

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

The Strategic Plan of the Drew University Library

The greatest single influence on academic libraries over the past decade has been the impact of digital technology. The digital revolution - still in its infancy - is reshaping scholarly communication, collections and services, and is radically changing the behaviors and expectations of our users. In just a few years, our Library has become a virtual destination with unlimited hours as well as a geographical destination with limited hours. Technology now suffuses every aspect of how the Drew Library does business, and its effects continue to accelerate. Even in this era of Google, the Library serves as the portal to the world of scholarship for the Drew community.

Contrary to popular belief, the costs for the preferred digital products are not cheaper than the paper alternatives, and traditional library budget models are no longer sustainable. In addition, the recent down-turn in the economy presents real challenges. The University is asking all of its units to do more with less, to critique current practices and commitments, and to be imaginative, experimental, and bold.

To that end, the Drew Library kicked off a strategic planning process in February 2010 to determine Library priorities for the next three to five years. Our goals were to engage the entire staff, involve our stakeholders in the Drew community, research best practices, and produce a plan that is clear and cost-effective. An internal analysis led to the formation of several research groups dealing with technology, communication, physical space, collection development, and the evolving role of libraries. Student and faculty surveys conducted in the spring provided information about space, collections, services, and library use.

To help make the most of this wealth of information, the Library engaged Joanne Spigner of VisionFirst, who facilitated our exploration of emerging themes for the plan. A task force drafted the Library's plan and incorporated feedback from the administration, the University Library Committee, Computing and Network Services, and the faculty and staff of the Library. An outside review team of librarians will now offer its unique perspective to help shape the plan further.

While practical, the plan is ambitious and optimistic, reaffirming the Library's vital role in the educational mission of the University.

MISSION

To support and advance the educational mission of Drew University by facilitating access to scholarly collections and information resources.

VISION

The Library serves as the scholarly information research center for the university, continually strengthening collections and services by providing access to a useful and expanding complement of print, digitized, and Web-based resources.

The Library helps students build the skills needed to find, access, evaluate, and use reliable resources in all formats, and to produce scholarship.

The Library stands as the premier campus learning hub, providing an appealing environment for individual and collaborative study and research, academic support, informal conversation, and programs that enrich Drew's cultural and intellectual life.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We are **user-focused**, reaching out to students and faculty, listening to them and finding ways to meet their changing needs.
- We view creative **collaborations** as critical to our success, helping us to improve and expand services, ensure access to comprehensive collections, enlarge outreach to our users, generate campus support, and attract funding.
- We embrace **technology**, integrating it intelligently across the scope of our work.
- We strive to make the Library a **welcoming and supportive environment** for study and research.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Intensify Library support of student engagement

- Collaborate with the faculty of the three schools to develop strategies to integrate information literacy more fully into targeted academic programs
- Forge closer collaboration with Instructional Technology Services and the Writing Center to better integrate all academic support services
- Link Library resources and librarians to off-campus programs, online courses, international seminars and internships
- Review collection development practices to ensure alignment with university strategic priorities, particularly global perspective
- Increase services to alumni

Make the full transition to a 21st century academic library

- Evolve collection development practices as technology changes
 - Broaden access to e-book collections
 - Experiment with patron-driven acquisitions
 - Investigate the purchase of shelf-ready (already processed) books
- Improve resource discovery by investing in a new user interface (“front end”) for integrated library system
- Take a leadership role in the Open Library Environment (OLE) project, an open source project funded by the Mellon Foundation and a priority of VALE, the consortium of the New Jersey academic libraries
- Make the Library Web site easier to use
- Establish comprehensive, regular assessment of all resources and services

Secure sustainable funding to keep Library collections current

- Collaborate with faculty who are developing new programs to ensure adequate library resources
- Enlarge the Library’s role in fund raising to support collection development, in partnership with University Advancement
- Demonstrate the value of Library collections to student learning and faculty research

Make the Library a great place to be

- Improve the welcoming experience and first impression
- Renovate to better integrate technology with study areas and service areas
- Expand the number of group study spaces
- Create more comfortable study areas
- Expand hours to 24/7 during exam periods
- Upgrade the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC infrastructure of the buildings
- Complete the Thomas H. Kean Reading Room as a premier study and exhibit space
- Build an addition that would create a café, exhibit space, an all-night study area and a mediated classroom for library instruction as proposed in the University’s *Land Use Master Plan* (October 2008)

Advance the use of special collections and archives

- Improve access and preservation
 - Consolidate all special collections and archives in the Methodist Center*
 - Enlarge the Wilson Reading Room to better accommodate the use of special material and improve security*

- Establish endowments for the preservation and development of individual collections*
- Expand digitization of special collections and fragile and archival material
- Promote the use of Drew's most distinctive resources throughout the curriculum and in scholarship
 - Use the anticipated NEH Grant to enlarge the impact of the Dodge Poetry Archive video tapes
 - Process the Byron Collection and host a conference and exhibit
- Establish endowments for a special collections librarian and a university archivist*

Enhance communication with all segments of the Drew Community

- Initiate new ways to solicit user input
 - Conduct frequent focus groups
 - Survey students and faculty/staff at least annually
 - Embrace interactive communication tools such as text, chat, and other social networking tools
- Tell our story more effectively
 - Create a wider variety of content, including video, photos and stories
 - Enlist students to help develop and implement new communication strategies

Empower the Library faculty and staff

- Support strategic goals by rethinking staff skills and responsibilities and reorganizing structures and workflows
 - Provide for flexibility in staff responsibilities/skills
 - Provide for retraining and cross-training options
- Strengthen financial support for professional development

**Campaign for Drew item*

Progress Notes

Strategic planning has not been an exercise divorced from the day-to-day work of the Library. Consequently, the recommendations of *Partnering for Impact* have not been “on hold” awaiting en masse endorsement. Some projects have already been completed:

- Added group study spaces on the main level with large monitors that can be connected to laptops to facilitate work on group projects.
- Added the ability to use our chat reference service through text messaging, and have implemented a mobile-friendly interface link for the most popular EBSCO databases.
- Hired a Library Systems Administrator.
- Became an alpha implementer of the VALE OLE Project.
- Experimented with 24/7 Library hours in December during the Fall 2010 exam period.
- Upgraded the wireless installation. Provided by Computing & Network Services.
- Added a link to the Library’s resources as a default for Moodle course pages. Provided by Instructional Technology Services.

Other projects are in process:

- Ongoing discussion of the desirable balance between print and e-books. Electronic books are already the preferred medium for reference sources, and we have some significant collections of e-books, but we are exploring more.
- Nurturing donors for the capital projects in the Campaign for Drew.
- Began a pilot program of expanded Library support to off-campus students.
- Will survey Drew students and faculty again this spring.