



College of
**Communication &
Information Sciences**

The University of Alabama

College of Communication & Information Sciences

Strategic Plan

2021-2026



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C&IS Overview

The College of Communication & Information Sciences offers undergraduate degrees in Advertising, Communication Studies, Creative Media, News Media, and Public Relations; master's degrees in Advertising & Public Relations, Book Arts, Communication Studies, Journalism & Media Studies, and Library & Information Studies; graduate certificates in Book Arts and Archival Studies; and a multidisciplinary doctoral degree. The College is the only communication unit in the state of Alabama offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

The College prepares students for careers in the production of public communication, such as news, media, and film, for professional positions in government, business, and industry requiring training in media and communication, and for educational positions requiring graduate study in specific areas of communication and information sciences. The College also provides study of the processes of human and mass communication, preparing students to be effective communicators and foster their abilities to think critically, to express and to advocate their ideas effectively, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of human communication in practice. Supporting the College in these goals are the Digital Media Center, the Alabama Program in Sports Communication, the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, and the Institute for Communication & Information Research.

History

The College originated from the School of Communication, which was created on July 1, 1973, by combining the Department of Journalism (founded in 1926) and the Department of Broadcast & Film Communication (founded in 1940) with The University of Alabama Television Services (now The Center for Public Television) in a single administrative unit. The Department of Broadcast & Film Communication was later renamed to the Department of Telecommunication & Film which merged with the Department of Journalism in 2016 to become the Department of Journalism & Creative Media.

During its first year in 1973, the School of Communication created an additional department, the Department of Advertising & Public Relations, from course sequences that had been part of the Department of Journalism. University Radio Services (now Alabama Public Radio) was established in 1980, as was the Communication Research & Service Center (now the Institute for Communication & Information Research). On May 16, 1981, the Department of Speech Communication (founded in 1932, now Communication Studies) moved from the College of Arts & Sciences to the School of Communication. The former School of Communication became the College of Communication on September 9, 1988, by action of the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama in recognition of the school's expanded role and scope. On July 1, 1997, the College of Communication and the School of Library & Information Studies merged to form the College of Communication & Information Sciences.

Mission

The University of Alabama's College of Communication & Information Sciences is a comprehensive multidisciplinary division 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 mission is supported by one of the country's most diverse combinations of academic and service programs.

Purpose

- To offer courses leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees in those specialized areas necessary to prepare students to pursue careers in communication- and information-related areas.
- To provide students with a broad education that will allow them to become productive and creative citizens in society and leaders in their professions, their communities, and the nation.
- To encourage students to pursue further formal study and self-education in communication- and information-related areas.
- To engage actively in research and service.

Vision

The College of Communication & Information Sciences develops global leaders who do the extraordinary across the full communication, media, and information spectrum.

Values

- Personal and professional excellence
- Creativity and intellectual curiosity
- Interpersonal adaptability and negotiation
- Integrity and ethical grounding
- Diversity and appreciation for differences
- Passion and resilience
- Collaboration and unity

Key Themes

- All students have potential.
- The ethical choice is always the right choice.
- Diversity strengthens our community.
- Growth comes from being challenged.
- Curiosity and creativity are essential to learning.
- New, diverse, and futuristic ideas are encouraged.
- Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Dreaming big and thinking differently are essential to success.

We Believe

We believe communication and information can change the world. We believe the analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of information requires integrity, creativity, and professional excellence.

We believe consideration of different perspectives increases our ability to connect, grow, and contribute. We respect the insights and experiences of all members of our community.

We believe in treating each other with dignity and respect. We remain curious. We seek collaboration. We respect potential. We dream big. We show up. We do the work and, if we make mistakes in the process, we always try to get it right.

We believe we have a responsibility to advance the study and practice of communication and information sciences. We believe communication and information can change the world because they have already changed the world inside each of us.

Degree Programs

CIP Code	Degree Program Title	Degree Nomenclature	Accreditation
9.0903	Advertising	B.A.C.I.S.	Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC)
9.0903	Advertising & Public Relations	M.A.	
50.0799	Book Arts	M.F.A.	National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
9.0199	Communication and Information Sciences	Ph.D.	
9.0101	Communication Studies	B.A.C.I.S., M.A.	
9.0799	Creative Media	B.A.C.I.S.	
9.0499	Journalism and Media Studies	M.A.	Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC)
25.0101	Library & Information Studies	M.L.I.S.	American Library Association (ALA); Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)
9.0499	News Media	B.A.C.I.S.	Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC)
9.0902	Public Relations	B.A.C.I.S.	Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC)

C&IS by the Numbers

Overall Enrollment	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Undergraduate	2,514	2,623	2,591	2,633	2,730
Graduate	542	415	421	382	328
Total	3,056	3,038	3,012	3,015	3,058

First-Time Undergraduate Students by Sex	Male		Female		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
2020	152	34.5	289	65.5	441
2019	146	31.7	314	68.3	460
2018	120	29.9	282	70.1	402
2017	87	23.1	290	76.9	377
2016	139	27.1	374	72.9	513

New Graduate Students by Sex	Male		Female		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
2020	64	27	173	73	237
2019	36	28.1	92	71.9	128
2018	37	26.1	105	73.9	142
2017	34	26.2	96	73.8	130
2016	32	26	91	74	123

Annual Credit Hour Production by Course Level	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Lower Division	32,120	30,754	30,298	28,496	27,503
Upper Division	22,629	23,233	22,413	20,693	21,148
Graduate I	5,920	5,796	5,796	5,008	4,805
Graduate II	877	1,016	761	828	777
Total	61,546	60,799	59,268	55,025	54,233

Degrees Awarded by Level	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
Bachelor's	648	692	733	657	682
Master's	165	181	155	122	110
Doctoral	12	8	8	12	11
Total	825	881	896	791	803

Faculty by Rank	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructor	Lecturer	Total
2020	16	22	36	44		118
2019	16	20	34	38	10	118
2018	16	19	34	44	14	127
2017	21	17	31	44	11	124
2016	17	20	23	47	11	118

Faculty by Full-Time/Part-Time Status and Sex	Full Time			Part Time		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
2020	41	54	95	9	14	23
2019	41	52	93	11	14	25
2018	39	48	87	21	19	40
2017	43	49	92	16	16	32
2016	34	45	79	22	17	39

Employees by Job Group	Executive/Admin/Managerial	Faculty	Professional	Technical/Paraprofessional	Clerical/Secretarial	Total
2020	7	118	56	11	19	211
2019	7	118	62	12	17	216
2018	7	127	64	13	19	230
2017	7	124	61	16	16	224
2016	7	118	49	31	18	223

Grant and Contract Awards	Research	Public Service & Other	Total
2019-20	\$ 141,999	\$ 201,133	\$ 343,132
2018-19	\$ 155,708	\$ 158,153	\$ 313,861
2017-18	\$ 192,907	\$ 98,606	\$ 291,513
2016-17	\$ 20,000	\$ 172,672	\$ 192,672
2015-16	\$ 19,729	\$ 249,496	\$ 269,225

Strategic Priorities

I. Cultivate High-Quality Academic Programs

Offering rigorous, quality academic programs will prepare our students for success in their chosen fields and careers. C&IS will provide all students with an academically challenging environment, high-quality course offerings, and teaching excellence. We are committed to the development of faculty, support services, and resources that help deliver quality academic programs. We seek to provide optimal use of technology in support of teaching and learning, curricular and co-curricular innovation, and academic program development to prepare students for an evolving global society.

II. Enhance the Research Culture

A robust research culture advances knowledge and creativity while enhancing student and faculty experiences. C&IS will provide undergraduate and graduate students with experiences that promote scholarship and faculty mentor relationships. We are also committed to developing our research culture by increasing the level of research and creative activity while further integrating research as part of the student learning experience by providing resources and support to achieve research objectives and compete nationally and internationally.

III. Improve Internal and External Communities

The communities of C&IS enrich the experience of our faculty, staff, and students. Forging strong relationships both internally and externally helps build a supportive, dynamic college environment. We understand that our alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students deepen the educational experience and ensure the success and vitality of the College. A strong community also enhances the work life of every faculty and staff member. We are committed to strengthening these communities to allow every member to contribute and learn from each other.

IV. Provide a Learning Environment that Promotes Diversity, Equity, Leadership, and Service

Diversity of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, life experience, political perspective, and economic condition promotes a rich academic experience for students. Ensuring equitable access reinforces this commitment to diversity. Leadership and service by students, faculty, and staff supports intellectual, professional, and personal development and contributes to the development of leaders, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. C&IS will provide an environment that encourages and celebrates diversity, equity, leadership, and service among everyone in the College's community.

V. Strengthen National and International Profiles

C&IS recognizes the importance of creating an international reputation and prominent leadership in our fields of study. Nationally recognized programs and faculty will help C&IS attract and retain quality faculty/staff, undergraduate, and graduate students. Through partnerships, outreach, and leadership, the College seeks to strengthen the educational impact of its students through national and international opportunities, leadership, connectivity, and awards.

UA Strategic Plan Mapping

In the fall of 2015, The University of Alabama initiated a University-wide strategic planning process that culminated in the creation of four strategic goals that serve as the pillars of the University's strategic plan.

During the strategic planning process, the College of Communication & Information Sciences mapped each of the College's five strategic priorities to one overall institutional goal, ensuring alignment as the College advances both institutional and unit-level strategic plans.

The University of Alabama Strategic Goals

The College of Communication & Information Sciences Strategic Priorities

Provide a premier undergraduate and graduate education that offers a global perspective and is characterized by outstanding teaching, high-quality scholarship, and distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs.

- I. Cultivate High-Quality Academic Programs
- V. Strengthen National and International Profiles

Increase the University's productivity and innovation in research, scholarship, and creative activities that impact economics and societal development.

- II. Enhance the Research Culture

Enrich our learning and work environment by providing an accepting, inclusive community that attracts and supports a diverse faculty, staff, and student body.

- IV. Provide a Learning Environment that Promotes Diversity, Equity, Leadership, and Service

Provide opportunities and resources that promote work-life balance and enhance the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and staff.

- III. Improve Internal and External Communities

Key Result Areas

Key Result Areas (KRAs) are tailored statements of how C&IS plans to expend energy and resources to accomplish the College's five strategic priorities, with each KRA supporting multiple priorities.

In developing the KRAs, the Executive Council's intent was for the KRAs to be specific enough to guide implementation decisions while also being flexible enough to support different strategies that emerge throughout the plan's duration.

Recognizing the importance of reacting to the environment, and that while there is a time for everything there is not necessarily time to prioritize everything at once, the Executive Council also determined primary emphasis would be placed on six of the KRAs per year, with an annual review of which KRAs warrant priority in the upcoming year.

- Elevate students' professional connections, skills, and preparation for the workforce through intentional programming and co-curricular experiences
 - Priorities I, III, V
- Prioritize graduate education, recruitment, and student services
 - Priorities I, II, III, V
- Enhance the recognition and influence of student and faculty research, creative, and grant activities, with particular emphasis on civic- and community-engaged scholarship
 - Priorities I, II, III, V
- Integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout curricula, programming, and recruiting
 - Priorities I, II, IV, V
- Revamp and champion changes to faculty and staff evaluation, wellness, and recognition
 - Priorities III, IV, V
- Cultivate initiatives that promote enrollment growth, with emphasis on student recruitment, retention, and online opportunities
 - Priorities I, IV, V
- Forge professional and community partnerships, with particular emphasis on faculty/staff connections, entrepreneurs, and parents
 - Priorities I, II, III, V
- Position the College as a leader in advocating for the civic good and social change through community engagement and grant activity
 - Priorities II, III, IV, V
- Foster a cohesive sense of relational community, particularly among faculty, staff, and graduate students
 - Priorities II, III, IV
- Invest in instructional technologies, equipment, and training to improve pedagogy
 - Priorities I, IV
- Nurture and incentivize collaboration across units within the College
 - Priorities I, II, III
- Build distinctive international programming and curricula for students and faculty
 - Priorities I, III, IV, V

Strategic Planning Process

Background

During the 20-21 academic year, Dean Mark Nelson and the C&IS Executive Council undertook an evaluation of the prior strategic plan, emphasizing a review of the strategic priorities and previous implementation strategy, while leading a college-wide process to develop an updated strategic plan.

Under Dean Nelson's leadership, C&IS made significant strides aligning with all strategic priorities and stated goals of the previous plan including launching four online graduate programs, more than doubling the College's graduate population as of Fall 2021, redesigning undergraduate curricula and cocurricular programming, reaching the College's highest second-year retention rate, growing the quality and size of the full-time faculty, and enhancing the College's research culture and productivity including launching a Grant Writing Workshop.

The success of the College over the last five years and the University's strategic priorities remaining the same prompted the Executive Council to determine, with consensus feedback from faculty and staff, that C&IS's five overarching strategic priorities were still compelling and relevant. Yet, feedback identified that some of the previous plan's goals leaned overly broad, the number of objectives minimized impact, and the plan did not fully adapt to a changing landscape.

As a result, the College elected to retain the strategic priorities around which the community originally coalesced while tailoring the plan's focus to promote clarity and provide a mechanism for routine adjustments. The College community also emphasized the importance of structuring the plan in a way for units to support college-wide outcomes while maintaining discretion and providing a mechanism for all faculty and staff to contribute throughout the duration of the plan.

Plan Creation

Early in the 20-21 academic year, the C&IS Executive Council shared a call for proposals to the entire C&IS community to collect tangible ideas in order to advance the College. These tangible ideas related to the existing strategic priorities. Additionally, the College hosted listening sessions with undergraduate and graduate students where ideas and areas of emphasis were recorded.

The collective list of ideas was pulled together and analyzed by a representative working group of faculty, staff, and Board of Visitors members to distill the essence and emergent themes of the submitted ideas into draft KRAs that supported multiple of the College's strategic priorities.

Draft KRAs were shared in college-wide virtual town halls to collect input while discussing importance and prioritization. The Executive Council then met to interpret the feedback, tailor and finalize the list of KRAs, and determine an initial priority ordering for the 21-22 academic year, setting the stage for implementation discussions.

During their respective summer retreats, the Executive Council and each College unit began identifying specific initiatives and ways to operationalize the KRAs in the upcoming year, resulting in the official plan launching at the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester, including a proposal form for stakeholders to continually submit new ideas and initiatives in support of the Key Result Areas.