



# COLLEGE OF INFORMATION STUDIES

*Advancing and empowering people through information*

Strategic Plan  
April 2019

## Table of Contents

Trends	3
Strengths	4
Values	5
Vision	6
Mission	6
Focus Areas	6
Applications	7
Planning Process	8
Planning Team	9

## Trends

The following trends will influence the College of Information Studies in the future:

### *Information Industry*

- A. Trust in the expertise and integrity of private sector businesses as well as in government administration is decreasing, while trust in libraries and other community institutions remains high
- B. Growth in the pervasiveness and capabilities of technology (especially AI) is increasing quality of life for many, but driving increased marginalization and disparity in impact and access for others
- C. The increasing amount and availability of data is fostering knowledge and development, but is also decreasing privacy and security

### *Higher Education*

- D. A political climate that is increasingly skeptical of global cooperation limits our capability to attract diverse talents from many countries and challenges us to rethink how we recruit and mentor international students
- E. The increasing scrutiny of higher education by a variety of stakeholders, such as parents, alumni, and funders, shapes how the University advocates for its mission and values – this can encourage a positive focus on current societal trends and needs, but can also threaten academic freedom
- F. The increasing capabilities of technology in higher education continually offer exciting new opportunities for teaching and learning, such as online courses, virtual labs, and student chat support, but also create challenges in the need to continually assess and upgrade approaches
- G. The increasing financial cost of higher education for students continues to limit access to our programs and drives us to find ways to support students in need and constantly reflect on the value of our curricular offerings to students
- H. Funding of public institutions is decreasing, which threatens our Federal and local funding but also pushes us to find creative ways to support our programs and needs and reassess our fiscal responsibilities
- I. Political, technical, and economic trends are putting pressure on the financial and organizational stability of the university and the college
- J. The increasing number of stakeholders and voices allows the College to hear traditionally under-acknowledged constituencies but also increases demands to respond to multiple needs

## Foundational Strengths

- A. The iSchool is one of the most inter- and multidisciplinary units on campus. Our faculty, staff and students have diverse disciplinary degrees and backgrounds. As a College, we continue to enhance our multidisciplinary by investing in hiring colleagues with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
- B. We value and foster an inclusive, diverse environment to support everybody at the iSchool as they strive to reach their full potential.
- C. We are known for delivering career- and outcome-oriented education that yields high alumni placement rates.
- D. We actively build and maintain collaborations on and beyond campus. Our people are keen and successful at working collaboratively on research, teaching and other scholarly activities.
- E. We enjoy high reputation regionally, nationally and internationally. We are among the top 10 U.S. iSchools.
- F. The organizational culture at the iSchool is friendly and supportive. We care about the success and well-being of our people.
- G. The iSchool has effective and flexible governance policies and strategies that are able to meet the often shifting needs of a rapidly growing institution.
- H. We offer innovative, high quality educational programs that are expanded and improved based on the changing and growing needs of the information field.
- I. We strive to implement a start-up mindset that will be conducive to better agility and innovation.
- J. We foster strong connections to industry, government and other partners in our region and the nation.
- K. People at the iSchool are engaged, enthusiastic, and they strive for excellence in everything we do.
- L. We have a new and growing undergraduate program that we are building and improving to address the current needs in society and industry.
- M. iSchool is well-known and esteemed for leading research in information ethics, equity, and diversity.

# Values

We strive to achieve our mission by embracing and living out our shared values:

## **Service to Society**

- Educate and support all, including those who are underserved and marginalized
- Empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions
- Help organizations operate more effectively and efficiently
- Produce exemplary scholarship in information science and related fields
- Be agents of change for good locally, at the state and federal levels, and globally

## **Creativity, Discovery, & Innovation**

- Stay curious and open to new ideas and experiences
- Create constantly, valuing learning from failure
- Connect to sources of inspiration while remaining grounded in rigor
- Advance new foundational knowledge and scholarship of the interplay of information, technology, and people

## **Develop & Empower People**

- Create an inclusive, equitable environment where students, staff and faculty with different identities, abilities, and backgrounds can thrive
- Empower colleagues by being present
- Support others' ideas and autonomy
- Support shared and collaborative governance
- Maintain transparent communication and accountability
- Identify and remove barriers to achievement

## **Collaborative & Multidisciplinary**

- Work with others to create bigger ideas and have larger and longer lasting impact
- Seek exposure to alternative ideas and perspectives
- Be a catalyst in bringing together different groups and disciplines

## **Quality & Continuous Improvement**

- Be aware of new best practices and developments in our field
- Engage in ongoing critical comparison to identify and implement improvements, including issues of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Frequently integrate new knowledge and assess its utility
- Conduct systematic assessment to inform evidence-based change
- Develop relevant metrics, continually collect data, and measure trajectories
- Exceed expectations of quality

## Vision

We envision a world where information and technology breaks down barriers and creates exciting new possibilities so that individuals, communities, and organizations can explore their full potential and enjoy an enriched quality of life - a world where information and technology can be fully leveraged to solve real world problems and foster a culture of trust and respect.

## Mission

We improve lives and opportunities for people through information. With groundbreaking research and innovative academic programs, we strengthen information institutions, foster responsible information use, increase information reliability, and ensure equitable access to information. We harness data and technology for social, economic, and environmental good. We prepare the next generation of information professionals and thought leaders. Together, we use information to move the world forward.

## Focus Areas

Through groundbreaking research and through innovative academic programs that are producing the next generation of information professionals, we are supporting:

- 1. Information institutions and infrastructures in an increasingly diverse, interconnected, dynamic and information-rich world**
  - 1.1. We develop new systems, tools, standards, policies, and organizations that allow individuals, communities, and institutions to better capture, preserve, organize, access, and utilize information
  - 1.2. We shape and ensure the societal relevance and impact of existing information institutions and organizations, including libraries, archives, and museums by working with and for them to meet the needs of individuals, organizations, and communities - now and in the future
  - 1.3. We develop institutional leaders who will strengthen information institutions and infrastructures in an increasingly diverse, dynamic, complex, and connected world

## **2. Trustworthy and high-quality information in an untrusted world**

- 2.1. We investigate and develop rules, systems, and tools for responsible and respectful computer-driven decision making to ensure trustworthy outcomes for users
- 2.2. We develop systems for secure information collection, storage, discovery, and acquisition with the goal of promoting trust, use, and collaboration
- 2.3. We investigate and develop policy and practice for responsible and respectful use of personal and proprietary data in online environments in order to create a safe experience for users
- 2.4. We develop individual and institutional capacity to assess the value, accuracy, veracity, and utility of information
- 2.5. We enable the design, production, and management of information platforms and products that provide high levels of utility, trust, and accessibility

## **3. Democratizing discovery**

- 3.1. We empower underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized populations through improved information access, literacy, and tools - providing access to information that directly impacts quality of life, such as health, employment, education, and public safety
- 3.2. We utilize innovative design methods, technology, and information systems and interfaces to improve information access for all

## **4. The use of data and technologies for social good**

- 4.1. We design effective artificial intelligence technologies that empower people to augment their own abilities
- 4.2. We build smart communities equipped with the right information to advance all residents and stakeholders
- 4.3. We build and leverage technologies to provide immersive, engaging, and continuous life-long learning environments
- 4.4. We design and enhance effective human use of always-available information infrastructure to collaborate and manage information.
- 4.5. We partner with organizations to place systems and technology in communities, creating measurable impact

## **Applications**

- Utilize this document as a tool to frame “who we are” internally and externally – in print, on the website, in conversations
- Utilize this document to create focus and parameters for future strategic and operational decisions - guiding the direction of the college as we grow and expand

## Planning Process

The University of Maryland College of Information Studies (iSchool) Strategic Planning Committee was formed by the iSchool Dean Keith Marzullo in late June 2018. The Committee consisted of 13 members, including faculty and staff. Major process steps:

- **Aug 8, 2018 - First Committee Meeting: Received Charge**
  - The Committee received its charge from the Dean and learned about the strategic planning process and next steps
  
- **Aug 23 - Committee Full-Day Retreat: Formed Research Groups**
  - The Committee formed qualitative research teams each tasked with collecting data via interview from the following groups, respectively:
    - Team A: Students, alumni, parents, adjunct faculty
    - Team B: Sponsors of research activities, employers of alumni
    - Team C: Peer units on-campus, peer institutions at large
  - iSchool faculty and staff, not on the Committee, joined for an afternoon session to learn about the strategic planning process and to share their feedback about industry trends and the college's strengths, weaknesses, values, mission, and vision.
  
- **Sept-Oct - Research Group Work: Conducted Qualitative Research**
  - The three qualitative research teams collected data from their stakeholder groups through listening sessions and one-on-one interviews.
  
- **Oct 29-30 - Committee Two-Day Retreat: Reviewed Research**
  - Day 1: Data collection teams shared findings, the Committee discussed
  - Day 2: Based on all collected data, including that of the college's faculty and staff, the Committee summarized findings around trends, strengths, weaknesses, values, and initiative/focus areas.
  
- **Nov 8 - Committee Full-Day Retreat: Refined Strategic Recommendations**
  - The Committee refined recommended core values and strategic focus areas for the college.
  
- **Nov 2018 - March 2019: Wrote Strategic Plan**
  - A subgroup of the Committee (the Writing Committee) put the recommendations into a document, drafted recommended mission and vision statements, and worked with the Deans to fine-tune the language.



## Planning Team

### Co-chairs:

- Vedat Diker
- Ricky Punzalan

### Members:

- Tetyana Bezbabna
- Aditya Bhat
- Eun Kyoung Choe
- Dan Christopher
- Emily D'Acquisto
- Niklas Elmqvist
- Ursula Gorham
- Mia Hinckle
- Bill Kules
- Wayne Lutters
- Susan Winter

### Facilitator:

- Mitch Owens

### Support:

- K. Sarah Ostrach