



Where Curiosity Leads:
The Duke University Libraries
Strategic Plan, 2024–2029

DUKE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

It gives me great pleasure to share with you Where Curiosity Leads: The Duke University Libraries Strategic Plan, 2024–2029.



It outlines how we will serve a diverse and growing community of library users, while adapting to technological and societal changes that are reshaping higher education and the knowledge economy.

This effort comes as the Duke community is engaged in a yearlong centennial celebration. As we reflect on the university's growth over the last hundred years into a global research powerhouse, we take pride in the ways Duke's libraries have grown and evolved with it. You could say that the story of our next hundred years begins with this document.

Of course, the environment in which Duke students and faculty operate today is immeasurably more complex than it was a hundred, fifty, or even ten years ago. The rapid pace of technological change has always presented libraries with new opportunities to serve our users. But it also requires us to be always learning, adapting, and reworking the strategic goals we set for ourselves.

The title of our plan, “Where Curiosity Leads,” is intended to capture that spirit of continuous learning and innovation. Curiosity is the first step that ultimately leads one to the door of a library. Likewise, as an organization, ours is one governed by a desire to know and an openness to new ways of doing things.

Our plan aligns with President Price's overarching Strategic Vision for Duke, particularly in the ways it focuses on empowering Duke researchers, strengthening the campus community, and partnering with purpose at Duke and in Durham on common goals. It also shares some continuities with our previous strategic plan—“Engage, Discover, Transform”—which established teaching and research partnerships we're still building on, and laid the groundwork for the long-awaited renovation and expansion of Lilly Library, finally getting underway this year.

Along with these connections, our new strategic plan also addresses recent developments in the teaching and research landscape, such as advancements in artificial intelligence, new data sharing guidelines for federally funded research, the expansion of open scholarship, and changes in graduate and undergraduate education at Duke. Our plan contains more detail about all of these themes and how they specifically apply to library collections, services, spaces, and programs.

The strategic priorities, goals, and values that follow were informed by a year's worth of in-depth conversations, surveys, and focus groups with library stakeholders, including Duke undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, university and library leadership, members of our Library Advisory Board, and of course our library staff. Out of that extensive process of engagement and feedback we drew our plan's five main directions, or pillars as we call them, further refined by staff working groups into measurable objectives and tactics. Together they will shape what we deliver and how we will work in the future.

There are many individuals we wish to thank for their contributions, especially those listed at the end. If there is anything we've learned from this process, it's that inclusion and collaboration are not just buzzwords but the surest way to transform lofty ambitions into reality. We are delighted to share with you this next chapter in our journey, and we look forward to reporting on our progress as we go.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Salem, Jr." in a cursive style.

Joseph A. Salem, Jr.

Rita DiGiallonardo Holloway
University Librarian and
Vice Provost for Library Affairs

Mission

We advance the research, teaching, and public service mission of Duke University by providing outstanding collections, trusted expertise, and exceptional service in a welcoming and inclusive environment. We are the intellectual crossroads of the university, empowering scholarship and creativity across all fields of inquiry.

Vision

We foster research and teaching that define a Duke education, collaborations that contribute to stronger communities, and intellectual explorations that inspire deeper connections with the world.

Our Values

- 1. PEOPLE ARE OUR PRIORITY:** We see and respect the whole person, adopting people-centered processes and policies. We regularly seek feedback from those around us, then act on it. We approach our daily work with intention, curiosity, and humanity.
- 2. ACCESS BENEFITS EVERYONE:** We support the broadest possible access to information and regard it as a global good. We are a shared space and common resource, inviting all who come through our doors or find us online to discover, learn, and work with us.
- 3. TRUST IS EARNED:** In a world of disinformation and distortion, we provide reliable information, sound research, and expert guidance. We act with openness and integrity, and we honor the trust placed in us as custodians of knowledge and history.
- 4. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRENGTHEN US:** We rely on diverse experiences, points of view, and backgrounds to make better decisions, advance research, and adapt to a changing world. As an organization and as individuals, we are healthier when we feel like we belong and help others feel the same.
- 5. WE TAKE THE LONG VIEW:** We believe the best perspective is usually the long one. We strive to balance the needs of the moment with opportunities for the future. We steward collections and university resources responsibly, ensuring their long-term preservation and sustainability.
- 6. COLLABORATION IS VITAL:** We can have a greater impact by partnering with others than we can by going it alone. We look for ways to contribute our experience and expertise to achieve common goals, and we collaborate with purpose, commitment, and ingenuity.

PILLAR 1

Build collections, make connections.

Collections are the foundation on which everything we do is built. We will leverage the vast scholarly resources we hold, developing and refining wide-ranging research collections that meet Duke's evolving needs. We will align areas of growth with emerging teaching and research priorities. We will prioritize sustainability and strategic partnerships, preserving and providing access to the scholarly record for users today and in the future.

GOAL 1 – Focus collection development efforts and resources to achieve the dual aims of meeting Duke's changing scholarly needs and building collections of distinction with enduring importance to the broader research community.

GOAL 2 – Explicitly link collecting strategies and decisions to our stated organizational values, emphasizing diversity and investing in a future information landscape that benefits Duke and society at large.

GOAL 3 – Steward library holdings and resources through sustainable collection development principles and lifecycle management practices.

GOAL 4 – Expand access to collections through digitization and enhanced description, connecting researchers around the world with our materials.

PILLAR 2

Welcome, respect, and include everyone.

The free exchange of ideas that libraries make possible can only occur when all individuals feel welcome, all contributions are respected, and all voices are heard. To those ends, we will embed the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) into every aspect of our work—from our collections, services, spaces, and online interfaces to our work culture, leadership, and operational decisions. We will start by listening, to understand the needs of our users and staff. We will use what we hear to make changes, pausing regularly to assess our progress. We will support the Duke Climate Commitment by reducing our carbon emissions and supporting education, research, and engagement around sustainable solutions to the climate crisis. And we will partner within the Duke and Durham communities around shared priorities, living by our shared values as we engage with collaborators on and off campus.

GOAL 1 – Assess our services, spaces, collections, and organization through a DEIA perspective, ensuring that we understand the needs of our users and staff, and holding ourselves accountable for the commitments we make.

GOAL 2 – Identify, engage, and collaborate with partners in other cultural heritage organizations to advance regional and national DEIA programs, particularly those that further diversify the library profession.

GOAL 3 – Ensure that users experience all Duke University Libraries as safe, trusted community spaces, where all are welcome, diversity is visually affirmed, and equitable access is the norm.

GOAL 4 – Uphold a people-centered culture, providing services that meet each person where they are, while encouraging staff innovation and environmental sustainability.

GOAL 5 – Advance DEIA initiatives in existing library committees and working groups, ensuring a supportive approach that secures the progress of our collective endeavors towards inclusive excellence.

PILLAR 3

Partner and plan for the future of Duke research.

Our mission to advance open and equitable access to knowledge makes it vital that we embrace the opportunities and challenges presented by new tools, data, and research methodologies. We will provide a connected set of services that help Duke researchers plan projects, publish and archive their work, manage and visualize complex data, and navigate federally funded research guidelines. We will continuously improve the user experience across our online resources, digital collections, research support services, consulting services, and educational offerings. Investments in these areas are crucial for supporting the research enterprise across all disciplines, from the sciences and engineering to the arts, humanities, and social sciences, especially the exciting interdisciplinary work that defines a Duke education.

GOAL 1 – Advance library leadership in data science, visualization, management, and curation to meet the growing need for support in these areas across the university.

GOAL 2 – Sustain and extend the systems, infrastructure, and digital storage required to collect, preserve, and share scholarship by Duke researchers, as well as our growing digital collections.

GOAL 3 – Employ new tools and strategies to increase the discoverability, accessibility, and visibility of library resources and research support services, addressing the full range of scholarship at Duke.

GOAL 4 – Leverage Duke’s leadership position in open scholarship, digital publishing, and intellectual property to promote positive changes in research policies and practices.

GOAL 5 – Help researchers ethically and legally use emerging technologies to unlock value from vast data sets and online collections, or as the subject of their own research.

PILLAR 4

Deepen and extend outreach and engagement.

We aim to foster, amplify, and showcase the best teaching and research at Duke, increasing its impact both on campus and off. We will share the resources and expertise of Duke’s libraries as widely as possible, through exhibitions, public programs, workshops, instructional offerings, and online content, launching people on their own journeys of discovery. We will refine and strengthen our library brand identity to make our services and resources more discoverable and user-friendly. As we update library spaces to be more inclusive and inviting, we will ensure that users have access to diverse educational and cultural experiences. And we will partner with Duke students, faculty, staff, and other users as they develop the skills to evaluate sources, understand context, manage projects, and become effective teachers, researchers, and learners themselves.

GOAL 1 – Make our library spaces more effective, functional, and engaging for students, faculty, staff, and other learners.

GOAL 2 – Reimagine our teaching and learning programs to support undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty instructors.

GOAL 3 – Communicate and engage with alumni, donors, and the broader Duke community in support of our mission and strategic directions.

GOAL 4 – Refine and enhance library outreach and communications efforts to increase awareness of the role we play for students, faculty, and staff.

PILLAR 5

Invest in organizational wellness.

We will promote engagement and growth for all library employees, realizing that a healthy work environment can foster a deep sense of commitment, personal meaning, and pride. Realizing our ambitions will require investments in our workforce, workplace, and work culture. Our ability to deliver a wide and valued range of library services will depend foremost on our people, including their well-being, job satisfaction, career opportunities, and ability to keep pace with the rapidly evolving nature of library work. We will continue to prioritize our commitments to inclusivity and equity for our staff and ensure diversity of leadership across all levels of the organization. Organizational wellness also means managing our university funding judiciously, allowing us to remain a beacon of innovation and talent among research libraries. To support this work, we will create a culture of assessment and communication around our programming and initiatives, as outlined in the goals below.

GOAL 1 – Prioritize and support professional development opportunities for all library staff that benefit both the employee and the organization.

GOAL 2 – Cultivate a holistic culture of organizational wellness that encompasses mental, physical, and emotional well-being and promotes a sense of staff community.

GOAL 3 – Use data from diverse perspectives to make transparent and engaged decisions about our work.

GOAL 4 – Foster a work environment that is welcoming to everyone, and where anyone can see themselves working, leading to industry recognition as an organization where individuals from diverse backgrounds excel.

GOAL 5 – Steward university funds responsibly, ensuring the financial stability needed to achieve our long-term goals.

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