



# INDIANA UNIVERSITY

## SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN

*December 2007*

**T**his summary briefly describes the background and methods of the Fall 2007 strategic planning process in the School of Informatics, and the highest-level conclusions: the primary opportunities for national and international prominence and the key strategic priorities. The full plan also contains summaries of the recommendations from each of the planning committees, an analysis of common themes between the committees, the planned immediate next steps, and, in the appendices, the initial charge to the process and the full committee reports.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The School of Informatics (SoI) is in a transition period, moving from its formative period under the leadership of the founding dean, Mike Dunn, to the beginning of a more mature stage under the leadership of a new dean, Bobby Schnabel. This transition period is a natural time for a strategic planning effort that examines the current and desired state of the School.

Strategic planning efforts often begin with an initial focus on mission, vision, values, and goals. In this case, the School's leadership felt that SoI's current mission statement (see <http://www.informatics.indiana.edu/overview/mission.asp>) provides an excellent foundation and that the important need was to delve more deeply into needs and opportunities facing the School.

The strategic planning effort focused on a series of questions developed by the dean and the School's Leadership Council, with discussion with the School's faculty and staff (see full plan, Appendix A: School of Informatics Strategic Planning, Fall 2007; 8/31/07). An overarching theme of the process was to consider what the School's primary opportunities are for national and international prominence, as well as for serving the State of Indiana, and to determine the key steps needed to capitalize on these opportunities.

#### **METHODS**

Five committees were convened to examine the issues posed in the strategic planning paper. These committees focused on essential elements in a research university: undergraduate education, graduate education, research, faculty development, and diversity. In addition, members of the school's leadership and the Dean's Advisory Council are examining the topic of economic development and entrepreneurship.

The first four committees each were led by co-chairs from the three units of SoI — the Bloomington Department of Computer Science, the Bloomington Department of Informatics, and IUPUI Informatics — with the dean chairing the Diversity Committee. Each committee included additional faculty from each of the three units. Graduate students and staff were

represented on the Graduate and Undergraduate Education committees, respectively. One of the benefits of the planning process was providing an opportunity for the three units to collaborate.

## **OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES**

SoI's Leadership Council has considered the reports from each committee and analyzed them from two perspectives. The first is to extract the handful of the most promising and important opportunities for SoI to achieve national and international prominence in the coming years, based on the committees' recommendations. The second is to determine which of the recommendations summarized in the previous sections are of highest priority, based both on each committee's individual input and the intersection of the recommendations from the committees. Work on the recommendations listed as key priorities will commence immediately.

### **Primary Opportunities for National and International Prominence**

The School of Informatics is unique nationally in its breadth of coverage of the fields of computing and informatics, coupled with its size in terms of faculty and students, and its inclusion in one of the nation's top research universities. These characteristics position the School to play crucial, leading roles in the evolution and progress of computing and informatics on a national and international scale. Based on the recommendations of the planning committees, the following opportunities stand out as the most prominent and important possibilities for national and international leadership. The order of this list does not denote priority (it follows the order of the previous sections); all of these opportunities are of great importance and promise.

1. Establish a new model for undergraduate education in computing and informatics that spans the breadth of this discipline, from scientific and technical aspects to a broad array of applications and consideration of societal implications.
2. Develop a novel PhD that reflects the breadth of the School and the discipline of informatics and computer science.
3. Develop the premier professional master's degree in selected areas within the School, such as human computer interaction/design.
4. Examine the needs of the research areas considered to be best positioned to achieve and/or sustain national and international prominence, by the criteria of sustainability of the research area, expertise within the School, and existing or anticipated collaboration and funding opportunities. These are (alphabetically): complex systems; data, information, and search; human computer interaction/design; high-performance computing/e-science; life sciences (including bioinformatics, chemical informatics, health informatics); technology for values; and trust and privacy in cybersecurity.
5. Develop selected large-scale funded research programs that capitalize on not only the breadth and strengths of the School but also on unique strengths of the University (for example, the medical school and the IT environment) and/or collaborators at other organizations (universities and others). (The identification of these leading large-scale research opportunities is ongoing.)
6. Become a national example of how the broad view of informatics and computing embodied in the School can lead to greatly increased participation and leadership by women and underrepresented minorities, as students and faculty.

## **Key Priorities**

### ***Undergraduate Education***

1. Develop a new, combined model of the undergraduate core for Informatics and Computer Science.
2. Examine and develop new course offerings for nonmajor students that best mesh University needs with the School's capabilities.

### ***Graduate Education***

1. Assure a sufficient supply of strong PhD candidates.
2. Secure sufficient funding to support PhD candidates.
3. Investigate the benefits of combining PhD programs in Computer Science and Informatics into one coherent flexible structure that respects the requirements of specific subdisciplines.

### ***Research***

1. Examine and begin to address the key needs to attain or sustain national and international prominence of the seven research areas identified above.
2. Design unified policies that support research productivity and maintain high teaching standards.
3. Build an excellent grant preparation organization to assure that the School is maximally competitive for research funding.
4. Support graduate student admissions and funding that enhances faculty research capacity. (Overlaps with #1 and #2 under Graduate Education.)

### ***Faculty Development***

1. Bring as much clarity as possible to the tenure and promotion process.
2. Develop and maintain an excellent process for mentoring junior faculty.

### ***Diversity Committee***

1. Make a schoolwide commitment to excellence in diversity, starting by hiring a schoolwide diversity coordinator.
2. Begin the process of becoming a national diversity exemplar by becoming a National Center for Women & IT exemplar on a schoolwide basis.

## **NEXT STEPS**

In any organization, strategic planning is an ongoing activity. The Fall 2007 process is a vital initial milestone. The recommendations of this process are leading to immediate next steps. Sol's Leadership Council, under the direction of the dean, has begun creating task forces to address the key priorities mentioned in the previous section. The Leadership Council also will direct the work to be done based on the soon-to-be delivered report from the Economic Development Committee, which will become a part of this strategic plan.