INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are undergoing reinvention. Today's academic libraries have evolved, beyond warehouses of print collections, to providers of a suite of dynamic electronic scholarly resources and services accessible 24/7 from a variety of stationary and mobile devices. As we transition from large repositories of print to media-rich environments facilitating learning and collaboration, our librarians and staff actively engage with faculty and students. The Rutgers University Libraries provide the resources and services necessary to support the mission of the university in instruction, research, and public service by way of its twenty-seven libraries, centers, and reading rooms located in New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden. With over five million volumes and thousands of digital resources, the Rutgers University Libraries rank among the nation's top research libraries. Rapid delivery of information, where, when, and how it is needed, is expected by today's students and faculty.

Like all public university research libraries, the Rutgers University Libraries are challenged to support the depth and diversity of disciplines taught at the university, while at the same time responding to the enormous changes brought about by new and evolving technologies. We play a vital role in enabling today's faculty and students, both undergraduate and graduate, to attain their academic goals. By aligning the talents of our staff and by providing access to the scholarly resources and services demanded by our clientele, we present a strategic plan.
that articulates our new roles and continued relevance and significance for the university community.

We will strengthen our strategic actions by investing effort in the foundational elements set forth in the university strategic plan:

In support of a **strong core of sciences and humanities**, we will seek to:

- Fund and provide access to collections in the sciences and humanities to the level of our peer and aspirant institutions.
- Increase our understanding of constituents, including their academic interests and aspirations in order to improve services and collections and enhance their library experience.
- Leverage the considerable expertise of library faculty and staff in digital library development, metadata creation, bibliometrics, repository development, research data management services, and consultation on all aspects of open access and scholarly publishing.

In support of an **inclusive, diverse, and cohesive culture**, we will seek to:

- Cultivate and encourage diversity and multiculturalism through our collections, services, programs, and human resources.
- Position the Libraries as a central organizing agency for information on diversity and inclusion within the university, including creating a diversity and inclusion website and a web portal in the Rutgers University Community Repository (RUcore) that showcases relevant research being done across the university.

In support of an **effective and efficient infrastructure and staff**, we will seek to:

- Create and implement a faculty and staff development plan that identifies needed skills and strategies to keep expertise updated and refreshed.
- Engage in disaster planning to identify core services, not all of which are digital, and to create a plan for making them available.
- Build our technology capacity and keep current with trends in both higher education and librarianship.

In support of acquiring **financial resources sufficient to fund our aspirations**, we will seek to:

- Expand our fund raising and grant seeking activities.
- Reexamine financial resources, identifying major sources and expanding scope to identify new, unique sources and trends.
- Align resources to reflect Rutgers aspirations and strategic directions.
We also pledge to take all possible steps to support robust shared governance, academic freedom, and effective communication, both within the Libraries and across the university.

**The Strategic Planning Process**

Our most recent strategic plan was created in 2012. At that time, there was no university plan to model or support although there was guidance from accreditation visits, surveys and other user input, and environmental scans and planning and visioning reports available from professional associations. To further the plan, we identified and pursued annual activities, with measurable outcomes and indicators, and have achieved much. The creation of a new university strategic plan and the rapid pace of change in the academic research library world called upon us to revisit and reconceive our strategic plan and activities.

In early 2013, the Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian’s Cabinet began the process of writing a new strategic plan. The Cabinet designated itself as the steering group for the planning process and developed a draft chart of possible strategic activities based on the strategic priorities identified by the university. Activities were both new and drawn from the existing Libraries strategic plan. Library units across the system then held brainstorming/discussion sessions to surface and vet new and confirm existing strategic activities. The draft chart was revised, and broad goals were reconsidered. Proposed strategic activities were distributed in survey form to library faculty and staff for prioritization. Cabinet discussed recommended priorities within a resources framework, and the final plan was confirmed and distributed.

**Envisioning Tomorrow’s University**

The university of tomorrow will require a library that is engaged with the community, a partner with faculty in enhancing student learning, a colleague with faculty in co-creating new knowledge, and a facilitator of the research and learning process. By leveraging external partnerships we will make information resources readily available to support student and faculty inquiry across the disciplines and provide information services that enhance new and more effective modes of scholarly communication. By building a strong technology infrastructure and creating an agile organizational structure, we will be able to anticipate and respond to the changing nature of the information environment.

Twenty-first century students expect libraries to provide learning and study environments that enable ease of access to resources and services when and where they are needed. Transformed library spaces will inspire creativity, innovation, and collaboration. We must be responsive to student and faculty requirements by measuring the impact of library services on users and by using the results to improve student, faculty, and library performance. Fostering collaborations with units across the
university to extend the reach of the Libraries is essential to integrating resources seamlessly into learning, clinical, and research processes.

Branding the Libraries as the “go to” resource for authoritative access to scholarly material is an imperative in our media rich, information driven society. We are well positioned to embrace opportunities to partner in the research and academic arena by providing collections, services, and new mechanisms for delivering information and managing and preserving research results. Through outreach and public access initiatives, the libraries contribute to a New Jersey of well informed and productive citizens.

Successful academic libraries are redefining themselves and their missions to address sweeping advances in information access and technology. Our challenge is to make the transition from the library of the present to the library of the future while effectively communicating our new role and enhanced relevance to the Rutgers community and all those we serve.

To facilitate creation of tomorrow’s university, we will:

- Expand our role as the authoritative source for new trends in scholarly communication, thereby fostering innovation and experimentation to enhance research and knowledge creation, e.g., co-creating scholarly resources with faculty.

- Leverage the integration of the Health Sciences Libraries and engage in collaborations and partnerships to ensure that our health care providers (faculty, students, and staff) and consumers throughout the state have ready access to the highest quality health information, resources, and expertise.

- Partner and collaborate with university units to advance teaching, learning, research, and service.

- Strengthen relationships with other libraries, publishers, technology companies, and innovators, and develop consortial services to provide expanded access to resources and facilities that create economies of scale, e.g., participate in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) shared print repository.

- Align organizational structures to respond with agility to changing needs, and focus staff and faculty responsibilities on system-wide services and functions.

- Evolve the role of the subject librarians to provide greater support to interdisciplinary research and collaborations and to meet emerging needs of the community.

- Continue to develop a robust, extensible, fully available IT architecture for supporting core services and expanding new services.
BUILDING FACULTY EXCELLENCE

The Libraries will partner with faculty in areas of knowledge creation, innovative tool and service development, and the selection and effective delivery of information resources to support research and teaching. University faculty value library liaisons who provide them with access to the wealth of expertise and resources that are critical to their evolving research needs. We study changing research practices and build tools and services for organizing and managing research information.

The evolving library collection, as well as resources borrowed at time of need, remains a core service that is critical to the Rutgers goal of becoming one of the foremost research and teaching universities in the nation. We complement the research collections with excellent reference services and tools that support the discovery and reuse of existing scholarly information.

We are the center of scholarly communication at Rutgers. RUcore provides a flexible and expansive infrastructure to showcase and support the creation, use, and dissemination of scholarly information produced by the Rutgers community, thereby greatly enhancing faculty reputation and research impact. Faculty can also use this infrastructure to create new modes of scholarship, e.g., video analyses. Researchers can find the scholarly communication services available to them through a website showcasing the suite of research services we offer, e.g., copyright education, data management, collaborative tool development, and consultations on grant support and open access.

The Libraries work to enhance excellence in faculty instruction by aligning information literacy tools and services more closely to the curriculum while developing new open educational resources and tools. Education and consultation in matters of copyright and fair use enable faculty to create course materials from the wealth of information created by themselves and by others, while respecting copyrights.

We actively develop new spaces that extend the ability of faculty to teach with new technologies and across disciplines, or to meet and collaborate with faculty and students to build a vibrant community of scholars. Examples of new spaces include the digital humanities lab in the Alexander Library and the Douglass Library makerspace. These spaces provide increased opportunities to integrate the humanities with the social and hard sciences.

To facilitate faculty excellence, we will:

- Increase the impact of faculty scholarship at Rutgers by developing the RUcore infrastructure and tools to create, preserve, and disseminate faculty scholarship and research to the widest possible audience.
- Integrate library faculty expertise and services into the teaching and research workflow of Rutgers faculty for value-added service.
Partner with faculty to integrate data management into the graduate science curriculum and their research while continuing to eliminate barriers and increase advocacy for deposition of research data into RUcore.

Provide spaces, both physical and virtual, that enhance and advance research and teaching and that create and support vibrant scholarly communities through transdisciplinary conversation and collaboration.

Expand collection resources, including media, in areas of academic distinction and growth, while reflecting the diversity and transdisciplinary strength of the university, through careful purchases, digitization, collaborations, e.g., HathiTrust, and consortial purchasing with important partners, e.g., the CIC libraries.

**TRANSFORMING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Educational research has identified a series of standard practices shown to improve learning, increase retention, and enhance engagement. High-impact practices include early teaching of critical thinking and information literacy, encouraging collaborative learning, building learning communities, providing undergraduate research opportunities, supporting experiential learning, and preparing students to be effective and productive global citizens.\(^1\) Successfully implementing a comprehensive approach to student success requires participation by stakeholders from across the university.

In its report *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*, the Association of College and Research Libraries noted that “Libraries are the intellectual commons where users interact with ideas in both physical and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.”\(^2\) The recent Rutgers University Master Plan reinforced our understanding that Libraries are the primary source of study space for students and that many upgrades are needed to support 21\(^{st}\) century learning in our facilities. To support high-impact learning, students require a full range of learning and research environments ranging from quiet space for independent study and reflection to spaces built for collaboration and co-creation, from robust computing environments to a variety of tables and chairs that can be reconfigured to support multiple use options. Our physical spaces are vital to student comfort and success, and they must be adjusted to meet changing needs.

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We also contribute to the student experience outside of our walls. In partnership with campus stakeholders, our library faculty provide enriching experiences as part of the curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities of Rutgers student life. For example, we identify, reward and celebrate student achievement and creativity, facilitate student learning through course-integrated and for-credit instruction, support student growth through faculty advisory positions in student activities and organizations, and bolster student success through fun “stress buster” activities throughout the academic year. By hosting ongoing conversations with undergraduate and graduate students and key faculty and staff in campus student support departments, we are gaining a greater understanding of students’ aspirations. We will use this knowledge to increase our impact by intentionally building and improving our interactions with students.

To facilitate transformation of the student experience, we will:

- Collaborate with schools and departments to build students’ visual, digital, and information literacies across the curriculum in preparation for advanced studies, future careers, citizenship, and life-long learning.

- Craft a Libraries Master Space Plan to envision and plan for the development of spaces that support student learning and research, e.g., undergraduate learning commons, graduate research commons, science and social science data collaboratories, technology-rich teaching labs, digital creation studios, makerspaces, and improved wayfinding.

- Develop targeted services and resources for the unique needs of graduate and professional students, particularly to enhance and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.

- Engage students in knowledge creation through digital collection building, exhibit development, undergraduate journal publishing, and opportunities for research working with primary materials.

- Enhance user interfaces for library resources and services to a) improve search and discovery, b) enrich the experience for distance students and online learners, and c) expand resource accessibility.

- Partner with campus stakeholders to support the intellectual, social, and cultural development of undergraduate students.

**Enhancing Our Public Prominence**

Research libraries are stewards of cultural heritage resources. Everyone recognizes that books and journals are the business of libraries; but the collection, preservation, and dissemination of other materials, i.e., manuscripts, photographs, diaries, recordings, and many more types of current and historical information are our unique contribution to world-wide scholarship and institutional prominence.
A recent survey of academic library leaders reported that “…many doctoral institutions are focusing on special collections, digitization, and digital preservation. About three quarters of respondents from doctoral institutions rated ‘building and maintaining unique special collections of research materials,’ ‘digitizing materials and making them broadly available to the public,’ and ‘preserving digital materials’ each as very important.” The special collections, manuscripts, and archives that research libraries hold also serve to distinguish each individual library from all others.

To enhance our public prominence and create a sense of pride in the community, we will collect, preserve, and make available to the larger scholarly community and the general public the rich and unique resources of the Libraries and the university that are indicative of our geographic and intellectual contexts. We will seek to reach secondary school students, community groups and organizations, as well as our own alumni with information in areas of vital concern to their well-being. We will also effectively tell the story of the Libraries and the university by improving our communication strategies and using new forms of media.

To facilitate enhancing our public prominence, we will:

Preserve the history of New Jersey and the region in print, archival, and digital form.

Pursue unique and compelling areas for digital development from across the Libraries, especially the distinctive resources of Special Collections and University Archives and the Institute of Jazz Studies, and the documents of Rutgers history and research programs.

Continue and expand efforts to collect special collections and archives in diverse non-traditional areas especially documenting Asian, Latin American, and other ethnic communities that have established themselves in New Jersey in the last two generations.

Assess and enhance the Libraries communication strategies to increase awareness of the Libraries collections, services, and programs, including the use of new technologies and social media.

Develop public programming that builds community pride in the Libraries and the university among students, faculty, alumni, and the citizens and residents of New Jersey.

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