



STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2017

OUR MISSION

The mission of the USC Rossier School of Education is to improve learning in urban education locally, nationally and globally.

Urban education takes place within many contexts including pre-kindergarten through high school, in human services, higher education, and workplace settings. Urban areas typically have unique strengths including racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. Urban areas often face challenges associated with equity and access, poverty, density, mobility and immigration, environmental degradation and strained social conditions around housing, healthcare and crime. Our emphasis on and learning in urban contexts guides us as we generate knowledge that is applicable to contexts beyond the urban core.

We will transform urban education by:

Leading the search for innovative, efficacious, and just solutions by engaging in collaborative translational research.

Preparing and developing educational leaders who are change agents committed to urban education and who possess the competencies needed to address complex educational and social issues.

Creating mutually beneficial partnerships to ensure our work is field-based and incorporates a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a world where every student, regardless of personal circumstance, is able to learn and succeed. We believe that USC Rossier, as a top tier research institution, has the responsibility and the ability to train the education leaders and to develop the innovative practices inclusive of equity and access that will help realize this vision. We rely on the following guiding values and distinctive characteristics to achieve our goals.

OUR GUIDING VALUES

We will work toward our mission guided by a set of values, which we believe to be imperative to improving urban education.

Results Oriented: We are problem solvers. We identify challenges in urban education and will work to ensure improvement. Achieving excellence means maintaining a shared culture of high expectations for ourselves and for our students — a culture in which attaining specific goals and benchmarks must be the starting point for identifying new ones.

Collaborative Inquiry: Educational challenges are multifaceted; therefore, they must be addressed from a variety of perspectives; using the expertise of researchers and practitioners from the community, academy, and the private sector.

Combine Research and Practice: Urban education needs the best ideas from theory and practice, and the Rossier School embraces and combines both. This requires critical reflection of the practices, programs, and institutions of schooling, standing outside the framework of conventional norms and assumptions.

Innovation: Excellence in urban education means thinking outside of common problem/solution identification. We are committed to innovative solutions that often emerge outside of traditional structures and cultures.

Commitment to Diversity: Meeting our mission means believing that all people can learn, regardless of personal circumstance. We also believe in a diverse scholarly community (race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, epistemological differences, among others) in which multiple points of view are nourished.

The USC Rossier School of Education is committed to four academic pillars that guide all academic, research, and service efforts within our School and service as a guide for meeting the School's mission. These pillars are **Leadership, Diversity, Learning and Accountability**. For more complete information related to the four pillars see Appendix A.

OUR DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Our plan builds upon the transformation and translational goals on the university-wide plan, but is unique to the capabilities and commitments of our School. As a School we are thoroughly committed to high levels of quality in all aspects of our work.

Success requires us to embrace five distinctive characteristics: **scale, speed & agility, risk, impact and integrity**.

Scale, because education challenges are far-reaching and solutions should touch as many people as possible;

Speed & Agility, because we share a sense of urgency about the rapidly evolving challenges;

Risk, because this work is complex and solutions will require bold action, innovative thinking, and high levels of creativity;

Impact, because our work must make positive change for students and education professionals;

Integrity, because the foundation of all of our work is having accountability and honesty in what we do, who we are, and how we do it. Our research and teaching strive to solve complex and difficult social problems with compassion, dignity, humility, and truth.

OUR GOALS & STRATEGIES

This plan extends and refines the focus and work generated by the 2007-2012 strategic plan and is guided by three measurable goals. These goals are ambitious, given the demands of the field, but reachable, given the depth of our commitment.

GOAL 1: To produce the highest quality translational urban education research. We will take an entrepreneurial approach that leverages technology to engage in research that reflects a scientific industry model of “Research and Development.” Our research will be driven by the mission of our School and reflect the five characteristics that inform our work.

- A. We value strong academic, collaborative interdisciplinary research teams that engage in the development of new innovations, ideas and solutions to urban education issues and directly impacts practice.
- B. We will bring proven interventions to the field at greater agility and scale that will continually engage in development of measurable outcomes that will evaluate how our own research and teaching impact practice and educational outcomes.
- C. We will significantly increase the amount of externally funded research and support faculty in their effort to secure this funding.
- D. We will build a stronger infrastructure to support research active faculty with funding and project management.

GOAL 2: 100% of Rossier graduates will enter their profession fully prepared and able to improve learning in urban education – through their research, ability to leverage technology, program or curriculum development, teaching, policy development or counseling and intervention.

- A. The curriculum for every degree program will be based on Rossier’s four academic pillars: ***Accountability, Learning, Diversity, Leadership***, and will build specific competencies in Rossier Proficiencies built upon these four themes. Demonstrate a valuing of integrating multiple perspectives by building a community of stakeholders, who advocate for high academic achievement for all learners in any educational setting.
- B. Every Rossier degree program will establish a measurable outcome goal that articulates what it expects its graduates to be able to do with respect to improving learning in urban education as a result of completing the degree program.
- C. We will commit to helping our graduates improve learning in urban education by creating a monitoring and support system to track our graduates’ progress against the outcome goal, and if a graduate does not meet that goal, we will, by request, work with that graduate until she or he meets the goal or leaves the profession.

- D. We will identify at least three new academic areas of need which support our mission and reflect Rossier's commitment to urban education, for which we could either redesign an existing program or create a new degree program.

GOAL 3: Identify, create, and maintain partnerships that are sustained, deliberate and strategically integrated with our degree programs and research efforts.

We recognize that we cannot reach any of these goals alone. We have a long standing history of meaningful partnerships through the local, national, and global community. Over the coming years, we will work closely to refine and deepen these purposeful relationships.

- A. We will determine criteria for partnerships that will match both our mission and values, reflect local, national and global perspectives and utilize various technologies to better track and maintain partnerships through online database and records management.
- B. Using those criteria, we will determine whether to end or continue current partnerships – as well as to target new strategic partnerships. We anticipate partnerships in the following areas and to include more areas as needed:
 - a. K-12 districts, charter management organizations
 - b. State level higher education systems and institutions
 - c. Greater Crenshaw Educational Partnership
 - d. USC Schools (Viterbi, Keck, Cinema, Annenberg, Marshall, etc.)
 - e. Nationally and Internationally Recognized Institutions of Higher Education and Schools of Education (e.g. HHKUST, APRU, Yang Pu)
 - f. USC's Office of Community Engagement, USC's Family of Schools
 - g. Funder-led collaborations (e.g. 100kin10)
- C. Using an alumni portal and leveraging other technology including open source platforms, we will facilitate the continued exchange of ideas, including providing access to newly created asynchronous and synchronous materials that will provide content on previous and current Rossier priority projects at all stages of development from pilot through scale internally, to key partners in the academic, research, and practitioner fields as well as the greater community at large. Current key priorities for research and development include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Access, Equity, and Quality
 - b. STEM Education
 - c. Teaching with Technology
 - d. Teacher Education and Preparation
 - e. Professional development for Teachers, Education Professionals, Principals, Administrators and Superintendents

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Rossier Four Academic Pillars

Accountability - Students will develop the ability to:

- Establish goals and strategies for their position that support improved learning in their organization
- Apply goal-directed, data-driven decision making to generate consistent and measureable outcomes that are responsive to established standards and the needs of students, community and society.
- Demonstrate the belief that accountability and communication to all stakeholder groups leads to transparent and equitable educational outcomes that are responsive to all learners.

Learning - Students will:

- Apply evidence-based theories and principles of learning, motivation, and cultural competence to optimize practice in educational settings locally, nationally, and globally.
- Demonstrate the belief that effective instruction is learner-centered, theoretically grounded, and contextually responsive to the individual differences of all learners.

Diversity - Students will:

- Develop an unshakeable commitment to a diversity of thought and experience in their practice (e.g. diversity of race, socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language proficiency and disability).
- Identify practices, structures and policies that create barriers to learning and develop the skill and political savvy to negotiate, if not eliminate, those barriers for themselves and on behalf of others.
- Demonstrate a valuing of using individual and cultural differences to inform practice related to accountability, leadership, and instruction that result in equal opportunity and access for all learners.

Leadership - Students will:

- Apply accountable leadership strategies to create the structural, human relations, political and symbolic/cultural dimensions critical for high performance learning organizations.
- Demonstrate initiative in creating solutions to barriers to learning that they identify within their organization and community.
- Demonstrate an ability to create and sustain partnerships (i.e., groups, teams, organizations) that effectively improve learning.

Appendix B: Implementation Plans and Activities for Each Goal

GOAL 1: To produce the highest quality translational urban education research. We will take an entrepreneurial approach that leverages technology to engage in research that reflects a scientific industry model of “Research and Development.” Our research will be driven by the mission of our School while exhibiting the five characteristics that inform our work.

Implementation Plan for A:

- i. Establishing a pool of research innovation funds to competitively fund new start-up projects or to fund current projects ready to scale within a specified time frame. [Year 1]
- ii. Hosting an annual TedX style conference, multiple workshops and meetings to foster communication and idea generation among faculty, practitioners, and private and public stakeholders. [Year 1]
- iii. Develop an online journal on urban education innovation. [Year 2]
- iv. Developing and implementing a strategy to align academic programs, research and professional development to integrate our global work. [Year 1]
- v. Creating physical and virtual Research and Development hub for USC faculty, USC alumni, researchers from other institutions, private and public stakeholders and practitioners to develop,

implement, study and scale innovate ideas and projects that directly impact urban education. [Year 2-3]

Implementation Plan for B:

- i. Products and interventions found to have strong potential for high impact at scale will be supported for further development with a range of resources (intellectual, expertise, financing, and partnerships). [Years 2-4]. Current areas of focus on Rossier Research and Development include but are not limited to Interventions and Research that aim to:
 - a) Reduce high school dropout rate
 - b) Increase high quality STEM teachers in K-12 urban settings
 - c) Increase Access, Equity and Success in Higher Education

Implementation Plan for C:

- i. We will expand our research funding plan to increase a diversity of new research, international, training, and professional development contracts and grants. [Years 1-5]
- ii. We will continue to support faculty and academic programs to increase the number of prestigious individual research and international fellowships for faculty and students (i.e. Fulbright, Spencer/NaED dissertation and post doctoral fellowships, David L. Boren Fellowships, Guggenheim, Macarthur Genius Awards, etc.). [Years 1-5]
- iii. We will have a national federally funded Research Center in Education at Rossier by 2017.

Implementation Plan for D:

- i. Centralized research administration services that support faculty of all rank and type. [Years 1-2]
- ii. An incentive structure that leverages faculty strengths and expertise to increase faculty members' ability to participate in research (creation of a faculty committee to advise the Dean on an incentive structure which may include new buy-out and merit options). [Years 1-2]
- iii. Communications support to translate and share academic research more broadly. [Years 1-2]
- iv. Strengthen and expand qualitative and quantitative methods expertise for our faculty and students (via additional personnel, support, and training). [Years 1-5]

GOAL 2: 100% of Rossier graduates will enter their profession fully prepared and able to improve learning in urban education – through their research, ability to leverage technology, program or curriculum development, teaching, policy development or counseling and intervention.

Implementation Plan for A and B:

- i. Each program will have delineated the key competencies (skills, knowledge and abilities), including those in A that contribute to the measurable outcome goal in B. [Year 1]
- ii. Each program will have a completed Scope and Sequence that maps these competencies (and any others the program designates) against course syllabi. [Year 1]
- iii. Each program will have designated Key Assessments for these competencies. [Year 1]
- iv. We will have created a routine data collection process for assessing students' incoming skill level with these competencies, and linked that data to the ongoing academic assessment process. [Years 1-2]
- v. We will have created a feedback system that provides faculty and staff with regular feedback regarding students' progress in these competencies (and others, as desired). [Years 2-3]

Implementation Plan for C:

- i. We will have built the prototype and piloted the alumni/professional development infrastructure to support our alumni in their postgraduate practice. [Years 1-2]

- ii. We will develop the data/communications system that allows us to track our graduates and their progress, and help them assess their impact. [Years 1-3]
- iii. We will establish, pilot and refine a system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data about our students at routine intervals (i.e., orientation, the final semester, and annually post-graduation). [Years 1-4]

Implementation Plan for D:

- i. We will have conducted an “audit” of all existing programs to determine their potential for impacting urban education, and decide which could continue “as is,” which could be expanded, blended or revised and have greater impact, and which, if any, should be discontinued. [Year 1]
- ii. We will determine our capacity for new programs – programs that could be an off-shoot of an existing degree program, or something completely new to Rossier. [Years 1-2]
- iii. The basic proposals for 2 of those programs will have moved through the approval process within the University and into the development phase. [Years 1-3]
- iv. At least 2 new or revised programs will be launched, and the proposal for a third will have moved through the approval process into the development phase. [Years 1-4]
- v. A minimum of 3 new or revised programs will have been launched, and an ongoing “opportunity scan” process will have been initiated that will allow Rossier to anticipate future preparation needs, assess its program offerings against that data and the School’s mission. [Years 1-5]

GOAL 3: *Identify and create strategic partnerships that are integrated with our degree programs and research efforts.*

Implementation Plan for A:

- i. Define the structure and levels of engagement needed for each partnership that Rossier engages with and develop strategies to best facilitate the requirements of the partnership. [Year 1]
- ii. Developing a database system of better articulation and tracking of partnerships and working expectations. [Year 1]

Implementation Plan for B:

- i. Run reports and queries from database system and develop strategy plans for cultivation, maintenance and expansion of key partnerships. [Years 1-3]
- ii. Based on developed strategy plans move toward formalizing key partnerships through signed memorandum of understandings, increased research and academic collaborations, student exchanges and faculty residencies. [Years 2-5]

Implementation Plan for C:

- i. Expansion of the developing online alumni portal to include hub of online materials and communications to build networks of partnerships with key stakeholders in academia and the field. [Years 1-2]