In five years, the Embrey Human Rights Program will:

- **Provide a comprehensive academic curriculum with undergraduate and graduate degrees.** We will uphold an innovative course of study by increasing the opportunities available to undergraduate majors and minors, launching the first human rights doctoral program in the United States, and enlisting visionary and committed faculty. We will continue to promote interdisciplinary learning that carries real world significance.

- **Serve as a national leader for awareness and action efforts that are focused, timely, and impactful.** We will build meaningful awareness of, and pursue demonstrable change in, pressing issues of privilege and oppression. We will address the needs of vulnerable communities while underscoring the development of student activists.

- **Organize a varied and vibrant network of partnerships in Dallas and beyond.** We will grow relationships with effectual individuals and institutions on the SMU campus, throughout Texas, and in national and international circles. We will create more substantial and sustained experiences for our alumni and travelers.

- **Achieve recognition as the premier human rights brand in higher education.** We will assert a clear program identity and vivid marketing plan. We will honor our capacity for excellence in the present, while seeking the resources to increase that capacity for the future.

In five years, EHRP will be at the forefront of a growing movement to see human rights represented across the higher educational landscape. The program will serve as a model for integrative learning that is inclusive in scope, practical in application, and creative in character. Even as EHRP embraces and enlivens the Dedman College, SMU, and Dallas communities in which it holds a central place, it will also establish and energize a web of scholar activists stretching around the globe.
There is no such thing as a lesser person.
The mission of EHRP is to educate students and other members of the global community to understand, promote, and defend human rights as responsible citizens of the world.

*This mission is reflected in the program motto:* 

*no such thing as a lesser person.*
In 2006, the culture of SMU was permanently altered. The founding of EHRP challenged a campus historically identified with wealth and privilege to redefine itself as a defender of justice and diversity. Likewise, it called on Dedman College to recognize human rights as a legitimate field of study amid an academic landscape still beholden to traditional boundaries. This daring initiative galvanized the university community to project constructive leadership into society and transform Dallas into a beacon of hope. Yet at its heart, the message sent by the formation of EHRP was simple: if you want to learn how to create a world in which all people can not only survive, but thrive, come to SMU.

Over the past eight years, this message has proven influential and timely as EHRP has helped guide the university into a new era. Students have increasingly chosen to major or minor in human rights, making this discipline one of the fastest growing academic offerings on campus. Human rights travel experiences have generated cross cultural partnerships and extended SMU’s international reach. Likewise, the program’s community advocacy has aggressively demonstrated the importance of higher education in 21st century society. A spirit of revolution has even become reflected in the branding slogans recently adopted by Dedman College (“Minds Moving The World”) and SMU (“World Changers Shaped Here”).

The dream of EHRP has always been to create the premier, most comprehensive and influential human rights organization in higher education. Today the program finds itself closer than ever to realizing its potential through the creation of a new strategic plan.

The benefits of a strong and vibrant EHRP have been felt throughout Dallas. But the program’s tremendous success has also brought it to a crossroads in its history. What was once a fledgling startup has now emerged as burgeoning trendsetter on the cusp of transnational influence. To achieve this potential, however, EHRP must become simultaneously bolder and more disciplined in pursuing its core mission.
The goals outlined in this plan - including the launch of the first human rights doctoral degree in the US - highlight the need for increased focus. EHRP has been blessed to spearhead a wide variety of educational and activist projects in the past several years. Now, the ambition is to define a global identity by establishing a few major priorities and executing them with foresight, efficiency, and precision.

Instead of limiting consideration to a small range of content areas, EHRP's renewed focus will express a particular philosophy of human rights education. In other words, an emphasis will be placed on how issues are approached, rather than what issues are approached. This choice will allow the program to remain flexible in addressing emerging human rights threats and opportunities, as well as meeting changing student and faculty interests and community needs. The articulation of a clear and distinct philosophy will prompt a marketable image and agenda.

The EHRP philosophy will incorporate three basic commitments:

- First, special attention will be paid to the perspectives of oppressed communities. It is not that privileged voices deserve to be omitted or devalued. Rather, the work of human rights must encompass all voices, whether they exist at the center of society or on its margins. The program will therefore be particularly receptive to historically silenced groups: women, children, indigenous peoples and peoples of color, sexual and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and the poor. This commitment will animate EHRP's foundational aim of recognizing the dignity of, and offering recourse to, individuals treated as “lesser persons.”

- Second, practical applications of knowledge will be emphasized across the curriculum. Academic scholarship can and does positively impact human rights struggles on the ground. Yet students and scholars must never see themselves as detached analysts or objective arbiters. EHRP will seek to provide meaningful education that outfits learners with necessary intellectual and experiential tools for bringing change. This commitment will ensure that program pedagogy is attuned to situations of conflict and suffering.

- Third, creative projects will be promoted as valid forms of cultural criticism and social activism. The arts can empower poor and marginalized persons by uncaging the force and facility of their imaginations. To promote this good, wider development of culturally appropriate expressions will be encouraged throughout the campus and city. EHRP already possesses the largest collection of student human rights artwork in the world. A continued commitment to creativity will help the program champion subversive worldviews and uphold a holistic perspective on the human person.
The common denominator running beneath these commitments can be summarized in one word: integration. Going forward, EHRP will be guided by an integrative philosophy of human rights education that connects center with margin, classroom with community, and knowledge with artistry. Integration will inform every venture undertaken by the program and give purpose to historical and global awareness. It will also set a new benchmark in SMU’s continuing transition toward more interdisciplinary, empirical, and engaged models of learning.

To credibly embody its basic commitments and effectively implement an integrative philosophy, EHRP will need to be more selective in allocating resources than it has in the past. No organization can support every opportunity or attack every problem, even when the cause is vital. As determined fundraising efforts inspire an optimistic view of the program’s future, cautious cost benefit analyses must induce a pragmatic view of its present. To use a visual metaphor, the choice to put more wood behind fewer arrows will guarantee that EHRP is positioned for utmost success.

The insights found in this strategic plan were gleaned from formal and informal interviews with more than fifty participants between December 2013 and February 2014. A broad variety of stakeholder groups were consulted, including SMU students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as activists, executives, and philanthropists in the Dallas community. With the guidance of these assorted voices, a collaborative and ambitious vision of EHRP’s next five years has been built around the four strategic priorities presented on the following pages. Each priority has been outlined with specific goals and metrics, which detail what actions will be pursued and how their progress will be measured.

The study and practice of human rights will undoubtedly become increasingly critical to higher education in the coming decades. Pressing crises will demand inspired responses from the best and brightest minds the world can offer. In the face of such challenge, SMU will not be able to meet its goal of becoming a leading national institution without teaching people to work inclusively, act practically, and think creatively. EHRP is uniquely situated to make an integrative philosophy of human rights education more than mere words. The strategic plan before you describes how these ideas will be converted to reality.

I am a Supporter of Dignity and Equal Rights for All! We are Embracing Human Rights.
P R I O R I T I E S

1

EDUCATION

SUPPORTING TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION

EHRP occupies a distinctive niche in the national landscape of higher education. While the discipline of human rights is paid little more than lip service at most colleges and universities, SMU remains one of only seven institutions in the country, and the only institution south and west of Missouri, to offer an undergraduate major.

Likewise, the program has quickly established itself as a flagship offering of Dedman College. With 129 students overall and 59 declared majors as of April 2014, human rights has equaled or surpassed fields like women and gender studies, public policy, international studies, and even the venerable stalwart political science - and participation continues to grow. 99 distinct human rights courses are currently offered through 18 disciplines spanning the university. EHRP is especially proud to encourage the scholarly development of young women, who constitute approximately 80 percent of its student body.

The time is right for EHRP to address a glaring need by offering the first human rights doctoral degree in the US. Through an interdisciplinary PhD model in which students are trained in the study of human rights as well as more traditional fields like anthropology or economics, this offering will prepare students to contribute to bodies of applied knowledge and movements of informed action. It will also provide opportunities to bolster the undergraduate curriculum with more robust courses, a larger faculty base, greater resource sharing, and broader backing for research. To sustain momentum, EHRP must complement its existing pursuit of innovative undergraduate learning with a pioneering commitment to a new generation of highly trained scholar activists.
In the next five years, EHRP will support transformational education by achieving the following goals:

- **Launching a world class and thoroughly interdisciplinary doctoral degree in human rights.** Highly gifted graduate students will be offered competitive financial packages, attractive opportunities for teaching, research, and publication, and close guidance through a personalized course of study.

- **Strengthening the undergraduate experience with additional courses and closer mentoring.** The major and minor will be refined to maintain growth in participation and better prepare students for human rights career paths.

- **Recruiting committed faculty from inside and outside the university.** Incentives such as endowed professorships, customized courses, research funding, and collegial gatherings will be used to increase both the quality and quantity of program faculty.

- **Expanding opportunities for research that connects classroom to community.** In addition to promoting existing SMU resources such as the Office of Engaged Learning, EHRP will launch a Human Rights Research Fund and Community Outreach Fellowship to encourage public scholarship and service.

**Key Metric:** The first cohort of human rights doctoral students will matriculate by the fall of 2018.

**Other Metrics:** Number of undergraduate majors and minors; Number of faculty and endowed professorships; Placement rate of graduates in professional human rights positions; Research publications and service learning tied to the program.
ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

The mission of EHRP proclaims the power of education to change lives. This proclamation is aimed universally, not simply toward those fortunate enough to access higher education. Through its community outreach and public awareness efforts, the program has historically served as perhaps the most potent catalyst for human rights activity in Dallas. It has also represented a trusted sponsor for grassroots organizations in need of support. Over the past year alone, EHRP activities have included: pressing for legislative reform on immigration and capital punishment; delivering informational events on women’s and children’s rights; presenting more than twenty Know Your Rights workshops for day laborers; calling for justice in the Santos Rodriguez murder; hosting the exclusive national launch of author Edwin Black’s book, Financing the Flames; and presenting a major international conference on the persecution of minorities in partnership with South Asia Democracy Watch.
But for all its variety and vision, the program’s advocacy has not always achieved peak impact. Events have been inconsistently attuned to breaking news, student curiosity, and staff ability. These shortcomings can be attributed to an understandable desire to pursue too many promising opportunities at once. To ensure good intentions do not preclude professional executions in the future, approval will only be given to those ventures most prepared to attract compelling involvement and leave lasting impressions. Further, all efforts will be coordinated through the program’s integrative philosophy of human rights education to propel a unified agenda.

In the next five years, EHRP will advocate for change by achieving the following goals:

- **Implementing a refreshed community outreach model.** Activist outreach will extend EHRP’s academic foundations by emphasizing marginalized perspectives, integrating applied research, centering student participation, and evaluating measured outcomes.

- **Generating more polished public awareness events and communications.** Resources directed to programming will be carefully allocated to balance maximum exposure of critical issues with a realistic view of organizational capacity and high returns on investment.

- **Asserting proactive and viable campaigns for justice in the immediate community.** Without ignoring international struggles, EHRP will invigorate local movements by encouraging broad coalitions and spurring tangible progress on the SMU campus and in the Dallas metroplex.

- **Cultivating a conscious and engaged student body, most directly through a restructured Student Leadership Initiative.** Combining open participation with elected representation, SLI will enable particularly talented students to advise program administration and govern extracurricular organizations.

**Key Metric:** One highly visible outreach or awareness event will be organized each semester beginning in the fall of 2014, achieving an average participation of at least 100 individuals.

**Other Metrics:** Number of high quality events sponsored; Concrete campus and community impact of program related activities; Percentage of students involved in extracurricular human rights organizations; Proportion of high achieving students represented in SLI.

*Through its community outreach and public awareness efforts, the program has historically served as perhaps the most potent catalyst for human rights activity in Dallas.*
FORGING LOCAL AND GLOBAL CONNECTION

Evidence confirms human rights travel as one of the most powerful ways EHRP builds bridges among people and places. A financial commitment to travel allows the program to unearth awareness that might otherwise remain hidden. Recent trips to Australia, Costa Rica, France, Poland, and Rwanda have seen an average of more than twenty participants. These journeys and the many others like them have exposed diverse groups of students, faculty, and community members to a wide range of justice contexts. No other human rights program in the nation can boast this level of expertise in travel, making it a major asset of the EHRP portfolio.

Likewise, the program has historically enjoyed close working relationships with a variety of like minded organizations. From regional pioneers like 29 Pieces, the Dallas Holocaust Museum, and the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, to major organizations like Amnesty International, International Rescue Committee, and the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, these relationships have made EHRP a vital contributor in human rights circles of different scopes and sizes. The growing family of program alumni has offered another crucial web of cooperation.

To maintain a relevant and active network, EHRP must place additional emphasis on building long term partnerships. Human rights travel will be shifted toward intentional projects and a coherent schedule. The loose fellowship of alumni that currently exists will be transitioned into an official association with regular operations. Technology will also be better utilized, opening new avenues for distance learning. These changes will respond directly to the desire voiced by program stakeholders for more robust worldwide collaborations.

No other human rights program in the nation can boast this level of expertise in travel, making it a major asset of the EHRP portfolio.
In the next five years, EHRP will forge local and global connection by achieving the following goals:

- **Aligning human rights travel with philosophical commitments and current events.** By transitioning to an experiential study abroad model, trips will be better adapted to promote growth in cultural competence, encourage reflection on links between historical and contemporary struggles, and facilitate the emergence of global consciousness.

- **Reenergizing existing affiliations and seeking innovative alliances.** Efforts to raise SMU’s profile in conventional human rights circles will be complemented by the exploration of new partnerships across disciplinary, political, and philosophical boundaries.

- **Establishing a formal alumni association.** EHRP will provide convenient and consistent opportunities for alumni throughout the world to engage each other, current students, and program activities.

- **Harnessing technology for increased reach and influence.** The program’s capability to serve as a hub of human rights knowledge and communication will be supplemented by intelligent applications of information technology and social media, including a revamped program website.

**Key Metric:** By the spring of 2015, the EHRP Alumni Association will be fully operational with at least 80 percent active participation.

**Other Metrics:** Number and diversity of human rights travel participants; Number and diversity of formal partnerships with other individuals and institutions; Proportion of alumni actively participating in program related activities; View rates of the program website and social media communications.
GROWING A PREMIER AND FUTURE ORIENTED BRAND

At some point in their evolution, all human rights organizations must face a few key questions: Who are we? What do we stand for? What makes us distinctive? This process must not be seen as an abstract exercise, for it will fundamentally influence the opportunities that are sought, the commitments that are nurtured, and the reputations that are spread in a broad field with many obstacles and opportunities. EHRP understands the gravity of the moment at hand.

This strategic plan is intended to set the program on a trajectory to becoming the preeminent human rights entity in higher education. It is also designed to define EHRP’s public identity. Although the program is currently well respected, it must be assertive in growing its name recognition and institutional prestige beyond the South. Greater efficiency of focus and effectiveness in marketing will provide tools for building upon an already solid foundation. Of course, it will be critical that sufficient funding is secured to realize all strategic goals.

EHRP is incredibly grateful to acknowledge the continuing partnership of the Embrey Family Foundation. While many funding institutions target only one piece of the puzzle, the Embrey Family Foundation’s dynamic vision embraces the full meaning of human rights in today’s world. But just as it takes a village to raise a child, the struggle for justice and dignity requires a community. The generosity of the Embrey Family Foundation sounds a clarion call urging other individuals and institutions to join in the work of EHRP. Avenues for involvement will be opened to all good people, no matter what their means or backgrounds.
But just as it takes a village to raise a child, the struggle for justice and dignity requires a community.

In the next five years, EHRP will grow a premier and future oriented brand by achieving the following goals:

- **Completing a new brand study and marketing plan.** The identity of EHRP will be widely associated with an integrative philosophy of human rights education that centers the perspectives of marginalized communities, merges meaningful theory with cutting edge praxis, and honors the creative genius inside each person.

- **Growing the prominence of the Triumph of the Spirit Award.** By generating widespread attention, the biannual nomination process and award ceremony will enhance the program’s reputation as a human rights actor of international significance.

- **Developing support for crucial needs such as endowed professorships, student aid, and building space.** A three level plan for diversifying funding will be implemented, targeting additional assistance from within the university, investment from regional business and philanthropic leaders, and grants from major national foundations.

- **Reorganizing staff responsibilities around strategic priorities.** As a valuable and finite resource, staff time will be directed toward fewer projects, clearer defined roles, and more forthright performance expectations.

**Key Metric:** Perpetual funding for at least four endowed professorships and five doctoral students (per cohort) will be secured by the spring of 2016.

**Other Metrics:** Size of audience reached by marketing materials and program communications; Number of funders contributing to the program; Number and diversity of participants in the Triumph of the Spirit Award process; Percentage of staff time devoted to core activities.
Human rights touch every part of life. They reveal the basic commonalities that transcend time and space, and the authentic differences that make communities unique. All people are called to participate in the struggle of protecting access to society's most fundamental needs and inherent freedoms. The absence of human rights anywhere dehumanizes individuals everywhere - regardless of race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, ability, and background - for one person’s unjust oppression is always tied to another’s unearned privilege. The choice of awakening to action must therefore be regarded as both a necessary charge and a sacred trust.
However, the work of human rights is rarely easy. When faced with complex problems and intractable conflicts, the temptation to remain inert can be paralyzing. It is in this space of hesitation that the value of EHRP is proven. The program guides people to discover the knowledge, experiences, and interactions they require to be transformed. Its curriculum challenges individuals to grow even as it supports them in their growth. And its advocacy for justice demonstrates how positive change can be won.

The goals outlined in this strategic plan will benefit SMU by making EHRP a more innovative and productive conduit for education. For example, the launching of a doctoral degree in human rights will establish Dedman College as the destination of choice for promising scholar activists across the globe. A refined approach to advocacy and travel will corroborate the university’s centennial vision of becoming a changemaker of national and international distinction. Similarly, enhanced partnerships throughout Dallas will make the city a more collaborative and welcoming environment. Progress toward these goals will be assessed transparently and regularly in annual reports.

EHRP will be fortunate to have so many resources close at hand. The assembly of faculty already teaching human rights courses are among the finest scholars SMU has to offer, and connections with other outstanding faculty remain open for discovery. Program students and alumni represent an enduring source of talent and energy that the program would be wise to tap. Other university personnel, such as those in the Dedman College Dean’s Office, the Integrated Marketing and Advertising Department, the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, and the Office of Public Affairs offer types of expertise that will be essential to the program’s success.

By cultivating its resources and relationships wisely, EHRP will be poised to become the premier human rights organization in higher education. Of course, the program’s ultimate purpose in advancing this dream will be to help individuals near and far advance their own dreams - dreams of justice, of dignity, of never again having to feel desperate and afraid. While EHRP is proud of its achievements to date, it knows there is much more to be done and is enthusiastic about the future. The work will continue until every corner of the globe reflects the program’s guiding motto: There is no such thing as a lesser person.
There is no such thing as a lesser person.