

BARRIER-FREE ACCESS TO ALL OF THE RIGHT INFORMATION

Strategic Plan 2020–2025



**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LIBRARIES**

Mission Statement

University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) sparks the search for knowledge and understanding in our University and the wider community. We are one of the leading research libraries in the world. We partner with our staff, faculty and students as they pursue their paths to becoming creative and thoughtful scholars, learners and citizens. We are the heart of the University; we ignite and amplify our community's academic curiosity, encourage dialogue and provide essential context for critical engagement. Our commitment to openness will best facilitate knowledge creation in our diverse scholarly community.

Values

- We foster **community** for all of our users.
- We take a **user-first** approach.
- There are no wrong doors; all of our service points welcome our users.
- We are committed to **accessibility, inclusion, diversity and equity** in all that we do.
- We deliver **proactive** services; we actively engage and reach out to our students and faculty.
- We care deeply for our environment and strive towards **environmental stewardship**.
- We are committed to **informed assessment**; we strive to continually improve based on user feedback and other diverse sources of evidence.
- We listen and make space for **diverse opinions**.
- We work **together** collegially, across our campuses, as one team, **readily sharing** information and expertise.
- We believe in **ongoing learning, professional curiosity, innovation and creativity**—we evolve to meet future needs.
- We value **connection and collaboration**. We actively seek partners locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.



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Daria Perevezentsev

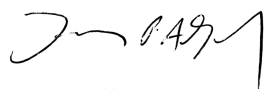
Introduction

The University of Toronto is consistently ranked one of the top 25 research institutions in the world and the University of Toronto Libraries is Canada's largest research library system. *Barrier-free Access to All of the Right Information* is an ambitious plan. It reflects our reputation for excellence and looks forward to new, innovative ways we can partner with faculty and students to inspire academic curiosity, and help develop and support creative and thoughtful scholars, learners and citizens. Our focus on the 'right information' recognizes the key role libraries play as trusted sources of knowledge. In an age of disinformation, this is more important than ever.

Our strategic vision for 2020–25 as outlined in the plan positions the Libraries as partners and leaders in the academic endeavour of the University and aligns our work closely within the priorities of our students, faculty and staff. At its core, the plan highlights what we will do and how we will do it. What we will do is represented by our two functional areas, Teaching & Learning and Research, two key facets of the academic enterprise which the library has always supported and continues to advance. How we will accomplish this work and innovate in these areas is enabled by the people, collections and spaces that make up the University of Toronto Libraries and that support our strategic vision. Together, these enablers represent what we at UTL know is necessary to build and maintain a world-class research library.

The strategic planning process was highly collaborative, drawing on the knowledge, ideas and experience of our many stakeholders. Hundreds of faculty, students, staff, and colleagues took time to contribute by responding to surveys, participating in focus groups and departmental road shows, submitting reports, sending emails, and providing feedback in many other ways.

This plan outlines the ambitions of the Libraries and provides direction to the departments and staff 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.



Larry P. Alford
Chief Librarian
chieflibrarian@utoronto.ca



Gordon Belray

The central library system works in partnership with 25 other libraries that operate independently in service to their constituents across all three University of Toronto campuses. Together, through our expert staff, the 42 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 Library Services Platform, that are used by all 42 libraries. The central system also manages licensing for most e-resources.

About the Libraries

The University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) is the largest academic library system in Canada. 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 (Eberhard Zeidler Library)
Bora Laskin Law Library
Milt Harris Library, Rotman School of Business
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

Bindery
Cataloguing and Metadata Services
Collection Development and Acquisitions
Library Operations
Security, Health and Safety
Finance, Human Resources and Administration
Information Technology Services
User Services
Scholarly Communications and Copyright
Scholars Portal (a partnership with the Ontario Council of University Libraries)
Scotiabank Information Commons
University of Toronto Archives & Records Management Services (UTARMS)
University of Toronto Libraries Advancement
User Services
UTL at Downsview

STRATEGIC VISION

Our strategic vision for 2020–2025 is
“Barrier-free Access to All of the Right Information.”

What do we mean by “Right Information”?

We chose this phrase because it encompasses a number of different but important goals in the practice of responsible librarianship—goals that are shared across the organization and across our broader profession.

- At a very basic level this means **factually accurate information**. In an age of disinformation, one of the most important roles of the library is to serve as a trusted source of knowledge that is as close to “true” as possible, as determined by its provenance and its relationship with the broader scholarly conversation. We don’t shy away from critically evaluating the literature, but we also aren’t here to pretend all viewpoints on a topic are equally rigorous.
- On a more philosophical level, Right Information is also a reference to Ranganathan’s Law of “**Every person their book.**” In cases where a user comes to us knowing exactly what they need, we make the process of providing it as painless as possible. In cases where a user has needs that are not yet clearly articulated, we are committed to helping them get to the root of their inquiry and get access to the materials that will meet their real needs.
- Right information is also **information about the library**. Whether a user is looking for information about our holdings or a directory of library services, we are committed to transparency and accuracy in describing what is available and what is required in order to access it. (E.g., physical access, student status)

Below are two clusters of familiar concepts. These are meant to serve as an illustration of what objectives conceived in harmony with the Strategic Vision look like.

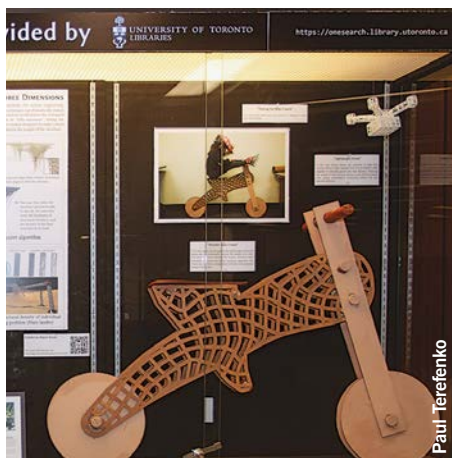
Our *Functional Areas*, including Teaching & Learning and Research represent two facets of the academic enterprise which the library has and continues to support. These concepts are grouped together because they represent important lines of business of the university enterprise, recognized outside of just the library.

Our *Enablers* include People, Collections and Spaces and represent the resources that UTL possesses that can be marshalled to support our Strategic Vision. These concepts are grouped together because they represent what we at UTL know is necessary to build and maintain a world-class research library.

Functional Areas (what we do)

Graduate student innovation

The Showcase Your Work: University of Toronto Libraries Graduate Student Exhibition Competition was created to give graduate students the opportunity to create displays based on their papers or projects. Demonstrating innovative use of library resources or services in the application was a key requirement. One of three 2019 competition winners, Computer Science PhD candidate Rahul Arora designed a striking display for his paper, User-Centric Structural Optimization in Three Dimensions.



Working together

Keep@Downsview is a partnership of the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa, Western University, McMaster University and Queen's University to preserve the scholarly record in Ontario in a shared high-density storage and preservation facility located at the University of Toronto's Downsview Campus in North Toronto. Preserving and maintaining this valuable collection ensures that these resources will be available for generations to come.
<http://downsviewkeep.org/>

Teaching and Learning

We are trusted advisors and partners with faculty and students throughout their academic journey. Our teaching, grounded in informed pedagogy, reflects the curricular objectives of the University and strengthens future generations of knowledge creators and critical thinkers.

GOALS:

- Promote **excellence in our teaching**
- Foster **passion for inquiry** so that our graduates are life-long learners who are responsible consumers and creators of information

OBJECTIVES:

- Embed principles of equity and inclusion to create a safe and healthy learning environment for all
- Create a culture of excellence in instruction and learning
- Build creative and dynamic physical and technological teaching infrastructure
- Build instructional hubs by leveraging expertise across our three campuses
- Partner with faculty to align our teaching and learning with their course and curricular learning objectives

Research

UTL is at the heart of the research enterprise at the University of Toronto. With an interdisciplinary and innovative approach, UTL ignites research activities on campus, across the City of Toronto and beyond. We are partners, collaborators and coaches, promoting open research practices that extend the scope of scholarship.

GOALS:

- Increase our **impact** across the University of Toronto, locally, nationally and globally
- Amplify our role in the academic enterprise by **partnering with faculty and research teams**
- Foster **evolving research and scholarly publishing approaches** that encourage sharing, inclusiveness and knowledge creation

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish partnerships across the University, locally, nationally and internationally
- Raise our visibility as a key starting point in the research life cycle and as an interdisciplinary hub for scholarship
- Leverage tools that support innovative approaches to research and discovery

Enablers (how we do it)

People

The library is made of—and for—people. We provide service to all of our users through initiative, collaboration and resolve. We encourage creativity, flexibility, and openness to new ideas and opinions. We empower people in the work they do and through the relationships they form with each other.

GOALS:

- proactively **identify barriers** to user-centred services and strive to remove them
- Build a community that values relationships and **respects and welcomes everyone**
- Honour the premise that a successful library is a **partnership between the people building it and the people using it**
- **Foster and strengthen relationships** with our many diverse community members

OBJECTIVES:

- Foster a can-do culture; encourage experimentation, empower all staff to lead, regardless of position; incentivize initiative in support of library goals
- Take a UTL-wide perspective; eliminate barriers and silos that prevent collaboration
- Create a flexible infrastructure that allows us to be nimble and anticipate emerging user needs

Collections

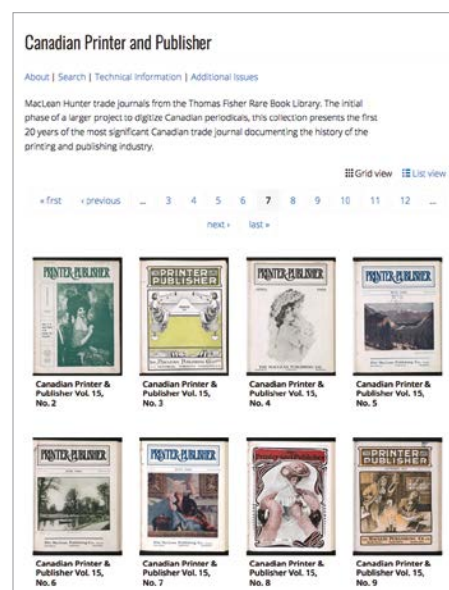
We build and sustain Canada's most comprehensive research collection, which serves as the raw material for research and a safe and trusted repository for scholarly outputs. Our approach is sustainable, diversified and highly collaborative with national and international partners. We see collections as service; collections are more than what we acquire or produce 'in house'; more broadly, they are whatever we can leverage access to for our many users.

GOALS:

- Build physical and digital infrastructure to make our library collections **effortlessly accessible**
- Contribute to the preservation of **Canada's cultural and historical record**
- Continually **assess our collections** to ensure we are investing in those that align with the University's priorities

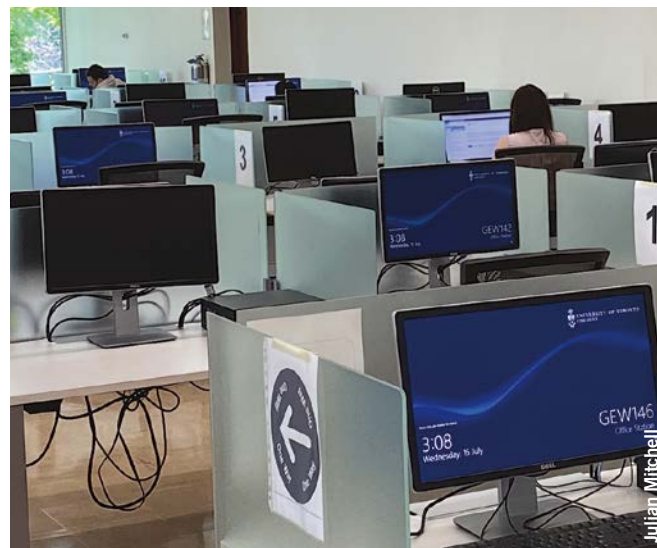
Responding to new challenges

Three months after all campus libraries were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Robarts Library opened a curbside pickup service for print material not available electronically through the HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service.



Our printed past, preserved online

Canadian Printer and Publisher, which began in 1892 and is still being published today by Rogers Media under the title *Canadian Printer Magazine*, is the national organ of the printing industry in Canada. It documents the growth and evolution of the trade, during a period of continuous technological and commercial innovation, beginning in the period when machine composition was taking over from hand composition in the 1890s. <http://fishercollections.library.utoronto.ca/>



Where they needed it: service to student families

Located in Robarts Library, the Family Study Space gives student parents access to the library resources they need to do their work while bringing their children with them.

In 2019, UTL piloted new services in the space. Story time, organized in partnership with Toronto Public Library's Lillian H. Smith Library, was well-received, as was free child minding during Reading Week.

In recognition of this project, UTL librarians Jesse Carliner and Kyla Overall were selected as the winners of the 2020 Alexandre Vattemare Award for Creativity in Libraries.

When they needed it: service to students without technology

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UTL opened a computer and Wi-Fi space on June 18, 2020 to serve current University of Toronto students who required access to technology for academic work. Following physical distancing and other safety requirements set out by government and public health officials, the Technology Access Service operated in the Gerstein Science Information Centre's Wallace Room.

The two zones in the space provided either library computer access or Wi-Fi access for personal devices. Up to five students per zone were able to book a morning or afternoon appointment for one three-hour period per day.

OBJECTIVES:

- Leverage regional, national and international cooperative collection building collaborations
- Reinforce and expand our existing strengths in the areas of physical and digital preservation
- Promote the library as a trusted repository for special collections, archives and rare formats
- Invest in new and emerging formats to support comprehensive collection-building
- Advocate for and invest in open and emerging forms of scholarship

Space

We are both big and little; noisy and quiet. We have the advantage of size, yet we also provide a personal experience. We provide welcoming, intuitive physical and digital spaces to our diverse users. Our inclusive spaces provide community; a trusted, safe space for thoughtful exploration of ideas and opinions, where civil debate and discourse is part of the culture.

GOALS:

- Our doors are open and accessible to our users, we strive to provide **barrier-free access** to resources and services.
- Our spaces serve as a **catalyst for reflection, dialogue, discovery and invention.**
- Service to our users is **where they need it, when they need it.**

OBJECTIVES:

- Harmonize our digital presence to provide an intuitive and consistent experience to our many users
- Build and maintain spaces that are welcoming, safe, useful and comfortable
- Diversify our spaces to meet the changing needs of our users

Acknowledgements

The members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who contributed their knowledge, ideas and experiences to the planning process over the past year. We are deeply grateful to the hundreds of faculty, students, staff and colleagues who took time to contribute to the plan by responding to surveys, participating in focus groups and departmental road shows, submitting reports, sending emails, and providing feedback in many other ways. We valued the opportunity to engage with staff and stakeholders in conversations about what we do at the University of Toronto Libraries and how we can do it better.

We would also like to acknowledge those who helped guide us through the process of completing the plan. In particular, we would like to thank:

- Our former colleagues:
 - Neil Romanosky, Dean of University Libraries, Ohio University, for his leadership in co-chairing the committee
 - Houman Behzadi, Head Music Librarian, McGill University, for his thoughtful contributions to the committee's plan
- M.J. D'Elia, Associate Chief Librarian, Engagement & Access at University of British Columbia–Okanagan and Julien LeBlanc, President, blueprint North America, who facilitated inspiring sessions that helped us refine our ideas and develop the high-level themes that frame the plan
- Kathy Ball, Director of Assessment, McMaster University, Jackie Belanger, Director of Assessment & Planning, University of Washington Libraries and Steve Hiller, Special Assistant for Strategic Analysis and Institutional Research, Former Director of Assessment & Planning, University of Washington who shared their expertise in implementing and assessing strategic plans and pushed the committee to think through our next steps and implementation of our plan
- Klara Maidenberger, Kyla Everall and Chad Crichton from UTL's Assessment Committee for helping us distill the feedback we collected and develop a plan to implement and map our objectives going forward
- Lesley Falkner, who provided invaluable project management support to the committee
- Maureen Morin for the visuals and graphic design

We hope that *Barrier-free Access to All of the Right Information* reflects the spirit of everyone's input and represents a shared vision for moving forward.

People

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Alexandra Carter, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
May Chan, Metadata Services
Ike Gibson, Capital Projects and Planning
Amy Greenberg, Scholars Portal
Julie Hannaford, Co-chair, Deputy Chief Librarian
Neelum Haq, User Services, Robarts Library
Askari Husain, User Services, Robarts Library
Eva Jurczyk, Collection Development Department
Steve Marks, Information Technology Services
Reg Matson, Information Technology Services
Erica Nekolaichuk, Gerstein Science Information Centre
Andrew Nicholson, UTM Library
Elizabeth O'Brien, UTSC Library
Mindy Thuna, Co-chair, Engineering & Computer Science Library
Jenaya Webb, OISE Library

UTL Executive Leadership Team

Larry P. Alford, Chief Librarian
Julie Hannaford, Deputy Chief Librarian
Shelley Hawyrchuk, Chief Librarian, UTM
Angela Hamilton, Chief Librarian, UTSC
Laura Anderson, Director for Strategic Initiatives
Marcel Fortin, Advisor on Data Sciences, Research Data Management and Digital Research
Loryl MacDonald, Associate Chief Librarian for Special Collections
Sian Meikle, Associate Chief Librarian for Digital Strategies and Technology
Glen Morales, Chief Administrative Officer
Mindy Thuna, Interim Associate Chief Librarian for Science Research and Information
Caitlin Tillman, Associate Chief Librarian for Collections and Materials Management

Contact

Larry P. Alford
University Chief Librarian
University of Toronto Libraries
130 St. George Street, Room 2015
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5S 1A5
chief librarian@utoronto.ca

PlanUTL@utoronto.ca

www.library.utoronto.ca/PlanUTL