DALHOUSIE LIBRARIES STRATEGIC PLAN

2022–2025

DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

LIBRARIES

Territorial Acknowledgement

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

Message from the Dean of Libraries

The Dalhousie Libraries is a strategic leader within the university. A driver in the use of digital technologies, we are a key steward of the learning and teaching infrastructure, and the champion and facilitator of open access. We provide a platform and create momentum for students, faculty, and staff to achieve their objectives.

Our commitment to the global Dalhousie community includes decolonizing library services and practices, respecting commitments to Indigenous knowledge stewardship, and acknowledging the communities that precede Dalhousie in the space we now live, work, and learn.

Our new strategic plan articulates the numerous and invaluable ways that we as a U15 research library support Dalhousie's *Third Century Promise*, as well as the university's first Digital Strategy.

Dalhousie University's *Third Century Promise* pillars include:

1. Exceptional student experience
2. Inclusive excellence
3. High-impact research
4. Civic university with global impact
5. A foundation for inclusion and distinction

Founded on service excellence, the Dalhousie Libraries takes pride in our contributions to the University and to our broader communities through our commitment to research and student success.

Message from the Associate Dean Planning

The Dalhousie University Libraries Strategic Plan 2022–2025 is a collaborative effort that shares our strategic direction for the next three years.

The Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of library and archival staff, librarians, archivists, and administrators from across a variety of units within the Dal Libraries was tasked with developing the strategy. Consultations with students, faculty, staff, and community members before, during, and after the creation of the first draft provided valuable context and direction. *Please see Appendix A for more about this staff-led process.*

Mission & Vision

Mission

Our mission is three-fold:

- To support teaching and learning through our innovative services and spaces — both physical and virtual — as well as through the dissemination of knowledge in all forms.
- To be active partners in Dalhousie's research endeavours through collaboration, dissemination, and management of information resources and to preserve Dalhousie's scholarly output.
- To provide inclusive and inviting spaces to enable our diverse communities to thrive intellectually.

Vision

We strive to be a leading research library that inspires the creation, exploration, and discovery of knowledge in all forms through user-focused engagement with our diverse communities.

Strategic Priorities

The Dal Libraries' Strategic Plan includes five strategic priorities:

- Exceptional Student Experience
- Inclusive Excellence
- High-Impact Research
- Community and Global Impact
- Strong Foundations

1. Exceptional Student Experience

The Dalhousie Libraries is committed to our students and to service excellence. From first-year students to doctoral candidates, to alumni and other lifelong learners, we strive to provide the range of services and resources to support academic success at all levels and across all disciplines at Dalhousie. Our commitment to an exceptional student experience for all includes providing spaces, services, and resources that enable student success.

Goal 1.1: Deliver excellent services to support learning and teaching.
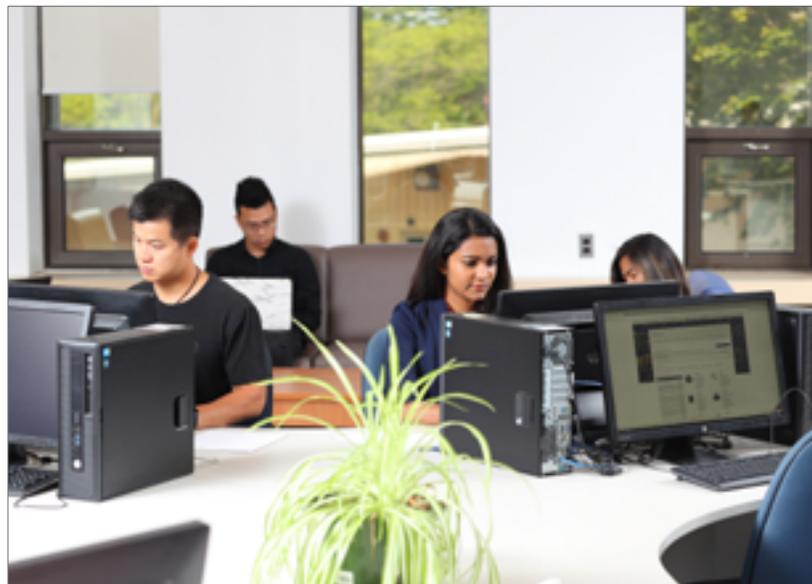
OBJECTIVES

- Create a sustainable and scalable strategy for integrating library-led instruction across the curriculum, ensuring that library-led instruction supports all library users, is targeted to specific courses, and focuses on data and information literacy skills.
- Leverage tools and resources that ensure students have access to reference and research services to support their academic success at their point of need.
- Expand supports for learning and teaching technologies with a sustainable approach.
- Leverage the upgraded library management system to enhance the Libraries' capacity to support the academic mission.

Implementation development

Learning & Teaching team, ATS, Resources & Discovery

Examples

Exploring Leganto for eReserves

Goal 1.2: Provide access to excellent library resources to support learning and teaching.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide relevant, essential, platform-independent, and accessible library resources through ongoing assessment and data-driven development.
- Enhance training opportunities related to library collection development and product awareness for librarians and subject selectors.
- Streamline Libraries' Resources processes related to acquisitions, cataloguing, and electronic resource management.

Implementation development

Resources & Discovery, Subject liaisons/selectors

Examples

- *Ensure U15-level scholarly resources.*
- *Better tools and preparation for subject liaisons/selectors to make the best choices.*
- *More efficient processes for Resources — training for new staff in anticipation of retirements.*

Goal 1.3: Create welcoming, intentional spaces

OBJECTIVES

- Review spaces through a safety and inclusivity lens, considering the needs of persons with (dis)Abilities and library users from diverse backgrounds.
- Assess and renew spaces to ensure we are meeting students' changing academic and technological needs.
- Foster innovation in technology-rich, flexible learning spaces.
- In preparation for a new Dalhousie University Master Space Plan, develop a Dal Libraries Master Space Plan that is user-focused, highlights our expertise, and unifies our spaces.
- Offer new and engaging opportunities on Dal Libraries' digital platforms for students and faculty to create and discover with technology.
- Launch new website that is both mobile-friendly and compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), with a refreshed information architecture and content written with users in mind. Work toward ensuring that all the tools on our website meet these standards.

Implementation development

EDIA, Resources & Discovery, ATS, input from all for space planning.

Examples

- *Decolonized, culturally sensitive, accessible (physical and neurodivergent needs, gender inclusivity), trauma-informed spaces.*
- *Providing "sandboxes" for faculty and students to try out new technology or pedagogical tools.*

Goal 1.4: Ensure we have an integrated system of digital library tools.

OBJECTIVES

- Review interconnection of tools that students and faculty use in the libraries.
- Work towards a unified digital student journey by implementing highest impact system integrations.

Implementation development

ATS, Learning & Teaching, Library Services, Scholarly Communications, Discovery

Examples

- *Digital student journey support for Digital Strategy and Third Century Promise.*
- *SSO/access management for vendor platforms such as Open Athens and Shibboleth.*

---

2. Inclusive Excellence

We are committed to fostering a culture of inclusiveness and respect within the Libraries, where everyone is aware of the value of their contributions. We strive to provide the optimal conditions for all library employees to be able to make essential contributions to the university. Our staff will be representative of the places they work, encouraged to be themselves, and supported so they can reach their full potential.

Goal 2.1: Build a workforce in the Libraries that reflects and serves our communities.

OBJECTIVES

- Use university-gathered data to better understand who we support with our services and to inform our practices.
- Provide library-oriented anti-racist training.
- Continue progress to meet requirements of the Nova Scotia Accessibility 2030 legislation, focusing on our electronic resources and digital presence, as well as services for persons with dis(Abilities).
- Nurture a culture of support within the Libraries for the benefit of all staff.
- Foster support for Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians pursuing information management careers, either directly, or in partnership with other organizations and/or institutions such as CAAL-CBPA.
- Decolonize access and classification by addressing the structural biases in existing schemes of knowledge organization and information retrieval (i.e. metadata in the Archives catalogue, Novanet, and other discovery platforms).

Implementation development

EDIA

Examples

- *Promote and seek out EDIA continuing education opportunities.*
- *Work with Dalhousie University Accessibility Advisory Committee and Facilities Management to implement the accessibility plan.*

Goal 2.2: Deploy our human resources effectively and position the organization for sustained change and growth.

OBJECTIVES

- Review organizational structures to ensure continued agility and the ability to effectively respond to rapidly changing environments and conditions.
- Nurture our culture of inquisitiveness — investing in professional development, mentorship, and continuous learning opportunities.
- Collaborate with regional and consortial library partners to achieve sustainable human resource deployment.
- Celebrate our achievements and communicate to staff and our user community transparently, frequently, and with consistency.

Implementation development
HR, SLT

Examples
Succession planning, continuing education, collaborative work within Libraries, and external library partners (possibly LAC, Downsview, and regional repositories).

3. High Impact Research

The Libraries advance knowledge by actively engaging throughout the research lifecycle, anticipating new and emerging information needs, and encouraging a vibrant research culture.

Goal 3.1: Enrich and build institutional research capacity by providing relevant expertise and access to scholarly content.
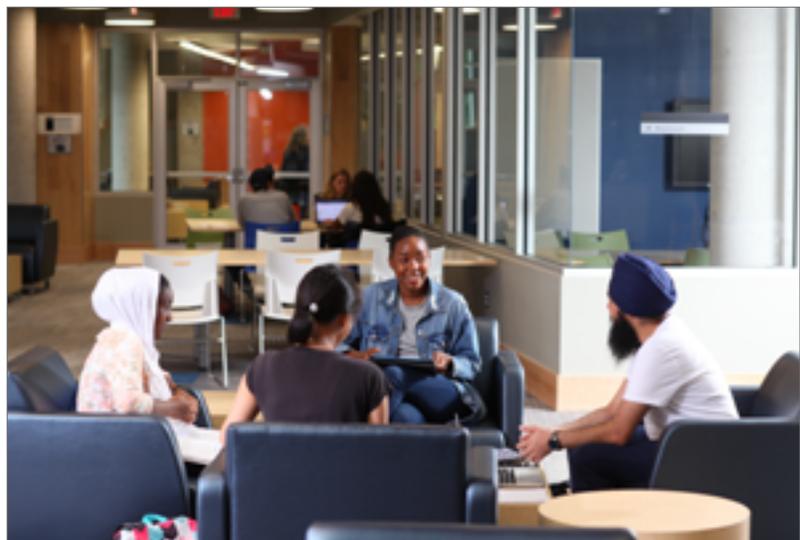
OBJECTIVES

- Promote the Libraries' research services to members of the Dalhousie research community.
- Identify the strategic library resource needs of Dalhousie scholars and seek ways to sustainably provide those resources.
- Engage in partnerships across the university to work on the seamless integration of tools and systems that support and highlight research.
- Lead Dalhousie University to consume and create new knowledge through ethical, open, reproducible, and shareable practices.
- Revitalize our digitization strategy to spotlight the Libraries' resources including special collections, archival collections, and digital repositories.
- Engage in shared print and controlled digital lending initiatives at national and international levels.

Implementation development
Research & Scholarly Communications, ATS, Archives & Special Collections, Library Services

Examples
Refresh digitization strategy, controlled digital lending, telling our story about research services.

Goal 3.2: Lead in the transformation to open scholarly communications and strengthen research dissemination and impact through internal and external partnerships.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness of scholarly and societal benefits of Open Access.
- Strengthen our relationship with the Office of Research Services.
- Build on the success of Cultiv8 and Collider spaces in the libraries; seek opportunities to support research institutes, incubators, and networks across the university.
- Support open scholarship initiatives, platforms, and infrastructure.

Implementation development
Communications strategy for research services.

Examples
Programming with units such as SURGE.

4. Community and Global Impact

Supporting the university's strategic direction as a civic university with global reach, Dalhousie Libraries engages with campus and community partners through the sharing of knowledge and resources, and the provision of services.

Goal 4.1: Enrich the quality of life for local communities

OBJECTIVES

- In collaboration with community partners, explore the development and delivery of library programming of interest to under-served communities.
- Cultivate events and programs that honour Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities.
- Collaborate and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities to co-develop knowledge and be responsible stewards of their materials in our care.
- Collaborate with partners in higher education and GLAM sector to enrich our community.

Implementation development
Library services, Learning & Teaching, EDIA, Indigenous Services, Archives & Special Collections

Examples

- *Off-campus borrowers, International Baccalaureate students, and alumni access to databases.*
- *Indigenous Community Room in Halifax.*
- *OCAP® principles applied to new archival collections, decolonized descriptions in the Archives catalogue, and modifying existing entries as discovered.*
- *Community partnerships, such as the one between our health librarians, Halifax Public Libraries, and the Nova Scotia Health Authority for 2SLGBTQIA+ Health.*

Goal 4.2: Encourage the pursuit of lifelong learning

OBJECTIVES

- Promote and share barrier-free access to resources related to environmentally and socially relevant issues with our external community.
- Investigate, develop, and present information and data literacy learning opportunities to the wider community.

Implementation development
Communications, Learning & Teaching

Examples
Literary events, lectures such as Brutalist architecture, DalOpen.

Goal 4.3: Promote the Libraries' stories, achievements, and value.

OBJECTIVE

- Develop and sustain a comprehensive communication strategy that demonstrates value, builds awareness, and promotes library services, expertise, resources, and spaces.

Implementation development
Communications, Social Media team, SLT

Examples
Social media presence, Dal Magazine/Alumni Magazine, Libraries Annual Report, Today@Dal, faculty communications, and relationships with ORS and faculties.

5. Strong Foundations

With the university and regional communities, ensure the Libraries have sustainable, ethical, and foundational supports to ensure the long-term health of the Dal Libraries, while fostering a culture of continuous improvement and growth and supporting the university's academic mission to the best of our abilities.

Goal 5.1: Sustain the Dal Libraries' growth through engagement with and support from our donors.

OBJECTIVES

- Implement Libraries' capital campaign strategy in partnership with Advancement colleagues.
- Grow relationships with friends and donors through Libraries events and community consultations.

Implementation development
Dean of Libraries, SLT, partnership with Advancement

Examples
- *Capital campaign — designing for future spaces: accessibility (physical and neurodiverse needs), trauma-informed spaces, decolonized spaces.*
- *Engaging our donors with needs to make a better library system — financial, in-kind, endowment agreements.*
- *Foster close and candid relationships with our community to be in tune with their needs.*

Goal 5.2: Build the university's digital capacity

OBJECTIVES

- Reshape existing video conference platforms to enable online and hybrid collaboration for teaching and learning, library programs, and library services.
- Lead the continued implementation of the university-wide records management policy and provide support through services based in the Libraries.
- Contribute to the development of university-wide digital governance (Pillar 5 of the Digital Strategy) to ensure policies and governance structures are user-focused, protect user privacy, and guarantee barrier-free access to information and university services.
- Develop the Libraries' digital preservation infra-structure and services.

Implementation development

ATS, ARMSC (Archives, Records Management, Special Collections), Learning & Teaching team

Examples

- *Supporting the university's digital strategy.*
- *Online learning/hybrid capacities — delivering the best options and content.*
- *Growth of records management (and space requirements of the same).*

Appendix A: Development of the Strategic Plan

Reviewing relevant materials (Spring/Summer 2021)

The Planning Committee reviewed the previous Libraries Strategic Plan, noting progress and considering if any items should be carried to the new plan or removed. In addition, the Coordinator of Assessment produced a number of reports and provided access to a wide variety of data about the Libraries and its users. Reviewing this information was critical in giving the committee a better under-standing of a way forward.

Engaging the library community (Fall 2021)

The Planning Committee engaged the Dalhousie Libraries community by conducting several con-sultation group sessions representing the various units across the library system. Over 60 staff, man-agers, and librarians signed up for group consulta-tion sessions where they responded to a series of questions. Members of the Planning Committee led these discussions and recorded notes. The Plan-ning Committee also welcomed feedback by way of email, an anonymous feedback form, and a survey.

Putting it together (Fall 2021)

Members of the Planning Committee coded all comments collected from the group consultation sessions and any other feedback received to devel-op a list of themes mapped to Dalhousie Univer-sity's *Third Century Promise*. Further information was solicited from the Planning Committee, Library Council, the Senior Leadership Team, and other units who were invited to comment on the draft.

Consultation with Penultimate Draft (Winter 2022)

The close-to-final draft will be taken to Deans' Council, the Dalhousie Research Advisory Commit-tee, the Associate Deans Academic Committee, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, and a special meeting of the Dalhousie Student Union Executive for feedback. That feedback will be incorporated into this document, and a penulti-mate draft will await final input from the new Dean of Libraries when they start their term in August 2022.