

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
FY2021 Annual Review Narrative Survey

Unit Name: The Information School

Programmatic & Academic Vitality Narratives

- 1)** Have you made any changes to your unit's annual budget development process from the response provided last year? If yes, please briefly describe the changes you've made to your unit's annual internal budget development process. If no, please answer with a simple, "no changes." *Word Limit: 500*

No changes.

<OPB inserting FY20 response, below>

The iSchool's budget process engages faculty, staff and student leaders throughout the year to development and refine growth and other strategic plan assumptions, needs and priorities. Our planning looks forward three years to ensure financial stability and maintain our ability to support current and future strategic investments and growth plans. Each step in our budget cycle includes reviewing and revising our goals, assumptions, priorities and potential budget investments list (the "wish list") with our leaders. The typical budget cycle follows this schedule:

- Nov/early Dec: Establish high level goals and priorities for the next fiscal year; review/refine with leaders.
- Dec/Jan: Prepare initial budget plans for the next fiscal year + 3 years, to include enrollment change plans and fee-based tuition rate proposal; review with leaders; submit to the Provost and UWCC.
- Jan/Feb: Review/confirm current ongoing/continuing resource allocations with budget managers and key leaders; request proposals for budget changes.
- Jan-Apr: Monitor and adjust budget plans to align with UW policy changes, ABB and fee-based enrollment projections, salary increase authorizations and other factors.
- Apr/early May: Refine preliminary decisions on budget priorities and funding of internal budget proposals; review/refine with leaders.
- May/June: Inform budget managers and key leaders of expected budget allocations (may be pending final budget allocations from ABB or other centrally controlled resources)
- June/July: Finalize budget allocations and decisions; communicate any changes from preliminary budget to leaders as needed.

- 2)** Have you made any changes to your unit's strategic plan in the past year? If yes, what are 3-5 key elements of your unit's new/revised strategic plan? If no, please comment on the progress you've made in 3-5 key areas of your strategic plan. *Word Limit: 500*

Yes, we made some changes to our strategic focus and refined our areas of strategic visibility:

- **Bring the Information School together into a single location.** After a number of failed attempts to bring the iSchool into a single location, we are engaged in a new plan, partnering with the Human-Centered Design and Engineering department, on a new building where Sieg Hall is. Our planning includes **identification of "bridging" space** to allow the School to meet existing/expanded teaching/research needs.
- **Expand access to our undergraduate offerings.** Informatics is one of the most competitive majors on campus, with fewer than 25% being admitted each year. A minor created to help alleviate demand on the major, in 1 year, became the biggest on campus. We are working to expand our degree program by 90-140 per year (total students in program will be 600-700).
- **Expand access to our Master in Information Management via a professional online program option.** To remain competitive with peer programs, most of which have an online degree option, and to increase the attractiveness of our program to domestic students, we are partnering with an online program management provider to expand our

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existing degree program with an online option (launch expected Winter 2021). This online program will provide a high, professional quality level of student experience, with expanded access and reach while having negligible impacts on physical space or staffing.

- **Create a diversity pipeline for students, faculty and staff.** We are developing mechanisms to enhance alumni engagement alumni, to better support current students, and to recruit applicants with more diverse backgrounds. We are also planning to increase outreach to K-12 schools to increase engagement with prospective undergraduate students. We are creating fellowships for students that particularly target under-represented minorities and have launched a pilot program (BoundLIS) with UW Libraries as a start. We have improved our use of faculty diversity statements and are including these earlier in our faculty search evaluation process. We are considering diversity in the creation of our hiring committees (faculty and staff) and are working to recruit faculty and staff that would add diversity.
- **Make the Information School the top research institute in information science.** Part of our effort is in supporting larger and riskier research projects, and part is focused on better communicating our research to the broader community. We are raising and redirecting funds to provide seed funding for riskier projects and the development of research centers of excellence that will have significant impact in the strategic areas of democracy and information literacy, the planet and environment, and health and wellness.
- **Make the Information School a great place to learn and work.** We are professionalizing our internal practices (both around faculty and staff processes) to respond to the growth over the past 20 years. We are working with our advancement team to raise funds for both faculty chairs/fellowships and student fellowships. We are working with faculty and staff groups to enhance our ability to recruit and retain high quality personnel.

3) What major obstacles or institutional barriers currently do, or will, hinder execution of your strategic plan? What are you doing to address these challenges? If no changes from your response to either component of this question from last year, please answer “no changes”: *Word Limit: 250*

The biggest obstacles we face are:

- **A solid plan for moving the iSchool into a single location and resolving our mid-term space needs.** Our alumni base cannot financially support a new building. We need support from central Advancement, Capital Planning and Development, and possibly External Affairs to help us put together and support a realistic strategy for fundraising for a new building, along with support from the Provost's office in communicating the priority of a new shared building for HCDE/iSchool. We will also need creative support to identify and quickly renovate space to address our now crisis shortfall in space for recent faculty, research and student growth.
- **Unclear relationship with Continuum College.** While Continuum College is considering restructuring fees charged to programs that have been consistently revenue-positive, the quality of the services that we and others receive is inconsistent and unsatisfactory. Further, Continuum College was unable to deliver a solid plan for our new online program. While we need very little service, we will continue to pay the standard fees for program management of this online program. As we look to professionalize the delivery of our online programs, we have an uncertain future with Continuum College regarding delivery of our existing online Master in Library and Information Science program.
- **Seattle is expensive to live in.** We are having difficulty recruiting and retaining high quality faculty, staff and students due to the expense of living in Seattle. Access to cheaper housing would help with recruitment and retention.
- **Access to classrooms.** As we look to meet the growing demand for Informatics, we need to grow some classes and expanding the numbers of sections of others. Growing the size of a class with the use of TAs and Reader/Graders is more affordable than hiring faculty/guest faculty to teach additional sections. However, doing so is challenging as

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the large classrooms are not readily accessible to courses that are not already using them. Further, the UW does not have classrooms that facilitate larger-scale studio-based learning.

- 4) Over the next year, could any of your planned strategic activities result in material changes to revenues or expenditures, faculty or staff workload, or the student experience within your unit/campus and/or another unit/campus? *Word Limit: 500*

We have included projected additional revenue and expenditures and addressed faculty and staff workload impacts for all strategic initiatives being implemented. Key changes included in our plans are:

- **Online MSIM program:** Launching the online MSIM program will initially require an upfront investment by the School but the program will repay the start-up costs within the first four years. By the fourth year, this program will generate additional resources for the iSchool above and beyond direct costs that will be utilized to support facilities investments (mid and long-term), planned faculty hires, staffing refinements and other costs associated with the School's strategic initiatives.
- **Refine staffing for internal efficiencies and process improvements:** Staffing changes being made to align our staffing with supporting the maturity of the School's research and teaching activities and the vision for responsive and agile processes have been included in these budget plans and are covered by existing/anticipated resources from MSIM and Informatics enrollment growth.
- **Facilities renovations and capital campaign:** The iSchool's initiation of a major campaign for capital funding for a building could require additional resources to support planning activities and intermediate temporary space renovations. Our operating budget plans include holding some funds in reserve to augment capital and central funding as well as continuing funding the cost of rental space.
- **Expand access to Informatics program:** We anticipate growing this program by 50% across the next three years (see Section 6 for more detail). Initial growth in our program requires investments from our reserves due to the ABB funding lag but is expected to generate a modest amount of additional resources for the School above and beyond direct costs. These resources will primarily be utilized to support additional faculty hires to sustain continued growth and add to the resources generated by the Online MSIM program for supporting facilities investments (mid and long-term), staffing refinements and other costs associated with the School's strategic initiatives.
- **Enhance online learning for the Master of Library & Information Science program:** We are partnering with UWCC in redeveloping the format of our online learning environment. This is on top of previous investments we have made in hiring for our Online Learning team. Costs to redevelop all courses in the program are estimated to be \$400K to \$500K over the course of several years. We will fund this in part from program revenues but will also need to use some of our reserves.
- **Creation of new research centers of excellence:** With a focus on increasing the research stature of the Information School, we will be looking to launch new research centers of excellence. While this will cause a short-term increase in expenditures, this should pay off in increased revenues for the school. For example, the recently launched Center for an Informed Public required more time from our staff and temporary staff than originally planned for but has resulted in a multi-million dollar externally funded center, with a number of outstanding significant matching requests from external donors.

- 5) What is your unit doing to effectively use or redeploy resources in a way that benefits your unit/campus and/or other units/campuses? *Word Limit: 500*

The iSchool is doing the following to enhance the effective deployment and utilization of our resources:

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- **Refining staffing and staffing models for internal efficiencies, collaboration enhancements and process improvements:** We have and are continuing to assess and align our staffing with supporting the maturity of the School's research and teaching activities and the vision for responsive and agile processes. We are building collaborative relationships between operational teams to improve efficiencies, communication, job skills and knowledge and provide more effective support for our faculty, students and researchers. We are focusing skilled resources on developing better tools and systems to support making processes more transparent and effective for our faculty, staff and students.
- **Creating capacity for supporting start-up of research centers.** Utilizing the experience of the Center for an Informed Public, we are looking to build the knowledge and skills within our faculty and staff to support the development and launch of future research centers.
- **Refining the allocation of funds that support strategic research initiatives and support faculty work.** The school is reviewing and refining the way that internal funds are allocated to improve the impact on iSchool research, teaching and scholarly work.
- **Maximizing the utilization of physical space.** While we work on a solution to our space challenges, we continue to find ways to increase the capacity for work and collaboration within our existing space to support faculty, staff and students by collaborations with other units, utilizing furniture that takes less space, moving staff to more shared space configurations and increasing office sharing arrangements.

6) For UW student facing units, what are you doing to improve the experience and outcomes of students on your campus or in your unit? What could the University do to support your efforts? *Word Limit: 500, Leave blank if N/A*

The iSchool has made recent extensive investments that are directly tied to improving the student experience, including:

Growth of Academic Programs in response to demand - As mentioned above, the Information School has been steadily increasing the number of courses and seats in classes to better accommodate the overwhelming demand for the Informatics minor, data science electives, and service courses for STEM majors that fulfill the diversity requirement. We have obtained approval to run two Informatics admissions cycles each year, to increase access for transfer students and others who are delayed in completing our high-demand prerequisite courses. We expanded our popular MSIM degree (currently about 15% acceptance rate) with a one-year option in Autumn 2019. We will significantly address access to this program with the new online option, mentioned earlier. The University can support these efforts by providing more consistency around ABB allocations and summer quarter offerings, so that we can forecast and plan 3-5 years. The University could help prioritize the transition to a modern student registration system with robust functionality for managing course waitlists.

Technology Tutors - We have hiring experienced students with advanced tech skills to work in our computer labs as tutors. This has become increasingly important as the expanded population of Informatics minors have typically had less opportunity for technical preparation.

Informatics Peer Advising – We hired 7 final-year students to provide information and advising for 1st year Informatics students and prospective students. Peer Advisors hold regular office hours and participate in writing workshops with applicants. They provide insight into the actual experience of taking Informatics coursework and other activities in which Informatics students participate. This has helped to manage the volume of demand on our Advising Staff and complements formal guidance with an “insider” perspective.

Mentorship programs – We are implementing formal mentorship programs for students in our Informatics, MSIM, and MLIS programs. Students are partnered with industry professionals for career planning and networking. We host mentoring events, have an assistant to support logistics/communication and faculty lead to recruit, and train mentors. About 1 out of 4 majors will participate in this program this year. The University can help by providing units with further guidance, support, and best practices in managing relationships with industry partners.

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Capstone Sponsor Manager - iSchool students are increasingly pursuing capstone projects sponsored by industry. While these are rich learning opportunities, these arrangements also lead to many complicated relationships such as intellectual property rights, non-disclosure, compensation. This position added in Autumn 2019 will help students and sponsors navigate these challenges. We have been working with the Office of Technology Transfer and Co-Motion in this and welcome the University's continued support in this effort.

Course champions - For undergraduate courses with multiple sections, we have designated a veteran faculty member (for a small stipend) to serve as the primary point of contact for maintaining and updating a common syllabus, communicating with instructors for all sections, and mentoring new instructors teaching each section. This results in a more consistent student experience across sections. The University can support this by continuing dialogue about effective use of part-time faculty and providing training resources to help units mentor these faculty.



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Tuition Based Program Rate Recommendations - Narrative Section

[NOT APPLICABLE TO THE ISCHOOL]

Responses to the questions below are required for each tuition category that your unit/campus recommends adjusting. If you are recommending changes for multiple tuition categories, please differentiate your responses within each question.

- 1) Please explain why each proposed change is needed and how your unit/campus will use new incremental tuition revenue increases or absorb incremental tuition revenue losses.
- 2) Explain whether and how each proposed change will affect peer comparisons and/or whether a market analysis was conducted.
- 3) Discuss the impact of each proposed change on student debt load.
- 4) Describe whether you expect the proposed tuition rate(s) to result in any substantial changes to enrollment (including a change in the resident/nonresident composition) or to the volume of waivers awarded.
- 5) For each proposed change, please explain what would happen if the change were not implemented (e.g. deficit, loss of staff positions, etc.). If a proposed change is part of a plan to eliminate a current deficit, please indicate that.
- 6) For each tuition category that you have proposed changing, please discuss your unit/campus's overall tuition rate strategy for the next 3-5 years. In your response, please explain whether and how your long-term strategy connects to "market" rates (e.g. where do you want to be, rate wise, compared to peers?)

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Communication with Faculty & Student Stakeholders

Communication of your unit's annual review materials, including fiscal vitality data, narrative responses and tuition rate recommendations is an important and necessary component of the University of Washington's Annual Review process. Your responses to the questions below will be documented and included as part of the annual review materials provided to Executive Leadership of the UW.

If the meeting schedules of faculty and student leadership groups present a challenge, please make accommodations to get approval within the necessary time frame. If necessary, you may submit an update to OPB at a later date, after faculty and students have had an opportunity to review.

- 1) Please select the date that FACULTY leadership within your unit/campus was consulted and provided the opportunity to provide input as part of this budget planning exercise. If, due to scheduling difficulty, you are unable to consult with faculty leadership before the February 3, 2020 submission deadline, please select the date you are scheduled to consult with FACULTY leadership and, immediately after that date, please provide an update to Jed Bradley

Friday, February 7, 2020

- 2) Please list a point of contact for your FACULTY leadership (name and UW email address)

Chair of the iSchool Elected Faculty Council: David Levy, dmlevy@uw.edu

- 3) Please select the date that STUDENT leadership within your unit/campus was consulted and provided the opportunity to provide input as part of this budget planning exercise. If, due to scheduling difficulty, you are unable to consult with student leadership before the February 3, 2020 submission deadline, please select the date you are scheduled to consult with STUDENT leadership and, immediately after that date, please provide an update to Jed Bradley

Thursday, February 13, 2020

- 4) Please list a point of contact for your STUDENT leadership (name and UW email address)

The Student Leadership Council can be contacted through our Director of Student Services, Wendie Phillips (wrp@uw.edu).

- 5) Enrolled students affected by tuition rate increases should be consulted on proposed increases before proposals are finalized. Please describe when and how students were consulted and summarize the feedback they provided regarding EACH of your tuition recommendations.

The iSchool does not have any tuition rate increases included in this package. We consulted with our fee-based degree students (MLIS and MSIM programs) regarding fee-based rate increases at the Student Leadership Council meetings on November 15, 2019. They provided feedback indicating they understood and supported the rationale for the MLIS and MSIM program tuition rate increases. Those rate increases will be presented to the Provost by Continuum College. We will discuss the tuition rates again when we meet with them on February 13, 2020.