

iCONNECTIONS



2025-2026

BEYOND WHAT WE KNOW

The iSchool is pursuing research
and discovery at the leading edge
of technology and humanity.

S Syracuse University
School of Information Studies

The most important questions are the ones we haven't answered yet.

At the iSchool, that's where our work begins.

A Message from the Dean 1

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AI	
Exploring Human/AI Interaction	2
Institute for AI in Hinds Hall	3
New AI Degree Programs	4
Alumni Working in AI and Robotics	5

RESEARCH ADVANCEMENTS	
2025-2026 Research Highlights	6
Crowston Named AAAS Fellow	7
Oakleaf Expands AI Literacy	8

STUDENT EXPERIENCE	
Experiential Learning	9
Student Entrepreneurship	10
Careers and Outcomes	11

ADVANCING THE iSCHOOL	
Alumni in the Field	12
Placeholder page	13

iCONNECTIONS

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A Message from Dean Rubin

When I was a student at the iSchool, the internet was just beginning to change the world, and none of us could have predicted how it would reshape the global economy and the daily lives of nearly everyone on the planet. Over my career, I've learned that the people who thrive in moments like that embrace change and see what's next.

Returning to lead the iSchool is a full-circle moment for me. I'm honored to serve as interim dean, but it was important to me to keep teaching, because our students give me energy, ideas, and honesty. Fittingly, I teach Introduction to Information Technology, the very course I took as a freshman back in 1991.

We're living through another transformational period of technological change. Artificial intelligence is reshaping how we work, learn, and interact with the world around us. For the iSchool, this moment presents a significant opportunity, as our strength has always been at the intersection of people, information, and technology, and that perspective has never been more relevant.

The stories in this report reflect that strength, and I'm truly proud of what our faculty, staff, students, and alumni continue to accomplish. From faculty advancing our understanding of emerging technologies to students launching businesses, our community is demonstrating what it means to be an iSchooler. We're not simply preparing students to use the technologies of today. We're giving them the foundation to adapt, lead, and help shape whatever comes next. I'm grateful to our partners and to everyone across the iSchool who makes this possible.

I'm excited about what's ahead for our students and our school.

Jeffrey H. Rubin '95, G'98
Interim Dean
School of Information Studies
Syracuse University

EXPLORING HUMAN/AI INTERACTION

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into our daily lives, iSchool researchers are exploring a fundamental question: How do humans perceive and form relationships with AI?

Professor Jaime Banks secured a \$600,000 National Science Foundation grant to lead a four-year study examining the psychological and social dimensions of AI companionship. Working with collaborators at Illinois State University and iSchool doctoral student Zhixin Li, Banks is investigating how people perceive AI companions and how those perceptions influence their experiences with the technology.

The research will deepen our understanding of human-AI relationships, with potential implications for the design, ethics, and responsible development of emerging technologies. The award underscores the iSchool's contributions to human-centered AI research and its commitment to understanding not just what technology can do, but how it shapes the human experience.

I'm most excited about the potential for AI to do social good.

*Jaime Banks, Professor
School of Information Studies*



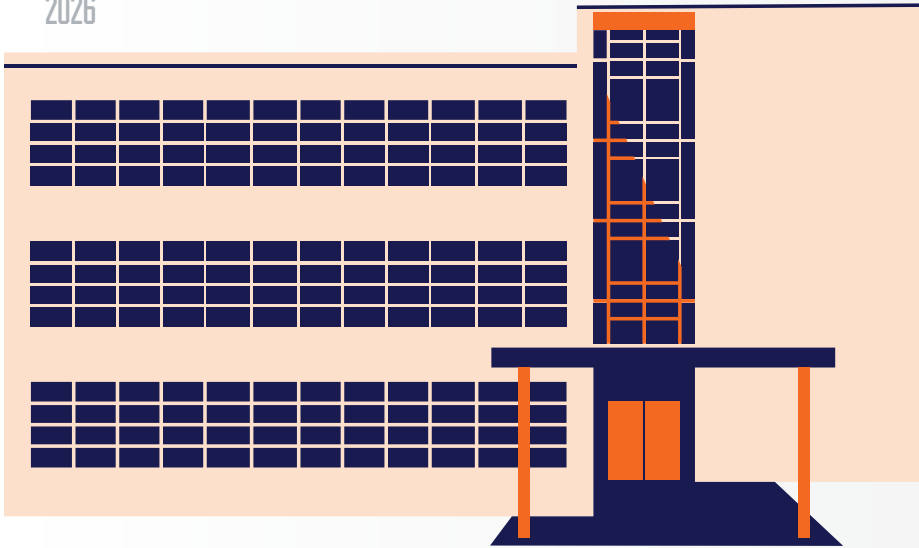
\$600,000

**NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION GRANT**

Advancing our understanding of human relationships with artificial intelligence.



National
Science
Foundation



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR AI
4 SCHOOLS. 21 FACULTY.
ONE UNIVERSITY-WIDE VISION FOR AI.

School of Information Studies

Jaime Banks, Professor
EunJeong Cheon, Assistant Professor
Kevin Crowston, Distinguished Professor
Michael Fudge, Professor of Practice
Jennifer Stromer-Galley, Professor
Joshua Introne, Associate Professor
Carsten Østerlund, Professor
Bei Yu, Professor

College of Engineering and Computer Science

Paulo Shakarian, KG Tan Endowed Professor of
Artificial Intelligence, Director
M. Cenk Gurso, Professor
Endadul Hoque, Associate Professor
Alex K. Jones, Professor
Kristopher Micinski, Associate Professor
Chilukuri Mohan, Professor
Qinru Qiu, Distinguished Professor
Senem Velipasalar, Professor
Reza Zafarani, Associate Professor
Junzhe Zhan, Assistant Professor

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Johannes Himmelreich, Associate Professor,
Associate Director

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications

Jason Davi, Associate Professor
Regina Luttrell, Professor

THE HUB FOR AI RESEARCH NOW LIVES IN HINDS HALL

Syracuse University's new Institute for Artificial Intelligence will be headquartered in the iSchool's Hinds Hall, establishing a hub for interdisciplinary research and collaboration. Led by Professor Paulo Shakarian, the Institute brings together researchers from four schools and colleges to advance AI research spanning security, human-AI interaction, intelligence, and governance.

The Institute's home at the iSchool reinforces the school's central role in the University's growing AI ecosystem, connecting technical innovation with the human, organizational, and societal dimensions of emerging technology. Through collaborative research, industry partnerships, and student engagement, the Institute will help translate AI discoveries into meaningful real-world impact.

instituteai.syracuse.edu



New degrees position the iSchool and Syracuse University for the future.

AI is advancing faster than our understanding of its possibilities and impact. Three new AI-focused degrees position iSchool students at that leading edge—preparing them not simply to use today’s technologies, but to explore what comes next and help shape how AI evolves.

Bachelor of Science in Integrative Artificial Intelligence

An interdisciplinary undergraduate degree that prepares students to understand and apply AI across professional fields while considering its broader human, ethical and societal implications.

Minor in Artificial Intelligence

A flexible minor that gives students across disciplines a foundation in AI concepts, tools and applications that complement their primary field of study.

Master of Science in Applied Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence

An advanced degree that prepares students to design and apply AI solutions that center human needs, responsible innovation and meaningful real-world outcomes.

ALUMNI AT THE FOREFRONT OF INNOVATION

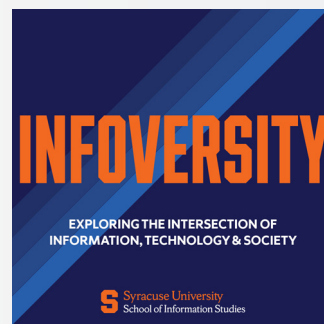
Getty Images

Sagar Mohan '98, G'03 Is Helping Shape the Future of Robotics at Amazon

Sagar Mohan '98, G'03 has built a career at the intersection of technology, leadership and complex problem-solving. Today, he leads engineering teams at Amazon Robotics, developing software that helps manage and optimize thousands of robots across hundreds of facilities using real-time data and AI.

Mohan credits his Syracuse University background in computer engineering and information management with shaping the systems-thinking approach he brings to his work. His career has spanned entrepreneurship, startups and large-scale technology, giving him a firsthand view of both the opportunities and challenges that come with innovation.

In a recent Infoversity podcast conversation, Mohan reflected on the lessons he's learned along the way and the rapid evolution of AI and automation. As technology transforms how engineers work, he sees technical depth, human judgment, problem-solving and continuous learning as increasingly essential to navigating what comes next.



LISTEN TO THE
FULL PODCAST



INQUIRY AND DISCOVERY AT THE LEADING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITY

RESEARCH AND AWARD HIGHLIGHTS



Kevin Crowston Named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and awarded \$49,999 from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to study skill development and retention in the age of generative AI.



Jaime Banks Awarded \$596,868 from the National Science Foundation to investigate how people perceive and form relationships with AI companions, testing foundational assumptions of social theories.



Collin Capano Secured a \$719,330 renewal from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to expand Syracuse University's Open Source Program Office and its support for open-source research, education, and development.



Sebastian Modrow Awarded \$349,995 from the National Endowment for the Humanities for E Pluribus Unum, exploring the American Revolution at the intersection of ideas and interests.



Joshua Introne Received \$293,491 from DARPA for research developing approaches to predicting how beliefs evolve within complex, non-ergodic systems.



Megan Oakleaf Received a \$281,594 IMLS grant for SSAAILL, a project advancing student success through assessment and AI literacy in libraries.



EunJeong Cheon Received \$10,000 from the International Labour Organization to examine current trends and the future of AI adoption in South Korean nursing.



Renate L. Chancellor Received \$5,000 from the ALA to develop her project "Meeting Them Where They Are: A Toolkit for Addressing Social Service Needs in Libraries."



Tyler Youngman Received the 2026 iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award for The Monumental Challenges of Pastmaking, recognizing outstanding doctoral research across the international iSchools community.

\$3.8M

GRANTS AWARDED
IN AY 2025-2026

163

PUBLISHED PAPERS &
JOURNAL ARTICLES

117

FACULTY PRESENTED
THEIR RESEARCH AT
CONFERENCES AND
OTHER VENUES

PROFESSOR KEVIN CROWSTON NAMED PRESTIGIOUS AAAS FELLOW



Distinguished Professor Kevin Crowston was named a 2026 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), one of the most distinguished honors in scientific research. The recognition celebrates his contributions to information science, particularly his research on how technology transforms collaboration and the way people work. His current research examines how generative AI affects human skill development and retention, further advancing the iSchool's leadership in understanding the intersection of people and technology.



Distinguished contributions to information science through groundbreaking research on coordination theory and virtual organizations, exceptional editorial leadership and dedicated service building interdisciplinary communities studying technology-mediated work.

American Association for the Advancement of Science

MEGAN OAKLEAF WINS GRANT TO TRAIN LIBRARIANS NATIONWIDE ON AI LITERACY



Preparing Librarians for the AI Era

iSchool Professor and Senior Associate Dean Megan Oakleaf received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to lead a three-year national initiative preparing academic librarians for a rapidly changing AI landscape.

The Student Success through Assessment and AI Literacy in Libraries (SSAAILL) project brings Syracuse University together with the University of Virginia, Colorado State University and the University of Denver to address three emerging needs: teaching students to critically evaluate AI-generated information, understanding AI-enhanced assessment and learning analytics, and helping library leaders demonstrate the value of libraries in an AI-driven environment.

“Our MSLIS students are entering a profession where AI literacy instruction, AI-augmented assessment and AI-era leadership communication are becoming core competencies.”

Professor Megan Oakleaf

The project will train 110 academic librarians through an intensive, train-the-trainer model. Participants will then bring what they learn back to their institutions, with the initiative ultimately expected to reach more than 550 librarians at 110 institutions nationwide. Undergraduate students will also help shape the curriculum, ensuring the training reflects how students are actually using AI for research and learning.

EXPERIENCES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

At the iSchool, learning extends far beyond the classroom. Through immersive experiences like EuroTech and AsiaTech, students travel to global technology hubs, visit leading companies and see firsthand how emerging technologies are transforming industries and economies around the world.

Students also take part in some of the technology industry's most influential gatherings, including AfroTech, the Tapia Conference and the Grace Hopper Celebration, where they connect with industry leaders, explore emerging ideas and technologies, and build professional networks. For students like Jacob Kaplan '27, those opportunities have extended even further, including attending CES, one of the world's largest showcases for new technology and innovation.

Whether visiting a global company, connecting with professionals at a national conference or encountering a new technology for the first time, these experiences give students a front-row seat to what's next—and help them begin to imagine their own place in shaping it.

iSCHOOL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS:

EUROTECH

ASIATECH

CAREER TREKS TO NYC & BOSTON

SPRING BREAK IN SILICON VALLEY
(returning Spring 2027)

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES



STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

\$200,000

FUNDING RECEIVED FOR
STUDENT VENTURES

100

STUDENT VENTURES
LAUNCHED IN 2026

iSchool students are turning bold ideas into real-world ventures—and redefining what's possible. along the way.

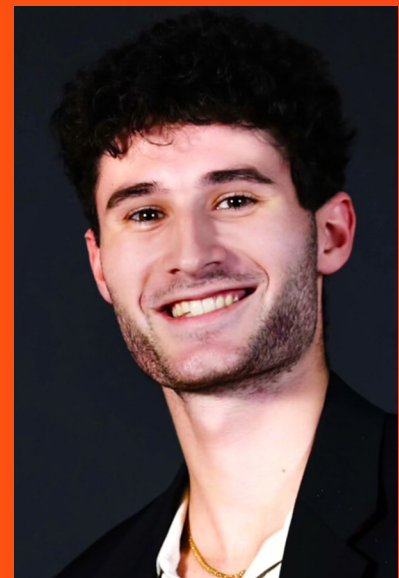


iSchool Entrepreneur Wins Statewide Competition

iSchool student Celes Buffard '27 earned first place and \$10,000 in the 2026 New York Business Plan Competition for SecondWave, a startup combining financial literacy with fractional real estate investing.

Turning Big Ideas Into Real-World Innovation

iSchool student Jacob Kaplan '27 is transforming ambitious ideas into entrepreneurial ventures, including The OtherGlasses, a startup developing adjustable prescription eyewear. With mentorship and support from Syracuse University's entrepreneurial ecosystem, Kaplan is putting experiential learning into action, demonstrating how iSchool students turn creative thinking into practical solutions.





PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

**Tomorrow's most innovative employers
are looking for our graduates.**

Our emphasis on hands-on learning and
strong industry connections make iSchool
students some of the most in-demand at
the University by companies like:



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

91%

Our career placement rate is
one of the highest on campus,
with ninety-one percent of
2025 grads landing a job or
spot in grad school within 6
months of graduation.

TOP 10

Careers in information security, data
science and information management are in
2026's top 10 best jobs ranked by US News
and World Report

\$73,329

Average starting salary of 2025's
graduating seniors—one of the highest
of any school at Syracuse University

ISCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS



16,000+

ALUMNI ACROSS THE GLOBE

1,316

CURRENT
STUDENTS



35

FULL-TIME
FACULTY

672 MASTER'S AND CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

601 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

43 DOCTORAL STUDENTS

AY25-26



18

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED





FROM SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOLS TO IT ROLE AT EQUITABLE

**“I didn’t
want to
limit
myself—
I wanted
to grow.”**

Bushra Khazaleh ’26

Bushra Saho Khazaleh ’26 never imagined herself pursuing a career in information technology (IT)—until she transferred into the School of Information Studies (iSchool) and soon realized how much she enjoyed web design, management and cybersecurity. “Before that, I had no experience in tech at all,” says the information management and technology major from Al Mafraq, Jordan.

With the support and mentoring of iSchool Career Development Specialist Morgan Mastronardi ’15, Khazaleh landed an internship with the Syracuse office of Equitable, a financial services company, and participated in a high-level software migration project, serving as a technical bridge between the IT actuarial systems team and business stakeholders. She took a

leading role in transitioning outdated data, mapping complex data structures and creating technical visualizations. “I made it clear to my manager that I was open to exploring different areas and challenging myself with new experiences,” she says. “I didn’t want to limit myself—I wanted to grow.”

The experience gave her the opportunity to apply classroom learning, develop her technical and professional skills, and build her confidence. It also confirmed she had found the right field—and her performance led to a job offer. She’s looking forward to returning to the same team at Equitable as an IT associate. “I am excited to take on new challenges, contribute to meaningful projects and further develop my skills in a full-time role,” she says.

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

“Donor generosity has had a big impact on my time here. It has helped create opportunities for me and for the organizations I’m part of - opportunities that wouldn’t have been possible without the support of donors.”



Luis Jimenez Perez '26
Information Management &
Technology



SUPPORT
OUR STUDENTS

545

Total Unique Gifts

276

Gifts to the iSchool Fund
supporting key initiatives
and student needs

112

Undergraduate students
supported by experiential
learning and professional
development funds

74

Gifts providing
experiential learning and
professional development
opportunities for students

22

Gifts to support
impactful
scholarship

LEADERSHIP GIVING

The Hill Society



S Syracuse University
School of Information Studies

The Hill Society + iSchool

Launched in 2026, The Hill Society + iSchool is a dedicated group of donors who share a common goal of supporting the iSchool's highest priorities - investing in our students, faculty, and initiatives that shape the future of innovation, data, and technology. Through their leadership level gifts, they ensure the iSchool can respond immediately to students' needs, support faculty research, and fuel the bold initiatives that set our school apart. Together they build a living legacy, advance the school's mission, and drive the future of innovation.

131

HILL SOCIETY+ISCHOOL
MEMBERS IN FY26

iSchool Board of Advisors

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Beth Cofsky '85

Nancy Conturso P'25 (Vice-Chair)

Craig Cornelius '88

Hether Danforth

Sharon Dhall '93

Frank Iannella '92*

David Klein '93**

Stephen Marsh '97

Patricia Mautino '64 G'66**

Gregory Raimann P'14

Kenneth Rosenblatt '96*

Jeffrey Rubin '95 G'98

John Sapone '93

Hasan Shaikh G'05

RJ Sherman '09 G'12

Christopher Smith '97

Alana Variano '08

Gisela Von Dran

Graham Warner '02 G'13

*New members

**University Trustees

**iSchoolers are studying,
researching and innovating
at the leading edge of
technology and humanity.**

**Beyond what we know.
Beyond the walls of
the classroom. Beyond
disciplines, industries and
borders. Together, we're
exploring what's possible—
and helping shape what
comes next.**