Ⅰ ILLINOIS

Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

PROPOSAL TITLE: Eliminate the Center for Digital Inclusion

SPONSOR: J. Stephen Downie, Associate Dean for Research and Professor, School of Information Sciences, (217) 265-5018, jdownie@illinois.edu

COLLEGE CONTACT: J. Stephen Downie, Associate Dean for Research and Professor, School of Information Sciences, (217) 265-5018, jdownie@illinois.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The **Center for Digital Inclusion** (CDI) at the iSchool will close as a separate entity effective July 1, 2018, subject to the approval of the Senate of the Urbana-Champaign campus. Its programs and initiatives will continue in the form of a distributed research model.

JUSTIFICATION:

The mission of CDI is to foster inclusive and sustainable societies through research, teaching, and public engagement about information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their impacts on communities, organizations, and governments. The iSchool remains committed to this mission, which will remain fundamental to the work of faculty.

The iSchool community has evolved considerably since the CDI was awarded its five-year probationary status as a center. Many of the faculty members and students who were involved in the day-to-day running of CDI have moved on to retirement, other institutions, other research projects or graduation and jobs. Notions of diversity, equity and inclusion have also evolved along with faculty/student interest in exploring these important topics beyond the digital realm and across all aspects of life. Upon reflection, current iSchool and CDI stakeholders have determined that the resources and overhead needed to maintain the CDI *as a center* would be better allocated to new endeavors and projects in the broader diversity, equity and inclusion domains. Thus, in lieu of a center, iSchool faculty members will continue to focus their research, teaching, and engagement on crucial issues of digital equity and social justice in the information professions.

Communications and strategies related to the CDI closure were developed in consultation with CDI's advisory board within the iSchool and the iSchool's Executive Committee. An external advisory board, initially suggested in the Center proposal, was never formed. Dean Allen Renear told the iSchool faculty, staff and students at the February 14 regular

faculty meeting that, subject to Senate approval, the iSchool would not be seeking permanent status for the CDI (i.e., the CDI would close); faculty and student representatives had no further comment at that time. News of the CDI closure has been posted on the iSchool website as of February 20, and it will be circulated in the electronic News & Notes during the week of February 20; this e-newsletter is sent to alumni and donors. *Intersections*, the biannual magazine of the iSchool, will include a story about CDI when it is published in June 2018. As of February 28, no further responses have been received from the iSchool or community stakeholders.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: *(Please respond to each of the following questions.)*

1) Resources
   a. How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal?

There is one active grant (US Ignite/NSF Smart Gigabit Cities) that was obtained by Dr. Gant. It has been transferred to Campus Research IT, with PI Tracy Smith, director of IT Infrastructure. An MOU between the iSchool and Campus Research IT supports the project coordinator on that grant, Chieh-Li (Julian) Chin, for 25% of her time. Ms. Smith and Ms. Chin will complete that grant in 2019.

CDI funds that remain are state funds and will be zeroed out by June 30, 2018.

   b. How will the unit create capacity or surplus to appropriately resource this program? If applicable, what functions or programs will the unit no longer support to create capacity?

Not applicable.

   c. Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources? If so, please provide a summary of the sources and an indication of the approved support.

Not applicable.

   d. Please provide a letter of acknowledgment from the college that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed program.

Not applicable.

2) Resource Implications
   a. Please address the impact on faculty resources including the changes in numbers of faculty, class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratios, etc.

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Project coordinator Dr. Sharon Irish, with assistance from a 50% graduate assistant, is compiling documentation for a final report, to be delivered by June 30. This report will include several video interviews with a key community partner (Tap In Leadership Academy) and provide lessons learned and possible future directions. This report will be made available to the campus and past community partners via IDEALS.

Dr. Irish currently has a 10% appointment at CDI. The iSchool is now exploring reassignment opportunities within the iSchool. The GA's appointment ends May 15.

There has been no Center coordinator since 2014. Susan Lafferty supported the Center for one day a week in 2014-15, but has since taken a job elsewhere on campus.

A full listing of CDI-affiliated faculty and their research areas is included as Appendix A.

  b. Please address the impact on course enrollment in other units and provide an explanation of discussions with representatives of those units.

Not applicable/no impact.

  c. Please address the impact on the University Library

The closing of the CDI as a separate entity will not have an impact on the University Library.

  d. Please address the impact on technology and space (e.g. computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.)

Not applicable/no impact.

For new degree programs only:

3) Briefly describe how this program will support the University's mission, focus, and/or current priorities. Include specific objectives and measurable outcomes that demonstrate the program's consistency with and centrality to that mission.
4) Please provide an analysis of the market demand for this degree program. What market indicators are driving this proposal? What type of employment outlook should these graduates expect? What resources will be provided to assist students with job placement?
5) If this is a proposed graduate program, please discuss the programs intended use of waivers. If the program is dependent on waivers, how will the unit compensate for lost tuition revenue?

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:

July 1, 2018

STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

The CDI is not referenced in the Programs of Study Catalog and as such, there is no statement.

CLEARANCES: (*Clearances should include signatures and dates of approval.* ***These signatures must appear on a separate sheet.*** *If multiple departments or colleges are sponsoring the proposal, please add the appropriate signature lines below.*)

Signatures:

J Downie

_____   _____
Unit Representative: Date:21 February 2018

_____   _____
College Representative: Date: 21 February 2018

n/a
_____   _____
Graduate College Representative: Date:

n/a
_____   _____
Council on Teacher Education Representative: Date:

Appendix A:
CDI-Affiliated Faculty and Their Research Areas

- **Abdul Alkalimat** (emeritus)—Digital inequality, community informatics, African American intellectual history
- **Catherine Blake**—Biomedical informatics, natural language processing, evidence-based discovery, learning health systems, socio-technical systems, data analytics, literature-based discovery
- **Bertram (Chip) Bruce** (emeritus)—Community informatics, environments to support inquiry-based learning, collaboration in knowledge making, new literacy practices
- **Nicole A. Cooke**—Human information behavior, particularly in an online context; diversity and social justice in librarianship; LIS education and pedagogy, particularly in the online environment; information literacy and instruction
- **Les Gasser**—Social informatics; collective, distributed, and self-organizing information systems; conceptual foundations of information; extreme-scale distributed simulation; origins and use of information in biological systems
- **Elizabeth Hoiem**—Children's literature and material culture, British literature, history of education and literacy, social history, child labor, thing theory, fantasy, science fiction, science and technology in literature, automata, digital humanities pedagogy
- **Brant Houston** (Journalism)—Nonprofit journalism newsrooms, digital tools for news-gathering, new business models for journalism
- **Emily Knox**—Information access, intellectual freedom and censorship, information ethics, information policy, print culture and reading practices
- **Rachel M. Magee**—Teens, youth, everyday life, technology use and non-use, youth services, social computing, values and design
- **Ann Peterson-Kemp** (emerita)—Community informatics, community inquiry
- **Michael Twidale**—Computer-supported cooperative work; collaborative technologies in digital libraries and museums; user interface design and evaluation; open-source usability; information visualization; ubiquitous learning; social learning of technology; rapid prototyping and evaluation
- **Kate Williams**—Technology use in local communities and by ordinary people; public libraries past, present, and future; social capital as a crucial resource in the information revolution

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic
Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820

February 22, 2018

Gay Miller, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Office of the Senate
228 English Building, MC-461

Dear Professor Miller:

Enclosed is a copy of a request from the School of Information Sciences to eliminate the Center
for Digital Inclusion.

Sincerely,

Kathryn A. Martensen
Assistant Provost

Enclosures

c: S. Downie
    A. Renear
    E. Stuby
    A. Elli