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LIBRARY and LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

American University Library

Strategic Plan

2023-2026

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University Librarian Letter



I am thrilled to present the American University Library's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. This comprehensive and actionable plan guides us as we support Change Makers for a Changing World, AU's 7-year strategic plan. This Strategic Plan is a road map to help us serve the AU Community and beyond with excellence and is a beacon to shape the future of the American University Library.

Beginning in December 2021, the Library Leadership Team initiated critical and meaningful discussions assessing the status of our organization coming out of the pandemic and conducted a deep analysis of our organization's reality. The Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 is a product of active participation and engagement from our university students, faculty, administrators, and partners in addition to our library staff and faculty.

Our Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 consists of four strategic themes:

1. Student Experience

Student experience lies in the center of the University Library's services and programs.

2. Scholarly Community

We fundamentally believe that collaboration and partnership are essential to promote scholarship and intellectual curiosity across American University.

3. Research

We claim a critical role in breaking down the barriers to participation in the creation of knowledge by embracing open and equitable research and publication practice.

4. Organizational Excellence

The University Library places people in the center of our organization. Behind everything we do is the desire to achieve organizational excellence.

I believe that our inclusive strategic planning process ensured our library staff and faculty to come together after the long and challenging remote work environment during the pandemic and to rebuild trust and collegiality among the members of our organization. I am deeply grateful for everyone involved in the creation of this exciting plan and look forward to making progress in achieving the strategic goals and objectives.

Sincerely,

Jeehyun Davis

Vision, Mission, Values

Vision

The American University Library leads the creation and use of credible, equitable, accessible information that empowers people to generate knowledge and enact positive change.

Mission

The American University Library provides information, tools, and expertise for creation, discovery, and understanding that advance student achievement, elevate research experiences, and enable our faculty, staff, and students to contribute to global knowledge.

Values



User-centered

We are a service unit that prioritizes our users needs and eagerly accepts our responsibility to support the needs of AU's diverse community.



Learning

We are a learning organization that creates knowledge through problem-solving and empowers the AU community's active learning.



Caring

We are an organization that cares by being attentive, responsible, discerning, responsive, respectful, equitable, and highly competent.



Collaboration

We work together civilly in inclusive, equitable, sustainable partnerships, respecting our diverse backgrounds, toward shared goals.



Integrity

We commit ourselves to personal responsibility and agency, dependability, trustworthiness, respect for self and others, transparency, honesty, and accountability.

Theme 1

Student Experience

Student experience lies in the center of the University Library's services and programs. The library environment, both physical and virtual, offers our diverse student population various spaces where they can participate and thrive in academic engagement and professional development. We strive to provide inclusive study spaces where students feel welcomed and have multiple options for quiet/silent study as well as vibrant and collaborative spaces for group interaction. We ensure the tools, resources, and services that we provide to students are selected based on data-informed, equitable, and inclusive deliberation. Furthermore, our student staff gain work experience and collaborate with library staff and faculty while building their professional portfolios.

Goal 1 Redesign and realign our services to meet the post-pandemic needs of our students and elevate the student experience.

Objective 1

Provide equitable access to resources and services needed for teaching and learning so that all AU students can participate and thrive in their educational and professional pursuits as part of their student experience.

Objective 2

Develop and support a culture of assessment within the library to enable more data-informed processes and transparency in our decision-making regarding our student-facing services and programs.

Objective 3

Review current support for our dedicated online student populations and programs and develop appropriate infrastructure where necessary.

Goal 2 Develop a library space plan to create functional, inspiring, and inclusive spaces that meet both student study and collaboration needs and support broader library and university programming.

Objective 1

Develop a needs assessment process and create a sustainable framework for gathering feedback and enabling changes to library spaces.

Objective 2

Improve comfort and infrastructure of library spaces including upgrading lighting and access to outlets within the building.

Objective 3

Expand and improve availability of overnight spaces.

Theme 1

Student Experience

Goal 3 Dedicate support to ensuring that library services and tools are accessible and inclusive.

Objective 1

Perform an accessibility audit to ensure open, equitable access for all library users.

Objective 2

Ensure that the library website meets University accessibility standards and provides streamlined access to library resources, collections, and services.

Objective 3

Advocate for increased accessibility practices across campus and with library vendors.

Objective 4

Identify and develop areas of support specific to our international student population.

Goal 4 Invest in our student staff by developing and enhancing experiential learning opportunities through building skills that can be directly applied to the professional working environment.

Objective 1

Create opportunities for student staff to share and develop their experiential learning through their library jobs.

Objective 2

Refine the lifecycle of student employment to provide a consistent experience across the organization including hiring, onboarding, and providing regular performance feedback.

Objective 3

Develop a mechanism to recognize and celebrate the achievements of student staff.

Theme 2

Scholarly Community

The University Library's focus on community helps to generate campus collaboration and promote intellectual conversation. It is a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages students, faculty, and staff to engage in scholarly pursuits and to share their knowledge and expertise with others. We fundamentally believe that collaboration and partnership are essential to promote scholarship and intellectual curiosity across American University.

Collaborating with other institutions and organizations will help the Library build stronger relationships within the AU academic community and beyond. By working closely with campus partners and other stakeholders, the Library will gain a deeper understanding of their needs and priorities and develop effective and thoughtful programs and services.

Goal 1 Develop partnerships that promote scholarship and intellectual curiosity.

Objective 1

Collaborate with campus units to develop and implement innovative programming that meets the changing needs of the academic community.

Objective 2

Collaborate with student groups to develop programming that supports student success.

Objective 3

Strengthen and explore new partnerships with external organizations to enhance the library's resources and services and promote scholarship and research.

Goal 2 Prepare our students to both critically evaluate resources and critically engage in an information ecosystem that is rapidly changing and does not inherently prioritize truth.

Objective 1

Develop, establish, and evaluate a Critical Pedagogy framework for information literacy.

Objective 2

Advocate for information literacy, beyond academic research, to be inserted into the curriculum and university programming.

Objective 3

Collaborate with appropriate partners to offer events and programming around information literacy, including misinformation, disinformation, artificial intelligence, privacy, and other emerging issues.

Theme 2

Scholarly Community

Goal 3 Encourage innovative scholarship and collaboration by establishing a formal digital scholarship program.

Objective 1

Launch a new digital scholarship program that supports digital research and scholarship and establishes the library's position as a hub for digital scholarship on campus.

Objective 2

Create dedicated virtual and physical spaces for the digital scholarship program.

Objective 3

Build capacity in staffing and infrastructure to support and advance our digital scholarship initiatives.

Objective 4

Integrate digital scholarship with the faculty and student research experience via a fully realized suite of services.

Theme 3

Research

The University Library is an essential element of American University's research support structure and is consistently recognized for the quality of the collections, tools, and services we offer to faculty and student researchers. The Library continues to foster traditional excellence and prioritizes targeted development in alignment with the evolution of the University's scholarly agenda and our values of equity and social justice.

We recognize that library collections embody cultural values and are committed to seeking out under-represented voices—enabling those perspectives to be readily encountered and included in the knowledge-creation process. We also claim a critical role in breaking down the barriers to participation in the creation of knowledge by embracing open and equitable research and publication practices and emphasizing equitable access to our collections. Through these efforts, both the work of American University's scholars and American University's archival and special collections are made accessible outside of paywalls, enabling both greater and broader impact and participation.

Goal 1

Build a diverse and inclusive collection that supports the research and teaching needs of the institution and includes sub-collections of distinction.

Objective 1

Develop a collections strategy that explores opportunities to align our values with our collecting practices.

Objective 2

Build infrastructure and processes for more data-informed analysis and decision-making around library collections.

Objective 3

Strategically change our collecting practices to include voices historically excluded from academic collections and highlight and celebrate underrepresented voices and perspectives.

Goal 2

Embrace open and equitable forms of knowledge and support values-informed scholarship.

Objective 1

Operationalize our Scholarly Communication Framework.

Objective 2

Implement a new institutional repository platform.

Objective 3

Promote Open Educational Resources.

Theme 3

Research

Goal 3 Expand equitable information access through digitizing AU's archives and special collections to contribute to global open knowledge.

Objective 1

Build capacity for our digitization program.

Objective 2

Prioritize inclusive digitization and description efforts for improved discovery.

Objective 3

Implement a new digital collections platform.

Objective 4

Expand the reach of archives and special collections to increase opportunities to promote and integrate special collections and archives into curriculum.

Goal 4 Support innovative research by creating and promoting research support services that meet the needs of both faculty and student researchers.

Objective 1

Create programmatic support for faculty using various methods to systematically gather and analyze available research on a topic.

Objective 2

Undertake a sustained marketing and outreach program that educates researchers about the support available to them through the library.

Objective 3

Develop a program to support campus needs for scholarly research analysis and evaluation using tools such as Dimensions and Altmetric.

Theme 4

Organizational Excellence

Along with the faculty and students that we support, the University Library places people in the center of our organization. Behind everything we do is the desire to achieve organizational excellence. We promote learning opportunities and professional development for our library staff and faculty, motivate them to practice problem-solving and shared responsibility, and foster a sense of belonging in our workplace. We strive to incorporate Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) into all areas of our operations and decision-making. We are devoted to organizational effectiveness through practicing ethical and servant leadership, removing barriers that impede cross-departmental and cross-campus collaboration, while promoting a culture of self-reflection and personal responsibility.

Goal 1

Exercise a people-centered and value-centered approach to library leadership and management.

Objective 1

Operationalize our values through decision-making grounded in IDEA and critical thinking.

Objective 2

Foster a culture of innovation and experimentation.

Objective 3

Establish and operationalize training and leadership development opportunities for library managers.

Goal 2

Elevate the employee experience through the effective management of the employment lifecycle rooted in IDEA.

Objective 1

Develop a holistic onboarding program that connects new employees to the library's policies and practices, providing a solid basis for integrating all staff and faculty into the library's culture and mission.

Objective 2

Maximize the impact of the annual performance management cycle through a consistent and effective performance review practice across the organization.

Objective 3

Provide ongoing professional development and training opportunities to invest in library personnel.

Objective 4

Recognize and celebrate outstanding employee performance.

Theme 4

Organizational Excellence

Goal 3 Build a culture of advancement by identifying and capitalizing on fundraising opportunities.

Objective 1

Build the library's capacity to seek out grant opportunities.

Objective 2

Enhance the donor engagement experience through strategic outreach and targeted communication.

Goal 4 Implement strategies that enable the streamlining of documentation and allow for the effective and transparent communication of policies, procedures, and processes.

Objective 1

Develop and execute a plan to streamline internal and external documentation, policies, and procedures.

Objective 2

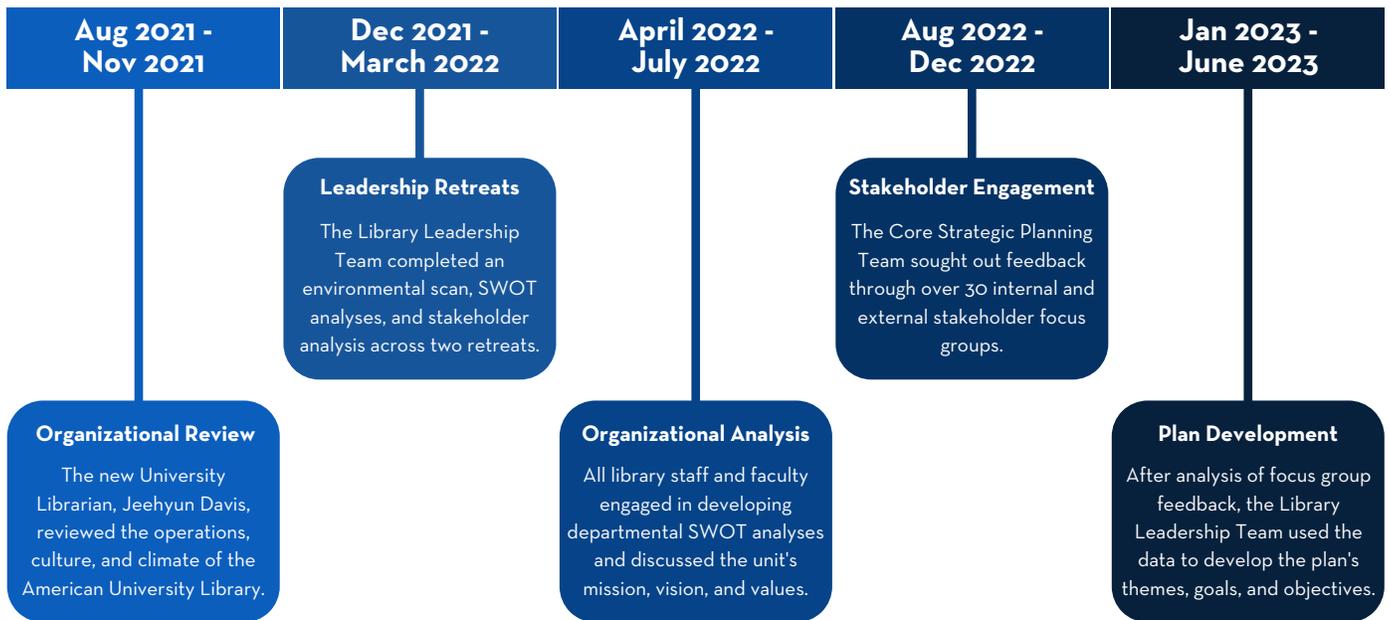
Develop and document a succession plan.

Objective 3

Identify, assess, and develop internal library communication methods and best practices.

Planning Process & Team

The strategic planning process began when Jeehyun Davis, the University Librarian, joined American University in July of 2021 and ended with the finalization of our strategic plan in July 2023. This process was inclusive, open, and grassroots to ensure that our IDEA values were centered in both the process and final plan. Our two-year strategic plan development process comprised five stages: organizational review, leadership retreats, organizational analysis, stakeholder engagement, and plan development.



Core Strategic Planning Team

The core strategic planning team, comprised primarily of the Library Leadership Team, was responsible for developing the framework, analyzing feedback, drafting language, and developing implementation and assessment plans.

Library Leadership Team

Key Library Personnel



Jee Davis
University Librarian



Gwendolyn Reece
Director of Research, Teaching, and Learning



Michael Piller
Senior Director of Academic Technology



Robert Kelshian
Director of Discovery, Access, and Assessment



Melissa Becher
Associate Director of Research, Teaching, and Learning



Liam Toohey
Library Systems and Assessment Administrator



Alayne Mundt
Director of Technical Services



Michele Mikkelsen
Director of Administrative Services



Claire Young
Special Assistant to the University Librarian



Nicole Weaver
Chief Development Officer



Leslie Nellis
Head Archivist for Special Collections and Digital Initiatives



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