STRATEGIC PLAN
Games and Interactive Media
Nicholson School of Communication and Media
College of Arts and Humanities

Florida Board of Governors 2025 Mission:

The mission of the State University System of Florida is to provide undergraduate, graduate and professional education, research, and public service (e.g. broader impact) of the highest quality through a coordinated system of institutions of higher learning, each with its own mission and collectively dedicated to serving the needs of a diverse state and global society.

UCF's Vision:

UCF has embarked on a bold venture to become a new kind of university that provides leadership and service to the Central Florida city-state. While sustaining bedrock capabilities in the future, the university will purposely pursue new strengths by leveraging innovative partnerships, effective interdisciplinary, and a culture of sustainability, highlighted by a steadfast commitment to inclusiveness, excellence, and opportunity for all.

UCF's Mission:

The University of Central Florida is a public multi-campus, metropolitan research university that stands for opportunity. The university anchors the Central Florida city-state in meeting its economic, cultural, intellectual, environmental and societal needs by providing high-quality, broad-based education and experience-based learning; pioneering scholarship and impactful research; enriched student development and leadership growth; and highly relevant continuing education and public service initiatives that address pressing local, state, national, and international issues in support of the global community.

UCF's Goals:

1. Offer the best undergraduate education available in Florida.
2. Achieve international prominence in key programs of graduate study and research.
3. Provide international focus to our curricula and research programs.
4. Become more inclusive and diverse.
5. Be America's leading partnership university.

The Five Pillars:

1. Increasing Student Access, Success and Prominence
2. Strengthening Our Faculty and Staff
3. Growing Our Research and Graduate Programs
4. Creating Community Impact Through Partnerships
5. Leading Innovation in Higher Education

Nicholson School of Communication and Media's Mission:
NSCM will be guided by the following goals for the next 18 months (2019):
1. Maintain an environment where faculty can flourish in their teaching, research, and engagement/service.
2. Successfully add the doctoral program in strategic communication.
   a. This endeavor aligns NSCM with the university's Collective Impact Effort
3. Prepare and execute a smooth transition of specified programs, faculty, and staff to the UCF Downtown campus.
4. Commence with an organizational transformation from programs to department within NSC.
5. Additionally, to support the university's Collective Impact strategy and Board of Governors' Funding Model, the school will pursue certain efforts, e.g., increase the number of philanthropically endowed professorships, and increase the number of faculty, staff, and students who have international experiences.

NSCM will be guided by the following goals for the next 3 years (2020):
1. Maintain an environment where faculty can flourish in their teaching, research, and engagement/service at both UCF Downtown and main campuses.
2. Retain high quality, representatively diverse faculty, staff, and students and recruit more.
3. Identify new and appropriate international partners to expand international opportunities for faculty, staff and students.
4. Additionally, to support the university's Collective Impact strategy and Board of Governors' Funding Model, the school will pursue certain efforts, e.g., increasing the graduation rate of transfer students, increase national and international recognition of faculty and student excellence, increase the number of graduate students, and increase the number and amount of research awards and external funding.

NSCM will be guided by the following goals for the next 5 years (2022):
1. Maintain an environment where faculty can flourish in their teaching, research, and engagement/service.
2. Retain high quality, representatively diverse faculty, staff, and students and recruit more.
3. Reunify mass communication and human communication programs, faculty, and staff on the UCF Downtown campus.
4. Continue with organizational transformation from programs to departments for the professional programs in NSC.

5. Additionally, to support the university's Collective Impact strategy and Board of Governors' Funding Model, the school will pursue certain efforts, e.g., increase bachelor's degrees awarded in areas of strategic emphasis.

NSCM will be guided by the following goals for the next 10 years (2027):
1. Maintain an environment where faculty can flourish in their teaching, research, and engagement/service at both UCF Downtown and main campuses.
2. Retain high quality, representatively diverse faculty, staff, and students and recruit more.
3. Double the national and international recognition of faculty and student excellence.
4. Become one of the preeminent doctoral programs in strategic communication in the United States.
5. Launch NSCM to college status at the University of Central Florida, offering exceptional education to undergraduate and graduate students.

I. GaIM Goals

Primary Goals

In alignment with the UCF Collective Impact

1. Become recognized as a leader in innovative, forward thinking games, web, social media, and digital media design research and education
2. Allow our undergraduate students to graduate on time with competitive degrees, reflected in curriculum, and high-quality portfolio pieces to support applications that are competitive and attractive to future employers
3. Expand and improve the size, quality, and reputation of our graduate programs
4. Develop industry partnerships, scholarships, and funded research positions to offset student costs of education
5. Attract and retain a diverse, world-class faculty
6. Contribute to cultural community impact with attention to not only intellectual merit of scholarly and creative work, but also on broader impact of the work in the region and beyond (A group of faculty and staff developed some solid plans under the overarching leadership of Dean Moore that can be found in the UCF Five-Year Institutionalization Plan)

Supporting Goals

1. Develop stronger relationships with local, regional, national, and international professionals
2. Address workforce needs by training students and giving them the tools necessary to succeed
3. Establish and maintain partnerships with the regional and local community
4. Support the presentation of outstanding student and faculty work
5. Increase faculty exposure and recognition
6. Attract new financial support for scholarships, research, creative activities and programs
7. Leverage better relationships and ongoing connections with alumni
8. Promote inclusiveness and diversity in curricula, performances, research, and creative activities among faculty, staff and students

II. Internal Department Assessment

Based on 2015 program reviews and other factors

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

1. People:

1.1. Excellence in personnel, (e.g. administrators, faculty, staff, and students)
1.2. High quality, yet relatively inexpensive degrees
1.3. Mixture of in-class and online courses for flexibility
1.4. Diversity of students and programs
1.5. Growing alumni base with successful alumni placed in multiple fields

2. **Environment:**
   2.1. Geographical setting in a major metropolis with strong forecasted economic growth
   2.2. New Downtown Campus with state-of-the-art facilities for future integration of undergraduate program with graduate programs
   2.3. Access to museums and industry for real-world partnership programs, integration of curriculum, and opportunities for internships and jobs
   2.4. Located near the Florida Space Coast, at the Entertainment Capital of the US and in the center of the Modeling and Simulation Industry

3. **Program:**
   3.1. Offer a wide diversity of BA, MA, MS programs
   3.2. Contemporary and competitive curriculum (e.g. recently revised in several major areas)
   3.3. Large school with high enrollment and growing (BA) creates dynamic exchange of ideas
   3.4. Large university with multidisciplinary collaborative culture (e.g. UCF Clusters)
   3.5. Diversity of academic programs, materials, methods, approaches in theory and practice creates a place and opportunity for all interests
   3.6. Compatibility with industry and organizational needs and workforce demands for student expertise in art and technology skills
   3.7. Program quality rankings: Game Design/Dev ranked #1 in the South and #2 in US public schools (Animation Career Review, May 2017)

Weaknesses

1. **People:**
   1.1. Class size and faculty load ratio are far above standards at accredited institutions
   1.2. Demands of creating new curriculum on faculty is not recognized or optimized
   1.3. Scheduling is not optimized
   1.4. Not all courses that should be taught in computer labs are scheduled in computer labs
   1.5. Some service assignments should be reassigned to administration
   1.6. Lack of diversity in the full-time faculty
   1.7. Limited support for visiting faculty exchanges (e.g. outgoing)
   1.8. Lack of high-quality graduate students (MA, MFA, PhD) required to support research work needs of faculty

2. **Environment:**
   2.1. New campus and building will separate communities making collaborations more difficult

2.2. Student experience is expected to be separate, not equal to main campus
2.3. Transportation issues are expected to reduce social opportunities needed for cohesive culture (e.g. sports, events, and clubs)

3. **Program:**
   3.1. Lack of accreditation (is it really a weakness?)
   3.2. Limited financial resources: travel, graduate waivers (GTAs/GRAs), equipment, shipment costs, etc.
   3.3. Limited facilities: research labs, art studios, offices for growth, flexible teaching spaces, production spaces, PC Gaming labs, CAVE, WALLS, AR, VR, and MR labs
   3.4. Lack of efficient equipment loan programs and personal to support (e.g. need a person to check-in and check-out equipment)
   3.5. Limited support for visiting faculty exchanges (e.g. incoming)
   3.6. Limited staff support in advising, grant writing, marketing, recruiting, production, lab support, etc.
   3.7. Lack of robust system for tracking and engaging alumni
   3.8. Lack of MFA, Ph.D. programs
   3.9. Lack of Professional Certification programs

Opportunities

1. **People:**
   1.1. Faculty interest and achievements are diverse and complementary, represents future growth
      1.1.1. Games, serious games, gamification, advertising games, etc.
      1.1.2. Web, apps, and social media in industry and organizations
      1.1.3. AR, VR, MR applications in education, advertising, cultural institutions, entertainment, health and wellbeing research
   1.2. Increase external research funding potential (e.g. young tenure-track faculty cohort promises future growth)
   1.3. Student interest and market demand is high with continued growth expected
      1.3.1. Games, serious games, gamification, advertising games, etc.
      1.3.2. Web, apps, and social media
      1.3.3. AR, VR, MR applications

2. **Environment:**
   2.1. Increasing donor funds for scholarships, programs, and faculty support
   2.2. Increasing Orlando industry funded labs for faculty and student research and learning
   2.3. Central Florida offers diversity in opportunities for internships and jobs
      2.4. Modeling and Simulation (DOD) contractors
      2.5. Entertainment industry
      2.6. NASA
      2.7. UCF Medial, future growth
      2.8. Art and cultural organizations

2.9. Orlando business community

3. Program:
   1.1. Connecting students and faculty internationally by developing partnerships abroad
   1.2. Filling regional workforce needs with internships and jobs
   1.3. Develop new partnerships within UCF Downtown Campus programs and Orlando City community organizations and industry partnerships:

UCF Downtown Campus

UCF Undergraduate
- Communication & Conflict B.A.
- Digital Media B.A.
- Emergency Management B.A./B.S.
- Health Informatics and Information Management B.S.
- Health Services Administration B.S.
- Human Communication B.A.
- Legal Studies B.A./B.S.
- Nonprofit Management B.A./B.S.
- Public Administration B.A./B.S.

UCF Graduate
- Communication M.A.
- Digital Media M.A.
- Emergency and Crisis Management M.E.C.M.
- Health Administration M.H.A.
- Health Care Informatics M.S.
- Interactive Entertainment M.S.
- Nonprofit Management M.N.M.
- Public Administration M.P.A.
- Public Affairs Ph.D.
- Research Administration M.R.A.
- Strategic Communication Ph.D.
- Urban and Regional Planning M.S.

Threats

1. **People:**
   1.1. Student demand continues to grow and outpaces new faculty lines
   1.2. Talented faculty leaving for higher paying jobs elsewhere
   1.3. Faculty morale problems due to uneven workload assignments or compensation
2. **Environment**:
   2.1. Shrinking government funding at Federal and State levels
   2.2. Competition from STEM fields

2.3. Rapid pace of change of technology market requires annual upgrading of all tools
3. **Program:**
   3.1. Competition with for-profit universities offering online, flexible programs to working students
   3.2. Economic disparity in student body (e.g. students who can afford equipment and those who cannot)

III. The Job Market

What are the trends in the digital media, games, and web design industry? What are the degree programs that prepare students for those opportunities?

Sample careers	Skills acquired in program(s)	Program(s) that meet needs
Entrepreneurial careers	- Creativity and innovative problem solving - Ability to lead others while also taking direction - Working within a hierarchy - Working in stressful environments - Critical thinking with the ability to self-correct based on constructive feedback - Multi-tasking abilities - Collaboration and teamwork in industry and education - Formal presenting and writing - Strong work ethic - Technical proficiency - Knowledge of narrative and storytelling	All degree programs
Interface designers		

Gallery and museum assistants, curators, and installation designers	• Skilled knowledge of drawing, design, and color • Master craftsmanship in artistic fine arts techniques • Experience with 3-D scanning and printing • Mixed media fine arts expertise • Artistic critique presentation and response skills	
Designers and art directors		
Teachers in art and design (K12 and higher education)		
Industrial and manufacturing design (e.g., clothing, jewelry, toys, technology products)		
Environmental/landscape designers		
Modelers, Riggers, Texture Artists	• Skilled knowledge of drawing, design, and color • Combining technology with aesthetics • Visual storytelling	
Interactive Designers		
Technical Artists		
Game designers/developers	• Coding/scripting • Project management • Application development & design • Mechanics • Level/page design • User experience design	GaIM B.A. (games and web)
Game artists		

Environmental artists	• Interactive design fundamentals • Concept and creation of databases	
Technical artist		
Game programmers		
Game testers		
Web designers/developers		
Mobile media designers		
Social media managers		
Usability designers		
Interactive designers of AR, VR, MR		
Mixed reality designers		
Mixed reality exhibit designers / developers		

Consultants / Entrepreneurs		
K12/higher education professionals		

I.V.   GaIM Strategic Goals

1. Expand multidisciplinary research, education, and broader impact, both inside and outside UCF to achieve multiplier effects across programs
2. Attract and retain diverse faculty with excellent potential to contribute research, creative, and educational innovations and impact
3. Support faculty seeking funded research
4. Promote undergraduate retention and graduation rate of students
5. Fortify educational excellence with faculty driven creative and scholarly research
6. Expand and improve the size, quality, and reputation of our graduate program (MA in Visual Language and Interactive Media)
7. Develop partnerships to enrich classroom experiences and future employment opportunities of our students

Goal 1: Expand multidisciplinary research, education, and broader impact, inside and outside UCF to achieve integrated, interdisciplinary programs of impact

Action: Focus energy and resources on multidisciplinary activities that integrate UCF Cluster and GaIM programs for impact
·   Number of collaborations between faculty for increased research, education, and funding opportunities both inside and outside of UCF ·   Number of collaborations for increased work included in permanent collections ·   Number of collaborations for increased with published books ·   Number of collaborations for increased a record of competitive grant funding ·   Number of collaborations for increased with invitations to juried shows, exhibitions, conferences, etc. ·   Number of collaborations for increased student participation ·   Media coverage of faculty and student on significant projects published on online distribution channels of digital media

Goal 2: Attract and retain diverse faculty with excellent potential to contribute research, creative, and educational innovations and impact

Action: Recruit and retain diverse faculty renowned for their scholarly, creative, pedagogical, and research accomplishments
·   Increase faculty credentials for creative and scholarly work (e.g. Ph.D. and MFA from highly ranked institutions and programs) ·   Professors of Practice or Guest Lectureships from industry (e.g. no terminal degree but are international leaders widely recognized in industry) ·   Increase faculty retention rate to X% ·   Increase gender and race/ethnic diversity among faculty population to be representative of US population diversity as a goal ·   Diversity comparison between faculty and student demographics should be proportionally representative at a minimum

Goal 3: Support faculty seeking funded research

Action: Expand and improve external funding profile through acquisition of grants, contracts, and partnerships
·   Increase number of grant applications to internal and external ·   Increase number of Fulbright applications ·   Increase number of NSF, NASA, NIH, NEA grant applications, and related organizations ·   Increase number of grant applications to foundations ·   Increase number of contracts ·   Increase number of partnerships

Goal 4: Promote undergraduate retention and graduation rate of students

Action: Increase freshmen 1st year retention rate and improve 6-year graduation rate (more students graduating sooner)
·   Increase 1st year retention rate (e.g. defined as first year at UCF, including traditional freshman in their first year of college, and transfer students). ·   Increase the percent population, graduation rates in 4th year, and reduce the percent population exceeding 6th year coursework. ·   Student satisfaction surveys of the curriculum and program as an experience, after 1st year at UCF, entering 4th year, and graduation exit survey, and 6-12 months post-graduation. ·   Feedback from student open forums ·   Feedback about signature experiences, (e.g. upper level courses, such as service learning, undergraduate research, independent study, and internships   · ·   Data from NSCM advising/scheduling. (This is not a metric, rather a way to see if met metric. A metric related to this would be looking at increasing student usage of advising serves by such as increased advisor visits or something of that nature) ·   Data from the UCF Mine Portal registrar's office

Goal 5: Fortify educational excellence with faculty driven creative and scholarly research

Action: Focus energy and resources on outward-facing activities that bring distinction and prestige to GaIM programs.
·   External program and faculty recognitions, rankings, and prestigious awards ·   Media coverage of faculty and student achievements ·   Number of faculty with work included in permanent collections or exhibitions ·   Number of faculty with published books, peer-reviewed journal articles, significant digital media published online ·   Number of faculty with a record of competitive grant funding ·   Number of faculty with invitations to juried shows, exhibitions, conferences, etc. ·   Number of faculty with Fulbright awards or external visiting artist residencies ·   Number of faculty with prestigious professional awards or distinctions ·   Number of faculty with regional/national/international affiliations ·   Number of students entering prestigious graduate programs ·   Number of students entering competitive careers with highly-regarded companies earning competitive wages ·   Number of incoming students with competitive graduate-college-level fellowship awards (e.g., Presidential or Trustee or Provost fellowships)

Goal 6: Expand and improve the size, quality, and reputation of our graduate programs (MA in Visual Language and Interactive Media)

Action: Invest resources strategically to help our graduate program numbers grow and to support and enhance the quality of our existing graduate programs.
·   Increase the quality of the facilities and build a state-of-the-art learning environment ·   Increase quality of graduate students applications, (e.g. admissions standards criteria, GRE scores, and GPA, independent fellowships, work experience, and portfolios) ·   Increase the number of graduate students on assistantship ·   Increase the number of graduate students enrolled in each program ·   Increase the number of graduate student awards ·   Increase job placement rate of graduates ·   Increase graduate student satisfaction on exit survey

Goal 7: Develop partnerships to enrich classroom experiences and future employment opportunities of our students

Action: Collaborate with UCF Downtown Campus and programs to define qualitative goals that convey economic and cultural impact to the community
·   Leverage UCF Downtown Campus and programs to support multidisciplinary partnerships ·   Advisory board for GaIM (e.g. community, industry, cultural organizations, faculty, alumni, and students) ·   Host open house annual event to showcase student and faculty creative digital media works