



School of Information Sciences

Strategic Plan

2022-2027



THE POWER OF INFORMATION



INTRODUCTION

The School of Information Sciences, the iSchool at Illinois, makes a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals through teaching, research, and public engagement. Our dynamic community is home to world-class faculty, outstanding students, top-tier research, and academic programs consistently ranked highly by *U.S. News & World Report*. We engage in inclusive community partnerships, working beyond geographic boundaries to benefit the social good.

Both the iSchool and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign are known for innovative teaching and research that address global problems and improve the human experience.

We believe in the power of information to change the world.

We **educate leaders** in the information sciences who impact their communities.

We **inspire advocates** for information access, intellectual freedom, and inclusion.

We **transform lives** through our individualized, top-ranked degree programs.

We **advance research** at the intersection of people, information, and technology.

We **foster innovation** through our interdisciplinary, human-centered approach.



PROGRAMS

BS in Information Sciences
BS in Information Sciences + Data Science
MS in Library and Information Science
MS in Information Management
MS in Bioinformatics
PhD in Information Sciences
School Librarian Licensure
Certificate of Advanced Study
Undergraduate Minor in Informatics

VALUES

Since the iSchool was founded in 1893, we have expanded to address the complex information needs of contemporary society. Throughout the years, we have maintained the following values:

- We engage with social issues through research and education, contributing to the public good and future scholarship.
- We support academic freedom and encourage the broadest possible range of research topics and approaches, attending to the implications of technology for humans, both as individuals and as communities.
- We embrace ethics, and we practice diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at all levels, supporting populations that are historically underrepresented in higher education.
- We steward our human, financial, and physical resources.
- We support work-life balance, including but not limited to recognizing the demands of elder and child care for all members of our School.



GROWTH IN SCALE AND SCOPE

The iSchool shapes professional practice and the development of research, teaching, and engagement in the field of information sciences. While we continue to prepare librarians to create, curate, disseminate, and preserve information, these activities are now part of our larger mission.

We are growing rapidly, recruiting the best and brightest students and world-class faculty, both of whose numbers have doubled in the past four years alone. We prepare our graduates to fill leadership positions in diverse information settings—including public, academic, and school libraries as well as business, healthcare, the arts, education, and government.



VISION

The iSchool uses multidisciplinary information sciences to create sociotechnical solutions to real-world problems. We build a just and informed society by educating future global leaders.

MISSION

People use information for analysis, inquiry, collaboration, and play. Our School is dedicated to shaping the future of information through research, education, and sociotechnical engagement. Our mission is to lead the way in understanding the use of information in science, culture, society, commerce, and the diverse activities of our daily lives—that's how we, and you, can change the world.

The iSchool pursues its broad mission with values that remain deeply rooted in the service ethic of librarianship. Our students understand not just how to use technology, but also how to help others use it to meet the real needs and ethical aspirations of a changing society.



“Our five-year strategic plan is crafted around the iSchool’s vision and serves as a living document that expands on our foundational values and identifies opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement to benefit our communities. I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and effort to create this important guiding document.”

Eunice E. Santos, Dean and Professor
School of Information Sciences

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Maria Bonn, Associate Professor, Co-chair

Mike Twidale, Professor, Co-chair

Lisa Bievenue, Director of Informatics Programs

Jessie Chin, Assistant Professor

Sharon Comstock, Teaching Assistant Professor

Meg Edwards, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (former)

Emily Knox, Associate Professor

Anita Nikolich, Director of Research and Technology Innovation and Research Scientist

Ted Underwood, Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Yang Wang, Associate Professor

Our 2022-2027 Strategic Plan is the result of dedicated work by the Strategic Planning Committee, which gathered feedback from a wide range of iSchool community members to inform the recommendations that will guide the future of our School.



STRATEGIC GOAL

Advance information sciences research that transforms our communities and the world

The iSchool is uniquely positioned to catalyze new thinking and break new ground in emerging areas of societal and global importance, such as information policy, quantum information management, data literate citizenry, and the role of libraries as community agents.

We will collaborate across our diverse research areas to solve complex social problems. We will be the research leaders in areas in which we have strengths and facilitate partnerships in areas outside our expertise. In addition, the iSchool will continue to prepare and nurture future scholars who excel in the information sciences and related areas.

Key Initiatives

- Increase the sources, quantity, and size of external research grants.
- Lead in multi-partner and multi-institutional grants.
- Increase the visibility of research output.
- Leverage research centers to strengthen and emphasize the School’s ability to span disciplinary boundaries in research.



STRATEGIC GOAL

Lead the world in education in the information sciences

The iSchool is proud of our global reputation as a leader in information education. This reputation benefits our graduates, allows us to recruit outstanding faculty, and increases the visibility and impact of our work.

We educate our students with both foundational knowledge and the skills to build capability throughout their careers. Our programs do not just address the needs of the moment—they prepare students for evolving careers, and they prepare them to be thought leaders who are instrumental in building the new areas of their fields of practice.

Key Initiatives

- Ensure that all components of our degree programs are in place and adequately supported.
- Evaluate and continue to design pedagogy and education delivery models to optimize distributed learning.
- Leverage Informatics and the CU Community Fab Lab to strengthen and emphasize the School's ability to span disciplinary boundaries in education.



STRATEGIC GOAL

Nurture and grow a culture of inclusion both locally and globally, ensuring diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all aspects of our work

The culture of the iSchool and the value systems of its members place a high priority on an ethic of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. It is extremely important to infuse this ethic throughout our culture and operations, curricula, educational programs, research, hiring, and external engagement. This work must continue beyond the parameters of this plan.

We will strive to enable all members of our community—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—to be confident in addressing the issues and promoting the values of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. We are well aware that these values are intrinsically political and can and will be contested. We are ready to enter this debate.

Key Initiatives

- Address barriers to accessible education.
- Develop strategies for diversifying and retaining iSchool faculty and staff.
- Evaluate, assess, and incorporate justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility principles across our curricula.
- Explore innovative approaches to the challenges of work-life balance.



Our leadership in the field of information sciences is related to our interdisciplinary partnerships across broad communities. Our vibrant research centers serve as incubators for emerging areas of study.

Our researchers address contemporary information issues, such as data science, human computer interaction, digital libraries, privacy and security, artificial intelligence, bio- and health-informatics, information literacy, library practice and policy, cultural analytics, and youth literature, culture, and services.

INTERSECTIONS OF INQUIRY AND ENGAGEMENT

The following topic areas demonstrate our expertise and our areas of strategic focus:

- Improve the state of Illinois through partnerships in research, training, and education.
- Design and build information infrastructures that align with campus priorities and our vision, expertise, and values.
- Study and support the transformative role of libraries in society.
- Democratize access to information across the globe.
- Use artificial intelligence to complement human intelligence.
- Invest in the study and application of game frameworks and techniques in multiple domains of research and practice.
- Align information science with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



LOOKING AHEAD

Information promotes discovery, creates connections, empowers us, and provides vision for the future. Moving forward, information is crucial to our lives.

The iSchool at Illinois leads the way in shaping the future of information. We utilize information to drive decision-making and develop forward-thinking solutions across a broad range of contexts. Through innovative problem solving, we address key challenges and contribute to the social good.

The iSchool connects people, information, and technology to achieve goals and benefit society. In the future, we will continue to be a global leader by harnessing the power of information to create a just and informed world.

To read our strategic plan in its entirety, please visit: go.ischool.illinois.edu/strategic-plan.



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