Adjuncts nor Employers mentioned this as an issue.

Faculty teaching

There were some reflections on faculty teaching, but they were oblique, implied by comments on other issues of the faculty members included.

Strengths:

- Willingness to challenge themselves
- Philosophical and theoretical complements and critiques of practice
- Diversity among faculty
- High quality including distinguished theorists

In addition, research programs were closely linked with the quality of students' experiences, which reflects on faculty strengths. The value of:

- Significant programs of research (details not given)
- Some faculty members involved directly in local issues and decision-making
- Many are accredited planners

Although students remarked that they are aware of some tensions, the general atmosphere was seen as positive. Students felt listened to, and felt they had time to talk. Comments about the quality of the program in the context of expansion indicated that a fear was that the opportunity for relationship building would be lost. Faculty were seen to:

- Encourage an environment of critical thinking
- Set a multi-disciplinary tone combining theory and practice
- Support a diversity of students and interests
- Maintain a focus on excellence
- Set a good balance between teaching and research

Summary reflections

Given the difference in comments about Adjuncts and Faculty members, it appears that there is a good understanding of the distinct role differences, although the comments are silent on the importance of research to faculty members. As faculty members also set the tone for the school, the general comments about relationships with instructors and quality of learning and program may be attributed to faculty members' leadership. However, there are few direct comments about teaching in respect to faculty members; rather, they are implied by words such as 'multi-disciplinarity' of the faculty, or 'breadth of program'.

Teaching Styles

Given the comments on Adjuncts and Faculty members, there is an obvious difference in the difference between the way the two groups go about teaching, in general (likely not true for all of either group). However, while there were many comments about curriculum that reflect somewhat on teaching choices and styles, there were few direct comments about the quality of

individual teaching styles. In general, though, comments on the experiences in the classroom were as follows:

Weaknesses

- An over-reliance on lecture circuits
- Too much busy-work in some classes, with the result that students are overloaded and cannot become engaged in practical learning beyond the Vancouver area
- Inability to articulate course goals to program goals and the vision of sustainability

Suggestions for improvement focussed on more support for increasing teaching quality:

- Supporting skill development in teaching
- Offering systematic training in instruction
- Mandating training for instructors

A weakness is that, as far as I know, neither SCARP nor any other planning school require their teaching staff to have any real teacher's training. In any university that has an Education program, it should be mandatory to take some teacher training as part of continuing education to move up the professorial ladder. (Employer)

Strengths appear to be the variety of offerings on several dimensions:

- A balance of field work and theoretical work taught with different strengths amongst the instructors
- Class discussion (students felt heard) the ability to offer a breadth and depth of courses

Summary reflections

There are very few comments which directly focus on teaching style; more comments are concerned with advising and mentoring (see below). Similarly, the original faculty SWOT comments are more focussed on curriculum and program content rather than on teaching style or quality, except in the following areas: (a) a perceived weakness issue of reduced faculty teaching time due to the practice of buying out course time so that other duties can be accomplished, (b) the opportunities which may be provided through information communications technology and (c) inconsistency in teaching quality. Comments on threats (external) are absent, as are direct comments on strengths (internal).

Mentorship and Advising

Comments suggest that mentorship and advising is uneven and problematic in both the Ph.D. and Masters programs. A key issue seems to be a feeling that there is uneven quality in spite of a low faculty/student ratio and generally good ambience. Key issues are:

- Uneven commitment among faculty to supervision
- Inability to be supervised by adjuncts or practitioners

More problematically, comments also suggest that students are unsure of how to resolve problems and feel as if there are not clear accountabilities for supervision problems. Specific suggestions (opportunities):

- Standards so that dissatisfaction in mentor-mentee relationship can be referenced to expectations (accountability issue)
- Guidance on how to develop (initiate) advisory relationships
- Guidelines on students' responsibilities (to balance to expectations)
- Clarity on how to select an advisor (relevant to the Masters program)
- Means (pathway) for resolving advisor conflicts or seeking accountability (clarifying the pathway)

There were several comments suggesting that the mentorship relationships were inadequate for some students and that this was unfair. This is a reflection of uneven quality, similar to faculty perceptions.

Summary reflections

In spite of very positive comments about contact between faculty members and students in the "Strengths" section, including references to the open governance system, the sense of collegiality and the high quality of the program due to "the personal touch", there were some comments to the effect that there was not enough contact time to enable Masters' students to pick advisors. This may reflect lack of guidelines; if people are not sure what they are looking for it takes more browsing to figure it out. The comments about mentorship also fit with the "Opportunities" suggestion that Adjuncts and Continuing Faculty should be available to supervise. This is part of a conundrum about not being sure who to pick, and for what purpose. (Adjuncts are not eligible to be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in universities and therefore they are not eligible to supervise students).

Rephrased as 'Opportunities', this might look like the following:

- Develop clearer guidelines, as in standards, for supervision (one person suggested looking at the University of Washington guidelines)
- Put 1st year 'orientation' advisors in place (perhaps one for Ph.D. and two for Masters) to provide guidance on process. The Program Chairs are the designated person for conflict resolution, so should not be the 'Orientation Advisor.'
- Provide materials, perhaps in the Craig Davis room, describing the purposes of an Advisory relationship, the duties, etc. There are many excellent books for graduate students.
- Formalize the process slightly, so that students who feel uncomfortable know how to approach a potential supervisor (i.e. resolve the 'blind date' problem).
- Utilize Ph.D. students as peer mentors in a structured group setting so that Masters can have a neutral place to discuss goals and develop mentorship plans (which can then be shared with the program chair). This would double by serving to develop the experience

of Ph.D. students in mentoring, and Ph.D. students could themselves have a reference group within the Ph.D. program to discuss challenges in mentoring.

Ph.D. and Masters Degree Programs

Comments on both the Masters and Ph.D. programs will be summarized here, followed by curriculum content issues for the Masters program below.

Ph.D. Program

Feedback on the Ph.D. program was analyzed along with the Masters program feedback, and incorporated where it added to the analysis, such as in comments on mentorship and supervision, which were similar from both Master's and Ph.D. students. Specific comments on the Ph.D. program were only made by Ph.D. students or continuing faculty (in the SWOT faculty-generated comments), except one comment by an employer to the effect that a Ph.D. does not necessarily indicated excellence in teaching (or anything about quality of teaching). This was not a direct comment on SCARP's Ph.D. program.

Strengths and Opportunities:

- A large cohort of Ph.D. students now exists who could play a leadership role within the school or broader community
- There are not many PhD programs in planning in Canada. Through the PhD Jamboree, and our program Canadian planning scholarship has been brought to the attention of other schools (and potential employers of our PhD graduates)
- There is an opportunity to create teaching opportunities for our PhD students by building stronger relationships with other faculties that already have undergraduate degrees such as geography, environmental design, environmental science, sociology, etc.
- SFU could provide a unique opportunity for collaboration in teaching, particularly with PhD students
- "Completion grants" could assist students in the final months of study, when funding is often running out

Weaknesses and Threats:

- Lack of a clear direction for the PhD program
- Lack of thought on how the Masters and PhD program might be mutually supportive
- Uneven PhD supervision; some students have very favourable experiences, others do not
- Lack of consistency in terms of the faculty's commitment and approach to PhD supervision (as reported in mentoring, above)
- Lack of travel support: PhD students need to be attending at least one conference per year, especially towards the end of the degrees when they are preparing for the job market

Another comment, relevant to the teaching and mentoring section, was that Ph.D. students seem to experience a disorientation in first year and would benefit by having the colloquium or an advising symposium spread over the full year or started in first term, so that a 'road map' is developed earlier.

Thus, the top four issues seem to be:

- Uneven quality of mentoring and advising
- Funding for travel, which is necessary for presentations which are part of building the Ph.D. student's c.v.
- Lack of teaching opportunities, which are desired for experience and needed for funding
- Lack of utilization of Ph.D. students within the school, including articulation of their work and the program to the Masters program

In response to the faculty statement which concerned Ph.D. program competitiveness of the program, one respondent answered as follows:

The PhD program is not competitive due to the lack of funding and teaching opportunities for students, resulting in loss of top-quality applicants to other universities. (Faculty and staff)

It is not competitive for American students, since most of their top schools are Ivy League while ours are public institutions (they have more money to give; we have less). However, the part about teaching opportunities is correct. (Ph.D. student)

Summary reflections

Consistent with overall comments, opportunities were seen to exist for partnership within and outside the school, leadership within the school, and a greater cohesion with the Masters program. Comments did not include threats to the Ph.D. program. The scope of Ph.D. students' comments concerned the Masters Program, connection of the school to practice, relationships of the School to external stakeholders, and the mission and visions statements. There was only one comment on the Ph.D. program from non-Ph.D. stakeholders, an employer, and this was not directly relevant to SCARP's Ph.D. program, although perhaps it bears a warning about preparing future university faculty with teaching skills. As with research, it is interesting to note the absence of concern or perhaps awareness amongst Masters' students, employers, adjuncts and alumni about the Ph.D. program.

Masters Program

Most of the comments about curriculum, advising, teaching, practice and employment relate to the focus of the Master's program as a professional preparation and academic degree. Thus, this section on the Masters Program forms the centrepiece of this report. Five subsections

covered here include: employability and career progression; Areas of Concentration (AoCs); articulation of the vision and mission to the curriculum; and curriculum planning.

Employability and Professional Advancement of Program Graduates

There is a vigorous debate within the school about what skills and aptitudes graduates should and could have. A variety of comments were available in the SWOT which addressed skills development (listed below in the curriculum content section), but the range of comments raise the question more broadly about what outcomes SCARP, UBC and the professional community might expect out of the graduate masters degree program. Among some of the suggestions:

- Supporting the local economy
- To focus on and bring to bear a uniquely Canadian analysis of planning challenges
- To shape the public concept of planning, and therefore incidentally of SCARP and other planning schools
- To bring critical analysis to some of the highly challenging complex issues in Vancouver – as noted, “Vancouver is a highly complex planning landscape” (Adjunct comment).
- To have graduates serve as a continuing bridge with the professional community, for the purpose of bringing fresh challenges and ideas to SCARP students and faculty
- To produce competent, skilled graduates who are ready to move into the workplace

This set of outcomes suggestions indicate a slightly different focus for preparing graduates, not so focussed on immediate skills and employability, but the development of an ongoing relationship with the school, on communicating effectively after graduation with alumni, and of on being open to ongoing feedback and input to the school.

Another strength that I don't see reflected in the School admitted strengths (faculty SWOT statements) is that the School produces graduates that are desired in many areas of professional life; I was the first professional planner in my small city and now my department has several...(plus more in) the City Manager's office, the Engineering Department and Corporate Services. (Adjunct)

Some technical skills are important, but the consistent message from planning practitioners is that it is theoretical perspective that makes the difference. Skills and practice come when a student moves from academia to, well, practice. (2nd year and “beyond” Masters student)

Clearly one of the strengths of the program is that it keeps producing great new professional planners. I would think that is its most important strength.... (it) has and continues to produce excellent professional planners who populate planning-related and administrative and elected offices throughout Canada and internationally. (Employer)

As noted at the beginning of the report, these statements about skills cannot be taken as ‘representative’, but they are highly positive statements about the outcomes of the Masters’ program. They should be tempered by comments about the limitations of ‘spatial’ thinking in

the school, and the urban design Area of Concentration (see below for more detail in the section on curriculum and AoCs). In relation to graduate skills, the following comment is typical of concerns about urban design.

Lack of curriculum that better reflects requirements of the profession. Notably land use planning and general municipal planning. (Alumni)

A slightly different issue, which may be related to employability, were comments about the student intake. Some suggested that the intake could be more deliberately focussed, rather than broadly inclusive. This perspective stood in contrast to the positive comments about the diversity of students including benefits of the mix of international, U.S., and national; the mix of ages and experiences; and the mix of interests. Specific comments were as follows:

- Too inexperienced, not as employable, less practice experience (in relation to past entrants)
- Graduates are unsure how to sell themselves
- Younger students make it harder to sustain community partnerships
- Younger students make it harder to maintain a professional milieu within the school

Summary reflections on Employability and Career Progression

There was a differences between stakeholder perspectives on employability. Alumni, Adjunct and employer comments did not reflect a concern about skills; these concerns were more often expressed by Masters students who are currently in the program. The lack of concern among Alumni could reflect a change in the curriculum between the time that Alumni graduated and now, or the difference between the anxiety of preparing for graduation, versus looking back once one has a job. There may also be a sample bias: Alumni who responded may be those who maintained a connection with the school because they were successful in obtaining jobs in the field of planning, whether because of or in spite of their training. Nevertheless, from the position of considering SCARP from a practice point of view, there was not a particular concern expressed about graduate preparation. In fact, comments were opposite: those outside the school expressed value for the theoretical and critical preparation students had, and noted that SCARP graduates are widely distributed in both senior and key positions as well as in a broad spectrum of positions, something that is enabled by the flexible training and preparation. The cautions, where expressed, were about the changing nature of student cohorts, indicating that a younger cohort may require shifts in expectations as well as more job preparation support.

Areas of Concentration

There were a number of comments about the Areas of Concentration (AoCs) or 'streams' in the school. These comments will be followed by comments on particular aspects of curriculum content. The next section following this will review comments related to how the mission and vision of the school (sustainability and democratization) articulate to the curriculum and courses, which will also relate to the AoCs.

Areas of Concentration

Background: The areas of concentration, as explained on the SCARP website, are used to (a) “to assist students in designing their programs in ways appropriate to their specific interests and SCARP’s strengths” and (b) “to organize Advising Guidelines which will reflect the courses being offered and the faculty members available for supervising research”. In addition, students apply to enter a stream within the school, and specific faculty members are responsible for advising the Masters Program Admissions Committee on admittance within these streams.

As posted on the SCARP website, the areas of concentration for the fall 2008 admissions were as follows:

1. Community Development and Social Planning
2. Comparative Development Planning
3. Disaster and Risk Management Planning
4. Ecological and Natural Resources Planning
5. Urban Design and Transportation Planning
6. Urban Development Planning

Strengths

- Linked to diverse, multi-disciplinary faculty research programs and Adjunct specializations
- Supports a diversity of students (student interests, presumably)

Critiques (weaknesses)

- Poor conceptualization of urban design stream
 - Uncoordinated expansion of this stream
 - Not competitive
 - Insufficient facilities (software, hardware, space)
 - Need to teach more “spatial thinking” in the school (Alumni comment)
- Vague differentiation between comparative development and community development
- AoCs matter to some students and not to others
- Reducing AoCs would reduce student diversity (not defined, but perhaps meant in terms of interests and backgrounds), shrink supports for diverse research, and reduce breadth of program
- Too many AoCs. This results in fragmented program and faculty interests (balanced by other comments on the positive benefits of diverse AoCs)

Reducing AoCs would reduce the breadth of research and learning that attracts a diversity of students to the school. One of my most positive reflections upon my time at SCARP was the range of interests in the student body. This should not be lost by reducing AoCs. (2nd year and “beyond” Masters student)

Opportunities

- Reconceptualise urban design as “Art + Politics”
- Explore whether some AoCs are oversubscribed
- Explore differences between AoCs on scale of generality (some are very specific; others very broad)
- Assess links between multi-disciplinarity of faculty members and intake
- Articulate how each AoC meets SCARP goals
- Engage world leaders on sustainability in each AoC (outreach suggestion)
- Explore whether some AoCs have unique space needs (urban design comment)
- Explore whether all AoCs are equally supported by faculty research (connected to research)

Summary reflections

Comments on the areas of concentration (AoCs) suggest uses of the AoC structure beyond organizing content areas. The comments also focus on differences in the dimensions and characteristics of the AoCs, as well as on weaknesses in the urban design program. Reflections focussed on the potential for AoCs to serve as portals for organizing content and communication between the school, practitioners and the broader policy and scholarly community. This included suggestions for exploring how well connected the different concentrations are to practitioners, for example, what the ratio of faculty to adjuncts/instructors is in each AoC. Comments also focussed on how much relevance accreditation has to each AoC. However, the ideas and questions suggest that AoCs can serve as unique vehicles for connecting the vision and mission of the school to the practice community, for developing practical and theoretical ideas about how to approach sustainability in the context of real challenges, and for pushing problems and conceptualizations. AoCs may also serve as particular fundraising vehicles if they become outreach tools, fitting in with others’ suggestions about utilizing alumni connectedness.

In addition, as noted in the next section, achieving sustainability practices involves practical skills and achievable contexts, and so the skills taught in each AoC towards sustainability goals could also be articulated to the mission.

Course and Curriculum Content

The comments about curriculum content were mostly made by current Masters students and Alumni, about evenly divided between 1st and 2nd year students and Alumni. Individual courses were not commented on by students, however, the comments ranged widely, and are presented in Figure 1, on the next page.

Strengths

- Varieties of curricular experiences are avail.
- Faculty and practice professors offer a wide array of experience
- Blend of international, social and "traditional" planning
- Program is relevant to both BC and international planners
- Wide array of disciplinary activity
- Balance of diverse theory, interests and practice planning

Weaknesses

- Poor conceptualization of urban design
- Not enough governance studies; could offer municipal governance, organizational behaviour
- Need to practice quantitative methodologies, not just have an overview
- Community engagement skills
- Too much theory, too soon. Need to start with foundation skills
- Need to expand diversity beyond gender and ethnicity; to include able-ism, age-ism, queer studies, children and youth
- Over-reliance on technical skills (also, not enough technical skills)
- Economic methodology needed
- Uncritical adoption of U.S. realities and models
- Too much process; need foundation skills, practical skills
- Over-reliance on statistics as a planning tool (Alumni comment)
- Need writing skills, presentation skills

Opportunities

- Pursue partnership opportunities, especially in continuing education on reconceptualising practice
- Challenge spatial planning accepted practice
- Prioritize depth or breadth – specialists or generalists
- Reconceptualise land as a resource, not a commodity
- Focus more on content and concrete skills; not so much on critique and process
- Use the carbon neutral initiative to teach and lead

Threats

- Too much focus on funding may bias toward corporate definitions of planning
- Too much transdisciplinarity may be too shallow
- Diversity of the school may not be reflected in allied professions
- Democratization is hard to teach

Figure 4 Student Comments on Masters Curriculum Content

Two contrasting comments on this, one by the only non-student to comment on curriculum and the other by an alumnus, highlight different ways of valuing skills.

Students don't have a basic understanding of the concepts and tools that directly influence planning. i.e., economics, statistics, zoning, etc. Perhaps this means instigating some base level requirements during the admission process. (Adjunct)

Clearly the art and science of planning is better established than it was 30 years ago when Bill Vander Zalm (former Premier of British Columbia) thought he could wipe it out with the stroke of a legislative pen. (Alumni)

Summary reflections

Pro and con comments may be interesting to consider in the context of another issue, which were perceptions that the nature of students entering the program was changing.

Commentators reflected that the newer student cohorts were younger, with less working experience. It may be that the curriculum structure and content must be adapted to the needs of a slightly different generation.

It may also be that if planning is more established as an accredited discipline, as commented on, standards may be “maturing” and growing more rigid. This may fuel a more prescriptive view of required skills. However, a number of suggestions were made for addressing innovative ways of linking practice and the school, which may help to address part of this perceived or actual gap.

The opportunity comments related to sustainability, and the direction was in terms of using the examples that are available to explore concepts, new practices and implementation issues; to go deeper and farther. This linked to comments on continuing education, where it was suggested that professional education should focus on concepts. There seems to be the potential here to create linkages through the teaching practitioners (Adjuncts) to the practice community and to focus reconceptualization in the context of practice issues, for alumni as well as for current students.

Sustainability Concepts in the Curriculum

Commentators did not contest the importance of sustainability to the mission of the school or to its centrality in the curriculum. There were, however, suggestions about how to improve the deployment of sustainability as a concept in relation to practical skills and as a focus for communication with practicing professionals and mutual learning. There were also suggestions for how to advance the concept and explore new areas of application. Many of these pertained to curriculum, so they are reported in this section.

Opportunities/Weaknesses

- All AoCs need to be integrated with sustainability concepts
- Courses need to be cross-referenced to sustainability concepts

- There is no curriculum on sustainable community engagement processes
- There could be/should be conceptualization and teaching of social sustainability

In relation to governance (see below)

- Exploration of sustainability governance models

In relation to content

- Develop a core course on sustainability
- Teach sustainability in the context of daily issues and practical challenges

As reported above, two more areas of comment concerned sustainability:

- Adjuncts and instructors should understand how their courses articulate to the core vision and mission of the school, including the focus on sustainability
- AoCs could and should form a coherent whole for addressing sustainability
- Engaged world leaders in a conversation on sustainability

There were no ‘threats’ comments concerning sustainability, except in terms of its overuse as a term.

President Toope reminds us ‘... the importance of UBC as a global leader...’ Yeah, Steph’ we know! Shop-worn hyperbole is regnant and perfidious. ‘Oh no, not again!’ is the subliminal response: no one listens. Every broker, every corporate shill, every adrenalin-hyped politician is trying to ‘flog’, (I use the pejorative advisedly), something. Claims of ‘global leadership,’ ‘world class,’ and ‘sustainable’ resound: empty.’ (Alumni/employer)

Summary reflection:

As indicated, imagination is being applied to how sustainability can continue to be translated into practice. In particular, students were interested in application of the concept, and opportunities were seen to work more closely with practitioners, both as outreach and to learn. This was seen as a key area of opportunity for continuing education and potentially fund-raising, but also connecting with alumni. There were also opportunities for the exercise of leadership, especially in the global arena.

In summary, comments on the AoCs and sustainability reflect some weaknesses, but plenty of opportunities. The urban design stream is particularly singled out for being under-resources and under-utilized in the school. An uneven scope and scale between concentrations is also suggested as a problem. The remarks, though, point to a tremendous opportunity to use the AoCs as portals to practice, to explore the application of sustainability and to engage practitioners.

Curriculum Planning

A variety of critiques were levelled at the process of curriculum planning. These critiques were from a broad spectrum of commentators. The ‘weaknesses’ and ‘opportunities’ were not balanced by strengths or threats comments, and in some ways echo the concerns expressed through the Faculty SWOT statements.

Weaknesses

- Student feedback too limited (desire was for program feedback, not just course feedback)
- Lack of curriculum committee
- Lack of transparency in curriculum planning
- Curriculum planning is too short term
 - not possible for students to plan their path through the curriculum
- Ph.D. path unclear in first year (Ph.D. comment)
- Ph.D. and Masters programs are not designed to be mutually supportive (Ph.D. comment)
- Adjuncts do not understand the curriculum vision, and instructors do not understand the course complementarity

(There is a) a lack of cohesion in course teaching and content consistent with vision and mission. There does not appear to be a link between to vision statement and the core curriculum. As an adjunct I do not have a good understanding of the core curriculum... I hear from students that there is not a strong interconnection between the course that I teach and those of other professors on sustainability. (Adjunct)

Future course offerings are unpredictable and unclear to students and there is a lack of student involvement in planning for course offerings. It would be best to move beyond giving feedback for the courses alone. This could be solved by doing an end of year evaluation on how students feel about the available courses and how they fit into their objectives at SCARP. (2nd year and “beyond” Masters student).

Alumni should be involved in (planning curriculum), too: what courses were applicable to their planning work? Courses should be planned in advance (two years ahead if possible) so that students can strategize on what courses to take in the two year period of study. (2nd year and “beyond” Masters student).

Opportunities

- Strengthen core competencies via strategic curriculum planning
- Examine the way funding may negatively shape curriculum planning
- Engage alumni in curriculum planning to identify emerging practice concepts
- Develop a sustainability statement for each course

Summary reflections

In combination with the comments made about integrating the vision and the AoCs, and articulating sustainability more clearly throughout the curriculum, these comments about planning suggest that the courses themselves could be better integrated or more transparently integrated into an overall curriculum plan, and that the plan should be mapped out with perhaps a two year horizon. Ideally annual mapping would not focus on the coming year, but on

the next year, so that the curriculum is planned two years prior. This would ease the Masters students' path through the curriculum, even if changes had to be made on a year to year basis regarding some electives and instructor assignments.

Moving to a more planful planning of curriculum would permit better integration of the "opportunities" suggested above and allow time to involve Adjuncts and alumni more closely. A more planful approach might also help address "systemic" issues like articulation of the Masters' program to the Ph.D. program, and engagement of partners who are external to the school or the university. Developing a cycle of feedback from Alumni would also enable emerging practice issues to be identified, and could also help strengthen practice teaching.

Concluding Reflections on the Masters Program

Overall, the sets of comments on curriculum, teaching and planning of the Masters Program curriculum highlight some key weaknesses as well as some key opportunities:

Weaknesses

- Curriculum planning is too short term, and may not permit adequate time to address key systemic issues within the curriculum and the two programs
- Students would like to provide feedback on the whole program
- Students need more guidance in selecting advisors and addressing conflicts or problems
- Courses need to be more clearly articulated to each other and to the key vision and mission of the school

Opportunities

- AoCs may provide an opportunity for engagement beyond the school
- Alumni could be engaged in identifying practice issues for curriculum development
- Diversity is a key asset, and one of the key "doors" for this is through the AoCs
 - Diversity is also supplied through the interests, experiences and backgrounds of the students
- SCARP provides a flexible yet deep program
- Sustainability is valued as a core vision and mission, but it can also be applied in new directions, engaging partners and practitioners, and addressing world issues.

Strengths

- Diversity of students in terms of cross-cultural and international perspectives, and experience and backgrounds
- Peer to peer learning
- Diversity of student interests facilitated by the diversity of offerings in the School and the range of faculty and adjuncts teaching
- Adjuncts
 - links to applied knowledge and practice teaching
 - experience gained in field work

- links to work fields
- their courses are well-regarded
- high quality adjuncts
- Program content
 - a blend of international, social and 'traditional' planning
 - student passions are encouraged
 - a balance of theory and practice, with high level analytical skills
 - a variety of philosophies, enhanced by presence of adjuncts who bring a different perspective

The “opportunities” statements regarding curriculum and teaching issues suggested that curriculum could be used as a tool to engage in partnerships, draw revenue, ensure relevancy and receive feedback, build stronger relationships with continuing professionals, provide teaching opportunities for Ph.D. students, and raise the profile of the school. Suggestions that particularly focussed on Masters program issues included linking sustainability more closely to practical skills, and utilizing Adjunct interests and experiences.

Some suggestions focussed on using resources that are available (see also suggestions about the location below)

- CK Choi can be used as an example of green technology (use what is available)
- Use the current interest in going carbon neutral to lead and teach (critically as well as practically)
- Explore current problems of the urban environment such as aspects of urban noise pollution (enhance relevancy for students and practitioners)

Other suggestions focussed on challenging practice:

- Conceptualize problems in the context of progress on sustainability
- Reconceptualise land as a resource, not a commodity
- Focus on what can be achieved re sustainability - teach practical skills that support action
- Utilize Adjunct interest and knowledge to conceptualize sustainability from a practical standpoint

Summary reflections

The suggestions made in relation to both weaknesses and opportunities reflect the potential to use the curriculum as a bridge to connect the practicing planning community with the school, including raising the public profile, promoting exploring of key concepts of interest to the school with practitioners, and bringing key concerns of practitioners to the school (refreshing the school).

B. Research

There are surprisingly few remarks regarding research itself. Most of the comments on research were indirect, such as the reflections on the diversity of content areas (which presumably arise out of faculty offerings, interests and activities) and general comments about linking concepts like sustainability to program areas, or concerns that too much narrowness in the AoCs might limit links to faculty research. The absence of comment extended to lack of comment on the research assistantships which provides students with job-related and academic and research experience; internship opportunities; and funding for both Ph.D. and Masters students through research assistants. The importance and influence of facilities built for the support of research programs (such as the Cosmopolis media lab, the Disaster Preparedness lab, and the Transportation lab) were also not commented on. There appears to be a lack of apparent awareness of the centrality of research to an academic institution and the ongoing profile of SCARP and UBC.

Comments about the value of faculty with strong reputations, the credibility of the school and the value of having leading scholars are coupled with comments about the low public profile of current faculty, and lack of connection of faculty interests with practical concerns. These comments belie the actual activities of some faculty members, such as (to give only four examples) those involved in studying housing issues in Vancouver; those engaged in watershed management issues in the Fraser River basin; those engaged in participatory governance and gender issues here and abroad; and those involved in understanding urban regeneration and character in general, using Vancouver as one focal point. In addition, many faculty members have ongoing relationships with practicing planners in a variety of fields. This connection between research and practice is not acknowledged in the comments, which suggests that there are some opportunities to:

- Communicate more effectively the connections that do exist between research and practice, especially those which benefit the local area
- Highlight, feature, or profile the ways in which faculty members' research programs are enriching the field generally and the school in particular
- Acknowledge more broadly the significant funding contribution to students and the school which various research programs generate
- Identify publicly the relevance of faculty research interests to current planning issues, both conceptually and practically

It would be worth exploring the value of research to the school to articulate how it is connected to the quality of the PH.D. and Masters programs, as well as the research being conducted by Ph.D. and Masters students. The lack of profile of research in this review appears to be a communications issues more than a substantive issue, but its absence is relevant to more effective utilization of curriculum planning as well as practice connection.

C. Assets, the Vision and Mission, and Strategic Planning

The remainder of the report reviews with SWOT comments that pertain to the goal of strategic planning. First, comments on the governance model will be reviewed, since the governance structure plays a key role in strategic planning, and relates to the implementation of the vision and mission. In a second section, the assets and resources of the school will be covered in the context of opportunities. These include:

- The location
- Institutional resources
- Personnel, including staff, alumni and adjuncts or external partners
- The public profile

Following this review of assets and resources, a third section on the vision and mission will be presented. Comments from the assets discussions will be related to the vision and mission comments. Finally, in this section, overall comments on threats as they related to strategic planning will be reviewed. In the conclusion, the whole report will be summarized with overall perspectives on the SWOT as reflected in stakeholder comments.

Section I. Governance and Strategic Planning

The governance model is reported on first because it forms the foundation for strategic planning. The faculty SWOT statements were positive but modified with suggestions for linking governance more firmly to the vision and mission. The original statement was:

SCARP has a good governance model that is open, participatory, formally involves students, and moving towards more devolved leadership. (Faculty)

The following paraphrased statements, mostly a summary of comments by students, modify the faculty perspective in several ways:

- There are not enough resources for staff, so the burden of participation sometimes falls to students. As a result, the PSA and student volunteer efforts should be considered part of the participatory governance structure and funded or resourced to sustain involvement.
- There is an uneven commitment to participatory efforts among the faculty which limits the model's effectiveness.
- The governance model is "old-school" and needs to be critiqued as to whether it is conducive to future sustainability planning
- There is a lack of accountability and transparency, which means that the model is vulnerable to "take-over" by cliques. The suggested remedy was to support staff (not necessarily faculty) in working with democratic models to be able to respond to and engage with students in the governance system.

- The model is strong in principle, but suffers from lack of engagement from some faculty members

One specific comment captured a range of the dilemmas as they occur for students:

While in theory open and transparent, governance processes have not always been the case. In years where PSA council is significantly dominated by one or a few people (and yes this happens even at SCARP), other forms of engagement with faculty and planning tend to be dominated by those same people. The school could benefit from:

- 1. Governance and engagement training for staff to ensure that what they are hearing is actually representative of the student body and not some more dominant individuals.*
- 2. A restructuring of the PSA (in progress) including governance training*
- 3. Conflict management training opportunities for staff and students. Group projects are one of the most important parts of SCARP, but also create high stress situations. Relationships with advisors have been in the past sometimes fruitful, sometimes volatile. Inter-staff relationships are sometimes based more on personality than academic values. (2nd year and “beyond” Masters student)*

Summary reflections

Although the open and participatory governance system is valued by those internal to the school, comments about inclusion or consultation by those external to the school are focussed on ways that they (alumni, adjuncts and employers) can find meaningful ways to participate. Considering the possible range of engagement suggests that it may be more appropriate to review the level of engagement within the school, and then look externally to other types of meaningful consultation. This becomes important as the assets and opportunities for partnership are explored, below.

The issue of participatory governance also connects to two others areas of comment: the democratization commitment within the mission statement of the school, and public profile and modelling of sustainability. In the next sections, the assets of the school are reviewed, as commented on by participants, and then these are followed by comments on the mission and vision, which relate back to this section on governance.

Section II: Assets and Opportunities for Growth

Some of the ideas for expansion and growth were optimistic and enthusiastic. They are also, possibly, beyond the scope of capacity of the faculty and school as they currently exist. Key opportunities (outside the environment of the school) included the following:

- Leveraging the UBC goals of improving teaching and learning
- Partnerships (carefully considered and in line with stated goals, providing true value-added)
- Utilizing staff resources and investing in staff development
- Leveraging the significance, complexity, diversity and attractiveness of BC
 - the regional diversity
 - the economic and cultural diversity
 - the complex urban and rural environments
 - its significance in the Pacific region and to Canada

This section reviews key assets that were mentioned and relates them to goals for expanding and consolidating the school vision and operation. Four sub-themes are explored: location, institutional resources, personnel including staff and alumni, and the public profile.

II(a) Location, location, location

There is a strong consensus throughout all the groups that the region, including the City of Vancouver, the greater Vancouver region and BC and Vancouver Island, is a natural gift to the school. An Adjunct pointed out that the City of Vancouver provides a very complex planning environment, and another Adjunct pointed out that BC offers a tremendous diversity in terms of culture, environment, ethnicity, economy, and population. It provides a rich region to study, and is also very attractive to live in. The school is close to recreation areas which is an asset in recruiting. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that the school does not have enough reach beyond the City of Vancouver, not even, perhaps, to the major municipalities of the Greater Vancouver region (Metro Vancouver).

The faculty statement which referred to location was:

The School has strong relationships with professionals in various areas including the public sector (e.g. City of Vancouver, other municipalities in the Lower Mainland, and beyond), private sector, and professional planning institutions (e.g. PIBC and CIP). (Continuing faculty and staff)

This was modified several times:

Focus on the school tends to be on the Lower Mainland given its location - could be a greater focus on other parts of BC, including Vancouver Island. (Alumni)

The School generally does not have strong relationships with professionals; the exceptions are few in number; its connections with municipalities beyond the City of Vancouver are very few; its connections with PIBC and CIP are few and not strong. (Continuing Faculty and "other" category comment)

We lack significant reach into communities beyond the metropolitan area of Vancouver and this is a weakness. (Ph.D. comment)

Disagree that the school has strong relationships outside of the lower mainland. Its relationships within Vancouver are a strength. (Ph.D. comment)

In addition, the lack of engagement with the local was seen to mitigate the vision and mission by not supporting the local economy.

Opportunities

Some faculty are involved in research that is directly applicable to local planning decisions and are making direct connections with local government. (2nd year and "beyond" Masters student)

Work with the Urban Design SALA group to develop new joint opportunities with the addition of planning (SALA consults with local government and others re sustainability visioning and charettes and planning needs to be incorporated. This could be a source of revenue. (Alumni)

SCARP should also focus on drawing in MORE students from Canada as these students are more likely to remain local and contribute to the local economy. (1st year Masters student)

Summary reflections

These comments suggest a value for local engagement and contribution to the local economy: that is, seeing SCARP itself as part of the solution of creating a sustainable local environment. Thus while the location is seen as unique and interesting, and to provide a good opportunity for studying situations which do not exist elsewhere, there were also critiques that the school did not reach far enough beyond its boundaries to embrace the regional and that this betrayed the vision and mission of the school. It was clear that commentators felt that the asset of location was under-utilized.

II(b) Institutional resources

Both uncertainty and opportunities were expressed through the Faculty SWOT statements about the institutional host and partnerships.

Threats that were identified in the original statements included:

- New and uncertain profile of the new faculty “home”, the College for Interdisciplinary Studies (CfIS)
- Budget cuts at UBC, and ongoing lack of funding for recruiting and sustaining students

On the other hand, UBC was seen as a strong institutional base, providing potential opportunities to:

- Capitalize on UBC’s 2010 on shared vision
- Enhance key partnerships, such as with the UBC Learning Exchange and SALA (School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture)
- Utilize fundraising support through the UBC Development Office
- Use UBC goals to enhance teaching and learning to enhance teaching capacity at SCARP

Free comments did not focus so much on details that are internal to UBC as on what partnerships could be utilized to do:

As a threat, the shifting nature of planning needs to be anticipated. SCARP is well positioned to anticipate such issues as the impact of climate change; but moving on this agenda requires funds for key positions, perhaps such as research chairs, post-docs or practice leadership positions (Ph.D. comment)

There's a need to explore what sustainability means for architecture, civil engineering, politics or public affairs, but we need to be wary of being 'watered down' by the traditional nature of those faculties. for that reason it is important to our philosophical growth to also align with 'critical' and 'transformative' departments like women's studies, first nations studies, food systems sciences, social work and MAPS (2nd year and “beyond” Masters student)

However, key potential assets of inter-disciplinary partnering included:

- Studying other disciplines to understand how they approached sustainability
- Learning from skills other disciplines have

Go beyond 'strong relationships' with professionals and venture into collaborative processes on community issues/concerns; develop continuing education for planning professionals in conjunction with others (City Program; PIBC, AIBC, etc.) (Alumni comment)

The Centre for Human Settlements (CHS) was also the focus of comments on the potential to generate synergies through partnerships:

- Look at CHS as leverage
- Explore what CHS offers SCARP
- Utilize CHS and the Learning Exchange as possible laboratories for partnerships
- Use CHS as a sustainability implementation hothouse

Summary reflections on Institutional Resources

While the Faculty SWOT comments focussed on details of the intra-institutional environment and resources and challenges, other commentators focussed on ways in which partnerships within UBC or with professional associations, alumni or practitioners could further the aims of the School. Faculty comments were more concerned with resolving problems of teaching and student support, whereas other commentators focussed on furthering the mission, providing learning opportunities and increasing public profile for the vision.

II(c) Personnel: Staff, Alumni and Partnerships (External Relations)

Staff

Current weaknesses were a perception of redundancy amongst staff responsibilities, a complaint that the web site might be used to 'stand in' for important personal contact, and a lack of training in working with governance models. However, staff members were also seen as a key potential resource for initiatives to move forward on partnerships, in fundraising, and in outreach.

One (or several) staff members should be retrained to emphasize revenue-generating/fundraising capabilities, to increase the benefit of the staff position to the faculty. (2nd year and 'beyond' Masters student)

One of the key suggestions for staffing was to hire a new person, or train existing personnel, to take on promotion, fundraising and support of extension of faculty outreach and school partnerships. These suggestions came largely from students. Key responsibilities would be promotion and marketing, and developing partnerships:

- Grant writing
- Business plan development (for the school)
- Public promotion
- Corporate fundraising and partnership development
- Marketing of for-profit courses (institutes, continuing education, webinars)
- Support for developing for-profit ventures with partners (institutional, corporate or government)

Alumni

Another key resource was the Alumni, and not just as resources for outreach. Graduates are consistently employable in a wide range of settings and according to reports, consistently do well in career progression. Graduates also expressed satisfaction with their training and experiences. In terms of assets, alumni:

There is a large pool of loyal alumni still interested in the school and ready to stand behind it. Alumni are widely distributed in a variety of industries and roles included elected offices and senior positions. As a potential partnership asset, it was noted that a wealth of experience is available, including for current mentoring. In addition, as one person noted, interest is there in exploring what planning means and what role SCARP plays. The potential exits to :

- Build relationships with emerging graduates
- Utilize graduates to provide feedback on the relevancy of curriculum
- Utilize graduates to mentor or work with students as thesis/project mentors

The alumni are large in number but they are not engaged with the School; their size, distinguished membership and distribution is only a potential strength. (Continuing faculty and staff)

II(d) Partnerships and Expansion

Partnerships were mentioned many times, and for many purposes. These included bringing assets to the school, but also increasing communications with practicing planners, and therefore also learning from models being used and experiments being conducted by practicing planners. There was a suggestion that this would increase relevance of the School for teaching purposes, and of the school to the professional public.

Some of the specific benefits include:

- Offering undergraduate courses in partnership with SFU or other departments; these will also offer Ph.D. students the opportunity to teach
- Relying more on Adjuncts, as in other professional schools where practicing professionals have cross-appointments or practicing appointments (e.g. medicine, law)
- Offering continuing education in partnership with other institutions, and web cast these. Utilize practicing Adjuncts to ensure these are relevant; focus on conceptual content.
- Generating revenue by hosting workshops in sustainability

Summary Reflections

As might be inferred from the above comments, a number of naturally occurring assets are available to the school in the form of location, personnel, institutional assets and partnership opportunities. These were highlighted repeatedly in comments about a variety of other issues (curriculum, planning, revenue generation, public profile, links to practitioners, and draw for the school).

- Location, both attractive to live in and interesting as a study site, providing opportunities for leadership and to study leadership

- A large body of alumni, in diverse fields, many now in positions of leadership at political as well as bureaucratic and private sector positions
- A distinguished, well respected set of practitioners who are interested in teaching at the school
- Employers who are graduates themselves and who value the students from SCARP
- An institution (UBC) with an excellent reputation and a current interest in improving teaching
- A diverse, high quality student body at both the Masters and Ph.D. level (evidence will grow at the Ph.D. level)

These assets suggest extraordinary possibilities.

II(e) Public Profile

A number of faculty generated SWOT statements referred to or relied on the public profile of the school. These are referenced in the chart, here and selected quotes are provided below:

	Positives	Negatives
Internal	<i>(1) first planning school, distinguished history, faculty reputations (3) only 1 of 2 Masters with U.S. accreditation, (4) distinguished multi-disciplinary faculty (5) strong relationships with professionals in local, public and private (11) well positioned in UBC due to interdisciplinarity and good relationships</i>	<i>(13) low visibility among planning schools outside Canada (14) no continuing education or professional development programs (15) few accredited faculty (16) weak relationship CIP/PIBC and few relationships outside lower mainland (19) lack of clarity around CHS</i>
External	<i>(2) significant city-region, (3) relevance of planning (4) leader in sustainability (5) collaboration with SALA (7) expanding admissions (9) synergize with CHS mission (12) generate support through partnerships (13) synergize with UBC goals (14) capitalize on ties with Learning Exchange</i>	<i>(1) diminished overall reputation (2) dissatisfied alumni (11) uncertainty and lack of profile within UBC of CfIS as the new faculty home for the school (15) local competition</i>

Figure 5 Faculty and Staff Comments on Public Profile

The School has strong relationships with professionals in various areas including the public sector (e.g. City of Vancouver, other municipalities in the Lower Mainland, and

beyond), private sector, and professional planning institutions (e.g. PIBC and CIP). (Faculty)

As one of Canada's first planning schools, SCARP's distinguished history, strong reputation, and drawing power after 55 years are attributed to its focus on sustainability, particularly for the Master's program, outstanding alumni, the individual reputations and expertise of its faculty in a variety of disciplines and the achievements of the Centre for Human Settlements. (Faculty)

Fairly low visibility among planning schools outside of Canada (e.g., not ranked by Planetizen), hence we draw fewer non-Canadian students than we might. (Faculty)

Weak relationship with PIBC and CIP and little relationship with practitioners beyond Adjuncts and City of Vancouver. (Faculty)

In responding to faculty statements, respondents agreed that the school had a strong reputation. In addition, though, there were gentle challenges, expansions and critiques:

Additional strengths:

- The existence of a Ph.D. program, as there are not many in planning in Canada
- The biannual Ph.D. Jamboree, which is raising the profile of the school with other Ph.D. students and within planning
- The summer intensives, which offer in-depth learning opportunities

Challenges:

I find the first three "strengths" rather weakly stated. I'm not sure what an "increasingly significant international city-region" is. Perhaps that is another way of stating that we are not in a rustbelt city. I would like to see a more specific list of words: a laboratory of green practices; a growing Pacific Rim transportation nexus; an expanding experiment in regional governance; a delta city grappling with potential climate change impacts; ... or ? (Ph.D. comment)

It is difficult for an outsider to assess the relative import of the reference to "[Scarp's] strong reputation and drawing power" without access to statistics relating to numbers and quality of applicants for SCARP as compared to other Masters planning programs in Canada and the US. Perhaps the faculty member who identified this as a strength could post the comparative numbers to the Scarp- School listserv. (Employer comment)

Critiques were levelled at some issues that were identified as strengths. Specifically, these related to:

- Weak relationships beyond the lower mainland
- Ineffective utilization of expertise and examples available through institutions, adjuncts, and alumni
- Incorrect identification of competition as a threat
- Ineffectual utilization of potential partners

Clearly, the public profile is key to many of the opportunities explored throughout the comments. Key vehicles for expansion include:

- Fundraising, drawing on expertise
- Extending professional development to practitioners (including Alumni)
- Working conceptually with practitioners

Summary reflections

In addition to the critiques, challenges and expansions, it is interesting to note that the faculty SWOT statements tend to refer to strong relationships amongst individuals or small units, but not much to general public profile. On the other hand, opportunities, such as the draw for students, indicate the need for institutional profile, not necessarily just relationships. There appears to be a disconnection between the means, which are focused on relationship building, and the outcomes, which rely on public profile. The mechanism for building public profile, which the faculty SWOT statements refer to, seems to rely on individual faculty members, but free comments suggest that the public profile of individual members in the local region has diminished somewhat since the time of former directors.

However, comments point out the excellent connections through adjuncts and alumni that are not being utilized. Free comments also point out the assets that the school does have, such as the Ph.D. program, the biannual Jamboree, the summer intensives, and the relationship to practitioners, which could be more systematically highlighted.

The comments on Public Profile combine with the comments on location, personnel and institutional resources to suggest directions for engagement. The internal 'strengths' are matched by external 'opportunities', suggesting the school has much to draw on. In the next section, the vision and mission of the school are considered.

Section III: Mission and Vision of the School

Comments on the mission and vision were already made in the sections on curriculum. Those included suggestions for articulating courses to the sustainability mission; using the AoCs as a planning tool to focus and address goals in achieving the mission and vision of the school, such

as communicating about sustainability. The comments in this section relate to ways in which the vision and mission may serve the strategic goals of the school.

The vision and mission of the school were succinctly summarized in a planning document by former Director Tony Dorcey in 2006:

SCARP Vision

Sustainability through democratization of planning.

SCARP Mission

To advance the transition to sustainability through excellence in integrated policy and planning research, professional education and community service.

SCARP Goal

To be the premier professional planning school in North America focusing on the challenges of implementing sustainability.

Cautions were stated in response to the Faculty free statements were as follows:

- Recognize the tension between democratization and sustainability
 - *Ultimately, legislative 'hammers' or regulatory mechanisms must be put in place to achieve sustainable practices; it will not be achieved by grassroots movements only nor by changes in individual behaviour (Paraphrased Alumni and 2nd year and 'beyond' Masters student)*
- Operationalize democratization
 - Explore differences in meaning of the word in internationally and in different governance contexts where democracy may not be the base
- Express the mission and vision statements in all aspects of the school from governance models to curriculum to outreach.
- The mission and vision should be expressed through the AoCs and the curriculum should be coordinated so that the courses articulate to each other on this framework. (see comments above)

SCARP should position itself as an academic institution that is striving for and proposing an entirely new governance and planning paradigm, that will actually encourage sustainable communities and regions. (2nd year and "beyond" Masters student)

Furthermore, opportunities were suggested to engage stakeholders on the vision and mission

- Engage with sustainable planning models
- Engage stakeholders
- Model new strategic governance models

Develop closer links with governments and the private sector to advance the practice of sustainability in these institutions. Invite speakers in governments and industry who are undertaking practical approaches in sustainability planning to share their ideas and progress and enable the students learn about the barriers to progress in advancing sustainability. (Adjunct comment)

Summary reflections

The comments about the vision and mission affirm the primacy of the school's goals. The comments point more towards ways that the concepts could be extended, applied, challenged or used to structure further engagement.

As with in other categories, the tendency in these comments is to be holistic, that is to think about the model, the stakeholders, the goals, implementation and evaluation. The comments set the context as a long term process, and suggest articulating the goals to all aspects of the School's activities.

There was an interesting caution around the term democratization, largely coming from those outside the school who saw it as a difficult term to measure. Although the same measurement challenge exists around the term sustainability, the indication was that democratization may miss or narrow the opportunity to use a variety of structures to achieve various goals. Some of the complexity was linked to the location, as expounded on in the following excerpt:

The democratization of planning for instance is a major concern in countries where the rule of law does not exist and where the centralized state, even if not autocratic, has not devolved planning authority to community levels in any substantive manner. Urban and regional planning, growth management, land-use regulation and subdivision approvals are highly devolved in North America. Regional and local planning takes place in meetings and forums at the neighbourhood level and decisions about it are made on a community level. Most of Europe has not devolved planning and environmental jurisdiction to the extent that the division of powers (in Canada and the U.S.) enables, or attained our level of freedom from centralized state oversight of local exercises of planning power....(if there is) any certainty of timely implementation of comprehensive "sustainable policies and measures" (or whatever is spun as sustainable), it will require regulatory and economic measures emanating from far higher than the community level. Education over the long term will play a great part in voter acceptance of such initiatives. ("Other" comment)

Section IV: Competition and External Threats

Explicit statements were made about the high quality and unique offerings of SCARP, the breadth and depth provided by a long and distinguished history in research and some leading

thinkers and researchers. However, this confidence was tempered with cautions, centred in 'weakness' statements. These included:

- A sense of complacency; coasting on reputation
- An unclear baseline and mission statements which were not easy to measure, thus preventing a more than impressionistic sense of progress. This was a particular concern to those who fit into the employer/alumni categories, presumably because they are more sensitive to "the bottom line"
- Untapped potential for strategic partnerships, partly because of a lack of resources, and partly because of a lack of clarity
- Under-resourced and over-burdened faculty. This latter in particular inspired a range of suggestions on the possibility of hiring and training a new staff person to engage partnerships and promote the school, including through fundraising
- The potential to be 'captured' by corporate interests (unnamed in the comments), and a fear that a corporate version of sustainability might dominate if the wrong partnerships were chosen

Notwithstanding the optimism and confidence of respondents, some significant cautions were embedded in the suggestions for ways to expand:

- Expanding the program without adequate thought and care could:
 - Diminish the benefits of a collegial environment and close faculty-student relations
 - Have implications for connection of the alumni to the school farther down the road
- Pursuing partnerships or alliances without a critical stance may open the school to 'capture' of concepts like sustainability; this is particularly an issue if funding is pursued and obtained
- The participatory system of governance may be harder to manage if the school expands
- The current resources are inadequate to sustain expansion, including facilities, communications, the urban design studio, the level of equipment, and access to mentors

Competition was not seen as a threat, but rather, embraced as an opportunity. Competition (such as SFU or other opportunities) was seen to:

- Challenge complacency
- Inspire opportunities to partner productively on course offerings
- Potentially provide opportunities to share Ph.D. students for teaching assignments
- Opportunities to collaborate on or debate concepts of sustainability
- Learn from others

Concerns about faculty renewal, especially in the natural resources area, was identified as a “threat” by Faculty members, but was repositioned as an opportunity by other commentators. The underlying message was a robust confidence in the school. Thus, competition was seen as an opportunity and a strength now, but also as a future threat if the school does not act to meet the challenge.

D. Concluding remarks

At least half of the student body participated in the SWOT survey. In addition, alumni and a few employers and adjuncts participated. The remarks therefore provide a “360” set of comments, viewing the school from a range of experiences and perspectives.

Key recommendations

- Focus on high-leverage intervention points
- Assess partnership opportunities that add value
- Develop a baseline (and long term assessment plan) to evaluate success
- Articulate accreditation goals to SCARP goals
- Articulate the mission and vision to the curriculum and to outreach activities
- Utilize key resources more effectively (location, alumni, practitioners, institutional resources)
- Extend beyond the lower mainland in concept, outreach and engagement
 - lighten student load so that engagement beyond the lower mainland is more possible
 - engage world leaders on the mission and vision of sustainability and its connection to democratization

Assets

In conjunction with comments on governance, it appears that including ‘external’ stakeholders in imagining the future public profile of the school provides an imaginative doorway to revisualizing the strengths of the school and developing the “asset” of the public profile of the school.

There is a feeling that there is not enough concrete information is available for assessing the baseline. This includes information on how to assess the reputation of the school. (For instance, how much does reputation influence student applications, or how much do faculty profiles actually link graduates to jobs?)

While the governance model was cited positively it may also require some maintenance. Recommendations included training staff to work within a participatory model; engaging external stakeholders by, for example, engaging alumni and employers in providing feedback for curriculum planning on emerging practice issues. However, the governance model was also

seen as an opportunity to experiment with developing new models that would serve sustainability and democratization.

There were a number of comments on planning processes. These ranged from frustrations with the current strategic planning process, to warnings about the limitations of the current vision and mission, to specific comments about planning curriculum offerings, to more general comments about engagement of partners. The areas of planning most touched on related to the perceived threats of expansion, the practical limitations of the current governance model, the opportunities for leveraging partners, and warnings about unplanned movement forward.

On the positive side, the discipline of planning was seen to be robust, and this seemed to be connected to suggestions for ways to expand and move forward. Respondents were very positive about the mission and vision, with the proviso that democratization and its connection to sustainability needed to be explored more critically.

Silence in a few key areas suggests some positive qualities:

- There were no complaints about the quality of the school, only arguments about what skills should be prioritized in the curriculum
- The mission and vision were affirmed
- A deep sense of caring was evident
- Relative silence on the importance of research may not have been surprising, given the nature of the stakeholders consulted (practitioners rather than other academic institutions) but it indicates that there could be a higher profile for the importance or centrality of research in what SCARP does
- Questions about the role of CHS suggest that how the school serves CHS should be examined. The question is usually put the other way ‘What is the relationship of CHS to the school?’ but in fact, the question which may be more productively asked is what SCARP has to offer to the mission of CHS (beyond institutional supports).

Cautions

Notwithstanding the optimism and confidence of respondents, some significant cautions were embedded in the suggestions about expansion possibilities:

- Expanding the program without adequate thought and care could:
 - Diminish the benefits of a collegial environment and close faculty-student relations
 - Have implications for connection of the alumni to the school farther down the road
- Pursuing partnerships or alliances without a critical stance may open the school to ‘capture’ of concepts like sustainability; this is particularly an issue if funding is pursued and obtained
- The participatory system of governance may be harder to manage if the school expands

- The current resources are inadequate to sustain expansion, including facilities, communications, the urban design studio, the level of equipment, and access to mentors

Looking forward, the vigour and variety of comments suggest a vibrant community which will continue to contribute to the mission and vision of SCARP. The question is not whether, but how well this can be effectively utilized.

Appendix One: Continuing Faculty and Staff, SWOT Statements

Strengths

As one of Canada's first planning schools, SCARP's distinguished history, strong reputation, and drawing power after 55 years are attributed to its focus on sustainability, particularly for the Master's program, outstanding alumni, the individual reputations and expertise of its faculty in a variety of disciplines and the achievements of the Centre for Human Settlements.

Shared commitment by staff and faculty to SCARP's mission on sustainability, which also coincides with UBC's Trek 2010 goals.

One of only 2 Canadian Masters in Planning with US accreditation, plus CIP and PIBC accreditation.

SCARP has a distinguished multidisciplinary faculty covering a wide range of subjects, conducting research and teaching in significant areas that attract funding and get students jobs.

SCARP's students are outstanding, engaged, critical, constructive and cooperative.

Highly committed Adjunct Professors bringing a wealth of public and private sector experience to the teaching program.

Committed and highly competent administrative staff.

SCARP's multi-disciplinary professional program offers a breadth of courses with some depth in key areas and attracts many excellent applicants.

The School has strong relationships with professionals in various areas including the public sector (e.g. City of Vancouver, other municipalities in the Lower Mainland, and beyond), private sector, and professional planning institutions (e.g. PIBC and CIP).

Large group of distinguished alumni, strategically placed all over Canada and beyond.

SCARP is well positioned in UBC given its trans-disciplinary orientation, close connections with other interdisciplinary research, teaching and community service oriented units (e.g. IRES, SALA, CWAGS, IAR, Learning Exchange), and the creation of CFIS that reinforces its importance within UBC.

Interpersonal relationships and internal harmony within SCARP.

SCARP has a good governance model that is open, participatory, formally involves students, and moving towards more devolved leadership.

Weaknesses

A major weakness is the lack of funds and resources for SCARP, which limits the School's abilities in many areas including financial support for students, IT support, and attraction of top quality students and faculty.

Inconsistency of interest in sustainability mission.

Weak application of vision or its integration into curriculum.

Poor coordination between overall learning objectives and individual course learning objectives.

Lack of standing committee on curriculum review, development, teaching and learning tends to overload the Director and provides only ad hoc, temporary solutions to problems when they arise.

Need to rationalize course offerings to avoid unaffordable overlaps and fill gaps while better meeting accreditation requirements and avoiding low enrolments.

Too many Areas of Concentration (AOC's) which sacrifices depth in some areas and often with only one (or very few) over-loaded faculty member(s).

The PhD program is not competitive due to the lack of funding and teaching opportunities for students, resulting in loss of top-quality applicants to other universities.

Weakness, inequalities and inconsistencies in advising and supervision of students by faculty.

Inconsistency in the quality of teaching and mentoring.

SCARP's physical facilities are cramped and limit teaching, learning, and office space. Poor teaching equipment.

Digital technology needs to be better integrated into the whole of the learning program and IT support provided.

Fairly low visibility among planning schools outside of Canada (e.g., not ranked by Planetizen), hence we draw fewer non-Canadian students than we might.

No Continuing Education or Professional Development Certificate Programs.

Very few faculty who are members of AICP/CIP.

Weak relationship with PIBC and CIP and little relationship with practitioners beyond Adjuncts and City of Vancouver.

Adjuncts are not involved with the school beyond teaching courses and are teaching too many courses that are required for accreditation.

Lack of alumni involvement with the School.

The Centre for Human Settlement's ambiguous relationship to the school and its lack of a clear, renewed vision is a weakness.

Opportunities

Studying how other planning schools do better in reducing budget and resource constraints and learning their secrets of success.

Location in an increasingly significant international city-region.

Increasing relevance of planning as a profession and field of enquiry due to increasing pressures on cities and urbanizing regions.

Become a new leader in sustainable, resilient and integrated planning.

Collaboration with SALA (School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture) on consolidation of space; improved teaching and research facilities.

New types of courses: Certificate programs, joint degrees/courses, and undergraduate offerings (that offer PhD students teaching opportunities).

Could expand (by say 50%) our admissions almost immediately with two steps: a commitment to offer two sections of required courses, and a group project opportunity to complement existing project or thesis options.

New hiring possibilities as faculty members retire.

Reconstruct CHS in line with SCARP mission and identify synergies with other units.

UBC emphasis on improving teaching and learning and associated funding can enable the School to enhance its capacity.

Tracking tools using ICTs could be used productively in program advising.

Opportunities to strengthen partnerships and create alliances with other bodies (e.g. alumni), in order to fund raise or garner support for our programs (e.g. expand our focus on Urban Design, Media Studies).

Opportunities to capitalize on our shared vision and mission with UBC's new President and the Trek 2010 goals.

Capitalize on SCARP's ties with the community through Learning Exchange.

Strengthen ties and collaborate with CIP/PIBC to work on programs for student mentoring, continuing professional development, research etc.

Fund raising opportunities for SCARP-CHS from potential granting sources; there is support from the UBC Development Office.

The Provincial government's desire to expand graduate enrollment, and President's likely new budget model (the money follows the students), means we can (and will be pressured to) expand Masters enrolment (by 50%) and can/must also expect additional resources to help us do that.

Threats

Diminished overall reputation of the School hurting recruitment, development and partnerships.

Dissatisfied alumni favouring graduates of competing programs.

There are several key senior faculty members who are likely to retire soon, particularly within the Environment and Natural Resource area.

Rising real estate costs make it difficult to recruit faculty and staff and potentially to attract students.

Abolition of mandatory retirement will make it very difficult for SCARP to renew itself with dynamic young faculty, unless we seize growth opportunities in the face of cutbacks.

Leaves and reduced teaching loads due to buy-outs result in lower numbers of courses taught by continuing faculty members in a given year.

Small classes make us visible as having expansion capacity (however, they also reflect the diversity of graduate learning opportunities that are available in a research intensive university).

Expanded enrollments without increased resources and/or enhancement of teaching productivity could reduce the quality of the learning environment.

High faculty to student ratio, despite project/thesis supervision overload.

Poor UBC funding for graduate students and scholarships, and increased competition from better funded Canadian universities, especially Uof T and Uof A, will not enable SCARP to hire top-caliber students.

Uncertainty and fears around CFIS as a new institution that is on trial and current lack of stability or visible strength within UBC.

Accreditation may be a threat unless we increase CIP membership and continue to address the professional training criteria that accreditors hold for our program.

UBC's budget cuts that may threaten SCARP's activities.

There are shrinking resources in the funding to support the international mandate of CHS.

Local competition as SFU is offering more courses and programs related to planning and the loss of SCARP's relevance and uniqueness.

Appendix Two: Information Communications Technology

One statement referred to the potential for ICTs to support the development of consistent quality in advising students through Masters thesis or project completion. It may not be immediately apparent what ICTs are, and how information technology (IT) serves ICT but how ICT study is a communications and education discipline in itself. Some resources for exploring ICTs are listed here.

UNESCO Bangkok, Global E-Learning Initiatives

<http://www.unescobkk.org/education/education-units/ict-in-education/technologies/>

What is ICT?

The term, information and communication technologies (ICT), refers to forms of technology that are used to transmit, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. This broad definition of ICT includes such technologies as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, computer and network hardware and software; as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as videoconferencing, e-mail and blogs.

Scotland, public school oriented

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/ictineducation/ictadvice/index.asp>

- On-line tutorials
- Interactive whiteboards
- Web design
- Digital imaging
- Publishing reports
- Podcasting
- Simulation (games-based teaching)
- Skills development: using ICTs in planning practice

Industry Canada, communications technologies

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ict-tic.nsf/eng/Home>

Ministry of Education, Alberta, applications

<http://education.alberta.ca/apps/ict/ie.asp>

examples of ICT objectives, grade 12