

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Leading Strategic Change in a Disorderly World

MPA, Winter Quarter 2020

SYLLABUS – 4 credit class

CLASS MEETINGS

Monday 5-9pm / 10 Weeks: 6 Jan – 14 Mar
Tacoma campus

Instructor: Larry Seaquist
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LOCATION: Evergreen Tacoma (Rm TBA)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class proceeds from a conviction that strategic leadership in an array of high functioning public agencies and community organizations is essential to our democracy's socio-economic well being. Recognizing that public sector leaders must tackle our society's most complex and demanding problems, this class explores a wide range of the complex strategic planning issues and opportunities which lie ahead in the working careers of our MPA graduates.

Our overall goal is enable each student to prepare to lead strategic change in the public sector of tomorrow. Rapidly evolving political, economic, and social dynamics are transforming our society and the public sector that serves it. In the years ahead, creative, agile strategic planning will be as much the hallmark of healthy, successful public service agencies and local community organizations as it is of today's high tech startups.

Students in this intensive course will strengthen their personal capacities to create and lead strategic planning efforts in public agencies, in community-based organizations, with tribal nations, and in the hybrid collaborations which increasingly deliver key public services.

Seminar work will explore strategic planning principles using real world strategic planning problems. Augmented by limited advance reading, students will use in-class "clinics" and structured strategic planning exercises to strengthen their personal strategic planning skills. The class will culminate in students' conduct of a leading-edge strategic planning laboratory to explore a difficult, student-selected public policy problem facing today's public sector leaders.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The seminar classwork aims to enable each student to develop the craft of organizing and directing strategic planning efforts in public-sector agencies and in community-based organizations. Through their active participation, students will develop a personal repertoire for leading change in public sector organizations. To that end, seminar participants will:

- Practice the diagnosis of real world strategic planning problems and the design and leadership of rapid, effective strategic planning responses;
- Consider the constantly changing dynamics likely to require strategic plan resets by public sector leaders in the years ahead;
- Learn from the experiences and advice of selected public service leaders directly involved in current strategic change problems; and
- Explore a variety of strategic planning methods applied to a wide range of looming problems and consider the lessons from recent planning successes and failures.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Mindful of the biorhythms of evening classes, two breaks will divide our four-hour sessions into three blocks, organized to enable active student engagement throughout the evening. Brief admin and course planning info will open the evening promptly at 5pm and close the evening promptly at 9.

In overview, the ten weeks of class engage these general topics:

Week Theme

- 1 Introduction. Survey student interests, today's problems, tomorrow's leaders.
- 2-3 Repertoire for strategic change: Diagnose problems/opportunities and design strategies.
- 4-5 Repertoire for strategic change: Launch and manage strategic change campaigns.
- 6 Repertoire for strategic change: Exercise leadership
- 7 Community StratLab: Conduct student-designed strategic planning exercise
- 8 Our future: Consider next-generation problems and innovative strategy-making.
- 9-10 Conclude: Present & discuss individual strategic plans; asses key takeaways.

Note: In consultation with class participants, individual class segments may be adjusted to capture real-world strategic planning issues of interest.

CANVAS

We will use Canvas for schedules, readings, assignment submissions, etc. Additional Canvas features may be used in consultation with students.

READING & WRITING

Pre-course preparations: Expect email contact from the instructor shortly after registration.

Students are asked to arrive at the first class with these two assignments complete:

1. Read *The New Urban Crisis: How our cities are increasing inequality, deepening segregation, and failing the middle class—and what we can do about it*, by Richard Florida (Basic Books, 2017) (paperback). In this recent book, Florida describes the urbanizing dynamics driving much of the deepening political polarity and inequality we see here in Washington state. Do you agree with Florida's analyses? How can public service leaders reshape their agencies and local organizations to effectively address the needs of all citizens in our rapidly changing communities, urban and rural?
2. Write a concise sketch of a strategic planning problem of personal interest. Briefly survey the problem and how you might organize a plan to tackle it. Keep it short: one page or less. You will briefly introduce this problem and your preliminary game plan in the first class.

Weekly class reading:

See detailed class schedule on Canvas for weekly advance reading assignments. Limited weekly pre-class reading assignments will examine current issues of direct interest to class participants. Other than the Florida pre-read book, all reading will be available on-line.

Final presentation, Week Nine:

Selecting a specific, real-world strategic planning problem of direct, personal interest, each student will develop an action strategy, describe it in a one-page strategic planning precept, and deliver a ten-minute presentation for class discussion. Topic to be agreed with instructor by about Week Five. This topic need not be the same one you introduced in Week One.

EVALUATION

We will follow standard TESC/MPA practices using the Evergreen on-line system.

Student evaluation: Students will submit their individual self-evaluation narrative. Instructor will submit a narrative evaluation for each student. (Note that the student may specify that the faculty member cannot access the student's evaluation until the student's eval is processed and posted.)

EVALUATION (continued)

Individual, post-course evaluation conferences are not planned but may be scheduled with the instructor as any student may wish.

Instructor/course evaluation: Because Larry Seaquist and the MPA program value each student's experience and advice, the student's final evaluation by the instructor will not be posted until the student has submitted a course/instructor eval. Note that per Evergreen procedure, students may submit faculty evaluations by hard copy, by email, or through the Evergreen on-line system.

PERSONAL CONSULTATION/OFFICE HOURS

As an adjunct, Larry does not have an office at Evergreen. But he is committed to helping each student succeed and is available to consult with individual students both on course work and on students' personal career planning whenever needed. We can confer by email, by phone, or in person by arrangement.

INSTRUCTOR:

Larry Seaquist served as a strategist and strategic planning executive in a wide range of local, national, and international public service roles. During his eight years elected service in the Washington State Legislature, four as Chair of the House Higher Ed committee, Larry led strategic planning efforts in education, health, operating budgets, environment and transportation.

In his prior career as a U.S. Naval officer, Larry commanded a series of warships including Battleship USS IOWA. Following service in the Navy's Strategic Studies Group, he led strategy and budget planning efforts for the Navy, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He directed the OSD Office of Policy Planning and served in the Office of Net Assessment during the transition to the new, post-Cold War world.

Larry followed his Navy career with a decade of peacebuilding in at-war and at-risk countries in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Latin America. Sponsored by the Director-General of UNESCO, working with local government and community leaders and with local students, he pioneered the design and demonstration of innovative strategies for locally-led strategies of conflict prevention and community development. He continued this work in a number of U.S. cities and towns including Washington DC, Columbus OH, and Seattle-King County.

A former Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, he has led strategic planning seminars with students at universities in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Latin America.

Currently, Larry leads and writes about strategic planning projects on public education, homelessness, and the urgencies of refreshing America's democracy.

THE FINE PRINT

General: We will adhere to the usual procedures and policies of Evergreen and the MPA program.

Attendance. Designed to develop personal professional skills, full credit in this highly participatory course assumes attendance and engagement.

Communicating with Each Other: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

Emergency cancellations/inclement weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel class even if campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-class email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts direct from the school. about campus closing or other emergencies. You can check their latest [here](#).

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student conduct code](#) and the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#). See the college's [Student Conduct webpage](#) for more.

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

Oct '19