

School of Informatics Strategic Planning, Fall 2007

8/31/07

Objective: The fall 2007 strategic planning process of the School of Informatics is intended as a high level process to identify the highest priority opportunities for the School (both ongoing and new) and the most important issues that the School needs to address to take advantage of these opportunities, accompanied by a preliminary indication of strategies for addressing them. It will be followed by specific groups or task forces that work on these highest priority issues, beginning in January 2008 if not earlier. The planning process is not intended as a comprehensive study of all aspects of the school. It also does not address organizational issues (e.g. department structures), focusing instead on key programmatic and personnel issues. If these indicate the need to re-examine organizational issues, that will be done subsequently. Finally, to make the process more tractable, it focuses on the Bloomington and Indianapolis portions of the School and not the programs at the regional campuses, which also will be considered subsequently.

There is an oft-cited 80/20 or 90/10 rule in processes – that one can achieve 80% of the results in 20% of the time (or some say 90% of the results in 10% of the time). While this isn't natural for academics – one wouldn't want to publish a theorem that was 80% correct even if it only took 20% of the time – it has relevance for a planning process like this. We are trying to get a good idea of our priorities, key issues, and most important next steps without spending an inappropriately large amount of time doing so, knowing that such a list is a living document and if we get it close to right and then start working on the most important issues, we will be making good progress.

Structure:

- Leadership Council examines key overarching issues (see below)
- Faculty/staff subcommittees examine strategic issues (see below) in each of:
 - Research
 - Graduate Education
 - Undergraduate Education
 - Diversity
 - Faculty Development
- Dean and Major Gifts Officer lead strategic plan for fundraising and development
- Subcommittee of Leadership Council and subcommittee of Dean's Advisory Council lead strategic plan for School's role in Indiana economic development
- Planning Director and Dean provide overall support and coordination

Key Issues:

- Overarching (Leadership Council):
 - What are our greatest opportunities for national and international excellence due to being the largest and broadest school of informatics in the United States? What are the places where it is most strategically advantageous to take a unified two-campus approach? What are our overall measures of success?
 - What are the key places where our strategic planning needs to go across the boundaries of our subcommittees? (e.g. the continuity between our undergraduate and graduate programs, or the connection of our undergraduate students to research)
 - What are our highest priority opportunities for collaboration and partnership with other units at IU, and at the state, national and international level?
 - What are our most important strategies for increasing revenues and managing expenses, and what is the role, if any, of entrepreneurial activities such as distance and/or executive education? What budget model should we use internally (e.g. between the two Bloomington departments)?
 - How do staff and faculty perceive the overall climate of the school, and are there any significant issues that need to be addressed?
 - Are there areas where we should consider re-organizing our staff structure?

Specific leading issues for each subcommittee:

- Research
 - What are the (3-5) areas in which we are best positioned to achieve and/or sustain national and international prominence/leadership? (This includes developing some criteria for making this determination, and applying them.)
 - What are the key strategies that we should use to be more successful in attracting research funding (including how we assist our faculty)? (This includes a high level examination of whether there are priorities of key national funding agencies that align with our strengths and priorities.)
 - Are there opportunities for collaboration either within or outside the school that are of key strategic importance? Are there leading organizations or people that we should consider collaborating with?
- Graduate Education
 - What are the relative priorities between the MS and PhD programs (may vary by program/department / campus)? What is an appropriate number of students? (This may be a question for the next stage of planning.)
 - How well is the structure of the Informatics PhD serving our needs and are there key aspects that should be re-examined?
 - How well is the Computer Science PhD serving our needs and are there any fundamental changes that should be made?

- How should we be matching prospective PhD students to faculty? (This question may need refinement.)
- Are there important ways in which we need to improve services to our graduate students?
- Undergraduate Education
 - How should we leverage the breadth of our school, including both computer science and informatics, in constructing future undergraduate majors or tracks of majors that meet the needs of students and are attractive to them (whether called CS, Informatics, or something new)?
 - Do any of our existing majors need significant re-examination, and if so, what are key modifications that we should consider?
 - What are the most important opportunities for collaborating more effectively with other programs at IU, and teaching non-Informatics students at IU? This could include joint programs, eliminating duplication, providing courses, minors or certificate programs that meet the needs of non-Informatics students, and more.
 - Are there important ways in which we need to improve services to our undergraduate students? Are there issues of recruitment, retention and student placement that are high priorities to address?
- Diversity
 - What are the key issues we need to consider and steps we need to take in recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, faculty and staff?
 - Is it a priority for the School to be a national leader in diversity, and if so, what are our key strategies for this?
 - Do we want to try to become an “exemplar” institution of the National Center for Women & Information Technology?
- Faculty development
 - Are there important ways in which we need to improve our mentoring of junior faculty?
 - Are there any key needs to improve our policies and procedures regarding faculty review?
 - Are there issues regarding teaching loads, teaching quality, rewards and recognition for teaching, and/or course buyout that are important to address?
 - How do we create an environment where all senior faculty members are expected to make a full contribution to the School, perhaps in varying ways, and are rewarded fully for doing so?
 - What approaches should we take to develop future leaders from the faculty?
 - Do we need to address the availability of graduate students to junior faculty?

Process and Outcomes:

- Subcommittee chairs and members – each subcommittee will have three leaders, one each from IUB-Computer Science, IUB-Informatics, and IUPUI. One may be designated as the overall subcommittee chair. Each will have 2-3 additional members from each of the three units.
 - Research:
 - Co-chairs: Beth Plale, Alex Vespignani, Yaoqi Zhao
 - Additional members: Dennis Gannon, Eden Medina, Edgar Huang, Polly Baker, several additional members representing additional groups
 - Graduate Education:
 - Co-chairs: Erik Stolterman, David Leake, Mathew Palakal
 - Additional members: Geoffrey Fox, Amr Sabry, Arun Chauhan, Luis Rocha, Tony Faiola, graduate student
 - Undergraduate Education:
 - Co-chairs: Dennis Groth, Geoffrey Brown, Danita Forgey
 - Additional members: Suzanne Menzel, Memo Dalkalic, Kalpana Shankar, Joe DeFazio, undergraduate student
 - Diversity (will function more as focus group, see below):
 - Chair: Bobby Schnabel
 - Additional members: Mark McCreary, Susan Tennant, Sara Anne Hook, Dennis Groth, Raquel Hill, Beth Plale, Randy Bramley, Kay Connelly, Laura Hopkins
 - Faculty Development:
 - Co-chairs: Andy Hanson, Marty Siegel, Sara Anne Hook
 - Additional members: Steve Johnson, Esfan Hagverdi, Barb Hayes
- Output: The purpose of this process is to arrive at a clear understanding of our highest priority opportunities, and a roadmap for moving forward on these. In the end, this is accomplished with a very brief (few page, bullet-style) document for the entire School – there is a small finite limit to the number of large, crucial things we can do at once! As a means to this end, it will be sufficient for each subcommittee to produce a final report of roughly 2-4 pages in length, bullet style, that responds to the key questions that it was charged with answering (possibly augmented by a few others that it added during its process), followed or augmented by a brief summary of its SWOT analysis and its answers to the four questions mentioned below. The objective is that each report is likely to both lead us to a very small number (possibly one) of more tactical follow-up steps in that area starting in winter 2008 (e.g., development and implementation of a process to help faculty be more successful in grant proposals) as well as guide upcoming resource allocation decisions. The leadership council, especially the Dean and Director of Planning, will have the lead responsibility of blending the reports into a final strategic plan, and of immediately (ok, we'll allow for winter break ☺) leading actions based upon this plan.

Each subcommittee and the overarching committee will begin their process with a fairly quick assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for their topic.

Each of the first four subcommittees should address the following issues in conjunction with answering the specific questions it is charged with:

- Determine top priorities / emphases
 - Determine key strategies for excellence
 - Describe main resource needs and opportunities, including staff support
 - Suggest main ways that we will measure our progress and success in this area
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- Timeline: The time period for the subcommittee planning process is roughly Sept 1 – Nov 15, beginning with a meeting of all the subcommittee co-chairs and the leadership council on Sept 4. During this period, it is anticipated that each subcommittee will meet roughly five times for about two hours each, although each group is welcome to choose its process. Each subcommittee will be asked to develop a process (such as a survey, focus group, etc.) that allows any interested member of the School to provide input. By Oct. 10, each subcommittee will supply an interim report of roughly one page that summarizes (in bullet form) its key conclusions to date and the most difficult issues it still faces. Each subcommittee will aim to submit its final report by Nov. 15. The leadership council, Director of Planning and Dean will complete the process of blending all reports into a final strategic planning document by Dec. 15. The diversity committee will work in more abbreviated form since the questions it is asking are more foundational. There will be reports back to the School during and at the conclusion of the process.