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# Table of Contents

Overview ......................................................................................................................................... 1

Strategic Priorities FY 2014-2017 .................................................................................................... 2
  A. Improving Library Resources ............................................................................................... 2
  B. Transform Access to Research Information ......................................................................... 3
  C. Student Information Fluency .................................................................................................. 4
  D. Ongoing Facilities Improvements ......................................................................................... 5
  E. Library Staff Development ..................................................................................................... 6

Next Steps ....................................................................................................................................... 7
OVERVIEW

This document summarizes key strategic priorities for the UNT Libraries in the FY 2014-2017 period, and will inform planning activities during this time. This document should be read in close conjunction with other associated strategic planning documents of the UNT libraries, including the following:

- 2014 Strategic Plan Alignment Map of UNT Libraries and Academic Affairs
- UNT Libraries Strategic Plan 2011-2015
- UNT Press Strategic Plan 2014-2019

This document lays out the primary directions that the UNT libraries will undertake during the coming four years. It builds on previous work and accomplishments during the 2011-2014 period, and serves as a transitional planning guide for moving beyond the 2011-2015 strategic plan.

The most important priority for the next three years will be the first one listed: improving library resources. Without adequate resources, it is unlikely that progress will be made on the other priorities.
The next four years will be a period of dynamic change for the University of North Texas, and a period in which the UNT Libraries must undertake transformative efforts in providing information services and resources to the campus. The national proliferation of new information resources, tools, and programs means that there are an enormous range of possibilities which could benefit the UNT community; however, we are entering a period in which funding for new library resources will likely be constrained by flat enrollments and other demands. The challenge for UNT to engage with is the prioritization of opportunities and needs in this period. The following represent the most important priorities for the UNT Libraries in this period.

A. IMPROVING LIBRARY RESOURCES

The highest single priority for the UNT Libraries is improving resources. “Resources” should be understood in the broadest sense, as meaning funds, materials, and other kinds of assets. Improving library resources addresses the needs of both faculty and students alike. The following are a summary of the key aims in this priority area.

Targets:

1. Increase the revenue streams that support the UNT Libraries in order to address the needs of the campus: Based on the extensive analyses performed for the president\(^1\), the UNT Libraries are funded at roughly half the level desired by the campus. The most important priority for the UNT Libraries is to aim to increase library revenue streams to the level of our aspirational peers. We have begun to take steps to diversify these revenue streams through two mechanisms: 1) HEAF funds for the purchase of materials are now being received to offset the cost of library benefits which was assumed by the library in FY14, and 2) some colleges (notably the College of Business) have begun to supplement the library budget with funds for the purchase of lesser used research materials. However, both of these two supplemental strategies have so far not increased the library budget in absolute terms, but rather have only served to hold the library budget expenditures level with respect to some materials purchasing categories. The fact that monopolistic publisher prices escalate at super-inflationary rates means that library purchasing declines at a rate of roughly 8% per year, leading to the need for ongoing cancellations in other areas of collection development. This continued hemorrhaging of materials each year is having significant impacts on the research abilities of UNT scholars. We must now move to increase the library budget in absolute terms if we are to reverse this trend while there is still time. If we do not make headway on this issue, we will soon reach a state in which UNT researchers are incapable of conducting research effectively. The previously mentioned 2013 analysis prepared for the president articulates six different strategies for bolstering the library budget with existing revenue streams. Whatever is required to implement a strategy for bringing the library budget up to the standards desired by the campus must be done in this coming period (2014-2017).

2. Acquire major research collections: While the budget constraints of this period are real and pressing, we cannot simply cease to acquire research collections, especially in the case of acquisitions that are time constrained opportunities. Premier collections support both student learning as well as the research needs of scholars. “Collections” here again should be understood in a broad sense, as meaning both analog and digital formats, and acquisition through donations, grant-funded digitization efforts, and commercial purchases. Acquiring and providing access to research collections is arguably the core function of a research library, and is one of the primary features that make a university a destination for researchers. Unique primary research materials and premier purchased collections are the hallmark of top tier research universities, and if UNT is to succeed in becoming a top tier institution we must successfully acquire and make accessible such collections. The biggest priorities in the 4 year period under consideration are to build up the research collections acquired and managed by three divisions of the library: digital libraries, special libraries, and collection management. The digital libraries division is very successful in raising funds through grants, and in fact is ranked ninth in North America currently. Our primary high level goal for this division in 2014-2017 is to achieve an NEH

\(^1\) Halbert, Martin; Hartman, Cathy Nelson & Paz, Susan. **UNT Libraries Budget Increase Analysis 2013: A proposal to increase the budget of the University of North Texas Libraries to meet the needs of the campus.** UNT Digital Library. [http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc333028/](http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc333028/)
challenge grant to solidify its ongoing support. Building on the longstanding strength of the UNT Music Library, the special libraries division has been cultivated in the last five years with the result that it now regularly brings in major archival collections (ex. Resource Center Dallas, Bankston, Clark collections) through donations and occasional major purchases. Major acquisitions currently in progress include the archives of NBC 5 and the Black Academy of Arts and Letters. All of the archival acquisitions are brought in with a mind to fundraising to support the ongoing curation of the collections, and this capacity is slowly growing. Finally, the collection management division is responsible for acquisition and processing of commercially purchased items (ex. subscriptions and monographs). Traditional purchased materials are simultaneously the most easily recognized elements of the library collections, and also the most at-risk due to the monopolistic super-inflationary cost escalations mentioned elsewhere in this document. Until such time as the library budget model changes, we can no longer afford to keep our base collections in this area and are instead adopting a model of annual decision-making based on available funds. The issue of traditional materials purchases is mentioned in several other parts of this document and will be a significant one to grapple with during the 2014-2017 period.

3. **Fundraising:** The UNT Libraries had no history of fundraising prior to 2009, when Dean Halbert arrived and began to build up a library capacity for raising funds through donations. In the past five years, the libraries has raised $2.4M in donations, including $800K in cash and $1.6M in gifts in kind. The library has built a relationship with Advancement and is now co-funding a new development officer position. We must now begin to capitalize on the new fundraising capacities that we have developed. We believe this is possible, especially by making use of the relationships and community engagement efforts that have been enabled by our recent major archival acquisitions, all of which have enhanced the level of connection and engagement with new groups of prospective financial donors. Our most prominent goal in this area is associated with an NEH challenge grant application that we have submitted, and the fundraising goals in the application targets raising $1.5 million for a match from NEH of $500,000.

### B. Transform Access to Research Information

The next four years will be a critical period of change in the landscape of research for both higher education and libraries, in terms of access to research publications. The field has seen decades of proliferation in new disciplines and a concomitant growth in scientific/scholarly publications and the search technologies associated with discovery of information in this burgeoning landscape. At the same time, many of these publications have been monopolized by overseas commercial interests which have thereby been able to charge super-inflationary price increases in double digits for decades. Virtually all universities are now unable to afford to acquire access to the range of commercial research publications represented by their faculty interests. Alternative Open Access models of publication have likewise been proposed for decades which would be directly managed by universities, and thereby constrained in price. We must now undertake the transition from commercial monopolies to higher education management of research publications. The UNT Libraries are uniquely suited to leading transformative change on the campus in this regard, as there is an understanding of both the opportunities and the costs of this transition within the library. Central to this transformative change initiative the UNT Libraries will undertake an educational campaign to meet with the different colleges of the university to foster an understanding of this paradigm shift in scholarly communication and to advance beneficial transitions on the campus and in the larger field.

**Targets:**

1. **Establish a Scholarly Communication Transformation (SCT) initiative:** We must establish a new proactive initiative if UNT is to play a constructive role in doing our part to mobilize change in the scholarly communication cycle. This initiative will build on the success of the campus Open Access (OA) initiative in 2010-2011 which established the first public university OA policy in Texas at UNT, the five years of successful annual UNT Open Access Symposia, UNT digital scholarship efforts, and the scholarly communication efforts undertaken to date to better inform the UNT community on copyright issues. The SCT initiative will not be limited to any of these topics, but will also broadly engage the campus with the systemic issues in the economics of scholarly communication that have been widely understood as a crisis and highlighted over the years by groups such as SPARC [http://www.sparc.arl.org](http://www.sparc.arl.org), authors such as Dr. Paul Courant and Dr. Ted
Bergstrom\textsuperscript{2}, and many other groups. Concretely, the aim of this SCT initiative will be to: a) broaden the awareness of UNT faculty of the current issues in the crisis in scholarly communication, b) directly engage with the associated issues of P&T and publishing quality, c) discuss opportunities and relevant metrics of digital scholarship, d) mobilize UNT faculty to become involved in change efforts, and e) expand on already existing copyright services in the University Libraries to educate faculty, students, library staff, and other members of the UNT Community on copyright issues such as copyright law, the TEACH Act, Fair Use, the SPARC Addendum, and copyright compliance. As we manage the ongoing shortfalls of funds in the library, it will be important to do everything possible to facilitate the transition from commercial monopolies to openly accessible research publications or other strategies for undertaking high quality scholarly communication through sustainable means. If the library is able to take a leadership role in change efforts for promotion and tenure practices on the campus by getting P&T committees to accept new model publications, we may be able to make modest headway on the fundamental issues that have destabilized the current landscape of scholarly communication.

2. \textit{Continue improving discovery and access to research information:} On a more pragmatic level, we will continue to innovate and incrementally improve searchability, discovery, and access to the entire range of research collections held by the UNT Libraries, both licensed and digitized, in both analog and digital formats, etc. The UNT digital libraries division analyzed this issue extensively\textsuperscript{3} and implemented a variety of systems to this end, notably Summon. Continuing to improve online catalog and search capabilities will be an ongoing goal for this three year period.

3. \textit{Aggressively negotiate with publishing monopolies:} The UNT Libraries, like all research libraries today, must begin to reverse the trend of super-inflationary price increases imposed on academia by publishing monopolies such as Elsevier. The National Academies of Sciences article by Courant and Bergstrom cited previously makes this clear, and lays out more aggressive negotiating strategies for libraries to engage with this problem. As contracts with major monopolistic publishers are renegotiated in coming years, the UNT Libraries must begin to deploy these and other appropriate strategies for reducing the costs expended on purchased scientific literature to manageable levels. This may entail losing access to some unsustainably priced subscriptions. The reasons for this selective loss of access will be made clear to UNT scholars in advance through the SCT Initiative described above. Ideally, if publishing monopolies are willing to negotiate in good faith with us, we will not lose access to as much of the scientific literature as might otherwise be the case.

C. \textbf{STUDENT INFORMATION FLUENCY}

Deficiencies in the critical thinking skills of UNT students have been noted in recent NSSE studies of UNT students\textsuperscript{4}, especially in areas related to information literacy. The library has long played an important role in addressing information literacy on the campus. In collaboration with faculty from virtually all disciplines, the UNT Libraries conducts hundreds of bibliographic instruction and information literacy sessions each year. In support of UNT’s avowed goal of providing the best quality education for students in Texas, the UNT Libraries will seek to foster not simply information literacy, but information \textit{fluency} in UNT students.

\textbf{Targets:}

1. \textit{Information Fluency Initiative:} A comprehensive initiative will be established as a way of focusing and orchestrating many distinct library activities that are directed to the ultimate aim of improving the capacity of UNT students for critical thinking and the ability to use information effectively. A key aim of this initiative will be to strengthen core library services to enhance high-impact practices.\textsuperscript{5} Building upon our core services, the

\textsuperscript{2} For a recent article that has highlighted the economic problems in monopolistic publishers, see: Courant, Paul; Bergstrom, Theodore et al. “Evaluating Big Deal Journal Bundles.” \textit{Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.} July 1, 2014, vol. 111 no. 26. \url{http://www.pnas.org/content/111/26/9425}

\textsuperscript{3} Phillips, Mark Edward; Weng, Neena; Thomale, Jason & Hicks, William. \textit{Resource Discovery Systems at the UNT Libraries.} UNT Digital Library. \url{http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc77122/}.

\textsuperscript{4} Simon, Jason. 2013 \textit{National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE): UNT Findings.} Access presentation \url{here}.

\textsuperscript{5} According to the 2013 NSSE Annual Results, high-impact practices (HIPs) promote student engagement and retention. See: \url{http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2013_Results/pdf/NSSE_2013_Annual_Results.pdf}#page=22
UNT Libraries will collaborate with campus student services to promote a student-centered library and increase creative learning opportunities outside the classroom. The UNT Libraries will also work with faculty to create innovative services which enhance student learning and integrate the Libraries as an active partner in the classroom. The Information Fluency Initiative will be closely coordinated with the new assessment program in the UNT Libraries in order to establish clear metrics for monitoring the progress of the initiative in improving student information fluency. The initiative will also coordinate with other relevant campus groups related to student learning success, including groups both inside and outside of Academic Affairs, as well as the campus QEP project (see below). This initiative will coordinate a large number of related activities in the library, including bibliographic instruction program, the new GIS program, digital scholarship efforts, and other related undertakings. The Information Fluency Initiative will have a steering committee with representatives from the library leadership and several other Academic Affairs units, as well as a regularly assessed set of agreed-upon metrics to gauge progress and guide actions.

2. **QEP involvement:** The University is currently in the process of deciding among finalists for a campus Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for student learning enhancement as part of the SACS reaccreditation process. All four of the QEP finalists have expressed an interest in working with the library as part of their efforts. As the process of selecting the final campus QEP project is concluded, the library will move to a collaborative relationship and process with this project. A set of logical goals for library involvement in the campus QEP initiative will be finalized and implemented, and may include space set aside in Willis for this purpose.

3. **Knowledge Visualization Program:** A subsidiary initiative will be established to advance the knowledge visualization capabilities of the extended UNT community in support of and with connections to the Info-Fluency Initiative, the QEP involvement, and several of the facilities projects described below. This initiative will address many of the particular learning needs highlighted by the NSSE data and the opportunities for high impact campus services noted from other leading national institutions. The advent of big data in research and library services brings with it a concomitant for programs to assist scholars in understanding trends and patterns in large data assemblages. The Knowledge Visualization program and an associated new visualization lab will leverage the training aspects of the Info-Fluency Initiative with the makerspace facility to provide the means for UNT students and faculty to examine renderable models of data and designs in both virtual and physical manifestations.

**D. ONGOING FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS**

The 2011 Library Master Space Plan highlighted the need for ongoing incremental space planning, renovations, and construction activities. As the student demand for library learning space has steadily increased in recent years, the UNT Libraries have responded with many new facilities programs (examples include going to 24x7 access at the request of the SGA, and the opening of the Library Forum as a public facility for campus events). The 2014-2017 period holds many exciting possibilities for facilities improvements which will result in enormous beneficial impacts for UNT scholars.

**Targets:**

1. **Second floor renovation:** This project will address the desperate need for additional student study and library service spaces in the Willis Library which was identified in the 2011 Library Master Space Plan. As a culmination of years of facilities planning, the second floor of the Willis library will be comprehensively renovated starting in FY15. This project will make approximately 30K ft² of newly renovated library space available, and is only made possible by the new storage capacities provided by the Research Collections Library coming online two years ago and funding from the campus for recarpeting. The libraries are now engaged in design and planning efforts with the SGA, GSC, and other campus groups on services and facilities to be offered on the second floor of Willis. This project will be coordinated with the campus QEP initiative, the knowledge visualization program described above, and other ongoing space planning efforts. The space redesigns that will be implemented in this project will be developed this year and implemented through incremental steps starting in Spring 2015.

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2. **Makerspace**: The national “makers” movement\(^7\) has seen a tremendous surge in the establishment of library “makerspaces” across the country.\(^8\) Public libraries have led this trend and academic libraries are now moving to quickly catch up in implementing such spaces. The UNT Libraries will open its new makerspace, termed the “The Factory”, in the Fall 2014 semester. Developed with input from several UNT colleges and student groups, the Factory will initially feature a cluster of 3D printers, large format plotters, and high capacity laser printers, together with a collection of microcontroller kits that can be checked out. The library will continue to build the makerspace offerings in this facility over time, with feedback and guidance from our users. We anticipate many new dynamic changes and additions to this facility as the makerspace trend continues to evolve, and as we get additional ideas from collaborating with our users on the space.

3. **Incremental infrastructure improvements**: The library is in the process of studying the many basic infrastructural deficiencies present in the facilities of the UNT Libraries, and prioritizing responses and interventions. In a financially constrained period, this will be a particularly challenging process, but essential to effective and efficient operations and services. The 2011 Master Plan Building Assessment\(^9\) noted many problematic issues throughout the library infrastructure, and especially in Willis. Some new challenges that have arisen since this assessment was completed include the need to finish construction on the Research Collections Library (the office and reading room space at the front of the building have never been completed), and the issue of how to best manage the large off site library collections of millions of items now housed in the Annex and the RCL.

### E. Library Staff Development

The next few years will be an important period for the development of the staff of the library for several reasons. As librarians formally move into the ranks of tenure-track faculty in FY15, adapting to this change and cultivating an enhanced level of professionalism and scholarship among librarians will be an important goal in coming months. Likewise, we cannot forget about continuing to support library staff who are not librarians, and who need opportunities for growth and training. There are a variety of skills in grant writing and assessment that also need to be nurtured.

**Targets:**

1. **Librarians becoming tenure track**: While UNT librarians have for some time had “continuing appointment” status, the proposed new UNT Faculty Review, Tenure, and Promotion policy document will include librarians in the tenure track procedures for the university. The Library began the process of raising the standard for promotion in a new *Procedures for Appointment, Evaluation and Promotion* document adopted in 2012. This process will continue as librarians become tenure eligible. Support for librarians to increase scholarly output include formation of research support groups, hiring of a director for research and assessment to offer advice and guidance, and continuing education opportunities to increase success with research and publishing.

2. **Cultivating a culture of assessment**: The Library understands the need to demonstrate in effective ways our contributions to the success of our students and faculty. To address this need, we began a value assessment program in 2013 that will continue and expand in the coming years. With continuing demands on our budgets, our services and activities must show that they contribute to learning, teaching, and research at UNT. The new director of research and assessment will guide this program working with our Assessment Working Group and other key groups on campus (including the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness) to collect and analyze relevant data. Through this process, the Library will better focus our services and activities to meet student and faculty needs.

3. **Growing staff growth opportunities**: In addition to growth opportunities for our librarians, the Library invests in continuing training for our para-professional staff. We formed a regional library group, the Cross Timbers...
Library Consortium (CTLC) in 2012 to sponsor training opportunities for our staff and librarians. Staff are encouraged to attend and participate in the yearly conferences by presenting and by learning from others. Additionally, the CTLC formed affinity groups for different segments of our staff (such as special collections, access services, reference, etc.) that meet occasionally. Our staff will continue to be encouraged to attend such meetings. We will continue to encourage staff to pursue opportunities for completing degrees or a MLIS as UNT students by allowing flexible work scheduling and awarding staff scholarships to help with tuition costs.

4. Expanding the culture of grantsmanship: Historically, the digital libraries division was our only division to seek and obtain external funding for research and development projects. We seek to expand the culture of grant writing by mentoring librarians in every division to think about external funding for projects. In the past year, our special libraries and our public services divisions have both submitted successful grant proposals, but we plan to increase the number of successful proposals and the number of librarians writing proposals over the 2014-2017 target years through improved mentoring, recognition, and rewards for successes. Additionally, the Library applied to host a Foundation Center and received approval resulting in no-cost acquisition of the Foundation Center Funding Databases, now available in the Eagle Commons Library. Use of this resource to identify additional funding resources in addition to the few federal and state funding opportunities will offer a more diversified approach to our grant seeking.

**Next Steps**

A number of next steps will be taken in FY2015 to transition between the previous strategic planning cycle and the priorities described in this document, as follows:

- **Report on achievements:** A comprehensive report on the outcomes of the previous library strategic plan will be prepared as it is concluded in FY2015. This report will examine each of the goal areas set forth in 2011 and document what was achieved and not achieved. The report will also attempt to comment on the goal areas as originally articulated, in order to improve subsequent planning efforts. Our hope is to continually improve our planning abilities as we move forward. This document will be vetted with other campus stakeholders as it is prepared, just as the original plan was developed in consultation with other units on campus. This capstone report should both document outcomes of the previous plan and inform the subsequent planning efforts that occur.

- **Undertake planning efforts with UNT stakeholders:** Many of the priorities identified in this document must receive more attention in order to be fully detailed. Examples include: planning the specifics of the second floor renovation, the SCT and Info-Fluency initiatives, and specifics of increasing the library resources. All of these priorities will be examined to develop planning processes, and these processes will include various kinds of opportunities for university stakeholders to provide feedback and guidance through focus groups, surveys, online and in-person feedback forms, and any other workable mechanisms that can be devised.

- **Develop transition plan:** A plan will be put together to transition between the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and the coming period. The plan will include transitional hand-offs from the previous goals and new priorities articulated in this document.