

Northwestern University Libraries

Strategic Plan 2016-2018

Northwestern University Libraries anticipate and address the research, teaching, and learning needs of the university community. **We will** provide collections and information services of the highest quality that sustain and enhance the University's mission. **We will** partner across campus to develop initiatives that directly contribute to student success, effective teaching, and research productivity. **We will** encourage a culture of assessment using qualitative and quantitative data to improve and expand services. **We will** structure our organization to give priority to strategically important services, and **we will** use our many spaces dynamically to maximize study and research, academic partnerships, integration of technologies, campus engagement, and the use and curation of distinctive collections.

Four major library strategies interact to advance Northwestern University's **We Will** plan:

- Providing access to research collections of international distinction;
- Delivering advanced scholarly digital information services anytime, anyplace;
- Enhancing learning and engagement through services and programs;
- Collaborating nationally and internationally to share resources and expertise.

I. DISCOVERY AND CREATIVITY: Northwestern University Libraries will expand partnerships and materials to support research and aid in the discovery and creation of knowledge. We will strengthen Northwestern's areas of academic priority by:

- Improving the ability of Northwestern students and faculty to publish and disseminate the results of their research, through advocacy and services that support new directions in scholarly communication.
- Increasing partnerships and services to promote digital humanities and digital scholarship, and opening new avenues for research in all fields by providing up-to-date information technologies and comprehensive scholarly resources.
- Realizing a full array of digital repository services to ensure preservation of data, scholarship, and other Northwestern academic assets.
- Articulating and pursuing a research agenda for the Libraries that builds on existing knowledge and strengths in digital repositories, distinctive collections, preservation, and assessment.
- Acquiring and providing access to distinctive collections and promoting their use in research and teaching to inform answers and inspire new questions.

II. INTEGRATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: Northwestern University Libraries will be furthered as a destination providing students and faculty with the spaces, technologies, resources, and expertise needed to succeed academically, advance professionally, and make a positive impact on society. We will integrate learning and experience by:

- Creating, supporting, and improving learning environments, such as the remodeled Mudd Library, that accommodate a wide variety of pedagogies, preferences, learning styles, and disciplinary practices.
- Delivering services and resources in a device-independent manner for online and blended learning, and integrating the library's resource discovery and delivery tools with campus systems.
- Guiding Northwestern students toward relevant and effective strategies to think critically, solve problems collaboratively, and be proficient consumers and creators of information throughout their education, careers, and life activities.
- Embedding librarians in academic and academic support programs to provide continuous, consistent, and effective support of faculty teaching and student learning.
- Implementing relevant models of librarian-faculty collaboration, assessing the effectiveness of library contributions to teaching and learning and promoting the value of primary resources.

III. CONNECT CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY: Northwestern University Libraries will leverage our unique position on campus to strengthen interactions among diverse constituencies, fields of study, and perspectives. We will expand community connections by:

- Revitalizing Deering Library to develop communities of interest in research resources, scholarly services, exhibits, events, and programs that cross disciplinary boundaries, support University goals, and promote our shared traditions.
- Promoting conversations with campus partners to create and support programs and services for first generation, low-income, and under-represented students that enhance their academic success, personal development, and professional growth.
- Leveraging partnerships with other Northwestern campus and student life organizations to raise awareness of library and information services and enhance our contribution to campus life.
- Expanding the scholarly, technological and operational advantages that derive from our unified administrative relationship with Northwestern University Press.
- Reinforcing the function of the library as an intellectual crossroads and a safe, neutral, open, inclusive, and welcoming environment for the campus community; engaging the library's staff and services to foster diversity, equity and inclusion in a variety of academic, administrative and co-curricular contexts.

IV. ENGAGE LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY: Northwestern University Libraries will engage locally, nationally, and internationally to expand access to information for the greater good. We will intensify Northwestern University's engagement with the world by:

- Bringing the world to our campus by creating programs and services to highlight our distinctive collections, such as the Herskovits Library of African Studies, as global resource centers.
- Sharing our important collections worldwide through advanced systems for resource sharing, through lending for exhibitions and academic programs and through partnerships with relevant external research and education communities.
- Expanding professional partnerships and use of our collections in the Chicago region through engagement with institutions such as the Newberry Library, Art Institute of Chicago, and other members of the Chicago Collections Consortium; and actively extending our resources through the regional consortial opportunities of the CIC.
- Creating and supporting educational initiatives for K-12 students in the Chicago metropolitan area through involvement with programs and institutions such as the Northwestern Academy, Center for Talent Development, and planned Obama Presidential Library.
- Influencing the future of global information access and preservation by leading and contributing to international open source technology communities such as Hydra, Fedora, and Avalon.
- Aligning local academic initiatives with national trends and services through major organizations like the Association of Research Libraries with its current emphases on collaborative models for research data management, discovery and preservation of born-digital resources, advancing scholarship and publishing, and developing communities of practice in the areas of digital humanities and liaison librarianship.

To ensure the success of these efforts we will articulate a detailed organizational implementation plan, formalize multi-focal assessment mechanisms, and continue to refine our organizational structure to prioritize both campus services and operational efficiency.

The Libraries crafted a Vision Statement in 2014 that drives our service goals and workplace climate:

”We are a Library driven by the research, learning, and information needs of all users, with a primary emphasis on the students, faculty, and staff of Northwestern University. We are committed to achieving Library goals in alignment with University goals.

We are a Library whose organizational structure supports our work. We organize by work activity with an equitable distribution of power that enables point-of-need decision-making and achievement at all levels of staff. We appreciate the parts of our organizational structure individually and holistically. We recognize the contributions of staff in all positions, at all levels of experience, and of all educational backgrounds. We welcome collaboration vertically and laterally within our organizational structure.

We are a Library that fosters a collegial, positive, diverse, and inclusive workplace. We communicate openly, respectfully, transparently, and constructively. We extend trust to all staff regardless of unit or organizational level. We take responsibility for our actions and acknowledge personal accountability to our organization, our stakeholders, and one another. We maintain fair, ongoing, and honest performance feedback opportunities and evaluation processes for all staff.

We are a Library that anticipates and addresses the changing needs of our users. We empower all staff to utilize personal strengths toward innovation. We espouse nimble decision making with appropriate deliberation and consultation. We set and achieve tangible goals, acknowledge milestones, and complete projects. We continually expand our skill sets through professional development, nurture our competencies, and value knowledge sharing across all staff.”