FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REGARDING THE PROPOSED
COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND INFORMATION

In discussions about the proposed College of Computing and Information (CCI), a number of questions have been raised about the effect this will have on the University. Following are some commonly raised issues, with responses from Peter Bloniarz, Associate Provost for Informatics and Dean of the School of Information Science and Policy.

1. **Q. What will be the impact on the number of seats in undergraduate Computer Science (CSI) and Information Science and Policy (ISP) courses for majors and minors?**

   A. Other than normal evolutionary changes in course offerings and seat capacities, no changes in Computer Science and ISP undergraduate course offerings are planned. Of course, with the fast pace of change in these fields, I expect that new courses and programs will emerge at all levels of the curriculum.

2. **Q. Will resources be diverted from undergraduate programs to graduate courses?**

   A. The creation of the new College will not shift resources from undergraduate to graduate programs. All existing programs, including Information Literacy courses in the General Education program, will continue unchanged.

3. **Q. What will be the impact on undergraduates who are not in the Computer Science Department in terms of access to Computer Science courses?**

   A. The creation of the new College will have no impact on the access to CSI courses. However, as the Informatics Faculty continues to develop, I expect that additional IT courses will be developed in a number of departments at the University beyond those currently listed in the IT Commons Course Catalog (http://www.albany.edu/itc/itc_course_catalog.html).

4. **Q. With the Computer Science Department moving out of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), will it be harder for CAS departments to partner on research and educational programs with them?**

   A. Administrative relocation of the Computer Science Department should not affect the ability of CAS departments to partner with either Computer Science or Information Science and Policy. All existing programs (such as the combined B.S. in Computer Science and Mathematics, and the combined M.A./M.S. in History and Information Science and Policy) will continue to be supported.

5. **Q. Will CCI undermine information technology programs located in CAS or other units at the University?**

   A. No. Other than Computer Science, no new resources are being transferred from other units to the new College. The Informatics Faculty will continue to support other departments across the campus in developing new IT programs across the campus.

6. **Q. What will be the impact on the budget of the College of Arts and Sciences? Are we taking more resources away from CAS than expenses? Will the move of the Computer Science Department from CAS result in a decrease in CAS resources? Will the Computer Science Department have fewer resources than it currently has in CAS?**

   A. The Provost's office intends to make the transfer as resource-neutral as possible. Working with that office, the deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Information Science and Policy are making an inventory of the

resources that are associated with the Computer Science Department with the intent of transferring them to the new College when it is created. The faculty of the new College will review this inventory as part of this process. To the extent possible, the transfer is being designed to be resource-neutral.

7. Q. What will be the impact on existing interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs in information technology?

A. Interdisciplinary programs that are currently approved (such as the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Information Science) should grow as the University continues to invest in interdisciplinary faculty hires across the campus.

8. Q. Will the creation of a strong College of Computing and Information divert resources from the university-wide IT Commons?

A. These two initiatives have interlinked goals – the IT Commons to foster interdisciplinary scholarship in disciplines across the campus, and the new College to provide a strong core related to computing and information – so to some extent investments in one support the other. Nonetheless, the budget for the IT Commons appointments will be maintained separate from those of the College's departments.

9. Q. What is the difference between the IT Commons and CCI? Why do we need both?

A. The IT Commons represents a new way of doing business on this campus. The IT Commons funds faculty appointments (that in turn support campus-wide programs), but the IT Commons has no faculty per se. IT Commons faculty appointments are normally interdisciplinary in nature and can involve home appointments in any department across campus. CCI is an administrative unit which has faculty (some of which may be funded in part or entirely by the IT Commons) and supports programs of research and education related to computing and information.

10. Q. What's the relationship between the IT Commons and the Informatics Faculty?

A. I expect that most if not all of the faculty in the Informatics Faculty will hold joint appointments in other departments across the campus. A minority of the faculty in the Informatics Faculty will hold formal split line appointments as opposed to affiliated faculty appointments. The IT Commons is a funding mechanism, managed by the Provost's office, that can fund many of these split line appointments.

11. Q. Is the Informatics Faculty a department?

A. Although it has many of the attributes of a department, the Informatics Faculty differs from most departments in that its faculty will typically have joint appointments in other departments, either within the new College or elsewhere on campus. At present, all faculty budgeted to Informatics have their primary appointment in the other department. In the future it is possible that some faculty could have primary appointments in Informatics.

12. Q. Why have any departmental structure at all in the College?

A. The fields of Computer Science and Information Studies are well-defined disciplines with well-established academic identities. Although a few universities have experimented with eliminating departmental structure, faculty strongly identify with these existing communities.

13. Q. Why not eliminate the Informatics Faculty and place it in either the Information Studies department or the Computer Science department?

A. Both departments have an important role to play in the programs of the Informatics Faculty. However, placing the Informatics Faculty in one department or the other would run the risk of making it more difficult for other departments to participate in the interdisciplinary programs of the Faculty, including the IT Commons. Keeping the Informatics Faculty separate, and giving it a singular mandate to foster interdisciplinary programs, seems the best way to preserve the campus-wide nature of the Informatics Faculty.

14. Q. Will existing Information Science PhD Program faculty have to choose whether they will stay in their existing departments or move to the Informatics Faculty?

A. The status of each existing faculty member will be unchanged.

15. Q. What does it mean for a faculty member to be a member of the Informatics Faculty?

A. This depends on the type of appointment the faculty member has to the Informatics Faculty. If the appointment is as an adjunct faculty member (all appointments prior to fall 2004 were of this type), then the faculty member has no formal obligation to the Faculty and participates voluntarily in its programs. This may include such activities as teaching courses, supervising doctoral students, serving on committees, and any activity the faculty member chooses to engage in. The faculty member typically receives benefits in proportion to the extent of engagement with the program.

Starting in fall 2004, some faculty have joint appointments with split-line budgets and a formal obligation to the Informatics Faculty. In each of these cases, their relationship to the Informatics Faculty is to be spelled out in a Memorandum of Understanding with the other department. In most cases, these faculty teach one or more courses that are available to students across the campus, although in some cases that responsibility is borne by other faculty members in their department.

16. Q. Why do you propose to call the new unit a College rather than a School?

A. In most people's minds, the designation School connotes a professional school. Although the Department of Information Studies will continue its professional M.S. degree program that is accredited by the American Library Association, both it and the other units in the new College are involved in a broad array of educational and scholarly activities. The term "College" seems more appropriate for the variety of activities in the unit.

17. Q. Where will faculty offices be located?

A. For the time being, the faculties of Computer Science and Information Studies will continue to maintain their respective offices on the uptown and downtown campuses.

18. Q. Will students have to travel downtown to take courses?

A. Courses will continue to be offered on both uptown and downtown campuses, depending upon the course requirements and availability of appropriate classroom space.

19. Q. When will this take effect?

A. All three faculties have approved it. Discussions are continuing with UPC, the three faculty units, and the University administration. President Hall will make a final decision pending the results of these discussions.