



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023

Ratified September 17, 2018

The School of Communication's legacy is more than 150 years old, originating from the Forensics Union that was established two days after ISU's founding. Over its history, the School of Communication has built a tradition of excellence in teaching, research, and service. In particular, Illinois State University's School of Communication has established itself over the years as an exemplary organization in the institution and within the field and its disciplines:

- Leading scholarship from leading experts (see CIOS data).
- Excellence in learning in and out of classrooms, including internationally.
- Top-awards earned for undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Nationally recognized and highly awarded student organizations.
- Culture of collegiality among faculty and students.
- Most awards for teaching of any department or school in ISU since 2001.

The School of Communication takes strategic planning and execution seriously. We recognize that the School's strategic plan must align with that of the College and the University, to the extent that our plan must "roll up" to the higher-order plans and back again so show how all interrelate. To this end, we used the following graphic that demonstrates these dynamics among the strategic plans and served as a framework for our strategic planning for the next five years:

Unit	Vision	Mission	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
University (Draft 2018-2023) 	Illinois State University will remain a national leader and be recognized world-wide for educating high-achieving, motivated students who seek an individualized and transformative experience...	We at Illinois State University work as a diverse community of scholars with a commitment to fostering a small-college atmosphere with large-university opportunities. We promote the highest academic standards in our teaching, scholarship, public service, and the connections we build among them. We devote all of our resources and energies to creating the most supportive and productive community possible to serve the citizens of Illinois and beyond.	Enhance strength & stability	Foster innovation	Nurture diversity & inclusion	Enrich engagement
College of Arts & Sciences (Final 2016-2021) 	To foster an inclusive community of exceptional teacher-scholars who will provide students with one of the nation's premiere public educational experiences.	To serve as the intellectual heart of the University through our commitment to the teacher-scholar model which imparts knowledge from a broad spectrum of the arts and sciences while preparing independent and resilient students from culturally, linguistically, and geographically diverse backgrounds to meet the challenges of a global society.	Facilitate academic excellence	Enhance the communication & infrastructure supporting academic excellence	Diversify and enhance financial support for recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students	Share and promote our accomplishments in inclusive academic excellence, diversity, & social engagement
School of Communication 	Our vision is to obtain and maintain national recognition as one of the foremost centers of communication study in the discipline. (Governance Structure & Policies, p. 4)	To realize this vision, our mission is to enhance the societal and economic conditions by providing comprehensive undergraduate and graduate degree programs, research and creative works, and service initiatives that are at the leading edge of theory and translate into viable applications. We accomplish this mission within the parameters of Educating Illinois and through our core degree programs and operations.... (Governance Structure & Policies, p. 4)	Enact academic excellence	Revitalize operational practices, physical infrastructure, & technology for continued academic excellence	Expand financial support for greater academic excellence	Promote the School to constituents strategically

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

For this strategic plan, a team of 10 representatives from each of the School's personnel classifications, led by the associate executive director, planned and executed the process for this plan's development. All full-time members of the School of Communication were invited to participate in a half-day strategic planning event on February 9, 2018, held on campus.

Prior to the event, all School personnel were provided with and asked to review the following core documents: (a) the current version of the School's strategic plan, (b) the executive

summary for the School's *2015 Program Review*, and (c) the section of the *Program Review* that pertains to their principal area(s) of work in the School. During their pre-event preparation, everyone was asked to note their thoughts along the following lines and be ready to share them during the event:

- Whether something we are doing well in the *current* plan is worth continuing to do (with or without augmentation) in the revised plan.
- Whether something said in the *2015 Program Review* needs to be specifically or better stated in the new strategic plan.
- Whether something is missing and needs to be added into the new strategic plan.
- Whether something is no longer needed and should be phased out.
- Whether anything else is relevant.
- Then at the retreat, please share them

During the event, administrators, faculty, instructors, and administrative staff who attended discussed the day's goals and then enacted the following process:

- **Task:** Group sharing, brainstorming, and discussion of ways to achieve a given outcome for the School's strategic plan. Those ways may be current or future, general/conceptual or specific/tactical. Retreat attendees must have done their homework of (a) reading and thinking about selected *Program Review* documents, (b) reading and thinking about the School's previous strategic plan, and (c) assembling ideas about the School's future. Additionally, copies of ISU's latest draft strategic plan for 2018-2023 and CAS's approved strategic plan for 2016-2021 were available for all groups to use.
- **Groups:** Four groups (one for each of the plan's four outcomes) were created with roughly equal numbers of members and fair distribution of representatives of all operational areas.
- **Timing:** Each group convened for 15 minutes and addressed its designated COM plan outcome. A three- to five-minute transition period was used for people to move from one group to the next. Retreat attendees rotated through each group once, resulting in four group discussions per plan outcome. This way everyone was able to contribute to all four outcomes.
- **Recording:** Two people from the planning team were assigned per group—one or both of which recorded the group's ideas and added the name of each person who gave an idea. The group leaders were responsible for keeping the discussion on track and on task. The group leaders gave a summary of all group inputs after all discussion periods were completed.
- **Questions:** Using the previous version of COM's strategic plan, applying the results of the last Program Review, and thinking about the present and future of the School, the following questions were used to guide discussion:
  1. What goals under Strategic Focus X do you think (a) still apply or (b) should be deleted for the next five years?
  2. What goals (if any) do you think should be added to Strategic Focus X for the next five years?
  3. What actions listed under any goal for Strategic Focus X do you think (a) still apply or (b) should be deleted for the next five years?
  4. What actions ought to be added under any goal for Strategic Focus X for the next five years?
  5. Looking back over the whole of Strategic Focus X as we have addressed it in this session, how would we measure whether or not we fulfilled the goals listed?

6. Is there anything else we should address that pertains directly to this strategic context?
7. Follow-up questions that are specific to a group's task may be added as needed to spur ideas, clarify matters, and move the process along.

After the event, the planning team reviewed the input from the group discussions and refined the initial findings of principle areas of strategic focus that pertain to each strategic outcome. From this refined data set, an *initial draft* of the new strategic plan was prepared, reviewed, and commented on within the team. From this output a first *substantial draft* was prepared for and sent to all School personnel to review and comment. Feedback on this version was collected and applied to create a *final version* that was presented at the first all-School personnel meeting in August 2018. Voting to approve of the new strategic plan was held at the September 2018 all-School personnel meeting. This document is the *ratified version* from that meeting and is the culmination of this fully inclusive planning process. This strategic plan should be applied in tune with the School's governance document.

### **AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS**

To achieve our vision, fulfill our mission, and enact ISU's values, we in the School of Communication will work toward achieving goals in the following strategic focus areas, which parallel those in the College of Arts and Science's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Focus 1: Enact academic excellence.
- Strategic Focus 2: Revitalize operational practices, physical infrastructure, & technology for continued academic excellence.
- Strategic Focus 3: Expand financial support for greater academic excellence.
- Strategic Focus 4: Promote the School to constituents strategically.

The following sections address all of these strategic foci. The sections each present particular goals that pertain to each strategic focus. Under each goal is a list of recommended action items that the School plans to undertake; whereas, the lists present what promise to be the most valuable actions, but the lists are not exhaustive. Detailed data gathered from the strategic planning retreat should be used to identify or inspire other appropriate actions that would help to achieve any given goal(s) in a strategic focus.

<b>Strategic Focus 1: Enact academic excellence</b>
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**Goal 1.1:** Develop and maintain rigorous academic curricula.

- Identify ways to improve the evaluation of teaching and learning:
  - Determine and report on the validity and reliability of teaching evaluation instrument for face-to-face classes, with the aim of making appropriate improvements in the instrument and/or the process (e.g., allow students to administer; add peer observation).
  - Explore the development of a teaching evaluation instrument for online classes.
  - Investigate using external program reviewers from academia to evaluate the whole school and/or individual programs on a periodic basis.
- Consider standardizing content for high-demand and programmatically core courses offered in multiple sections (e.g., COM 297 and COM 329).
- Implement course-assessment plans and make improvements in course and curriculum content as appropriate.

- Establish greater awareness of areas of consistency and inconsistency in learning expectations at the undergraduate and the graduate levels.
- Pursue disciplinary and interdisciplinary curricular innovation in emerging areas where faculty strengths align with student and societal needs.
- Review and update planning processes to ensure the optimal delivery of majors, minors, and general education courses.
- Enhance the international content of curricular programs and grow student involvement in them, according to results of the OISP internationalization grant awarded in 2017.
- Fill academic lines in areas of greatest need and in anticipation of future personnel changes.

**Goal 1.2:** Enhance opportunities for co-curricular learning activities.

- Encourage faculty development of and participation in co-curricular activities.
- Grow student involvement in regional, national, and international co-curricular programs.
- Hold departmental and interdepartmental colloquia that encourage intra-School faculty and student participation.
- Increase support for academically oriented student organizations.
- Take advantage of opportunities in Goals 1.1, 1.3, and 1.5.

**Goal 1.3:** Enhance support for faculty research and creative activity.

- Work with RSP to better identify sources of external funding.
- Provide resources to support faculty research and creative activity (e.g., release time, training, graduate assistants, travel).
- Explore then promote opportunities for faculty exchanges, especially internationally.
- Provide opportunities for NTT and AP professional development in teaching, including professional travel, conference presentations, and research collaboration with faculty.

**Goal 1.4:** Enhance and encourage support for student research and creative activity.

- Fund student research and creative projects during the academic year and the summer.
- Fund (especially through external sources) student travel to conduct and present research and creative works.
- Develop collaborative student research teams.
- Enhance support for faculty supervision of student research.

**Goal 1.5:** Enhance support for professional development

- Empower students through career awareness and industry preparation.
- Develop a student recruitment program that focuses on high-achievers, reaches out to high schools, and includes faculty in the recruitment process.
- Establish a more formal mentoring program for faculty, staff, NTTs, and APs.
- Encourage collaboration in and share research-based practices for effective teaching and learning.
- Offer professional-development opportunities in the School, on campus, or through external organizations, especially teaching-specific professional development opportunities (e.g., SoTL, conferences, seminars).
- Identify and support (e.g., funding, release time) opportunities for faculty and staff to extend their knowledge base and experiences by working in industry, government, and nonprofit organizations.
- Explore the viability of a Center of Communication Excellence for alumni and community members in particular topic/practice areas.

**Strategic Focus 2**  
**Revitalize operational practices, physical infrastructure, & technology  
for continued academic excellence**

**Goal 2.1:** Conduct a thorough and actionable space audit, especially concerning:

- Classroom and lab spaces (needs to be updated and reconfigurable).
- Research space.
- Community-building/Socializing spaces.
- Updating WZND and TV-10 reception areas and workspaces.
- Small-group-meeting and test-taking rooms.
- Main office redesign for better utilization.

**Goal 2.2:** Establish a Facilities and Technology Committee to address all matters for space and technology utilization.

- Create a plan using results from the space audit.
- Communicate about our spaces' capabilities and availability.
- Secure additional funding to support physical expansions and upgrades across the School.
- Obtain approval to hire at least one full-time assistant for space and technology.

**Goal 2.3:** Implement distance-learning capabilities for all programs.

- Perform an audit about what technology and equipment is needed versus available in classrooms and faculty offices for distance learning.
- Leverage training programs for effective online course design and online instruction.

**Goal 2.4:** Converge technology support for all student media outlets.

- Employ common sales and financial-management system for all School media assets that accommodates their respective business models and yields more-thorough performance measurement and reporting.
- Determine whether and how to restructure and assign/share engineering and IT personnel among TV-10, WZND, and WGLT.

**Strategic Focus 3**  
**Expand financial support for greater academic excellence**

**Goal 3.1:** Consider ways for greater transparency about School financial matters.

- Explain the budgeting/funding process for the School within the larger contexts of the College and the University.
- Ensure that all program coordinators actually consult with their faculty about funding priorities as part of the annual budget planning process.
- Manage and develop revenue streams in support of academic programs.

**Goal 3.2:** Strengthen School-focused development program.

- Explore funding possibilities through corporate contributors (i.e., primarily financial contributions but also in-kind contributions) for School-overall and individual programs, projects, and needs.

- Develop and host specific fundraising or in-kind donation programs for targeted School needs (e.g., alumni apparel, advertising, alumni concierge program, monetary sponsorships, corporate naming rights, extracurricular foundations, ISU foundation accounts for specific projects, dinner and silent auction, Gladly We Give).
- Build participation in grant opportunities among faculty and students.
- Coordinate contract for services that benefit School and faculty, especially through the School's SMACC and CIC facilities.
- Inspire greater alumni tracking and engagement in support, from programs to infrastructure to scholarships.
- Cultivate more and better relationships with alumni and donors, especially those alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers, through a more systematic alumni relations program that should include RSOs and ISU alumni Services.
- Seek endowed chair of one or more School programs.
- Establish endowed student scholarships for one or more School majors.

<b>Strategic Focus 4</b> <b>Promote the School to constituents strategically</b>
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**Goal 4.1:** Institute a dedicated organizational function to promote the School among all constituents.

- Develop and enact an annual strategic communication plan under the associate executive director and staffed by student interns.
- Inform/Educate and support faculty about the process for promotion of news and achievements.
- Work with School development efforts on alumni communication.
- Consider hiring a full-time PR person to run this organizational function.

**Goal 4.2:** Promote the local, state, national, and international visibility of the School's programs, student successes, and faculty and staff achievements.

- Continue development and distribution of communications to the university and its internal and external stakeholders.
- Develop mechanisms for connecting community organizations to faculty and staff with the research and consulting expertise.
- Develop and offer programs featuring faculty experts to speak on, consult about, or solve problems for matters relevant to industry, government, nonprofit, and other arenas.
- Publish/produce messages from the School that address industry, government, nonprofit, and other societal problems.
- Improve utilization of communication channels (analog and digital) that spread the School's messages effectively among all target audiences.