Looking Forward:

Northwestern University Libraries and the University Press play a key role in advancing the University’s priorities through the creation and dissemination of knowledge. We deliver scholarly information and empower research and learning across multiple physical and digital locations, presenting innovative services concurrently with distinctive primary sources and award-winning publications. We customize and actualize major academic assets including collections, technologies, professional expertise, and specialized facilities. The Libraries have seen significant transformation in recent years resulting in a robust knowledge base that supports the research enterprise of the University. The current strategic plan has led our work since late 2018, and a new phase of planning will occur after the conclusion of the Program Review process in the fall of 2021.

In the complex financial environment of the past three years, University Libraries are focusing on two approaches, assessment and outreach, to maximize and innovate resources. The focus on assessment has motivated the evaluation of academic services, collections, and spaces to ensure we are realigning resources in the least disruptive way for our users. Expanded outreach and engagement has helped to ensure that those services, expertise, and collections are reaching the entire Northwestern community, no matter their location, and has enabled us to understand academic needs and increase the impact the Libraries have on our campus’ core mission. New leadership at the University Press is revitalizing the vision for the global dissemination of more diverse scholarly and creative voices.

This focus made possible the successful, urgent pivot to support teaching and research in the COVID19 pandemic environment, see this explored in the next section. Assessment, outreach, and service redesign have positioned the Libraries to embark on a year of systematic planning aimed at shaping the future of the University Libraries and the University Press. This will be reflected in four principal documents:

- University Program Review Self Study Report
- A new three-year Libraries and Press strategic plan
- A multi-year equity, diversity, and inclusion plan
- A community-driven update to the Libraries Mission and Vision statement

The results of this robust planning process will help to set bold, ambitious goals for how the Libraries and Press will advance University priorities, support learning and research, and expand the global intellectual impact of Northwestern.
Move the University forward during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the Northwestern University Libraries and the University Press in many of the same ways it has disrupted the world at large. The challenges of facing the pandemic and still providing research resources provided an opportunity to leverage those pillars of the last few years, assessment and outreach, to re-imagine library services. As we targeted concrete requests in new ways, the Libraries adapted and innovated quickly to meet student and faculty needs. This was clearly seen in the success of the new Foundations of Online Teaching practicum where librarians facilitated faculty cohorts though the program. We also expanded existing programs such as online “chat” consultations and helping faculty develop free or low-cost digital course materials. The benefit of these innovations will likely result in permanent new approaches for information services, and will significantly increase access for users regardless of their location or local situation. Changes in the mode of library services have also affected collections decisions. The need to support all users with electronic sources has meant shifting resources to meet this increased demand. This will require the Libraries to continue reviewing funding and expenditures as it has in the past years.

- We will prioritize staffing for three areas: digital information and technology support; on site building services and safety; and direct engagement with faculty and student research.
- We will continue to evaluate new and existing services to meet the needs of users studying both on campus and remotely, and use this exploration to develop a reimagined concept of information services and of librarian faculty as academic partners on campus.

Enhance the University’s Intellectual Eminence and Impact

Library collections and services, realized physically and digitally, are fundamental to the support of teaching and learning and to the reputation of the University. Unique materials, especially in three domains: the Herskovits Library of African Studies; the Transportation Library; and our 20th Century-and Contemporary Music collection, attract scholars from around the world and contribute to the intellectual eminence of the institution. The University Press is an internationally respected organization through which the University expands scholarly communication, creation, and preservation of the scholarly record. Together we play a prominent role in the dissemination of scholarship as well as in the collecting of academic information. The Libraries are also a global leader in the development of open source software that promotes the dissemination and preservation of the scholarly record in visual images, music, film, and media.
Accomplishments in 2019-20 demonstrate intellectual impact: national awards for authors of color at the University Press; collaboration with CNAIR on the gift of extensive collections in support of Native American and Indigenous studies; the acquisition of the Robert McCormick archive, a rich source for journalism, political science, and other fields; and the increase in GIS technology tools and expertise.

- We will leverage the increased visibility of the Press to recognize diverse and global authors; disseminate knowledge in multimedia formats; and expand engagement with campus scholars.
- We will seize unique opportunities to add archives and primary source materials that diversify our collections and enhance key areas of faculty research.

Build Research Eminence

Publishing and diverse modes of scholarly communication are central to the creation and dissemination of Northwestern University’s research output. The Libraries collectively are a core facility within the University’s research infrastructure; and the NU Press is part of the worldwide system of research dissemination. This core is at real risk of deterioration following three years of compounded budget reductions; this has direct impact on advanced faculty research in STEM fields, as well as growing risk to social sciences and humanities as we lose the ability to sustain digital subscriptions.

We will maximize the impact of the Northwestern research enterprise by developing strategic partnerships with centers and programs to synthesize data and drive accessible pathways to University output. The Libraries will look to the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Library Initiative on operationalizing the “collective collection” to expand the network of shared resources available to researchers and allow the Libraries to direct local support to unique and immediate needs.

While revisioning space for general and digital uses as a result of the pandemic, we must still care for unique physical research materials. The renovation of Deering Library will enhance the usability and stewardship of the University’s rare and unique resources and create distinctive spaces for study, teaching, presentation, and community engagement that will attract students, faculty, and the wider community of scholars.

- We will architect a three-year plan to restore our ability to provide high-level current digital scholarly resources in major fields of faculty research.
- We will explore new ways to support researchers though research impact metrics, data analysis, and technical expertise to maximize data for overall University research impact.
Support the Student Experience

Northwestern University Libraries have a central role in student life and learning. We offer an open and welcoming experience for all students, both digitally and in-person, which has been recognized in formal student surveys. We support basic and advanced learning across all fields of knowledge, responding to the vibrant diversity of our campus community. The Libraries have actively expanded outreach to students through customized support and events addressing curricular and co-curricular needs. University Libraries partnerships with Weinberg College, the Searle Center, and the Office of the Provost have led to the establishment of the academic resource center in University Library, the Affordable Instructional Resources initiative, and, during the pandemic, the highly successful Practicum in the Foundations of Online Teaching. The Libraries’ proactive outreach to student groups to archive their records for history of Northwestern University has continued, and taken on an individual twist during the pandemic, seeking student writings and diaries about their experiences.

- We will deepen our understanding of the library needs of students, especially those who have been historically marginalized, and through enhancing the accessibility and diversity of our services and resources, contribute actively to their academic success.
- We will make permanent shifts in our student services to incorporate the benefits learned from remote learning, to continue building online teaching tools and low-cost digital course materials.

Strengthen the Enabling Support for our Ambitions

The Libraries and Press seek to provide continuing advancement for the University’s mission, ambitions, and excellence. In the past few years we have sought to transform the culture and structure of our organizations, aspiring to be employers of choice and developers of a new and diverse generation of leaders. Staff redesign has resulted in the creation of positions supporting emerging specialties such as digital publishing, research data management, digital archiving, and preservation services. The most recent changes brought new configurations to public services, special collections, and resource management. In strengthening our internal support, we strive for seamless access through the continued improvement of library spaces, technology integration, and the redeployment of collections and services across locations and consortial arrangements.

Support of both digital and physical infrastructures comprises a major and interdependent set of strategies. We are concurrently redesigning spaces to customize uses for the creation, delivery, and archiving of digital information; for the curation of the University’s archival heritage and scholarly record; and for the enhancement of interpersonal services and academic communities.
• We will lead a participatory approach to reframe the vision and values of our organization and to empower the individual creativity and expertise of our staff to deliver innovative services.
• We will continue the active redeployment of spaces for public use, collections, and staff and technical functions as well as to maximize adjacencies on campus, partnership opportunities with other academic services, workflow efficiencies, and the protection of University assets.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Access
The Libraries have a history of active and multifaceted work in equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, including three years successfully hosting the Association of Research Libraries’ Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce (Kaleidoscope), and is eager to expand work in this area. Accessibility is a crucial component to add to this framework given impact on equitable use of library spaces, materials, technologies, Press publications, and other services. With a signature leadership appointment, the Press will build on its strong record of engaging with authors of color, and topics related to critical race theory and ethnic studies. Earlier this year we created the new position of Accessibility Librarian, and in late 2020 we appointed a part-time equity, diversity, and inclusion coordinator who will work on better coordination of existing initiatives and training, campus partnerships, a strategic plan for EDIA. We will hire a senior manager for diversity and organizational development by the end of 2021.

Collaboration
Our work is inherently collaborative; academic libraries and presses today cannot operate as stand-alone organizations. We have decades of demonstrated commitment to partnerships on campus, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Ongoing projects cut across multiple schools and units at Northwestern, and extend to many external institutions. Current initiatives include:

- **Academic Resource Center:** With Weinberg College, the Searle Center, and others.
- **Affordable Instructional Resources:** Shaping campus strategies to reduce textbook costs and increase open access course resources.
- **Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities:** In-depth engagement via librarian fellows and programming with NU Press authors.
- **Mary & Leigh Block Museum:** Partner in exhibitions, publications, programs, and research.
- **Center for Native American and Indigenous Research:** Librarian affiliates, research support, and notable new funding to digitize archival resources related to Native American education.
- **Chicago Collections Consortium and Black Metropolis Research Consortium:** The Libraries are founding members and maintain leadership roles in both groups.
• **Buffett Institute**: Member of the Global Council and partners with the NU Press to fund a global translation prize; now exploring options for additional print and digital publishing services via NUL and NUP. Emerging programmatic collaborations related to languages and area studies.

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**Metrics and Current Data (as of close of FY20)**

NUL [organizational charts, measures of impact, policies and publications](#) are openly accessible at our websites. The NU Press is currently redesigning its site but its mission and history are [here](#).

**Services to students and faculty**
- 5,600,249 full text articles accessed
- 1,055,702 web visits from around the world
- 60,412 books circulated
- 11,440 items lent to other libraries; 19,313 items borrowed from other libraries
- 5,528 reference questions answered
- 424 classes and presentations reaching 7,743 students

**Professional Service**
- 8 Adjunct/Lecturers/Fellow and 1 other university appointment
- 138 Professional Committee Positions and 60 Northwestern Committees
- 62 Professional Presentations and 9 NU presentations
- 17 Professional Publications; 6 Professional Awards/Elected Offices; and 1 Camus Award

**Total collections**
- 8,445,591 combined print and electronic volumes across all library locations
- 201,890 audio files, 84,346 films and videos, 8,863 graphic images
- 103,923 print journals and 189,096 electronic journals
- 36,343 linear feet of archives and manuscripts
- 250 terabytes of unique digital content (NUL-produced)

**Collections growth and preservation**
- 495,202 e-books and 24,276 print books added
- 16,887 films and videos added (includes streaming video titles)
- 76% of acquisitions expenditures are for electronic materials
- 697 conservation treatments and 272 de-acidified volumes

**Five Library Buildings**
- 366,587 usable sq. feet of space in Evanston and 7,103 in Chicago
- 17,726 usable sq. feet high-density shelving
- 356 public computers

**Staff**
- 186 total staff at Northwestern University Libraries
- 69 librarian faculty; 35 professional staff
- 80 support staff
- 2 FTE student staff (no student hiring since April 2020)