

2020-2025 Strategic Plan



Center for Integrative Conservation Research

Owens Institute for Behavioral Research

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

January 11, 2021

Background

During Academic Year 2019-2020, the Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR) began efforts to create a five-year strategic plan for 2020-2025. Activities included surveying all faculty and staff affiliates and Integrative Conservation (ICON) PhD graduate students and convening a committee to envision our goals, activities and measures going forward.

In December 2019 we retained the services of the JW Fanning Institute for Leadership Development to guide our strategic planning process and facilitate our strategic planning committee discussions. David Meyers, Public Service Associate with Fanning, served as our lead Faculty from Fanning. In early January 2020, we first convened our strategic planning committee, comprised of current CICR faculty affiliates, an ICON PhD student, an ICON graduate, and two external conservation practitioners. We then surveyed all CICR and ICON affiliates and graduates students, seeking feedback on our current activities as well as potential future directions. In February, once the survey closed, we held drop-in sessions for affiliates and students in which we reported back survey results and provided opportunity for further discussion.

We had intended to hold a half-day retreat for our strategic planning committee in March 2020, but had to adapt plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Working remotely in small groups with our strategic planning committee, we continued progress over the summer and completed a draft plan in fall 2020. We shared the draft plan once more with our strategic planning committee, with our CICR Affiliates, then submitted it to our CICR Executive Committee for a final review. The 2025 CICR Strategic Plan was approved by our Executive Committee in early January 2021. The plan will be posted on our website and shared with UGA administrators as appropriate.

Nate Nibbelink
Director

Strategic Direction I: Promoting Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Strategic Goal 1.1: Expand experiential learning opportunities for all students to engage with the diversity of communities in Georgia and across the nation and world on locally identified needs and issues.

Unit Goal 1.1: Same as UGA Strategic Goal 1.1.

Experiential learning is a core value of the programs we support through CICR. The core course sequence for the Integrative Conservation (ICON) PhD Program includes a practicum course where the cohort collaborates with an external partner to address an applied socio-environmental problem. The Sustainability Certificate capstone course similarly involves partnerships with local and regional organizations to address sustainability challenges. Under this strategic goal, CICR is committed to growing and formalizing our external partnerships, and adding support for a new “family” of MS programs (an informal grouping of new and existing programs across units) requiring students to codevelop their projects with external partners and allowing an alternate applied thesis model.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number and quality of formal partnerships with external organizations for ICON 8002 class projects and student internships

Data Source: ICON instructors and CICR staff

Annual targets:

FY2021	Create assessment rubric for partners and students to evaluate collaboration. Create a template MOU and/or process to use to formalize ICON 8002 partnerships.
FY2022-2025	Maintain quality of partner engagement as demonstrated by: -# of established partnerships with NGOs (at least 1 per year) -High (80-100) average assessments from external partners -Majority of students/year who rate their internship as useful for career planning

Key Performance Indicator 2: Number and quality of community partnerships through the Sustainability Certificate Capstone

Data Source: Sustainability Certificate staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Propose FCID 4500 as Experiential Learning course
FY2022-2025	Maintain quality of experiential learning as demonstrated by: -# of students completing an EL course through the Sustainability Certificate -# of capstone partners/year (at least 5) -High (80-100) average assessments from external Capstone hosts

Key Performance Indicator 3: Establish a new family of MS programs rooted in external partnerships for applied solutions

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Create informal family of programs; enroll the MS in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (formerly Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development, renaming in progress); propose new MS in Nature-Based Systems (w/Engineering)
FY2022	Recruit students under new umbrella and form partnerships
FY2023	Welcome first cohort, recruit additional MS degrees to family
FY2024	Recruit, maintain, approve at least 1 new MS
FY2025	Graduate first cohort

Strategic Goal 1.2: Enhance training, support, and recognition for all who provide instruction and outreach

Unit Goal 1.2: Enhance training and support for all who provide instruction

CICR supports research, instruction, and student mentoring across sometimes highly divergent disciplinary perspectives and approaches, often requiring patience, humility, and the ability to resolve conflicting perspectives on research quality and value. Under this strategic goal, we will add workshops for faculty on mentoring interdisciplinary graduate students and create awards for students and faculty that exemplify these values in their instruction and mentoring.

Key Performance Indicator 1: CICR recognition of outstanding teaching at the faculty and graduate student levels

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Create one new CICR teaching focused award (e.g. to recognize interdisciplinary humility)
FY2022-2025	Recognize one faculty or graduate student per year with new teaching award

Key Performance Indicator 2: CICR-led graduate student mentoring workshops to faculty

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	1 hosted workshop per year, every other year
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Key Performance Indicator 3: CICR promotion of peer mentoring among faculty

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Create one new 'good collaborator' award that recognizes activities that cultivate an environment that values diversity of thought, approach, etc.
FY2022-2025	Recognize one faculty per year with new award

Strategic Goal 1.3: Enhance infrastructure and support for evidence-based teaching methods across the curriculum

Unit Goal 1.3: Same as UGA Strategic Goal 1.3

The core courses for the ICON PhD program are currently taught by two instructors, one from a natural science discipline and one from a social science discipline. Both ICON and the Sustainability Certificate program rely on external partnerships that enhance applied learning opportunities, and our affiliated faculty are actively engaged in scholarship on approaches to student training that enhance creativity and collaboration to better prepare our students to solve complex socio-environmental challenges. Under this strategic goal we will maintain these activities, enhance external partnerships, and disseminate successful training models for enhancing creativity and collaboration in graduate research.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number of courses taught by faculty from at least two disciplines

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	2 courses per year
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Key Performance Indicator 2: Number of course-based external teaching partnerships

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Establish baseline
FY2022-2025	6 partnerships per year (ICON Program: 1 per year; Sustainability Certificate: 5 partnerships per year)

Key Performance Indicator 3: Develop strategies to teach creative inquiry and collaboration, in partnership with Ideas for Creative Exploration (ICE)

Data Source: NSF Innovations in Graduate Education Team

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2023	Test approach with 10 students per semester
FY2024-2025	Successful approaches adopted in one or more STEM MS/PhD research methods course

Strategic Goal 1.4: Promote academic access and success for all students, with particular consideration for underrepresented, rural, first-generation and other underserved students

Unit Goal 1.4: same as UGA Strategic Goal 1.4

The founding of CICR in 2007 was based on the principle that diverse people, experiences, and disciplinary perspectives are needed to enhance solutions to complex socio-environmental problems, and that an inclusive environment is a key aspect of promoting access and success within our community. Under this strategic goal, and in light of recent events, we strengthen this commitment by increasing our intentional activities to recruit and support underrepresented students in our programs.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Develop new internal and external relationships in order to recruit a diverse and inclusive cohort of students to the ICON PhD Program and Sustainability Certificate

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Establish baselines (3-year average)
FY2022-2025	Increase number of engagements with internal and external groups featuring diverse speakers and fostering student and faculty interactions (e.g. invite faculty speakers from HBCUs, host cosponsored events with multicultural student organizations, invite external advisory committee members from HBCUs)
FY2025	Over 5-year period, show increase in URM applicants, enrollment, and completion rates

Key Performance Indicator 2: Create CICR inclusivity statement

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Inclusivity statement adopted and integrated into materials & website
FY2022-2025	Annual review with refinement if needed

Key Performance Indicator 3: Total dollars of financial supports to underrepresented and underserved students

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Subcommittee develop plan for how and where we can provide support to underrepresented students
FY2022-2025	Fundraise to provide financial support. Pending available support, track: -# of travel and research awards/year (amount will depend on available funding) -# of students/year who had student fees covered by department/UGA unit

Strategic Direction II: Growing Research, Innovation, & Entrepreneurship

Strategic Goal 2.1: Provide resources, support, and incentives to nurture a diverse and inclusive culture of excellence in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship

Unit Goal 2.1: Provide resources, support, and incentives to nurture a diverse and inclusive culture of excellence in research.

As stated above, the founding of CICR was based on the principle that diverse people, experiences, and disciplinary perspectives are needed to enhance solutions to complex socio-environmental problems, and that an inclusive environment is a key aspect of promoting access and success within our community. Under this strategic goal, we plan to enhance incentives and training to support inclusive excellence in integrative research across disciplines and to continuously monitor how we are doing.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Quality of environment of inclusion among faculty, staff and students

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Develop a satisfaction survey and develop a baseline around feelings of inclusivity
FY2022-2025	Administer survey (include in: annual survey to affiliates, post-ICC survey, and ICON student report survey) and maintain high (80-100) average assessments

Key Performance Indicator 2: Number of CICR-led trainings to enhance diverse and inclusive research

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	Offer one training per year (training topics to be informed by results of survey in KPI 1 above)
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Key Performance Indicator 3: Diveristy, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training completed by all CICR Affiliates

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Establish baseline of current DEI training completed by affiliates
FY2022-2023	Coordination of annual DEI trainings as needed to achieve goal
FY2024-2025	Increase in number of affiliates with DEI certificate

Strategic Goal 2.2: Promote collaboration among academic units and between these units and external organizations to drive interdisciplinary research and commercial activity.

Unit Goal 2.2: Provide resources, support, and incentives for collaboration among academic units and between these units and external organizations to drive interdisciplinary research and applied problem-solving.

CICR was established to help bridge social and natural science and to reduce misunderstanding and frequent dismissal of alternate disciplinary approaches as valid approaches for research and problem-solving. Under this strategic goal, we plan to maintain our interdisciplinary symposia and conference, enhance support for collaborative proposals that cross disciplinary boundaries, and augment our affiliate faculty ranks to fill critical gaps in disciplinary perspectives.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number of multi-investigator, cross-unit grant proposals that acknowledge CICR as receiving Center/Institute credit

Data Source: Office of Research

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Establish baseline
FY2022-2025	Increase by one proposal per year

Key Performance Indicator 2: Number co-sponsored programs, conferences, and events that promote integrative research and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and external partnerships

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	2 events per year
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Key Performance Indicator 3: Number of new faculty affiliates recruited from focal areas underrepresented by existing faculty affiliates

Data Source: UGA Elements reports

Annual Targets:

FY2021	CICR Executive Committee will identify key areas where strength is needed (e.g., law, policy, econ, social science areas)
FY2022-2025	Increase faculty affiliate membership in key identified areas

Strategic Goal 2.3: Align the human and physical capital of the University to expand the research enterprise and fuel innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of the organization.

Unit Goal 2.3: Align the human and institutional capacities of our partner units, centers, and institutes to expand the research enterprise in conservation and sustainability.

As an interdisciplinary center with >90 affiliated faculty from >12 schools/colleges at UGA, CICR was formed to align the human and institutional capital across campus to better address environmental conservation and sustainability challenges. Under this strategic goal, we plan to enhance training and support for personnel, and build new cross unit collaborations for research and training in critical areas.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number of critical research skills workshops, hosted or co-hosted by CICR, provided to CICR faculty affiliates (but open to all)

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	2 workshops per year
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Key Performance Indicator 2: Number of sponsored Doctoral or Post-Doc fellowships that allow for innovative approaches

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	1 per year, if funding available
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Key Performance Indicator 3: Number of innovative, integrative, and engaged research seed grants offered to CICR faculty affiliates

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	\$1K seed grant offered each year, if funding available (grant amounts to increase pending fundraising)
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Key Performance Indicator 4: Number of applied projects and research proposals designed to spur social innovation and responsibility

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	One project or proposal per year
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Strategic Goal 2.4: Enhance communications about the University’s strengths in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship and the impact of those activities on local, state, national, and international communities

Unit Goal 2.4: Same as UGA Strategic Goal 2.4

Due to limited staffing, CICR has struggled to maintain coordinated, consistent, and wider-reaching communication about our research activities. We are currently working with an intern to build a communications plan, and under this strategic goal, we will implement that plan to enhance external communication (and tracking) using multiple modes of communication.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number of earned media instances highlighting research impacts

Data Source: UGA Marketing and Communications

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	3 articles per year
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Key Performance Indicator 2: Number of research briefs to highlight CICR/ICON research and its impacts

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2022	4 research briefs published per year
FY2023-2025	6-8 reseach briefs published per year

Key Performance Indicator 3: Social media presence and interactions related to CICR research

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Assess baseline levels and establish current numbers
FY2022-2025	Increase social media followers and interactions by 5% each year

Key Performance Indicator 4: Number of invited talks in academic and non-academic settings

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Assess baseline levels and establish current number
FY2022-2025	5 speaking or strategic communication opportunities per year (with growth over time)

Strategic Direction III: Strengthening Partnerships with Communities across Georgia & around the World

Strategic Goal 3.1: Increase collaborative, community-focused research, scholarship, technical assistance, and training in Georgia, across the nation, and world

Unit Goal 3.1: Same as UGA Strategic Goal 3.1

CICR has highly valued “engaged research” since its inception (research which values collaborative engagement with the community and aims to improve, understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, including societal challenges). Under this strategic goal, we aim to enhance training for faculty and students on how to do engaged research effectively, strengthen our partnerships with organizations having research needs which we can support, and track effectiveness of those engagements over time.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Host engaged scholarship workshops for training in stakeholder engagement and coproduction (targeted to faculty, and open to all)

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	1 training per year
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Key Performance Indicator 2: Develop and utilize “CICR performance evaluation” questionnaire for UGA and community collaborators to fill out about each other’s performance completed mid- or post-collaboration

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	Create assessment rubric for partners and students to evaluate collaboration.
FY2022-2025	Maintain quality of partner engagement as demonstrated by: -High (80-100) average assessments from community partners

Key Performance Indicator 3: Establish multi-year collaboration with groups investigating socioecological issues/decisions in Athens (e.g., Leisure Services to examine Greenway impacts), Georgia (e.g., Atlanta or coastal partners), and nationally/internationally

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	Update list of past and potential collaborators
FY2022-2025	Over the course of 5 years, establish and maintain ≥ 3 multi-year collaborations (at least 1 in Athens, 1 in GA, 1 in other states or nations)

Key Performance Indicator 4: Develop a small grant program to facilitate faculty-community collaboration

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	Update list of past and potential collaborators
FY2022-2025	1 grantee/collaborator per 3-5 years; 1 fundraiser per 3-5 years, at outset of collaborative work

Strategic Goal 3.4: Develop high-impact global partnerships that engage and support UGA areas of research and service excellence

Unit Goal 3.2: Same as UGA Strategic Goal 3.4

CICR faculty and students currently work on applied conservation and sustainability problems in over 20 countries. Under this strategic goal, we will strengthen those partnerships by enhancing involvement and recognition for our global partners in coproduced research products.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number of sponsored proposals for global collaboration projects

Data Source: Office of Research

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2022	1 proposal per year
FY2023-2025	2 proposals per year

Key Performance Indicator 2: Total dollar amount provided as small grants for open access publication support

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	\$1000/year, minimum (for years 3-5, add faculty award if funding allows)
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Key Performance Indicator 3: Number of co-authored publications with colleagues at international organizations and other coproduced research products

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Establish baseline of # articles per year
FY2022-2025	Maintain or increase each year # articles per year

Strategic Goal 3.5: Strengthen communications regarding how UGA sustainably supports and benefits communities through research, teaching, and public service

Unit Goal 3.3: Same as UGA Strategic Goal 3.5

As stated above, CICR is currently working on a communications plan. Under this strategic goal, we will implement that plan to enhance external communication focused on how our applied research and engagement activities benefit communities both locally and abroad.

Key Performance Indicator 1: Number of stories written about outreach activities by external media outlets

Data Source: Local, regional, national, international news outlets

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Assess baseline levels
FY2022-2025	Maintain or increase each year # stories per year

Key Performance Indicator 2: Number of stories written about outreach activities featured on CICR website

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021-2025	At least 2 stories per year
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Key Performance Indicator 3: Number of training opportunities for ICON students and/or CICR affiliates to learn and practice effective communication strategies

Data Source: CICR staff

Annual Targets:

FY2021	Reimagine our goals related to effective communications across disciplines and with stakeholders and communities
FY2022-2025	Implement plan with at least 1 activity per semester (1 seminar, workshop, or other opportunity)