University of South Carolina College of Information and Communications

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

February 19, 2020

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Dr. Tom Reichert, Dean
College of Information and Communications
University of South Carolina
800 Sumter Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Dear Dean Reichert:

The Berkeley Research Group, LLC, is pleased to present the completed 2020-25 College of Information and Communications Strategic Plan – a plan designed to drive and empower innovation within the college and help shape the future of information and communication in a digital world.

Over nine months, the college undertook an extensive effort, with our support as consultants and process facilitators, to develop a strategic plan for next five years. This effort was a collaborative and integrative undertaking designed to encourage development of a cohesive, coordinated and aligned direction across the institution. The process included surveys, interviews and focus groups with students, faculty, staff, alumni, university leaders and administrators at other universities, colleges and schools to benefit from their views and experience. The last strategic planning effort was also reviewed, as were other existing materials. The process also included market analysis.

At the end of the most recent spring semester, upon completion of the data collection phase, a workshop was held to initiate a conversation about the findings developed during the process and to start preliminary formulation of the major themes that would ultimately guide creation of the strategic priorities and objectives. Throughout this past summer and fall, a committee of faculty and staff, with our support, drafted the actual plan.

The resulting Strategic Plan undertakes a complete assessment of the current state of the college, its mission, vision and values, and its options for the future, establishing a set of strategic priorities and objectives. These strategic priorities and objectives are designed to make the most of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science, both as leaders in their respective fields and through their partnership with each other in those areas of mutual interest and concern regarding the generation of knowledge through data and information.

The Strategic Plan will drive a culture in which all faculty, staff and alumni address the changes the college needs to make in order to achieve the institution's greatest potential as embodied in its mission, vision and values. Execution of the plan will be a continuous process throughout which the college will monitor, review and update both those within the institution and across the broader university community on the progress being made. Progress will be evaluated through measurable objectives, key performance indicators and annual strategic reviews.

During our months of facilitating the process that has led to this plan, we have had the opportunity to observe the college at close range. Thanks to numerous conversations with faculty, staff, students, alumni and stakeholders, as well as the chance to participate in a number of strategic planning interactions such as the strategic planning workshops and the deliberations of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee,

we have identified issues and developed perspectives that, although outside the scope of the strategic planning process, are nevertheless of significance for the college.

With this is mind, in addition to submitting the completed Strategic Plan, we would make the following recommendations for your consideration.

- *Develop and execute a plan to increase enrollment*. Current college enrollment will not be sufficient to realize the vision and fulfill the mission that have been identified by the Strategic Plan. Securing the long-term future of the college – for reasons of impact, reputation and finance – requires increased enrollment in college programs. Several steps can help achieve this goal.

    o First, the college should change the name of the School of Library and Information Science to the School of Information.

    o Second, the college should adopt flexible scheduling within the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

    o Third, the college should significantly expand its online course offerings. This should involve more than just increasing the number of such courses, however. The college should also carefully consider and where appropriate adopt changes in teaching methodology that more effectively align with an online versus in-classroom learning environment.

    o Fourth, the foregoing changes, as well as any others the college may undertake, should be made part of strategic enrollment plan, with specific year-by-year targets for growth in enrollment.

- *Establish articulation agreements*. The college should increase its reach and impact by leveraging its resources through strategic partnerships both inside and outside the university. These could include:

    o Inside the university, more joint degree programs, where students combine a degree from the college with one from elsewhere in the university, completed in less total time than each degree individually would require;

    o Outside the university, collaborations with community colleges to allow students from those institutions to receive academic credit towards graduation from the college; and

    o Also outside the university, partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities offer another opportunity for collaboration that would extend the impact and influence of the college.

- *Complete an organizational redesign*. The college represents the joining together of two schools with long individual histories and discrete areas of interest and concentration. At the same time, bringing those two institutions together represents an opportunity to benefit from the synergies that could be realized – and to some degree are already happening – through deeper cooperation and collaboration. These increased benefits should be pursued through an organizational redesign that focuses on:

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- o Changes in organization structure that consolidate common administrative functions;

- o Organization positions designed to foster more partnering across the two schools;

- o Financial support for collaborative research; and

- o Development of collaborative courses spanning both schools.

- A*ppoint a senior leader to oversee strategic planning and institutional effectiveness.* It is a maxim that it is difficult – if not impossible – to change an organization while also running it. While we believe the Strategic Plan, thanks to the inclusive process by which it was developed, has broad support within the college, daily imperatives facing those who work at the college will make it challenging to maintain a consistent and effective focus on the priorities and objectives embodied in the plan. For that reason, one person should be appointed with primary responsibility to oversee institutional effectiveness and ensure accomplishment and measurement of the plan. It is essential that this person be seen as someone who facilitates, rather than directs, organizational change.

- *Create more international partnerships*. The world of data, information and knowledge has expanded electronically; thanks to this expansion, the opportunities for international partnerships have likewise increased. The college should look for and establish more international alliances, whether involving joint degrees, transferable credits, exchange programs, semesters abroad, collaborative research or jointly sponsored colloquia and other forums. Some of these partnerships may be enduring; others may be time- or purpose-limited. But such partnerships should be a regular and prominent feature of the college.

- *Design and carry out a Strategic Plan communications campaign*. Although the process by which the Strategic Plan was developed as highly inclusive, the fact remains that many with an interest in the college – including alumni, stakeholders and potential donors, as well as those outside the college but within the university – are not intimately aware of the plan or what it intends. The college should address this directly by:

  - o Developing and executing a "roadshow presentation" for alumni and corporate partners, to be completed within 120 days of the plan's adoption; and

  - o Developing and executing a similar presentation, tailored for delivery within the university, with presentations to be completed within 90 days of the plan's adoption.

- *Seek out new ways to increase alumni engagement*. A critical requirement for the sustained growth and success of the college is an active and committed alumni community. That engagement should be more broadly gauged than a focus just on financial support. The college should consider its alumni as partners in the educational mission and a resource that properly cultivated can leverage the resources of the college. Among the steps the college could take to more deeply engage alumni in the life and work of the school are:

  - o Expand the role of alumni as guest lecturers and adjuncts;

- Enroll alumni as mentors to current students;

- Create internship opportunities under alumni auspices;

- Recruit alumni as brand ambassadors for the college;

- Use alumni as recruiters and interviewers for potential students; and

- Provide opportunities for alumni to participate in topical forums, both in person on the Columbia campus and online.

- *Initiate an enhanced program for faculty and staff rewards and recognitions*. While financial compensation is always important, behavioral studies have shown that money alone has a poor track record in encouraging and maintaining sustained superior performance. While competitive market-based compensation is essential, it is no guarantee of exceptional performance. For that, the college should establish an explicit and robust program for reinforcing through recognition and reward those behaviors pinpointed as exceptional. Those forms of recognition and reward could include:

    - Recognition for superior teaching;

    - Financial support for collaborative research drawing on the faculty of both schools;

    - Support for membership and acceptance of leadership positions in professional organizations;

    - Recognition and where appropriate financial support for service to the profession or the community; and

    - Recognition for service on internal college committees and projects.

- *Redesign the website*. While the current college website is acceptable, other comparable institutions have websites that are more graphically engaging and compelling. While the website for the college must exist within the boundaries established for the university's online presence, there would still seem to be ways in which the college website could be made a greater asset. We would recommend engagement of a website design firm to undertake this task.

- *Adopt key performance indicators to promote greater accountability*. One proverb about organizations that has withstood the test of time is, "What gets measured, gets done." To ensure the greatest possible likelihood that the purposes of the plan are in fact achieved, it is essential that the college establish key performance indicators (KPIs) that promote accountability through objective measurable goals. By way of example, we would propose the following KPIs:

    - *Strategic Priority 01: Strengthen the academic community*

        - Objective 1 – Focus on students: increase students' opportunities for learning, both in the classroom and through experiential means; build diversity, equity and inclusion; and support students' career aspirations

- KPI: Career development and placement initiatives
- KPI: Number and access to courses
- KPI: Demographics of student body
- KPI: Progress of Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

- Objective 2 – Focus on faculty: Provide incentives for scholarship and creative activity, increase diversity and facilitate professional growth

  - KPI: Support for creative research and scholarship
  - KPI: Demographics of faculty
  - KPI: Opportunities for professional growth

- Objective 3 – Focus on staff: Increase involvement in decision making, increase diversity, provide incentives for creative activity and facilitate professional growth

  - KPI: Changes that increase involvement of staff in decision-making
  - KPI: Demographics of staff
  - KPI: Opportunities for professional growth

- Objective 4: Focus on alumni: Expand the alumni network and strengthen ties with more alumni through meaningful contact

  - KPI: Relationship building programs
  - KPI: Contact frequency
  - KPI: Growth of alumni network

- Objective 5: Focus on leadership: Build trust through clear and frequent communication

  - KPI: Initiatives to promote transparency in policies, practices and decision-making process
  - KPI: Timeliness of internal communications

o *Strategic Priority 02: Strengthen the college infrastructure*

- Objective 1 – Increase student enrollment and maintain or enhance student academic and demographic profile

  - KPI: Student enrollment and retention
  - KPI: Development of professional training courses

- Objective 2 – Increase funding efforts to support the college's programs and initiatives

  - KPI: Measure research dollars
  - KPI: Progress of Associate Dean of Research

- KPI: Number and quality of incentive programs

- Objective 3 – Organizational design

    - KPI: Annual/regular organizational efficiency studies with Nathan Strong's team
    - KPI: Publish/share new organizational chart
    - KPI: Publish/share roles and responsibilities
    - KPI: Publish/share college handbook

- Objective 4 – Joint degrees

    - KPI: Creation of joint degrees

- *Strategic Priority 03: Establish the college as an acknowledged leader in data, media, and society*

    - Objective 1 – Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with other educational areas of the University of South Carolina

        - KPI: Collaborations with other units at the university

    - Objective 2 – Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with external organizations and individuals, especially to assist communities, physical or virtual, in developing the information and data tools that they may need to help democracy flourish in a digital world

        - KPI: Track collaborations with external organizations and individuals

    - Objective 3 – Expand use of and access to labs and other technical resources students in both SLIS and SJMC need to excel in academics and research

        - KPI: Lab activity and collaborations

    - Objective 4 – Strengthen internal and external communications outreach

        - KPI: Communications plan and activity

    - Objective 5 – Increase number of international partnerships and initiatives

        - KPI: International initiatives and partnerships

We believe that action on each of these recommendations, as well as on the priorities and objectives established by the Strategic Plan, will create a sound foundation for a future in which the college realizes more completely its potential and positions itself for sustained success on realizing its vision and achieving the mission the Strategic Plan has so unequivocally established.

Very truly yours,

Faisal Amin
Director, Higher Education

Vanessa Charlot
Consultant

LETTER FROM THE DEAN – February 19, 2020

Dear CIC faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners and friends:

Ninety-six years ago, in a bedroom of a house where the McKissick Museum now stands, a group of aspiring newspaper reporters took the first class in the University of South Carolina's School of Journalism. The school's sole professor – who by default was also the dean – set up his office in the closet.

Fifty years later, the university launched its school for librarians; 30 years after that, in 2002, the two programs were brought together into what is now the College of Information and Communications. As new technologies have changed media and information practices and research, both schools have updated and added majors and degrees and reimagined their futures.

I am pleased to present our new five-year strategic plan, authored by all of us, that builds upon our storied history but positions us strongly for the future as we prepare to enter our second century.

The plan emphasizes learning and collaboration to educate, inspire, lead and serve. And it lays the groundwork for us to strengthen our academic community, enhance our infrastructure, increase our visibility and grow our reputation for excellence.

This is a transformational time. With more than 2,200 students, 100 faculty and staff, and nearly 20,000 living alumni, the college is larger and stronger than ever.

And while this plan maps our future as a college, it also recognizes the unique role each school will play in getting us there. The college is here to support the schools so they can continue to excel. As our vision says:

> *Together, we strive to be a community that seeks to drive and empower innovation to shape the future of information and communication in a digital world.*

These aren't just words to us. They speak to who we are and who we hope to be.

Heartfelt thanks to every one of you for your feedback, input, comments and questions – especially those difficult ones that challenged our thinking and stretched our horizons. You have helped us make sure our plan represents not just who we are, but who we hope to be. Here's to many years of continuing to work together to make this our reality.

Tom Reichert
Dean

INTRODUCTON

Our new strategic plan has three goals:

- Enhance the ability of the college to support the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science in accomplishing their individual goals and unique purposes.

- Map out a clear path to foster even stronger collaboration between the two schools and make the most of opportunities created where their common interests in data, information, knowledge, and communications, as well as their scholarly research, teaching, and creative vision, intersect.

- Position the college as a nationally acknowledged leader in addressing a fundamental requirement for democracy: the ability of people to understand and wisely use data and information and the knowledge data and information can create.

The case for a new strategic plan. In 2002, the University of South Carolina joined the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and the College of Library and Information Science to establish what is now the College of Information and Communications. The university's goal was "to better distinguish [the college] as the umbrella for the schools and reflect the evolving information/communications landscape." The college's primary mission was "to educate the state's diverse citizens and to position South Carolina as a leader among states in an information-oriented society through teaching, research and creative activity, and service."

Seventeen years later, information and communication have changed drastically. In 2002, Google was just five years old. Then came Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat. Apple introduced the iPhone in 2007; Android phones appeared in 2008. Traditional news organizations have found themselves scrambling to transform to meet the demands of an increasingly technological environment. Online news outlets like Politico, Breitbart, and Axios have appeared. The emergence of the Internet of Things has increased both the volume of and access to data, while also creating significant, culture-shifting debates on issues such as privacy and national security.

The college is also a different place. It is under new leadership. The two schools are now in buildings barely 100 yards apart. Forty percent of faculty across the college are new within the past two years, and among them are many with shared interests, passions, and methodologies. The scholarly interests of the two schools, though still rooted in their own disciplines, priorities, and academic perspectives, have more opportunities to work together than ever before.

Beyond the campus, employers more and more value graduates with skills that intersect the two schools' expertise. And what employers want, students will seek; a recent analysis of comparable institutions made the point that demand among students is strongest for new degrees that combine information and communication.
To prosper, the college must take all of these factors into account, ensuring it is competitive with other institutions that have made significant progress toward greater structural, curricular, and research collaboration between information and communication programs.

The college has embraced the need to refresh its mission, vision, and values and to redefine its path. It acknowledges that a rapidly evolving world of information demands refreshed thinking about how best

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to meet the challenges that have emerged in those 17 years and those that will increasingly emerge. It is time for a deeper understanding and agreement among all the college's stakeholders of its continuing importance, how it provides value, and how it prospers. Equally if not more important, the collaboration between the two schools needs to be more fully realized. For all these reasons, the college has created this new strategic plan.

The Case for the college. The case for the college is grounded in an assumption and a belief.

The *assumption* is that of all the ways in which people seek to govern themselves, democracy has proved itself the best of options. For democracy to function, data, information, knowledge and communications are essential.

But the issues surrounding those are becoming more complex and numerous almost daily. What will be the trusted sources of data? Who will have the right or responsibility to craft that data into information? How is the quality and accuracy of knowledge measured? As questions proliferate, they become more resistant to easy answers. Yet in today's world — where data increases exponentially, where information is suspect, where knowledge is less and less a thing held in common — the threat to democracy is immediate and real. Finding answers and solutions has never been more important.

The College of Information and Communications exists to seek those answers and solutions, to understand, explore and illuminate data, information, knowledge and communications as fundamental building blocks of democracy. This is the core of its mission, vision, and values.

The case for the two schools in one college. For the college to fulfill its mission, realize its vision, and act on its values, it must encompass the full universe of data, information, knowledge and communications – from the collection, cataloging and housing of data to the translation of that data into information and communications, to its ultimate destination as knowledge.

The School of Library and Information Science and the School of Journalism and Mass Communications both engage with all aspects of data, information, knowledge, and communications, but they bring different perspectives, analytical tools, and organizing precepts. Along with the important work both schools do within their respective spheres of inquiry and practice, the potential of their working together where their expertise, research, and teaching overlap presents an unequaled opportunity. Together, the schools embrace both the breadth and depth of the universe of data, information, knowledge, and communications. The result is a college that offers, through active, creative, and disciplined collaboration, a comprehensive, nuanced and comprehensive explanation of a complex world.

There are also practical benefits from allying the two schools in a single college:

- The college provides the broader strategic vision, which this plan will refresh and renew. It helps the schools find their place within the larger university structure to maximum advantage and keeps them abreast of overall trends in higher education. This includes a more integrated relationship with university administration and other colleges on campus. With the college working at this higher level, opportunities and threats can be identified earlier and the information shared and acted on before they become needlessly difficult challenges.

- Collaboration under the college banner also promotes a clear understanding of how to support both schools so they can best position themselves relative to their peer and aspirational

institutions. While never losing sight of the schools' distinct identities, the college can also scan the environment to discern where relationships and resources can best be leveraged to common benefit.

- The college can better deploy financial resources to address the greatest strategic needs. The college's help with budgeting and other resource allocation decisions means unnecessary duplication can be minimized and synergies can be identified and executed to stretch financial resources.

- The college can provide support services that free faculty of the two schools to focus on teaching, research, and service. The college is better able to provide those services with minimal duplication, leaving more money for the work of the faculty and the education of students.

The collaborative work of the two schools under the auspices of the college is anchored in the indispensable value of helping people better understand data, information, knowledge, and communications so they can make better decisions for themselves, their organizations and their communities. This value is not just academic, important as that is. It also facilitates shared interests as varied as health, social justice, literacy, diversity, advocacy, and privacy.

These collaborations reach well beyond college and university boundaries to the larger world. This strategic plan better equips the college to deal effectively with the practical issues that too often vanquish the best-intended programs: issues of funding, academic structure, internal and external communication, and the setting and measurement of objective goals designed to meet strategic priorities. In that, it supports the schools individually and their collaborations, as well as their work with the rest of the university and the world beyond campus.

Conclusion. This plan is based on a belief that a healthy democracy requires the accessibility of data, the tools and expertise to understand and work with data in the creation of information and knowledge, and the importance of communications to sharing that information and knowledge. It is anchored in the invaluable benefit of having two schools building upon their individual contributions while also engaging in close collaboration with each other. And it embraces the need for practical, clearly stated, objective, and measurable steps to achieve the college's mission. This plan makes the college vision a reality while living its shared values every day.

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Mission

The College of Information and Communications supports the purpose of the University of South Carolina by transforming the lives of the people of South Carolina, the nation and the world through teaching, research, creative activity, and community engagement. We strive to produce graduates and knowledge that strengthen global and diverse communities and promote democratic participation in an information society.

Vision

A community that seeks to drive and empower innovation to shape the future of information and communication in a digital world.

Values

At the University of South Carolina College of Information and Communications, we fulfill our mission and achieve our vision through our:

- Devotion to a high ethical standard
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Respect for universal access and freedom of speech
- Belief in a mission of service that engages and empowers communities
- Embrace of an innovative approach to all we do

In acting on these beliefs, we unceasingly seek to be:

- Visionary, enterprising and agile
- Honest, trusted and civically minded
- Passionate, dedicated, personal and collaborative

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

A robust strategic plan is essential for every organization's health. To know where we want to go, how to get there and why it maters, we must have a vision and common values, priorities and, objectives. But we must also execute that plan. Specific objectives are needed for each priority, and each objective must have clearly defined tasks with an owner, a deadline, and a way to measure progress. This is how the College of Information and Communications will take its strategic plan from concept to reality.

For a strategic plan to succeed, both the plan and the roadmap must acknowledge and respond in practical fashion to environmental realities. For the college, one of the most immediate realities is its relationship to the university. While the college has freedom to set its own course, that must be done in the larger university context. This is especially important as the university is coming under new leadership.

The university's current strategic plan, Focus Carolina 2023, has four priorities: educate leaders and thinkers of tomorrow; support a world-class faculty; spur innovation, creative expression, and community engagement; and achieve recognized institutional excellence. Our strategic plan embraces all four.

For example, educating the leaders and thinkers of tomorrow is a central goal of our priority to strengthen the academic community. The college's first objective to support that priority requires focusing on students, providing more opportunities for classroom and experiential learning, building diversity, ensuring equity, increasing inclusion and supporting careers. Similarly, the college embraces the university goal of supporting a world-class faculty with its objectives of incentivizing scholarship and creative activity, increasing diversity, and facilitating professional growth. Other university priorities find support across all the college's strategic priorities and objectives. The goal of organizational excellence, for example, underlies all three of the college's strategic priorities and finds expression in a number of supporting objectives and tasks. Strengthening the academic community, strengthening the college infrastructure, and establishing a more visible and acknowledged institutional presence all will contribute not only to the mission of the college, but also to that of the university.

In sum, the strategic plan is engineered for success. Its series of tasks, with their clear accountabilities, deadlines and measures of success, create a practical plan of action to implement its priorities and objectives. And the plan aligns almost point-by-point with the university's strategic plan, further increasing its chances of success.

Strategic Priority/Objective
Strategic Priority 01: Strengthen the academic community
• *Objective 01.01:* Focus on students: increase students' opportunities for learning, both in the classroom and through experiential means; build diversity, equity and inclusion; and support students' career aspirations
• *Objective 01.02*: Focus on faculty: Provide incentives for scholarship and creative activity, increase diversity and facilitate professional growth
• *Objective 01.03*: Focus on staff: Increase involvement in decision making, increase diversity, provide incentives for creative activity and facilitate professional growth
• *Objective 01.04*: Focus on alumni: Expand the alumni network and strengthen ties with more alumni through meaningful contact
• *Objective 01.05*: Focus on leadership: Build trust through clear and frequent communication
Strategic Priority 02: Strengthen the college infrastructure
• *Objective 02.01*: Increase student enrollment and maintain or enhance student academic and demographic profile
• *Objective 02.02*: Increase funding efforts to support the college's programs and initiatives
• *Objective 02.03*: Clarify and continuously reinforce the college organizational design
• *Objective 02.04*: Establish and promote joint degrees
Strategic Priority 03: Establish the college as a an acknowledged leader in data, media and society
• *Objective 03.01*: Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with other educational areas of the University of South Carolina
• *Objective 03.02*: Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with external organizations and individuals, especially to assist communities, physical or virtual, in developing the information and data tools they may need to help democracy flourish in a digital world
• *Objective 03.03*: Expand use of and access to labs and other technical resources students in both SLIS and SJMC need to excel in academics and research
• *Objective 03.04*: Strengthen internal and external communication and outreach
• *Objective 03.05*: Increase number of international partnerships and initiatives

Strategic Priority 01: Strengthen academic community

Objective 01.01	Focus on students: increase students' opportunities for learning, both in the classroom and through experiential means; build diversity, equity and inclusion; and support students' career aspirations			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
01.01.01	Increase resources and activities for career development and placement	AD SS	1	
01.01.02	Increase number of and access to courses	AD AA	1	
01.01.03	Increase number of and access to experiential learning opportunities	AD AA	2	
01.01.04	Increase student body diversity to reflect the state's communities	AD DEI	4	
01.01.05	Appoint an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to oversee and execute relevant curricular matters and development	Dean	1	
01.01.06	Set and maintain explicit and aggressive standards regarding retention and time to graduation	AD AA	2	

Objective 01.02	Focus on faculty: Provide incentives for scholarship and creative activity, increase diversity and facilitate professional growth			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
01.02.01	Enhance support for creative research and scholarship	AD R	2	
01.02.02	Increase faculty diversity to better reflect the student body and the community	AD DEI	4	
01.02.03	Provide, encourage and facilitate opportunities for professional growth	DIR	4	

Objective 01.03	Focus on staff: Increase involvement in decision making, increase diversity, provide incentives for creative activity and facilitate professional growth			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
01.03.01	Increase staff involvement in decision-making	AD AF	2	
01.03.02	Increase staff diversity to better reflect the student body and the community	AD DEI	4	
01.3.03	Provide, encourage and facilitate opportunities for professional growth	AD AF	3	

Objective 01.04	Focus on alumni: Expand the alumni network and strengthen ties with more alumni through meaningful contact			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
01.04.01	Develop and execute task-specific relationship-building programs	Alum	2	
01.04.02	Create a multi-directional alumni network and increase contact frequency	Alum	3	

Objective 01.05	Focus on leadership: Build trust through clear and frequent communication			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
01.05.01	Increase transparency in policies, practices and decision-making processes	Dean	2	
01.05.02	Increase quality of timely internal communications	Dean	1	

Strategic Priority 02:   Strengthen the college infrastructure

Objective 02.01   Increase student enrollment and maintain or enhance student academic and demographic profile

Task	Description	Owner	Year	Status
02.01.01	Develop and execute a plan to increase SLIS undergraduate enrollment	DIR	1	
02.01.02	Develop and execute a plan to increase SJMC graduate enrollment	DIR	2	
02.01.03	Make a decision on instituting SJMC online and/or hybrid graduate degree offerings	DIR	2	
02.01.04	Create professional training and executive education, including experimental offerings	DSP	3	
02.01.05	Develop and execute a plan to increase UofSC non-CIC student enrollment	AD AA	2	

Objective 02.02   Increase funding efforts to support the college's programs and initiatives

Task	Description	Owner	Year	Status
02.02.01	Position college to take advantage of the university's new budget model	DIR	2	
02.02.02	Develop a plan to increase external funding for research initiatives	AD R	2	
02.02.03	Appoint an Associate Dean of Research to execute and oversee development of an external funding plan	AD R	1	
02.02.04	Develop and execute a plan to enhance and incentivize CIC interdisciplinary research	AD R	3	
02.02.05	Build internal awareness of college scholarship, research and creative activity	AD R	2	
02.02.06	Create a plan for the development office with clear deliverables and milestones	DOD	1	

Objective 02.03   Clarify and continuously reinforce the college organizational design

Task	Description	Owner	Year	Status
02.03.01	Clarify and communicate a clear college organizational chart	AD AF	1	
02.03.02	Clarify and communicate organizational roles and responsibilities	AD AF	1	
02.03.03	Create a college handbook	AD AF	1	

Objective 02.04   Establish and promote joint degrees

Task	Description	Owner	Year	Status
02.04.01	Create and promote degrees, certificates and minors in Data and Strategic Communications	AD AA	3	
02.04.02	Make a decision on instituting a joint Ph.D. degree	AD AA	2	

Strategic Priority 03:	Establish the college as an acknowledged leader in data, media and society			

Objective 03.01	Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with other educational areas of the University of South Carolina			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
03.01.01	Collaborate with the College of Engineering and Computing on AI	AD R	2	
03.01.02	Continue to collaborate with Public Health and Education	AD R	2	
03.01.03	Develop at least two additional cross-university collaborations on data-related matters	AD R	4	
03.01.04	Create a plan to promote university use of the Social Media Insights Lab	DSP	1	
03.01.05	Pursue university-wide cross-disciplinary grant funding initiatives	AD R	2	

Objective 03.02	Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with external organizations and individuals, especially to assist communities, physical or virtual, in developing the information and data tools they may need to help democracy flourish in a digital world			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
03.02.01	Create at least two collaborations with external media organizations	DSP	3	
03.02.02	Create at least two information-related initiatives with external businesses	DIR	3	
03.02.03	Develop advisory councils and fellows programs at the school/college levels	DIR	2	

Objective 03.03	Expand use of and access to labs and other technical resources students in both SLIS and SJMC need to excel in academics and research.			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year**	**Status**
03.03.01	Expand use of and access to the Social Media Insights Lab	DSP	2	
03.03.02	Complete, clearly define the purpose of and promote use of the new research lab	AD R	2	

Objective 03.04	Strengthen internal and external communications and outreach			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year/Qtr**	**Status**
03.04.01	Create and execute a plan to increase external visibility of the college on campus and beyond	Comms	2	
03.04.02	Take specific steps to further refine and promote a unique college brand	Comms	2	
03.04.03	Create a plan to showcase faculty scholarship and creative initiatives	AD R	2	
03.04.04	Sponsor events at professional and academic meetings/conferences	DIR	2	

Objective 03.05	Increase number of international partnerships and initiatives			
Task	**Description**	**Owner**	**Year/Qtr**	**Status**
03.05.01	Finalize dual master's degree program and other programs with National Cheng Chi University in Taiwan	AD AA	1	
03.05.02	Take specific steps to further develop international partnerships and initiatives	AD AA	4	

APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Strategic Planning Advisory Council Members

- Rachel Acosta
- Ken Campbell
- Shirley Staples Carter
- Erik Collins
- Rebekah Friedman
- Karen Gavigan
- Andrea Hickerson
- Kevin Hull
- Rushondra James
- Dick Kawooya
- Sarah Keeling
- Sei-Hill Kim

- Van Kornegay
- David Lankes
- Brytnee Leigh
- Elise Lewis
- Eshan Mohammadi
- Tara Mortenson
- Leigh Moscowitz
- Tom Reichert
- Christine Shelek
- Laura Smith
- Karson Terry
- Jeff Williams

Appendix II: Organizational Chart

College of Information and Communications - Organizational Chart
January 2020

College of Information & Communications
Dean
Tom Reichert

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Kim Thompson

Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Shirley Staples Carter

Asst. Dean for Admin & Finance
Brylnee Leigh

HR Manager & Assistant to the Dean
Rachel Rolli

Associate Dean for Research
Brooke McKeever

Communications Manager
Rebekah Friedman

Webmaster
Patty Hall

Visual Communications Coordinator
Michaela Baker

Senior Director of Development
Elaine Arnold

Asst. Dir. of Development
Karson Terry

Alumni & Donor Relations Manager

Director of Special Projects
Randy Covington

Grant Support and Administration
Terri Moorer

Social Media Insights Lab Manager
Kaitlyn Park

Director of Scholastic Journalism
Leslie Dennis

Office Coordinator
CJ Faulk

Grad. Student Services Mgr.
Camea Cato

Sr. Info Res Consult
Jill Chappell–Fail

Info Res Consult II
Pierre d'Autel

Info Res Consult I
Jeff Salter

Info Res Consult I
Lewis Zeigler

Assistant Dean for Student Services
Rushondra James

Mgr. of Student Recruitment
George Fetner

Career Services Mgr.
Shiritsha Mudunuri

Student Services Mgr.
Rachel Acosta

1st Year Academic Advisor
Dora Rosser

1st Year Academic Advisor
Demarcus Heller

Admin Assistant
Debi Wallace

Senior Advisor
Art Farfowe

Academic Advisor
Chinell Singletary

Academic Advisor
Brittany Stubblefield

School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Dir. & Assoc. Dean
Andrea Hickerson

Assistant to the Director
Lauren Bullard

Admin. Asst.
Asia Singleton

Greenhouse Studio Operations Manager
Britt Hogg

Broadcast/Engineer Maintenance Tech
Daniel Stewart

Faculty

Assoc. Director of Graduate Studies
Sei Hill Kim

MMC Coordinator
Holly Overton

Advertising Sequence Head
Jeff Williams
Journalism Sequence Head
Laura Smith
Mass Comm Sequence Head
Ken Campbell
PR Sequence Head
Leigh Moscowitz
Vis Comm Sequence Head
Tara Mortenson

School of Library & Info Science
Dir. & Assoc. Dean
David Lankes

Faculty

BSIS Lead
Elise Lewis

Student Services Mgr.
Laura Thorp

Student Services Coordinator
Laura Kohl

Student Services Coordinator
Shana Watson

Administrative Coordinator
Elexus Moody

Distance Ed Coord
Madonna Stoehr

Director of SCCCL
Christine Shelek

Program Coordinator
Liz Hartnett

Coordinator CRE
Valerie Byrd Fort

Appendix III: Current State Assessment

Overview

This Current State Assessment, an important initial step in preparation of the strategic plan, was the product of four months of surveys, interviews, workshops and focus groups involving all stakeholders relevant to the College of Information and Communications: students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners. Both the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science were well-represented throughout this process. The data collected, as reported in this assessment, are rich in detail; they provided more than ample raw material for a robust strategic plan. Those data made clear the overarching strategic imperatives the college needed to address:

- Confirm that the current organizational structure – two distinct schools within one college – will remain as presently constituted.

- Define a mission that embraced both schools, leaving them free to continue work in their respective areas of interest, but wherever possible also holding both accountable to promote collaboration and cooperation in research, teaching and service.

- Define that mission to position the college uniquely among similar institutions, giving it a distinct identity and clear differentiation.

- Decide what areas of academic research and teaching will be the college's hallmark.

- Address the subordinate issues that surfaced during this process so that the college's mission, the tasks assigned to the two schools, the need to create a unique college identity, and the imperative that the college establish a reputation for excellence in specific areas of research and teaching are all supported.

The Current State Assessment suggested starting points for responding to these imperatives:

- The data suggested there is genuine value in allying but not combining the two schools.

- There was a clear belief among all of the stakeholder groups, reinforced by other information, that while the two schools may be responsible for different tasks, they can and should serve a common mission as well.

- There was a strong sense that the common mission revolves around information: research and teaching about its collection, validation, evaluation, communication and use in order to facilitate thoughtful and objective decisions, whether by individuals, businesses, communities,

governments or nations. This initial formulation provided a useful starting point for the next step in the process.

The College: Background

In 2002, the University of South Carolina created the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies by placing the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and the College of Library and Information Science within the same organizational structure as schools. In 2015, the college was renamed the College of Information and Communications; the university's goal was "to better distinguish [the college] as the umbrella for the schools and reflect the evolving information/communications landscape."

The College of Information and Communications is home to two nationally recognized schools providing outstanding education, research and service. This puts South Carolina among only a few universities to combine its communications and information science programs: two rapidly evolving – and converging – fields united by a shared belief that information accessibility and integrity is the cornerstone of a strong community. The college is bigger than it has ever been, with approximately 1,800 undergraduates, 400 graduate students and more than 100 faculty and staff. The School of Journalism and Mass Communications encompasses 97 percent of undergraduates affiliated with the college. The School of Library and Information Science, by way of contrast, has 87 percent of the graduate students at the college. Across the entire college, 70 percent of students are female, and 86 percent are white or Caucasian.

New assets, available to faculty and students in both schools, include the Social Media Insights Lab and funding for a new research lab that among other things will focus on the cutting-edge area of biometric measurement — both designed to study issues related to data, media and their impact on society.

The college's organizational structure includes centralized undergraduate and distributed graduate advising, student services, communications, alumni relations and development. Student services include advising, recruiting and availability of a professional career manager. The two schools explicitly share the mission of ensuring individuals and organizations get the information they need to make sound decisions for themselves and those who rely on their work. The college plans to develop new degrees in data, media and society.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications, created in 1923, is one of the oldest journalism and mass communications schools in the United States. Since 2015, the school has occupied a renovated, state-of-the-art building in the heart of the university's Columbia campus. Embracing the model of a traditional comprehensive mass communications program, the school teaches communications from traditional techniques to newer digital methodologies. Through the course of their education,

undergraduate and graduate students are exposed to communications scholars and practicing professionals. In addition to classroom settings, students work in laboratories and studios. As a unit of a Carnegie Foundation-designated doctoral university with "very high research activity," school faculty and students engage in a wide range of research projects funded by diverse sources totaling in about $150,000. Funders include the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of State, and Health Science South Carolina.

The school supports six majors: advertising, journalism, broadcast journalism, mass communications, public relations and visual communications. The school offers three levels of degrees: Bachelor of Arts (BA); a Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Mass Communication (MMC); and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Requirements for master's degrees include successful completion of coursework, satisfactory performance on a comprehensive examination and, in some cases, preparation of a thesis. Doctoral degrees require successful completion of coursework, satisfactory performance on a comprehensive examination, and writing and successful defense of a dissertation. Part-time study is available. Financial support is provided through scholarships, loans, and teaching and research assistantships.

The student body consists of approximately 1,700 undergraduate students and about 50 graduate students. The student population is approximately 70 percent female; it is also more than 86 percent white or Caucasian and about 14 percent black or African American, with smaller percentages of Hispanic/Latino and other underrepresented groups. There are almost 50 total faculty, all of whom are full-time.

The School of Library and Information Science

The School of Library and Information Science, established in 1970, has long been highly regarded as a professional program for school and teacher librarians and in recent years has added programs for undergraduates and doctoral candidates. In addition, the school has significantly expanded its academic and outreach programs in response to the rapidly expanding and evolving information landscape. A leader in distributed learning with classes both on campus and online, the school also champions literacy across the state through the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy and Cocky's Reading Express™. Originally exclusive to children, the program is now expanding, taking on issues such as adult literacy, information literacy in college students and financial literacy.

As with the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, the School of Library and Information Science provides faculty and staff the platform for engaging in a broad range of research projects funded by diverse sources. In 2018, faculty and students participated in external research and development grants totaling more than $1 million over three years. Among those funders were the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Science Foundation and the University of South Carolina Office of the Vice President for Research. The school's research and service to the profession has also been recognized with some of the highest accolades afforded to such institutions.

The school is nationally ranked and has recently become a member of iSchools, a consortium of schools based on the principle that expertise in all forms of information is required for progress in science, business, education and culture. Schools in the consortium share a fundamental interest in the relationships among information, people and technology.

The school offers three degrees: Bachelor of Science in Information Science (BSIS), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). It also offers two certificate programs involving five degrees, as well as a minor in informatics. Requirements for the master's degree include successful completion of coursework, plus preparation of an end-of-program portfolio. Doctoral degrees require successful completion of coursework, as well as satisfactory performance on a comprehensive examination and writing and successful defense of a dissertation. Most recently the school awarded 164 master's degrees and nine other advanced degrees. The majority of the master's degrees were earned through distance learning. Financial support is provided through fellowships, research assistantships, scholarships, loans and graduate assistantships.

The student body includes approximately 300 graduate students. The student population is predominantly female – more than 80 percent; the student body is more than 80 percent White or Caucasian and approximately six percent Black or African American, with smaller percentages of Hispanic/Latino other groups represented. There are 16 total faculty. Of those, nine are female and seven are male. The school also draws on the particular skills and talents of adjunct faculty as appropriate.

Strategic Plan Foundations I: Overview

Seldom is a strategic plan developed *de novo*, devoid of context, consideration of history, or recognition of current or anticipated realities. The current state of the college presented a series of predicates that were taken into account in developing the new strategic plan. They began with the last strategic planning effort and included an understanding of how other institutions similarly situated address issues from organization structure to degree and course offerings and areas of research focus, what best practices exist from which the college could draw inspiration, what practical realities the college faced thanks to its inclusion within a larger university community, and, perhaps most important, what had been learned through the extensive outreach process of surveys, focus groups, interviews, informal conversations and a strategic planning workshop that the college undertook in the first six months of 2019.

Strategic Plan Foundations II: The 2003 Strategic Plan

The 2003 Strategic Plan: *An Overview.* Following the 2002 joining of the colleges of Journalism and Mass Communications and Library and Information Science as schools to create the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies – now the College of Information and Communications – the college wrote a strategic plan. This plan laid out mission and vision statements, as well as a set of values. These statements remain in effect today:

<div align="center">***Mission***</div>

The primary mission of the College of Information and Communications, comprising the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science, is to educate the state' s diverse citizens and to position South Carolina as a leader among states in an information-oriented society through teaching, research and creative activity, and service.

- **Teaching**

  The college is committed to the integration of information literacy skills into the education of the university's diverse student population and to the preparation of leaders and professionals in the fields of journalism and mass communications and library and information science through excellence in teaching and curricular development.

- **Research**

  The college seeks to create unique centers of inquiry and research that will broaden society's knowledge of our disciplines, raise our profile, and attract the finest teachers, the keenest researchers, and the brightest students to the college, thus improving the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

- **Service**

  The college is committed to using its expertise to aid in the development of the state and its citizens by increasing the ability to find, transmit, analyze, and create the information services and products that will encourage economic growth and improve the quality of life.

The plan also set out two lists of near-term strategic priorities, one for each school. For the school of Journalism and Mass Communications, the priorities were:

- Select and hire a new permanent dean;

- Create NewsPlex, "a prototype multiple-media micro-newsroom for demonstration, research, and training in next-generation news-handling tools and techniques";

- Develop a plan for managing our enrollment with a view toward reconciling student numbers with available resources;

- Increase external funding;

- In anticipation of our move to the renovated and expanded Petigru building, reexamine curricular and space utilization factors with a view toward making the most of the opportunities provided by a new location;

- Expand the regional and national visibility of the college;

Berkeley Research Group

- Remain a leader in mass communications education by maintaining a tradition of high-quality teaching;

- Reexamine faculty and staff workloads and assignments;

- Increase the number and dollar value of grant proposals submitted, as well as the number of faculty participating in grant proposals;

- Increase internal financial support for both doctoral and master's students;

- Expand our online offerings; and

- [Explore] additional distance education offerings.

For the School of Library and Information Science, the strategic priorities were:

- Continue to develop SLIS's entrepreneurial focus;

- Explore interdisciplinary opportunities with other units of the university;

- Meet the fund-raising goal set for the college by the USC Capital Campaign;

- Continue to monitor student outcomes;

- Continue to improve teaching and to review the curriculum;

- Emphasize research and scholarship;

- Emphasize advocacy and service to the profession;

- Recruit faculty, staff and students from under-represented populations;

- Evaluate and enhance technology in SLIS;

- Strengthen professional interaction within the state; and

- Begin preparation for American Library Association Committee on Accreditation Reaccreditation Visit in 2002.

Berkeley Research Group

The plan also included five-year strategic goals for the new college:

- Develop an emphasis in information studies within the existing Ph.D. program in mass communications;

- Develop and implement an undergraduate degree program in information/media/communications studies;

- Monitor quality of teaching;

- Continuously review the curriculum;

- Establish and meet CMCIS Advancement goals;

- Diversify the college's entrepreneurial focus;

- Recruit faculty, staff and students from underrepresented populations;

- Emphasize research and scholarship; and

- Emphasize advocacy and service to the profession.

These five-year strategic priorities were supported by an initial action plan as well as a proposed set of Assessment Indicators.

The 2003 Strategic Plan: *Implications for the New Strategic Plan.* In considering the implications of the 2003 Strategic Plan for the current strategic planning initiative, several points were salient:

- Neither the mission, vision, nor values had been revisited since 2003. While they might require no modification, the decision to leave them as they were had to be consciously taken.

- The individual strategic plans for the two schools and the plan for the college contained far more priorities than found in most plans. The danger of so many priorities is that it becomes difficult for the organization to focus its energy and resources; by embracing more, the institution may in fact accomplish less. This was clearly the case for the college; many of the same priorities set out in 2003 could still have been candidates for inclusion in 2019.

- A number of priorities were more tactical than strategic; at most, they would more often be given the status of an objective. For example, to "[m]onitor the quality of teaching" would not appear

to be a strategic task for the college; there was no connection between that activity and how it could further the college's goals.

- Insufficient consideration was given to how to make the two schools work together and make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Given this, it should be no surprise that the same question – how to make the most of two schools under one roof – remained the most salient challenge in the 2019 strategic planning process. The two schools had to come to understand the opportunities and rewards available in working together.

- Although there were two items under the five-year strategic goals that could be construed as intended to foster closer collaboration – an emphasis on information studies in the Ph.D. program, as opposed to two separate Ph.D. programs, and developing and implementing an undergraduate degree in information, media and communications – no real progress had been achieved on either action.

- Outside of any strategic planning process or plan, the college had recognized the essential need for a robust approach to building a strong and effective partnership between the schools. Specifically, the college had tasked the dean to do the following:

  o Develop a vision and mission shared by the disciplines of the two schools, building on that shared purpose while continuing to recognize each school's distinctive qualities, purposes and goals.

  o Promote collaboration and integration of teaching and research in areas that are closely aligned across the college and schools.

  o Develop a clear brand identity for the college as a whole while also establishing and maintaining strong brand identities for the two schools and the disciplines they represent.

  o Lead continued development and implementation of a dynamic vision for the future direction of the college.

Strategic Plan Foundations III: Institutions Similarly Organized

The college is not the only institution, much less the first, to face the challenge of combining schools such as those of Journalism and Mass Communications and Library and Information Science. Studying other institutions proved a source of ideas and guidance on how to generate maximum benefit from bringing the two schools together.

- *University of Alabama College of Communication and Information Science*. The college offers five undergraduate majors: advertising, communication studies, creative media, news media and

public relations. At the graduate level, students may choose among advertising and public relations, book arts, communication studies, journalism and library and information studies. The college also offers a single doctoral program with multiple tracks for information sciences and communications. Integration of mass communications and information science is achieved primarily at the doctoral level through the multidisciplinary approach that characterizes the program. The college is weighing establishment of an undergraduate major in library and information sciences. A centralized approach to research funding has resulted in more than $3.9 million in grants. The college has some 3,100 students.

- *University of Tennessee College of Communication and Information*. Formed in 2003, the college comprises four schools that work in close and effective collaboration: Advertising and Public Relations, Communication Studies, Information Sciences and Journalism and Electronic Media. Each school has its own webpage and offers different student events and opportunities. There are 1,500 undergraduates, 250 graduates and 70 tenured or tenure-track faculty. Undergraduates can major in communication and information, as well as in information studies and technology. Students completing their Master of Science in Communication and Information can choose to concentrate on advertising, communication studies, journalism and electronic media, or public relations. Doctoral students receive a Doctor of Philosophy in Communication and Information – an integrated program that serves as a strong focus for collaboration – and can choose to concentrate in advertising, communication studies, information science, journalism, and electronic media, or public relations. The college also offers a study abroad program and executive education and has a director of international studies.

- *University of Kentucky College of Communication and Information*. The college includes a Department of Communication, a School of Journalism and Media, a Department of Integrated Strategic Communication, a School of Information Science, and a graduate communication program. Majors offered include communication, information communication technology, integrated strategic communication, journalism, and media arts and studies (formerly known as telecommunications). The master's program differentiates between the two colleges, offering a Master of Arts in Communication and a Master of Science and Arts in Library Science. The information technology major merges the two schools. A student may choose between two concentrations: ICT commercialization or technology management. A minor in information studies is also offered. The CI Co Lab is a dynamic cross-disciplinary center that fosters technological innovation through collaboration among students, faculty and staff. The Health Literacy Colloquium has the goal of increasing knowledge about basic health issues. The college also offers study abroad programs. Total enrollment is 2,200, of whom 1,800 are undergraduates and the rest graduate students.

- *Florida State University College of Communication & Information.* The College of Communication & Information is the newest college at Florida State, formed in 2009 by bringing together but not merging the schools of Communication, Communication Science, and Disorders and Information.

The three schools place strong emphasis on cooperation and collaboration, with joint hiring of staff, joint degree programs and joint centers. The college's education, research and service facilities include research centers and institutes, state-of-the-art technology supporting a distributed academic community, the Goldstein College Library, Seminole Productions, the Schendel Speech and Hearing Clinic, and the FSU college radio station. Digital youth and literacy are areas of research common across the college. The college has also entered into a number of partnerships with community businesses and nonprofit organizations that provide experiential learning and service opportunities through internship and outreach programs. The college has also become one of the international leaders in the iSchool movement, which explores the leveraging of relationships among people, information, communication and technology. The college offers a new joint BA and is considering merging its three doctoral programs into a unitary degree. External funding for library and information science is strong, while external financial resources for communication are growing, but more slowly.

- *Kent State College of Communication and Information*. The college, with 2,200 undergraduate students, is made up of five schools: Communication Studies, Digital Sciences, Information, Journalism and Mass Communication, and Visual Communication Design. The School of Digital Sciences is the newest organizational unit; it is both collaborative and growing. The iSchool has some 600 graduate students. In its curriculum, the college mixes digital sciences, visual communication design, journalism and mass communication, information science and communication studies. Although the organizational structure is centralized in areas such as communications and marketing, funding, student services, technology support and course scheduling, the various curricula do not exhibit a great degree of overlap. Even at the doctoral level, the subjects are kept relatively separate, with doctoral candidates required to choose between information and communication as an area of focus. The college has some 70 full-time faculty. It also has some 250 international students from 30 countries, and 18 countries host courses from the college.

- *Rutgers University School of Communication and Information*. The Rutgers University School of Communication and Information on the flagship New Brunswick campus was created in 1982 through the merger of the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, the School of Communication Studies and the Department of Urban Journalism. Today the school comprises three departments: Communication, Journalism and Media Studies, and Library and Information Science. The school has several centers and institutes focusing on areas such as school libraries, organizational development and leadership and communication related to health issues. Faculty members – 66 full-time and 150 part-time – are scholars recognized nationally and internationally for excellence and innovation in contemporary communication, information, and media-related research and teaching. The undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs also evidence separation and distinction among the schools. There are 1,900 undergraduate majors, approximately 400 undergraduate minors, 490 graduate students and 100 doctoral students. The school takes an interdisciplinary research approach in several areas: health and wellness; social

media interaction and collaborative design; global media, community and democracy; and organizations, policy and leadership. There is one joint teaching department, one joint research department, one joint dean of programs, an interdisciplinary Ph.D., and incentives for collaboration on work such as publications, conference presentations, seminars and research grants.

Rutgers administration stress the importance of valuing the individual identity within the school while also placing strong emphasis on the need for and benefits of collaboration. There is one associate dean for research, an organizational arrangement that faculty members have supported. There are presentations, publications and research grants. There is also a seminar series that bids to bring in high-level speakers by leveraging the joint qualifications of the component units. An interdisciplinary doctoral program further incentivizes collaborations. In addition, the current dean appointed one associate dean of programs to provide a view across all three departments. The school also went through an exercise to remove "Library" from the name of the Information Studies department.

- *Penn State Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications*. The Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications at Penn State includes four departments – Advertising and Public Relations, Film-Video and Media Studies, Journalism, and Telecommunications – offering five undergraduate majors. Graduate students may pursue a master's degree in media studies or a Ph.D. program in mass communications, with several distinct areas of emphasis. The college also offers an online college with multiple degree programs and intern partnerships with major news and media networks such as Disney, HBO, Showtime, AMC and the Cartoon Network. The college is also notable for the strength of its alumni network, according to the 2019 *Princeton Review*. Total fall 2018 enrollment was 2,670; student retention and graduation rates are slightly higher for the college than the Penn State University Park campus as a whole. The college's most recent strategic plan is notable for its numerous goals, which express the intent of the college to:

    o Contribute to a culture of ethics and integrity at Penn State and provide ethical leadership for the professions;

    o Sustain and enhance the reputation of the college for prioritizing student success in all of its endeavors;

    o Expand the reach of the college to new populations and in new settings, with high-quality programs and services;

    o Impact the professions and society through research, creative activity, and public scholarship;

    o Steward college resources, relationships, and investments;

- o Reflect and promote an appreciation of diversity in college classrooms and among students, faculty and staff; and

- o Expand the international activity of the college, interacting with and making an impact on the global community.

Strategic Plan Foundations IV: The Best Practices of Peer and Aspirational Peer Institutions

Both the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science exist within a robust larger national community of similar institutions. This community provided a rich source of best practices to consider for possible adoption by the college. Both peer and aspirational institutions for each school were identified as sources for such best practices.

The School of Library and Information Science

Institutions identified as peers for the School of Library and Information Science were Florida State University, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Aspirational peers were the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana, the University of Washington, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Texas at Austin. All of these offered valuable perspectives on the wide range of options available to the school in assessing its current state and future path.

- *Florida State University College of Communication & Information.* As noted above, this is the newest college at Florida State. The college is the product of bringing together but not merging three schools. The resulting institution has placed a premium on cross-school collaboration. In addition, the college has reached out to partner with the community and nonprofit organizations and has established a leadership role in the iSchools movement.

- *University of Tennessee College of Communication and Information.* The college has some 70 tenured or tenure-track faculty members and a current enrollment of approximately 1,500 students – 1,250 undergraduates and 250 graduate students. The college emphasizes the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with access to information and the exercise of expression in a democratic society. The college has four schools: Advertising and Public Relations, Communication Studies, Information Sciences, and Journalism and Electronic Media. The undergraduate program consists of advertising, journalism and electronic media, and public relations, as well as information sciences, all of which are appropriately accredited. The degrees offered are Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies; Bachelor of Science in Advertising, Journalism and Electronic Media, or Public Relations; Master of Science in Communication and Information or Information Sciences; and a Ph.D. in Communication and Information.

- *University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee School of Information*. It seeks to be a leading and collaborative school, advancing knowledge and preparing students from diverse backgrounds to be successful information professionals within their communities. The school extends opportunities to students living outside the Milwaukee area through online courses; in addition, the school has extended its reach by establishing links with associations and institutions worldwide. The school offers a range of programs, degrees and certifications, starting with an undergraduate major and minor in information science & technology, through doctoral studies in information studies. The focus throughout is consistently on Information; there is no corresponding program for journalism or mass communication.

- *University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana*. Among the university's notable traits are a commitment to research; an emphasis on engagement, networking and community; and diversity initiatives that help to create a consequently diverse culture.

- *University of Washington*. It has introduced a variety of new programs, encouraged the emergence of a collaborative community and equipped itself to address change effectively.

- *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*. This program is characterized by international outreach, an emphasis on career development and strong digital curation that attracts many students.

- *University of Texas at Austin*. Students can create a program tailored to their particular interests, and they can build an online portfolio and choose a project that can range from volunteer work to writing a thesis. They also have access to electives that help build expertise in their area of study.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Institutions identified as peers to the School of Journalism and Mass Communications were the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (also considered an aspirational peer), the University of Georgia, the University of Alabama and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Aspirational peers are Florida State University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Missouri at Columbia. As was the case with the School of Library and Information Science, each of these peer and aspirational peer institutions offered valuable perspectives on the wide range of options available to the school in assessing its current state and future path.

- *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*. The university has some of the nation's top research facilities exploring the relationship between technology and journalism, offers networking trips to San Francisco and documentary multimedia storytelling in Medellin, and has an excellent career center that helps students step-by-step on their college journey as well as on their transition into the professional world.

- *University of Georgia*. The strategic planning process was used to work through an organization redesign and reorganization. The process required many meetings, a great deal of feedback and recurring votes. A prime recommendation is that the dean of the college focus a good deal of time and attention on building personal relationships across the institution through such techniques as informal walk-arounds. Such actions undercut what seems to be a natural tendency at many institutions of higher education for faculty to adopt the most negative interpretation of administration actions.

- *University of Alabama College of Communications and Information Sciences.* This is a comprehensive multidisciplinary college in which teaching, research and service are focused on shared creation, presentation, dissemination, retrieval, collection, analysis and evaluation of messages and meanings in a variety of settings. The college has adopted five strategic priorities: cultivate high-quality academic programs; enhance the research culture; improve the internal and external communities; provide a learning environment that promotes diversity, equity, leadership and service; and strengthen the national and international profile of the college. The college offers undergraduate majors in advertising, communication studies, creative media, news media, and public relations; master's programs in advertising and public relations, book arts, communication studies, journalism, and library and information sciences; and a doctoral program based on an interdisciplinary research approach to the study of communication and information sciences.

- *University of Tennessee College of Communication and Information*. As noted above, the college's four schools include Advertising and Public Relations, Communication Studies and Journalism, and Electronic Media. Each school has its own identity and offers different student events and opportunities. There are also undergraduate majors in communication and technology. Students completing their Master of Science in Communication and Information can choose to concentrate on advertising, communication studies, journalism and electronic media, or public relations. Doctoral students receive a Doctor of Philosophy in Communication and Information and can choose to concentrate in advertising, communication studies, information science, journalism and electronic media, or public relations.

- *Florida State University College of Communication & Information.* As noted previously, this is the newest college at Florida State. The three schools that were joined to create the college speak to its areas of concentration: Communication, Communication Science and Disorders, and Information. Collaboration among the schools is a college hallmark, as are external partnerships and experiential learning opportunities.

- *Pennsylvania State University*. Students can choose a track to follow, from digital and print to broadcast and photojournalism. The tracks are designed to prepare students to become writers,

reporters, editors and photographers. Students can participate in an award-winning newscast, and the career services center hosts three communications-focused internship fairs each year.

- *University of Missouri at Columbia School of Journalism*. The school, founded in 1908 as the world's first journalism school, is well known for its exclusive focus on journalism. The university also owns the Columbia Missourian newspaper and KOMU-TV, a commercial station. Both are central to the school's pedagogy, the "Missouri Method," as are an NPR-affiliated radio station and Vox, a monthly community magazine. Students also have access to renewable scholarships and are offered over 30 areas of focus from which to choose. The school places strong emphasis on experiential learning, educating students for careers in journalism, advertising and other media fields by combining a strong liberal arts education with hands-on training in professional media.

The Best Practices Reviews: *Implications for the New Strategic Plan.*

While the implications of the peer institutions reviews would be woven into the larger work of the strategic planning project that also included surveys, focus groups, individual interviews and the Strategic Planning Workshop, as well as the informally gathered information that is the natural result of on-site work by the consultants, several initial points were worth noting in setting the context for the plan itself. Each did not equally apply to both schools; what differed was how much weight a particular point might be given, not whether the point should be considered at all.

- No one institution tries to be all things to all people. Each institution has developed particular points of strength, conferring a unique character and personality to the school. *A successful school has explicitly determined how it sees itself and how it wants to be seen and has focused its energy on those things that make the aspirational character a reality.*

- The colleges and schools exhibiting the most progressive leadership often create new joint degrees and areas of collaborative research. Even where they are not joining or merging legacy departments and schools into a unitary structure, they are aggressively pursuing creative opportunities for combinations that draw on the strengths of the individual units to create new programs, degrees and research. Increasingly, these collaborative initiatives are proving the most fertile ground for growth. *The issue where colleges or schools have been created by bringing together preexisting organizational units is not how closely to bind those units together structurally, but how to draw on best of each unit to create new program, degree and research initiatives that can fuel and sustain growth.*

- Every institution focuses on creative curriculum that provides students maximum choice. *The more flexibility a school provides its students in plotting the course of their education, the more attractive that school becomes to prospective candidates.*

- Each school addresses, though in different ways, the need for experiential education. Some provide opportunities within the school; others partner with external entities. Those opportunities may include study abroad. *Successful schools do not limit their educational program to the classroom, but partner it with hands-on experience, whether within the school, through external relationships, offering study abroad or providing internships.*

- All the institutions are grappling with a rapidly evolving technological environment, but it is not so clear that they are equally focused on the increasingly complex issues surrounding both the aggregation and dissemination of data. *There is a significant first-mover and competitive advantage for a college that embraces both library and information science and journalism and mass communications by determining how best to both use and teach emerging technologies while also deciding how to embrace the complex ethical and philosophical issues that the rapidly expanding stream of data – true, false and murky – is generating.*

- Without exception, the institutions each provide significant career services support to their students. Some have a highly active career services office; some add to that a degree of faculty mentoring; many work at building an external network of contacts that provide avenues for employment. *For many, if not the majority, of students at a professional institution, the hallmark of a successful education will be whether the process ends in meaningful and gainful employment in the field of their choice, and part of the purpose of every education institution in the professions must be to work in different ways to help make that happen.*

Strategic Plan Foundations V: The University Context

The College of Information and Communications exists within the larger framework of the University of South Carolina. It could not fully understand its current state (and plot an effective strategic plan) without fully understanding the university context.

Three key things provided the starting point for this contextual assessment:

- A major changing of the guard was underway at the university level. A new president had been appointed, and there would soon be a new provost and chief financial officer. The appointment of a new permanent communications officer was also pending. While all of these changes were taking place outside the college, the college would be affected by them. While these changes in leadership should not drive any aspect of the strategic plan, they needed to remain a point of awareness in its formulation.

- The university budget model was moving from a centralized to an incentive-based allocation. The college would be challenged to generate more revenue from credit-hour instruction, externally funded research and graduate student enrollment. At the same time, the university was committed to the two schools. They would not disappear, nor would they be consolidated into a

single organization. They would maintain their separate identities, even as they would be required to acknowledge they existed within the college and as such shared responsibility for making the most of the organizational arrangement.

- Several data points emerged from conversations with university stakeholders, including several vice provosts and deans of other university schools and colleges, during preliminary research for the strategic plan:

    o While many of those interviewed expressed a strong desire to learn about, understand and collaborate with the college, there was also a clear lack of knowledge about the college, its work and the opportunities for collaboration.

    o Some of the stakeholders interviewed did not have a strong sense that college faculty are heavily invested in funded research; not hearing much about faculty research successes at the college, some have been led to speculate that the college is weak in this area.

    o No strong understanding was expressed among those interviewed as to what differentiates the college and makes it distinctive from and more competitive with other schools and colleges within its areas of academic discipline.

    o Overall, the sentiments expressed were generally supportive but were not supported by specific knowledge that would generate active support for the college and its work.

The University Context: *Implications for the new strategic plan.* The contextual realities for the college as part of the larger university community presented unavoidable implications for the new strategic plan. For example:

- The change in the university budget model would challenge the college to maintain financial sustainability through increased credit-hour instruction, more externally funded research and larger graduate student enrollment. This meant the plan would have to take into consideration those steps most likely to achieve those things: increased credit-hour instruction through teaching more non-majors, increasing externally funded research through more scholarly collaborations between faculty of the two schools, and larger graduate student enrollment through new and innovative degrees and more convenient degree delivery. The college would need to actively encourage faculty to create more online courses; this would require larger grants as incentives to engage in this time-consuming task.

- The college can look to other institutions for inspiration and ideas. For example, the School of Journalism and New Media at Ole Miss has achieved purposeful growth from 500 to 1,700 students in eight years. The resulting additional revenue has been used to increase faculty, enhance technology, improve facilities and provide annual raises, all without making core classes

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significantly larger. In offering a new hybrid master's degree, the school has targeted to grow enrollment in strategic communications from 50 to 150.

- The idea was not to copy what other schools have done but to find ideas for how to accomplish clearly delineated goals. These might include meeting the challenge of the university's new budgeting model while maintaining student body quality, generating faculty salary support, providing more research funding and affording better support for graduate students and strategic priorities. Even more important, these actions should be taken as part of a larger effort to make the college an even more effective product of the joining of the two schools. This meant enhancing mutual understanding between the schools while maintaining their separate identities, finding more areas of meaningful collaborations whether in course development or research partnerships, looking for efficiencies at the staff and support levels that help control costs while not harming the schools' individuality, and determining the most effective college-wide administrative structure.

- The college should pay more attention to its place within the university and do more to make its case for the value of the college within the larger institution. Opportunities for collaborations across the university, both on campus and beyond, should be actively pursued. In addition, the college should undertake a program of presentations to other schools and colleges across the university to explain the work of the college, underscore its accomplishments, and lay the groundwork for further discussions on opportunities for cooperation and collaboration in areas of research, teaching, certifications, degree offerings, and continuing and professional education.

Strategic Plan Foundations VI: The State of the College - The Perspective from Within

While the college faced significant challenges, its students, faculty and staff had significantly positive attitudes about it. The information that follows was gleaned from data developed through some 14 focus groups, almost 500 responses to surveys, and 20 one-on-one interviews. Among the key findings:

- *From students*:

    o *Overall attitudes.* Some 93 percent of students surveyed felt fortunate to be attending the college and believed they are getting a good education in their selected major. Among the same survey sample, 23 percent expressed the desire to see some changes made, but still were happy overall. Only 3 percent of the students surveyed expressed the willingness to transfer if the opportunity arose.

    o *Reasons for choosing the college.* Among the top reasons student cited for attending the college were, in declining order of importance, future employment opportunities, the reputation of the college, the quality of faculty, general curriculum, family legacy, diversity and scholarship. What was seen as reasonable tuition was also a factor.

o *Favorable aspects of the college.* Among those things students liked: the faculty, The Carolina Agency, the access they enjoy to equipment, what they saw as the availability of superior technology, the trips the college offers, the quality of advising, and their fellow students. Paralleling these attitudes, some 78 percent of students said they also were satisfied with their college experiences outside the classroom.

o *Least favorable aspects of the college.* Among the things about which students were negative: the registration process, the lack of hands-on experiential learning earlier in the curriculum, the limits on class choices and frustration with oversubscribed classes, the pressing need to keep up with industry practice, the difficulty in securing access to laboratories to work on projects, the uneven quality of instruction, and the need for more assistance from the college on internships and job placement.

o *College strengths and areas for improvement.* Among the college's strengths were the quality of facilities, the overall South Carolina environment, the quality of the faculty, and the experiential learning opportunities. But students wanted more focus on even more experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, capstone opportunities and service learning; more college help in providing employment opportunities; and course offerings with greater relevance to the likely career paths students will experience. Students suggested strengthening course offerings in social media, analytics, career-building, digital media, software training, and training in search engine optimization. Students also underscored their belief that their college experience is impeded by what they regard as unproductive bureaucracy and dysfunctions within Student Services.

Some student concerns that appeared particular to a school in many cases actually reached across both schools. Students in the School of Library and Information Science felt there was a lack of professional development opportunities aligned with the concept of information science. They questioned why, if the field is intended to be people-oriented, professional development opportunities were primarily limited to those students who wanted to code. This concern could be considered a subset of a larger one that reaches across both schools: whether students are being trained appropriately for the professional world they will enter upon graduation. A similar issue – alignment of the college with the world of work – was raised by students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. They saw a need for faculty who are better informed regarding industry trends. They regarded tenure as encouraging retention of faculty who are not equipped to help students prepare for the realities of the contemporary workplace. And all students – whichever their school – found academic and career advising, the registration process and access to technological resources, lacking.

o *Strategic perspective.* The foregoing responses suggested a series of potential tactical steps the college could consider during the strategic planning process to enhance the student experience. At the same time, students also offered perspectives that led to larger strategic considerations.

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The most important of these perspectives was summarized in the comment by one student: "Data science is the future, and hopefully the college will put more emphasis on this in its programs as we move forward." In short, students saw data and technology as something for which the college could and should be known.

These student perspectives suggested two overarching implications for the strategic plan:

- o Consider including some tactical steps in the plan, perhaps under the overall strategic goal of improving the student experience or, in the alternative, aligning the student experience more closely with the professional world and work into which students will graduate.

- o Consider a common theme for the college's mission and vision that could reach across both schools given the student focus on the importance of data science and technology. It also offers a potential differentiator for the college that, if effectively pursued, could provide a significant competitive advantage.

- *From faculty*:

- o *Overall attitudes.* Some 88 percent of faculty surveyed reported positive attitudes regarding their affiliations with the college. Almost all faculty found the college a good place to work; of those surveyed, just 9 percent indicated there were things about the college that made it a less than ideal work environment, while just 3 percent expressed a level of dissatisfaction high enough that they would consider an opportunity elsewhere if offered. Overall, these were highly positive numbers, paralleling those reported by students.

- o *College strengths.* Among the college qualities noted as strengths were, in declining order of frequency of mention, the caliber of faculty colleagues, the students, the friendly and supportive work environment, the facilities, the breadth and depth of course offerings, and the flexibility and independence faculty enjoy.

- o *College challenges.* Perceived challenges were, in declining order of frequency of mention, the existence of two schools within one college, the level of diversity within the student body, and the presence of "office politics" indicative of a lack of cohesion, sense of community, and an unclear future. Compensation was also seen by some as an issue. Faculty also wanted to see better graduate student funding; they likewise cited the need for awards for excellence in teaching and research. A broader concern was the need to overcome barriers to collaboration on curriculum and research, many of those being caused by a mutual lack of understanding. One proposed solution: creation of a research symposium.

Faculty also had other items they deemed worthy of consideration, including diversity of both the faculty and the student body, the physical condition of Davis College, the need for greater faculty

diversity, and more personnel assistance, including support from graduate students. Faculty also expressed a desire to see opportunities to engage in scholarship that might run beyond currently accepted boundaries of what constitutes an appropriate scholarship focus. Perhaps most important, faculty want the college to make a deliberate decision to become recognized as a leading authority in one or more particular areas. Those suggested included equity of access to information, effective use of information, data as an empowerment tool for individual contributions to society, creative leadership and data and digital communications, the creation of information, and social media analysis.

Some faculty also expressed the need for more rigor in standards for student learning and accountability. They also advocated that the college do more with cutting-edge technology, perhaps even bringing on board a technologist to help faculty learn how to more effectively use technology in the classroom as part of better preparing students for work in technology-rich organizations. Faculty also saw a need for resources devoted to an expanding curriculum more closely aligned with the students' workplace needs and future employers' expectations.

o *Reasons for being at the college*. Surveyed faculty cited, in declining frequency of importance, the quality of faculty colleagues, the reputation of the schools and of the university, the emphasis on quality teaching, the quality of support staff, the overall compensation package and research opportunities.

o *The future.* Many faculty saw an opportunity for the college to establish itself at the forefront of data and media convergence, not just embracing all things related to data and emerging technologies, but also equipping students as future professionals to better deal with both. This would require, in the view of many, acquiring faculty with the needed expertise. Faculty on the whole also believed in the value of paying more attention to shared governance, as well as seeing the two schools working more closely together as the key to achieving institutional excellence. While there was a minority faculty view that disagreed with this assessment, it was just a minority. Most faculty wanted to see collaborative grants for teaching and research, cross-listed courses, joint meetings and networking events, students taking classes in both schools, joint degrees ,and more committees with memberships and portfolios that reach across the college. Faculty acknowledged that progress has been made on some issues but saw the need for much more to be done.

o *The challenge of change*. Most faculty acknowledged the need for change; indeed, they saw it as inevitable. But many also believed a perceived lack of transparency and communication about changes created tension and a lack of trust among faculty about the intent of that change. They sought clarity on the purpose and direction of the college. Faculty also saw a need for constancy of purpose; the perception of many was that the college is easily distracted by "new and shiny things" rather than focusing on critical basics such as class sizes, overloaded teaching schedules, competitive compensation and advancement opportunities for non-tenure track faculty. Likewise,

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there was also the desire for greater clarity over the roles of the two schools, not just in relation to each other, but also in their respective financial contributions. There was also an underlying assumption – in fact incorrect – that while the official characterization is that of the two schools as equals, there is a significant imbalance in the relationship due to the larger financial contribution made by the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. This inaccurate understanding of the college's financial realities made the need for greater transparency even more clear.

For strategic planning purposes, faculty issues to be considered were how to foster collaboration on research, how to allow the schools to retain their respective identities while co-located in one college, what could be done to increase funding opportunities, and what steps should be taken to create a better organizational structure. Faculty members themselves suggested the following steps: increased recognition for quality teaching and research, cross-enrollment, collaborative grants, greater transparency, better funding, and equity in teaching loads.

There was, however, one overarching issue that had to be squarely addressed in the strategic planning process. While most faculty saw the need for shared governance and closer working relationships across the college and between the schools, there was, as noted above, a minority who disagree. The two views could not continue to contend if the college were to progress. The issue needed to be resolved, and that resolution had to serve as a foundation stone of the strategic plan.

- *From staff*:

  o *High satisfaction.* Some 94 percent of surveyed staff found the college a good place to work. While 9 percent indicated dissatisfaction with aspects of the college and a smaller percentage said they had a "tough time" at their job, staff responses overall indicated a high level of satisfaction with the work environment. Among the reasons staff gave for their positive assessments: the quality of their colleagues, the student body, a positive work environment in which they are not micromanaged, management flexibility and a belief that their contributions are valued.

  o *College strengths*. Staff responded, in declining order of frequency of mention, the faculty and fellow staff members, the students, a relaxing environment and the flexibility they perceive in operations. As additional strengths, staff also noted the facilities and available technology.

  o *College least favorable aspects*. Staff cited, in declining order of mention, those faculty members who do not plan well or respect their staff, a lack of communication, and the belief that staff do not always feel they have been heard or their views truly respected. In addition, staff members volunteered frustration over not always understanding how their work supports the larger goals and direction of the college. Staff members also mentioned their belief that more staff meetings would be beneficial, the need for more recognition and rewards, better compensation, resistance among some to change, improved internal communication, greater opportunities for

advancement, and more clarity in respective roles and responsibilities. While 80 percent of staff interviewed felt their work is valued, there was also significant support for more staff integration into decision-making processes and greater emphasis on the need for crossover cooperation and collaboration. Looking outside their specific areas of responsibility, staff also expressed concern regarding what they saw as a student body that exhibits insufficient diversity.

For strategic planning purposes, two interrelated learnings were to be drawn from the staff views:

o Many relatively small-scale steps could be taken that would further strengthen positive staff attitudes. These could include college leadership enhancing transparency – both the reality and perception of it, greater research collaboration, engagement with the Columbia community through service projects, more effective deployment of technology, and the development of cross-curricular course offerings. Staff themselves encouraged consideration of how to better provide feedback and training opportunities for staff, a more conscious effort to integrate staff into more college activities, development of creative ways to reward staff, and more recognition of staff for work done well.

o There was a perception prevalent among staff that the college would benefit from a more pronounced commitment to cooperation and collaboration across the institution and its constituent components.

Two approaches could be taken in crafting the strategic plan. One was tactical: addressing the items individually, as to-dos on a checklist. The other was strategic: looking for ways of addressing the first list of specific concerns to respond to the second point regarding the need for greater cooperation and collaboration. The first approach might enhance staff satisfaction to some degree, but the second would address both points in a way to strengthen bonds and reduce unnecessary barriers across the college.

- *From alumni and partners*:

  o *A moderately strong connection to the college*. Some 39 percent of alumni surveyed regarded their affiliation with the college to be an integral part of their professional life. However, 34 percent said the college played an interesting but not integral role in their professional lives, and 27 percent said the college had only a minor role, or no role at all, in their professional life.

  Many alumni and partners said they wanted to hear more from the college about the work being done. For example, a quarterly newsletter could be a simple tactic to address this sentiment. Among the things they wanted to hear about were more clarity about how the college is meeting the demand for data, information and communication in an increasingly complex world; how the approach of the college to that challenge differs from and is superior to that of other institutions; how the college is changing in response to the transformations taking place in the industries

where its graduates will work; and what sort of jobs students are getting after graduation. There was also a desire to see greater connection and synergy between the two schools, a direct consequence of the belief that the affiliation uniquely positions the college as a whole to address the increasingly difficult tests being posed by the avalanche of data, the veracity of that information flow, the multiple means of communication and the validity of those paths of communication.

○ *Benefits of college affiliation*. Among the benefits of maintaining an affiliation with the college, in declining order of frequency of mention, were the college community and the resulting network, quality professors, alumni support and the knowledge and skills gained.

○ *Peer institutions.* Alumni and partners cited as peer institutions the University of Georgia, the University of Florida, the University of Tennessee, the University of Missouri and the University of North Carolina. Among the reasons were reputation, resources, facilities and course offerings.

○ *Priority needs*. Among things cited as vital to the college's future were a pressing need to build awareness and reputation, creating more internship experiences as essential preparation for entry into the workforce, hiring additional professionally oriented faculty, preparing students to be fully prepared to hit the ground running in their professions after graduation, and securing more faculty with national academic and professional reputations. They can set the research and teaching pace, attract ever-stronger students, bring in research dollars, help develop a singular institutional perspective that differentiates and elevates the college, and further enhance the reputation of the college as a first-class teaching and research institution that produces uniquely well-qualified professionals.

Other recommendations included leveraging social media and analytics as an area of study; improving the preparation of students for a digital, data-oriented workplace; and taking a first-mover advantage approach to teaching and research. Other proposals included maximizing The Carolina Agency, creating a social media lab, focusing more on data analytics and doing more to ensure that students are prepared to read, analyze and interpret data.

For strategic planning purposes, the resulting issues from alumni and partners to be considered included how to enhance the reputation of the schools individually and the college collectively, increase experiential learning opportunities, enhance the breadth and depth of course offerings, strengthen alumni relations, and improve facilities. To enhance the reputation of the schools and the college, alumni proposed specialization in information and communications, mandating internships early as part of graduation requirements, continuing the acquisition of reputable faculty, continuing to reach out to alumni with the goal of building a strong network band of those loyal to the college, and seeking out ways to highlight and communicate student success, both while at the college and after graduation.

Most important, however, alumni and partners urged the college to embrace the core strategic question: How should the college respond to what is seen as a unique opportunity to connect information science and mass communications? There was an apparent belief the college had already started down this path but that there was a considerable distance to go before reaching the ultimate destination. To complete that journey, in the view of alumni, the college needed to ensure maximum effective collaboration between the two schools – that data science students learn to better communicate data, while mass communications students come to better understand data and how its proper use makes their messaging more powerful.

In summary

When considering all of the data secured during the surveys, focus groups and interviews, several clear themes emerged regarding where the college was and where it needed to go.

- *Identity.* The college needed to create a unitary vision of how the two schools relate to each other and how their presence within one college could be made to work to the advantage of each.

- *Internal communications.* The college needed to establish and adhere to communications practices that ensure transparency and minimize misinformation and lack of clarity regarding decisions that are made, goals that are pursued, expectations that are set and results that are achieved.

- *Branding and marketing.* The college needed to create a clear, unified and compelling vision communicated externally for the benefit of the reputation of the two schools and the college as a whole.

- *Facilities.* The college need to take into account every aspect of the physical environment, from classrooms and collaborative spaces to technology, to provide an environment that encourages the optimum educational experience and fosters excellence in academic research.

- *Enrollment.* The college needed to increase enrollment in both schools while maintaining and strengthening the quality of the student body and maintaining a high level of educational experience.

- *Development.* The college needed to undertake an aggressive program to enhance the range and depth of alumni engagement.

- *Collaboration.* The college needed to actively pursue, promote, support and reward the development of opportunities for cross-disciplinary research across the college.

- *Curriculum.* The college needed to pursue a highly focused, concentrated initiative in pinpointed areas for further curriculum development, particularly including strategic opportunities for cross-curricular course offerings.

Strategic Planning Implications

Taking into account the history of the college, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science, the evolving academic and professional worlds with which all three are engaged, the work being done by peer institutions and the internal perspectives of students, faculty, staff, and alumni and partners, the strategic plan had to address several imperatives. This is not to say other priorities and objectives would not be considered, but that at a minimum the plan should respond to the following challenges:

- *Common Mission:* The college needed to define the rationale for its existence: Why should the college exist, and why have the two schools been allied together within the college? What is the common bond that unites the schools, even if it does not require their merger? What is their common concern, and what is the role of each in meeting the challenge that concern presents? In other words, whatever their unique qualities, what is their common mission? No one was able to forcefully articulate that rationale in a compelling way that commanded clear and enthusiastic support across the college.

- *Definition of Partnership:* Given that the college would not consolidate the two schools, there needed to be a clear delineation of functions and a systematic analysis of the ways in which the schools could collaborate, as well as the means to facilitate that collaboration. Some of the collaborative opportunities might be clear and persuasive on their face and should be slated for immediate and full implementation. Other collaborations might require a more staged implementation. A third category might have more innovative opportunities for joint effort that need to be tested on a pilot basis before being confirmed for college-wide adoption.

- *Optimum Structure:* Once the rationale for the college and its two separate but partnered schools had been confirmed, and once a substantial body of collaborative opportunities had been identified, the college would need to assess its organizational structure to determine any changes needed to further the college's well-defined mission and implement the collaborative initiatives. This would involve not just the arrangement of organizational units, lines of reporting and job descriptions but also the way the organization was managed – how expectations were set; how performance was measured; how problematic behaviors were addressed; how professional growth on the part of students, faculty and staff was fostered – to ensure the formal structures would be supported by the less formal, everyday behaviors of those throughout the college.

- *Implementation Timeline:* After the first three steps were completed, the college would have to lay out an implementation schedule. Making all the proposed changes at once would increase the odds the college would fall short of its goals, discouraging participants. The better path would be to set out the rationale for the college and then pursue implementation of collaborations and

establish any new organizational structures, policies and practices over a defined time – an approach that would take time but more likely result in positive, lasting change.

- *The Michelangelo Challenge.* in addition to these large priorities, the college also would need to address a number of lesser issues that could, nonetheless, have a major impact on the success of the institution. Clear internal communications, strong support for students in planning and pursuing their careers, adding key staff members to committees, working to strengthen ties with alumni, and working to consistently be at the forefront in the wise and effective use of technology in the educational program were just some identified options for objectives that could support the larger strategic priorities. In the words of the 16th century sculptor, painter, architect and poet of the High Renaissance, "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

- *The Bias for Execution*. Strategic plans are notorious for often being dead on arrival. Frequently, institutions expend considerable time and energy, as well as money, to produce a detailed document destined to sit on the shelf, gathering dust. For the college's strategic plan to be successful, it would need to include not only clear priorities, but also clear, objective measures to assess progress. There also would have to be a conscious effort to ensure that once the strategic plan was launched, every decision the college made and every incentive it provided to faculty, staff, students and alumni would encourage the behaviors needed to move the plan from paper to practice.

Date: August 23, 2019

To: Tom Reichert, Ph.D.   Dean, College of Information and Communications

From: Nathan P. Strong   Director, Office of Organizational and Professional Development

Subject: Organizational Efficiency in the College of Information and Communications

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Dear Dean Reichert,

Below are our observations regarding potential organizational efficiencies that could be achieved in the College of Information and Communications (CIC). The School of Library Sciences (SLIS) and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) have some areas of functional overlap. In addition, consideration should be given to adjusting roles in several functional areas. We developed these suggestions after our review of staff position descriptions and our discussions with your team, and the Berkeley Research Group consultants.

Observations

One area of concern is the lack of up-to-date position descriptions (PDs) for many staff members. In addition, the PDs of six staff members were not able to be located. Further, there were no written descriptions of the job duties of Academic Administrators in either school. The lack of clear job descriptions often leads to role confusion, role ambiguity,

and in the worst cases, role conflict. The clarification of roles and expectations would greatly enhance the ability of the faculty and staff members to perform effectively.

Suggestions:

- Create "one-page" position descriptions for faculty administrators positions to reduce role confusion and clarify expectations for their roles;
- Make sure that staff members have updated PD's for all positions, investigate role revision for some positions to accurately reflect their current workload and job duties;
- If new PD's are created or a current PD is revised, ensure that those descriptions are aligned with the new strategic plan of the college to ensure goal alignment.

There is also an opportunity for the College to make some strategic adjustments in the administrative structure by reviewing overlapping job functions and enhancing capabilities in some underserved areas. Turnover and retirements are providing increased opportunities for administrative flexibility. In addition, consideration should be given to redeploying and adding resources to areas of need in the College.

Suggestions:

- Add a position reporting to the Assistant Dean for Administration and Finance to relieve and/or assist with the financial duties and reduce the amount of transactional work performed by the incumbent;
- CIC should inquire about using the remote HR Services provided by the Division of Human Resources to improve HR functionality and improve services to the leadership and employees of the College;
- Consider eliminating the undergraduate advising duties from the role of the Distance Education Coordinator;
- Continue the centralization of social media/promotional functions to streamline internal processes and provide a more consistent product;
- Continue to review the distribution of duties related to managing "special events" so that there is clarity of responsibility for events on both the college and school level;
- Consider creating an assessment position so that clear responsibility is assigned for monitoring strategic planning initiatives, blueprints, and facilitating accreditation processes;
- Before adding a new position in IT, make sure there is role clarity among current IT staff to create a more equitable workload between schools.

If you have any questions regarding these suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.