# SUNY Potsdam College Libraries Strategic Plan

Turning the libraries of 2010 into the libraries of 2015

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The College Libraries: Mission, Vision, and Values

On January 18, 2006, the staff of the College Libraries endorsed a comprehensive set of Mission, Vision, and Value statements to guide their communal work. These statements live on as vibrant guiding principles for the Libraries, and are the basis of much of the innovation and dedication inherent in current service offerings.

Mission

The work of the College Libraries is dedicated to “Supporting learning for the college community through information resources and services.”

Vision

We envision the following for the College Libraries:

- The college community recognizes the College Libraries as vibrant, innovative, and essential to achieving the mission of the College - providing physical and virtual environments that support college programs, enhance learning opportunities for students, foster intellectual engagement, and contribute to a sense of community.
- Information literacy learning outcomes are integrated into every academic department, and teaching faculty actively encourage their students to use library resources and services and to draw on the expertise of library faculty.
- Library faculty and staff are respected and sought out for their leadership, knowledge, competence, professionalism, creativity, helpfulness and the contribution they make to student learning.
- Collaborations between the College Libraries and other organizations are innovative, numerous, and visible.
- SUNY Potsdam graduates are recognized as knowledgeable, effective and ethical users of information in their professional, civic, and personal lives.
- A well-established base of donors who value the special contribution of the Libraries to the College provides support for new initiatives and special resources.

Values

We are committed to:

- **Learning**: creating an environment that supports both intellectual curiosity and innovative thinking, and that contributes to professional and personal growth for all members of the college community.
- **Service**: providing efficient, timely, accurate, and informed service in a professional manner that is respectful of and responsive to the needs of our patrons and our colleagues.
- **Quality resources**: supporting access to a broad spectrum of shared resources that meet the learning and information needs of the college community.
- **Community**: building collaborative and collegial relationships within the College Libraries, with all areas of the college community, and with our external partners in support of our mission.
- **Responsiveness**: welcoming diverse ideas and perspectives, responding with flexibility to a changing environment, and experimenting with structures and technologies that offer new opportunities.
A Strategic Vision for the College Libraries: Taking Crumb and Crane to 2015

The above principles have aged well in the four years since they were developed, and will prove strong and worthy enough to lead the Libraries forward. They are rooted in the values evident in the College’s Bicentennial Plan, which in addition to proposing the creation of a state of the art library in the Minerva Center, also shares the College Libraries’ focus on remaining faithful to the Handcrafted Education, aspirations to develop new programs of excellence, and the embrace of new and emerging co-curricular opportunities. The question facing the Libraries and the College, however, is how to go forward with that vision. In “The Library Rebooted”, authors Scott Corwin, Elisabeth Hartley, and Harry Hawkes make the case that “The Internet has supplanted [the] core function of the library’s purpose by giving users access to much of the world’s information in roughly the time it takes them to start their computers and make a cup of coffee”, but they also assert that libraries have some measure of control over their future. If we believe in the empowerment of that statement, the question at hand is this: Given the changing realities of higher education and the values of our institution, what do the College Libraries need to be in five years?

Goal 1: Mission

Libraries once existed to be Libraries; they had value to academic communities in their own right. While this remains true in the eyes of many academics, and in pockets of scholars throughout the academic enterprise, it is no longer a universal truth for the students we seek to serve. Information has migrated to the internet, and as the authors report in the 2009 University of Washington Report, “How College Students Seek Information in the Digital Age”, college students use open web resources for personal queries, and turn to their professors – not librarians – when they have scholarly information needs. Librarians are not the trusted authority for the average college student, are not the sole source of information available to them (nor the most logical, in their minds), and thus, if we desire to remain relevant in the eyes of those we seek to serve, we must prove our worth to that audience.

Part of that struggle for libraries and librarians lies in the simple truth that many of the former roles of libraries have been usurped by the web – Google is a better index than we dreamed of 30 years ago, Wikipedia has proven more accessible and more authoritative than its published counterparts, and full-text retrieval has almost entirely replaced photocopying from well-maintained archives of journals. As Corwin notes, “Many of the assumptions about running a library – that the measure of a library’s quality is the size of its book collection, that there’s value in keeping even infrequently loaned books on the shelves, that library staffing decisions shouldn’t be questioned – are outmoded and need to be set aside.” We are not going to survive by trying to be what we once were, because the user does not need us to be what we once were. In light of these trends, one issue that rises to the top of discussions within the College Libraries – and in the profession – is that decision-making based on “what the user wants” is both very hard to do without knowing what the user wants now, or will want in five years, but also short-sighted given that the user doesn’t always know how to articulate what s/he wants. We do know, however, what we value and what we’re good at: providing first-rate information resources and services, with a focus on meeting the user’s needs with professionalism and personal attention. Therefore, it is time to find out what the user wants the Libraries to be, in their own words, to balance that first-hand information against the ideas generated by our professional expertise as higher education information professionals – and then act on the conclusions we reach from that synthesis.

As the role of the academic library is evolving, and the College Libraries explore the opportunity to adapt and evolve actively rather than reactively, we must also consider the observations of the Final Report of the Program Review Team from April 2009's Program Review of the College Libraries. The report notes the strength of the Libraries’ focus on student information needs, student success, and student engagement, the leadership level at which the Libraries have contributed to Information Literacy throughout the curriculum, the significant level of service and commitment to the College shown by libraries’ staff, and our commitment to values, transparency in budgeting and planning, and use of technology. They indicate a belief that we are succeeding in many of our initiatives, and have significant strengths – many located in collaboration, student services, and open communication – to build upon. In light of these strengths, the 2010 Horizon Report from EDUCAUSE is intriguing. ”The
work of students is increasingly seen as collaborative by nature, and there is more cross-campus collaboration between departments. While this trend is not as widespread as the others listed here, where schools have created a climate in which students, their peers, and their teachers are all working towards the same goals, where research is something open even to first year students, the results have shown tantalizing promise.\footnote{Johnson, L., Levine, A. Smith, R., and Stone, S. “The 2010 Horizon Report”. The New Media Consortium and EDUCAUSE, 2010. Pg. 4}

Finding the “tantalizing promise” of the academic library for the future means looking outside ourselves to determine our path forward. The College Libraries have a strong tradition of values-based decision-making, and have invested decades of energy into understanding our role on this campus and our vision of what success means for us. In addition to that strength of identity and character, we must consider that the value of libraries in the future lies not simply in being the excellent stewards of information in service of our users that we have always been, but also in working toward the College's goal of fostering collaboration across campus.\footnote{Strategic Goals, 2009-2011, SUNY Potsdam Leadership Council, Resource Development, pg 2.} Our road forward lies in continuing to build our understanding of user needs, expanding partnerships that value what librarians and staff add to the student and faculty experience, building relationships through one-on-one research assistance, and valuing the services we can provide as a place where users can interface with a broad range of academic support services.
Goal 1: We will excel as a hub for teaching, learning, and research, meeting expressed user needs by integrating technology and information resources with key services and user education.

Objective 1.1: We will identify our strongest functional role on campus in the eyes of our users and potential users.

Near-term Projects:

- Survey the student body regarding their expectations of and satisfaction with the College Libraries.
- Survey Crane student body regarding their perceptions of the Crane Library.
- Plan and implement small and targeted issue-specific surveys of faculty.
- Analyze data and compose a summary of findings from assessments and 2008 Self-Study.

Long-term Projects:

- Create and implement a plan to do regular assessments of user needs and satisfaction based on the successes and challenges of the 2010 assessments and summary.

Objective 1.2: We must review our service philosophy and priorities in light of the assessments available to us, including Spring 2010 assessments and 2008-2009 Program Review and Self Study reports.

Near-term Projects:

- Review and rewrite College Libraries mission and vision statements as appropriate in light of current trends in librarianship, campus needs, and the evolving goals of the Libraries.
- Using data drawn from the mission, vision, and assessment statements, and from group discussion within the libraries, identify and prioritize key services and activities in each area of the Libraries, and focus resources accordingly.
Objective 1.3: We will strengthen and foster logical collaborations with campus colleagues, projects, and curricula related to research.

Near-term Projects:

• Build a strong collaborative relationship with the Center for Undergraduate Research, building on the Information Literacy workshops and instruction program, the Institutional Repository hosted on Dspace, and the College Libraries involvement in course-based student scholarship.

• Expand outreach relationships with teaching faculty to promote the Libraries’ programs in support of course-based student scholarship.

Long-term Projects:

• Assist in the successful implementation of projects related to the Title 3 Grant on Undergraduate Research, including embedding of librarians into new upper-division learning communities focused on research skills and practice.

Objective 1.4: We will strengthen and foster logical collaborations with campus colleagues, projects, and curricula related to technology.

Near-term Projects:

• Plan and implement sustainable expansion of the role of the College Libraries in the campus computer lab infrastructure, leveraging our culture of service and assistance to continue the success of current technology implementations in the Libraries.

Long-term Projects:

• Explore implementation of a staffing model which includes Crumb Library as a Help Desk service point with a focus on student technology support.

• Explore the role of the Crane Library staff and services in support of user technology needs, particularly considering the Midi Lab, the new Performing Arts facility, and other emerging needs in the Crane School.
Objective 1.5: We will strengthen and foster logical collaborations with campus colleagues, projects, and curricula related to information literacy, with a goal of reaching every student once during each year of their program of study.

Long-term Projects:

- Develop outreach and instructional tools deliverable online, including virtual building tours, point-of-need video tutorials, and content embeddable in course-management systems for faculty use.
- Work closely with the General Education Coordinator to ensure that Information Literacy remains a strong and vital component of the College’s General Education program, exploring all options for strengthening the component, including for-credit courses, add-on course components, embedding librarians in teaching, etc.
- Work with the College Administration on workload and hiring issues to ensure sufficient library faculty are available for outreach and teaching in support of Information Literacy and Undergraduate Research.  

Objective 1.6: We will continue to strengthen and foster logical collaborations with campus colleagues, projects, and curricula as relate to new partnerships in academic support.

Long-term Projects:

- Investigate ways to more fully and sustainably integrate the services of the College Writing Center with the successful research assistance services offered by the College Libraries, considering approaches that can flourish before the successful creation of the Minerva Center.
- Investigate ways to partner with campus colleagues to link library learning and spaces with campus tutoring services, considering approaches that can flourish before the successful creation of the Minerva Center.
- Investigate ways to partner with campus colleagues to provide support and access to teaching and learning with media, both in access for study and in creation, considering approaches that can flourish before the successful creation of the Minerva Center.
- Support campus efforts to consolidate and formalize teaching and learning with Geographic Information Systems, including provision of technology and academic support for GIS work.

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9 As per Recommendations For The College #2, External Review, pg. 9, and Recommendations for the College: Additional Staffing, pg 11.
Objective 1.7: We will develop a service plan for the Crane Library that reflects the strengths of and opportunities appearing for a 21st Century music library.

Near-term Projects:

- Write a 10 year report complementary to the self-study work done for the College Libraries overall, analyzing the State of the Julia Crane Memorial Library and the changes of the last decade.

Long-term Projects:

- Draft a new vision for the unique services and collections of the Crane Library in line with the planning done for the College Libraries as a whole.
- Investigate ways to partner with campus colleagues to link the expertise of the Crane Library staff with emerging programs demonstrating cross-disciplinary information needs in the performing arts.

Objective 1.8: We will be responsible and creative stewards of College resources, advocating for appropriate and sufficient resources to support our success.

Near-term Projects:

- Balance funding between services and infrastructure in a way that will accommodate the information needs of users and support teaching and learning but also begins to address the Libraries’ deferred maintenance issues.
- Build budget plans that adjust our expenses (and the attendant services) to reflect the realities of current College budgets and the service priorities of the Libraries.

Long-term Projects:

- Determine what optimal staffing levels are for the College Libraries, and lobby the campus administration to meet those needs.
- Develop a formula that accounts for price inflation in library and information products, and lobby the campus administration to implement a systematic annual budget increase for the College Libraries which reflects that formula.
Goal 2: Place

The College Libraries encompass two facilities: Crumb Library, completed in 1969, and Crane Library, an original part of Schuette Hall. Both were built with an eye to the needs of libraries in the era in which they were constructed, and both did that job admirably for decades. Both facilities have aged less gracefully than we might hope, however, and we are now faced with significant challenges as our mission, services, and users change and evolve. Despite these challenges, the Libraries are heavily-visited spaces, with users choosing them as places to study and collaborate with peers, using the information resources we provide, and taking advantage of the technology housed in the facilities.

The current design of library space, specifically the spaces not occupied by book stacks, is inadequate. Crumb Library:

- Is a 67,000 square foot building that has a maximum safety occupancy of 1462.
- Originally, as designed by the architect, contained seating for nearly 700 users.
- Currently offers seating for 407 students out of a student body of 4300.
- Currently provides only 41% of the seating intended by the designers of the building.
- Currently can seat less than 10% of our student body at any one time.

The library staff have struggled to configure Crumb’s aging furniture in the spaces not currently occupied by books, trying to create study spaces conducive to the group work that has become an important part of teaching and learning at SUNY Potsdam, in spaces with and without computers for student use. However, as Shirley Dugdale notes in her article on space use in higher education, “we must not forget the importance of sanctuaries on campuses, especially in this age when the threat of ‘continuous partial attention’ easily distracts.” This is a part of the traditional role and value set of libraries that we are loathe to – and would be unwise to – abandon, and one which students demonstrate that they value through their use of our facilities and their feedback about our services. This layered and varied use of library space adds to the challenges of deploying that 67,000 square feet to the best of our ability.

As the campus’s main library, Crumb Library is challenged to be all things to many different people, but what we are most challenged to create in the current facility is space in which faculty and staff collaborations can succeed. The Self-Study indicates that “Collaborations in the service of student learning are becoming increasingly recognized as the most effective use of resources. There is no space in Crumb Library for such collaborations,” and the External Review confirms that perception. The solution advocated in both documents, as well as by the Academic Affairs Goals for 2009-2010, the Strategic Goals of the College for 2009-2011, and the College’s Bicentennial Plan is the Minerva Center, a proposed renovation and expansion of Crumb Library that would allow creation of a Learning Commons space for the campus, integrating many different academic support units in one facility.

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12 External Review, pg 10.
13 Academic Affairs Goals 2009-2010, Goal 3A, pg 1.
14 Strategic Goals, Facilities, pg 1.
External Review Team found widespread campus support for this plan during the 2009 Program Review\textsuperscript{16}, and it continues to be a key goal for the staff of the Libraries.

While we work toward this important construction goal, collaborations and services are being fitted into our existing facilities. With the full support of the Libraries’ staff, the Writing Center and Extended Education have both used a table in the open study area on the first floor to serve users in a centralized location, but that is an inelegant, stop-gap solution that simply hints at the potential of the collaborations. CTS has taken over maintenance management of the very popular lab computers in the library, but there are opportunities for services, collaboration, and growth that the current facilities do not allow for. Simply put, while minor cosmetic renovations were completed in 2000 and collaborations are being fostered with Crumb Library as their place, much more change is needed to create the Learning Commons that the College has envisioned for the center of the academic quad.

Crane Library has benefited from the 2009 renovation to the entryway which rejoined the two disparate halves of the space around a central lobby and reading area. This is the first step in a much-needed re-visioning of the Crane Library facility. Current usage statistics show that the Crane Library is a popular location, but that the most heavily used space resource is the Midi Lab housed inside the Library envelope. A large proportion of the Library’s floor space is dedicated to stacks, closed individual study carrels, listening rooms, and sound equipment – once the mainstay of a successful music library – but all of these resources are seeing changing or declining use in the online information environment. The Crane Library suffers from inefficient use of its spaces, a severe lack of furniture appropriate to modern student needs, and insufficient technology to meet the needs of users. While the renovation of the entryway and the addition of the Midi Lab have made it a more appealing space, they are simply the first necessary steps of many.

Dugdale reports, “In the future, space types are more likely to be designed around patterns of human interaction than around the specific needs of particular departments, disciplines, or technologies.”\textsuperscript{17} Given our desire to assess the way students use our spaces and their perceived needs, the Libraries are uniquely poised to be the kind of spaces that cross departmental, disciplinary, and technological boundaries, more so if we commit to redesigning our existing facilities. While there are inexpensive near-term changes that can be made to provide greater leverage to rise to these challenges, the only sustainable long-term solution is a complete renovation of both libraries.

\textsuperscript{16} External Review, pg 10.
\textsuperscript{17} Dugdale, pg 52.
Goal 2: We will be creative stewards of facilities that support student learning, encourage collaboration among many constituents of our learning community, and are able to adapt to the changing needs of modern Higher Education.

Objective 2.1: We will analyze stacks density/weeding needs and plan for the future of the collections in both libraries in anticipation of small- and large-scale renovation.

Near-term Projects:

- Review the original intentions for collection density in Crumb Library, the current state of collections, the projected growth of collections at current funding levels, and assess the collections needs of the facilities based on those data.

- Review the original intentions for collection density in Crane Library, the current state of collections after removal of the Crane Overflow, the projected growth of collections at current funding levels, and assess the collections needs of the facilities based on those data.

Long-term Projects:

- Consider the future of legacy formats and closed stacks in the Crane Library, and develop a plan to transition these collections through the next five years.

- Develop a five-year plan for allocation of space between users and stacks for each library, inclusive of proposed new initiatives and their space needs.

- Implement weeding projects consistent with the mission and goals of the Libraries, with a focus on high-impact labor-efficient projects.
Objective 2.2: We will create a facilities transition plan for Crumb Library that logically leads to the creation of the Minerva Center, inclusive of renovations and reorganizations possible in the next five years assuming limited campus funding for facilities renovations outside of Capital funding.

Near-term Projects:

- Investigate the desirability and feasibility of creating a 24-hour study space in Crumb Library.
- Develop a plan to move LTEC and library classroom facilities to the basement (returning it to limited-use public space).
- Assess the ADA compliance of Crumb and Crane Libraries, in both spirit and letter of the law, and draft recommendations to bring the facilities closer to ideal compliance.

Long-term Projects:

- Reorganize the Reference Area on the first floor.
- Investigate ways to return more of the 2nd floor space to user-centered rather than collection-centered tasks.

Objective 2.3: We will plan for the future of the Crane Library’s many unique spaces.

Near-term Projects:

- Build a close relationship with the Crane School leadership to ensure Libraries’ plans are in alignment with overall goals and needs of the Crane School of Music students and faculty, particularly as the Crane School embarks on a strategic planning process of its own.
- Assess the impact of the 2009 renovation of the entryway on user behavior, and use the lessons of that project to shape future changes.
- Understand and plan for the relationship between the Crane Library and the Midi Lab.

Long-term Projects:

- Develop a plan to change or refurbish the spaces currently occupied by Graduate study carrels, listening rooms, and storage spaces adjacent to the Midi Lab to ensure efficient and effective use of the space.
- Purchase adequate quantities and appropriate types of furniture for the Crane Library.
- Conduct a feasibility study of expanding the role of the Julia Crane Music Library to include a media center designed to enhance the connections between the Crane School, campus Performing Arts programs, and emerging communication technology literacies for all students.
Objective 2.4: We will proudly and adequately house the College Archives.

Near-term Projects:

- We will assess the space needs to appropriately store, preserve, and access the collections of the College Archives and Special Collections.
- We will assess the space needs to appropriately provide user access to the collections of the College Archives and Special Collections.
- We will assess the space needs of staff who undertake the complex work of managing the College Archives and Special Collections.

Long-term projects:

- We will develop a plan to provide appropriate space and facilities for the College Archives and Special Collections.

Objective 2.5: We will develop advocacy goals for space use in the College Libraries

Long-term Projects:

- Identify, describe, and prioritize future projects and necessary renovations based on plans developed by the libraries, including writing an update to the original Minerva Center proposal.
- Share prioritized list of project needs with relevant campus constituents in support of and conjunction with campus Capital, Facilities, and Crane School planning.
Goal 3: Information

Libraries have always, first and foremost, been about the information access they provide. Though much has changed for libraries in the last decade, this has not. The Washington report describes students as turning first to course readings, but then continues on, “In addition to course readings, nearly all of the respondents used scholarly databases in their course-related research”, sharing survey results showing that 84% of respondents report using scholarly research databases like JSTOR, Proquest, and EBSCO, and that 78% of respondents had used their library’s online catalog to search for books\textsuperscript{18}. Those numbers do much to assuage the concern that students never use the library, or only use the internet, and to reinforce our belief that library-provided resources are valuable, and valued – and will remain so.

But what are our library-provided resources, and what will they be in the future? Libraries used to collect books, and journals, and did so with an eye to providing a comprehensive representative collection of materials that users might need if they worked on any given topic. Libraries in the digital age are now providing access to – but often not buying ownership of – materials in formats we never imagined, for a fraction of previous financial commitments, and in volumes that are orders of magnitude larger than our most idealistic dreams would have allowed. The 2010 Horizon report predicts that electronic book and reader adoption in higher education is between two and three years away, citing growth in available content, exploration of use of electronic texts in a broad range of disciplines, and advances in consumer technology\textsuperscript{19}. To restrict ourselves, now, to collecting only monographs and print journals would be wholly irresponsible and make a mockery of our goals, yet many of our collections policies, practices, funding, and staffing patterns reflect that older mode of collecting. We must revise and reconstruct our understanding of “library collections”, expanding our philosophies, workflows, and budgets to create systems able to accommodate new options, including streaming online content, increased database use, electronic texts, point-of-need purchases, collections shared across multiple institutions, reduced reliance on print materials, and developments we could not predict now, in the first half of 2010, but which will be commonplace in 2015.

Libraries have also put a high priority on collecting for scope – building just-in-case collections of materials that would then be housed and preserved for future scholars to use. We have large but barely-used collections, and we must now ask the question “Is this the collection our users need?” The External Review Team encountered concern from faculty stakeholders that the Libraries have “cut the print journal collections to dangerously low levels in favor of acquiring electronic resources to now discover these are jeopardized,” continuing on to express concern that these cuts endanger not only student learning but also faculty morale and effectiveness.\textsuperscript{20} While few library staff would argue that adding additional print journals is the ideal solution to address this concern, we would all agree with our teaching colleagues that financial instability is the greatest threat to our collections. Just as the greater institution of SUNY will benefit from a rational tuition policy, the College Libraries will benefit from the Self Study’s recommended “rational and incremental annual growth plan”\textsuperscript{21} from the College, a financial management strategy which would keep pace with inflation in information resource expenses and allow us to provide the collection our users need. Given the ongoing uncertainty related to

\textsuperscript{18} Washington, pg 15.
\textsuperscript{19} Johnson, pg 18.
\textsuperscript{20} External Review, pg 10.
\textsuperscript{21} Self Study, pg 34.
budgeting on our campus, we must continue to rigorously evaluate the processes we use to build, disassemble, and sustain our collections of all formats to meet the needs of our users.

But it is not enough to simply collect information, even when done superbly. We must also then make the information accessible to the community we serve. The Libraries must invest in two venues for making our resources available: The College Libraries website, and our educational outreach efforts. There are three groups of library users on our campus; those who use our information resources, those who use our facilities, and those who use our services. Facilities users are addressed above, under Place; users of our outreach services are easily measurable, counted in reference transactions, research consultation appointments, number of students taught in Information Literacy instruction sessions, and visits to the circulation desk. Our information users are not so easily counted. A Venn diagram of these groups may look something like this:
The complicated and often un-comparable data provided by the vendors of our information resources tell us that these expensive resources are highly used. Anecdotal evidence tells us that our outreach services are highly valued, and quantitative data shows us that our facilities are popular among library users. However, these can and should be groups with much greater overlap, each able to benefit from greater exposure to the offerings of the others. As the 2010 Horizon Report makes clear, “The abundance of resources and relationships made easily accessible via the Internet is increasingly challenging us to revisit our roles as educators in sense-making, coaching, and credentialing.”22 Given the likelihood that most of our users never enter our facilities nor encounter our outreach services – particularly as the campus strives to increase our outreach to nontraditional and adult learners – if we wish to increase the accessibility of information on all fronts and preserve our role as described by EDUCAUSE, we must create a robust and intuitive web interface to our resources that will not only provide access to our information resources but also guide users to the educational benefit of our outreach services and the community benefits of our physical facilities. This must be done not as an addendum to our service plan, but, as the External Review Team highlights, as a sustainable, investment in the Libraries’ provision of service23. However, we must refocus our efforts carefully to ensure that our investment in online outreach is not done at the expense of the individualized instruction which we know to be both highly effective and integral to the College’s identity.24

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22 Johnson, Pg 3.
23 External Review, pg 8.
24 Bicentennial Plan, pg 1. Strategic Goals, Student Experience, pg 3.
Goal 3: We will provide access to information resources in thoughtful and forward-looking ways, educating users about evolving content, format, and access options.

Objective 3.1: Redesign the Libraries’ website in acknowledgement of its current role as our first and most used service point.

Near-term Projects:

- Hire Web Services Librarian with a start date of summer 2010.

- Hire professional library user experience consultants to study the effectiveness of our current website for local users.

- Work with Public Affairs to assess the future of the College website and CMS, and the appropriate place for the libraries within that system.

- Develop a framework for library web design at SUNY Potsdam that incorporates best practices in education website design, the consultants’ usability studies, and the priorities of Public Affairs, with the needs of the Libraries.

Long-term Projects:

- Redesign the Libraries’ website from the ground up, implementing as soon as is feasible.

- Review all key policies and services to ensure that they are accessible to web-only users.
Objective 3.2: We will assess the role of library information systems – search, inventory, and management – in the modern information environment and respond accordingly.

Near-term Projects:

- Decide on a strategy for accessing monographic materials in answer to the question “what is the first point of access for users searching for books?” considering our native catalog, catalog overlay software, external catalogs, and other options.

- Decide on a strategy for accessing scores and sound recordings in answer to the question “what is the first point of access for users searching for music?” considering our native catalog, catalog overlay software, external catalogs, and other options.

- Decide on a strategy for accessing online indexed materials, considering native interfaces, aggregating content with single vendors, federated search software, subject portals, and other options.

- Revisit the decisions made regarding e-cataloging in 2003, and develop a new plan for 2010-2015.

- Choose an archival information management system, and begin implementation to ensure users have access to the material housed in the College Archives.

Long-term Projects:

- In light of decisions made about key services, develop a plan to align cataloging resources with our goals, considering level of in-house cataloging and customization, in-house needs for specialized cataloging, and other issues raised by discussion.

- Review and adapt music cataloging policies as appropriate to reflect current search technology and user needs.
Objective 3.3: We will ensure that key outreach tasks are aligned with user needs and library goals.

Near-term Projects:

- Develop a short-term plan that ensures that reference service is scalable, in line with college and library goals for Handcrafted Education, sustainable with available resources, and responsive to demonstrated user needs.

- Develop a short-term plan designed to ensure that course-based information literacy instruction is scalable, in line with college and library goals for Handcrafted Education, sustainable with available resources, and responsive to demonstrated user needs.

Long-term Projects:

- In light of decisions made about key services, develop a long-term plan to align reference resources with our goals, considering emerging opportunities and priorities, the role of the website and the role of technology in library help desks, professional values and institutional resources, and other issues raised by discussion.

- In light of decisions made about key services, develop a long-term plan to align information literacy resources with our goals, considering emerging collaborations, the role of the website and other online information services in reaching users, professional values and institutional needs, and other issues raised by discussion.

Objective 3.4: We will expand on our highly successful Interlibrary Loan service by implementing just-in-time resource acquisition to complement our just-in-case processes.

Near-term Projects:

- Explore participation in SUNY-wide just-in-time purchasing projects.

- Combine workflows and staffing in acquisitions and Interlibrary Loan to facilitate smooth integration of new processes.

- Implement GIST or another similar management tool for new selection processes.

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25 Bicentennial Plan, pg 1.
26 Ibid.
Objective 3.5: We will ensure that our collection development policies and practices are in line with our mission and goals.

Near-term Projects:

- Evaluate and expand weeding policies and planning so that we are poised to meet emerging collection needs.
- Evaluate and formalize the role of the College Archives in collecting, preserving, and making accessible the College’s history, including an assessment of the role of artifacts and memorabilia to maintaining the College’s history.

Long-term Projects:

- In light of decisions made about key services, develop a plan to align our collection development policies with our goals, including evaluation of fund allocation, liaison and outreach activities, collection priorities, and other issues that emerge from discussion.
- Evaluate and formalize the College’s Dspace implementation as a repository of local scholarship and creative endeavors.
- Evaluate and amend as necessary the collecting relationship between the College Libraries and the Sheard Literacy Center in light of overlapping missions and the need to collaborate for success.
Goal 4: Organization

Fifteen years ago, when the College Libraries switched to a Team structure rather than a more traditional hierarchical management structure, that was a revolutionary change. It was brave, it was bold, and it was largely a success for more than a decade. We must recapture that bravery and again be bold in revising our organizational structure.

College Libraries staff disagree on the effectiveness of the current structure, as reported in the Self-study, some raising questions about the value of bylaws, defined structures, and codification, while others were concerned with fostering innovation, holding individuals accountable to group norms, and issues of trust. Many libraries' staff value the impassioned debate that is a hallmark of our professional discussions, but there is concern that some voices have become disenfranchised. Many libraries' staff want a Director who will "just make a decision" when that is warranted, but others voice concern that without proper checks and balances in the structure, a strong Director becomes a dictator rather than a leader. Despite (or perhaps because of) these varied concerns, and given that there is not strong universal support for the current system, it is clear that revision is necessary to bring more of the staff to a place of comfort, security, and satisfaction with their working environment. The College also is looking to campus units to make the most of the resources we have available to us by encouraging staff to explore collaboration as a tool to save resources, something the Libraries are very good at.

In addition to the Libraries’ evolving culture of cooperation and collaboration, in recent years we have explored new and challenging service models, and then faced problems of scale with successful services. The Self-Study reveals one example, Information Literacy: “The [Information Literacy] workshop has been offered three times with 16 departments now having participated. Should the workshops succeed in engaging every – or even most – academic departments in collaborating with library faculty to ensure the College graduates information literate students, there would not be enough library faculty to meet the demands for instruction services.” The External Review Team also pointed to this issue as one the College and Libraries must solve, asserting that “Of all the recommendations for the College, providing additional staffing is the most critical to the Libraries. Current staffing levels, which are the lowest among its peer institutions, strain the Libraries’ ability to maintain existing services, preclude opportunities for achieving any of the recommendations of this report, and place a significant burden on a new director, now doubly challenged to suggest change in an environment in which staff are already overburdened and unable to meet existing expectations.” The College is also aware of these needs, and has committed to examining and addressing shortcomings in administrative staffing, but in the current budget climate, those well-intentioned efforts may be slow to materialize, and we should not wait for them to fix us – we should fix ourselves.

In light of that dire and unsettling description of our working environment, Libraries’ services beyond instruction suffer from these same concerns; we are afraid to be too forward-reaching in Interlibrary Loan lest we fail to meet demand, we are unable to extend our Zero-Based Budgeting

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27 Self Study pg 26.
28 Strategic Goals, Resource Development, pg 2; Academic Affairs Goals 2009-2010, 4C, pg 1.
29 Self-study, pg 8.
30 External Review, pg 11.
31 Strategic Goals, Faculty and Staff Worklife, pg 3; Academic Affairs Goals 2009-2010, 7C, pg 2.
project in Collection Development to more than a few departments each year because it takes too much time, and we desire to have personal face-to-face Reference service for more hours than are feasible given our resources. And, as the business+strategy article notes, “Clearly there is no way that libraries could transform themselves into leading-edge Internet organizations even if they wanted to. Nor should they aspire to that. A great many things are in flux, and a library that goes too far [puts itself at risk]. But some experimentation is in order.”

It is easy to become paralyzed by deficiencies in resources, an unclear future, and overwork. Clearly, therefore, not all of our concerns can be addressed by reorganizing staff. However, with thoughtful experimentation, some of our concerns can be met head-on by a structure that is more flexible, assigns resources to areas which are most in need of them, and which reflects current priorities and goals.

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Corwin, pg 10.
Goal 4: We will be a nimble, innovative organization committed to quality and responsiveness, built around a staff structure that responds to challenges and successes with grace.

Objective 4.1: We will adopt a new management structure for the College Libraries.

Near-term Projects:

- Develop a long-term plan for staff management and structure for the College Libraries based on who we aspire to be rather than on currently available resources and staff.

- Revise staff management structure based on current resources and staff, accommodating unfilled positions in the 2010-2011 academic year, as a transitional plan which leads to implementation of the long-term plan.

- Write and approve new Bylaws of the College Libraries to reflect the modified governance structure.

Long-term Projects:

- Plan for the future of each functional area of the Libraries’ staff, including transition planning, training needs, and maintenance of legacy systems and processes, and integrate this into the aspirational plan.

- Consider the relationship between the College Libraries’ management structure and the Bylaws of the College Libraries, and the benefits and drawbacks of the intricate linkage between the two.

Objective 4.2: We will integrate our successful pilot projects into the operational structure of the organization, sustainably managing, staffing and funding these initiatives.

Near-term Projects:

- Leverage the strengths of the now-defunct Resource Sharing Working Group by creating Brainstorming Groups dedicated solely to learning about and teaching others about new developments in the profession.

Long-term Projects:

- Affirm our commitment to faculty scholarship, undergraduate research, and the College’s institutional repository by hiring a librarian responsible for scholarship outreach and support.

- Affirm our commitment to the successful outreach and undergraduate research efforts of the College Archives by staffing the Archives with appropriate clerical and professional support.
Objective 4.3: We will build a workplace culture that values personal initiative and responsibility and is supportive of the strengths of all employees.

Near-term Projects:

- Review and revise the Libraries’ approach to mentorship to better acknowledge, accommodate, and reward the informal mentoring that is a strength of our staff.

- Support initiatives, projects, and attitudes that lead to a culture of personal responsibility for communal work without creating boundaries that stifle collaboration and cooperation.

- Review and revise routine performance expectations to ensure that all staff have time for formal and informal mentorship, collaboration, creativity, and learning.

Objective 4.4: We will reorganize the physical arrangement of library staff to encourage greater collaboration, connectedness of work, and efficiency.

Near-term Projects:

- Assess the space and resource needs of each functional area of the Libraries, in consideration of the futures planning done by each area.

- Develop a plan to appropriately furnish and repurpose available staff space given projected needs.
Goal 5: Presence

We could lecture to 1000 new students each year, telling each of them how valuable we are and how we can help them succeed in college. We might make an impact on a few of them. We could stop into every faculty office and explain every single one of our services and how those services impact on teaching and learning. Several of those we spoke to would undoubtedly come in to sample what we’d advertised. However, rather than strive to convince incoming students and faculty colleagues by repeatedly explaining why libraries are valuable, we might instead heed the advice given by thousands of writing professors and authors: “Show, don’t tell.” Granted that a portion of our audience is career academics, sometimes telling is compelling. Therefore, a clearer and more productive path for us will be to show, as well as tell; to simply be valuable by integrating our services and expertise into the systems which already have value for the user, and communicating clearly about what we do. The College has recognized that we must do a better job of promoting the good work of our faculty and staff, going so far as to add this as a Strategic Goal for 2009-2010. The hardworking staff of the College Libraries must do the same.

We recognized, during our self-study in 2009, that “the best way to reach students is through teaching faculty. We see ourselves as partners in the academic enterprise with teaching faculty and engage in activities that support that vision.” The external reviewers agreed, noting that students use the input of their professors to shape how they interact with the Libraries, and commending the libraries for building strong relationships with classroom faculty, who “express overwhelmingly positive support for library faculty, acknowledging their impact on and contribution to student learning, student research, and the classroom faculty’s teaching”. Therefore, by leveraging our current strengths, and providing what users already need (and then doing it better than it can be done elsewhere), we become a natural part of the educational process. By demonstrating that we are trusted partners in the instructional process, we can gain access to the trusted authority role held by faculty. By integrating librarians and library services into the mission-critical activities of the College – classroom teaching, undergraduate research, information literacy, general education – we can ensure that we will be a relevant part of the work we strive to support.

And then we must talk about it. We must advertise our successful work. We must make our services and facilities known. We must be our own best advocates. But we cannot do this independently; aggressive marketing only works in conjunction with compelling services. We must be telling the truth when we ask our users to trust in our good work; the two tactics support each other. If the two are working in concert we will be, as the Bicentennial Plan for the College advocates, “known and respected within the state and ultimately nationally for the excellence of our programs”.

Providing unparalleled authentic value to the user must be our goal, and selling a convincing story of that value to our users will allow them to experience that value. By continuing to provide high-quality services, and using smart marketing and honest communication to entice potential users to experience those services, we will create a community that agrees that this is, in fact, our role.

33 Strategic Goals, Marketing, pg 1; Academic Affairs Goals 2009-2010, 2A, pg 1.
34 Self-Study, Pg 15.
35 External Review, pg 7.
36 Bicentennial Plan, pg 1.
Goal 5: We will build a presence as a campus unit that is admired and respected for its relevance and value to teaching and learning, a respect that is fostered by staff and users through transparent communication and genuine connections.

Objective 5.1: We will develop a communication plan for the College Libraries

Long-term Projects:

- Develop a strong and consistent message for the Libraries.
- Cultivate a reliable, authoritative, and personable voice for the Libraries.
- Build on the successful existing outreach and programming done in the past to develop a calendar of meaningful opportunities to connect with Libraries users.

Objective 5.2: We will develop a marketing plan for the College Libraries

Long-term Projects:

- Develop, implement, and assess a strategy for marketing our key services to potential student users.
- Develop, implement, and assess a strategy for marketing our key services and partnerships to campus colleagues.

Objective 5.3: We will effectively use our facilities to promote our message and communicate with users.

Near-term Projects:

- Develop and implement signage policies for both Crumb and Crane Libraries consistent with the goals and voice of the Libraries’ communication plan.
- Implement new communication tools for physical users of the libraries in support of their need to communicate with us and with each other.

Long-term Projects:

- Implement new communication tools for online users of the libraries in support of their need to communicate with us.
Goal 6: Innovation

Employees at a vital organization do not want to come to work and discover that their job is boring. They do not want to look back at their career and see that they did nothing that added exceptional value to the life of the people they strive to serve. And no one here wants to see that happen to our libraries. We want to be valued. We want to be relevant. We want to be interesting. We want to implement useful, smart change. We want to innovate.

We have a history of success in innovation. If an outsider were to ask any member of the libraries’ staff, they would tell you about a project that they participated in that was cutting-edge at the time they did it. The summary assessment from the Self-Study is clear: “In short, the spirit is willing; staff, time, and money are lacking.” Therefore, we must build a library organization that prioritizes what we want to see for ourselves. As the business+strategy article says, “This is not the time for libraries to shy away from new strategies. Library executives need to do more than innovate, however. They need to approach the innovation challenge with an entrepreneurial mind-set: test, measure, refine. And if something does not work, they must go through the process again: Test, measure, and refine using new ideas and concepts.” We must – and will – look creatively forward if we are to do our part in bringing to fruition the Bicentennial Plan for the College, embracing new and emerging opportunities to create a “state-of-the-art Library and student academic assistance and support center that will become a national model”.

We must build on our history of successful innovation, and use the five preceding goals in this plan to create a campus library system that is innovative, interesting, respected, and engaged. We must support innovation from every member of the library staff. We must encourage creative thinking. We must adequately and enthusiastically support professional development for all staff. We must be willing to take thoughtful risks. We must not be afraid to fail, and when we do, we must try again. We must engage with the literature in the field, opportunities for professional growth, experiences of our peers, and the authentic experiences of our local user community. We must connect all of these things as we think critically about our options, and make smart decisions to create the best future for our libraries and our users. And, as the campus leadership has affirmed in multiple goals documents, we must support library staff in appropriate ways – with financial resources, allowances of time, and administrative support – to encourage all of us to engage meaningfully with innovative thought and creative work.

37 Self-Study, pg 27.
38 Corwin, pg 9.
39 Bicentennial Plan, pg 1.
40 Strategic Goals, Faculty and Staff Worklife, pg 3.
41 Strategic Goals, Faculty and Staff Worklife, pg 3; Academic Affairs Goals 2009-2010, 7, pg 2.
Goal 6: We will be leaders in providing innovative, thoughtful, and interesting services, spaces, and collaborations to the campus community.

Objective 6.1: We will develop a fair and robust system for encouraging and ensuring adequate professional development for all staff

Near-term Projects:

- Identify special training needs for individual staff members based on key services review and reorganization of workflows in the Libraries.
- Plan for funding of professional development opportunities appropriate to each staff member’s needs.

Long-term Projects:

- Develop in-house information sharing processes that are engaging and promote creativity and debate.
- Engage in discussion that will lead to a communal understanding of the role of scholarship, publication, and creative work in the professional workplace of the Libraries.

Objective 6.2: We will develop a strong and thoughtful system of evaluation and reward to encourage creativity, innovation, and careful risk among all staff.

Long-term Projects:

- Reshape our institutional understanding of the purpose and value of CSEA employee performance programs and evaluations.
- Reshape our institutional understanding of the purpose and value of UUP Professional Staff performance plans and evaluations.
- Reshape our institutional understanding of the purpose and value of Librarian participation in Academic Faculty Information Form reporting, including consideration of the value of post-tenure peer review for librarians.
Conclusion

The College Libraries are a valued and valuable part of the academic life and culture of SUNY Potsdam, and it is the intention of all stakeholders to preserve and enhance that role by shaping a College Libraries that is more relevant, more vibrant, and more valued in the next decade than it was in the previous one. We will ensure that we have the skills, the interests, and the resources to be the academic partner our students and colleagues need us to be.

None of the projects described here can happen in a vacuum, in that many of them must happen simultaneously, yet others must be completed in preparation for subsequent projects. Therefore it is impossible to create a firm “first this, then that” plan of action. Additionally, these are all proposals – over the course of the next two years, as the Libraries begin the work of reforming and refocusing on our future, we may find that things which sounded exciting and obvious in the spring of 2010 sound impractical and inefficient in 2012. The Libraries are also affected by numerous outside forces: The shifting resource picture of the campus and the State, the changing business models of our dozens of vendors, the varying missions, goals, and projects of the many agencies with whom we work, ranging from the State of New York offices to SUNY offices to independent consortia of libraries working together. Internally, the staff of the College Libraries can and will engage in impassioned and thoughtful debate of many of these ideas, and so the future of the Libraries will be shaped by our changing available resources, this plan, and the as-yet-unheard debates to come. But we will meet the challenge, and we will find our path forward, and we will be a better organization for having made the effort.