Carleton College, Gould Library
Strategic Plan: 2013-2018

The Laurence McKinley Gould Library is situated at the heart of Carleton, acting both as a College service, supporting the scholarship of the Carleton community,¹ and also as an academic hub on campus,² particularly leading the College’s efforts to produce information literate graduates. As an active center of academic life, the Library must remain flexible and responsive to changing expectations on campus and in the information landscape. We in the Library approach these changes both eagerly and thoughtfully, with an eye towards sustainability and good stewardship of our resources.

While facing these opportunities and challenges, we will harness six guiding values to inspire and lead us. These values are threaded throughout the plan and form the underlying motivation for our many strategies and goals:

- **Active Flexibility** -- creating capacity for experimentation, allowing us to identify and embrace beneficial changes
- **Advocacy** -- using the Library’s position and expertise to champion equitable and sustainable access to information
- **Collaboration and Community** -- building and sustaining mutually-advantageous relationships within the Library, across the College, with St. Olaf, and with other key partners
- **Stewardship** -- caring for and maintaining our resources and collections
- **Strategic Assessment** -- strengthening the Library through evidence-based practices
- **Visibility** -- communicating the Library’s value to the campus and beyond

While each of these values is important, collaboration is especially visible in this strategic plan because it is so integral to our work in all areas. The Library depends upon and actively cultivates successful collaborative relationships with many groups, on and off campus,³ and these collaborations are crucial to our success.⁴

The Library’s strategic plan combines the goals of the College’s 2012 strategic plan, “Carleton’s Future: A Strategic Plan for the College 2012,” with the Library’s goals and guiding values. This plan articulates our key priorities and achievable goals, organized into six equally important categories: Services, Curriculum and Teaching, Co-Curricular Student Experience, Collections and Access, Physical Plant, and Staff.
**Services**

The services that the Library and Archives\(^5\) provide are essential to the success of our students and to the overall excellence of the College. Building upon our core services, we will intensify our efforts to support intellectual curiosity and to remove any existing or potential barriers to information discovery and delivery.

**Strategies:**

- Improve and expand services by strengthening strategic partnerships, particularly with St. Olaf and ITS, sharing both resources and expertise.\(^6\)
- Investigate a joint service model for Archives and Special Collections.
- Collaborate with ITS and St. Olaf to develop a digital scholarship service model supporting all disciplines.\(^7\)
- Optimize the websites of the Library and the Archives to facilitate access, provide a working environment for information research, showcase available resources, and highlight the importance of the Library to the broader Carleton community.
- Coordinate with St. Olaf to enhance services and improve workflows at both libraries.\(^9\)
- Evaluate service points and experiment with new models as appropriate, including investigation of locating additional academic support services in the Library.\(^9\)
- Continue to streamline discovery and content delivery using established, new, and developing technologies.
- Develop further linkages between the Library and existing peer support networks on campus.\(^10\)
Curriculum and Teaching

In addition to high-level student work within the disciplines, the College places increasing emphasis on interdisciplinarity, use of primary sources, and student scholarship. Combined with emergent methodologies and our commitment to serve a diverse student population, these emphases require increasingly specialized support from all areas in the Library and Archives. They also require the capacity and willingness to assess the current research needs of the Carleton community and adjust our practices to meet those needs.

Strategies:

✧ Work to help the campus, and especially our students, understand that information literacy is crucial for students’ intellectual work and critical thinking within and around their courses.

✧ Explore the expansion of our mission to:
  - increase educational support for and collection availability to alumni,
  - further develop Archives, Special Collections, and Exhibits programs’ support of the curriculum.

✧ Continue to coordinate with other academic support units on campus to provide effective, student-centered curricular and research support, particularly around the complementary critical literacies.

✧ Participate fully in the College’s investigation of technology-delivered instruction, looking especially for platforms by which Carleton and St. Olaf can deliver collaborative, library-based content and instruction.

✧ Support the Library’s exhibits program to showcase our unique holdings and the work of Carleton faculty, staff, and students through exhibits that complement the curriculum and campus conversations.
Co-Curricular Student Experience

Co-curricular learning experiences are an integral part of a Carleton education; therefore the Library is committed to providing experiences that enhance that learning. With the campus’ increasing emphasis on post-Carleton life, the Library supports students in their career explorations. The Library also advocates for and partners with campus entities to serve all populations of students.

Strategies:

- Emphasize that information literacy is crucial for students’ lives after graduation, and insure that students graduate with strong skills in this area.
- Assess programs and services to ensure that we support all students at the College.
- Mentor students interested in library science, archival studies, and related fields.
- Analyze and address existing gaps in services, particularly to underserved populations.
- Strengthen ties with the Division of Student Life.
- Prepare students for post-Carleton life by providing valuable student work experiences and, potentially, internships.

Collections and Access

As the amount of information grows and the methods of information access evolve, it becomes increasingly important for the Library to acquire, organize, and disseminate information in a strategic manner. By streamlining the path between information discovery and delivery, the Library and Archives can help students navigate the vast and sometimes confusing information landscape, making their research more effective, and contributing directly to their overall education.

Strategies:

- Provide access to a wide range of materials that support the curriculum and enhance the education of students from varied backgrounds and experiences.
- Collaborate with other institutions to increase access and contain costs.
- Leverage our relationships with other libraries and consortia to advocate for fair and sustainable vendor licensing.
- Help lead a College-wide conversation about open access.
- Explore ways in which Carleton and St. Olaf can further participate in coordinated collection development.
- Review the current collection development model to ensure that it is efficient, effective, and beneficial to the College.
- Ensure equitable access to information as technology evolves.
Physical Plant

The Library and Archives must provide facilities that serve all users while remaining flexible for future needs. Well-designed and usable spaces are key to ensuring our ability to provide core services and to support the pedagogical practices of the College.

Strategies:

✧ Perform a comprehensive space assessment to determine best use of existing spaces. Particular attention should be paid to:
  ➢ addressing inadequate space in Special Collections and Archives for collection, teaching, researchers, and staff,
  ➢ providing appropriate space for the general collection, library services, and staff work, including space for collaborative work with St. Olaf,
  ➢ arranging spaces for collaboration and conversation between students, faculty, and staff,
  ➢ protecting spaces for quiet study.

✧ Create the best, most accessible library experience within the limitations of the existing building.

✧ Communicate the importance of the Library as a unique campus space that provides comfortable and supportive environments for study, collaboration, and gathering.

✧ Ensure that our technological infrastructure meets current needs and provides the flexibility to address future technological needs.
Staff

A constantly growing and evolving academic environment requires a high-caliber, engaged, and fulfilled Library staff that can both adapt to changes and also create and advocate for changes it deems critical to the College’s and the Library’s success. The Library depends upon a vibrant work culture, one that encourages community collaboration, embraces change, and respects a diversity of staff identities, thoughts, and actions. This is necessary to the Library’s continued success in support of curricular and non-curricular needs of the College and community.²⁷

Strategies:

✧ Continue the Library’s commitment to recruit a diverse library staff.

✧ Review the current organizational structure to ensure that the Library and Archives are staffed in the most effective and efficient manner to provide a high level of service.

✧ Support staff members in all positions by encouraging the pursuit of professional interests and career development.²⁸

✧ Monitor changes that impact community needs in order to adapt our staffing models to provide the appropriate level of support.

✧ Engage in intentional staff succession planning, including the effective and smooth transfer of institutional knowledge.

✧ Explore the feasibility of an internship program for library and archival work and of paraprofessional or supervisory student positions to support student career development.²⁹

✧ Review Library position openings with St. Olaf to capitalize on collaborative staffing opportunities.³⁰

Conclusion

The priorities and goals articulated in this strategic plan will serve to direct the activities of the Library as well as its departments, teams, and staff members. The Library’s strategic plan is designed to allow for innovation and experimentation in the achievement of our goals. The end point, however, is clear: Gould Library will be flexible and responsive in support of the College’s needs in the coming five years.
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“Carleton’s Future: A Strategic Plan for the College 2012” calls for a concerted effort to prioritize time for core academic functions of the College. (Section 4.E, “Freeing up time and resources for core academic functions.”)

These include Information Technology Services (ITS), other academic support services on campus, the College’s curricular initiatives, the faculty, St. Olaf, and many regional and national library groups.

This value is also expressed in “Carleton’s Future,” section 6, “Embracing collaborative opportunities with other institutions to enhance our academic programs and save costs.”

The Carleton College Archives is organizationally part of the Library. Its function and mission are distinct enough that the Archives is developing its own strategic plan. In this document, the Archives is specifically mentioned wherever appropriate.

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 6, “Embrace collaborative opportunities.”

Ibid.

Ibid.

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 5.B.iii under “Make focused investments in facilities that directly advance our mission.”

This would not only enhance our service, but also provide more well-rounded experiences for the students providing peer support, thus furthering section 1 of “Carleton’s Future” about preparing students for post-graduation lives.

“Carleton’s Future,” Section 1.D, “Emphasize student research as a defining component of a Carleton education,” calls for an increased emphasis on “student research as a defining component of a Carleton education,” and section 2.A.i under “Enhance our curriculum to improve liberal arts teaching and learning” focuses on the Humanities and Social Sciences in particular.

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 3, “Strengthen the socio-economic diversity of our student body,” calls for increased socio-economic diversity in our student body.

This study ties the work of the library directly to the College’s strategic plan, section 1, “Prepare students for post-graduation lives.”

See note 12 about our commitment to serving diverse populations.

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 1 under “Prepare students for post-graduation lives.”

Supporting the work of “Carleton’s Future,” section 1.E, by helping students develop co-curricular and academic skills.


See “Carleton’s Future,” section 6, “Embrace collaborative opportunities.”

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 5.B.iii under “Make focused investments in facilities”

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 6, “Embrace collaborative opportunities.”

In this way, the Library performs many core academic functions on campus. See “Carleton’s Future,” section 4.6 under “Maintain a self-sustaining economy.”

For some of these potential future needs, see “Carleton’s Future,” section 2.B under “Experiment with online learning models.”

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 6, “Maintain a self-sustaining economy.”


See “Carleton’s Future,” section 4.D.iv under “Human resources.”

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 1.C under “Prepare students for post-graduation lives.”

See “Carleton’s Future,” section 6, “Embrace collaborative opportunities.”