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CAMPUS NEWS

UW receives approval to move L&S's largest majors to new AI-focused school

The UW System Board of Regents voted Thursday to move three departments out of the College of Letters & Sciences into a new College of Computing and Artificial Intelligence.

By [Annika Bereny](#)

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The University of Wisconsin-Madison received approval to separate the school's largest and fastest-growing majors into a new college focused on artificial intelligence and computing ahead of next fall.

The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents voted unanimously Thursday to authorize creation of a new College of Computing and Artificial Intelligence (CAI) at UW-Madison, the first new academic division since 1983, when UW-Madison created the School of Veterinary Medicine.

The Departments of Computer Science, Statistics and the Information School will separate from the College of Letters and Science to this new school on July 1, 2026. In the six years since 2019, enrollment in Computer, Data and Information Sciences (CDIS) degree programs has doubled with more than 5,200 students in the programs.

"We will be shaping a future where UW-Madison leads in innovation while advancing knowledge for the common good," Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin wrote in a press release. "We want to prepare UW-Madison students for a world where computing and technology intersect with every profession and discipline, from patient care to teaching, biomedical research to the humanities."

The university has floated changes to computing and statistics departments and majors since as early as 2018 when Chancellor Emerit Rebecca Blank authorized a working group on computing. The group's [work](#) led to the creation of CDIS in 2019, where Computer Science and Statistics had previously fallen under L&S's physical and natural sciences division, and the Information School under L&S's social sciences division.

Four years later, a 2023 working group of experts [suggested](#) a new school.

In an email to CDIS students, director Remzi Arpaci-Dusseau said the creation of a new school will create new opportunities for students through faculty hiring, new courses and "a general investment in support of all of us and our work as we lean into the future."

He reassured current students that degree requirements for graduation will continue "even as new opportunities come online."

"Of course, there are many details that we will be working through in the coming months and years; there will also be many opportunities for you to hear more and also share your voice with us about our collective future. I look forward to meeting with you all and having those discussions in the spring and beyond," Arpaci-Dusseau said in the email.

Mumblings of this move had been prevalent on campus all semester. It was discussed at an August University Committee meeting, and at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for CDIS' new headquarters, Morgridge Hall, where Mnookin [told The Daily Cardinal](#) it was a "serious possibility" that the university could divorce CDIS from L&S.

Zumbrunnen also discussed this change at an [October Faculty Senate meeting](#), though Senators raised concerns about staffing and resources, especially amid budget pressures.

Like Morgridge Hall — the largest [privately funded building](#) at the university — UW-Madison plans to seek private donations to fund the school. \$36 million in general program operations funding would move from L&S to this new college, but its overall budget is anticipated to be around \$85 million, leaving the remaining almost \$50 million uncertain.

"Artificial intelligence and computing are transforming every discipline, from veterinary medicine to political science, and we see the formation of a college as an important step toward serving as a campuswide resource while also meeting the needs of our students and the state of Wisconsin," Arpaci-Dusseau said. "The future workforce will be defined by those who can integrate computing and AI fluently into every discipline."

This 'reorganization' will begin July 1, 2026.

Editor's Note: This story was updated at 3 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4 to reflect the passage of this proposal by the Board of Regents

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