

The cover features a dark red background with several overlapping circles in lighter shades of red, pink, and orange. In the center, a white circle contains the title text. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of serif and sans-serif fonts.

RUTGERS

School of Communication
and Information



Strategic Plan

2014 - 2017

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION
STRATEGIC PLAN
2014 - 2017**

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NB: Content in italics with quotation marks in this document are quotes from
the *University Strategic Plan* and
the *University Strategic Plan in Brief*.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL

Rutgers University's School of Communication and Information seeks to understand communication, information, and media processes, organizations, and technologies as they affect individuals, societies, and the relationships among them. The solutions to many of society's critical social, cultural, and economic problems are rooted in interaction, participation in information networks, and processes of civic engagement. Societal challenges include the achievement of healthy people and communities; constitution of a thriving democracy and useful public policy; preparation of new generations of leaders; design of humane, productive, and empowering organizations; and development of individual skills, self-understanding, and personal fulfillment. Our school plays a central role in contributing to the understanding and advancement of solutions for these challenges.

We are committed to educating individuals who make lasting contributions to society and to the interdisciplinary study and professional practice of communication, journalism and media, and library and information science.

We are committed to a supportive workplace in which all employees can achieve their professional potential.

History

The roots of the academic programs within the school reach back to the early 20th century. Major milestones in the school's history include:

- 1926 Undergraduate program in journalism was established at the new Rutgers University (formerly Rutgers College).
- 1927 Undergraduate program in librarianship was established and was offered for two decades at the New Jersey College for Women, later Douglass College.
- 1953 Graduate School of Library Service (GSLS) was created and admitted its first class of masters students.
- 1959 PhD program in Library Service was established.
- 1971 Undergraduate major in communication was established by the new Department of Human Communication.
- 1978 Name of the GSLS changed to Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.
- 1982 School of Communication, Information and Library Studies was established** with a merger of the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, the Department of Human Communication, and Livingston College's Department of Journalism and Urban Communication. At the time of its inception, the school offered two undergraduate majors (Communication, Journalism and Mass Media), and a masters degree and a doctor of philosophy degree in Library Service.
- 1987 Interdisciplinary PhD program in Communication, Information and Library Studies was developed out of the pre-existing doctoral program.
Masters program in Communication and Information Studies was established.
Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences joined the school with its undergraduate major and masters program; it was suspended in 1991.
- 1996 The school offered the first two fully online classes at Rutgers University.
- 2001 Undergraduate major in Information Technology and Informatics was established.
- 2005 Master of Library and Information Science program launched a fully online degree program.
- 2009 Name of the school was changed to School of Communication and Information.
- 2010 Digital Communication, Information, and Media minor was established.

Three Intersecting Fields, One Community

Our three departments represent distinct disciplinary traditions and evolving fields of intersecting interest in communication, information, and media that come together at SC&I to form one community. While the majority are trained as social and behavioral scientists, SC&I faculty also includes researchers schooled in the physical sciences and engineering and the arts and humanities who contribute to our academic mission. Collectively, we aspire to excellence and leadership in response to disciplinary trends within our fields, and aim, in the words of the university strategic plan, to *“create an environment that fosters collaborative and interdisciplinary discovery.”*

Library and Information Science (LIS) studies information in context. The department provides a unique perspective on the profound impact information makes on people and society as a whole. From knowledge management to children’s literature, from digital libraries to information retrieval, to the design and evaluation of information interfaces and services, the department seeks to make significant contributions to the social development of individuals by understanding the links among people, information, and technology, as well as to prepare students to become innovators and leaders in today’s dynamic and growing information professions.

Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) concerns itself with both the practice of journalism and media production historically and in an age of technological emergence, disruption, and transformation, grounded in the analysis of media institutions in a democratic society. Commitment to promoting a vibrant public sphere is evident through research in the areas of: media and public policy; public culture and digital democracy; social movement media; global, local, and regional cultural production; global media and international journalism; nationalism, citizenship and identity; and media diversity.

Communication is dedicated to advancing knowledge about communication and its practice in society, by examining how meaning is created and negotiated in human interaction to address 21st century personal, professional, and public communication challenges and opportunities. Research examines the complexity of communication processes in personal relationships, social networks, organizations, and communities, and provides unique insights for innovations in communication across the domains of health, technology, business, government, civil society, and the environment.

Our aspiration aligns with that of the university, to have our departments and school broadly recognized among our leading peers: preeminent in research, excellent in teaching, and committed to community.

Within the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, we aspire to be the leader in envisioning and demonstrating connections among the fields of Information Science, Media Studies, and Communication in the development of knowledge and discovery and the practice of the wide range of professions in communication, journalism and media, and library and information science.

SC&I by the Numbers

As we entered the strategic planning process in Fall 2013, SC&I was home to 59 full-time faculty, of whom 47 were tenured or tenure-track, 10 were non-tenure track, and 2 were post-doctoral associates. In addition, about 100 practitioners in fields related to our curricula taught as part-time faculty, and about 50 of our doctoral students had teaching appointments either as teaching assistants, assistant instructors, or part-time faculty. The school employed about 30 full-time staff and a dozen part-time staff.

SC&I offers three of the largest majors at the university: Communication, Information Technology and Informatics, and Journalism and Media Studies. As of September 2013 there were 1,839 undergraduate majors and an additional 315 minors in the interdisciplinary Digital Communication, Information, and Media minor. Our two masters programs, in Communication and Information Studies (MCIS) and Library and Information Science (MLIS) enrolled 378 students, and our interdisciplinary PhD program included 114 students.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

The university strategic plan defines foundational elements as the *"basic components required for future success ... in order to make ... strategic priorities and integrating themes possible."* Five such elements are identified.

Strong Core of Sciences and Humanities

"Rutgers must ... renew its commitment to a strong core of research, scholarship, and undergraduate and graduate teaching in the arts and sciences."

Scholarship and teaching at SC&I are firmly rooted in the humanities and social sciences while also offering students a professional orientation at the undergraduate and masters levels. Our undergraduate students are required to complete the New Brunswick Core Requirements to assure they master a foundation of liberal arts and sciences knowledge. Our graduate programs ground students in fundamental theory, current methodologies, and reflective practice. Our faculty emphasize foundational knowledge and translation of research to multiple audiences. Masters students are prepared for careers in the practice and management of complex communication, information, and media processes. The doctoral program prepares students seeking theoretical and research skills for scholarly and professional leadership and to make contributions to the advancement of disciplinary knowledge in our fields.

Upcoming initiatives at SC&I to promote excellence in the liberal arts will include:

- Expand the honors programs in all three majors and participate in the new Honors College.
- Within the development of new curricula (discussed in more detail under Strategic Priorities), assure the continued integration of the liberal arts within our academic programs.
- Invest in faculty excellence by recruiting both the brightest new scholars and outstanding senior colleagues from peer programs who make enduring contributions to knowledge in the social sciences.

Inclusive, Diverse, and Cohesive Culture

"The university strives...to create the conditions needed for all individuals and groups to enjoy full participation and inclusion in our community."

SC&I has long had a Diversity Committee as part of its governance structure. Our by-laws state that "the committee's role is to ensure continued support for diversity as a SC&I priority." Particular focus of the group in the recent past has been on faculty recruitment and equity issues.

Over several years multiple SC&I faculty have been recipients of the university Diversity Award which recognizes leaders in promoting diversity at Rutgers, either through their own research and teaching or in other venues. In addition, multiple SC&I faculty and staff are active in LGBT and other diversity initiatives on campus and nationally, such as the National Center for Women in Technology's Academic Alliance, which aims to build race and gender diversity in the higher education technical fields.

Students are exposed to concepts and behaviors related to diversity in their studies because SC&I consciously incorporates the subject of human diversity into our coursework. For example, the Communication program has classes on *Intercultural Communication* and *Communication and Gender*; the ITI program has a class on *Gender and Technology*; the JMS program has classes such as *Gender, Race, Class and the Media*. Individual classes also incorporate concepts of diversity into broader themes, such as health communication and communicating diversity in work and professional contexts. In co-curricular activities, SC&I has eighteen student organizations, several of which embrace diversity within their mission, including the Association of Black Journalists, Association of Women in Communications, and the African American Culture and Communication Association.

Upcoming initiatives at SC&I to promote an inclusive culture will include:

- Be proactive in recruiting and retaining faculty and staff of color and those from under-represented populations to assure a diverse workforce which provides an important model to our students and impacts the culture of the organization.
- Increase efforts to recruit and retain a diverse population of students. Specific targets include: Increasing the number of students of color who apply to and complete our programs; increasing the number of women in the ITI program; increasing the number of non-traditional students in programs; serving the needs of LGBT students more transparently; serving all students at a level of excellence.
- Communicate core values throughout the school in all venues.

Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Staff

"The University must facilitate agile responses to administrative needs and ... a culture of excellence, collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability among staff....an environment oriented toward student service and satisfaction."

Rutgers can be a very challenging environment in which to work. Some university policies and processes seem designed to make tasks more difficult, rather than supporting our success. SC&I faculty and staff look forward to participating in and supporting the adoption of *"best practice academic and administrative systems and organizations, backed by updated technology"* which was identified in the university plan as a step needed to close the "quality gap" with our aspirational peers.

Within SC&I we have focused in the past few years on redesigning staff jobs and recruiting a highly qualified workforce, helping them develop professionally, and working in teams to create effective processes and solve problems. We have added several new staff positions where there was need, and expect to continue to shift positions as needed. Our Student Services and Information Technology offices in particular have been the focus of significant redevelopment, and we are proud of the strong service orientation they have helped us achieve.

Because university financial, HR, and other systems do not provide the information we need in order to operate effectively, we have created shadow systems to support our work. We look forward to a time when such systems will not be needed.

In the facilities area, we have made significant investments of our own funds into creating new spaces and upgrading existing spaces, including offices, research space, and classrooms. But there is much still to be done.

Upcoming initiatives at SC&I to promote effective and efficient infrastructure and staff will include:

- Work rigorously with Facilities to continue our cycle of upgrades to existing offices and classrooms, and use our own funds strategically to assure all faculty, staff, and students have effective places to learn, teach, and work.
- Redesign research space within the school. SC&I has limited space devoted exclusively to research. At least one of the major research labs in the school is significantly under-utilized and work has begun to collect requirements on the redesign of the space.
- Create and implement an internal staff development program to promote an even higher level of service excellence. Our goal is for faculty and students to judge that SC&I staff are among the most effective and service-oriented at the university, and for staff to consider SC&I to be a positive and supportive work environment invested in each person's professional excellence and development.
- The University identified student services as an area for focus. While SC&I has invested considerable time and funding into creating an effective student services function, we intend to further enhance the operations of the Office of Student Services, implementing ever more best practices to promote positive student-outcomes and academic, social, and professional student communities that are inclusive, engaging, and civic-minded.

Financial Resources Sufficient to Fund our Aspiration

Under All Funds Budgeting, SC&I has been a self-supporting school. The vast majority of our operating income comes from tuition, and there has been careful management of our expenditures. We have focused on enrollment management so we can sustain our economic model. Our diversified academic programs include degrees at all levels, continually updated courses that draw student interest through relevance to their careers and lives, and on-campus, online, and summer and winter options.

We have developed a staff to support external funding of the faculty in order to increase our revenue from those sources, and we have targeted efforts in fundraising to support strategic plans.

Upcoming initiatives at SC&I to promote financial sustainability will include:

- Fundraising for two endowed chairs in the school, described in more detail under Build Faculty Excellence.
- Focus on fundraising from corporations, including replicating the MCIS Johnson & Johnson program with other corporations and for other degree programs.
- New financial modeling to support Responsibility Center Management being adopted by the University for FY2016.
- Refocusing professional masters programs and engaging new marketing methods to draw a larger pool of students.
- Curriculum development at the undergraduate level to assure the strength of our majors.

Robust Shared Governance, Academic Freedom, and Effective Communication

The School operates with a committee structure to assure shared governance:

- Department chairs and senior deans meet monthly as the school's executive committee.
- Department chairs, program directors, deans, and senior staff meet monthly as the cabinet of the school, advisory to the dean.
- Departmental and program faculty meet monthly to oversee their curricula and the activities of their areas.
- Other committees within the school address focused areas such as Undergraduate Education, Rules of Procedure/Elections and Nominations, Research Development.

These committees assure all stakeholders have representation when decisions are being made.

The school has had a relatively significant number of faculty who have held leadership roles in the New Brunswick Faculty Council, the University Senate, and the Rutgers AAUP-AFT.

Upcoming initiatives at SC&I to promote shared governance, academic freedom, and effective communication will include:

- Review of our committee structure to assure faculty are able to fully participate in shared governance.
- Use opportunities to reiterate a culture of academic freedom.
- Develop a more robust intranet to provide additional means of communication within the school.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Build Faculty Excellence

"Great universities are and will be defined by the strength of their faculty."

Our faculty hold doctorates from leading universities nationally and internationally, including 42 who completed their doctorate at 28 different AAU member universities: 18 public (Arizona, Buffalo, California-Irvine, California-San Diego, California-Santa Barbara, California-Los Angeles, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania State, Purdue, Rutgers, Texas, Toronto, Washington, and Wisconsin) and 10 private (Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Northwestern, New York University, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Stanford, and University of Southern California).

Our faculty body includes leading scholars in our primary and allied fields of study. Faculty scholarly productivity index (FSPI) scores recently reported by Academic Analytics to the University, aggregated by department, place each of our school's three departments within the top 22 of the 80 Rutgers departments included in that report. FSPI scores recognize faculty productivity in publication of books, journal articles, conference proceedings, peer recognition through citation, honors and awards, and grant funding. Resources that will allow us to build on the existing strengths of our faculty include establishing named chairs for the recruitment of world-class senior faculty along with support sufficient to foster and retain outstanding mid-career researchers.

Entering academic year 2014-2015, of SC&I's 50 research/teaching faculty (31 tenured, 19 tenure-track), 82% joined Rutgers since 2000, including 21 since 2009 (8 appointments in Communication, 7 in JMS, and 6 in LIS). Our commitment to increasing diversity through the recruitment of faculty from under-represented groups is evident in the hire of three African American and two Latino faculty over the past six years. With most of our faculty at early or mid-career, important challenges in fostering faculty excellence require effective mentoring and support that *"allows talented young faculty to mature into leaders in their disciplines"* and *"rigorous assessment of reappointment, tenure and promotion decisions."*

SC&I full-time faculty also include 10 experienced and accomplished non-tenure-track faculty members, of whom 7 were hired since 2011. Most have been recruited to joint administrative and teaching responsibilities, including five undergraduate course coordinator and program director appointments and one masters program director. Our introduction of these appointments is part of the infrastructure that aims to support the increased research productivity and prominence of our tenure-track faculty as well as student success.

Among the nascent new centers at SC&I are two notable initiatives. A Center for the Communication of Science and Medicine has the endorsement of faculty and administrators from Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences with whom we would collaborate as well as the interest of at least two of our departments. This center's mission would be to assist those in the health sciences and in scientific disciplines to translate scientific and medical research for the media, for lay people including patients, and for lectures in the classroom and in public settings.

A Center for Media and the Public Interest, projected for development within the next three years, will allow us to provide an organizational structure that both facilitates and enhances the profile of the excellent scholarship that is a defining strength of scholars across our three departments. The Center will enable scholars to participate in collaborative research initiatives with NGOs, public interest organizations, and other academic units/institutions with shared interests, in an effort to strengthen our position as a focal point for engaged media scholarship.

A professorship in Communications and Public Policy was occupied by University Professor and broadcast journalist Richard Heffner for 50 years. SC&I will collaborate with the School of Arts and Sciences to raise funds to recruit an outstanding scholar to assume leadership in this area. The chair exists within SC&I but needs additional funding to be fully endowed; an associated lecture series has been managed by SAS. A second initiative for an

endowed chair is the Gloria Steinem Chair in Media, Culture, and Feminist Studies, a collaboration between SC&I, Women's and Gender Studies within SAS, and the Institute for Women's Leadership, which will be pivotal in leading a Gender and Media academic program and its associated scholarly endeavors.

Moving forward, we continue to seek exceptional tenure-track and senior faculty, including faculty from under-represented groups whose research of communication, information, and media phenomena addresses problems that connect to social issues of trans-disciplinary interest and importance. Important to the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty is our success in providing infrastructure that supports research productivity and excellence. As noted in the University strategic plan this includes commitment to *"strengthen graduate education programs that are integral to the work of our faculty."*

Strategic priorities to build faculty excellence:

- Increase grant revenue generated by faculty by supporting their efforts through designated resources.
- Increase national awards and recognitions from within our fields.
- Raise funds to establish two new endowed chairs.
- Establish at least one new fully funded research center.
- Sponsor at least one symposium each year connected with one of our integrating themes.
- Further develop formal mentoring processes for early and mid-career faculty.
- Provide the staff, systems, and facilities to support faculty excellence.
- Recruit new faculty in areas outlined as priorities by our departments which also align with our problem-based integrating themes.

Fortify Academic Programs and Transform the Student Experience

Teaching and learning are at the core of our enterprise. We pride ourselves on the quality of our curriculum, the dynamism of our teaching, and our engagement with our students. We also know that we have to constantly review and redevelop our programs in order to maintain our excellence and attract potential students. Creating learning objectives that are guided by evidence-based practices in teaching and learning is a standard.

Strategic priorities in undergraduate education:

- Expand the honors programs in all three majors and participate in the new Honors College.
- Create and implement a plan for outreach to community colleges to assure they adequately prepare and recommend their students to SC&I programs. Specifically, collaborate with two to three community colleges in the near term to establish relationships with their career and academic counselors.
- Work with faculty from community colleges to assure all SC&I pre-major courses are available at the community college level to enable transfer students to more easily choose our majors and support timely rates of degree completion.
- Make more visible the service learning opportunities at SC&I and increase the number of opportunities.
- Complete the curriculum revision begun during 2013-14 in all four undergraduate programs to update courses and add new specializations and pathways.
- Create a minor in Gender and Media in collaboration with the Department of Women's and Gender Studies which will allow students to examine and improve power dynamics relative to gender and the media.

Strategic priorities in graduate education:

- Continue to work towards full and competitive financial support for doctoral students. In the past decade the school has increased the number of full-time lines for doctoral students from a minimum of 16 per year (all "state-funded" TAs) to a minimum of 35 (with the addition of 19 TA, GA, fellow, and instructor lines fully funded by the school). In addition there are some externally funded GA positions annually.
- Expand the masters program in the Department of Library and Information Science to a Master of Information degree, retaining its American Library Association accreditation, to reach new audiences with career goals in the information professions outside of traditional library settings. This re-branding will include, minimally, a change of name of the degree and changing course titles to better reflect the new content already being taught.

- Examine the feasibility of a name change of the Master of Communication and Information Studies to reflect its inclusion of media studies classes in order to reach new audiences. Restructure governance to make visible the participation of the Journalism and Media Studies Department and invite additional participation.
- Increase marketing and recruitment to dramatically increase the number of students in both masters programs by at least 30% to assure their viability and sustainability. The expansion of the Johnson & Johnson Fellows program, listed above under financial sustainability, is a part of this effort as well.
- Implement the revisions to the PhD program voted on during 2013-14; monitor efficacy of the new requirements and adjust accordingly.

Strategic priorities in continuing education:

- Offer enhanced online educational opportunities including webinar, web conferencing, and asynchronous courses that are convenient for a diverse audience of adult learners.
- Capitalize on our proximity to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. to enhance our educational programming, strengthen partnerships with organizations, and recruit specialized instructors.
- Create opportunities that draw an international population.

Some initiatives will support excellence across the school.

Strategic priorities transforming the student experience:

- Provide infrastructure and opportunities to encourage a greater number of students to choose international experiences. A newly established faculty and staff committee has begun work to identify the best avenues for achieving this goal.
- Reinvigorate the career management services offered by the school to students. The focus of this initiative will be to hire a career management and alumni specialist who will: create programs and infrastructure; work with our internship coordinators, program directors, alumni, and employers to leverage internship and job placement opportunities; work with faculty, student services, and student organizations to develop even more robust curricular and co-curricular career-related activities; track graduate placements; and create an alumni infrastructure.
- Build industry relationships to inform our ongoing curriculum development and assure its articulation and alignment with workforce needs.
- Create more and better opportunities for cross- and interdisciplinary learning within the school and across the campus. Examples of initiatives that have been endorsed already are: enhancing opportunities for students to take courses from a variety of SC&I programs no matter which specific program is their main program; expanding the course offerings in the SC&I interdisciplinary curriculum; and developing a program in gender and media with Women's and Gender Studies.
- Develop initiatives related to civic engagement and leadership within our school and across the university. Our faculty, student, and curriculum-based commitments to civic engagement are not just forms of service, but are aspects of applied research and experiential learning. The university's Center for Organizational Development and Leadership is led by a senior SC&I professor. We see the opportunity to make a unique and powerful contribution to the civic engagement and leadership missions of Rutgers by broadening our efforts to enhance understanding of, appreciation for, and skills in applying information seeking, knowledge sharing, debate, conflict resolution, collaboration, collective action mobilization, and more.

Envision Tomorrow's University

SC&I has been a leader in creating new approaches to policies and processes for higher education. We were among the first units to create robust evaluation processes for non-tenure-track faculty that mirror processes for tenure-track reappointments. We were among the first to offer online courses. We were among the first to establish an instructional design and technology function within our school (not just instructional technology). We were among the first to reorganize staff in the school so that each academic department could draw on specialized staff rather than expecting departmental administrative assistants to have expertise in the wide range of student

advising, budget administration, and human resources management functions. In the coming years we plan to continue to reinvent the university of the 21st century.

Strategic priorities in evidence-based management:

- Adopt new decision support systems and work with offices across campus to require data in electronic form so that we can identify problems and make more evidence-based decisions in areas including finances, enrollment management, and facilities.
- Identify a small set of schools with which to benchmark staff functions; benchmark academic and administrative activities with the schools from the Committee on Institutional Cooperation and the iSchools Caucus; use Academic Analytics to provide other evidence-based assessment of our productivity and then act to address issues identified.

In the technology area, it hardly needs to be noted that there is constant change and we must not just stay current but anticipate the future. Students, faculty, and staff should have ready access to state-of-the-art tools and stored information so that research and instruction can occur in any location at any time on any device. SC&I was one of the founders of the high-performance computing cluster at Rutgers and will continue to support high performance computing for data analysis.

Strategic priorities in technology and technology services:

- Implement virtual desktop and "BYOD" (bring your own device) services. Creating a virtual desktop of services will enable any student or faculty member to use any device, whether mobile or desktop, to perform their work and collaborate. Any device when connecting to the SC&I network will seamlessly have access to the tools and technologies we provide. In the coming years, we will focus on services more and hardware less. Our investments will be targeted on solutions to problems more than on devices and servers.
- Data consolidation and visualization. SC&I will continue to be a major contributor to initiatives to pull the silos of information spread across the university into a central repository to enable better decision making.
- Leverage our use of high performance computing to support research, building new tools and creating expertise in this area, to enable faculty to utilize new information paradigms.
- Support experimentation with emerging technologies for teaching, learning, research, and management.
- Strengthen our IT team to meet the new challenges of the coming years. We will make use of outsourced services when we can, such as for maintaining servers and operating systems, to free our staff to provide value-added services, including customized application and web development when appropriate.

Although in the coming years much work will be done virtually, for the foreseeable future the core of our activity will continue to be based in a physical setting on campus. The aging facilities at SC&I are part of the larger facilities situation at the university. SC&I has invested heavily in our own infrastructure and we know that continuing to upgrade our physical plant is part of assuring the success of our endeavor.

Strategic priorities in facilities:

- Further advance the planning for a new building and raise funds for it.
- Work vigorously with Facilities to continue our cycle of upgrades to existing offices and classrooms, and use our own funds strategically to assure all faculty, staff, and students have effective places to learn, teach, and work.
- Redesign research space within the school. SC&I has limited space devoted exclusively to research. At least one of the major research labs in the school is significantly under-utilized and work has begun to collect requirements on the redesign of the space.

We envision the academic and scholarly aspects of tomorrow's university under the previous two categories of priorities.

Enhance our Public Prominence

"To manage our reputation, Rutgers must convey its message clearly by targeting specific, prioritized audiences with a disciplined, consistent, and ongoing communications program."

SC&I is proud of the strength of our faculty and academic programs, and of our mission in scholarship, teaching, and service to the community and profession. For example, the Department of Library and Information Science is one of just four Rutgers departments identified by the university in its strategic plan as being "best in class" among AAU peers and aspirants. At the same time, we realize the school's strengths and accomplishments are not fully apparent to important groups of stakeholders both within and outside the community, and within and outside of academia. Our tri-departmental configuration that we value for its interdisciplinary focus has the potential to blur our departmental strengths when compared with discipline-based units at other institutions. For example, although we are a founding member of the i-Schools movement, a set of leading information schools that emerged from former library schools, our inclusion of Communication and JMS departments makes SC&I unique among the AAU and the CIC. For faculty in Communication and JMS, affiliation with the large number of communication and journalism and media studies scholars within the National Communication Association, International Communication Association, and Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, often feels more relevant. The combination of disciplinary and interdisciplinary excellence within the school can make our story challenging to tell.

Over the past year we have invested significant resources to tell our story better, to develop our brand, and to convey to all of our publics who we are and what we offer. The SC&I website and social media presence has been transformed, and we are working with a public relations firm to further enhance our brand identity.

Strategic priorities in enhancing our public prominence:

- Create and distribute high quality materials with a consistent brand identity. Distribute the new SC&I magazine *interaction* twice a year to assure that our colleagues across campus, across higher education, and donors and others are aware of our achievements.
- Institute a SC&I Council consisting of high level executives in the communication, public relations, information, library, journalism, and media fields to seek advice about trends in the workplace and career paths for our students. A second goal for this body is to introduce our programs and the quality of the faculty and students to thought leaders and influential, highly-placed executives of prominent organizations so that they can become invested in our success.
- Develop "SC&I Talks" consisting of presentations given by faculty or visitors and re-purpose them as YouTube videos to be made prominent on the SC&I website. Current topics of timely interest and those that intersect with the university's strategic themes will be chosen.
- Items mentioned in previous sections that are relevant here include fundraising to establish two new endowed chairs.

INTEGRATING THEMES

Five years ago SC&I adopted a problem-centered approach to faculty hiring and planning strategic initiatives by adopting four integrating themes. Over the next three years SC&I will continue to organize recruitment and activity around these themes, in conjunction with departmental priorities. They have helped us hire outstanding scholars who address problems of critical importance in the 21st century.

We were delighted to see how well our themes aligned with the new Integrating Themes adopted by the University in its strategic plan. Below are the SC&I problem areas and how they align with Rutgers' new Integrating Themes.

Health and Wellness

Community wellness and individual and collective health are major issues in the 21st century. Our faculty who study health communication campaigns and message design, health informatics, e-health, knowledge management in health organizations, science journalism and health reporting, patient-practitioner communication, disclosure, and myriad related fields are helping shape policy and understanding of critical wellness issues.

This SC&I theme aligns with Rutgers' theme:

Improving the health and wellness of individuals and populations

Social Media Interaction and Collaborative Design

Every day, we are doing more together using technology and virtual interaction. Our faculty are increasingly concerned with information seeking, collaboration, and learning in virtual environments; relationship maintenance using digital social networks; corporate and community use of social media; the burgeoning business of social applications; youth and technology; diversity and technology; and creative collaboration in gaming worlds.

This SC&I theme aligns with Rutgers' themes:

Creating a sustainable world through innovation, engineering, and technology

Creative expression and the human experience

Global Media, Community, and Democracy

Twenty-first century technological developments are changing how we stay informed; in turn, our relationship to our communities and democratic participation is evolving. Topics of importance to our faculty in this area include, but are not limited to, transnational media, niche outlets, citizen journalism, new media and social movements, race and class, poverty and other pressing problems, political empowerment, and the evolution of traditional media.

This SC&I theme aligns with Rutgers' themes:

Cultures, diversity, and inequality – local and global

Educating involved citizens and effective leaders for a dynamic world

Organizations, Policy, and Leadership

It is critical to understand how modern communication and information challenges affect organizations, policy makers, and leaders. This research area focuses on the intersection of technology and media with studies of persuasion, organizational change, managing technological organizations, collaboration, identity, and other concentrations. Scholars in this area study social networks, e-learning, converging media, corporate social responsibility, and communication policy, and their applied research includes programs such as Rutgers' Center for Organizational Development and Leadership.

This SC&I theme aligns with Rutgers' themes:

Cultures, diversity, and inequality – local and global

Educating involved citizens and effective leaders for a dynamic world

A NOTE ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS

The priorities and integrating themes at the university level informed the development of this strategic plan for the School of Communication and Information. Our planning process consisted of forums and meetings across the 2013-2014 academic year.

- The SC&I faculty and senior staff met during a day-long facilitated discussion on October 2, 2013.
- The report from October was distributed, and department chairs contributed brief strategic priorities in department-centered documents in late October.
- During an all-faculty meeting, faculty and senior staff met in small groups to hone the ideas from the October 2 meeting.
- Department chairs and deans met to discuss further.
- A series of three town hall style meetings were held with students at all levels during March and April 2014 and notes were taken and distributed to faculty.

The SC&I Chairs and Directors group, the cabinet of the school with representatives from all areas, provided advice. The draft was distributed to all faculty electronically in June 2014, and comments were integrated into the final version. This report represents work over the course of the academic year. We look forward to implementing the plan over the next three years.