



Public Services Council

Public Services Strategic Planning

Librarians and library staff of the Rutgers University Libraries provide Rutgers students, faculty, and staff with access to the services, collections, and facilities that support their scholarly activities. The public services program includes all the activities where we directly touch our users: reference, instruction, circulation, reserves, interlibrary loan and document delivery, photocopying and scanning, online catalog and website design and structure, and media services, whether in traditional or digital formats, in or out of the library, and whether at service desks or through individual consultation.

The Public Services Council oversees the policies and general direction of these activities and developed the following three strategic areas with contributions from various subcommittees and central public services units. Public services developments will continue to be dependent upon support from and collaboration with collection development, technical services, and library computing and will need to be in harmony with our developing institutional repository.

Ease of Access to Relevant Information

We present our users with a wonderful and often bewildering array of resources and services. We need to find ways to simplify their work and ours.

- Facilitate ease of access to all library materials by providing tools that seamlessly search across disparate databases and resources; allow users to retrieve, access, and use relevant information; and act as a bridge between the paper and digital worlds.
- Develop a seamless materials delivery environment that enables users to search, identify, request, and receive library materials, owned by Rutgers or not, at their desktops.
- Provide leadership for information literacy at Rutgers University. Continue to teach critical thinking skills that enable users to “locate, evaluate, and use” information.¹
- Promote inter-institutional collaborations that support shared access to and coordinated development and management of print and non-print, digital and analog collections.
- Continue to create and enhance content for the Libraries website and foster greater promotion of this resource.

The User-Centered Library

User-centered libraries are distinguished by their commitment to redesign and continual process improvement in support of user success.

- Continuously evaluate the traditional, functional approach to our work and refocus on understanding and responding to our users’ needs.
- Work flexibly across functions to provide holistic services to defined user groups, large and small.
- Infuse our services, our planning, and our work with an affect of service characterized by empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and reliability.

¹ *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. American Library Association, 2000. See the section entitled “Information Literacy Defined,” and in particular, Note 1, at <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm#ildef>, accessed January 31, 2005.

The Library as Place

The library is the university's intellectual center for scholarly activities, functioning as a crossroad that provides readily available academic and research support and that encourages intellectual growth. The Library as Place is utilitarian as a symbol of the library as a refuge - a place to study, a place to escape, a place to just get away, a place to meditate, a place to reflect. Valued by all of our users, the Library as Place is especially important to our undergraduates, who use our space to study, reflect, conduct research, collaborate, and socialize.

- Design attractive, safe, service oriented, and convenient physical library spaces that inspire study, research, learning, and collaboration. Create quiet contemplative spaces that facilitate individual study and allow for reflection and creativity. Create collaborative spaces to facilitate group study and problem solving. Create such inviting spaces as cafés and vending rooms.
- Continue to create a sense of academic community on our campuses by sponsoring lectures, exhibits, and informed dialogues in our libraries.
- Keep abreast of equipment developments and seek funding and technical support for assuring that the library is a place of technological innovation.