KALEIDOSCOPE

Visions for Tulane University Libraries



Tulane University Libraries

Presented by Lindsay Cronk

September 26, 2023

CONTENTS

I	Executive Summary	1
II	Mental Model and Metaphor: Why a Kaleidoscope?	2
III	Mission, Vision, and Values	4
IV	SWOT Analysis	6
V	Strategic Goals	8
VI	Feedback and Assessment	10

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an era where knowledge fuels intelligence, transforming our society at an accelerating rate, Tulane University Libraries will be a center for constant renewal. Our plan encompasses a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation, underpinned by a set of core values that guide our actions. **We aspire to be Tulane's knowledge partner: a research and learning destination that enhances campus life, fosters strategic connections, and champions access to advance community equity. By unlocking knowledge, we empower our communities to achieve their aspirations and enable Tulane University to advance its mission.**

This executive summary highlights our vision, values, strategic priorities, and operational needs. We invite your input as we move towards a more compelling and meaningful design and delivery of Tulane University Libraries.

Visionary Approach: We present a dynamic vision for the future of Tulane University Libraries, rooted in a commitment to enriching the academic experience through innovation and inclusivity, and supporting the University's success by enhancing student and faculty experiences.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation: Our plan embraces a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, fostering a unique and vibrant library experience that reflects Tulane's audacious aspirations and the cultural cachet of traditional expectations of the library.

Core Values: Our actions are guided by a set of core values that prioritize delight, empowerment, curiosity, and connection. These values drive our mission and shape our interactions with our service communities, academic and public.

Strategic Priorities: We are dedicated to creating contemplative and experimental spaces, forging strategic partnerships within and beyond the university, promoting open access to knowledge, and harnessing the transformative power of information to support Tulane.

Operational Needs: While recognizing our strengths and opportunities, we also address our weaknesses and threats, ensuring a proactive approach to challenges and a maximization of opportunities for growth.

You're Invited: We invite you to invest and participate in an era of renewal, experimentation, and growth, as we work together to strengthen the Libraries' role in the academic landscape, enhance operational efficiency, and enrich the lives of individuals, organizations, and communities. Together, we can realize the full potential of Tulane University Libraries.

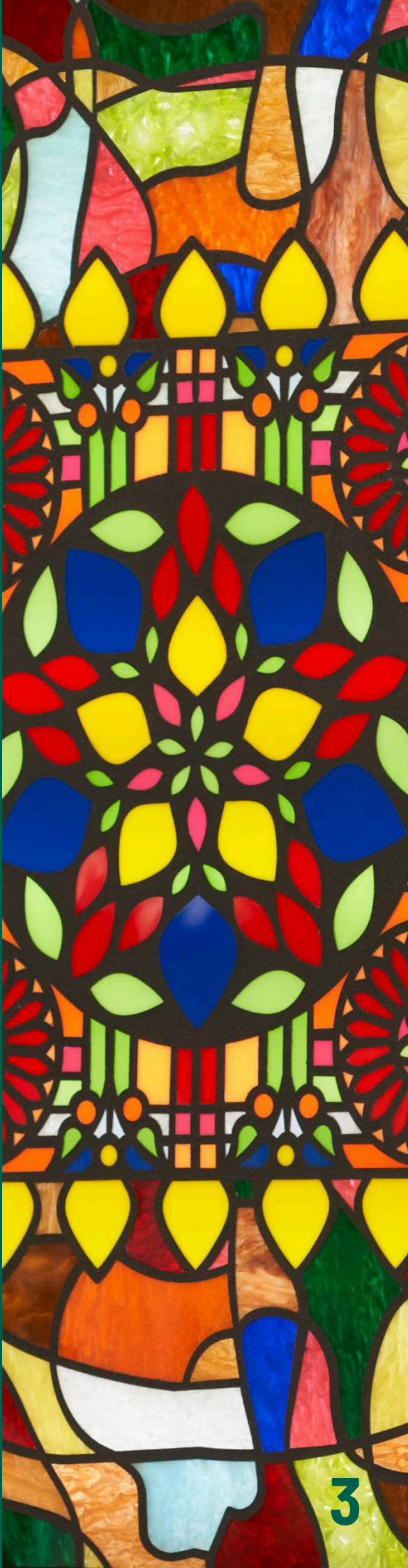
II Mental Model and Metaphor: Why a Kaleidoscope?

An academic library has more in common with a **kaleidoscope** than you might think.

- **Dynamic Perspectives:** Just as a kaleidoscope offers a multitude of ever-changing patterns and colors, an academic library curates a vast array of knowledge, perspectives, and ideas. It's a dynamic set of environments, analog and digital, where diverse academic disciplines converge and collide. Library resources inspire new ideas and help researchers to identify patterns that become new knowledge.
- **Constant Transformation:** A kaleidoscope's beauty lies in its constant transformation, mirroring the ever-evolving nature of academia. Similarly, libraries adapt to technological advances, evolving research methodologies, and changing educational paradigms.
- **Infinite Combinations:** In a kaleidoscope, the possibilities for patterns seem limitless. Likewise, a library provides endless combinations of resources, encouraging students and researchers to explore various avenues of inquiry and inspiration.
- **Enriching Experience:** Just as gazing into a kaleidoscope is to experience quiet wonder, delving into a library's wealth of information can expand one's horizons, deepen knowledge, and inspire creativity.
- **Unity Amidst Diversity:** Despite the kaleidoscope's ever-changing patterns, there is an underlying structure and symmetry. Similarly, libraries serve as organized repositories of knowledge, providing structure and order amidst the diversity of information.
- **Reflection of Society:** A kaleidoscope reflects the world around it through its colors and shapes. Libraries, too, reflect the intellectual and cultural landscape of their institution and community, serving as a mirror of society's interests, values, and progress.

In essence, both a kaleidoscope and an academic library reveal the power and beauty of diversity, transformation, and discovery. At Howard Tilton, our space itself resembles a kaleidoscopic image-- its symmetry and repetition of elements, and in the design conversations ahead, we hope to use this as a visual metaphor for the work we do and the aspirations we will realize.

Academic Libraries are an elegant solution for many University needs. **At Tulane, we are foremost the calm within the Hullaballoo.** As a nexus of knowledge within the joyful cacophony of campus innovation and the premier partner within the university, creating and holding space for students, faculty and staff for assistance in the process of learning and knowledge creation, the library is distinct from other campus resources.



III Mission, Vision, and Values

To jumpstart strategic, capital, and operating planning for the Libraries, we have refreshed our Mission, Vision, and Values. These updated versions connect and amplify Tulane's overarching purpose. We are committed to creating, communicating, and conserving knowledge.

Mission (what we do and how we do it):
At Tulane Libraries, we invite introspection and ignite imagination by forging connections, curating resources, and conserving knowledge.

Vision (aspirational future state):
Tulane University Libraries are a kaleidoscope, reflecting and refracting tradition and innovation. We are committed to Tulane's past, present, and future, and our efforts strengthen the city of New Orleans and support to researchers globally.

Our vision, which balances tradition and innovation, mirrors Tulane's audacious aspirations while also preserving its scholarly record. It speaks to the foundational mission of libraries, extending access, as a continuously evolving practice. In doing so, we contribute to the university's mission of leading with wisdom and integrity to know that we are the stewards of generations of scholars to come. Furthermore, our dedication to achieving balance of disciplines and approaches connects with foundational library principles and strengthens not only the Tulane community but also the city of New Orleans and researchers worldwide, aligning with Tulane's broader goal of enriching organizations and communities.

Our values are also realigned to connect library services, design, aesthetic, and daily work to Tulane's Core Values.

DELIGHT:

Tulane Libraries go beyond mere utility to create moments of happiness and appreciation. As a value, delight encourages meaningful interaction, creativity, innovation, and a deep understanding of the needs and desires of individuals aiming to exceed expectations and create memorable, uplifting experiences.

EMPOWERMENT:

Tulane Libraries deliver enriched study and learning experiences where students and researchers find easy entry into the scholarly dialogue. As a value, empowerment calls for design to address disparities and steward our services to benefit Tulane's communities, the City of New Orleans, and society as a whole.

CURIOSITY:

Tulane Libraries elevate critical thinking, asking questions, experimenting, and continuous learning as essential to personal and collective growth, helping communities to think, to learn and to act and lead with integrity and wisdom. As a value, curiosity promotes innovation, adaptability, and a lifelong passion for discovery, inspiring students, faculty, and community members to delve into the unknown and expand their horizons.

CONNECTION:

Serving as organizing and linking infrastructure within the University, Tulane Libraries links and describes academic, professional, and practical domains to help address collective challenges and seize shared opportunities. We champion attribution, facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration, and promote knowledge integration. We transform the boundaries between academic disciplines into fertile ground for innovation and meaning making.

These library values actively contribute to fostering an inclusive, innovative, and knowledge-driven community, in sync with Tulane's emphasis on inspiring excellence, leading for a better tomorrow, and promoting knowledge for the greater good. Together as a team, with all hands on DECC, we will realize our vision through meeting and setting goals.

IV SWOT ANALYSIS

Following meetings with stakeholders, staff, and users to ask a set of five questions focused on active projects and efforts, this analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats provided a scaffold for considering what strategies and goals could best serve the Libraries moving forward.

Strengths:

- Central Position: Tulane University Libraries hold a central position, both physically on campus and philosophically in terms of upholding the core values.
- Calm in the Hullabaloo: Creativity and collaboration take energy and attention. The Libraries are understood as a space for reflection and quietude, heads down work.
- Expert Staff: Our people are our most invaluable resource.
- Good Neighbors: Tulane Libraries have proven to be a powerful incubator and neighbor space for university initiatives.
- Exceptional Collections: Tulane's collections are truly extraordinary with strengths in areas of particular importance to both local and international communities.

Weaknesses:

- Conservatism: A conservative approach at times may hinder the libraries from fully exploiting opportunities and adapting quickly to changes in the academic landscape.
- Underestimation: Stakeholders presumptions weaken the library's ability to communicate improvements/changes and innovations.
- Budget Challenges: Without an adjustment between the resource and personnel budgets, Tulane's investment in scholarship cannot be properly stewarded nor can the kaleidoscopic potential of the Libraries be realized.

Opportunities:

- Collections as Data: Exploring the concept of “Collections as Data” offers the potential to unlock valuable insights from library holdings, transforming them into powerful research assets.

- Digital Collections: Embracing digital scholarship not only reshapes the library’s role but positions it as a key research partner, fostering transformative research collaborations in an evolving academic landscape.

- Investing in Personnel: We can exponentially expand our impact by unleashing the creativity and supporting the wellbeing of Tulane University Libraries.

- High Impact Scholarship: Tulane Libraries are pivotal in championing open scholarship, contributing to a shift towards impactful publishing practices that resonate with changing academic norms.

- Innovative Learning Spaces: The transformation of library facilities into dynamic, adaptable, and technology-rich learning environments aligns perfectly with Tulane’s commitment to multidisciplinary collaboration. In an age of AI, analog spaces could be a defining feature setting institutions apart.

- Interdisciplinary Bridges: Situated both Uptown and Downtown, Tulane Libraries serve as a bridge between disciplines, facilitating unconventional research by connecting scholars with diverse resources and each other, fostering a collaborative research ecosystem.

Threats:

- Declining Position: There’s a risk of a declining position broadly with changes in information behavior and at Tulane specifically given the dated appearance of library spaces and collections.

- Identity Challenge: Tulane Libraries face challenges in communicating a clear identity and unique value proposition, impacting visibility and recognition.

- Lessening Service: Student and faculty expectations of Library Service are high—without pay equity, service will decline to an unacceptable level.

- Global Uncertainty: The overall operating environment is challenged by global uncertainties, including political, economic, social, and technological disruptions, which can impact library operations and strategies.

V STRATEGIC GOALS 2023-2028

These goals are intended to address feedback and our SWOT analysis and to align with Tulane's Strategy for Tomorrow, moving the Libraries forward through a five year span.

Strategic Goal 1:
Enhance Library Spaces and Collections Action Plan: Invest in library renovations and modernization to create inviting, dynamic, and technology-enabled learning spaces. Curate and digitize collections to align with evolving academic needs and enhance access to unique treasures.

Strategic Goal 2:
Foster a Supportive and Inclusive Library Community Action Plan: Implement comprehensive staff training programs to promote service excellence as an expression of partnership-- emphasizing friendliness, responsiveness, and creativity in interactions with students, faculty, stakeholders, and partners. Pilot and expand initiatives to support students and faculty during their Tulane journey, especially in challenging moments.



Strategic Goal 3:
Elevate Visibility and Collaboration Action Plan: Develop marketing and outreach campaigns to emphasize the library's role as a sanctuary and a global destination for researchers. Strengthen partnerships with academic departments and research endeavors, both Uptown and Downtown, to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and unconventional research.

Strategic Goal 4:
Embrace Digital Scholarship and Open Scholarship Initiatives Action Plan: Expand digital scholarship support services and resources, encouraging faculty and researchers to embrace innovative digital research methods. Advocate for open scholarship practices and contribute to the transformation of scholarly communication.

Strategic Goal 5:
Strengthen Financial Sustainability Action Plan: Address equity asap and align investments with strategic priorities. Proactively manage the Libraries budget to ensure maximum return on investment for the University.

These draft goals are in alignment with the university's strategic priorities, including the Plan for Today and Strategy for Tomorrow. The goals provide an active framework that focuses on fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within the academic community. Through initiatives promoting cultural responsiveness, research excellence, and inclusive learning environments, Tulane Libraries actively contribute to Tulane's commitment to becoming a more equitable institution.

VI Feedback & Assessment

In closing, we appreciate your input on this initial vision. Moving forward, we'll focus on and assess impact, making practices of prototyping and iteration for continual improvement. Tulane Libraries aspire to be the University's kaleidoscope, blending tradition and innovation to better serve our academic community. Your support is crucial in realizing this vision, and we look forward to our collaboration in ensuring that Tulane University Libraries shine as beacons of knowledge, inclusivity, and excellence.