

Uniting the Arts & Humanities with Science & Technology

FY16-17 Strategic Plan



Our Mission

The University Libraries provides state-of-the-art access to broad and diverse scholarly resources and innovative technologies to empower users to evaluate their information needs, identify and access reliable sources, and successfully transform information into knowledge.

Our Vision

We will be known and valued by the university community as essential to the educational process and to the success of students. Serving as an Intellectual Hub for the campus, our flexibility, creativity, and adaptability will drive innovation in services, instruction, technology, and resources.

Introduction

This University Libraries Strategic Plan builds on the accomplishments and organizational strengths gained through our 2009-2014 plan, leveraging these strengths to position us as a library for the 21st century. The plan is user-centric, and highlights two vital components to our success: the people who build a strong, creative, healthy, and fiscally responsible organization; and infrastructures and processes that are adaptable, proactive, and technologically sophisticated. Most importantly, the plan reflects our values and priorities, such as our commitment to open intellectual inquiry, knowledge sharing, teaching, collaboration, excellent client service, and the development of our faculty and staff. The plan will guide us as we make choices—as individuals, as departments, and an integral campus unit—about what we do and how we can deliver the most value to UA and its scholarly enterprise over the next several years.



Strategic Directions

1. ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Partner with the UA academic community to foster student success; inspire intellectual inquiry and scholarship.

2. OUTREACH & COLLABORATION

Cultivate relationships with the campus and the community, forming deeper collaborations and leveraging partnerships to increase the visibility of library services and resources.

3. FACILITIES & SPACES

Provide an inclusive, technology-infused environment with flexible places that are responsive to the needs of all users and that nurture engaged learning behaviors.

4. ACCESS & DISCOVERY

Optimize and increase the discovery of services, resources, and technologies through secure, state-of-the-art access.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Support the ongoing workforce development of all University Libraries employees to enhance skills, knowledge, engagement, and job satisfaction in order to meet evolving student and faculty needs.

Strategic Direction **1 ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT** Partner with the UA academic community to foster student success; inspire intellectual inquiry and scholarship.

Context/Rationale

Teaching permeates the Libraries' culture, from course-related instruction in our classrooms to embedded librarians in evidence-based programs. Every day, staff at service points throughout the Libraries helps students learn the academic research practices they need, from finding a book on the shelf to taking advantage of classroom technology. It is essential to our mission that we continue to develop our teaching services and programs to ensure that they are responsive, sustainable, and grounded in a strong foundation of pedagogy and best practice.

Objectives

- 1.** Realign our information literacy program to current professional standards and trends
- 2.** Support the full spectrum of curricular delivery models.
- 3.** Provide experiential learning opportunities.
- 4.** Maintain distinctive scholarly publishing strengths in Akron history and culture; Ohio politics and elections; the history of psychology; and poetry and poetics

Actions

- Develop a mission statement for UL information literacy program.
- Identify measurable student learning outcomes for undergraduate information literacy instruction.
- Map information literacy student learning outcomes to UA undergraduate curriculum.
- Map archival collections to relevant departments and courses.
- Pilot and assess hands-on archival instruction session with select courses.
- Conduct an environmental scan of library services for distance learners, online, and hybrid curricular delivery models.
- Create a Makerlab
- Partner with the Williams Honors College and EXL Center to publish and promote documentation of undergraduate research and service learning work through the repository.
- Reframe student employment in the lens of experiential learning: explore developing internships (for credit), peer mentoring, and student ambassadors programs.
- Publish Steve Love's biography of Don Plusquellic; John Green's biography of Ray Bliss; and the Akron Story Circle Project; Publish Jenn Lucas's Midterm Elections book and Jerry Austin's stories with the Bliss Institute.; Publish the book of asylum postcards with the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology. Conduct the Akron Poetry Prize successfully; publish Winner and Editor's choice titles, in addition to Leslie Harrison's Book of Endings.
- Acquire additional titles for each area of distinction.

Strategic Direction **2 OUTREACH & COLLABORATION** Cultivate relationships with the campus and the community, forming deeper collaborations and leveraging partnerships to increase the visibility of library services and resources.

Context/Rationale

The University Libraries must deploy new methods of communication, fully participating in the social Web while also using older media and staying alert to new opportunities. Our goal is to reach our users and partners wherever they are which means that we must customize messages for various communities based on their needs to take full advantage of any collaborative opportunities. Our outreach efforts must be a two-way street; their success depends on our ability to elicit and take advantage of user feedback, including input from staff and external partners.

Objectives

1. Align with the University of Akron Press to solidify our position as curators of UA generated scholarly content in the institutional repository.
2. Build cross-disciplinary innovative academic support programs.

Actions

- Provide one-on-one support for students and faculty publishing content through the repository.
- Create Intellectual Property resources and initiate outreach support to help all students, faculty, and staff understand copyright and obtain permissions.
- Partner with mission-aligned community organizations to publish content of relevance and importance for the community in both print and digital forms.
- Create editorial review board and editorial policies for IdeaExchange.
- Investigate the value and feasibility of incorporating theses and dissertations from The University of Akron into the institutional repository.
- Create library liaison support structure for centers, institutes, and similar campus units.
- Improve local K-12 outreach by hosting school students, offering free public classes, and providing job shadowing opportunities.
- Initiate, host and facilitate regular, collaborative Think-Tank sessions between the library and information technology services, tutoring services, and EXL.
- Form a collaborative partnership with CAST to offer research and instructional assistance to CAST faculty and students.

Strategic Direction **3 FACILITIES & SPACES** Provide an inclusive, technology-infused environment with flexible places that are responsive to the needs of all users and that nurture engaged learning behaviors.

Context/Rationale

For many users, their experience centers on interaction with the physical spaces of the Libraries. Our users understand and embrace the nature and value of library space, and they consider access to physical space one of the Libraries' core services. Access should, therefore, be transparent, be matched to their needs, and be barrier free. A "space as service" mentality allows us to impact directly the daily lives of our users.

Actions:

- Recommend non-capital redesign, repurposing, and reconfiguration of current spaces and moveable furnishings to address the identified goals, needs, and preferences of our users.
- Identify and resolve safety and security issues. Remove barriers to accessibility.

Objectives

1. Elevate the user experience in our physical spaces.

Strategic Direction **4 ACCESS & DISCOVERY** Optimize and increase the discovery of services, resources, and technologies through secure, state-of-the-art access.

Context/Rationale

Users seek tools, interfaces, resources, and services that efficiently and effectively meet their needs. They expect our resources to be intuitive, functional, and transparent, and our tools to be mobile-friendly and effective for novel modes of inquiry. Faculty and students expect service that is easy to access and available when and where needed-- one that provides a gateway to networks of specialist expertise. We recognize the value of scalable, extensible, and sustainable infrastructures that enable and support: 1) library services and collections; and 2) users' need to collect, store, use, and share their data, publications, and other research material.

Objectives

1. Make selected unique collections more discoverable.
2. Work toward frictionless access to content and services.
3. Explore and promote the best technological means to present the scholarly work of the University to the local community and the entire world.

Actions:

- Identify, evaluate, and prioritize physical/analog archival materials that are at the highest risk of loss due to degradation and format obsolescence.
- Develop a plan for the preservation/conservation, digitization, and online access to these materials.
- Investigate and determine best practices for the collection, preservation, and access to UA's born-digital materials with archival value.
- Restructure Interlibrary Loan Services through system upgrade and workflow efficiencies.
- Explore integration of Sierra services into MyAkron to provide increased access to personal library account activity and discovery of library resources.
- Streamline library authentication by utilizing the campus single sign-on system.
- Review and update library policies and procedures using Sierra audit data to maximize access for users, and to ensure cohesion with the larger library context (depository, OhioLINK, SearchOhio, ILL partners).
- Apply compiled, cross-departmental Sierra audit data by correcting internal system setting inconsistencies, implementing available automated processes, and installing desired ILS functionality not currently in use.
- Assess the feasibility of implementing a unified information architecture for our collections which now exist in various variant systems.

Strategic Direction **5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** Support the ongoing workforce development of all University Libraries employees to enhance skills, knowledge, engagement, and job satisfaction in order to meet evolving student and faculty needs.

Context/Rationale

The Libraries is a learning organization that is ever-changing, adapting and transforming itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century library. We aim to be able to embrace disruptive innovation and meet new, often unanticipated, expectations. The human challenges include the continual need for new expertise, both from new recruitment and internal development; achieving and maintaining rich diversity in our workforce; and supporting all of our faculty and staff in both their professional development and their efforts to prioritize multiple and growing demands.

Actions

- Share and optimize expertise so that our workforce flourishes professionally and provides the highest level of service to the UA community.
- Connect employees who are interested in scholarly collaborations.
- Provide structured opportunities for UL faculty/staff to de-stress through social gatherings, team building, and other activities.

Objective

1. Develop a resilient workforce.