



Cornell University
Library

TOWARD 2015:

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN, 2011-2015

February 2011

The Cornell University Library Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 was developed by the Library Strategic Planning Team with extensive input from faculty, staff, and students. An electronic version is available at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/strategicplanning>.

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INTRODUCTION

Cornell University Library's strategic plan is ambitious in scope and scale. It responds to major forces affecting Cornell and all universities right now: an accelerating pace of change, a diffuse information ecology, a constricting resource base, a greater focus on educational outcomes, and a blurring of the processes and products associated with scholarship and creative expression.

As we look toward Cornell at its sesquicentennial, I dare say no other part of the university will be as changed by external forces as the Library. Moving forward, we will become more virtual in delivering content and services to faculty, students, and other researchers wherever they are. The Library will also be more personal; users will exercise greater control over their information environment, working alongside library experts to address new challenges in research, teaching, and learning. We will be redefined by our strategic partnerships both within and outside the university, especially by our substantial collaborations with peer research libraries. We will operate in a global context to gain privileges for Cornell faculty and students but also to support the University's aspirations to be the land grant to the world. And we will remain a trusted, neutral party with a unique mission to preserve cultural and intellectual resources for use by generations to come. As we embrace an increasingly digital world, we will safeguard and grow physical collections that are critical in many disciplines.

The University's plan focuses on the importance of One Cornell. The Library, too, will operate as one entity enhanced by the diversity of its individual parts. We will support the directions outlined in the University's strategic plan and we will engage with users to prioritize programs that have a direct impact on their academic success.

The Library's strategic plan offers a bold vision for the future of this great library system. I am grateful to the Strategic Planning Team and the many people who provided input in crafting this document. The plan lays out seven main goals and accompanying objectives for the next five years. The next step will be to engage all staff and our principal constituencies in developing work plans and concrete activities to move us forward in each of these areas. Collectively, we must be prepared to devote our energies and resources to accomplish this vision. I'm proud of this plan and proud to serve as the Carl A. Kroch University Librarian during this pivotal time in our history.



Anne R. Kenney

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL I: Ensure access to the full scholarly record for the Cornell community.

Through the Library's judicious selection, partnerships, and borrowing arrangements, Cornell users will gain rapid access to the content they need in the formats best suited for their work. They will also enjoy privileged access to collections of scholarly import through reciprocal sharing agreements with leading libraries around the world.

The Library will invest in deeper and more focused local collections, in print and digital formats, and collaborate with other institutions to ensure the permanence and ongoing accessibility of the comprehensive scholarly record.

Objectives:

1. Return the Library to its position among the top ten academic institutions in the Association of Research Libraries in terms of collections support. Seek increased allocations from the University, reallocate resources internally, and pursue external funding from donors, foundations, and others to support a vital and outstanding collection.
2. Build collective and comprehensive collections across the disciplines through the Borrow Direct consortium, our collaboration with Columbia, and other suitable partnerships. Working closely with faculty, identify subject areas in which Cornell can benefit from peer institutions' strong collections as well as areas in which it can cultivate national and international collections of record.
3. Acquire and promote special collections of scholarly significance — print, digital, multimedia, and artifactual — to enrich the research and teaching environment on campus and make these unique materials accessible to scholars worldwide.
4. Building on the model of Cornell's partnership with Tsinghua University Library, develop arrangements with research libraries around the globe to gain privileged access for Cornell researchers to previously inaccessible or hard-to-find archives, special collections, and research holdings.
5. Ensure the long-term preservation and conservation of the Library's print collection, working with other institutions to coordinate the retention of print copies of heritage material.
6. Expand preservation efforts for digital resources, reallocating funds and working with trusted third parties. Provide long-term access to digital content that is core to the University's academic mission, including research data, visual resources, subject repositories, e-books, streaming media, institutional records, websites, and digitized copies of print resources.
7. Systematically gather and analyze usage data and other metrics, as well as direct input from library users, on both print and digital resources to ensure that collections meet existing needs and areas of emerging research significance for Cornell.
8. Selectively adopt new acquisition and access methods, including demand-driven approaches, to respond quickly to Cornell users and expand the scope of available resources.
9. Digitize the Library's unique holdings while limiting exclusive arrangements with commercial and non-commercial partners to five years or less.
10. Negotiate, in concert with peer institutions, more effective and less restrictive license terms.
11. Support the work of selecting library materials in the context of changing collection needs and our multi-institutional collaborations with improved workflows, collections data, and new tools for library staff.

GOAL II: Dramatically improve systems for finding and using scholarly resources.

The process of discovering scholarly materials has evolved significantly over the past decade, with many users beginning their search outside the Library using a diverse range of tools and workflows. The Library will ensure that the Cornell community can easily discover and access relevant scholarly materials through their preferred channels. We will focus on breaking open information silos, integrating physical and digital resources, and expediting access to all the resources faculty and students need.

By building on a history of innovation and expanding partnerships, we will institute specialized services that leverage the Library's deep collections, enabling patrons to find and use resources that might be hard or impossible to access otherwise. Library professionals will strengthen connections with users and bring their subject expertise more effectively to bear on research needs.

Objectives:

1. Enhance and integrate discovery services linking users to scholarly resources, including licensed content. These services will highlight Cornell's holdings and extend beyond them to reveal all available resources, including those provided by the Library's partners.
2. Adopt solutions that support users as they adopt new technologies and research methods, including accessing materials on new devices.
3. Offer virtual browsing capabilities that emulate and expand upon the physical browsing experience. Such capabilities should enable serendipitous discovery and include exploration at collection, article, and image levels that is currently impossible.
4. Enhance the discovery and use of resources in creative, functional ways by harnessing subject expertise to complement technical capabilities such as content mining and pattern recognition.
5. Develop new services guided by active dialogue with users and assessment of outcomes. Engage faculty and undergraduate, graduate, and professional students as the Library develops, examines, and tests new tools. Encourage and support calculated risk-taking and unconventional thinking.
6. Respond to users' needs for training and guidance in managing information resources, and embedding scholarly resources and services in online learning environments. Assess the effectiveness and impact of this work.

GOAL III: Provide services to support the full cycle of research and scholarly exchange.

The Library will foster the work of Cornell researchers — faculty, students, and staff — at every stage of the research process. Library professionals will provide high-level consultation services and support the use of specialized tools for content management, analysis, and scholarly communication. The Library will support the creation, use, reuse, and curation of data, visual resource collections, field notes, and other forms of primary research content.

Partnering with others on and off campus, the Library will address issues of sustainability and responsiveness in scholarly publishing and creative expression, paying particular attention to domains

with limited dissemination options. The Library will continue to help scholars assert their intellectual property rights and expand access to the results of their research.

Objectives:

1. Formalize the network of library liaisons to departments and academic programs across the University to strengthen relationships. Build liaisons' subject and information expertise to enhance ongoing dialogue with researchers.
2. Facilitate cross-disciplinary research collaborations through increased library staff participation in funded projects with significant information management components.
3. Expand specialized research consultations, including services such as GIS, data analysis, and bibliometrics, in collaboration with other groups on campus, including the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research (CISER).
4. Offer consulting services for faculty and others to meet requirements of grant proposals and publications, including database searching, research data management plans, and mandatory public deposit. Continue to collaborate with other campus groups, such as the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Research Data Management Service Group (RDMSG).
5. Coordinate efforts across the Library to foster campus awareness of policy, technology, economic, and research implications of developments in scholarly communication. Provide expertise and guidance for faculty, students, and staff on intellectual property and copyright issues, and lead efforts to make research results openly accessible.
6. Improve scholarly communication and publishing by increasing library staff participation on advisory boards of societies, publishers, and other organizations across the disciplines.
7. Enhance on-demand specialized services to support faculty collections and a broad range of scholarly activities, including digitization, metadata creation, visual resource management, and online publishing.
8. Partner to develop and implement sustainable economic models to support repositories and other Cornell-sponsored scholarly communication venues of high value for researchers, such as arXiv and Project Euclid.
9. Assess new strategic publishing opportunities in collaboration with faculty, Cornell University Press, and others to offer innovative and sustainable scholarly communication alternatives.
10. Define relevant measures for assessing library support of research and scholarly exchange. Develop and establish shared measures with peer research libraries. Achieve a top ten rank in these terms.

GOAL IV: Strengthen the educational impact of library programs for students at all levels.

In collaboration with faculty and other academic partners, we will enhance the Library's programs, facilities, and services to ensure Cornell undergraduate, graduate, and professional students excel in their academic careers and beyond. Service offerings will be tailored to meet specific educational goals and student needs in various disciplines and Colleges.

The Library will partner with other instructional services to provide more effective assistance to students and recent graduates. Developing measures to assess student learning and the Library's impact on instruction will advance the University's goals for student learning outcomes.

Objectives:

1. Build information literacy programs to achieve college learning outcomes. Develop innovative approaches for information and media literacy in partnership with the Center for Teaching Excellence, campus academic technology providers, and college-level centers. Collaborate to provide academic technology support for teaching and learning.
2. Work with faculty, department heads, and deans to introduce new channels for integrating library staff in classes, programs, and academic departments. Expand outreach efforts to departments and participate in academic life.
3. Collaborate — within the Library and with other campus partners — to develop reusable teaching modules and assignments that can be accessed from a shared repository and embedded within existing systems, such as Blackboard and LibGuides.
4. Provide more training opportunities for library staff to learn new approaches to outreach and instruction, and develop a corresponding mentoring system for library staff.
5. Greatly enhance online guides and instructional tools for library databases and reference collections. Improve their discoverability in the Library's online presence, and assess the usefulness of these tools for students.
6. Use classroom experience and formal assessment to understand how user needs and expectations are changing and continually modify instructional services to meet those needs. Consult regularly with faculty about student performance with regard to information literacy, research papers, and assignments, and integrate this information into the Library's instruction assessment strategies.
7. Define relevant measures for evaluating library infrastructure for instruction, regularly assess progress, and course-correct as necessary.

GOAL V: Invest in physical and virtual library spaces.

The Library will be a vibrant learning hub and intellectual crossroads in its physical and virtual spaces. Renovated spaces will provide attractive learning environments conducive to study, collaboration, and cross-disciplinary interaction in close proximity to essential collections. The Library's online presence, customized by its users, will serve as a center for access, research, networking, and learning, both on and off campus.

As the Library operates fewer physical locations on campus, some unit libraries will transition to virtual service models. Closely consulting with faculty and other stakeholders on planning and development, we will ensure higher-quality spaces, focusing on high-use and specialized materials and services.

Objectives:

1. Identify user needs, expectations, research and study practices, and technology trends to ensure that the Library provides needed workspaces and tools. Assess quantity, quality, perceived safety, comfort, and services.
2. Provide environments that foster enhanced learning and innovation, promote local culture, and support research in collaboration with Colleges and departments.
3. Take the Library to its users through increased virtual services and in-person presence of library subject experts in academic units.

4. Create dynamic virtual libraries and further develop virtual discovery capabilities. The Library will collaborate with users to leverage expertise while supporting specialized needs and ensuring consistency.
5. Work with partners to provide better facilities for manipulating data and multimedia resources to allow work that can be shared, downloaded, annotated, and recorded in real time.
6. Develop in-house expertise in emerging technologies and implement them in library spaces to meet user needs.
7. Explore location-specific guidance tools and promote personalized library activities based on user preferences.

GOAL VI: Expand the Library's reach through public engagement.

The Library's resources and expertise will amplify the public engagement and outreach mission of Cornell University, New York's land grant university. The Library will participate in projects and partnerships that extend and enrich the research environment for the Cornell community and promote the public interest for the people of New York State and the wider national and global communities.

Applying our expertise in information organization and management, the Library will facilitate translational research, extension, and technology transfer of the University's research results through collaboration in the development of highly effective information systems.

Global partnerships will extend the Library's impact and foster research around the world. Building on a decade of experience hosting open-access repositories for research generated at Cornell and beyond, the Library will support robust repositories to serve the University's mission of advancing research globally and across disciplines.

Objectives:

1. Seek partnerships and develop projects/programs to strengthen Cornell's research environment and enhance opportunities for researchers nationally and globally.
2. Expand partnerships with international centers on campus (e.g., EINAUDI Center, CIIFAD) to promote services to the University's international constituencies.
3. Provide information-management expertise in support of the University's public engagement efforts. Integrate existing information sources using tools such as VIVO.
4. Collaborate across the Library to articulate a cohesive message that promotes our resources and user services both internally and externally.
5. Provide services to alumni and friends of the Library, including access to collections when possible, as well as reference, networking tools, and communication about events and the state of the Library.
6. Place greater emphasis on assisting recent graduates by extending access to scholarly resources and services in support of job searches and early career advancement.

GOAL VII: Promote an organizational culture that helps library staff succeed in a changing environment and embraces broader engagement with the Cornell community.

The Library will advance a culture of responsiveness, agility, innovation, and assessment. Engaging in ongoing projections about the future will engender academic excellence, cost effectiveness, and support for the priorities of the University. The Library will also foster organizational transparency, responsibility, and professional self-development to help staff excel in an environment of constant change.

The University's strategic plan advances the concept of "One Cornell," at the same time recognizing that academic strengths are based in the Colleges. Similarly, organizational clarity, efficiency, and cohesiveness enable us to function as One Library while providing the customized services and resources offered by the specialized unit libraries. Library staff will pool their expertise and expand their skills to address faculty and student needs. The Library will also identify priority areas for local collaborative efforts and deepen and expand existing inter-institutional partnerships.

Objectives:

1. Adopt common, Library-wide strategic priorities, policies, practices, and collaboration tools to enhance effectiveness and service. Promote regular communication and flexible staffing among the units. Engage staff in articulating the distinctive strengths of their units as well as effective shared practices across the library system.
2. Emphasize communication, teamwork, and flexibility while defining competencies for all library positions. In particular, delineate clear standards for digital information skills, analytical proficiency, and technical literacy. Recruit, retain, and reward staff with robust skills in these areas. Continuously augment staff skills through training and mentoring.
3. Empower staff to explore gaps in their areas of expertise, including emerging research areas and technologies, and use this information to improve user support.
4. Recognize staff who build on the strengths or address the weaknesses of the Library. Promote open discussion to tackle challenges as they arise. Recognize and support grassroots approaches to problem-solving.
5. Update processes and workflows frequently to provide better service to the University in a period of rapid change.
6. Foster new relationships between library staff and Cornell faculty and students to facilitate broader collaborations. Partner with IT staff to imagine new projects, and design and tailor systems users need.
7. Cultivate a work environment in which individual staff are respected for their unique skills and interests, and supported in their efforts to enrich the Library.
8. Reward collaborative work, both within the University and with peer institutions, that creates innovative, shared solutions to common challenges.
9. Deploy a new resource allocation model in the context of One Library that enables optimal use of funds across the system.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Library Strategic Planning Team set out to draft a plan that would define the Library's strategic direction for the next five years. Among our prime objectives was aligning the Library's strategic considerations with those of the University, as found in the report "A Strategic Plan, 2010-2015: Cornell University at its Sesquicentennial" (<http://www.cornell.edu/strategicplan/>).

The team was charged with:

- *Conducting a strategic planning process that engaged the whole library system and core constituents, including soliciting and incorporating input from representatives of all Cornell University Library stakeholder groups*
- *Making users' needs and expectations primary*
- *Identifying external forces that would likely impact the Library and other Association of Research Libraries member libraries in the next five years*
- *Conducting an external environmental scan to identify strategic plan exemplars from other leading research libraries*
- *Focusing on the concept of "One Library" in the context of "One Cornell"*
- *Embracing an increasingly digital world while safeguarding and preserving analog/print collections where needed*

Over a period of four months, the team engaged faculty, staff, and students to provide input on the key strategic directions for the Library. All Library staff were encouraged to contribute ideas and given a set of six focused questions to stimulate their thoughts on various areas of concern. These questions provided the structure for multiple public forums, as well as online feedback. The team consulted groups of faculty and students at various stages of the planning and drafting process to help shape the plan and provide their perspective on how the plan might best be implemented.

The team also conducted an environmental scan of strategic plans from other major research libraries, learning from our colleagues to help identify important trends and address them in our plan. Early drafts circulated widely, and we used the feedback we obtained to refine the plan in close consultation with senior library management. This plan is, therefore, a collaborative effort that incorporates the ideas of many different stakeholders.

The Strategic Planning Team consisted of nine members from across Cornell University Library: Gaby Castro Gessner, Mary Beth Martini-Lyons, Dan McKee, Boaz Nadav-Manes, Mary Ochs (chair), Lyndsi Prignon, Leah Solla, Kizer Walker, and Simeon Warner. We thank all who contributed to this plan.