



The School of Information Sciences

Strategic Plan/Annual Update

Submitted March 1, 2013

Covers Strategic Planning Period FY 2013 to FY 2018

Executive Summary

Section A *Mission and Vision*

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the School of Information Sciences is to support and advance the broader education, research, and service mission of the University by educating students, furthering knowledge, and contributing our expertise to advance humankind's progress through information.

This mission is achieved through specific actions:

- Providing a high-quality undergraduate program in Information Science
- Offering superior graduate programs that prepare students for a wide range of careers in the information professions
- Engaging in research and scholarly activities that advance learning through the extension of the frontiers of knowledge and creative endeavor
- Cooperating with industry and government to transfer knowledge into practice
- Extending our expertise to local communities and public agencies to contribute to social, intellectual, and economic development in Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world.

Long-Term Goals (from FY 2013 Annual Plan)

- Educate 21st Century Informationists
- Foster Inclusive Profession
- Enhance the University of Pittsburgh
- Distinguish the School Among Its Peers

RESULTS OF 2012-13 LONG-TERM PLANNING

In FY 2012-13, the School conducted a series of exercises to involve faculty, staff and student representatives in reviewing the mission statement and refining the vision for the School as it updated its strategic plan for the next five years. These efforts have produced several key endeavors that the School will pursue over the next five years: fostering signature research and teaching areas; building community among iSchool faculty, students and alumni; increasing opportunities for all students to gain both practical and professional experience as well as an understanding of research methodology; and developing financial strategies to operate efficiently while remaining agile and responsive to changing employer needs, fluctuating job markets, and opportunities for program enhancement. As previously reported, the FY 2012 efforts resulted in a refined vision statement for the period FY 2013-18. In the coming year, this vision will guide the continuing development of more specific goals, plans and strategies.

Section B *Summary of strategic priorities, initiatives, and long-term goals*

Moving beyond the visioning process: A faculty task force was formed to collate and refine a diverse set of input into a comprehensive vision representing the strengths and aspirations of the School. Input was gathered through a blog, faculty meetings, a Board of Visitors workshop facilitated by a dean-emeritus of another iSchool, weekly brown bag lunches with the Dean, and school-wide meetings. These meetings produced a rich set of ideas, but in general pointed to the significant advantage that the School has with regard to its peers. We have a highly competitive program in LIS and offer substantially more technical depth in the information technology-related programs than many of our peers. **Thus, the new vision is *Embrace our Differences, Differentiate our Strengths, Strengthen our Impact.*** We will do this through a focused program of research, quality graduate and undergraduate programs, and partnerships with our community.

The task force recommended signature education and research areas that build on existing strengths to position the School in the international information landscape. These signature areas are: Big data (building community around big data; not simply having big data); Spatial information (not limited to geospatial); Information assurance (e.g., security assured information systems); and Web science (including topics such as social network analysis). These areas have been reviewed and endorsed by the Industry Advisory Council and the Board of Visitors. The complete report can be viewed at <http://www.sis.pitt.edu/~scouncil/index.html>.

Build a robust financial model: Several events of the past year highlighted the fragility of the economy, reinforcing the need for a more robust financial model to guide iSchool resource allocation. Prominent among these events was the proposed reduction in the Commonwealth appropriation to Pitt and the continued softness in LIS enrollments for specializations in the public sector. Today, the School remains fundamentally dependent on tuition revenue; although external research funding continues to increase, these funds are designated to specific projects and do not significantly contribute to the operating budget. These revenue sources are

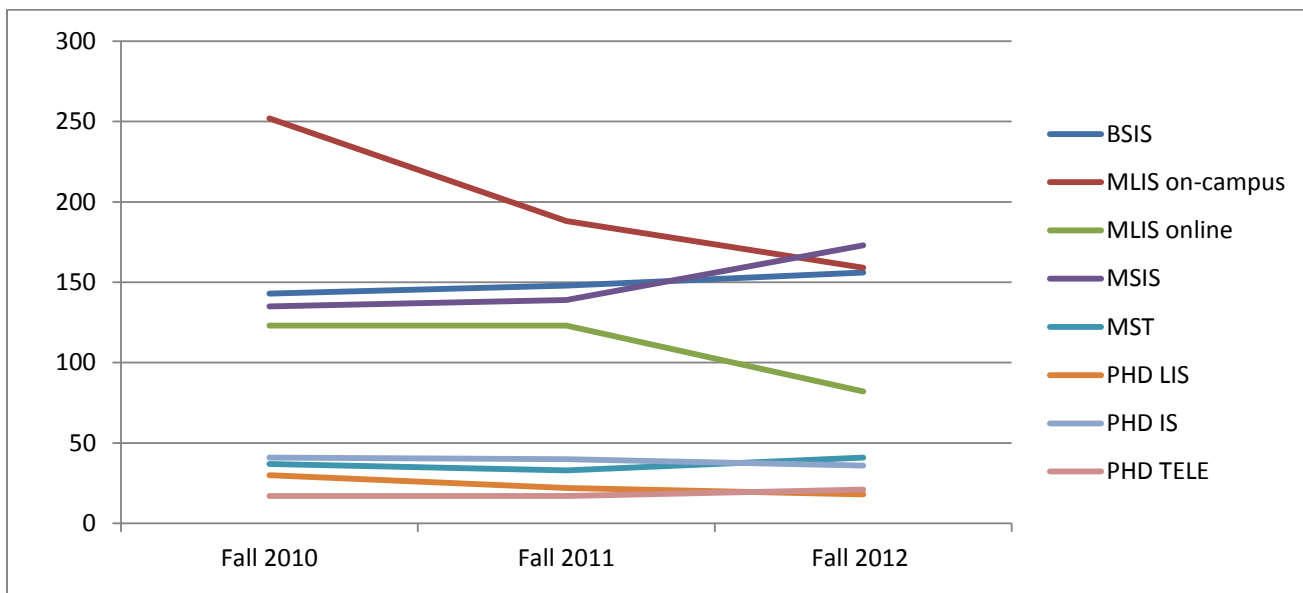
subject to economic and political forces beyond the School's control. In anticipation of continuing economic challenges, the School is enhancing its fundraising efforts and abilities, directing research initiatives into areas of growing national priority, increasing efforts to attract funding from a more diverse pool of potential donors, and working actively to optimize the experience of the large numbers of international students in the MSIS and MST programs. See below for more information about the School's fundraising progress.

This also includes right-sizing enrollments across programs. As job markets fluctuate, the School's enrollment shifts, overloading some areas and leaving excess capacity in others. It is critical for future planning and effective long-term resource utilization that the School balance enrollments across the school. The headcount in the MLIS program has declined, due to external factors such as the drop in funding for public and school libraries. However, this drop was not without its benefits in that class sizes were reduced to a more manageable level. A slight increase in enrollments for the BSIS program and a more significant increase in enrollment in the MSIS program have partially offset the decline in MLIS headcount. The School is working to ensure that tuition revenue is maintained in spite of declines in enrollments in specific programs; this is done through judicious growth in certain degree programs and increased enrollments of full-time, out-of-state students. New faculty with teaching interests and abilities in more than one program enable further flexibility.

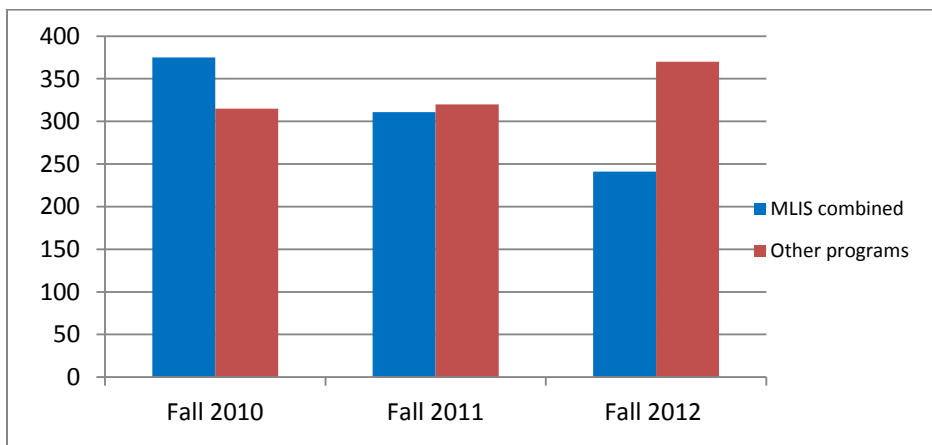
Enrollments in the iSchool

Applications to the MLIS program (both on-campus and online) have been declining since Fall 2010; this was an anticipated outcome of continuing budget cuts to traditional public and school libraries. For Fall 2013, MLIS applications are down significantly – 34% at this point in time (although this will change). As can be seen in the chart below, enrollments are following a similar pattern: student headcount in the MLIS programs is declining, while the other programs are seeing increased enrollment.

Enrolled Students



Enrolled Master's Students, by degree program



This chart clearly shows that the other degree programs (BSIS, MSIS, and MST) are making up for the loss in MLIS as of Fall 2011. However, the School cannot depend upon the continued growth in international applications which can be impacted by many external factors including visa limitations or declines in the economy of the country of origin. Therefore, the School needs to look to increasing enrollments of domestic students and of students from a broader range of countries.

Reinforce iSchool identity within the academic community: Our graduates are the School's ambassadors to the professions, industry and academia. These alumni need to be inculcated in the iSchool language, culture, and principles. To this end, the School has created a messaging campaign aimed at faculty, staff and students; rebranded SIS as an iSchool and created a series of events to cultivate a stronger bond among students in the iSchool, as well as with the University.

Enhance academic offerings: In January 2012, the School initiated the transition of its online MLIS program to Pitt Online so as to enhance the program and offer substantial long-term cost efficiencies. In FY 2013, the School hired a new Director of Distance Education, eLearning Partnerships and Outreach to manage the transition of the MLIS program to Pitt Online and to guide the future development of additional online offerings. The courses currently being transitioned to Pitt Online have benefitted greatly from the input of CIDDE's instructional designers, who (with the new Director) are ensuring that each course meets industry best practices for online education. The team has worked diligently to assure that existing students (those admitted under the former program) experience a seamless transition between the two platforms.

The School has begun to infuse the curriculum with coursework in the selected signature areas: a new undergraduate course in Big Data Analytics is being taught this term (Spring 2013) and the MSIS program has a new 36-credit specialization in the same area.

Foster collaborative research: Beginning in FY 2010, the iSchool hired visiting research scholars (using the Dean's research incentive funds) to foster collaborative research amongst the faculty, to facilitate cooperative research projects and grants, and to increase the likelihood of attracting funding for large-scale interdisciplinary projects. Given the lead time in publishing and funding cycles, the success of each visiting research scholar needs to be evaluated over an extended period of time. This program has been put on hold for FY 2013 due to funding limitations.

Section C **AY 2013 Outcomes**

Faculty

There have been significant changes within the iSchool faculty over the past year. We lost a faculty member (Bernadette Callery) to an untimely death and another to retirement (Richard Thompson) in FY 2013. One faculty member (Oh) took a personal leave. Combined with last year's postponed search (encouraged by the Provost in light of the uncertain economy and the likelihood of further cuts to the Commonwealth appropriation), the School is now under strength in both teaching and research faculty. We are currently recruiting for four faculty positions: one non-tenure stream professorship in Archives and Information Science, two assistant professorships in Web Science and Information Assurance with interdisciplinary interests spanning LIS and IST, and a non-tenure stream professor of practice to teach in the undergraduate program. Recent faculty hires include:

Sheila Corrall joined the faculty in Fall 2012 as a Full Professor and as Chair of the Library and Information Science Program. Professor Corrall previously served as Professor & Chair in Librarianship and Information Management at the Information School, University of Sheffield, UK. Professor Corrall's research interests include the application of business management concepts, tools and techniques to library and information services; understanding the evolving roles and competencies required of library, information and knowledge workers, and investigating the strategic aspects of information literacy development.

Brian Beaton completed his PhD in history in 2012 at the University of Toronto. His dissertation, "Everyday Data," explored local and community information practices in the period just before personal computing. He earned his M.A. in the Humanities and Social Thought Program at New York University. Beaton's research and teaching interests include science and technology studies (STS), archives, social and cultural theory, information workplaces, design, public and applied history, scholarly communications, digital humanities, and public policy.

Rosta Farzan most recently held a post-Doctoral research position with the Human Computer Institute's Social Computing Lab at Carnegie Mellon University. In 2009, she earned her PhD in the University of Pittsburgh's Intelligent Systems Program: her dissertation addressed "A Study of Social Navigation Support under Different Situational and Personal Factors." Dr. Farzan's research interests include socialization of newcomers, participation and commitment in online communities, social navigation and social information filtering, social Web technologies, personalized information access, and community-based user modeling.

Increasing Diversity in iSchools: The iSchool hosted the iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3) in June 2011 and 2012 at the University of Pittsburgh. The i3 project is designed to introduce undergraduate students from underrepresented groups to graduate study in Information Schools – and to consider an academic career in the Information Sciences disciplines. With the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, totaling \$700,000, the School will host 60 students in three cohorts from 2011-13. The i3 project has achieved early success along multiple metrics of assessment: 40 students have participated in the program since its inception, 2 students are currently enrolled in graduate degree programs, and 8 graduates of the program have applied for admission to one or more iSchools. In addition, 19 of the 22 US-based iSchools have supported the program either by supplying instructors or research project mentors, or by offering scholarships to applicants who have completed the i3 program.

Year	Number of Students	Number of home institutions	Number of states	Disciplinary background
2011	21	18	14	Information Technology, Computer Science, Engineering, Economics, Public Health, Journalism, Humanities, Business, English Literature, Sociology, Media Culture and Communications
2012	19	16	9	Information Science, Education, History, Sociology, Engineering, Journalism, Psychology, Business, Applied math, Statistics, Interdisciplinary Research

Progress On FY 2013 Objectives/Goals

Administrative	
Identify signature areas for research and education that reflect iSchool strengths and distinguish it among the iSchools	Done. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big data (building community around big data; not simply having big data) • Spatial information (but not limited to geospatial) • Information assurance (e.g., security assured information systems) • Web science (including topics such as social network analysis) Exploring the role of data curation as a research strength
Draft a vision statement, present to SIS Council/faculty for approval/endorsement	Done. <i>Embrace our Differences, Differentiate our Strengths, Strengthen our Impact</i>
Refine Enrollment	Ongoing – See Chart above
Develop financial aid strategies/increase fundraising to support scholarships	Done and underway. A bequest intention was made to support scholarships and proposals submitted to select funding agencies. In the LIS program, financial aid was redirected to support PhD students.
Increase consistent communications with prospective students (facilitated by Hobson’s Connect)	Done. System implemented.
Curricular/Programmatic Efforts	
Refine curriculum in light of industry/employer needs, involving IAC and other industry-related (CS industry board) organizations in curriculum evaluation	Underway. Input from advisory groups has been gathered. New undergraduate course on data analytics being offered in Spring 2013 term as a result of such input.
Offer learning opportunities and professional development opportunities outside the classroom	Done and on-going. More than 900 students participated in professional development events were hosted by the School.
Create more internship opportunities through increased outreach to corporations in the region	Underway. Six new employers have offered internships.
Promote other efforts such as Pitt’s Outside the Classroom Curriculum (OCC).	Done. Three OCC-related events were hosted in 2012-13. The School has approval for some co-curricular activities to count as OCC credits.
Identify potential non-degree offerings	The Health Librarianship CAS has been discontinued due to a lack of funding for scholarship support from the IMLS. The BSIS and MSIS program are looking to expand curricular offerings by the judicious introduction of post-Baccalaureate and post-Masters certificates in specializations.
Research	
Seek corporate support for research from entities identified by faculty	In FY 2013, proposals were sent to Cisco, NIH, Feinstein Institute
Ensure Operational efficiency and effectiveness	
Expand fundraising efforts	Underway. Hosted more alumni events to increase participation; created proposals to corporate partners to support scholarships and technology needs. Have received support for diversity scholarships; funds exceed the number of potential recipients. See fundraising report below.
Develop the work plan supporting technology updates for teaching across all programs	Modest technology updates were implemented in the Telecommunications Program; IT resources were enhanced in the new Third Floor space to support Web conferencing and collaborative work. IT

	staff and resources will continue to be reallocated to research labs, as support for online teaching is decreased (due to transition to Pitt Online).
Enhance student spaces in the iSchool facility	Third Floor collaborative study space to be completed March 20, 2013. The 8 th floor space (an underutilized student computing lab) will be renovated to provide technology-enhanced work space for PhD students.
Develop Collaborative Research	
Seek funding opportunities that reward collaboration	In FY 2011, 27 collaborative proposals were submitted. In FY 2012, 36 collaborative proposals were submitted.
Diversity	
Successfully host the iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3) to increase diversity of student body (and, eventually, the faculty body) in the Information Sciences	Done. Hosted second i3 event in June 2012, with 19 scholars (9 female, 10 male) from 16 different universities/colleges in 9 states, with an average GPA of 3.20; of the 40 students who have participated in i3: 9 attended the 2013 iConference, 3 presented research posters at the iConference, 8 have applied to Masters programs, 2 are currently enrolled in Master's programs, and 2 have applied for PhD programs; 6 iSchools offer 50-100% scholarships to i3 scholars.

Fundraising

GIVING					
	Individual	Foundation	Corporate	Other Organizations	Total
2008	149,785	782,000	44,375	1,015	\$977,175
2009	179,837	100,000	36,568	20	\$316,425
2010	299,529	600,000	27,357	74,128	\$1,001,014
2011	136,787	10,000	94,146	0	\$240,933
2012	1,074,915	0	41,425	0	\$1,116,340
2013 (as of Jan. 28)	148,868	0	80,184	0	\$229,053

Notable gifts:

Year	Donor Type	Amount	Donor	Program
2008:	Foundation	782,000	A. W. Mellon Foundation	Cyberscholarship Position
2009	Foundation	100,000	A. W. Mellon Foundation	Planning grant for i3
2010:	Foundation	600,000	A. W. Mellon Foundation	iSchool Inclusion Initiative (i3)
2010:	Other Orgs.	62,128	Full Service Network	Gift In-Kind: Telephone Switching System
2011:	Corporate	55,000	Google, Inc.	Grant to Peter Brusilovsky
2012:	Individual	600,000	John C. Lang	Planned Giving for Scholarships
	Individual	250,000	Bernadette Callery	Planned Giving for a Lecture Series
2013:	Corporate	54,034	Cisco Systems, Inc.	James Joshi's Research (DiCo TraM)

Section D Key Strategies for FY 2014

- Design an expansion and enhancement to the undergraduate program to 1) increase enrollment by 2.8% in Fall 2013 (2.5% in 2014, 3.1% in 2015, 2.7% in 2015, and 3.0% in 2017) to result in enrollments of 180 by Fall 2017; 2) improve outreach to students during their first two years at Pitt (e.g., through social networking, events at the iSchool, and introductory courses) to increase their awareness of and preparation for the BSIS program; 3) increase competitiveness of students on the job market; and 4) meet the needs of employers as expressed in responses to surveys/workshops/meetings. To this end, we will continue to conduct proactive outreach to those organizations that employ our graduates to determine how the specific skills they need are changing and to assess the success of recent graduates in their organizations.
- Address enrollment issues – adjust for the decline in MLIS students, particularly in public sector specializations; assure that the large proportion of Chinese students have a “very satisfying” academic experience in order that they serve as ambassadors for the iSchool and Pitt; gradually increase enrollment in BSIS and MST in proportion to available capacity within the curriculum.
- Recruit faculty candidates into signature areas of research and professional areas of teaching.
- Increase targeted fundraising activities.
- Complete the renovation and enhancement of the 3rd and 8th floors of the iSchool building to better serve students and faculty.