

V. Goals

A. Goal-setting process

Our department has always been consensus-driven in the extreme. Faculty recruiting is done on a department-wide basis. Graduate student admission is done on a department-wide basis. The introduction of new programs and the expansion of existing programs each are done on a department-wide basis. Curriculum is done on a department-wide basis. Computing support is done on a department-wide basis. And goal-setting is done on a department-wide basis.

In each case, “department-wide basis” typically means “lots of discussion, which leads to a consensus,” as opposed to “a vote, with the majority carrying.” Preserving this important element of our culture is an increasing challenge as we get larger and as the pace of change and the complexity of our operations and our environment increase.

During the department’s 1993 chair search, Ed Lazowska produced a personal statement of goals for the department. After his selection as chair, this document was revised by the faculty and adopted in January 1994 as a departmental *Vision Statement and Strategic Plan* – archivally available on the web at <http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/lazowska/chair/strategic.plan.html>. We actually adhered quite closely to the goals set forth in that plan, although many of the individual steps (e.g., the introduction of the Professional Masters Program, the doubling of the Computer Engineering program) were debated at length before implementation commenced.

Over the past six months, under the leadership of David Notkin, we have created a new *Vision Statement and Strategic Plan*, which was formally adopted in January 2000. It is available on the web at <http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/lazowska/chair/plan2000.pdf>, and is included as Appendix Q. That document provides the basis for the response that follows.

B. Goals

Because our goals are drawn from our recent *Vision Statement and Strategic Plan* and/or have been discussed earlier in this Self Study, we will be exceedingly brief here, referring you to Appendix Q and to earlier sections of this Self Study for further detail.

A note at the outset: We admit to being less than enamored of quantitative goals. We are strong proponents of “accountability,” but it is our view that the most important goals – e.g., “impact” and “reputation” – are almost impossible to quantify.

- Rise to meet our imperative. Any imaginable vision for the University of Washington of the next decade and beyond, and any imaginable vision for our region, will have an outstanding Department of Computer Science & Engineering as a cornerstone – literally, a *sine qua non*. We must *lead the way*, in partnership with others, in capitalizing on our many advantages, achieving a forefront position in areas of high impact in information technology that will benefit the University, the region, and the nation. (This goal really says it all – everything else follows from it.)
- Become indisputably one of the top five programs in the nation. We have progressed from “in the bottom half of the top ten” to “the best of the rest” (behind the “top four” – Stanford, MIT, Carnegie Mellon, and Berkeley). We are poised to take the next step, with appropriate institutional support. When our accomplishments cause the community to speak of a “top five” we will have succeeded. We will be competing on an equal footing for graduate

students and for faculty. Our research will be roughly on a par (if not of the same scale), as will our graduate program effectiveness; our students in multiple subfields will routinely be receiving offers from the nation's other top programs. We will be *the national leader* in certain key areas of computing research, chosen to exploit our competitive advantages. Our entrepreneurship will be making us stronger rather than weaker.

- Continue to seek high-leverage research directions with lasting impact, to establish deep intellectual partnerships with a broad range of disciplines, to seize each and every competitive advantage available to us, and to further integrate our research with our education and service. Embrace a broader range of research styles (although our dismal space situation precludes the large projects that represent the most important current trend, placing us at an enormous disadvantage).
- Thoughtfully but aggressively fill our numerous vacant faculty positions with the very strongest people in the nation, utilizing many of these positions to hire “outward-looking” computer scientists and computer engineers, dramatically broadening our perspective and establishing additional ties throughout the University.
- Continue our dedication to excellence and access in our educational programs. We cannot be all things to all people – we cannot meet all needs. However, the University of Washington’s Department of Computer Science & Engineering must continue to be the place where top students can fulfill their educational objectives, becoming prepared for highly-leveraged life-long careers related to our rapidly changing and increasingly ubiquitous discipline. In addition to this, we must exercise ever-greater campus-wide and statewide educational leadership, creating opportunities for a broad range of students. We commit ourselves to clearly and forcefully articulating the diverse roles and contributions of research institutions; to continuing to perform at the highest level in each of these roles; and to leading and partnering even more extensively in the development of educational opportunities that allow others to be more effective in helping to meet student and employer demand. We also will tend to the strength of our political base, which allows us to politely decline demands that would severely distort our balance to the long-term detriment of the University of Washington and the state. And we will take whatever internal measures we can to correct certain detrimental shifts in balance that have already occurred.
- Address our faculty retention issues through a variety of means, discussed earlier.
- Get the CSE Building funded and finished *as the University of Washington’s top priority*, and obtain interim “survival space.”
- Address our “commercial entrepreneurship” issues, and provide ever-stronger encouragement for “academic entrepreneurship.”
- Continue to be an institutional and regional leader in educational technology, recognizing the transforming effect that technology will have on education.
- Seek additional ways to recognize and reward high-performance staff members, who are essential to our success and our culture.
- Continue to strengthen our partnership with our region’s information technology industry. We must continue to strive for a relationship in which we each view the other as a major competitive advantage.

- Preserve the most important elements of our unique departmental culture, while adapting to changing times. (Related to the preamble of this section, where we discussed the consensus-driven nature of our department, an obvious question going forward is which decisions must still be made collectively, and which can be delegated.)