

IIS Strategic Plan Summer 2025

The Institute for Intelligent Systems (IIS) at the University of Memphis is uniquely positioned at the intersection of language, learning, and artificial intelligence (AI)--fields that are rapidly reshaping research, education, and society. As a leading interdisciplinary institute, IIS brings together researchers, students, and partners across the University and beyond to advance knowledge, foster innovation, and create public impact. This strategic plan articulates IIS's vision, mission, core values, and goals as we move into our next phase of growth and leadership. It reflects our deep commitment to collaborative research, student and faculty success, and public service while ensuring that our work meaningfully contributes to the University's mission and the broader world.

IIS VISION

- To serve as an internationally recognized interdisciplinary collaboration hub advancing research, education, and innovation in *language, learning, and AI* through impactful partnerships with regional, national, and international communities.

IIS MISSION

- To foster collaborative research and knowledge creation in IIS's core areas of language, learning, and AI.
- To deepen understanding of intelligent systems, spanning including humans, computers, and the built and natural environments.
- To catalyze innovative, cross-disciplinary research across the Social and Physical Sciences, Humanities, STEM, Music and Art, Communication Sciences, Medicine, and Law.
- To create opportunities for a broad, deliberate, and interdisciplinary research community of faculty, students, industry, and community partners committed to advancing the frontiers of language, learning, and AI.
- To promote public understanding of the rapidly evolving landscape of intelligent systems through accessible, public-facing science translation.

IIS CORE VALUES

- We strive to be a trusted, accessible resource that communicates advances in language, learning, and AI to a wide audience.
- We support student success through interdisciplinary collaboration, funding, mentorship, and professional development.
- We lead in the development of accessible tools, software, instruments, and knowledge resources that advance the study of language, learning, and AI.
- We provide an intellectual space for dialogue and inquiry on issues of regional, national, and global importance in our core areas.
- We foster an inspiring environment that embraces and elevates clever, collaborative, and visionary ideas.
- We value integrity, efficiency, creativity, empathy, and rigor in all we do.

IIS GOALS

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1. Aggressively Provide Access and Opportunity

Promote IIS's unique capacity to support students and faculty through grant-funded and sponsored research projects, training opportunities, and community partnerships.

2. Create Opportunities to Succeed

Create professional development pipelines, leadership experiences, and career-advancing activities for students and faculty at all career stages.

3. Deliver Outcome-Focused Academics

Train students in cutting-edge research methods across language, learning, and AI to prepare them for leadership in both academic and professional sectors.

4. Strengthen Research Enterprise

Facilitate innovative, interdisciplinary collaborations within and beyond the University ecosystem, and build capacity through strategic partnerships.

5. Recruit, Retain, Reward, and Recognize Our People

Actively collaborate with departments and units across campus to identify talented faculty, staff, and students and invest in their ideas to ensure their continued success

6. Exemplify Operational Excellence

Demonstrate innovation, efficiency, transparency, and resourcefulness in our operational processes and planning.

7. Generate and Steward Financial Resources

Support faculty and students in aggressively and proactively pursuing external funding and contracts through logistical and professionalization partnerships resources.

8. Advance Public Impact

Enhance IIS's contributions to public knowledge and societal well-being through community-engaged research, public-facing science, and knowledge translation.

Summary

Through this strategic plan, the IIS reaffirms its commitment to fostering transformative research, inclusive education, and real-world impact. Guided by these values and goals, IIS will continue to serve as a dynamic hub for collaboration across disciplines, helping to position the University of Memphis as a leader in advancing knowledge creation in the areas of language, learning, and AI. We are excited to deepen existing and invite new partnerships while supporting and inspiring the next generation of researchers, innovators, and changemakers.