

Strategic Plan for the Institute of Behavioral Science

University of Colorado, Boulder

2016-2021

*Submitted by the  
IBS Strategic Planning Task Force  
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Approved by the IBS Board  
August 10, 2016*

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**Introduction**

**Planning From a Position of Strength**

The University of Colorado Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS) was founded in 1957 as a center for interdisciplinary research, and has remained at the forefront of the social and behavioral sciences and a powerful force in collaborative engagement for more than half a century. Under the leadership of co-founder Richard Jessor and his successor Jane Menken, IBS grew into a leading institute for the University of Colorado, drawing faculty from across the social and behavioral sciences in work that transcends disciplinary boundaries and illuminates the complexity of social behavior and social life. Today, the Institute is not only known for its cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research, but it is increasingly recognized as an incubator of ideas. It also creates team projects that have important implications for social policy by emphasizing the human factors at the heart of society's most pressing problems. Why do people adopt or fail to adopt new technologies? How will we adapt to climate change? How can we better respond to natural hazards or prevent violence among young people? The need for the rare combination of theoretical insight and applied knowledge that IBS provides has never been greater.

**Context for IBS Planning**

In November 2015, IBS initiated a strategic planning process to engage the Institute in thinking deliberately and creatively about its future. IBS is a dynamic organization. As it plans for the next five years, it is poised to build upon its legacy. With a new IBS building completed in 2010, housing all its research programs together for the first time, and a new director, Myron Gutmann, hired in 2015, the Institute has begun a new phase in its development. It also faces a rapidly changing environment for higher education and research. Advances in technology and data collection, a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary research, and growing opportunities for local and international collaboration have opened up promising new avenues for discovery. At the same time, cuts in research funding and economic pressures on universities have created fierce competition for shrinking resources. This convergence of forces has created, along with challenges, significant opportunity for IBS. Funders, both public and private, increasingly recognize that society's most pressing problems require interdisciplinary solutions that bring together our understanding of human and natural systems, the kind of work IBS has pioneered for six decades.

**Plan for Inclusive Excellence**

IBS is committed to fostering inclusive excellence through a fair and welcoming cultural climate, broad access and equity, and an inclusive approach to curriculum and research. Over the next five years and beyond, and throughout its strategic plan for 2016-2021, IBS will build on its support for inclusive excellence through its hiring and student involvement; by helping meet the needs of diverse CU populations which in turn fosters campus diversity; and by advancing

research and education that have potentially broad impacts on issues of social discrimination and inequality.

IBS supports diversity in many forms: through the multiple methods and diverse perspectives we deploy to make discoveries; in the researchers, staff, students, and practitioners who conduct IBS work; and in the interdisciplinary nature of our work, drawing from across all departments and social and behavioral sciences. Not least, the substance of IBS research, from the social dimensions of natural hazards to the health and development of at-risk children, is deeply aligned with the values of inclusive excellence and can serve to promote those values at the University and in the larger world.

### **Strategic Planning Process**

In late 2015, IBS formed a Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) to draft a strategic plan based on broad outreach to all IBS constituencies. At its first meeting in December 2015, the SPTF discussed the mission and characteristics of the Institute today, identifying current challenges and opportunities. In January and February, the task force gathered information through five IBS round table discussions and more than 30 individual interviews, within IBS, across the CU-Boulder campus, and beyond. At its retreat in late February, task force members reaffirmed and expanded the Institute's mission and developed a preliminary set of strategic directions and high-level strategies that would move the IBS mission forward over the next five years. In early April 2016, task force members drafted a preliminary plan for future governance and membership, incorporating input from the IBS community. This draft plan will next be reviewed by the full IBS community, modified to reflect its suggestions, and then reviewed and confirmed by the IBS Board of Directors.

In order to facilitate the planning process, IBS engaged Cambridge Concord Associates (CCA), a strategic planning and governance group whose work focuses on institutions of higher education and their related research organizations.

### **The Strategic Planning Task Force**

Jason Boardman, Professor of Sociology, Director of IBS Health and Society Program

Nnenia Campbell, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Sociology

Joel Colvin, IBS Administrative Officer

James Dykes, Director of IBS Computing and Research Services

Monica Fitzgerald, Senior Research Associate faculty, IBS Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, and the Problem Behavior and Positive Youth Development Program

Myron Gutmann, Professor of History, Director of IBS

Lori Hunter, Professor of Sociology, Acting Director IBS Population Center

Judith McCabe, CU Population Center Grants Coordinator, Research Affiliate, IBS Environment and Society Program

Stefanie Mollborn, Associate Professor of Sociology, Research Affiliate, IBS Health and Society Program, and IBS Director of Interdisciplinary Training

Fernando Riosmena, Associate Professor of Geography, Research Affiliate IBS Population Program

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*Elaine Kuttner, Principal, Cambridge Concord Associates, Planning Consultants*

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**Executive Summary**

**Mission**

**IBS is committed to advancing knowledge of society's most pressing challenges, and to pursuing solutions to those challenges through innovative and interdisciplinary research, education, and engagement in the world**

**Strategic Directions**

**IBS and Research:**

Over the next five years, by supporting current and new activities, IBS will enhance its contributions to cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, knowledge, policy, and practice.

**IBS People and Their Value:**

Within five years, IBS will be a more diverse, cohesive, and vibrant community where everyone feels engaged and supported in their work.

**IBS and the University:**

Within five years, IBS will increase its contributions to the core mission of the University of Colorado Boulder through enhanced interdisciplinary teaching, research, and service, and by finding new ways to engage with the individuals and entities of the University community.

**IBS and the World:**

Within five years, IBS will strengthen its role as a premier resource for creating solutions to the most pressing challenges in the local community, the region, the nation, and the world.

**IBS Governance and Membership:**

Over the next five years, the Institute's governance structure and approach to membership will evolve to better support its commitment to innovative interdisciplinary research, teaching, and engagement.

**Strategic Plan for the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS)  
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Mission

**IBS is committed to advancing knowledge of society’s most pressing challenges, and to pursuing solutions to those challenges through innovative and interdisciplinary research, education, and engagement in the world**

*During their deliberations, the Strategic Planning Task Force reaffirmed the Institute’s long-time mission statement. They also enhanced the mission by adding “education and engagement in the world.” Their reasoning was as follows:*

The mission continues to capture the essential purpose of the Institute:

By pursuing solutions “*through innovative and interdisciplinary research,*” IBS engages in the systematic investigation of the world and creative collaboration across traditional academic boundaries.

Through its commitment to “*pursuing solutions to society’s most pressing challenges,*” IBS holds itself accountable to the larger society, beyond its own walls and beyond the University, and fosters research that aims to significantly improve societal well-being.

By adding “*education,*” the mission acknowledges the Institute’s current work in teaching and training, as well as its intention to expand upon it. As part of the IBS mission moving forward, the Institute will build upon its strengths to more fully engage:

- In the teaching mission of the University that formally engages graduate and undergraduate students in the learning and dissemination of knowledge, and
- In training activities that impart methods and techniques to practitioners, whether they are teachers, researchers field workers, or first responders.

By adding “*engagement in the world,*” the mission makes explicit its founding assumption that research should have an impact on societal well-being, and acknowledges the engagement and outreach this requires. It promotes the Institute’s potential as an open hub of intellectual discourse and knowledge creation that:

- Improves lives through research-based interventions
- Shapes social policy through research
- Connects widely with others through outreach across the University, in the Boulder community, and throughout the region, the nation, and the globe.

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Strategic Directions and Strategies

This strategic plan lays out five strategic directions that describe the trajectory of IBS over the next five years, along with high-level strategies for moving the Institute forward. The plan builds on existing strengths while establishing new directions.

**DIRECTION 1: IBS AND RESEARCH**

**Over the next five years, by supporting current and new activities, IBS will enhance its contributions to cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, knowledge, policy, and practice.**

*Rationale: Those engaged in interdisciplinary research, particularly research addressing major social challenges, are finding that their opportunities are greater than ever, despite an increasingly competitive environment. IBS is well positioned to take advantage of this moment in history by further diversifying its research portfolio, and cultivating projects of different sizes and types. To accomplish this, IBS will continue to strengthen and support the ongoing investigator-initiated projects that are the mainstay of its activities, while working to create additional ambitious, problem-based research projects that will last for decades and that build on new collaborations at CU Boulder and beyond.*

Strategies:

- A. In keeping with its original mission, IBS will consistently emphasize and invest in innovative and interdisciplinary research.
- B. IBS will continue to invest in its investigator-initiated research and other multi-faceted activities with the best possible infrastructure, incentives, and systems.
- C. IBS will generate ambitious new long-term activities and research agendas that draw upon the excellence of the Institute and the University.

Key Initiatives:

- a. Develop and implement programs for improving the capability of students, faculty, and staff to conduct interdisciplinary research
- b. Increase the capacity for research at IBS by growing the numbers of researchers in all categories
- c. Add new quantitative and qualitative primary data projects
- d. Develop new projects that emphasize data analytics, privacy, confidentiality, and security
- e. Increase implementation research: bringing evidence-based programs and practices into the field
- f. Expand evaluation research
- g. Build community-academic partnerships and research
- h. Develop long-term ambitious projects
- i. Create incentives for new internal and external collaborations, especially with CU Boulder colleagues

## **DIRECTION 2: IBS PEOPLE AND THEIR VALUE**

**Within five years, IBS will be a more diverse, cohesive, and vibrant community where everyone feels engaged and supported in their work.**

*Rationale: One of the great assets of IBS is the collegiality of its people – friendly, open, excited about ideas. As IBS adapts to its new building, it has an opportunity to ensure excellent communication, coordination, and support more broadly within the Institute, particularly across programs. IBS affiliates benefit and build on the Institute’s dynamic community when they can easily connect with one another, In order to show our value for people, IBS will support broad-based skill and career development for all staff, students, and faculty; increase support and mentoring for junior faculty; and promote diversity in keeping with the Provost’s initiative for inclusive excellence.*

### Strategies:

- A. IBS will facilitate the development of its students, faculty and staff through mentoring, leadership opportunities, and strong professional development programs, among other initiatives.
- B. IBS will build a more diverse organization while developing indicators for inclusive excellence and implementing plans for enhancing diversity. IBS will work with CU-Boulder leadership to secure resources for enhancing the diversity of IBS faculty, staff, and students.
- C. IBS will ensure equal access to timely information for its community.
- D. IBS will facilitate formal and informal interactions to share knowledge, promote collegiality, and foster a sense of community.
- E. IBS will develop new mechanisms to recruit and retain a diverse community of students, faculty and staff that reflects our commitment to inclusive excellence.
- F. IBS will develop policies in which expectations for IBS affiliates (for grants, service, and so on) are sensitive to the variations in affiliates’ career stages and funding landscapes.
- G. IBS will invest in a professional staff with the skills and number of people needed to ensure their ability to contribute to the organization’s leadership and growth.



### **DIRECTION 3: IBS AND THE UNIVERSITY**

**Within five years, IBS will increase its contributions to the core mission of the University of Colorado through enhanced interdisciplinary teaching, research, and service, and find new ways to engage with the individuals and entities that make up the University.**

*Rationale: As a leading institute at the University of Colorado Boulder and a powerful force in interdisciplinary research, IBS holds a prominent profile on campus and a reputation for collegiality. Drawing on its highly trained researchers, IBS will also increase its role in teaching and mentoring both graduate and undergraduate students. It will provide new incentives for interdisciplinary work, and promote qualitative and quantitative methodology and training. While remaining firmly grounded in the social and behavioral sciences, IBS will also seek to engage the broader campus scientific community in new interdisciplinary projects, lowering barriers to participation.*

Strategies:

- A. IBS will intentionally expand its role in the CU-Boulder teaching mission, increasing the role of IBS faculty, students, and staff in interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate teaching, mentoring, and training.
- B. IBS will reach out to members of the broader CU-Boulder community, and increase opportunities for interaction and participation in activities that cut across boundaries.
- C. IBS will work with other CU-Boulder units (departments, colleges, institutes) to develop new ways to collaborate and share resources.
- D. IBS will continue to work with CU-Boulder leadership to ensure that the necessary resources and incentives are available to support teaching and instruction, for example, by adding faculty lines in IBS or related units.

### **DIRECTION 4: IBS AND THE WORLD**

**Within five years, IBS will strengthen its role as a premier resource for creating solutions to the most pressing challenges in the local community, the region, the nation, and the world.**

*Rationale: As one of the premier interdisciplinary research institutes in the country, IBS has the opportunity and the obligation to establish a presence in the world that matches its extraordinary people and achievements. Through a strong communication and outreach strategy, the Institute will take advantage of this pivotal moment to ensure its position as one of the most prominent research organizations in the country. In doing so, IBS appropriately augments the already strong reputation of the University of Colorado Boulder while serving the institution, the region, and the larger world.*

Strategies:

- A. IBS will develop and implement a comprehensive and sustainable communication strategy that targets audiences at the local, national, and international levels.
- B. IBS will establish and invest in a high-visibility program to convene groups to engage in discussions about the most pressing social challenges in the world.
- C. IBS will continue to create and contribute resources and tools that can be used by researchers, students, communities, policy makers and practitioners.
- D. IBS will expand its commitment to cultivating academic-community partnerships towards the co-creation of theory, knowledge and practice.

## **DIRECTION 5: IBS GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

**Over the next five years, IBS will create a governance structure and approach to membership that enables it to realize the Institute's commitment to innovative interdisciplinary research, teaching, and engagement.**

*Rationale: As IBS changes, both by natural evolution and by design, its governance system must also change. The Institute's original interdisciplinary program structure has grown substantially, and Institute activities have continued to expand. IBS members and their departmental colleagues have called for greater levels of engagement and a more porous IBS overall. Recommendations include a new faculty organization, an expanded board of directors with broad representation from across IBS, and a well-documented governing system outlining clear roles and procedures. IBS will keep, and continue to build upon, its current structure of programs, while also seeking opportunities for innovative research, including new interdisciplinary Working Groups that could themselves become programs.*

*Such governing mechanisms will support the aspirations of the new strategic plan, and provide a strong foundation for the next phase of the Institute's development. They will ensure a more inclusive, transparent, and communicative IBS, able to facilitate a greater variety of high-quality research topics and related advocacy, engagement, outreach, and teaching.*

### Strategies:

- A. IBS will maintain its current structure of Programs and Centers while creating new opportunities that reflect scientific innovations for Working Groups and affiliates at large.
- B. IBS will create a faculty organization with rights and responsibilities that include carrying out selected elements of the strategic plan, and voting on affiliate membership and on specific hiring, promotion, and tenure matters.
- C. IBS will expand the Board of Directors to include the Director of Training Activities plus representatives of the center directors, untenured faculty, and professional researchers, with increased ex officio representation of staff and students.
- D. The faculty and Board of Directors will share decisions about future scientific directions at IBS.
- E. During the 2016-2017 academic year IBS will update its Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures, which will specify roles and procedures for governing bodies.