University of Virginia Library

Declaration of Possibility

https://www.library.virginia.edu/assets/2011possibilitystatement.pdf

We are and stand for the possibility
that this library is the intellectual crossroads where students and
  faculty,
  research and teaching, tradition and
  innovation, people and resources,
  individuals and communities, the world and
  Charlottesville
  ... all intersect and engage.

We are energy, motion, rigor, and risk.
We are physical and virtual space for a diversity of people, disciplines,
and viewpoints.
A place for intentional discoveries and unexpected breakthroughs.
A place of infinite choices, goings and comings, and
new pathways to new destinations.

This is a place where magic happens.
“We’re not recreating U.Va. from scratch. We’re building on 200 years of achievement to set a third century agenda.”

- President Teresa Sullivan, January 2014 Address to the Faculty Senate

Along with their universities, the best academic libraries constantly adapt to the forces reshaping research, teaching and learning. This University Library has pioneered new services and changed the profile of what a library can do to support the creation of new knowledge. But we are reaching the limits of what can be accomplished from within the models of the 20th century library—models designed to build collections for discrete academic units, to manage stacks of physical volumes, and to offer assistance through reference desks. While aspects of these models still have value, they are increasingly out of sync with the way faculty and students work. To become an intellectual crossroads that continues to promote and steward scholarship, we need new models that are effective in an increasingly digital, searchable, global, collaborative, and interdisciplinary world.

The Library is implementing a new service model based on five areas of focus: teaching & learning, research & scholarship, collections & access, information & spaces, and organizational services. Organizing staff and services around these areas of focus will provide new perspectives on how to advance, preserve, and disseminate knowledge at the University.

Our vision for the future includes Library domain and methodological experts who develop and foster collaborative research and teaching partnerships across Grounds. The Library will continue to collect materials locally, but increasingly promote access to both physical and digital materials from a much larger ecosystem of information, so that scholars can find and use the best resources in the form most conducive to their work. We will tackle the challenges surrounding the collection, use, and preservation of digital scholarship while ensuring access to analog materials. By adopting a more flexible and sustainable approach to leveraging technology, facilities, and staffing resources, we will offer more options for how students and faculty can use the Library, and a more engaging and satisfying experience when they visit, either in person or online. Our planning for a renovated Alderman Library anticipates a transformative space designed to embody new services that further the academic goals of faculty and students well into the future.

Our commitment is to create an innovative organization that is recognized as central and responsive to the research, teaching, and learning priorities of the University. We will not recreate the University Library “from scratch”, rather, we will create an updated framework that aligns with the emerging needs of the University’s third century. As this new model takes shape, we will be better positioned to collaborate with faculty and students and to maximize all our resources, including staff and their expertise, as well as collections, space, and funds. We are building on 200 years of achievement to craft a library for the future.
I. Teaching & Learning

We will focus on the academic needs of undergraduate students, our largest constituency, and specifically work to improve students’ ability to effectively use, evaluate, and create information. Through the promotion of innovative tools and content, and new approaches to teaching and learning, the Library will become a hub for instructors and students that advances University priorities to deepen student engagement and enhance learning.

We will respond to changes in the teaching and learning environment arising from:

- a new emphasis on high-impact educational experiences, especially those involving deep research, innovative coursework, and experiential learning;
- the call for effective teaching practices to address the needs of 21st century learners;
- the increasing numbers and diversity of undergraduate students at the University; and
- the importance of evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning.

Recommended Priorities for Teaching & Learning

For faculty and all instructors in their role as teachers

- Collaborate on innovative course design and the use of learning technologies and outcomes;
- Provide staff skilled in teaching to lead class sessions that enrich the students’ learning experiences and respond to the instructor’s course goals;
- Ensure that the Library provides seamless access to course materials, including all formats and special collections; and,
- Create and maintain technology-enabled learning environments that promote innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

For students as learners, creators, and researchers

- Provide training, both in person and online, in a host of technologies, skills and methods that enable student academic success;
- Advance leadership opportunities in the form of peer tutoring, student-led instruction sessions, and student award programs;
- Ensure that physical library spaces and online presence are designed to meet student needs and promote academic success.

Strategic Directions

- Strategically establish or expand expertise and programs to support new teaching and learning initiatives, in concert with the changing culture of teaching across Grounds;
- Closely align efforts with institutional goals to strengthen our distinctive residential culture and provide educational experiences that deliver new levels of student engagement;
- Strengthen and coordinate teaching and learning efforts across the Library, anchoring them in the twin pillars of assessment and pedagogical expertise.
II. Research & Scholarship

We will support the University’s priorities for research, scholarship, and creative works in all disciplines through close collaboration with faculty and advanced students on the creation, discovery, dissemination, and translation of knowledge. Our services will address research at every stage, exploit new developments in research design, technologies, and methods, and promote emerging models of scholarly communication.

We will respond to changes in the University’s research environment and scholarly communities arising from:

- new research opportunities in the mass digitization of the historical and cultural record;
- the growing ubiquity and scale of data and its potential to revolutionize the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts;
- the imperative for cross-disciplinary collaboration to address complex problems; and,
- emerging mandates and changing norms for publicly sharing the process and products of academic research.

Recommended Priorities for Research & Scholarship

Offer expert consultation, collaboration, and assistance in:

- Discovery: Finding and accessing information in all its forms, from literature and scholarship to data and specialized research materials.
- Use: Organizing and analyzing data through the development and support of tools and through high-level training and consultations in specialized methods.
- Production: Creating and preserving the scholarly record through contributing to and archiving digital projects, curating data and promoting standards, and developing sites for research experimentation.
- Intellectual community: Facilitating and collaborating in scholarship by hosting and participating in fellowship programs, academic colloquia, and interdisciplinary events.
- Scholarly communication: Providing expert guidance on the development and evaluation of platforms, methods, and emerging practices in the promotion and sharing of scholarship.

Strategic Directions

- Make the Library central to new University research priorities and initiatives through expanded support and deeper collaboration with U.Va. partners.
- Deepen and enhance subject and methodological expertise across the Library by developing a culture of R&D that enhances our ability to contribute to the research, scholarly, and artistic enterprise of the University.
- Promote the University’s rich scholarly and research output by filling the Library with bold advocates, expert educators, and well-informed developers of open access/open source platforms, practices, and strategies.
III. Collections & Access

We will connect library users with the resources they need whether purchased, licensed, borrowed, or acquired through our network of information resources. We will nurture, steward and share a distinguished collection of unique materials with an international scholarly community. While considering timeliness, cost-effectiveness and stewardship, we will build, promote and steward a collection that encompasses all formats and supports a strong, multidisciplinary university.

We will develop collection and access models that respond to:

• the changing landscape and economics of commercial publication models,
• the growth and diversity of original scholarship produced outside of established publication paths,
• the challenges of collecting, promoting, and stewarding new types of information (e.g., born digital projects, social networking, big data),
• advancements in metadata modeling,
• changing technologies and user expectations for information search and discovery,
• collaborative opportunities made possible by participation in larger systems of libraries (regional, consortial, etc.) that improve access and reduce costs for the University.

Recommended Priorities for Collections & Access

Ensure access to a rich array of materials for intellectual inquiry:

• Select: Scan the full environment of resources and select and preserve materials in support of academic programs and research.
• Obtain: Using the most effective methods available, provide timely and convenient access to selected resources.
• Promote: Create and maintain metadata about selected resources, choose the best platforms to promote discoverability, and develop tools when needed.
• Steward: Enable resources for current use, evaluate resources for retention, and preserve resources for future access.

Strategic Directions

• Increase access to digital content needed by the University community.
• Participate in national conversations, evaluate trends, and implement those that make the best possible information ecology for our users.
• Explore collaborative and consortial ventures and take advantage of outsourcing opportunities to free up local expertise for unique projects and goals.
• Ensure that important collections in all formats are preserved in perpetuity.
IV. Information & Spaces

We will deliver a consistent, pleasant, and productive experience to library visitors, whether visiting in person or online. Information will be clear and concise; spaces will be useful, welcoming, and ample. The Library will be both a hive of activity and a sanctuary of quiet. All spaces and online communication tools will be beautiful, functional, and user-friendly. At the same time, visitors will be free to engage with us quickly and readily, and to join us in experimenting with library information and resources with curiosity, imagination, and fun.

We will update and improve the Library’s services in response to:
• the diversity of needs and uses for library information and space,
• changes in how faculty and students use the Library and conduct their research,
• new methods of communication and access to information.

Recommended Priorities for Information & Spaces

• Effective and user-friendly information available online and in person.
• Friendly and knowledgeable staff, accessible both in-person and remotely.
• Easy and elegant online navigation and physical wayfinding of spaces and collections.
• Robust information services that leverage mobile capacity, web tools, automated and custom responses, and proactive and responsive communication mechanisms.
• Well-appointed rooms that may be reserved for individual and group use.
• Flexible and appropriate space for events related to the Library mission.
• Support for trends in physical use of spaces (bikes, furniture, chargers, etc.).
• Methods and tools for individual capture of needed information.
• Carefully located convenience services (food, printing, etc.) that significantly enhance the visitor experience and do not interfere with the academic goals of faculty and students.

Strategic Directions

• Welcome all visitors, while focusing resources and services on the University’s mission of research, teaching, and learning.
• Foster a balance between quiet and collaborative spaces, driven by user need and careful measuring of service costs and impacts.
• Use exhibits and events to become the public presentation platform for University scholarship.
• Rigorously analyze the costs and benefits of auxiliary activities and services located in the Library (printing, public terminals, space offered to tenants and vendors, etc.).
• Model a collaborative, curious mindset toward all library-provided spaces and information so we have strong yet flexible policies and the ability to change as needed.
V. Organizational Services

We will advance the Library’s new models through reliable and responsive strategic planning and administration of the organization’s human, financial, and facility resources, and other foundational services that promote success throughout the organization. Partnering with the other areas of focus, these services will directly contribute to the success of the organization while ensuring adherence to University policies and legal guidelines.

We will maximize Library effectiveness through a focus on:
- new administrative models and expectations at the University and in higher education;
- demographic change at the University and opportunities to leverage diversity;
- environmental factors affecting the Library’s financial, human, and facility resources.

Recommended Priorities for Organizational Services

- Implement consistent strategies and resources for effective planning and assessment of service outcomes.
- Build and support a workforce aligned with our strategic directions, provide staff training and technology, and continuously assess skills and performance.
- Ensure financial capacity and fiscal management to meet short- and long-range strategic goals.
- Ensure good facility infrastructure and well-maintained spaces.
- Develop long-range plans for holistic development and use of Library spaces that align with the University’s priorities.
- Provide technologies and technical expertise to improve organizational success.
- Promote safety for library users and provide security for our resources, including staff, spaces, equipment, and data.
- Provide strong external relations and internal communication programs.

Strategic Directions

- Streamline and improve processes through the use of technology or other means.
- Establish a culture of continuous improvement in the organization through a healthy cycle of planning, implementation, assessment, and adjustment.
- Explore opportunities for organizational services staff to have direct impact in other service areas.
- Experiment with new ways for organizational services staff to support the work of the Library, and adopt those arrangements that have the most impact.