LOOK NORTH

UNT 2030

DEVELOP | DISCOVER | DRIVE

UNT

ANURADHA & VIKAS SINHA
COLLEGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
& ADVANCED ANALYTICS

WHO WE ARE

The Anuradha and Vikas Sinha College of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Analytics at the University of North Texas advances education, research, and service at the nexus of information, people, and technology. CAIAA integrates the theoretical foundations and practical applications of information detection, analysis, and sense-making to address complex challenges facing organizations and society. Through applied research, career-focused and student-centered learning, and sustained partnerships across North Texas and beyond, the college advances UNT's public mission by developing talent, generating actionable knowledge, and driving

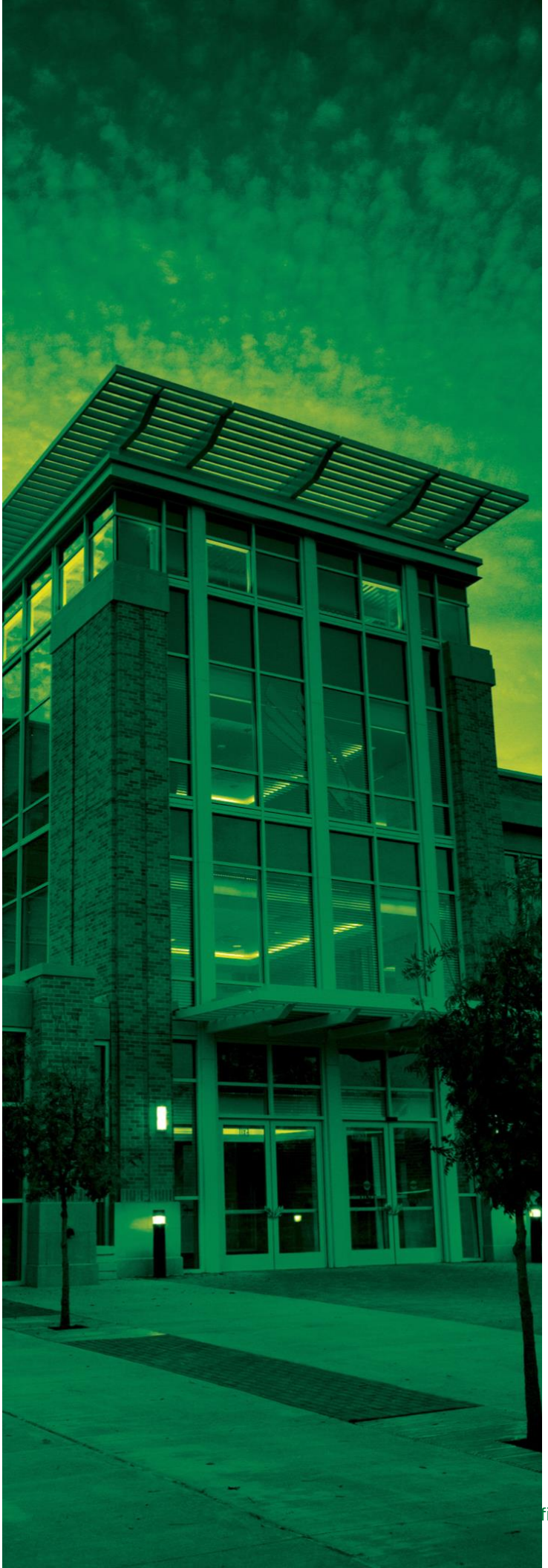


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Executive Summary

The Anuradha and Vikas Sinha College of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Analytics (CAIAA) Strategic Plan 2026–2030 advances the University of North Texas's *Look North: UNT 2030* vision by preparing graduates and generating knowledge that strengthen an increasingly information-driven world. As a college focused on all aspects of information, CAIAA is uniquely positioned within UNT to integrate the theoretical foundations of information detection, analysis, and sense-making with applied systems in data science, health informatics, and learning technologies, and semantic and syntactic analysis for solving real-world problems. As a public-facing information college that integrates expertise across information, technology, and human systems, CAIAA advances solutions to complex challenges across industry, education, healthcare, and other community-focused systems.

Organized around Develop, Discover, and Drive, the plan aligns CAIAA's priorities around student success, high-impact discovery, and partnerships that translate academic expertise into real-world impact. Applied, career-connected learning is aimed as a defining feature of the student experience, with every student completing at least one high-impact applied experience by 2030.

CAIAA will concentrate on discovery in strategically selected high-impact areas while sustaining broad research activity across its programs. Partnerships will deepen in ways that align applied projects, experiential learning, and translation pathways — strengthening collaboration across North Texas and beyond. Together, these priorities position CAIAA to contribute measurably to university goals while reinforcing its leadership in information-driven education, skill development, and innovation.

Develop

CAIAA will advance student success through applied, career-connected learning that links coursework, research, and professional practice across its programs. By 2030, every CAIAA student will complete at least one high-impact applied learning experience — such as a practicum, applied research project, co-op, or micro-internship — embedded within a coherent academic pathway.

The college will strengthen academic pathways to ensure programs remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive to evolving information environments. Stackable credentials, certificates, and flexible delivery models will complement degree programs and serve both traditional students and working professionals. Program design, credential development, and applied learning pathways will be aligned with regional workforce intelligence and structured employer input, guided by analysis from the Texas Talent Accelerator.

Faculty and staff will be supported through structured mentoring, professional development, and collaborative models that encourage innovation in teaching, research, and partnership-building. Strengthened faculty–industry connections, practitioner engagement, and coordinated partnership support will enhance both student learning and applied scholarship.

Together, these efforts will establish CAIAA as a model for career-connected, information-driven education, producing career-ready graduates and professionals equipped to lead through technological and societal transformation.

Discover

CAIAA will expand discovery in ways that address major challenges facing Texas and the broader information-driven world. The college will focus its research enterprise in strategically defined priority areas where information science, data systems, and human-centered technologies intersect to generate measurable public impact.

Research concentrations will include applied AI and data systems, digital health and informatics, immersive and learning technologies, and information access, literacy, and archives — domains where interdisciplinary collaboration, regional relevance, and technological advancement converge. These areas will be refined through ongoing faculty leadership and external engagement to ensure focus and coherence across the college.

CAIAA will expand student research opportunities at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels by embedding research experiences within coursework, applied projects, and funded initiatives. Seed grants, structured grant-development groups, shared research infrastructure, and collaborative clusters will strengthen proposal generation, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and external funding success.

Together, these efforts will position CAIAA as a research leader that amplifies human insight through technology — advancing knowledge while tackling the complex information challenges shaping our region and state.

Drive

CAIAA will drive impact by strengthening structured partnerships that translate academic expertise into applied solutions across industry, education, healthcare, libraries, and community systems. The college will focus on building coordinated engagement models that align experiential learning, applied research, and workforce development within a clear partnership framework.

Through a phased implementation of the Informatics Industry Innovation Center (IIIC) — CAIAA's structured platform for industry collaboration — the college will create defined pathways for faculty and students to engage real-world challenges alongside external partners. These pathways will support employer-informed education, applied research projects, and professional offerings that extend CAIAA's reach while preserving academic integrity.

Entrepreneurship and innovation will be advanced through streamlined processes that support applied agreements, industry collaboration, and the responsible movement of ideas from research to practice. Strategic engagement at UNT at Frisco will serve as one regional hub where proximity strengthens partnership activity and applied learning opportunities.

Through Develop, Discover, and Drive, CAIAA will strengthen student success, advance high-impact discovery, and deepen partnerships that translate knowledge into practice. These priorities reinforce the college's role in preparing graduates, generating actionable research, and advancing information-driven innovation for the public good.

Strategic Direction Through 2030

By 2030, CAIAA will be recognized as a leading public-facing information-centric college that prepares career-ready graduates, advances high-impact discovery, and strengthens partnerships that translate knowledge into practice. Grounded in integrating information, technology, and human systems, the college will focus its efforts where interdisciplinary expertise delivers measurable value to Texas and beyond.

CAIAA will be distinguished by coherent academic pathways that connect learning, research, and applied experience; a focused and growing research enterprise that addresses major information-driven challenges; and structured partnerships that align education and innovation with regional and societal needs.

Through this integrated approach, CAIAA will contribute measurably to university priorities while reinforcing its role as a trusted leader in information-driven education, research, and public impact.

Unique Role, Contribution, and Strengths

CAIAA's distinctiveness lies in its integration of information, technology, and human systems within a comprehensive public research university. Rather than operating in isolated domains, the college brings together expertise across data, digital systems, health, learning, language, and information environments to address complex organizational and societal challenges.

CAIAA's strengths include stackable, applied, practice-informed programs; sustained engagement with regional industries, public institutions, and community organizations; and a commitment to ethical, human-centered approaches to emerging technologies. This combination enables CAIAA to align academic rigor with real-world relevance while maintaining a clear focus on public impact.

As UNT's college centered explicitly on information in all its forms, CAIAA bridges technical capability with social and organizational insight — preparing graduates who are career-ready and equipped to lead through complexity, change, and technological transformation.

Navigating External Forces, Trends, and Contexts

Advances in artificial intelligence, immersive technologies, and data-driven systems are reshaping how information is created, analyzed, and applied across education, healthcare, government, and industry. At the same time, challenges related to information access, trust, and ethical technology use are intensifying in both public and private sectors.

The continued growth and economic expansion of North Texas are increasing demand for skilled talent, applied research, and sustained institutional partnerships. Employers are seeking graduates who can adapt to rapidly evolving technological environments while exercising critical judgment and ethical responsibility.

Within this context, CAIAA's focus on integrated information expertise, interdisciplinary collaboration, and career-connected learning positions the college to respond strategically to shifting technological and workforce conditions while advancing long-term public impact.

Strategic Goals (2026-2030)

1. **Advance student success through applied, career-connected learning:** Aligned with the Develop pillar of *Look North: UNT 2030*, this goal strengthens integrated student support, modernizes curriculum, and ensures graduates are career-ready upon completion of their programs. CAIAA will embed applied, career-connected learning across all academic pathways so that experiential learning is structural.

   By 2030, CAIAA will establish a coherent applied learning framework in which every student completes at least one high-impact, career-aligned experience that integrates coursework, research, and professional practice.

   To achieve this, CAIAA will:
   - Use workforce intelligence and employer advisory input, including data from the Texas Talent Accelerator, to inform curriculum alignment and applied experience design.
   - Integrate practicums, applied research, micro-internships, and co-op placements into degree pathways.
   - Formalize employer engagement models that align curriculum with skill milestones and advancement pathways.
   - Expand its current repertoire of targeted stackable credentials and certificates that complement degree programs and support both traditional students and working professionals.

   Success by 2030: Success will be demonstrated by universal participation in applied learning, measurable improvements in career placement and advancement outcomes, and sustained employer engagement across key sectors.

2. **Strengthen faculty and staff capacity to deliver excellence:** Aligned with the Develop pillar of *Look North: UNT 2030*, this goal ensures that the people responsible for student success, discovery, and partnership are supported through intentional investment in professional growth and institutional infrastructure. CAIAA's long-term success depends on empowering faculty and staff to innovate, collaborate, and thrive within evolving academic and workforce environments.

   By 2030, CAIAA will establish a sustainable support framework that enables faculty and staff to excel in teaching, research, and partnership engagement while maintaining balance and institutional coherence.

   To achieve this, CAIAA will:
   - Expand structured mentoring, leadership development, and professional growth opportunities.
   - Implement workload flexibility and recognition systems that value teaching excellence, collaboration, research productivity, and community engagement.
   - Strengthen faculty–industry engagement through coordinated faculty externships and practitioner hiring and integration where appropriate.

- Formalize partnership support structures in coordination with centralized university resources to reduce the administrative burden on faculty.

Success by 2030: Success will be demonstrated by improved faculty retention and engagement, increased interdisciplinary collaboration, expanded external funding participation, and sustained faculty involvement in applied and partnership-based initiatives.

3. **Focus research and discovery for public impact:** Aligned with the Discover pillar of *Look North: UNT 2030*, this goal advances high-impact research that addresses major information-driven challenges facing Texas and the broader society. CAIAA will prioritize strategic focus while sustaining broad scholarly activities across its programs.

   By 2030, CAIAA will strengthen a focused and growing research enterprise concentrated in strategically defined priority areas that deliver measurable public and regional impact.

   To achieve this, CAIAA will:
   - Organize research around high-impact interdisciplinary clusters in areas such as applied AI and data systems, digital health and informatics, immersive and learning technologies, and information access and literacy.
   - Expand student research participation across undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels.
   - Support collaborative grant development through seed funding, structured grant writing groups, and shared research infrastructure.
   - Increase visibility and dissemination of scholarship to amplify public understanding and institutional impact.

   Success by 2030: Success will be demonstrated through sustained growth in external research funding, increased interdisciplinary grant activity, expanded student research engagement, and measurable contributions to regional and societal challenges.

4. **Advance partnerships and translation to practice:** Aligned with the Drive pillar of *Look North: UNT 2030*, this goal strengthens CAIAA's role as a connector between academic expertise and real-world applications. The college will establish structured partnership models that translate education and research into measurable impact.

   By 2030, CAIAA will operate a coordinated partnership and translation framework that integrates applied learning, research collaboration, and innovation pathways across regional and national sectors.

   To achieve this, CAIAA will:
   - Implement a phased development of the Informatics Industry Innovation Center (IIIC) as a structured platform for industry collaboration.
   - Establish streamlined processes that support applied agreements, entrepreneurship, and the responsible movement of ideas from research to practice.

- Coordinate regional engagement, including strategic activity at UNT at Frisco, to strengthen proximity-based industry collaboration.
- Align partnership priorities and applied research challenges with regional workforce insights generated through the Texas Talent Accelerator.

Success by 2030: Success will be demonstrated through sustained employer engagement, growth in partnership-supported projects and agreements, expanded experiential learning pipelines, and measurable regional impact.

Key Outcomes & Metrics

CAIAA's contribution to *Look North: UNT 2030* will be measured through focused, outcome-driven indicators aligned to each strategic goal. These metrics prioritize student success, research impact, faculty capacity, and partnership-driven translation while ensuring feasibility and institutional coherence.

1. **Advance student success through applied, career-connected learning** | *Develop*
   Key Metrics (by 2030):
   - Increase the student completion rate of at least one high-impact applied learning experience to 100%.
   - Increase first-to-second-year retention from 93% to ≥95%.
   - Increase the six-year undergraduate graduation rate from 76.5% to ≥82%.
   - ≥85% positive career placement or continuing education within six months of graduation.
   - ≥70% of eligible students complete a paid, credit-bearing co-op or structured applied experience.
   - ≥30% of students use employment sponsorship to help fund part of their education.
   - ≥40% of students complete at least one employer-aligned stackable micro-credential, certificate, or badge.

2. **Strengthen faculty and staff capacity to deliver excellence** | *Develop*
   Key Metrics (by 2030):
   - ≥95% of tenured/tenure-track faculty participate annually in grant writing, research groups, or professional development.
   - Increase external proposal submissions by ≥30%.

2023	2024	2025	*2030*
49	54	69	*90*

   - Improve faculty and staff retention.
     - Faculty: 68.8% retention rate with 9.4 average years of service.
     - Staff: 33.8% retention rate with 4.2 average years of service (note: staff rates vary widely by unit).

- Improve climate survey indicators.
    - Increase Gallup climate survey mean score from 3.96 (Spring 2025 baseline) to ≥4.10 by 2030.
- Increase faculty and staff participation in professional development activities by ≥25%.

3. **Focus research and discovery for public impact** | *Discover*

Key Metrics (by 2030):

- Increase external research expenditures from $4M to ≥$7M.
- Annual growth of 10% in peer-reviewed publications and other scholarly outputs.
- ≥20% growth in cross-department and cross-college proposals and co-authored outputs.
    - Proposals with other colleges:

2023	2024	2025	*2030*
20	18	21	*26*

- ≥20% increase in undergraduate and graduate research assistantships and research participation.
- Increase the number of active industry-aligned research projects by 100%.
    - Privately funded projects:

2023	2024	2025	*2030*
2	2	3	*6*

- ≥100% expansion of research partnerships supporting applied research.
    - Applied projects:

2023	2024	2025	*2030*
1	2	3	*6*

- Increase public dissemination of research by at least 60% in the form of public-facing reports, policy briefs, or community presentations.

4. **Advance partnerships and translation to practice** | *Drive*

Key Metrics (by 2030):

- Establish and operationalize the Informatics Industry Innovation Center (IIIC) as a sustained platform for partnership-based applied learning and research.
- Increase the number of active external partners engaged in structured collaboration by 100%.
- Launch 10+ sustained applied project pipelines with industry or community organizations.
- Graduate a minimum of 80 executives/professionals annually from executive and professional education programs.
- Establish 20+ active, centralized university-coordinated partnerships aligned with workforce and innovation priorities.

Core Metrics: Established Benchmarks that Define University Performance

Metric	***UNT Baseline*** *(2024/25)*	***UNT Target*** *(2030)*	***CAIAA Baseline*** *(2024/2025)*	***CAIAA Target*** *(2030)*
1st to 2nd year retention	77%	90%	93.3%	95%
4-year graduation rate	42%	65%	64.5%	70%
6-year graduation rate	61%	80%	76.5%	82%
Annual R&D expenditures	$124M	$250M	$4M	$7M
Doctoral degrees awarded	286	300	39	45
Time to value	6 years	Decrease time for programs over median	4 years (median)	3.5 years (median)

Emergent Metrics: Important Dimensions of Our Success that Require New Approaches

CAIAA will integrate insights from the Texas Talent Accelerator and employer advisory networks into annual program review, partnership prioritization, and credential development processes. Tracking will include documented curriculum adjustments, partnership realignment, and program modifications informed by workforce data.

Post-graduation placement: Percentage of graduates placed in high-demand occupations or graduate and professional programs

CAIAA currently has limited tracking of post-graduation placement through program-level surveys and external analytic tools such as Academic Analytics, with plans to incorporate Steppingblocks to better identify placement in high-demand occupations and graduate programs. Select Information Science programs measure the percentage of graduates in relevant positions within 12 months through online surveys, and this process is being expanded college-wide, although, as is usual for survey mechanisms, the response rate varies. Annual surveys distributed via email, social media, affiliate networks, and LinkedIn engagement will further strengthen longitudinal tracking.

Career-aligned learning: Percentage of academic programs that integrate internships, industry-sponsored projects, or other work-integrated learning experiences

Currently, 38.45% of CAIAA programs formally require internships, industry-sponsored projects, or work-integrated learning, though 100% of the programs allow these experiences for academic credit. CAIAA plans to embed applied learning as a formal requirement across all degree programs and will develop coordinated tracking mechanisms to monitor participation rates, employer engagement, and the integration of career-aligned experiences within academic pathways.

Awards and recognitions: Prestigious awards, exhibitions, and performances achieved by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni

CAIAA documents awards and recognitions through faculty annual performance reports, departmental submissions, and centralized college communications. In 2025, students and alumni received recognition from organizations such as the American Library Association and the Society of American Archivists, and faculty held leadership roles in national associations. An annual alumni survey is being implemented to more systematically track post-graduation honors and professional achievements.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: New ventures, startups, and public impact projects launched by students, faculty, and alumni

In 2025, CAIAA launched Entrepreneurial Workshops and an Annual Pitch Competition facilitated by faculty and industry leaders to support venture development and applied innovation. Achievements are currently self-reported and promoted through college communications. The college plans to formalize tracking of startups, applied research ventures, public-impact projects, and partnership-based entrepreneurial initiatives launched by students, faculty, and alumni.

Student and alumni engagement: Perceptions of how well UNT prepares graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose

CAIAA plans to incorporate targeted questions into annual student and alumni surveys to assess perceptions of career readiness, preparation for meaningful work, and long-term impact. Existing engagement measures include social media analytics and participation indicators used in peer and performance evaluations. Expanded survey distribution and alumni outreach efforts will strengthen longitudinal tracking of engagement and professional connections.

College-Level Metrics: Other Important Priority Metrics Tracked at the College Level

In addition to the core strategic and university-aligned metrics outlined previously, CAIAA will monitor the following college-level indicators to track academic excellence, faculty and staff engagement, and external pipeline development. Baseline data will be confirmed in FY26 to validate targets and ensure feasibility.

- **Increase the number of students making Dean's List or President's List by 5% (123 in Spring 2025):** Reflects sustained academic excellence and improved student performance, supporting Goal 1 (student success).
- **Increase the number of faculty and staff award nominations by 20%, with representation across all departments and staff units:** Supports faculty and staff engagement, recognition culture, and retention, aligning with Goal 2 (faculty and staff capacity).
- **Increase alumni engagement activities and involvement by 30%:** Strengthens career-connected learning, industry partnerships, and long-term philanthropic sustainability, supporting Goal 4 (partnerships and translation).

- **Increase high school and community college student engagement activities, including spot admissions, by 40%:** Expands enrollment pipelines and awareness of information-driven careers, reinforcing long-term student success objectives.
- **Increase participation by both mentors and mentees of the College Mentorship Program by 75%:** Enhances retention, career-readiness, alumni engagement, and applied learning support, reinforcing Goals 1 and 4.

Goals in Action

***Develop* the potential of UNT students, faculty, staff, and community members**

- **Embed applied, career-connected learning across academic pathways** by integrating practicum-style courses, micro-internships, and structured co-op experiences aligned with regional workforce needs and informed by Texas Talent Accelerator insights.
- **Modernize curriculum** through industry-informed program review, coordinated advising and career services alignment, and structured professional practice development to ensure graduates are career-ready upon completion.
- **Establish structured mentoring and professional development pathways** for faculty and staff, including grant development, partnership engagement, and collaborative innovation support.
- **Expand flexible program delivery models,** including online, hybrid, and onsite offerings at UNT at Frisco, to serve working professionals and emerging learner populations in response to validated workforce demand.

***Discover* new knowledge and insights that bridge traditional academic disciplines**

- **Organize research around strategically defined interdisciplinary priority clusters** that are reviewed through faculty leadership and informed by regional workforce intelligence, including analysis from the Texas Talent Accelerator, to ensure alignment with emerging industry and societal needs.
- **Expand undergraduate, master's, and doctoral research participation** through community- and industry-engaged projects that integrate applied problem-solving within academic programs.
- **Strengthen research capacity** through structured seed funding, coordinated grant-development groups, and mentorship initiatives that support proposal generation and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- **Invest in shared research infrastructure, collaborative spaces, and digital tools** that improve research visibility, efficiency, and cross-college coordination.

- **Increase faculty and student engagement in applied research challenges** developed in partnership with employers and community organizations, reinforcing the translation of discovery into public-facing impact.

***Drive* creative advances, partnerships, and new models of higher education**

- **Implement a phased launch of the Informatics Industry Innovation Center (IIIC)** as CAIAA's structured platform for industry collaboration, beginning with pilot applied research and experiential learning projects and expanding based on validated demand and performance outcomes.
- **Strengthen partnership infrastructure** by establishing clear internal processes, agreement templates, and coordinated support functions that streamline the movement of research and creative work into applied settings.
- **Support innovation and entrepreneurship among faculty and students** through structured training, mentorship, and applied project development frameworks aligned with regional workforce needs identified through the Texas Talent Accelerator.
- **Build coordinated, multi-college partnerships** through the university's centralized engagement infrastructure to align applied learning, workforce initiatives, and research translation efforts across disciplines.