University of Kentucky | College of Communication and Information
School of Information Science

School of Information Science
Strategic Plan, 2025-2028

Message from the Director

I am pleased to present this strategic plan which reflects our collective dedication to the School of Information Science (SIS). I am grateful to all of you for your work on this plan, and your continued excellent work in supporting each other, our students, and the University.

Through numerous conversations, it became clear that we share a unified goal: to build on our successes and foster innovation. This strategic plan represents an initial roadmap for advancing our mission and building on our past success. I deeply appreciate the engagement and insight contributed by our community throughout this process. It highlights our strength as a cohesive and vibrant academic organization.

This plan identified key areas for growth and innovation, positioning us to navigate the future with confidence and purpose.

Procedure

The strategic planning process began in the fall of 2023 with the engagement of an external consultant, Ms. Kathleen Rinehart, to facilitate discussions. Ms. Rinehart conducted one-on-one listening sessions with nearly every full-time employee in the School. In January 2024, Ms. Rinehart conducted group meetings with non-tenure track faculty and tenure-track/tenured faculty to collect additional insights.

Key themes, including *collaboration*, *creativity*, *curiosity*, *determination*, *equity*, *excellence*, and *kindness,* emerged from these sessions. A School-wide meeting on May 1 reviewed the planning process and facilitated discussions on purpose, mission, strengths, and opportunities. Employees were asked to submit their top five priorities, emphasizing actionable goals.

Over the summer, the Director analyzed this input, which informed a preliminary draft of the strategic plan. This draft was shared with all employees during the fall meeting for feedback and further refinement.

Preliminary Observations: Goals, Strengths, and Opportunities

Goals

The strategic planning process identified four key goals for SIS:

- **Build Community** – Foster connections within the School, the College and beyond.
- **Converge and Collaborate** – Leverage interdisciplinary strengths to enhance innovation.
- **Empower and Excel** – Support professional growth and success among colleagues.
- **Engage and Partner** – Strengthen relationships with stakeholders and peers.

Strengths and Opportunities

The School of Information Science is unique, with many strengths and a long tradition as an academic unit. During the strategic planning process, a few distinctive aspects were identified to leverage and help shape the school's future directions.

SIS is distinguished by its interdisciplinary structure, offering diverse programs such as the MSLS, the MSICT, and an undergraduate major and minor in ICT, and Instructional Communication and Research, which supports the University's undergraduate curriculum and the College's graduate offerings. These interdisciplinary programs strengthen the School's presence within the University and provide further opportunities for collaboration. The School is housed in the College of Communication and Information along with three other units: Communication, Journalism and Media, and Integrated Strategic Communication. SIS stands out with its multi-disciplinary nature, differentiating the SIS from peer institutions and creating a broad range of opportunities for growth and success. Our longstanding expertise in online teaching has positioned SIS as a leader within the University, particularly during the challenges of COVID-19, and our innovative approaches to pedagogy have made us exemplars across the University. It is also true that silos have developed between disciplines, limiting collaboration and mutual understanding. Addressing this issue will enable SIS to better leverage its collective expertise.

As an iSchool, we need to continue integrating emerging technologies into our programs. One example is Artificial Intelligence applications, which present many real-world issues and opportunities for our work and instruction. We need to identify how to manage the impacts of emerging technologies, including AI, on curriculum development, research, and the continued viability of programs on which the School has traditionally relied.

Our mission to make a positive contribution to our communities demands that we meet the needs of our students and other stakeholders (e.g., alumni and external partners). We need to harness our expertise to deliver practical strategies that are responsive to the needs of our stakeholders and stay relevant. The School's success rests on the talent and accomplishments of our team, including administration, faculty, and staff. We need to create appropriate forums to discuss professional development support, resources, and leadership opportunities for faculty and staff. It also means ensuring that our procedures for the School's operations reflect our values as an academic organization.

Priorities

From the preliminary input of SIS employees, several strategic priorities emerged to advance the SIS mission, values, and goals.

1. **Exploring innovation and efficiencies** – Enhance administrative processes to better serve the faculty, staff, and students.
2. **Building community** – Foster stronger connections within SIS and with external partners.
3. **Refreshing the curriculum** – Ensure relevance and responsiveness to current and future learning needs.
4. **Fostering research** – Expand research opportunities and support interdisciplinary collaboration.

Key Strategies

Below are specific actions to take to act on the four priorities based on our observation.

Priority #1: Exploring Innovation and Efficiencies - Improve efficiencies and innovation to better serve faculty, staff, and students.

Goals	Time	Action(s)
Institutional Knowledge and Processes	2024-2025	• Develop and expand the School's Teams space for streamlined collaboration. • Launch and utilize a Faculty Canvas Hub to centralize teaching and administrative resources. • Streamline and standardize operational procedures following ones by the College and the University, e.g., a faculty onboarding checklist • Work with program faculty to document program specific processes and committee structure
Committee Streamlining	2024-2025	• Propose the elimination of low-activity committees. • Clarify expectations, duties, and responsibilities for remaining committees.
Professional Development	Ongoing	• Identify and publicize professional development opportunities through the University. • Explore additional funding opportunities for professional development. • Conduct surveys to assess current professional development practices and their impact.
Student Support	Ongoing	• Update student surveys to collect feedback on areas for improvement. • Gather data on teaching loads and advising perceptions to optimize resource allocation.

Work-Life Balance and Well-Being	Ongoing	• Promote participation in @Work survey to develop a baseline for work-life balance and identify key concerns. • Promote existing University resources supporting wellness.
Space Planning	Ongoing	• Address space challenges as Pence Hall renovations progress. • Communicate availability and usage of existing spaces for employees.

Priority #2: Building Community - Strengthen internal and external connections to foster a collaborative and inclusive professional community.

Goals	**Time**	**Action(s)**
Program promotion	Ongoing	• Develop concise, compelling elevator pitches for the School and its programs. • Enhance recruitment efforts in rural and targeted regional/national areas, and with marginalized populations. • Collaborate with external stakeholders to increase scholarship opportunities.
Internal Community Engagement	2024-2025	• Establish a volunteer social committee with representation from across SIS. • Host an annual showcase highlighting faculty innovations in teaching and research. • Promote internal and external research collaborations. • Review mentoring program for areas to improve.
University Collaboration and Outreach	Ongoing	• Work closely with the College of Communication and Information (CI) Marketing to raise SIS's profile within the University. • Monitor and expand SIS's presence on social media to increase visibility and engagement.
Building Trust and Opportunity	Ongoing	• Provide clear information on promotion pathways for special title series faculty, lecturers and staff. • Foster a collaborative environment through regular meetings and accessible communication platforms.
Industry and Alumni Engagement	Ongoing	• Strengthen connections with alumni and industry partners, for example, by developing service-learning opportunities and securing program funding.

Priority #3: Refreshing the Curriculum - Refresh and innovate curricula to meet the evolving needs of students and stakeholders.

Goals	**Time**	**Actions**

Curriculum Innovation	Ongoing	• Identify gaps in teaching coverage and opportunities for program growth. • Explore new courses, certificates, or collaborative programs.
Regular Curriculum Review	Long term	• Establish a systematic review process to assess and update curricula. • Gather feedback from alumni and professionals to ensure programs align with current industry and academic needs.
Leveraging Technology	Ongoing	• Continue to identify ways technology can enhance teaching, staff efficiency, and student learning experiences.

Priority #4: Fostering Research - Foster research initiatives and interdisciplinary collaboration to elevate SIS's scholarly impact.

Goals	**Time**	**Action(s)**
Research Support for Faculty	Ongoing	• Inform faculty of internal and external funding opportunities and provide guidance for securing resources. • Promote faculty's participation in the College Research Seminar Series to develop collaboration within the College.
Research Support for Students	Ongoing	• Explore fellowship programs for both undergraduate and graduate students.
Doctoral Program Exploration	Long Term	• Assess the feasibility of launching a doctoral program within SIS, including curriculum development, program structure, and resource allocation.
Participation in Interdisciplinary Research	Ongoing	• Establish a SIS research colloquium to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, share work, and build partnerships. • Quantify faculty involvement in cross-departmental activities to build collaborations from different disciplines within and outside the College. • Host an annual showcase highlighting faculty innovations in teaching and research, where faculty can share projects from different units and identify potential collaborations. • Strategically allocate resources to facilitate deeper engagement in interdisciplinary projects.

Considerations for Implementation

The success of this strategic plan relies on collective commitment, engagement, and ownership across all units of SIS. Key considerations for effective implementation include:

- **Formal plan approval** – Secure feedback and endorsement from SIS employees to unify efforts around the plan.
- **Resource allocation** – Dedicate appropriate resources to support the identified priorities and mission.
- **Ongoing assessment** – Establish a system to regularly evaluate the plan's effectiveness and ensure its relevance over time.

Conclusion

The 2025–2028 Strategic Plan for the School of Information Science reflects our collective commitment to fostering innovation, collaboration, and excellence in service to our students, colleagues, and stakeholders. Through the contributions of our faculty, staff, students, and external partners, we have identified clear priorities and actionable strategies to build a stronger, more connected community; enhance academic programs; and position SIS as a leader in interdisciplinary research and education.

Implementation of this plan will require active engagement, resource allocation, and ongoing assessment to ensure its effectiveness and inform future iterations. By working together, we can achieve the goals outlined in this plan and continue to elevate SIS's impact within the University and beyond.

Thank you to all who contributed your time, insights, and energy to this strategic planning process. Your dedication ensures that SIS will remain a vibrant, innovative, and inclusive academic community for years to come.