OVERVIEW OF A PATH FORWARD

The UW–Madison Libraries lead in curating, preserving, and sharing knowledge. We provide environments that inspire engagement, discovery, and learning. We deliver exemplary information services to advance the mission and strategic priorities of our world-class research university. We aspire to be essential partners in advancing discovery and scholarship. By continuously transforming services, we empower research, teaching, and creative endeavors that enhance the quality of life in our state, the nation, and the world.

Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, the Libraries launched its new strategic directions. As we implement our strategy, we focus on ensuring our values of respect, inclusion, communication, collaboration, and empowerment drive our efforts. We recognize the work we have accomplished, continue to reflect on our strengths, and look for opportunities to grow in ways that align with the mission of the University.

The Libraries are pleased to share our accomplishments and the work to develop our strategic plan that informs our decisions and investments as we pursue our next level of achievement.

Lisa R. Carter
Vice Provost for Libraries
and University Librarian

The UW–Madison Libraries advance the mission and strategic priorities of our WORLD-CLASS research university.”

— Lisa Carter

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND INITIATIVES — OVERVIEW OF A PATH FORWARD

To advance the directions outlined in our strategic planning work, teams were charged in 2020 to lead staff engagements with our strategic directions. We describe and celebrate initiatives that advance our efforts, the work that progresses our strategic directions, and their alignment to the University’s strategic framework.
UW-Madison Data Storage Finder

Research Data Services and DoIT partnered to create the Data Storage Finder tool, which is aimed at helping researchers at UW-Madison navigate the centralized research data storage options that fit their needs. This tool makes finding, comparing, and getting assistance with centralized campus research data storage services easier. (UW-Madison Data Storage Finder)

Humanities Education for Anti-racism Literacy (HEAL) in the Sciences and Medicine

We are collaborators on the Humanities Education for Anti-racism Literacy (HEAL) project, which received a $5M grant from the Mellon Foundation's Just Future Initiative. This initiative brings together a “cross-racial and interdisciplinary team that seeks to improve equitable access to higher education by drawing on humanities research to advance anti-racist practices and pedagogy in science, technology, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).” (HEAL project at the Center for the Humanities)

Undergraduate Study Research Award

Undergraduate students who intend to make creative and intensive use of library resources as part of a semester or year-long research project are eligible for the Libraries Undergraduate Study Research Award. The selected student receives $2,000 upon completion of the award’s requirements, which includes structured library support and a final presentation to library staff. On Friday, April 23, 2021, we hosted a virtual reception and award ceremony. Despite the uncertainty wrought by the pandemic, the committee was pleased to receive sixteen applications in 2020 and had the opportunity to showcase the work of award recipient Aaron Kinard. (Undergraduate Study Research Award)

ENGAGE IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

Teaching and Learning E-Learning Plan

Our E-Learning Plans have positioned UW-Madison Libraries to be responsive and proactively align with a changing campus landscape. The 2019-2021 UW-Madison Libraries E-Learning Plan guided our support of evolving campus initiatives and contributed to instructional innovation. We developed a methodology to package high-quality content within courses and for reuse by library and instructional staff. Additional content for our micro-courses was created with campus partners. This year, we launched a comprehensive dashboard of library services in Canvas. Library staff evaluated and redesigned the online module for Communication, Sift & Winnow: Libraries @ UW. We will continuously improve our offerings through assessment and discussions of our e-learning think tank.

Library Micro-Courses

Micro-courses are a pedagogical approach for skill-based learning delivered via small learning units. The Libraries expanded its offerings with these courses: Reflecting on Social Justice: Foundational Concepts, Including & Navigating Race in the Classroom, Literature Reviews in the Sciences. The content for these micro-courses was developed in collaboration with librarian subject matter experts and campus partners. Course development is selected on interdisciplinary skills, aligns with library strategic priorities, and supports high demand. Deep partnerships with the Graduate School, Writing Center, and academic departments aided in topic selection and adoption by graduate students. (Library Micro-Courses) (Library News Article: DEI Micro-Courses Available to Campus Community)

Finding Yourself in STEM

Finding Yourself in STEM is an ad-hoc, biocommons ambassador student-led project that focuses on building community with students, especially underrepresented students, across STEM fields. STEM Librarians instruct STEM students in the context of a formal course or assignment and provide informal educational support. During the pandemic, librarians pivoted to providing instruction and support, which enabled students to build online community.

Celebrating Kohler’s 50th Anniversary

How does one distill the essence of an art library into a graphic representation? This was the challenge given to Art 346, a graphic design class in 2019. Students were asked to design a 50th-anniversary poster for the Kohler Art Library and select library collections for their inspiration. To become familiar with the Kohler Art Library and its history, three ART 346 sections toured the library, learned about the
history of the Elvehjem Building and its Brutalist design, and viewed its special collections. Over several weeks each student developed dozens of manual concept sketches, distilling these ideas into six digital poster iterations. In January 2020, the Elvehjem Curatorial Lab displayed posters, and eight were chosen as the official 50th Anniversary commemorative posters. (Kohler 50th Anniversary)

Support of Comm A/Comm B Instructional Continuity

Our instruction Librarians are skilled and agile, enabling them to meet the needs of more than 30,000 learners each year. The Libraries proactively anticipated online instruction growth as they prepared to support fully online certificates and undergraduate and graduate degree programs. As a result, we were well-positioned to serve campus when classes moved online. In 2020-2021, the Libraries’ Comm-A and B instructional support was consistent with the amount provided in 2019-2020. As the Libraries look to the future, our instruction will continue to evolve with new models and activities, using the online strategies gained in the past year to strengthen our efforts. (Support of Comm A/Comm B Instructional Continuity)

BROADEN AND DEEPEN ACCESS TO RESEARCH RESOURCES

Powers campus Excellence in Research and Scholarship

Despite the disruptive conditions of the pandemic, library staff remained dedicated and diligent in their efforts to ensure our ability to make new resources available to scholars. Licensing and acquisitions procurement work continued unabated throughout FY21. Navigating the challenge of working remotely for the first several months of FY21, library staff cataloged and added more than 24,000 physical resources to the collections. Additionally, nearly 340,000 electronic titles were added to the Libraries’ discovery platform. Both measures facilitated teaching, learning, and research. Library staff creatively examined and recalibrated workflows to the remote work environment.

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Digital Preservation Repository

In preparation for the “Coordinating Cultural Heritage Collections at UW-Madison” grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we enhanced the software that manages the bits and bytes of digital artifacts and associated metadata. The Libraries’ Accesssibility Alliance, a consortium of research libraries dedicated to improving the accessibility of licensed electronic resources. Others worked behind the scenes to enhance efficiencies between the Libraries and campus procurement systems and services.

Rapido Development Partner

UW-Madison Libraries joined Ex Libris’s Rapido Project as a development partner in the Fall of 2019. The goal of the project is to address current challenges in resource discovery and delivery, increasing scholar productivity and expediting access. In answer to the researcher’s question: “Can I get this through my library?” the discovery platform should respond with options for format, time-to-delivery, duration of loan, and cost, if any, so patrons can select the option best suited to their needs. Library staff participated in planning and establishing requirements and evaluating the status of APIs. We are currently integrating Rapido features into our Coordinated Discovery Platform, with implementation slated for the end of the year. (BTAA white papers and reports on next generation discovery and delivery)
REVITALIZING SPACES
To Enable Research and Learning

Even when faculty, staff, and students worked remotely, the Libraries provided spaces for productivity and connection. Four of our library locations, Memorial, College, Steenbock, and Business, were open for in-person use throughout the pandemic. The remainder of the Libraries enabled centralized pandemic-driven services, such as the Pickup By Appointment curbside service. The Libraries designed reimagined in-person services to support users within the pandemic environment, including research and scholarship assistance, and spaces for conducting classwork/assignments and for quiet study, as well as in-person access to browse our rich collections.

Throughout the year (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021), the Libraries circulated a total of 63,701 items to users. In addition, the popular Pickup By Appointment service saw 17,824 users stop by Memorial Library to pick up requested materials. During semesters, the Libraries provided various spaces for student use while adhering to stringent safety protocols to ensure the safety of both users and staff. 25,243 users reserved study spaces, 3,814 users reserved study rooms, while others visited various Libraries locations to print or scan (4,556), to use computer labs (2,783), to borrow laptops (3,460), and to access collections (568).

Advanced Planning Studies
In 2020-2021, we completed advanced planning studies for the holistic transformation of College Library and a Libraries Collections Preservation Facility. These projects are outlined in the Libraries Facilities Master Plan and are essential for reimagining library spaces as active, vital places for research, teaching, and learning. The Libraries Collections Preservation Facility is an enabling project that would free spaces across campus currently used for storage and allow renovations that will create welcoming, inclusive, and safe spaces for connection, academic success, and research productivity.

LIVING THE WISCONSIN IDEA
Contributing to A Vibrant Campus Community

Meanwhile, we offered virtual services and programs to an international audience which fostered robust engagement and life-long learning. These offerings both extended reach and allowed the Libraries to reimagine library spaces as active, vital places for learning. These offerings included research and scholarship assistance, educational events, and discovery of digital collections via video presentations to safely share them with researchers, faculty, students, and community members. The series exhibits unique and extraordinary items scholars may not know exist in our collection and features the expertise of our subject librarians. (IAS Video Series)

During the pandemic, International and Area Studies librarians highlighted facets of distinctive collections via video presentations to safely share them with researchers, faculty, students, and community members. The series exhibits unique and extraordinary items scholars may not know exist in our collection and features the expertise of our subject librarians. (IAS Video Series)

Black Professor White University

The Faculty of UW-Madison welcomed Dr. Shanna Greene Benjamin to campus virtually on April 8. With an audience of more than 400 people, "Dr. Monica M. White discussed the issues raised in Benjamin’s book, Half in Shadow. In her biography of the influential professor and scholar Dr. Nellie Y. McKay, Benjamin examines Dr. McKay’s strategies for succeeding professionally while navigating the white-dominated academy. In her work on The Norton Anthology of African American Literature with Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., Dr. McKay created a space for studying Black literature and Black feminist thought in the academy. (Black Professor White University)"

The Campus Color Line

The UW-Madison Public History Project and the Friends of the Libraries welcomed Dr. Eddie R. Cole for a conversation on March 4 about "Cole’s book with an audience of nearly 400 people. In The Campus Color Line: College Presidents and the Struggle for Black Freedom, Cole maps the role of college presidents in shaping national conversations around racial equity in the mid-century. Dr. Cole’s research in the University Archives on the approach of UW-Madison administrators formed the backbone of his publication. (The Campus Color Line)"

Dr. Shanna Greene Benjamin (L) and Dr. Eddie R. Cole (R)
Finding Solutions
Pandemic challenges required a significant revision of the Libraries’ operational approach in order to safely reopen and provide robust support for remote teaching, learning, and research. In the face of necessary budget reductions, we examined our priorities, streamlined and reimagined workflows, and pursued efficiencies.

Throughout 2020, the Libraries communicated more effectively and frequently with the campus community by partnering with OVCRGE and the Grad School to provide monthly updates. Whether sharing information about our operations or addressing feedback gathered in campus-wide surveys, the Libraries continued to look for ways to address the needs of our users.

For staff, we held monthly town halls which covered topics like remote work, TTC, return-to-work expectations, bi-weekly pay transitions, among others, to inform staff and generate a sense of community. The Libraries also offered a two-part OHR workshop on Professional Communications for Influence. We also invested in more staff (including University Staff) attendance at more national conferences because sessions were held online.

Association of Research Libraries Arlies Award
The Libraries received an Association of Research Libraries (Arlie) award for our “We Can Help!” video. Developed as the pandemic closed our spaces last spring, it highlighted countless ways the Libraries were still finding ways to ensure our users could access the services and resources on which they relied.

Fast Fun Facts
The UW-Madison Libraries launched its video series, Fast Fun Facts. Each episode highlights fun, quick, engaging facts about a department or service within the libraries, led by one of the librarians or staff, sharing their expertise.

Meeting the Need
The complications of COVID-19 were felt throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. Yet Libraries remained committed to its mission, values, and strategic directions while recalibrating to find ways to expand and enhance services across campus.

In addition to assisting with our Ask a Librarian service, the Libraries distributed technology such as laptops, fulfilled increased requests for scanned materials, supported instructional continuity, and more. Additionally, the Libraries launched its Library by Appointment and Pickup by Appointment services to increase access to our physical spaces and collections while keeping health and safety at the forefront of our operations. Pickup by Appointment was so popular, the Libraries are continuing it at least through the fall semester of 2021. Even during a crisis, the UW–Madison Libraries are a place to find knowledge, community, and information. We continued to support education, research, and engagement opportunities in all modalities, during a most challenging period and across the academic and research enterprise.