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Summary:

As the University embarks on a new strategic plan, the Library seeks to define the ways in which it can best contribute to the fulfillment of those goals. In 2011, we substantially completed many of the goals outlined in our 2008 plan, itself based on the University’s prior strategic plan, the *Highest Order of Excellence*. A new strategic plan aligning the Library’s goals with the University’s new directions was drafted after months of discussion at all levels of the organization and largely finalized in November 2011.

The Library’s new strategic plan is divided into the four sections that parallel the four sets of issues articulated in Northwestern’s plan, *Northwestern Will -- We Will*:

- **Discover Creative Solutions** --- we will work together through research and innovation to create solutions to problems that will improve lives, communities and the world
- **Integrate learning and experience** --- we will integrate student learning with experiences in the world, beyond the classroom
- **Connect our community** --- we will connect individuals from diverse backgrounds and life experiences to create a truly inclusive community
- **Engage with the world** --- we will build strategic partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to heighten our impact for the greater good.

Rather than articulate separate goals, the Library has defined cross-cutting themes that identify the mechanisms through which we can advance the university’s mission. Those themes are:

A. Distinctive collections  
B. Innovative technologies  
C. Customized services  
D. Transformed space  
E. Organizational readiness

The ways we envision using these mechanisms are explained further below.

**Advancing the University through Library and Information Services:**

The mission of Northwestern University Library is to provide information resources and services of the highest quality to sustain and enhance the University's teaching, research, professional, and performance programs. The Library provides a setting conducive to independent learning and a resource for users both within the Library and throughout the University and broader scholarly communities. The Library is committed to meeting the needs of users by taking a leadership role in linking the University to information in a rapidly changing environment. The Library develops innovative strategies to educate users and to select, organize, provide access to, and preserve information resources. It forges effective partnerships outside the Library to connect users with the resources they need.
The University Library is more than a collection of books, although it has many and we are the curators. More importantly to this strategic plan, we are a society of scholars and a community whose goal is to support the creation, access, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge and we communicate and teach how to access that knowledge to local and national communities, and throughout the world. (A profile of the Library is in Appendix A.)

We collect information essential for the Northwestern community to investigate intellectual, scientific and creative questions and we assure, through large scale national collaboration, new technology development and curated preservation, that students and faculty have access to the texts they require, whether rare artifact or born digital. We maintain resources valued throughout the world for their scope and integrity and we find ways to allow the world to see these materials through new digital communication formats. We teach research strategies to Northwestern students, explore evolving scholarly communication models with faculty, and interpret collections for the general community. As an institution, “the Library,” the designated physical spaces we oversee, provides an academic crossroads for students and faculty who need study space, collaboration space, technical support and distinctive collections.

Library-specific themes:

The work of the Library community can help enable all of the University’s goals. We also need, however, to articulate strategic and targeted objectives pertinent to our professional domain and current challenges. Five themes unique to the Library’s mission have been identified. Each theme, when considered in the context of each University goal, reveals specific directions and activities that then promote convergence between the library and our parent institution.

Following is a brief description of each of the cross-cutting themes and how it frames university goals.

A. Distinctive Collections: The digital transformation of all aspects of the scholarly publishing process challenges the library to ensure that needed research materials in all forms and formats are readily available to scholars even while new venues of acquisition, methods of preservation, and access methodologies are in rapid development. At the same time, major research libraries contribute to the world’s cultural heritage by building collections of distinctive primary resources. We will craft mechanisms to ensure that digital and print information from all sources -- owned, leased, open access, locally created and consortially acquired -- is integrated to present one coherent corpus. We will investigate new methods of preservation for locally and nationally created digital and print resources to which we seek enduring scholarly access. And we will balance three collection components – the provision of leading edge resources for emerging research directions, the sustained growth of core academic collections, and the enhancement of unique scholarly collections of worldwide significance.

The library will integrate information resources to effect a unified, curated and comprehensive array of local and remote materials that are easily accessed, responsibly preserved and vigorously promoted to faculty, students, staff and broader user communities, in support of Northwestern’s learning, teaching, and research agendas.
B. **Innovative Technologies:** The impact of global technological developments such as cloud computing, mass storage options, mobile platforms and new architectures on NU’s technology infrastructure challenges us to develop and acquire information systems that are interoperable and federated, customizable to individuals and disciplines, and aligned with campus and national consortial directions. We will enhance existing information systems to reflect emerging trends, developing reliable hardware and software architectures that offer anytime-anywhere access to the information services and resources needed by the NU community, and ensuring that tools under development are seamlessly connected to other external and campus-based systems. We will continue to participate in collaborative technology development initiatives with campus and consortial partners, extending the horizons of access and delivery and supporting new approaches to research and pedagogy.

The library will develop and utilize flexible and reliable information technologies that are accessible independent of time, place, and platform, to support the NU community’s learning, teaching and research needs, delivering high-quality services and academic resources.

C. **Customized Services:** Capitalizing on the opportunities afforded by multiple formats and methods of delivering services, we will offer “niche” services to conform to the particular needs of faculty, students and staff at varying levels and in diverse fields. Developments in communication technologies such as social networking and mobile devices have changed the way students and scholars learn, discuss and research information. Changes in information technologies and the digital development of the scholarly record require that these new forms of research and investigation be articulated by those individuals working most directly with the applications. We will seek to apply librarians’ expertise in information discovery and management to the organization and preservation of campus digital assets external to the library’s immediate collections, and will build on and promote librarians’ abilities to assist with information management for scholarly resources and data in faculty and administrative settings.

The library will develop and promote services that support specific educational and scholarly research needs of the NU community, tailoring services to differing disciplines, educational levels and communication preferences, and contributing to the stewardship of campus information assets beyond those held solely by the library.

D. **Transformed space:** The Library’s Master Space Plan completed in 2010 envisions the renovation of Deering Library into a state-of-the-art special collections space showcasing priceless and renowned digital and print collections; the transformation of Main Library into a combination of interactive spaces for core print collections, and for the use and creation of new forms of research communication by students and faculty in all disciplines; and the updating of the branches (Mudd and Schaffner Libraries) as vital, location-specific, subject-neutral satellites that support technology-rich research and consultation for point-of-service needs. The infrastructure systems of both Deering and Main Library are far past their functional lives. Even in the absence of major renovations, we will press for significant replacement of failing systems.
in these buildings. The Oak Grove Library Center, built by NU to house 1.9 million volumes and to be extensible, will enable collection relocations and thus a phased approach to new services and spaces as above.

The library will advocate for the maintenance and enhancement of library spaces to reflect changing campus needs and innovative approaches to information access and learning, while developing and stewarding new and existing collections and services. The master space plan envisages an academic crossroads with dynamic spaces offering state of the art collaborative space, quiet areas for those engaged in digital or print research, showcasing of the campus’ most distinctive materials, and “test beds” to explore and develop new forms of digital information.

**E. Organizational readiness:** Continuing change in collection practices, information technologies, service models and space requirements necessitates that we become a learning organization that encourages innovation and active participation. We will bring together a multi-part assessment program to look both outward and inward, and adopt methods, procedures and services that reflect the best practices identified nationally. Staff development will be emphasized and expanded through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms. We will undertake re-engineering and workflow analysis and explore new models of cooperation or outsourcing to carry out aspects of technical operations. We will work to assure a nimble organizational structure that acknowledges new campus directions as they emerge and positions the library staff as ready experts in relation to campus initiatives that target aspects of the research and information management process.

The library will ensure the effective deployment of its operational resources through staff development and organizational assessment, seeking to be flexible, creative and responsive to meet campus academic needs and exemplify the best professional practices.
University Library Strategic Goals

1. Discover creative solutions. The library will enable excellence in all areas of faculty research and creative work through careful curation of physical and digital collections, will contribute to national and international dialogues on research and policy agendas that pertain to information access and dissemination, and will develop services and spaces that support a climate of innovation and entrepreneurism.

We will:

A. (Collections) Channel funds and staff time into our collections of greatest strength while simultaneously expanding support for new growth areas and subject priorities at Northwestern; improve access to “hidden” underprocessed collections; and stimulate faculty use of the institutional repository and related publishing services.

B. (Technology) In partnership with NUIT, the Office of Research and faculty in diverse disciplines, develop architectures and digital curation services in support of e-science, datasets and data-driven research, to enable collaborative use, long-term retention, and compliance with national deposit and data-management policies.

C. (Services) Expand awareness of research-level support and services for scholarly communication for faculty and graduate students, including advocacy, open access and copyright education, and integrate the Library’s work on these issues with that of the Graduate School, the Office of Research, the Northwestern University Press, the CIC and others.

D. (Space) Build on the scholars’ commons model to link expertise with targeted designation of space, creating areas for digital creation, GIS, data services, and 21st century information access and multimedia technology.

E. (Readiness) Build capacity to support areas of academic study that are new or that do not correspond with current collection and staffing strength. Area studies will be the initial focus of our effort to devise non-traditional approaches such as partnering with other libraries to share specialist librarian staff, utilizing vendor services and leveraging access to digitized retrospective collections through the HathiTrust.
2. **Integrate learning and experience**: The library will be a key academic partner to assist students in shaping their educational experience holistically and in understanding independent inquiry and research through teaching and services, and will support team-based, collaborative, experiential and life-long learning by deploying emerging technologies and redesigned learning spaces.

We will:

A. (Collections) Build student familiarity with the wealth of Northwestern’s library resources, from our strong general collections and world-renowned special libraries to the whole spectrum of paid and free digital resources to which we provide access, and work with faculty to encourage the use of these in student research and inquiry.

B (Technology) Provide support for teaching, distant learning, field experiences, flexible computing environments and other collaborative activities by maximizing the substantive research content and interactive library services that can be delivered via mobile and device-independent platforms.

C (Services) Develop targeted, seamless instructional programming that can be delivered directly to students or integrated with faculty curricula, and present customized support for delivery as part of a coordinated suite of educational services customized by type of user.

D (Space) Reduce outdated and outmoded service and collection areas and develop flexible, adaptable spaces that promote zoned study, collaboration, and teaching and learning.

E. (Readiness) Create a robust program of library user needs assessment that will directly inform continuous improvements in public services and space redesign.
3. **Connect Our Community**: The library can provide programming integrated across all segments of the university community to build a new mainstream that recognizes diversity and life-long membership through expansion of collections, deployment of new technologies, engagement in public discourse, new spaces, and extension of services such as mentoring, volunteer opportunities, and alumni relations.

We will:

A. (Collections) Strengthen our ties to the Northwestern community by developing a digital records management capacity, by creating exciting exhibits and events in partnership with other campus culture centers, and by promoting library resources and services not only in our publications, but also in those of schools, academic departments, centers, and the university as a whole.

B. (Technology) Integrate information and scholarly resources by developing a service-oriented architecture linking library discovery, resource management, and fulfillment services to multiple sources, e.g. Course Management System, Faculty Research Networking tools, Digital Repository and electronic publishing. Partner with NUIT and key campus stakeholders to expand virtualization, Identity Management, Data Storage infrastructure and other bridge services.

C. (Services) Promote policy and technology steps towards a university records management program that would offer digital archiving expertise and options relevant to administrative records, course-capture video, historic buildings records, multimedia publications, and more.

D. (Space) Establish spaces for a slate of ongoing public initiatives—lectures, performances, and high-quality exhibits—to complement library collections and services, diversify the value of the library as place, and to make it a key destination and campus crossroads.

E. (Readiness) Promote staff engagement with the widest variety of campus activities—formal and informal, administrative and academic—and seek opportunities to tap the informational and organizational expertise of library staff for broader University purposes. Use these activities to enhance staff development and improve library services.
4. **Engage with the world:** The Library builds and maintain partnerships that leverage research and technological strengths, globalize the campuses, advance the international presence of Northwestern, and foster civic engagement through national and international consortial activity. The Library engages with diverse types of organizations and institutions to promote resource sharing, collections development, digital projects and the provision of any time-any place services and virtual communication and spaces.

We will:

A. (Collections) Seek opportunities to showcase our unique physical and digital collections and staff expertise in high-impact collaborative projects at the regional, national, and international levels.

B. (Technology) Engage in collaborative digital projects to strengthen campus access to scholarly resources and technology services; and contribute our expertise to national and international initiatives related to system and content development– e.g., Hydra Project, Project Bamboo, Variations on Video, University Press Content Consortium.

C. (Services) Expand, integrate, and increase awareness of services available to all members of the Northwestern community regardless of where they are in the world, including NU-Q and other international programs.

D. (Space) Transcend physical barriers and facilitate engagement with the wider world through “smart spaces” supporting videoconferencing, international seminars, streaming overseas broadcasts, interactive maps and more; encourage staff and patron utilization for communication and collaboration across all NU campuses and partners.

E. (Readiness) Implement physical and virtual staff exchange arrangements with other institutions that have complementary strengths. These partnerships will leverage and enhance NUL’s consortial and global relationships. Use exchange experiences to develop the expertise of, and improve services offered through, our local staff.
APPENDIX A: Library Profile

Northwestern University Library (NUL) comprises the Main and Deering libraries and two branches (the Seeley G. Mudd Library and the Math Library) located on the Evanston campus; and the Schaffner Library on the downtown Chicago campus. The Pritzker Legal Research Center and the Galter Health Sciences Libraries are on the Chicago campus and, though administered separately, cooperate closely on collections, technology, space and staff development. NUL provides extensive operational and collections support to the NU-Qatar library in Doha, Qatar. In November 2012, construction was completed on the Oak Grove Library Center in Waukegan, IL, a climate controlled high-density book storage facility operated by NUL. Northwestern's libraries hold more than 5 million volumes, 90,000 serial subscriptions, 4.5 million microfilms, 200,000 maps and 18,000 linear feet of manuscripts and archives.

Within the Main library is the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, the largest collection of Africana in the world, including books, posters, textiles, documents, manuscripts, and ephemera, in 300 European and African languages; and the Transportation Library, one of the world’s most extensive collections, with materials on air, rail, highway, pipeline, water, urban transportation, law enforcement, and environmental impact. The library produces TranWeb, an internationally disseminated index to periodicals and documents in transportation. Located in Deering, the Music Library has unmatched strength in 20th century and contemporary classical music, and holds at least one copy of nearly every new score published since 1945. It also collects original manuscripts, notably, the John Cage collection documenting the 20th century’s most revolutionary composer. The Art Collection manages 150,000 books, exhibition catalogues, and journals on art, architecture, photography, and design. The Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections houses more than 235,000 rare books, periodicals, posters, manuscripts and photographs, from 5,000 year old Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets to 20th century Surrealist and Futurist art materials. Strengths include 1960’s and 70’s counterculture; British and American literature; the Siege and Commune of Paris of 1870-71; theater; World War 2 underground publications; and comic books, both mainstream and underground. University Archives retains records, publications, film, photographs, and other materials pertaining to Northwestern’s history, faculty and alumni. Many items are of national significance, from documents of the infamous Leopold and Loeb murder case of 1924, to the papers of Karen DeCrow, one of the founders of the National Organization for Women.

Digital Collections and Services. The Library has been digitizing unique collections of historical significance since the early 1990s. Notable digital projects include the photographs from Edward S. Curtis's North American Indian, the Online African Maps collection, the Africana Poster Collection, the World War II Poster Collection, the Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, and Chicago Homer, a multilingual database. NUL supports PhiloLogic and Virtual Modernization custom humanities tools, and a multi-functional digital image platform. A technology innovator since its creation in the 1970s of NOTIS, the landmark integrated library system, NUL has recently implemented Primo, a resource discovery tool; Illiad, a user-oriented electronic interlibrary loan system; Ares, an e-reserves system; and LibGuides. NUL provides digitization services, including audio and video streaming, slide scanning, book scanning and audio production and collaborates on digital projects with faculty, staff and graduate students. NUL is a participant in the Google Books scanning Project.
**Campus collaborations:** NUL partners actively with other academic and administrative departments on campus to provide student instructional support, scholarly communications advocacy and education, technology services and training. The library provides shared space for academic technology, the Writing Lab and career services. NUL participates in One Book, One Northwestern, and other campus and community outreach events. The library has been deepening its technological and programmatic collaborations with the Northwestern University Press, which is also overseen by the Dean of Libraries.

**External affiliations:** The Library is a member of the Chicago Collections Consortium, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, RAILS (the Reaching Across Illinois [multi-type] Library System) and CARLI, the Illinois academic library consortium. The Library also works closely with the Garrett-Evangelical Seminary's United Library, located on the Evanston campus, sharing an online catalog and collaborating on collection planning projects. A key member of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), NUL helped establish the HathiTrust digital archive. Nationally, Northwestern is a founding member of the Association of Research Libraries, the Center for Research Libraries, the Coalition for Networked Information, and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), and is a member of the American Library Association, EDUCAUSE, and the International Association of Scientific and Technological University Libraries. The Library regularly receives funding grants from IMLS, NEH, the Andrew Mellon Foundation and other agencies.