Charting our Future

2016 UPDATE

University of Toronto Libraries’ Strategic Plan 2013–2018
Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Toronto Libraries is to foster the search for knowledge and understanding in the University and the wider community. To this end, we shall provide innovative services and comprehensive access to information founded upon our developing resources as one of the leading research libraries in the world.

STATEMENT OF SERVICE VALUES

- We are responsive to our user communities
- We listen and treat each other with respect
- We are committed to delivery of services in a helpful and courteous manner
- We are committed to providing accessible and reliable services which are instructive, accurate and timely
- We are committed to acquiring, organizing, preserving and enhancing the value of our resources
- We are committed to delivering information using the most effective technologies available
- We are committed to maintaining, with both the university and our users, a clean, attractive and secure library environment
- We are committed to working together as a team, sharing information and expertise
- We share a commitment to learning in order to enhance our capabilities to provide good service
About the University of Toronto Libraries’ central library system

The University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) are rightly referred to as a national treasure. We are the largest academic library system in the country and the fourth largest in North America.

The library system is administratively complex. The central library system includes 17 libraries and various central services administered by the University Chief Librarian Larry Alford. This strategic plan defines the priorities for the central library system.

Central UTL libraries:
• Architecture Landscape & Design Library (Shore + Moffat)
• Bora Laskin Law Library
• Business Information Centre (Rotman)
• Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library
• Engineering and Computer Science Library
• Gerstein Science Information Centre
• Harry R. Abbott Dentistry Library
• John P. Robarts Library for the Humanities and Social Sciences
• Map & Data Library
• Mathematical Sciences Library
• Media Commons
• Music Library
• Noranda Earth Sciences Library
• Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) Library
• Petro Jacyk Central & East European Resource Centre
• Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library
• Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, including the University of Toronto Archives

Central UTL services:
• Access and Information Services
• Bindery
• Cataloguing and Metadata Services
• Collection Development and Acquisitions
• Facilities, Security, Fire, Health and Safety
• Finance, Human Resources and Administration
• Information Technology Services
• Reference and Research Services
• Scholarly Communications and Copyright
• Scholars Portal (a partnership with the Ontario Council of University Libraries)
• Scotiabank Information Commons
• University of Toronto Libraries Advancement
• UTL at Downsview

The central library system works in partnership with 27 other libraries that operate independently in service to their constituents across all three University of Toronto campuses. Together, through our expert staff, the 44 University of Toronto libraries provide collections and services that inspire discovery and engage inquiring minds within the University of Toronto community and beyond. The central library system operates the discovery tools, such as the common Integrated Library System, that are used by all 44 libraries. The central system also manages licensing for most e-resources.
INTRODUCTION

Upon arriving at the University of Toronto Libraries in 2011, I was struck by the level of excellence permeating the institution and the Libraries. It was clear to me that everyone at the University takes tremendous pride in their work and how it contributes to making the University such an outstanding place. The University of Toronto is consistently ranked one of the top 25 research institutions in the world, and the Libraries are Canada’s largest research library system and one of the most significant research libraries globally. Upholding that standard of excellence and positioning the Libraries to meet the challenges of the future is the key driving force of our strategic plan. As we reach the mid-point of the plan, we have taken the opportunity to look forward. The result is a refreshed vision that builds on the strengths of the past, while seizing opportunities to engage with new and innovative kinds of research and learning.

The University of Toronto Libraries are essential partners in advancing knowledge creation at the University of Toronto. Our international reputation as a centre for research attracts leading faculty, researchers, graduate and undergraduate scholars to the University. Differentiated from our peers by the breadth and depth of our collections and a 50 year history of using innovative technologies to further discovery, we remain uniquely positioned to make available the scholarship of the past, and open opportunities for transformative discovery into the future.

Our vision for the Libraries is bold, and this plan continues to leverage our strengths to address the unique information needs of our increasingly digital community. We will provide leadership in the library and archives community to address profound changes taking place in the scholarly environment, and will be a partner of choice for the University’s world class researchers who impact the world with their scholarship and discoveries.

The central library system builds on a history of adaptability and innovation, and our future will remain grounded in these timeless principles. Generations of our colleagues before us had the audacious vision to build one of the great libraries of the world. We honour and build on this legacy through careful stewardship of our world class collections, through technological and service evolution, and by embedding the University’s fundamental values of diversity, inclusion, respect, and civility in everything that we do.

This is an exciting time for libraries as it is clear that technology will continue to rapidly evolve the information and higher education environments, creating a more complicated landscape, and one that brings new previously unimaginable opportunities. We will respond to the changing needs of our scholars by becoming a laboratory for innovation, a driver of collaboration, and a gateway to the cultural, scientific and historical record. We will continue to be recognized as a preeminent research centre for scholars around the world.

To achieve our ambitions, we have affirmed five key priorities. Our choices are focused on serving the needs of scholars at all levels and supporting President Meric Gertler’s Three Priorities:

- We will grow our world class collections, expanding our strengths in both traditional and emerging directions in scholarship.
- We will enhance our physical spaces to facilitate ground-breaking research, teaching and learning.
- We will provide innovative and inclusive services that inspire the generation of ideas and prepare scholars for an information-centric world.
- We will strengthen our relationships with our many stakeholders, and engage dynamically with the community of researchers both locally and abroad.
- We will achieve these tasks through careful stewardship of our resources and the expert knowledge of our excellent staff.

This plan outlines the ambitions of the Libraries, and provides direction to the individual departments that develop and implement the targeted initiatives that allow us to achieve our goals. I invite you to share your ideas for the Libraries to ensure that UTL continues to lead strategically as we further the mission of the University of Toronto today and for future generations of scholars.

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Comprehensive collections
1. We will strengthen our worldwide reputation for building collections renowned for their scope, depth and scholarly impact.
2. We will enhance access, accessibility and discoverability of our collections.
3. We will preserve our print, digital and media collections for future generations of scholars.

Singular spaces
1. We will make major capital investments to expand and renovate the libraries.
2. We will provide physical spaces that inspire creativity and accelerate discovery. They will support the varied learning needs of our users to ensure their academic success.

Innovative inquiry
1. Our physical and digital spaces will inspire learning and knowledge creation, and enhance the University as a learning community.
2. We will continue to nurture the lifelong information literacy skills of our scholars by sharing advice and best practices, informed by an understanding and appreciation of their needs and goals.
3. We will be the partner of choice that researchers turn to for help finding the quality information they need for scholarship.

Exceptional engagement
1. We will engage deeply with the higher education community on issues that impact scholarship.
2. We will partner with colleagues locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to deliver outstanding research services.
3. We will build a strong culture of engagement with our diverse users.

Strategic stewardship
1. We will measure our contribution to the successful fulfillment of the mission of the University.
2. We will pursue opportunities to develop new revenue channels in support of key service areas and new service initiatives.
3. We will become a nimble organization that is able to continually adapt to the rapidly changing information and higher education environments.

The Libraries recognize that diversity is essential to meeting these goals, and are committed to recruiting a diverse staff.
Our outstanding collections are at the heart of the University’s mission to pursue research and teaching at the highest international levels. The library system is a key resource for our own faculty and students and for leading scholars worldwide; our collections are essential to learning, and integral to all points of the research cycle.

1. **We will strengthen our worldwide reputation for building collections renowned for their scope, depth and scholarly impact.**
   a. We will seek opportunities to collaborate with peer institutions as we modify and adapt our collection development policies and practices to align with current and potential research needs.
   b. We will take inspiration from the innovation shown by our researchers by expanding traditional collection practices in both core and special collections to include emerging directions in scholarship.
   c. We will embrace our place in the global community in one of the world’s most culturally diverse regions. We will build collections for the future by applying our subject and language expertise in seeking unique and significant textual and non-textual materials from all over the world and in many languages.
   d. We will expand our web presence through the creation, curation and local hosting of digital content in all disciplines.
   e. We will build capacity to house digitized and born digital collections to enable use of those collections to support emerging forms of digital scholarship.

2. **We will enhance access, accessibility and discoverability of our collections.**
   a. We will ensure better access to the full breadth of our collections by improving our online interfaces, search functionality and the quality of our metadata.
   b. We will meet the access and accessibility needs of our community by building web services that deliver our collections to devices of varying capabilities, including mobile devices.
   c. We will ensure that our world class collections are readily retrievable, whether on campus or at remote locations.
   d. We will enhance the presence of our collections in other searchable databases to better enable their discovery through external sources and searches.

3. **We will preserve our print, digital and media collections for future generations of scholars.**
   a. We will leverage the University’s commitment to expanding our storage capacity at Downsview by becoming a recognized leader of print preservation in Canada. We will be central to last print copy preservation efforts in Canada through collaboration and partnership with other leading libraries.
   b. We will build on Scholars Portal’s achievement of becoming Canada’s first Certified Trusted Digital Repository by developing a preservation infrastructure for UTL digital collections.
   c. We will, as custodians of Canada’s largest archival print and media collections, develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for their long-term preservation.

**SELECTED CURRENT INITIATIVES**

i. The Discovery of Insulin collections, documenting the world’s first medical discovery of major significance related to diabetes and noted as one of the most significant medical discoveries of the twentieth century, have been inscribed into UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register.

ii. A tri-campus Digital Preservation Working Group is working to steward a preservation infrastructure that will ensure UTL digital collections are accessible and useable to future generations of scholars.
The Libraries act as a home away from home for scholars, providing a sense of community in a large and diverse university. Our students and faculty seek out accessible spaces for quiet reflection, as well as areas that are conducive to collaborative work and study. We will reimage our physical spaces as knowledge laboratories, inspiring bold experimentation and providing the University community with the tools they need to be academically successful.

1. **We will make major capital investments to expand and renovate the libraries.**
   a. We will build the Robarts Commons, a 1200-seat addition to the John P. Robarts Library, to accommodate the high demand for quality learning spaces on the downtown campus.
   b. We will renovate the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library to ensure state-of-the-art environmental and security controls are in place to protect and preserve our world class collections of rare books, manuscripts and archives.
   c. We will develop a master facilities plan for renovations to the central libraries, in partnership with our faculty colleagues, to provide superior learning and collaborative spaces.

2. **We will provide physical spaces that inspire creativity and accelerate discovery. They will support the varied learning needs of our users to ensure their academic success.**
   a. We will facilitate interdisciplinary digital research and collaboration by creating a technology rich environment that enables scholars to experiment and create new knowledge.
   b. We will enable academic success by offering state-of-the-art technology required to support learning and teaching.

**SELECTED CURRENT INITIATIVES**

i. A refresh to the East Asian Library updated the circulation desk and computer stations, and improved seating, resulting in a better user experience in this leading international resource centre.

ii. The newly renovated Engineering and Computer Science Library provides welcoming and sought-after study space.
We are a leader in providing innovative and inclusive services to support our students, faculty, and other users in an evolving information environment. Through our services and spaces, we enable creativity and discovery, and provide a place to build community in a large and diverse university.

1. Our physical and digital spaces will inspire learning and knowledge creation, and enhance the University as a learning community.
   a. We will provide inspiring spaces for quiet study, as well as flexible and configurable spaces that enable effective collaboration and the incubation of ideas.
   b. We will respond to the needs of an increasingly sophisticated and globally connected community by building an intuitive virtual presence which will evolve as the needs of our users change.
   c. We will recognize and celebrate research innovation on the part of our academic community by creating annual awards.

2. We will continue to nurture the lifelong information literacy* skills of our scholars by sharing advice and best practices, informed by an understanding and appreciation of their needs and goals.
   a. We will advance teaching and learning outcomes by designing and implementing embedded information literacy programs.
   b. We will provide specialized research support while working to enhance self-service options.
   c. We will amplify the University’s global reach by developing educational initiatives that can be delivered at scale to a large and diverse student body.
   d. We will ensure that our students leave the University adept in information discovery, assessment, and creation in a digital world.

3. We will be the partner of choice that researchers turn to for help finding the quality information they need for scholarship.
   a. We will transform our service models to meet the current and yet to be imagined service needs of our users by providing identifiable and effective research and learning support in their chosen physical, virtual and blended environments.
   b. We will recognize the enduring need for customized information services and will offer continued access to public service points and personal consultations with approachable and knowledgeable staff.
   c. Using our deep expertise in information technology, we will provide the discovery infrastructure and tools needed to support scholars as they navigate increasing volumes of digital information and data, and we will support new forms of digital scholarship.
   d. We will put our users’ experience and workflow realities at the forefront of our service development efforts.

* Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning. (ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education, 2016)

SELECTED CURRENT INITIATIVES

i. The iStaff program boosts student confidence using Robarts Library as student staff members assist their peers navigate the 14 floors of “Fort Book.”

ii. UTL launched the Undergraduate Research Prize to celebrate undergraduate research achievement and recognize emerging scholars.

iii. The first Student Journal Forum brought current and aspiring student editors together to learn about the journal publishing process from librarians, faculty members, and peer journal editors.
Creating strong and enduring collaborations and relationships with our stakeholders is essential to our mission. To provide outstanding services, we must build effective, differentiated methods of communication and continuously seek feedback from our many users with a strong focus on our students and faculty.

1. **We will engage deeply with the higher education community on issues that impact scholarship.**
   a. We will persuasively advocate for open access initiatives and provide credible leadership and guidance for new directions in scholarly communication and copyright.
   b. We will improve support of knowledge transfer activities by building strong partnerships with University researchers, the Office of Research and Innovation, Campus-Linked Accelerators and others.
   c. We will support faculty innovation in teaching by leveraging our partnerships with the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI) and providing the technology and expertise needed for tomorrow’s classroom.
   d. We will influence new directions of knowledge dissemination by engaging with publishers regarding emerging forms of scholarly publication and viable models of scholarly communication for the future.
   e. We will build the technical infrastructure and support services that researchers need to meet emerging research data management requirements.

2. **We will partner with colleagues locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to deliver outstanding research services.**
   a. We will collaborate across our three campuses with all libraries at the University to further our shared missions of research and teaching service to our institution.
   b. We will partner with faculty, departments and external organizations to advance the University’s mission to foster leadership in the discovery, preservation, synthesis and transmission of knowledge.
   c. We will strengthen our global connections with consortia to build distributed and large-scale research services.
   d. We will grow our international presence by enhancing engagement with alumni, exploring new partnerships with international peers, and inviting international delegations to Toronto.

3. **We will build a strong culture of engagement with our diverse users.**
   a. We will evaluate our collections and services through our users’ knowledge and use of them.
   b. We will encourage all staff to proactively engage our students, faculty and other users – offering timely support and effective information at the point of need.
   c. We will improve collections, spaces and services through ongoing user consultation, and find new and creative methods of seeking user input.
   d. We will create opportunities for lifelong learning and community engagement by holding lectures, exhibitions and other public events with leading scholars and thinkers.

**SELECTED CURRENT INITIATIVES**

i. Partnering with Canada’s leading academic libraries, Libraries and Archives Canada and Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec, UTL is preparing to implement a linked data metadata framework to improve discovery and access to scholarly information on the web.

ii. Open Robarts, a transmedia game of secret societies, ancient mysteries, rare books and leading edge technologies helped promote open access to the university community in innovative and surprising ways.

iii. The Gerstein Science Information Centre introduced a new Research and Innovation Services (R&I) unit to respond to demand for additional support for faculty research and innovation.
Our staff accelerate excellence in research and learning by delivering world class collections and services. We will continue to steward our financial resources responsibly to deliver excellent services to our students and faculty. We will cultivate a positive, transparent and responsive organization able to deliver excellent services that communicate the value of the library and its many outstanding employees.

1. **We will measure our contribution to the successful fulfillment of the mission of the University.**
   a. We will build our capacity to collect data to inform planning for our collections, spaces and services.
   b. We will build expertise in evaluating the impact of our investments in collections, space and services.
   c. We will ensure that assessment is embedded as a key component of our projects and services.

2. **We will pursue opportunities to develop new revenue channels in support of key service areas and new service initiatives.**
   a. We will build on our expertise to attract grants that fund research and quality improvement initiatives.
   b. We will experiment with new strategies to fund innovation and sustain existing services.
   c. We will commit to supporting a culture of philanthropy throughout the central library system to provide for the level of excellence our students and faculty deserve.
   d. We will expand collaborations with partners and develop in-house capacity to participate in grant-funded research projects.

3. **We will become a nimble organization that is able to continually adapt to the rapidly changing information and higher education environments.**
   a. We will further develop our leadership, management and strategic thinking skills.
   b. We will explore new ways to support communication and collaboration across the Libraries.
   c. We will consult with staff as an integral part of our decision-making practices.
   d. We will continue to embrace a diversity of ideas, languages and skills that will enhance our ability to deliver excellent services.
   e. We will promote continuous professional growth and learning at all staff levels.

**SELECTED CURRENT INITIATIVES**

i. The University of Toronto Libraries and the Centre for Medieval Studies were awarded a grant of $773,000 USD from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop digital tools to support manuscript study.

ii. Awarded annually, the STAR awards acknowledge the extraordinary work of library staff by recognizing notable team accomplishments.

iii. “In the Loop” is published weekly to help staff across the 44 university libraries keep up-to-date about projects and initiatives that inform their work.

Image: Page from *Horae: Dutch Book of Hours*. Catholic Church. MS after 1400. From the collections of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.
This plan is the result of substantive consultations that took place through the 2012–2013 academic year, led by the members of the original Strategic Planning Steering Committee of Stephen Crotty, Dan D’Agostino, Julie Hannaford (Co-Chair), Lari Langford, Mark Leighton, Loryl MacDonald, Sian Meikle (Co-Chair), Michael Meth, Elena Springall, Peter Wilson, Pam King and Whitney Kemble. The committee consulted broadly with the University of Toronto community of faculty, students and staff; library staff in both the central system and in our partner libraries on all three campuses; and with our peers both locally and abroad in the larger library and archives communities. We are grateful to the hundreds of faculty, students, staff and colleagues who took the time to send emails, talk with the Libraries, respond to surveys, participate in focus groups, submit reports, and who agreed to be interviewed for their expertise. We are also grateful to those who contributed their thoughts and knowledge during the plan refresh. This plan is enriched by the many voices that care passionately about the University of Toronto Libraries.

We are also grateful to the many people who provided sage advice and shared their skills through the original planning process. In particular, Ms Helen Lasthiotakis offered guidance about planning within the University of Toronto context. Ms Sheree Drummond, Professor Glen Jones, Professor Rhonda McEwen and Mr. Michael Ridley loaned their considerable expertise to the Strategic Planning Speaker Series for UTL staff. Ms Vicki Whitmell ably steered us through the selection of the themes which framed our consultation process. Olesya Falenchuk, PhD and Monique Herbert, PhD and their team expertly managed data collection and analysis for the project. Ms Josie Fung, Ms Jennifer Riel and Ms Stefanie Schram skillfully guided the Committee to develop strategic choice cascades based on the framework developed by Professor Roger Martin at the Rotman School of Management. Maureen Morin was the driving force behind the project visuals and graphic design. Ms Laura Anderson provided effective project management support to the PlanUTL committee. All of these individuals, and many others, helped guide decision making to focus the central library system on a successful path forward.
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