The changing aspirations and expanding research environment at Northeastern University demand that it have a commensurate research library of the same breadth, quality and global stature. This document presents a set of broad initiatives, thrusts, or philosophies that can serve as an agenda for the Library’s next round of strategic planning. The starting point for Library strategic planning is the University’s Mission and its Long Range Academic Plan, with which all Library planning must be consistent.

A particular aspiration of the Northeastern University Libraries should be to attain, within 10 years, levels of information resourcing and service delivery aligned with the benchmark requirements of membership status within the Association of Research Libraries. This goal carries with it significant resource and personnel implications, and would of course need to be addressed and approved by the University's leadership.

Underpinning the Library's strategic directions for the next several years are several broad themes and values to which the Library and its staff adhere:

- User-centricity
- User privacy
- Excellent customer service
- Innovation and creativity
- Preservation of unique knowledge
- Intellectual freedom
- Open access to information
- Diversity and cultural competence
- Sustainability
- Continual assessment
- Deep and extensive collaboration
- Respect for colleagues and co-workers

The following strategic goals are grounded in the context of Northeastern University, especially the institution’s increased emphases on research, international context and practical impact. They affirm the directions that will guide the Library’s work for the next several years and in which context it will develop annual action plans. These strategies must be evaluated and adjusted periodically, both internally and externally, to ensure that the Library through its staff keeps its finger on the pulse of the University and on its various research, teaching, and scholarly communication priorities.
1. **User Experience**
   
a. **Personalized Services** – As the Library moves further into a heavily online information environment, it will need to develop services that both engage with users at the point where they encounter and create information, and also promote new approaches to information and media literacy. This will include a shift towards online tutorials, interactive/intelligent reference guides, “My Librarian” personalized services, and various synchronous and asynchronous means of working face-to-face and virtually with individuals and groups. Personalized support for faculty members and researchers will need to be developed for delivery through new digital scholarship services.

b. **Instruction** – The Library will transition from mostly traditional in-person, class-based information literacy sessions to an instruction program that more closely aligns with University-supported research-based methods, to be developed in collaboration with the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning through Research (CATLR), CPS, academic departments, and other centers of expertise in learning support on campus. These components will encompass media and other emerging information platforms, such as visualization and data based information.

c. **Multiple Modes of Delivery** – The Library will further develop the processes for ensuring that the content it manages is device- and location-agnostic. This might include development of a formal usability testing process, more intense negotiation with vendors (and with ITS with regard to VPN and related technologies), and greater emphasis on mobility as it impacts technology, user preferences, and communication with the Library’s users. At the same time, the Library will explore and support new technologies such as virtual teaching, virtual reality, gesture-based computing, and educational gaming, and develop virtual engagement environments in venues with the greatest likelihood of student uptake.

d. **Promotion and Communication** – In response to needs assessment and market research, the Library will direct promotion toward raising awareness about library offerings, using creative new media and traditional tools. These communications will open a wider space for dialogue with users that the Library can use as inspiration for new programs and services.
2. Research Services
   a. Researcher Engagement – All Library staff are encouraged to more actively engage in the research and scholarly life of the faculty and students, mindful of new approaches to research and scholarship. This extends beyond Research & Instruction (R&I) librarians. Metadata specialists, for example, might work with Northeastern faculty and students helping them prepare their materials for deposition in the Digital Repository Service (DRS) or other appropriate scholarly repositories. Library staff will, in collaboration with Information Technology Services (ITS) and other units, develop and offer workshops on emerging scholarly technologies and tools. In conjunction with its partners in the Digital Scholarship Commons, the Library’s Digital Scholarship Group (DSG) will undertake a program of applied research in emerging areas of digital scholarship and will offer training, project management and other services to faculty and doctoral students in these areas.

   b. Scholarly Communication - The Library will continue to advocate for emerging scholarly communication models, particularly for open access deposit of scholarly output in DRS. It will collaborate with other organizations and individuals to respond to copyright issues such as author rights, fair use rights, and orphan works, and to implement new publishing platforms and services.

   c. Data Management Services – The Library will develop a wide-ranging and flexible data management program that offers a range of services from basic (assistance with grant-writing requirements) and practical (depositing/versioning tools that allow faculty to work with their data in the DRS during their research) to advanced (developing customized data access portals atop the DRS framework).

3. University Expansion & Community Engagement
   a. Campus Expansion – The Library will seek to be factored into all critical University decisions that impact on students and faculty who are located remotely from the Boston campus. In the context of campus expansion and increasingly globalized programs, the Library will adapt to different models for information delivery, provision of information resources, service engagement, and assessment in many areas of activity.

   b. Cultural Competency - The Library will foster the cultural competency of staff members and the organization as a whole, with an emphasis on assuring equally sensitive and appropriate service and civility to all members of the University’s diverse and increasingly international community.
c. **Community Outreach and Engagement** - the Library will adopt a strong, leading position in building partnerships and services with communities beyond the campus.

### 4. Collections and Resources

a. **Electronic Collections** – The Library will continue to work through the implications of its transition from an e-preferred to e-only (with appropriate exceptions) collections policy. As funding permits, legacy print materials will be converted to online versions, preferably as part of a coordinated consortial strategy. Major emphasis will be placed on providing powerful yet intuitive interfaces to digital information, whether “owned” by the Library or not, and on promoting discovery of Library resources wherever users start their searches. Subject to appropriate funding, the Library will also help to support the University's emerging digital humanities, computational social science, and network science programs with the recommendation of digital resources appropriate for data mining, and with general negotiation with publishers to allow data mining of licensed resources.

b. **Demand-driven Acquisitions** – the Library will concentrate on providing access to information which is immediately required by the patron or in direct support of the curriculum, through models such as patron-driven acquisitions, purchase on demand, faculty requests, etc. Local resource-sharing networks and collaborative purchasing will continue to be explored and expanded.

c. **Purchase Models** – the Library will work with colleges and departments to develop hybrid management-based models for the purchase, lease or cost-sharing of major information resources required mostly by one revenue center on campus.

d. **Archives and Special Collections** – the Library will identify and promote specific special collection/archives foci with closer ties to the teaching and research mission of the university and aggressively seek funding opportunities to develop these collections. It will identify interdisciplinary themes in archival and special collections material (e.g. health, social justice) that closely align with the major emphases of the University and promote these to the faculty. It will greatly expand its related teaching functions and integrate materials with class projects. In collaboration with the campus partners and larger Boston community, the Library will create sustainable models for the digitization of the Library's unique resources (and the preservation of originals).
c. Print Collection Management – Over time, much of the remaining print collection will either be transferred to on-site compact storage or be withdrawn in favor of efficient and economical “as needed” access via the Library’s participation in the EAST (Eastern Academic Scholars Trust) distributed repository project.

f. Digital Repository Service – The Library will continue to expand the DRS by more fully engaging the widest possible spectrum of campus constituencies to assess needs and areas for innovation. Through the participation of appropriate library staff, the Library will develop procedures and policies to ensure that a) content is deposited in preservation-friendly formats, with appropriate metadata, and b) all due diligence is given to ensuring the preservation and long-term access to and use of this content. This includes working with ITS on developing auditing systems, storage allocation and business models.

5. Technology
   a. Systems – The Library will continually investigate and implement systems and interfaces that best support its strategic directions, fulfill the research needs and behavioral expectations of its users, and streamline its work. These systems should also support the development of collaborative collection development, technical processing and resource-sharing networks.

   b. Integration – The Library will ensure that its systems (bibliographic, technical, and financial) are integrated with related systems on campus (such as Blackboard and Banner) and external discovery systems.

   c. Innovation and experimentation – The Library’s staff will investigate, develop (as appropriate) and implement cutting-edge software solutions that best meet the needs of its patrons and staff. The Library needs to be technologically responsive and focus on the unique needs of the Northeastern community to determine a road map for sustainable technology, and will develop partnerships with campus and external partners that allow Northeastern to be viewed as a leader in the innovative use of academic and library technology.

   d. Digital Preservation - The Library’s service and research activity around digital preservation will create models for securing the online future of rare and unique items, including the scholarly output of Northeastern University. Through partner projects such as the
Women Writers Project and the Early Caribbean Digital Archive, the Library will secure and maintain digital copies of rare and at-risk texts. Through the DRS, TAPAS, Open Journal Systems, and similar projects, the Library will participate in the development of new publishing and preservation infrastructure to create a more sustainable future for online scholarly work. The Library will provide research project partners with the metadata and preservation expertise and support that gives large digital projects a future.

6. Space
   a. **Rebalancing Library Space** – The Library will redeploy as appropriate space no longer required for physical collections, in order to meet a range of needs, including space for study and to support new modes of collaborative work and knowledge creation.

   b. **Library as Intellectual Center** - The Library will strengthen its role as an intellectual center on campus in hosting performances, workshops, lectures, and exhibits.

   c. **Library as Creative Center** - The Library will provide a central focus with accompanying services for students and scholars producing creative, innovative and artistic work.

7. Staffing
   a. **Realignment to New Work** – The Library will continually review its staffing models and associated workflows appropriate to the context of a modern academic research library. This may include a move to collaborative staffing with other institutions.

   b. **Developing Library Staff** - The Library will develop and encourage a culture of continuous education and improvement, emphasizing project management skills, discipline knowledge, research support, technical, and public service skills as appropriate. A special emphasis will need to be placed on developing new expert skills and positions that properly support research and higher level learning in conjunction with University needs, e.g. GIS coordination, data/statistics expertise, visual resource management. This will require collaboration with academic departments to identify, advocate for, fund, and assess these positions, but will also offer opportunities for these new Digital Scholarship Commons-based services to be melded into the University curricula and research. In addition, the Library and individual staff should seek opportunities for service on campus committees and participation in campus life.
8. Assessment
   a. **Data Gathering and Analysis** – To create an outstanding user experience and support data-driven decision-making that is responsive to user needs, the Library will analyze user preferences and behavior, as well as outside trends and factors affecting library programs and services. The Library must engage users individually and in aggregate to determine unmet needs and identify gaps in awareness about library offerings, and recommend directions for new offerings. The development of a Library component of the University’s Business Intelligence initiative, and collaboration with CATLR and the Office of Institutional Research will be key elements of this effort. A communications component will support continuous feedback with library stakeholders.

   b. **Outcomes and Outputs** - Library Assessment will focus on exploring and strengthening the contribution of Library use to research and to student learning and retention outcomes, and on supporting the cost-effectiveness of library operations.

9. Funding and Development
   a. **Advancement** – to implement these Strategic Directions will require the realignment of existing Library resources. The Library will identify and secure diverse sources of funds or revenue including: intensified identification of new donors, active participation in the University’s Empower Campaign, the exploration of naming and sponsorship opportunities provided by new and existing Library spaces, and the more effective cultivation and development of existing donor contacts.

   b. **Other Funding Sources** – the Library will focus more closely on opportunities for additional funding such as: ongoing identification of grant opportunities, the submission of compelling applications, and successful award outcomes; the negotiation of cost-sharing based on mechanisms available through the Hybrid Management framework; the negotiation of a Library-related indirect costs component of University research grant awards; and other innovative approaches.

10. Cooperation and Collaboration
    a. The Library will further leverage collaborations and partnerships across and beyond the campus in order to improve the delivery and development of services. This will include deeper engagement with
Northeastern partners such as ITS, CATLR, the Colleges, and the University’s other administrative units, as well as with institutional groups such as the Boston Library Consortium and Boston Public Schools, and with project partnerships such as the EAST, Digital Commonwealth, Duraspace, HathiTrust, and VIVO communities.

Revised February 20, 2015