

# **Report**

## **Strategic Planning Working Group University Libraries Florida State University**

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## Executive Summary

Changes in user needs, expectations, and technology are rapidly transforming academic libraries. While libraries' core functions—acquiring, preserving and providing access to human knowledge—remain, in order to continue playing a vital role in the current academic environment, libraries must be proactive in creating and developing services, processes, programs, and spaces that are responsive to user needs, advances in technology, budget constraints, and new forms of scholarship, communication, and interaction.

As it was charged in late March 2008, the Strategic Planning Working Group has met weekly to develop a strategic plan that will “position the Libraries to respond effectively in support of broader institutional needs” over the next three to five years. As this plan was created, the Working Group actively sought input from users and other stakeholders; gathered information from internal and external sources to provide content and direction; formulated mission, vision, and values statements; and identified four strategic goals and accompanying strategies.

### Mission and Vision Statements

Core values identified by Libraries' staff and faculty informed the statements that define the Libraries' vision and mission.

### Strategic Goals

Based on data collected from stakeholders and the wider academic community, the Working Group recommends four strategic goals that it believes should be the focus of the Libraries' activities in coming years. The goals are structured in a way that is intended to represent broad strategic areas, which have implications for many different aspects of library operations and span divisions and departments.

- **Foster User-Centered Culture**  
To be most effective, library collections, services, spaces, and communication must be responsive to user needs and preferences. Continuing programs of user studies and assessment are needed to create and maintain a user-centered focus.
- **Develop Partnerships and Connections**  
To maximize access to material and fiscal resources, efficiencies in operations, and sharing of ideas and information, the Libraries need to cultivate both internal and external partnerships.
- **Create Integrated Learning Environments**  
To create a seamless process of discovery and use of information resources and services, a variety of virtual and physical applications should be employed.
- **Cultivate Employee Excellence**  
The Libraries' human resources are among its greatest strengths and most valuable resources. Programs to attract, retain, and develop a workforce able to effectively deal with the challenges of a continuously changing environment are critical to the Libraries' success.

Each strategic goal is supported by a number of strategies. Suggested actions that the Libraries might take to reach these goals are outlined in a separate document. The Working Group recommends that the next step be for departments or a task force to expand or develop action items that support these strategies. Some will require new resources; others may involve restructuring operations or developing collaborations within the organization.

Through these goals, the University Libraries are committed to supporting excellence in teaching and scholarship in innovative ways that anticipate users' needs and are aligned with the mission and goals of Florida State University.

# Vision, Mission and Core Values

## Vision

Building pathways to knowledge through service, leadership and innovation

## Mission

The University Libraries support teaching, research, and intellectual inquiry at Florida State University by providing diverse scholarly resources and innovative services within dynamic learning environments.

## Core Values

University Libraries employees are committed to the following values:

- Superb customer service
- Commitment to building, preserving and providing access to relevant collections that contribute to the global scholarly community
- Professional development and personal growth to achieve highest levels of expertise
- Innovation and resourcefulness
- Culture of positive and open communication internally and externally

University Libraries employees are committed to a workplace culture that:

- Recruits, retains, and develops high caliber employees
- Fosters integrity and trust
- Shows fairness, collegiality, and respect for others
- Shares information both horizontally and vertically
- Supports teamwork and collaboration within a positive environment
- Respects privacy and confidentiality
- Is proactive and flexible
- Recognizes and rewards success and service

# Strategic Goals

## FOSTER USER-CENTERED CULTURE

### Understanding Our Users

- Engage in studies of current and potential users of the library to understand their research styles, needs, and behaviors
- Use data derived from partners and stakeholders to better understand shared target audiences
- Create robust programs of assessment and review designed to improve current services, identify potential new services, and discontinue ineffective services

### User-Centered Collections

- Continuously evaluate collections in relation to users' needs
- Build and maintain relevant collections for research, curriculum support, and interdisciplinary initiatives
- Provide access to materials through a seamless, sustainable infrastructure

### User-Centered Services and Spaces

- Develop customized services with an integrated assessment component
- Provide a variety of customizable, flexible learning spaces to serve different learning styles, constituencies, and partners using the principles of universal design
- Provide safe social learning spaces for a variety of uses by the campus community
- Ensure effective "wayfinding" and consistent signage throughout libraries

### User-Centered Communication

- Brand the library and its services through virtual and physical media
- Connect users to services through marketing and publications
- Assume a leadership role in promoting the awareness of new methods of scholarly communication

## **PROVIDE OUTSTANDING COLLECTIONS**

### **Information Resources**

- Acquire and make available top-quality information resources that maximize support for teaching, learning, and research at FSU
- Collaborate with other research and academic libraries in Florida and the region to share information resources
- Preserve physical collections and establish protocols for archiving electronic content

### **Information Technology and Access**

- Create a unified, sustainable interface that enables effective and efficient resource discovery
- Utilize a variety of effective strategies to acquire and provide access to information
- Play a leadership role in formulating statewide policies, procedures and practices that support unmediated borrowing among partner institutions

## **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS**

### **Shared Collections and Resources**

- Take an active role in promoting and establishing regional resource sharing to maximize access to resources
- Share the wealth of the Libraries' resources with the broader research community by identifying, digitizing and providing access to exceptional collections

### **Money and External Funding Opportunities**

- Seek new funding sources, including grants and private and corporate contributions, to facilitate the development of collections, services and spaces

### **Campus Collaborations**

- Partner with campus units to develop programs that support critical inquiry and the learning process
- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange of ideas within the FSU community

## **CREATE INTEGRATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **Seamless Access and Delivery**

- Embed library resources and services into user applications and systems at point-of-need
- Adopt universal design practices for online and physical services and spaces to enhance accessibility for diverse users

### **Integrated Physical Environments**

- Obtain fast, secure, reliable wireless Internet access throughout libraries
- Anticipate user needs related to the growing variety of personal digital devices
- Equip users with software, technology, and equipment to support a variety of teaching/learning activities
- Provide support and/or referral for technology-related questions

### **Integrated Virtual Environments**

- Experiment with and pilot interactive virtual spaces
- Provide digital counterparts of physical library services, whenever possible

## **CULTIVATE EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE**

### **Workplace Culture**

- Create an environment that supports experimentation, innovation, teamwork and collaboration
- Develop a workplace that is intellectually stimulating and nurturing
- Maintain an organizational structure that optimizes the effectiveness of the Libraries

### **Workplace Communication**

- Build and maintain open communication, both horizontally and vertically, throughout the library
- Enhance open communication between the library, its users, partners, and other stakeholders

### **Workplace Leadership**

- Train and encourage employees in development of leadership, initiative, and accountability
- Promote employee involvement in designing, planning and implementing library programs and services

### **Workforce Excellence, Recognition and Rewards**

- Create a comprehensive program that recognizes and rewards exceptional individual and group performance, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and a demonstrated commitment to outstanding customer service
- Support the career growth of high-performing staff by providing the tools and educational opportunities required to develop new skills
- Conduct broad-based candidate searches to actively recruit employees who bring exceptional skill sets and innovative ideas to the library
- Develop a compensation strategy that emphasizes competitive pay, internal equity, and administrative flexibility in order to retain a well-qualified and high-performing staff

# Appendices

## 1. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats

### Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

Chief among the Libraries' strengths is its personnel. Committed, hardworking, and highly skilled, the Libraries' staff and faculty are critical to its success. They have shown great flexibility, dependability, and versatility in recent years, solving difficult problems within their own departments as well as developing and implementing new specialized services to meet user needs. Their dedication to excellent customer service has led to an increasingly positive relationship with faculty and students, as well as providing improved access to collections. Furthermore, the staff and faculty of the Libraries are supported in their efforts by strong and effective leadership, including a sense of direction and inspiration from new Director Julia Zimmerman. The Libraries' assets are bolstered by strong collections in key subject areas and its strength in technology and resources.

Of course, the University Libraries are also not without weaknesses. Most prominent among these are ever-tightening budgets and lack of materials funds, which have led to historically low salaries, lower-than-average staffing levels compared with peer institutions, and an acute need for additional material funding (See chart in Appendix). Furthermore, aging buildings have endangered material assets and lowered morale. Not only would new or renovated facilities benefit the FSU community as whole, but they would provide improved work spaces.

Historically the Libraries have suffered from communication problems, leading in some cases to internal conflict, lack of trust, and territorialism. Great strides have been made in this area, but better communication and documentation of responsibilities, as well as improved planning and follow-through are needed to further improve in these areas. Staff also desire to feel "more involved" in leadership decisions. While significant progress has been made in this area through the efforts of the new Director, there is still room for better communication and increased transparency among leadership, staff, and faculty. Another continuing area of staff concern is a perceived lack of coordinated planning, both departmentally and throughout the organization as a whole. Finally, the library needs to better "communicate" the unique value of its services to users through marketing and promotion. It is hoped that this plan will provide the structure to improve in these areas.

### External Opportunities and Threats

The challenge facing the University Libraries is not uncommon: how to do more with less. Even as new technologies and increased competition leads users to expect more from the library, budgets continue to shrink as costs rise. Here in the State of Florida, this situation has become particularly acute as recent (and anticipated future) budget cuts further limit the monetary resources needed to meet growing demand. The University Libraries must face this and other challenges head-on and, when possible, endeavor to utilize those factors for their own advantage.

Outside competition, whether from Google or Starbucks, is both a threat and an opportunity for academic libraries. Instead of fearing this competition, the Libraries must seek to leverage trends, insights, and innovations from outside the realm of libraries to improve their services. This includes exploring so-called Web2.0 technologies, mobile computing, digitization efforts, and improved spaces and services in order to stay relevant and vanquish a growing perception of the Libraries' obsolescence. Furthermore, the Libraries must explore new synergies by both partnering with outside entities and capitalizing on the services they provide (e.g. use of Google Book API, etc.) More effort also needs to be taken to bring a user-centered focus to the Libraries, including identifying unmet user needs and better promotion of the unique value of library services. Increased assessment and feedback should be used to improve current services as well as prune those services which are no longer relevant to the needs of today's user. The Libraries must also endeavor to integrate these services into the online spaces users frequent (e.g. Blackboard, Facebook, IM reference, etc.). Lastly, they must demonstrate leadership on campus and in the broader academic community as a champion of user rights and an innovator among libraries.

Financially, the Libraries must face the increasing costs related to technology, materials, and staffing by pursuing alternative funding sources, whether through grants, donations, or self-generated income. To prevent the loss of qualified staff, the Libraries should explore new staffing models and increase mentorship and career development opportunities, especially for employees without a library degree. Lastly, partnerships should be developed with the FSU community and other State University Libraries to build a “shared infrastructure” for collection development, user services, and technology.

## 2. Stakeholders

Input from the Libraries’ stakeholders played a major role in the development of the strategic goals in this document. Ongoing input from stakeholders will be important as the Libraries continue to evolve into a more user-focused organization. The Libraries’ stakeholders fell into two groups: external and internal. (See the Appendix for a diagram of the stakeholders and their relationship to the library.)

External stakeholders include faculty, students, academic departments, institutions and centers, FSU administration, donors, dean-directed libraries, other university libraries in the state of Florida, non-FSU libraries, and campus and other external partners.

External stakeholders’ viewpoints were important in the formation of the strategic plan and were sought through surveys of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates that were conducted during the strategic planning process. In addition, the Florida State University Strategic Planning Committee Priority Survey and other strategic planning documents were mined for stakeholder information relevant to our planning process.

Internal stakeholders include the library administration, departments within the Libraries, librarians, staff, and student workers. They were asked for input on the Libraries’ strengths and weaknesses and to identify what the core values of the libraries should be through a SWOT and Values exercise. (See the Appendix for copies of the SWOT and values exercise and its results.) Questionnaires were sent to stakeholders in satellite campus libraries and many were interviewed personally. In addition to being involved in the SWOT and Values exercise, Director’s Council members identified opportunities and threats facing the Libraries in the next few years.

### An Environmental Scan of College and Research Libraries

College and research libraries are in a period of significant transition, with almost every aspect of a library impacted by advances in technology. In 2007, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) conducted an environmental scan, and the impact of technology is clearly evident in its report. The report identified the “Top Ten Assumptions for the Future of Academic Libraries and Librarians.” The “assumptions” listed below have been identified by the Working Group and library stakeholder groups as areas of focus for Florida State University Libraries. The full ACRL 2007 environmental scan can be found in the appendix.

- Increased emphasis on digitizing collections
- Demand for increased access to library resources and services
- Debates about intellectual property will become increasingly common in higher education
- Information technology will shape daily routine of students and faculty
- Demands for technology-related services and technology-rich user environments will continue to grow and will require additional funding
- Students as “customers” of the academic library will demand high-quality facilities, resources, and services attuned to their needs and concerns
- Online learning will continue to expand as an option for students and faculty – both on campus and off

Different user communities want different kinds of library space, ranging from social space to work group space to quiet study space. New library buildings and renovations need to focus on these differing space needs; information commons will become the norm. Additionally, users want online access 24/7. Making resources available online will be a top priority for any library.

The ability to increase funds and augment budgets with alternative funding will be critical in meeting the ever-increasing costs of providing library resources and entering into new technology. Developing and maintaining relationships with donors and potential donors will be an important aspect in securing alternative funding.

### Florida State University

The Florida State University is a public, fully accredited, coeducational institution, and one of eleven units within the Division of College and Universities directed by the State Board of Education. FSU has 16 colleges and offers baccalaureate degrees in 101 fields, master's degrees in 114 fields, master's/specialist degrees in 27 fields, doctorate degrees in 73 fields, and professional degrees in 2 fields. Eighty-two percent of the students enrolled at the university attend full time. Undergraduates comprised 76.7 percent and graduate students 20.8 percent of the total enrollment of 41,065 students in the Fall of 2007.

### University Libraries

Florida State University is one of the country's major research institutions of higher learning. The University Libraries actively contribute to the university's reputation through their collections, services, and expert personnel. The Robert Manning Strozier Library, Paul A.M. Dirac Science Library and several branch facilities make up the University Libraries. Branch facilities are located at the College of Engineering, the Academic Resource Center at the FSU Panama City campus, and the Panama (Central America) FSU Campus. Strozier Library is the largest campus library, which houses collections in humanities, social sciences, education, and business, as well as government documents, Special Collections, the Digital Library, and Digital Media Center. The Paul A.M. Dirac Science Library houses the collection for the sciences. The branch facilities have materials available for faculty and students at their specific locations. The dean-directed libraries include the Harold Goldstein Information Studies Library, the Warren D. Allen Music Library, the Claude Pepper Library, the College of Law Library, and the Charlotte Edwards Maguire College of Medicine Library. The Libraries are decentralized to provide specialized services, programs, and collections for their users, while sharing an online catalog and a common electronic circulation system.

The University Libraries currently have 148 FTE (50 FTE are faculty and 98 are support staff and paraprofessionals). The Libraries are currently organized into five divisions: Administration, which includes Human Resources, Budget/Fiscal, Special Collections, Heritage Protocol, and Facilities; Collection Development; Public Services, which includes Undergraduate Services, Faculty and Graduate Research Services, Digital Media Center, Dirac Science Library, Engineering, Special Services, and Special Projects; Technical Services, which includes Interlibrary Loan, Serials, Monographs, and Cataloging; Technology, which includes systems, integrated library systems and networked services, electronic resources integration management, web development, and the Digital Library Center. Other than Administration, each division is led by an Associate Director, who reports to the Director of University Libraries. Julia Zimmerman became the Director of University Libraries in July 2007, replacing interim Director William Summers.

The University Libraries have several renovation projects underway. The first floor of Strozier Library is being renovated into an Information Commons to better serve the needs of undergraduate students. The basement is being renovated into a Scholars Commons to meet the needs of faculty and graduate students. The Scholars Commons will open in Fall 2008, and the Information Commons construction will begin during the 08/09 academic year. Heritage Protocol will be moving into a newly renovated space on the second floor of Strozier, and there are plans to renovate the Werkmeister Reading Room into an FSU Heritage Museum.

### Budget

The budget allocation for the University Libraries is \$13,359,474. Of that amount, \$5,443,310 is allocated for acquisition of library materials. This amount has been supplemented by approximately \$1.7m for the past several years to accommodate the ever-rising costs of books, journals, and databases. Cost increases of print and online materials have ranged from 5 to 8 percent annually, increases that the Libraries have continued to absorb with no increase in funding. Budgets will remain flat for the near future, putting pressure on the Libraries as journals and books continue to increase in cost. The flat budgets faced by the Libraries over the past several years significantly impact the quantity and quality of online journal offerings, books, and other materials.