Musselman Library Strategic Plan: 2020-2023

Gettysburg College

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Introduction

Over the last year Musselman Library has engaged in a strategic planning process to guide the library's efforts for the next three years, 2020 to 2023. The library's plan reflects Gettysburg College's current strategic plan for 2016-2021 and grounds itself in our ongoing mission to support a liberal arts education at Gettysburg with the library as the intellectual center of campus.

The library's strategic plan addresses changes in American higher education, which have shaped libraries' abilities to respond to issues that impact our students, faculty, and campus colleagues. Changing demographics, evolving ways in which students seek to use library spaces and access information, expectations on the role of technology in education, and new fiscal environments all have implications for the collections, services, and spaces academic libraries provide.

At Musselman Library, we are focused on anticipating and responding to this evolving landscape during the next three years. With an emphasis on both strengthening what we currently do well and seeking new opportunities, the library's strategic plan includes **four strategic directions** to guide us.

The plan builds upon our already strong programs and services and illuminates the variety of ways in which the library can further **support student success**. It challenges us to apply new strategies to collaborate with faculty in and outside the classroom, empower students to create and share new knowledge in an ever-changing information landscape, provide opportunities for students to develop digital literacy skills, increase the adoption of low- and zero-cost course materials, and deliver high-impact internships and student employment that equip students with essential, transferable skills

Supporting the changing ways in which library patrons make use of our collections, services, and spaces, the plan outlines how the library must balance finite physical space and the current fiscal environment in order to **design inspiring and accessible spaces** and **reimagine library collections**. It asks us to identify new space configurations that can provide access to collections that support our liberal arts curriculum while also providing inspiring spaces for diverse learners that facilitate study, instruction, collaboration, and rich co-curricular programming. Such spaces must be supported by new and evolving collection strategies that are both mindful of fiscal outlook and promote open and equitable access to scholarship.

Knowing that diversity and inclusion are fundamental to the library serving its diverse campus population and essential to developing services and collections that meet their needs, we will **cultivate an inclusive and responsive library climate**. We will build upon our investment in professional development opportunities for library staff around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The library will continue to work toward increasing the representation of people from diverse backgrounds on library staff by improving recruitment and retention, and we will address the ongoing lack of diversity within libraries, archives, and museums.

Process

Starting in fall 2018, Musselman Library began to develop a new strategic plan to guide the library through the next three years. Rooted in an appreciative inquiry approach, the strategic planning committee initiated the process with a library-wide event in January 2019 using the SOAR model to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.

As an inclusive approach that relies upon bringing people together from across the library, appreciative inquiry is particularly powerful for generating creative ideas and forming support for change and new initiatives by its focus on existing strengths and future aspirations rather than weaknesses and threats.

This launch event provided the library staff an opportunity to reflect together on what we value about the library's work, what we believe we do well, and what we can do to support the College's strategic goals of impact, inclusion and internationalization, and innovation.

The planning committee has sought to seek and value the viewpoints of all library staff and the campus community. Over the last several months, the committee has facilitated on-going conversations across the library within departments and with all library staff. Likewise, the committee has held focus groups with students, faculty, administrators, and staff to listen to the campus community and learn what they need and want from their library.

The committee has sought to develop a plan that is both aspirational and feasible within three years. The plan reflects a distillation of the ideas generated during library-wide conversations and draws upon feedback we received our campus community. Seeking to create buy-in from across the library, the enclosed plan encourages shared responsibility for implementation.

Implementation and Assessment

Knowing that the institutional and broader higher educational context can change within even three years, it anticipates change and future iterations through a proposed annual assessment of the plan's progress.

The planning committee recommends that library department heads identify annual priorities to direct the library's efforts and oversee its ongoing assessment by setting measurable outcomes related to the plan's goals to determine the library's success at implementation. A list of operational items that was generated by departments during the strategic planning process has been shared with the department heads and library dean for possible implementation.

Strategic Planning Committee

Submitted by:

- Clinton Baugess, Research & Instruction Librarian
- Betsy Bein, User Services Librarian
- Mallory Jallas, Research & Instruction Librarian
- Klara Shives, Acquisitions Librarian
- Miranda Wisor, Technical Services Assistant

Strategic Directions for Musselman Library

Support Student Success

As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, we must build upon our history of providing high-impact experiences for our students by responding to changes in pedagogy, scholarship, rising textbook costs, and expectations for students pursuing additional education or entering the workplace after graduation.

Goal A: Use creative and innovative pedagogy that addresses the evolving ways in which the library can collaborate with faculty and support student learning.

- **Objective 1: Expand support for e-learning.** Develop a collection of curated online tutorials and other digital learning objects that align with our programmatic student learning goals for information literacy to support flipped classroom instruction, online courses, or self-directed learning. Facilitate e-learning opportunities through digitized, unique primary source material held by Special Collections.

- **Objective 2**: **Increase faculty adoption of zero- and low-cost course materials.** Promote open educational resources (OER) as both an equitable and sustainable option for supporting students' success. Collaborate with faculty to identify possible OER for adoption. Provide support for the creation of new OER by Gettysburg faculty.

Goal B: Create opportunities to enhance the student experience in the library.

- **Objective 1: Create more opportunities to gain student feedback about services and changes in the library.** Students are our main constituency on campus, and we need to continually seek and receive their input on the library to best serve them. Methods for providing feedback may include a student advisory board, user surveys, or focus groups.

- **Objective 2: Offer programs and on-going workshops to student employees and interns that enhance their employment experience.** Explore ways to offer in-house workshops and collaborate on programming with campus partners, such as the Center for Career Engagement or the Office of Academic Advising. Help students to attain and develop career readiness competencies that will prepare them for a successful transition into the workplace.

Goal C: Formalize the library's support for digital scholarship.

- **Objective 1: Develop student-learning outcomes for digital literacy.** Draft student learning outcomes related to the library's support for digital scholarship/Digital Humanities that will aid outreach to faculty, provide structure to our pedagogical support, and inform assessment efforts.

- **Objective 2: Identify a long-term strategy to support undergraduate digital scholarship activities.** Create a sustainable model within the library that includes a summer student experience and allows the library to provide peer-to-peer classroom support in the academic year by undergraduate digital scholarship fellows who are trained to assist students working on digital projects.

Design Inspiring and Accessible Spaces

We are continually committed to providing library spaces that support learning, spark creativity, and connect patrons with our collections and services. We value making our spaces accessible to all patrons and staff, meeting and going beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and adopting the principles of universal design to create comfortable, inspiring spaces for all patrons and staff.

Goal A: Develop library spaces to meet the varied needs of our diverse campus population.

- **Objective 1: Create a sustainable vision for library spaces.** Hire an outside consultant to help the library develop a building-wide plan that supports the needs of our neurologically and culturally diverse campus community and responds to our evolving collections.

- **Objective 2: Design flexible spaces with appropriate furniture and technology.** Create instructional spaces that reflect changing pedagogies and support active learning and collaboration. Design should consider access to collections and flexibility for programming, including consultations, lectures, small-group work, and workshops.

Goal B: Apply the principles of Universal Design to foster broad accessibility.

- **Objective 1: Advocate for greater physical accessibility in all areas of the library.** Lobby for an elevator accessible to wheelchair users, better lighting and HVAC, and safe emergency egress for all patrons and staff. Provide furniture and facilities comfortable for people of all body types.

- **Objective 2: Reconceptualize library signage.** Facilitate wayfinding and inform patrons of potential barriers and alternatives. Use maps, images, and text at point-of-need throughout the library. Provide digital signs at high-traffic areas that highlight library events and exhibits, as well as basic information about using the library.

Reimagine Library Collections

The purpose of Musselman Library's collection is to support the liberal arts curriculum of Gettysburg College while also reflecting the library's core values, such as intellectual freedom; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and open, equitable access to scholarship. While continuing to support the curriculum and these values, the library's collection development strategy must evolve in the context of the College's current fiscal outlook. This requires rigorous collection assessment and the implementation of new acquisition strategies.

Goal A: Develop sustainable collection strategies that support student success and the curriculum, as well as ongoing intellectual engagement.

- **Objective 1: Assess underutilized collections.** Identify areas of content duplication and overlap. Develop criteria for quantifying high cost per use. Make data-driven decisions and communicate transparently with staff, librarian liaisons to academic departments, and faculty.

- **Objective 2: Approach assessment of our circulating collections with a zero-growth philosophy to gain more flexibility for our physical collection.** Assess our collections intentionally to keep them at a sustainable size. Consider our use of offsite storage space (Knouse) for overflow collections and develop a strategy for its use that does not obscure parts of the collection from our patrons.

- **Objective 3: Leverage consortia for purchasing and resource sharing.** Promote the library's robust borrowing network to provide access in areas we have not actively collected. Investigate potential acquisitions through a consortial lens to generate more affordable pricing.

Goal B: Examine accessibility when pursuing new acquisitions and evaluating current holdings to respond proactively to the changing needs of our campus community.

- **Objective 1: Connect patrons with available accessibility tools.** Promote and market the library's resources that incorporate accessibility tools (screen readers, OCR-enabled documents, etc.). Coordinate with the Office of Academic Advising to identify helpful resources and technologies that can be incorporated into the library.

- **Objective 2: Include accessibility standards as criteria for assessing electronic resources.** Weigh the web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) compliancy of existing and new e-resources during assessment along with cost, currency, and relevance.

Goal C: Align spending and collection development with values that promote an inclusive library marketplace and sustainable publishing environment.

- **Objective 1: Allocate acquisitions dollars strategically among publishers and vendors.** Investigate the products we purchase from a single vendor/aggregator and determine if our needs are better served by dividing our business among several vendors to enhance discovery and realize cost savings. Work with publishers and vendors that share the library's values around access to information.

- **Objective 2: Support open access (OA) and open educational resource (OER) initiatives that seek to transform the publishing landscape**. Within our fiscal environment, selectively choose OA memberships or collections to support that have a significant impact on the publishing landscape.

Cultivate an Inclusive and Responsive Library Climate

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental to the library serving its diverse campus population. In support of an equitable and inclusive culture within the library, we will prioritize on-going staff professional development. We will continue to identify strategies to increase the representation of staff from underrepresented backgrounds in the library. Addressing the lack of diversity within our larger profession calls upon us to expand representation by using high-impact learning experiences like our internship program to attract future professionals. We will elevate the voices of historically underrepresented communities by creating, preserving, and improving access and discovery of collections.

Goal A: Prioritize on-going professional development for library staff about diversity, equity, and inclusion in libraries and higher education.

- **Objective 1: Support opportunities beyond campus for librarians and staff to continue to develop their understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion.** To serve our campus community, it is important to engage in conversation with colleagues at regional and national levels. This may include workshops or attending conferences such as the Advancing Inclusion,

Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility in Libraries and Archives (IDEAL) conference and the Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium.

Goal B: Increase diversity within our library and greater profession.

- **Objective 1: Build upon strategies employed by other segments of higher education that have seen greater success at recruiting and retaining people from diverse backgrounds to improve representation in the library.** In order to support our increasingly diverse campus community effectively, our workforce must reflect that diversity. Connect with colleagues in higher education to identify additional strategies for increasing the number of applicants from diverse backgrounds.

- **Objective 2: Expand opportunities for students from underrepresented groups to explore careers in libraries, archives, or museums.** To address the lack of diversity within these professions, build upon the strengths of our current undergraduate internship programs by redesigning internships and other high-impact learning experiences in order to attract students from diverse backgrounds.

Goal C: Create, preserve, and enhance access and discovery of collections that feature diverse populations.

- **Objective 1: Improve access to resources that highlight the lived experiences, interests, and priorities of diverse populations.** The library will supplement or update descriptive metadata with inclusive language to address limitations in current Library of Congress subject headings in order to enhance discoverability.

- **Objective 2: Broaden representation in the library's oral history collection.** Actively collect and preserve oral history interviews with members of historically underrepresented communities at Gettysburg College.

References

In the process of developing the 2020-2023 strategic plan, the strategic planning committee drew upon a number of different sources as part of its environmental scan and reading into appreciative inquiry. A selection of core readings is included below.

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