2012

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
School of Information
and Library Science

SILS 2012-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

October 1, 2012
SILS 2013-2020 Strategic Plan

1. Introduction to the 2012 School of Information and Library Science Strategic Plan

SILS stands among the leading research-intensive schools devoted to educating information professionals. In the past two decades SILS and its peers have broadened research and educational missions beyond scholarly publishing and libraries to the entire spectrum of human information activities. This trend is manifested in what is characterized as the international i-School movement and SILS is an exemplar in demonstrating this 21st century view of information theory, practice, and education. This strategic plan benefits from the advances and challenges of the first decade of the new century and provides a foundation for the SILS of 2020 and beyond.

2. Vision, Values, and Mission

2.1. Vision.

Our vision is to be the leading information school in the world. We will be the foremost school that understands and explains the problems of creating, accessing, and using information; that proposes and critiques possible solutions to these problems; and that produces alumni who can put those solutions into practice. We see SILS as an accessible and inclusive magnet for talent and ideas. We envision the brightest people in the world coming to Chapel Hill physically or virtually to learn, research, discuss, and experience information theory and practice. We envision our alumni as innovative leaders in the information professions; our faculty as distinguished thinkers and actors in scholarly forums and as inspiring mentors on campus and online; our staff as skillful and supportive professionals; and our students as engaged learners and researchers who are aggressively recruited by leading cultural and corporate organizations. We see excellence, compassion, creativity, and impact in all that we do.

2.2. Values.

This vision is rooted in three core sets of values: values we share with the information and library science field, values we share with the UNC-CH community, and values specific to SILS.

Information professionals have expanding roles in all facets of modern life. However, they all draw upon core values that underlay the way they solve problems and do their work.

- Universal access—equitable and easy access empowers all people to make good decisions and advance their lives; SILS values open and inclusive discussion and systems that make information accessible broadly and freely.
- Intellectual freedom—progress depends on creative expression; SILS values diverse thinking and protects human rights of expression.
- Organization of information—structure and order can increase access and use; SILS adds value to information through principles and techniques that index, annotate, and architect documents, collections, and data streams.
- Knowledge stewardship—human progress depends on preserving knowledge; SILS values the complete intellectual past.
- Collaboration—teamwork supports synergy, facilitates complex endeavors, and fosters social thinking; SILS values and encourages group work.
• Self-directed learning—libraries have long served as resources for independent learning and digital collections of resources are now augmenting physical collections; SILS values resources and services that allow people to learn at will and on-demand.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a research-intensive state university with “lux and libertas” (light and liberty) as its founding principles. These principles are manifest in core values that SILS also embraces.

• Excellence—the world deserves nothing less than our very best ideas, actions, and beliefs;
• Access—as a state university UNC believes all people in the state deserve to learn and attend regardless of socio-economic condition;
• Inclusion—UNC believes that an inclusive environment fosters creativity and learning and strongly values diversity in all its dimensions.
• Multidisciplinary collaboration—UNC encourages and promotes cross-unit research and education

SILS has evolved over its 80-year history, and there are core values beyond those above that continue to guide it to meet its mission.

• Good of the Order—SILS is a community that values community above individual and collaboration over competition. We compete on many levels and support individual excellence but look for ways to leverage this to the good of the whole school rather than simply to maintain a loose federation of individuals.
• Evidence-based action—SILS adopts the North Carolina state motto “Esse quam videri” (to be rather than to seem) and takes action based on evidence and reflection.
• Leadership—SILS values people who accept responsibility and act with integrity, vision, and skill.

2.3. Mission.

SILS educates innovative and responsible thinkers who will lead the information professions; discovers principles and consequences of information and its use; creates systems, techniques, and policies to advance information processes and services; and advances information creation, access, use, management, and stewardship to improve the quality of life for diverse local, national, and global communities.

This mission is rooted in the values of our field, our university, and our school and seeks to achieve our vision as the leading information school in the world. It has four components: education, basic research, design and development, and real world engagement. Our educational mission is manifested in our degree programs, in field studies and internships, and in the collaborative research conducted by our students with faculty and other students. Our basic research mission is rooted in the recognition that data, information, and knowledge are the engines of science, industry, government, and the human experience. We study how information is created and flows among people and organizations, and how it is used and reused, managed, and preserved. Our design and development mission manifests in interacting systems that include computational components (hardware and software), organizational components (indexes, metadata, ontologies), access components (user interfaces), and policy
components. We develop and evaluate these interacting components in principled and systematic projects and investigations. Our engagement mission is motivated by the recognition that information is socially embedded in culture and that real world problems are solved by people armed with knowledge of the past, contemporary information, and tools for exploration and decision making. Engagement means not only leveraging information and tools beyond the campus, but also defining, learning about, and defending protocols, practices, rights, and responsibilities in a variety of contexts.

3. SILS Today.

In the fall of 2012, SILS is composed of about 400 students, 26 full-time faculty, and 15 professional staff. Four searches for new faculty are underway over the course of this academic year. SILS offers BSIS, MSLS, MSIS, PMC, and PhD degree programs and participates with other units in 8 dual-degree programs and 8 certificate programs. In Fall 2012, we offer 62 sections of courses as well as 7 online sections and 6 special sections (field studies, special seminars). Twenty-seven of the 62 regular course sections are taught by adjunct instructors or SILS doctoral-student teaching fellows. End-of-semester course evaluations indicated that students believe that instruction at SILS is excellent; summary ratings, S11, F11, and S12, averaged 3.7, 3.8, and 3.8, respectively, on a 5-point scale.

Our acceptance rates are competitive for students in our field (for 2012 rates were: 81% BSIS, 60% Masters, 23% PhD) and our graduates have high rates of placement upon graduation. SILS ranks 1st of all i-schools on doctoral student placement, and 3rd on placements in other i-schools (2004-2010 data). In 2011, our BSIS graduates ranked first among UNC graduates in job placement upon graduation according to the “First Destination Survey” completed by the University’s Career Services. SILS has more than 4700 living alumni and an active Alumni Association that holds events each semester to help students discover career options. Our development efforts generated $200,000 in gifts for 2011-12 as well as several estate planned gifts.

In addition to teaching, SILS faculty are engaged in research on a variety of problems and published more than 100 peer-reviewed papers in the last academic year. In 2011-12, there were 56 active multi-year research awards totaling $19M from 12 different sources with 15 different SILS faculty listed as principal investigators. This total included 8 new awards totaling $4.5M.

SILS, like other units at UNC and around the US, has undergone substantial budgetary reductions over the past three years (losing more than $400,000 in state funds). This has severely curtailed our ability to support research assistants for faculty (only assistant professors get research assistant support in 2012-13) and to hire a full complement of adjunct instructors.

SILS is housed in three floors of Manning Hall where all faculty, staff, and administrative offices reside and where about 50 of the course sections meet. In the 2011-12 year we acquired 6 offices on the first floor of Manning Hall and expect to acquire the lower level of Manning Hall in 2012-13. In 2012, a number of special initiatives are underway, including: the LifeTime Library Project, a national collaboration to establish research data infrastructure (DataNet), a joint project with RTI to establish

1 http://bierdoctor.com/2012/05/22/hiring-and-placement-in-the-ischools/
research programs in health information technology, and a campus-wide effort to develop a Professional Science Master’s Program in health informatics. The WiderNet Project, an international organization dedicated to “improving digital communication to all communities and individuals around the world in need of educational resources, knowledge and training,” will move from the University of Iowa to SILS in 2012-13.

3.1. Challenges Faced by SILS.

SILS faces seven general challenges that will shape the future of the school in 2020 and beyond.

- More than half of the tenure track faculty members today are full professors and the period of this plan will see active recruitment of new faculty due both to retirements and expanding programs. Recruitment and retention of faculty are thus important factors within our strategy.
- The demands of the state and nation for information professionals are growing. Our plans for the immediate years ahead include aggressive growth in selected areas while recognizing the economic and infrastructure constraints we face. This will require both innovative faculty recruiting if we are to maintain our current overall student to faculty ratio of 15:1, and careful revision and expansion of curricula. Coincident with requirements for additional faculty are requirements for increased support staff.
- The world is becoming increasingly connected, complex, and interdependent. Mutual understandings and problem solving demand new research and development that leads to solutions to information access, quality, and management if we are to solve the great challenges to humanity and the global environment.
- While we look forward to expanding into the lower level of Manning Hall in 2012-13, its optimal utilization will require a major renovation of the building, which will entail temporary quarters for 18-24 months.
- Over the next years, we will need to find the best approach to define and deliver our educational programs. One of our strengths is the quality that comes from residential, full-time immersion in our educational programs. The demands of working professionals aiming to gain new skills in a highly competitive and stressed information economy and the development of effective tools and techniques for learning at a distance provide new challenges and opportunities for SILS’ educational programs.
- We need to develop techniques and strategies to measure accountability, productivity, and success. The rising costs of higher education bring renewed attention to all programs and pressures to demonstrate return on investment for parents, students, and the public. This is especially crucial for state institutions like UNC and our challenge is to continue to provide equitable access to learning while demonstrating our value to the public.
- Because state resources have been lost over the past few years, we need to create revenue streams that will support our efforts in education, research and development, and engagement. SILS must raise funds to support our students (scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and work-study), to maximize our use of Manning Hall and continue to develop our technical infrastructure, and to recruit and retain our faculty and staff while adding new positions to allow for planned growth. Although some of this increased support will come from campus and school-based tuition, this challenge will require redoubled efforts at obtaining grants and contracts and greatly expanding our private fund-raising efforts.

To advance our mission and realize our vision to be the leading information school, SILS must meet these challenges and redouble its efforts on all fronts: educational program, research and development, engagement, and school resources and operations.

4.1. Educational Programs.

SILS offers five degree programs, several certificates, and collaborates in many dual-degree and certificate programs. Each program deserves individual consideration. However, there are some general objectives that cut across all programs.

Educational Program Cross-Cutting Objectives

- Maintain an overall 15:1 student:faculty ratio; to do this, we will need to recruit at least ten additional faculty members
- Add new adjunct instructors with deep experience in libraries and archives, and in corporate and government settings
- Improve student recruitment strategies (increase use of media, visits, alumni outreach) and financial support packages and mechanisms (scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, work-study)
- Secure more paid internships; expand the CALA and CaTA programs
- Improve and formalize placement strategies
- Expand linkages with UNC Center for Faculty Excellence and other support services to promote innovative and effective instruction
- Increase the number of hybrid or online courses we offer to 20% of our course offerings each semester, including massive open online course (MOOC) offerings
- Add staff support for recruitment, advising, information technology, and placement activities (three more full time staff equivalents)

4.1.1. BSIS Program.

The undergraduate program delivers a major (BSIS) and a minor in information science. The undergraduate committee has gathered data on the evolution of the program over the past decade and made projections for a 10% per year growth rate through 2020. With 54 majors in fall 2012, this projects to approximately 120 majors for fall of 2020. The number of students seeking an IS minor (37 in fall 2012) will likely grow as well over this period to approximately 80 minors in 2020. This growth in the undergraduate programs requires new faculty, additional sections of existing courses, a substantial expansion of the range of courses we offer, and additional support staff. Because the information field is changing rapidly with new technologies, both regular course revision and development of new courses are critical to the continued success of the program in placing graduates into information careers. More of our faculty must teach undergraduate courses and all incoming faculty will be expected to teach some undergraduate courses. Note that in 2012 a dual BS/MSIS program was introduced and this has generated good interest among our 2012 admits. The dual degree also reinforces the need to distinguish the BSIS and MSIS courses and manage 400-600 level courses that may have undergraduate or graduate enrollees. The undergraduate committee has developed a recruitment and curriculum
expansion plan for the 2013-20 period. We will need to increase the number of sections offered by at least a factor of 3, which will require the addition of 3 or more full-time faculty and a collection of additional adjuncts.

BSIS Specific Objectives

- Increase number of students by 10% per year through 2020 (120 majors, 80 minors)
- Increase the number of sections (existing plus new courses) by a factor of 3 by 2020
- Increase the proportion of full-time SILS faculty who teach at least one BSIS course every two years, to 65% (currently 40%)

4.1.2. MS Programs.
The MSLS program has long been the flagship program at SILS and we must maintain its reputation and quality into the future. In fall 2012 there are about 230 MSLS students enrolled and we would like to maintain or gradually increase this number over the coming years. It is essential that regular curriculum revision be undertaken so that this degree program continues to attract the most promising students who continue to assume prominent leadership roles in libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions.

The MSIS program has varied considerably in size over the past decade, ranging from a high of 107 in 2002 to about 60 in the fall of 2012. We aim to bring this program to the same level of reputation as the MSLS. To do so we must revise the curriculum to explicitly distinguish it from the MSLS and be more aggressive in recruiting students. Adding more practicums and internships that link the classroom to the workplace is one strategy we will adopt. We aim to increase the size of the MSIS to 150 by 2020 and to offer more sections of courses online.

MS Specific Objectives

- Increase the proportion of core courses taught by full-time faculty
- Revise the MSLS curriculum to reflect changes in library and archive practice
- Revise the MSIS curriculum to emphasize workplace problems and emerging information technologies
- Increase the size of the MSIS program to 150 by 2020

4.1.3. PMC Program.
The Post-Masters Certificate Program (formerly called the Certificate of Advanced Study Program) is a post-Master’s degree that over the past decade has had very few participants (one or two per year). A major initiative is to reinvigorate the PMC by offering specializations in high-demand areas through a hybrid on-campus and online delivery model. In 2012-13 we will introduce a PMC with a data curation specialization. We expect students to complete this program over 2-3 years while working professionally and to deliver most of the courses online. The development of online courses and new marketing actions will inform expansion of the PMC to other specializations such as academic library leadership and health informatics. We expect these programs to be self-sustaining with school-based tuition revenues rather than depending on state funding.

PMC Specific Objectives

- Initiate PMC in data curation program with 20 students enrolled by 2013-14, expanding to 40 by 2020
- Develop hybrid on-campus and online delivery model
• Expand to 1-2 other specializations by 2020

4.1.4. PhD Program.
The SILS PhD program is highly regarded and produces scholars who are sought by the academy and industry. The program size has held steady at roughly 50 students for the past decade. In the coming years, we expect to maintain the program at this size or slightly larger, maintaining a student:faculty ratio of 2:1. A key challenge is to continue to find full funding for at least 4 years for all of our PhD students.

PhD Specific Objectives
• Guarantee support for all PhD students for at least 4 years (stipend+tuition)
• Increase research and travel support for doctoral students, to provide an average of $500 per year to each active student
• Provide shared work space for all PhD students in residence
• Increase the diversity of the student body, in terms of areas of interest, nationalities, etc.

4.1.5. Other Programs.
SILS is a partner in 8 dual-degree programs and we expect that these programs will continue to serve a small number of students each year. This collaboration is strategic as it provides connections to other units on campus and beyond (NCSU, Duke). SILS offers a certificate in Digital Curation that graduate students at SILS and elsewhere on campus take in addition to the graduate degree. SILS is the coordinator of three certificate in health informatics programs (CHIP) in collaboration with the schools of Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health. CHIP has attracted significant interest and currently has 37 students enrolled. We expect that these certificates will continue to attract students, many of whom choose to become MSIS students. A campus-wide Professional Science Master’s Program in Biomedical and Health Informatics is also expected to be approved for 2014. SILS will continue to be an active partner in that program as it develops. SILS also partners with other units on 4 other certificate programs that attract small numbers of students. In the years ahead, SILS will continue to play a leadership role in health informatics initiatives across campus.

Other Program Specific Objectives
• Expand the CHIP to at least 60 active students, as part of a campus-wide health informatics initiative

4.2. Research and Development.
SILS is a research-intensive school and we aim to sustain and expand our research and development impact. SILS scholars attack a wide range of information problems using the entire spectrum of tools and techniques, and leverage these projects as contexts for educational experiences. We aim to involve students in research at every opportunity and we know that this integrated research and education perspective is one of the distinguishing characteristics of SILS. The freedom to define and conduct research on topics of personal interest is a keystone of academic freedom and scholarly self-actualization. This freedom is balanced at SILS with our strong values of community and good of the order. SILS scholars are interested in participating in research that is driven by collective resources (e.g., collegial talent and interest, infrastructure) and by problems of contemporary interest to the field and society. The first driver of collaborative research is based in clusters of faculty and students who work on problems central to the information field. At SILS, two general clusters focus on content/data and on
interactions among people, systems, and content. The content/data cluster investigates how content is created (including mining and reuse), structured (including relationships, vocabularies, and ontologies), managed by people and systems, curated and preserved, and the life cycle policies and constraints related to information resources. The interaction cluster investigates individual or social intentionality related to information, personal and augmented cognition and emotion, actions taken by humans and systems over time, and the impact and effects of information on individuals, organizations, and society.

Beyond these theoretical clusters of interest and excellence, SILS is situated in a major research university with exceptionally strong health affairs schools and programs and cultural resources, in a geographic location that includes the Research Triangle Park (RTP) and a collection of universities and corporations that excel in information technology and health sciences, and in a time that strongly values information services. Over the past decade, SILS has leveraged this context to develop its research strengths in health informatics, data structures and curation, human-information interaction, and library and archive services (both physical and digital). Multiple SILS scholars are active researchers in these areas and we aim to maintain these existing strengths, as well as promote the research contributions of individuals and small teams of SILS scholars who work on additional critical problems.

SILS scholars use a variety of different perspectives and methods. Some work on theory development while others aim to develop and evaluate system-based solutions. Some have already developed research teams that are supported with external grants or contracts and, as SILS continues to develop in the years ahead, external funding will play an increasingly important role in our collective research and development.

Research and Development Specific Objectives

- Develop collaboratory space in Manning Hall to support research teams
- Increase the per-faculty external funding participation level to at least 80% of SILS faculty (currently about 60%)
- Increase the external research funding level at SILS at least 10% each year (doubling the current amount from $4.5M in new grants in 2011-12 to $9M in 2020)
- Increase SILS faculty contributions to peer-reviewed journals and conferences by 15% by 2020
- Increase travel support for faculty to present research results at conferences and meetings by 25% by 2020
- Expand the Kilgour Research Award that seeds proposals for external funds to three awards per year by 2020

4.3. Engagement.

SILS is committed to active participation in geographic communities ranging from the local to global communities, and in intellectual communities ranging from school and university committees to national and professional society groups. Locally, faculty and students connect learning to community engagement through service-based course projects (e.g., at risk youth literacy programs in schools and public libraries; storytelling in schools, libraries, and senior centers; database and web design services for local government and non-for-profits), through special school-wide projects (e.g., building a Habitat for Humanity house), through collaborative projects with the state library and archives, and through our ongoing management of the EPA Library. We reach out to libraries and corporations in the region and
around the world. SILS runs seminars in London and Prague each summer and has initiated training programs in Morocco and Egypt. In the Spring 2013 semester, the WiderNet Project will move to UNC which is expected to lead to collaborations with underserved communities in Africa and South Asia as well as in the criminal justice system in the US where Internet access is not available. SILS faculty, staff, and students serve in leadership roles on campus committees and task forces, local and state boards and advisory bodies (e.g., UNC Employee Forum; Chapel Hill Public Library; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library) and serve on national advisory and review panels (e.g., NSF, NIH). SILS faculty are also active participants in professional societies, assuming top leadership positions in the American Society for Information Science and Technology, the Medical Library Association, the Society of American Archivists, the Special Libraries Association, and the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative. We aim to increase our engagement with these various communities even more in the future.

**Engagement Specific Objectives**

- Enhance the linkages between classroom learning and real-world problems through increased service-based learning and entrepreneurial opportunities
- Continue to operate the EPA Library in RTP and enhance mutual research and learning synergies
- Enhance digital library hosting and support by adding large-scale data sharing services to ibiblio
- Establish training and exchange programs with schools and organizations in Africa, Asia, and South America through WiderNet
- Continue to develop the LifeTime Library project as a school-wide sandbox for managing digital assets and expand it to include all SILS alumni.
- Regularize ‘Academy Meets the Real World’ Summits in North Carolina and beyond

### 4.4. Administration, Infrastructure, and Facilities.

#### 4.4.1. Administration and Infrastructure.

SILS supports its education, research, and engagement missions with an administrative staff that includes a dean; senior associate dean responsible for the academic program; an assistant dean responsible for administration; directors of Information Technology, the SILS Library, Communication, and Development; coordinators of the BSIS, MSLS, MSIS, and health information technology programs; and managers or coordinators for student services, career services, grant and accounting services, and desktop computing support. As part of its administrative functions, SILS will review and continue to diversify staffing patterns for faculty (lecturers, professors of practice; tenure track; research; 9 and 12 month variations) and staff (directors, coordinators, managers, support staff).

In addition to the educational and research programs, the administrative team coordinates school-wide events (e.g., two commencement programs, three funded lectures, two Board of Visitors meetings, and various special events each year). SILS maintains strong communication channels with the SILS community (active listservs and social media updates; digital signage in Manning Hall lobby), alumni (weekly online newsletters; two printed newsletters sent to all alumni twice a year) and the public (press releases; SILS website and social media updates). SILS has an active development effort that engages alumni and friends of the school in fund raising and advocacy. The SILS Information Technology and Research Center includes the SILS Library and IT Laboratories. More than 2000 visitors per week visit the ITRC during the academic year. The Library is operated by the University Library and includes two professional librarians who manage a collection of more than 100,000 volumes and process more
than 1000 interlibrary loan requests from libraries and individuals in the state, US, and the world. The IT labs include the director of IT and a desktop manager who maintain 18 servers and 160 laptops and desktops in the school, provide technical support for SILS classrooms, and lead the school’s virtualization, cloud-computing, and security efforts. SILS is in the midst of fast-paced and massive-volume changes in data generation, management and use and thus requires state-of-the art equipment and dynamic talent to support a world-class educational and research environment. Recruiting, retaining, and supporting these individuals and tools is a significant challenge for our future.

Administration and Infrastructure Specific Objectives

- Develop and implement transparent and rigorous assessment techniques for students, faculty, staff, and the school
- Reward faculty research and teaching excellence and staff service excellence
- Increase annual gifts by 10% each year
- Develop and implement SILS plan for Carolina First Campaign through 2021 ($9M)
- Continue transformation of SILS Library from print to electronic sources and services
- Continue virtualization of SILS servers and move from physical computer labs to virtual labs available anytime and anyplace for students, staff, and faculty

4.4.2. Facilities.

Manning Hall is in serious need of renovation and is included on the campus list of buildings that will be renovated in the immediate years ahead. We expect to acquire the lower level of Manning Hall in early 2013 when the Odum Institute moves to Davis Library. This will require significant planning, collaboration, and resources if we are to maximize this additional space. Beyond this move, we expect that Manning Hall will undergo a major renovation before 2020 and this will cause severe disruption to our operations as we vacate the building for 18-24 months. Both of these changes represent exciting challenges to our creativity and commitment to smart growth and achieving our vision of the leading information school.

Facilities Short-Term Objectives

- Continue to upgrade classrooms, offices, and public spaces to support virtual meetings and online teaching
- Create shared research labs in proximity to operational production environments such as ibiblio and WiderNet
- Adapt Manning 01 as a SILS classroom; adapt other spaces to group project spaces

Facilities Long-Term Objectives

- Develop and implement a renovation plan for Manning Hall that maximizes the extant volume of the building and leverages mobility and shared space practices
- Develop and implement a swing-space solution for the school while Manning Hall is under renovation