Strategic Plan

Nationally Distinctive, Locally Relevant

2022-2027

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

In August 2021, the College of Communication & Information launched an expansive and inclusive strategic planning process to lay the groundwork for the future of the college. Faculty, staff, and members of the CCI Board of Visitors were surveyed to determine our purpose and collective strengths, opportunities, and aspirations.

These data provided the foundation for discussions among the college leadership team. The team met for a retreat in September 2021 to discuss the state of higher education and our industries, competition, university, and college. The team identified trends, gaps, opportunities, questions, concerns, and insights on our environment. These discussions produced a working draft of a proposed new CCI vision and mission along with five goals for the College that directly connect to the University's land-grant mission and new strategic vision, which was unanimously approved by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees on October 22, 2021.

From November 2021-January 2022, the College further developed its draft goals and strategies through small goal teams. To build these teams, the dean's office solicited nominations from the school directors. As we created the goal teams, we considered faculty career tracks and stages, staff representation, as well as balancing all teams by diversity and school representation. Five goal teams comprised of CCI faculty and staff were charged to further develop the vision, mission, and goals and their accompanying strategies.

After these goal teams completed their work, the proposed new CCI vision and mission along with the five goals and strategies were further distilled through the Board of Visitors, who met in small teams and provided feedback and offered industry perspectives.

In February 2022, a full draft of the strategic plan was brought to college-wide feedback sessions – held via Zoom to maximize attendance and contributions. The college leadership team summarized the comments and feedback and recommended revisions.

In March 2022, the dean's office compiled the past five years of CCI data related to student success, research and scholarship, diversity and inclusion, and alumni engagement to establish a baseline for future key CCI performance metrics and set five-year performance targets that would ultimately assess the college's progress on the strategic plan. Additional college-wide feedback sessions were held to gauge feedback around the proposed metrics and performance targets. The college leadership team summarized the feedback and offered recommendations for revision.

The entire strategic planning process was posted to the college website and shared at college-wide faculty/staff meetings throughout the 2021-2022 academic year. An online form was created to solicit feedback from faculty, staff, and students. The dean's office also engaged its undergraduate and graduate student advisory councils on elements of the planning.

Following a recommendation from the college leadership team, the final plan was presented to the college for approval at its May 6, 2022 faculty/staff meeting. The plan was unanimously approved and forwarded to the Provost and Chancellor. The vote was an endorsement of the tremendous care, thought, and innovation that people across the college invested in crafting a shared vision for CCI's future.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION AT A FLAGSHIP, LAND-GRANT, RESEARCH 1 UNIVERSITY?

A land-grant university is an institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, and 1994. The original mission of land-grant institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to address many challenges of that time – through teaching agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts (engineering), as well as classical studies so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education (Association of Public Land-Grant Universities).

The future of land-grant universities is determined by the nature of the problems which arise in the areas they serve. Many of the challenges we confront today – data management and privacy, misinformation and disinformation, threats to democracy, diversity and inclusion, confidence in public health practices, and others – are best addressed by a College of Communication and Information at a land-grant institution. As a flagship institution, we also have a strong access mission. Today, CCI's teaching, research, and service contribute to the land-grant mission by improving the lives of people and communities in the state of Tennessee and beyond – through accessible academic programs, scholarship that makes life and lives better, and engagement with our communities.

OUR VISION

To develop highly engaged students, staff, and faculty who inspire the Volunteer spirit through service and leadership across the communication and information disciplines

OUR ROLE

Fueled by our land-grant mission, the quality and efficiency of our education mission, our relevant cutting-edge research and influential scholarship, our passionate commitment to diversity and inclusion, and our welcoming and distinctive environment, the College of Communication and Information creates educational experiences where competition and collaboration work hand-in-hand to attract the best students, staff, and faculty in the nation and prepare the next generation of Volunteers.

OUR MISSION

Uniquely positioned at a flagship land-grant Research 1 university, the College of Communication and Information:

- Provides a rigorous education in a supportive academic environment that inspires our students to engage in the social, scientific, and professional challenges of our time and future
- Serves Tennessee through research, teaching, service, and engagement that enhances the well-being and vitality of the state and its residents
- Commits to excellence in diversity, equity, inclusion, and community as core tenets in developing future Volunteers
- Lives this mission through its world- class people and programs and with the support of a passionate alumni base that spans the globe

GOAL 1

Provide high-quality, innovative, equitable, and accessible academic opportunities that re- imagine the land-grant mission by improving access to education, enhancing degree pathways, increasing enrollment, and promoting student success – where student success is the responsibility of all

GOAL 2

Raise the College's national/international scholarly profile through high-impact disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and creative work that creates a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future

GOAL 3

Progress and sustain a nurturing College culture where diversity, equity, inclusion, and community are enduring sources of strength and core tenets in developing the next generation of Vols

GOAL 4

Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, adaptability, and innovation across the College and with campus partners, disciplinary colleagues, and industry leaders

GOAL 5

Connect with Tennesseans and with industries and communities around the world, securing support for the College and inspiring future Volunteers to join our community

GOAL 1 - Provide high-quality, innovative, equitable, and accessible academic opportunities that re-imagine the land-grant mission by improving access to education, enhancing degree pathways, increasing enrollment, and promoting student success – where student success is the esponsibility of all

- Explore growth opportunities for the MSIS degree – including a hybrid cohort-based program with meeting locations across the state and in large cities – meeting students where they are at
- Grow enrollment in the College's successful online MSCI concentration in Strategic and Digital Communication – expanding the College's community of learners and improving access to a CCI degree – and adding new faculty as needed
- Explore the relocation of the college-administered residential MSCI program from the college to the schools – formalizing the program's current functioning and delivery and maximizing resources to recruit, retain, and graduate students
- Grow the enrollment of in-demand undergraduate programs – including the new BSIS in the School of Information Sciences and the sports communication concentration in the School of Journalism and Electronic Media – in line with disciplinary accreditation standards
- Imagine the development of an online degree completion program – built from modules within CCI's four schools – engaging new learners in the college's academic offerings
- Add new staff members to the re-envisioned Student Success Center to improve the undergraduate student-to-advisor ratio – which currently stands at 330:1 – the largest on campus
- Design and implement a unifying academic experience for CCI undergraduate students with the addition of a common college-wide introductory course and a capstone experience – supported outside of the classroom by a new CCI living-learning community in partnership with Campus Life
- Build innovative academic programs – such as 4 + 1 concentrations and interdisciplinary degree programs and certificate programs that leverage college-wide strengths, promote pathways to CCI degrees, and diversify the College's community of learners
- Create a unifying Volunteer Experience for all CCI students – spearheaded by a re-envisioned Student Success Center – with high-impact educational opportunities related to Research, Internships, Study Abroad/Internationalization, and Community Engagement, preparing students to RISE as CCI graduates

- Advocate for CCI's place in the university's general education program through oral communication – which is the single most in-demand program in the College

- Enhance service learning opportunities with businesses and organizations in Knoxville, across Tennessee, and beyond by exploring opportunities for student academic credit

- Reimagine the CCI Global Scholars Program where funded students return to Knoxville and share their global experience with the community – supporting the University's land grant mission

- Increase internships, industry partnerships, and high-touch experiential learning opportunities – such as a signature internship program in a new CCI communications and marketing office, partnerships with local industry leaders in Knoxville, and remote internship programs that improve access for students

- Explore the development of a college-wide ePortfolio initiative for all CCI undergraduate students – an opportunity to increase the development and marketability of students for high-profile internships and job placement

- Unify and promote experiential learning opportunities and student engagement experiences across WUTK-FM, WUOT-FM, *The Daily Beacon*, The Volunteer Channel, Land- Grant Films, UT Society of Professional Journalists, Tennessee Journalist, Public Relations Student Society of America, Communication Studies Club, and others

- Build out a CCI career development office – led by a new Director of Career Development – that serves as the centralized hub for signature college-wide career development programs, provides industry specific training and development for students, and explores a corporate partnership program

- Develop a new CCI teaching award, the highest and most prestigious recognition for outstanding teaching in the college, via a selection process with nominations from the CCI student body – allowing honored faculty the freedom to develop and teach a special topics course of their choosing to enrich the undergraduate and/or graduate curriculum

WE MEASURE SUCCESS BY:

- Strategically growing undergraduate student enrollment across the College by 15% – achievable with an annual growth rate of approximately 3%

- Increasing the college-wide six-year graduation rate of 74.4% in fall 2015 and four-year rate of 63.6% in fall 2017 – with the most recent cohorts outperforming prior cohorts and establishing a baseline for continuous improvement

- Increasing the college-wide freshman-to-sophomore retention rate from 89.5% to 91.5% – achievable with an annual improvement rate of approximately .5%

- Improving the college-wide student to faculty ratio from 23.58 to 21.67 over five years
- Increasing the college-wide internship participation rate from 11% to 21% – achievable with an annual improvement rate of approximately 2%
- Growing study abroad and global engagement opportunities – increasing to 10% participation over four years
- Strategically growing residential graduate student enrollment across the College by 20% – and online graduate student enrollment by 50%

METRICS

- Undergraduate Student Enrollment
- Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate
- Six-Year Graduation Rate
- Undergraduate Student to Faculty Ratio
- Total Internship Participation
- Total Study Abroad Participation
- Graduate Student (Master's) Enrollment

GOAL 2 - Raise the College's national/international scholarly profile through high-impact disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and creative work that creates a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future

- Enhance the development and stature of the Center for Information and Communication Studies and organize CCI faculty around common college-wide themes, including grand challenges and land-grant topics – such as diversity and inclusion, data creation, use, and management, health and well-being, and media and democracy – promoting cross- disciplinary research and creative work, incentivizing such work with internal funding opportunities, and providing assistance to faculty in obtaining external research funding

- Incentivize and produce research, scholarship, and creative work that embodies the land- grant mission – through summer research funding opportunities, internal RFPs that require collaboration across CCI schools, and others

- Invest in new research facilities and the improvement of current facilities to foster collaboration across disciplines – including the Adam Brown Social Media Command Center, User Xperience Lab, and Message Effects Lab

- Add a major College research and scholarship award for faculty who have achieved major career milestones – receiving the highest level of national or international recognition in their field – including authoring a paper that has received significant citations, expending sizable dollars on research, winning a prestigious national/international award, etc.

- Organize and implement grant development workshops for CCI faculty – with a proposal deliverable and compensation upon completion of the workshops

- Institute a college-wide scholarly speaker series – designed to showcase research, scholarship, and creative work among CCI faculty and students and welcome scholars from other institutions to campus to engage on topics of interest to CCI

- Transition the College's PhD program from a three-year funding commitment to a four- year funding commitment – intended to increase application numbers, enhance recruitment, and provide students more focus on their dissertation research during their third and fourth years

WE MEASURE SUCCESS BY:

- Increasing annual production of high-impact nationally recognized forms of scholarship
- Increasing annual submission of research proposals by 14% to $8 million – an increase that will require focusing more on large grants and creating collaborative teams
- Increasing annual externally funded research expenditures by 10% to $917,000 – which will require sustaining recent growth in awards and focusing on large grants
- Increasing the number of PhD students enrolled annually by 10% to 40%
- Increasing the number of PhD degrees awarded annually by 10% to 10%
- Engaging faculty from all four Schools in teaching in the college-wide doctoral core curriculum to support the PhD Program's interdisciplinary focus

METRICS

- Journal Articles Per Faculty
- Book Publications Per Faculty
- Citations Per Faculty
- Research Proposal Submission Value
- Research Expenditures
- Workforce Development Contract Awards
- Workforce Development Contract
- Expenditures Graduate Student (PhD)
- Enrollment
- Doctoral Degrees Awarded

GOAL 3 - Progress and sustain a nurturing College culture where diversity, equity, inclusion, and community are enduring sources of strength and core tenets in developing the next generation of Vols

- Implement the CCI Diversity Action Plan and continually review, revise, and prioritize initiatives to develop the College culture

- Attract, develop, and retain a diverse student body and staff and faculty team recognized for world-class teaching, research, and service within and across disciplines

- Build college leadership in inclusive excellence with the appointment of a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – with primary responsibility for the overall administration of the CCI Diversity Action Plan – and implementing a support model of diversity, equity, inclusion, and engagement at all levels spanning students, staff, and faculty

- Explore the development of 2 + 2 undergraduate degree programs with international universities

- Support the professional development of staff through university and college programs – and empower supervisors to reward staff during the merit raise process

- Build college leadership in faculty affairs with the appointment of an Associate Dean to oversee academic personnel processes and serve as a thought leader in developing practices that support faculty of all ranks and tracks

- Institute a college-wide mentoring program for all CCI faculty of all ranks and tracks – providing additional support to faculty and furthering initiatives that exist in the schools

- Institute a CCI Administrative Fellows Program to cultivate the leadership development of staff and faculty – enabling the schools and college to mentor staff and faculty for leadership positions and career advancement

- Engage staff and all faculty – regardless of rank or track – in the governance of the college and its schools

- Address the lack of tenure-track faculty, where significant disparities exist among schools, including the School of Communication Studies, with the addition of 10 new positions across the college over the next five years

- Establish a post-doc pathway program that enables schools to mentor historically underrepresented scholars to be competitive for faculty positions

- Build a partnership with Knoxville's Fulton High School, a communication magnet and Flagship high school, and other Flagship schools – designed to foster student pathways to CCI

- Build partnerships with HBCUs in Tennessee to nurture a pipeline of underrepresented graduate students to CCI graduate programs

- Host regular college-wide social events designed to bring together students, staff, and faculty to build community across the college

- Create a feedback loop, outside of climate surveys, to allow for feedback and to facilitate continued dialogue about college climate – and continually review and revise DEI practices, policies, and guidelines

WE MEASURE SUCCESS BY:

- Increasing undergraduate enrollment by recruiting and retaining all students while paying particular attention to the achievement gaps for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students

- Closing the college-wide retention gap for first-generation students from 69.7% to 80.4% five-year milestone with goal to match or exceed campus-wide retention rate

- Closing the college-wide retention gap for Pell-eligible students from 79.1% to 80% five- year milestone with goal to match or exceed campus-wide retention rate

- Closing the college-wide retention gap for students of color from 77.4% to 83.4% five-year milestone with goal to match or exceed campus-wide retention rate

- Closing the college-wide graduation gap (four-year) for first-generation students from 59.3% to 60% five-year milestone with goal to match or exceed campus-wide graduation rate[1]

- Closing the college-wide graduation gap for Pell-eligible students from 60.7% to 61% five-year milestone with goal to match or exceed campus-wide graduation rate

- Closing the college-wide graduation gap for students of color from 57.1% to 64.3% five- year milestone with goal to match or exceed campus-wide graduation rate

- Implementing holistic admissions practices across all CCI graduate programs

- Enhancing CCI's diverse community of students, staff, and faculty

METRICS

- Number of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty
- Number of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty
- Diverse Community of Undergraduate Students
- Diverse Community of Graduate Students
- Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate (first-generation students)
- Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate (Pell-eligible students)
- Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate (students of color) Four
- Year Graduation Rate (first-generation students)[1]
- Six-Year Graduation Rate (Pell-eligible students)
- Six-Year Graduation Rate (students of color)
- Diverse Community of Faculty and Staff

[1] The University of Tennessee began tracking graduation rates for first-generation students in 2015. As of the time of this report, a six-year graduation rate is not available.

GOAL 4 - Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, adaptability, and innovation across the College and with campus partners, disciplinary colleagues, and industry leaders

- Overhaul the approach to leadership and management of the College through the College Leadership Team – with a focus on collaboration, discussion, and data-informed decision-making – to best ensure success under the new Budget Allocation Model

- Utilize the recently developed CCI Research Affinity Groupings to keep CCI researchers informed of each other's work and foster potential research collaborations

- Build a new CCI budget office – with four full-time staff members specifically charged with supporting the college, its schools, and units, promoting financial transparency and collaboration between the college and its schools and units, fostering innovation among faculty, staff, students, and external partners, systemizing processes and policies, and decreasing workload among unit-level staff members

- Successfully transition the College from the current historical budget model to implementation of the University's new Budget Allocation Model – with a focus on strategic enrollment growth, student credit hour generation, budget transparency, collaborative interdisciplinary partnerships and programs, adaptability to market and student interests and demand, and academic program innovation

- Guided by the University master planning process, explore the development of a new CCI facility through a university-led design charrette exercise – engaging students, staff, faculty, and alumni representatives in imagining a 21st century learning and working environment

- Overhaul the approach to Board of Visitors meetings – with a focus on collaboration, discussion, and feedback – to leverage the experience and expertise of board members who represent all CCI Schools – and best ensure the College's forward progress

- Invest in new staff positions across the College and staff professional development opportunities to build capacity and streamline workload – with greater transparency for the allocation of merit increases

- Envision and create a collaborative showcase space in the Communications Building that highlights all academic areas featured in the College – which will serve as a recruitment tool and dynamic student learning laboratory

- Reevaluate the role and use of the Scripps Convergence Lab – a facility that reflects all CCI schools – and assess how it might be best utilized as a true convergence laboratory in the future

- Revise college bylaws with the addition of a college-wide budget committee, distinct staff and faculty advisory councils, and process improvements that allow the college to be responsive to industry trends and efficiently approve curriculum revisions and additions, and others

- Revamp school bylaws to bring consistency across units in key areas of university emphasis – including interdisciplinary collaboration, external funding pursuits (including unfunded grant proposals), high-impact research, scholarship, and creative activity, faculty voting rights, and streamlining committee service

- Relocate the Center for Undergraduate Programs and Advising in the Communications Building to increase visibility and accessibility for students and visitors

- Define the goals of the CCI internship and practicum experience to ensure a consistent industry-relevant experience, develop professional relationships with participating organizations, avoid duplicating efforts, and connect the best-qualified students

- Implement collaborative study abroad programs – featuring faculty from across CCI Schools – to provide cross-disciplinary learning experiences for students

- Reevaluate use of space in the Communications Building and open up spaces to promote socialization, collaboration, and engagement among students, staff, faculty, and industry partners – including the addition of outdoor seating to the front of the Communications Building

- Leverage the third floor CCI patio for college-wide events, alumni tailgates, and revenue- generating opportunities for external entities – while exploring a possible patio renovation on the opposing side

WE MEASURE SUCCESS BY:

- Increasing transparency in college processes with the addition of new policies and procedures

- Building collaborative partnerships across campus

- Maximizing revenue under the new Budget Allocation Model

METRICS

- Year-End Revenue (BAM)
- College-Level Processes Reviewed and Updated
- Collaborative Partnerships Across Campus

GOAL 5 - Connect with Tennesseans and with industries and communities around the world, securing support for the College and inspiring future Volunteers to join our community

- Initiate community partnerships that highlight the College's land-grant mission, including a new relationship with Knoxville's Fulton High School, a communication magnet and Flagship school – designed to foster student pathways to CCI through internships, summer scholars programs, and faculty engagement

- Reinstitute the Assistant Director of Annual Giving and Stewardship position – specifically charged with accelerating the College's annual giving efforts, fostering connections among alumni, friends, and future students of the College, and building a young alumni advisory board at the College level

- Define the CCI story with a focus on overhauling storytelling strategies and the build-out of a new CCI communications and marketing office – with three full-time staff members specifically charged with promoting alumni, students, staff, and faculty to foster connections among the College and its stakeholders

- Completely overhaul the college website with a refreshed design and efficient navigation – highlighting the college's mission and work of students, staff, and faculty

- Use various channels (e.g., website, newsletter, annual reports, social media, podcasts, etc.) to highlight innovative teaching, scholarship, and outreach innovations within the college and university and externally with industry and practitioners

- Promote CCI faculty and staff thought leaders and facilitate their engagement with media as topic experts – raising the college's profile across the state and nation

- Engage and promote CCI alumni as college storytellers who assist with student recruitment, advocacy, and building connections with industry and community partners

- Support and promote signature College initiatives that emphasize the University's land- grant mission – including community engagement projects, Land-Grant Films, remote internship programs, a new student success initiative (research, internships, study abroad, and community engagement), WUTK-FM as a community resource, faculty-led research, and others

- Host alumni receptions across state and in large cities across the country – in addition to alumni trips abroad to visit students at their study abroad locations and actively engage alumni in the life of the college

- Create regional alumni ambassadors across the state (e.g., in Jackson, Memphis, Nashville, etc.) who serve as a volunteer resource, mentor, and advocate for underrepresented high school students interested in pursuing a CCI degree

WE MEASURE SUCCESS BY:

- Building signature partnerships in the community and industry with faculty and students

- Increasing philanthropic support via major gifts from $2.76 million per year to an average of $3.2 million per year — with support for named professorships, study abroad,
- technology, facilities, scholarships, and naming opportunities for schools, a Student Success Center, a showcase space that highlights all areas of study in the College, and a dean's chair that provides unrestricted funds to support college-wide needs

- Increasing philanthropic support via annual gifts from $199,489 per year to $300,000 per year

METRICS

- Signature Partnerships in the Community/Industry with Faculty and Students
- Total Annual Giving
- Total Major Gifts

STRATEGIC PLANNING LEADERSHIP
FACULTY & STAFF

Innovative Academic Programs and Enrollment

Alexis Anderson, Program Manager, Online MS Concentration
Guy Harrison, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism & Electronic Media
Derrick Holland, Assistant Professor, Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations Emily Paskewitz, Associate Professor, School of Communication Studies
Cindy Welch, Clinical Associate Professor, School of Information Sciences

Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

Wade Bishop, Associate Professor, School of Information Sciences
Jenny Crowley, Assistant Professor, School of Communication Studies
Beth Meko, Grant Writer, Center for Information and Communication Studies Erin Whiteside, Associate Professor, School of Journalism & Electronic Media Sifan Xu, Assistant Professor, Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Faculty/Staff Recruitment

Chioma Marbrey, Lecturer, School of Communication Studies
Amber Roessner, Associate Professor, School of Journalism & Electronic Media
Vandana Singh, Associate Professor, School of Information Sciences
Joseph Stabb, Assistant Professor of Practice, Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations Hillary Tune, Communication Specialist, School of Information Sciences

Collaboration, Adaptability, and Innovation

Brian Dobreski, Assistant Professor, School of Information Sciences
Melanie Faizer, Senior Lecturer, School of Journalism & Electronic Media
Amy Forrester, Assistant Director, Center for Information and Communication Studies Laura Miller, Associate Professor, School of Communication Studies
Matthew Pittman, Assistant Professor, Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Alumni and Community Engagement

Courtney Childers, Associate Professor, Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations Carolyn Hank, Clinical Associate Professor, School of Information Sciences
Jimmy Holt, Underwriting and Development Coordinator, WUTK-FM
Joy Jenkins, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism & Electronic Media
Annette Winston, Distinguished Lecturer, School of Communication Studies

COLLEGE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Joseph Mazer, Dean
Virginia Kupritz, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
Suzie Allard, Associate Dean for Research
Julie Longmire, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Programs & Advising Elizabeth Foster, Director, Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations John Haas, Director, School of Communication Studies
Abebe Rorissa, Director, School of Information Sciences
Catherine Luther, Director, School of Journalism & Electronic Media