Libraries & Learning Strategic Plan

Positioning for the Future: 2025-2030

This draft was completed on Friday, October 17, 2025, building upon the work done in 2024 by the Libraries & Learning Strategic Plan workgroup.

This strategic plan outlines the direction for Libraries & Learning (L&L) as we strive to foster a culture of engaged and impactful teaching, research, and learning across the University of Southern Maine (USM) community. We aim to cultivate empowered users of ideas and information, recognizing the evolving needs of our diverse community and the changing landscape of higher education.

Key Terms

Mission: A statement of L&L's fundamental purpose—why it exists and the core work it seeks to accomplish. The mission defines overall direction and guides everyday decisions and long-term strategies.

Vision: A forward-looking description of the desired future state L&L strives to achieve. The vision paints a picture of success and inspires action toward that aspirational future.

Core Values: The essential principles and beliefs that shape L&L's culture and behaviors. Core values guide interactions, decision-making, and priorities, reflecting what the organization stands for and how it operates.

Priorities: A broad area of focus that reflects L&L's highest long-term importance. Strategic priorities guide decision-making and resource allocation and stem from the library's mission, values, and community needs.

Goals: A specific, measurable outcome which L&L aims to achieve within a strategic priority. Goals define what success looks like and help track progress over time.

Initiative: A concrete project, program, or action taken to achieve a strategic goal. Initiatives are time-bound and actionable.

Mission

To foster a culture of engaged and impactful teaching, research, and learning across our University community, and cultivate empowered users of ideas and information.

Vision

The Division of Libraries and Learning encourages a culture of inquiry by supporting collaborative teaching, research, and learning. Our spaces, services, resources, and programs are welcoming, equitable, accessible, timely, and integral to a successful University experience. We cultivate partnerships that help us anticipate future academic trends to better respond to the changing needs of our diverse community.

Core Values

We value:

- **User-Centered:** We commit to understanding and anticipating the needs of our diverse users, designing services and spaces that foster their success, and providing an exceptional experience.

- **Equity:** We champion an inclusive environment where all individuals have equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities for learning and discovery.

- **Collaboration:** We build strong partnerships within the library, across the university, and with the wider community to create shared knowledge and leverage collective efforts to achieve common goals.

- **Discovery:** We embrace a spirit of curiosity, innovation, and creativity to improve services, address needs, and adapt to change.

- **Knowledge:** We are dedicated to cultivating a culture of inquiry by providing essential resources, expert guidance, and a supportive learning environment that contributes to growth, achievement, and well-being.

Strategic Priorities

These priorities are organized to align with USM's overarching strategic framework: People, Purpose, Place. This framework provides a holistic lens through which to view and advance the USM Libraries' mission, ensuring a balanced and future-oriented approach to serving the university community.

I. People: Fostering Community, Expertise, and Well-being

This pillar focuses on the individuals who make up the library community—students, faculty, staff, and the broader university—and how the library empowers and connects them.

A. **Cultivating a Thriving Workplace & Expertise**: Foster an inspiring, collaborative, and visible workplace culture that supports continuous learning, professional growth, and the well-being of staff across Libraries & Learning.

B. **Strengthening Community Connections & Partnerships:** Build dynamic connections and partnerships within the USM Libraries, across the university, and with external communities to enhance collaborative initiatives and resource sharing.

C. **Enhancing Intellectual Pursuits of Faculty:** Connect faculty with the physical, digital, and human resources to support discipline-based information literacy, research agenda, and course content

D. **Enriching the Student Experience:** Proactively engage with and support USM's diverse students through personalized services, accessible resources, and responsive learning support, fostering a sense of belonging and academic success.

II. Purpose: Driving Academic Opportunities and Information Empowerment

This pillar centers on the core mission and strategic objectives of libraries and learning in advancing teaching, learning, research, and information literacy within the university.

A. **Empowering Teaching & Learning Excellence:** Develop and implement a comprehensive framework for library engagement in teaching and learning, integrating critical information, digital, research, and AI literacies into the curriculum and co-curricular experiences.

B. **Building and Sustaining a Future-Ready Information Collection:** Strategically acquire, manage, preserve, and provide access to a rich, diverse, and evolving

collection of resources that supports current and emerging research, teaching, and learning needs across all disciplines.

C. **Championing Research and Scholarly Communication:** Support the research lifecycle of faculty and students, promoting open scholarship, data management best practices, and the visibility of USM's intellectual output.

D. **Empowering Student-Driven Learning:** Design frameworks, services, and resources that enable effective peer-to-peer learning experiences.

III. Place: Optimizing Dynamic Environments for Engagement and Innovation

This pillar focuses on leveraging and evolving the library's physical and digital spaces and infrastructure to create vibrant, inclusive, and technologically advanced environments that foster discovery, collaboration, and community.

A. **Cultivating Integrated & Experiential Learning Hubs:** Design, develop, and maintain adaptable physical and virtual spaces that facilitate diverse modes of active learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, creativity, and community engagement.

B. **Building Robust & Adaptable Digital Infrastructure:** Develop, maintain, and secure a cutting-edge, scalable digital infrastructure and robust technology platforms. This infrastructure will ensure seamless, equitable access to resources, support innovative library services (including those for the Humanities Lab and makerspace technologies), enable effective data management, and protect intellectual assets for the entire university community.

C. **Enhancing Seamless Digital Presence, Service & Discoverability:** Continuously optimize the USM Libraries' internal and external digital presence (websites, discovery layers, online platforms, virtual tours) to provide intuitive navigation, access the depth and breadth of library resources and services, and enhance user experience. This includes prominently featuring and providing access points for the Humanities Lab, makerspace resources, co-located services, and active learning initiatives.

D. **Valuing the Enduring Significance of Physical Space:** Recognize and champion the unique and indispensable role of the library's physical environment as a foundational element for learning, collaboration, and community building, complementing and enhancing our digital offerings.

Goals

I. People: Fostering Community, Expertise, and Well-being

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
A. Cultivating a Thriving Workplace & Expertise: Foster an inspiring, collaborative, and visible workplace culture that supports continuous learning, professional growth, and the well-being of staff across Libraries & Learning.	1. Identify opportunities for cross-discipline positions to address the changing needs of academic libraries. 2. Increase cross-departmental collaboration and connection within L&L. 3. Resource the Professional Development committee to coordinate opportunities for all L&L staff to participate in professional development. 4. Elicit feedback from at least 50% of L&L staff annually to inform macro planning and decision making.
B. Strengthening Community Connections & Partnerships: Build dynamic connections and partnerships within the USM Libraries, across the university, and with external communities to enhance collaborative initiatives and resource sharing.	1. Develop and implement a structured communications plan to highlight library achievements, impact, and strategic initiatives to key university stakeholders. 2. Develop and sustain at least 1 new formalized external community partnership (e.g., local schools, nonprofits, cultural orgs) annually. 3. Develop and sustain at least 1 new partnership with campus units or internal organizations annually to support shared programming, events, or resource initiatives.

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
C. Enhancing Intellectual Pursuits of Faculty: Connect faculty with the physical, digital, and human resources to support discipline-based information literacy, research agenda, and course content.	1. Develop and implement new best practices for course specific LibGuides. 2. Create and implement a process for assessing faculty needs and Information Literacy session impact. 3. Establish a baseline measure of library resources integrated into undergraduate courses. Use this baseline to set goals for expanded integration. 4. Implement a process to regularly assess and forecast faculty research needs, enabling the library to deliver targeted resources and support.
D. Enriching the Student Experience: Proactively engage with and support USM's diverse students through personalized services, accessible resources, and responsive learning support, fostering a sense of belonging and academic success.	1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of student needs related to library space use—including quiet study, collaborative work, and academic support—and reorganize library areas across campuses based on those findings. 2. Increase student utilization of L&L created podcasts, videos, and other materials by at least 20% by 2030. 3. Increase meaningful student employment opportunities across Libraries & Learning by 20% by 2030. 4. Increase the adoption of OER materials in undergraduate courses by 2030, reducing textbook costs for students and enhancing course accessibility.

II. Purpose: Driving Academic Opportunities and Information Empowerment

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
A. Empowering Teaching & Learning Excellence: Develop and implement a comprehensive framework for library engagement in teaching and learning, integrating critical information, digital, research, and AI literacies into the curriculum and co-curricular experiences.	1. Establish the current usage of Information Literacy (IL) in classrooms, and develop a best model to serve IL needs. 2. Increase faculty participation in library and teaching support programs targeted outreach and enhanced service offerings. 3. Develop and implement standardized workflows and guidelines that integrate research and instruction into the library's changing information literacy framework.
B. Building and Sustaining a Future-Ready Information Collection: Strategically acquire, manage, preserve, and provide access to a rich, diverse, and evolving collection of resources that supports current and emerging research, teaching, and learning needs across all disciplines.	1. Identify and secure a sustained annual budget for collection development and ongoing resource maintenance to align with curricular needs and inflationary cost trends, with annual review and advocacy processes in place. 2. Define and document clear roles, workflows, and communication protocols for collection development across Libraries & Learning units, ensuring 100% staff awareness and adherence through internal training and review. 3. Ensure each collection, including specialized collections, have a strategic plan for managing, expanding, and promoting their collection, including digitization, discovery, outreach, and utilization. 4. Yearly increase in visibility and usage of the USM Institutional Repository.

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
C. Championing Research and Scholarship: Support the research lifecycle of faculty and students and the visibility of USM's intellectual output.	1. Increase faculty awareness utilization of Institutional Archive and Faculty Published Research. 2. Establish new partnerships/access to community-driven, non-commercial Open Access journals to submit/publish work. Promote current access. 3. Clarify and strengthen the relationship with undergraduate research experiences. 4. Provide training and resources on digital humanities tools and methodologies, such as text mining, data visualization, and digital storytelling, to enable faculty and students to create new forms of scholarly output. 5. Integrate and leverage AI-powered research tools that can assist with literature reviews, data analysis, and content creation, while also promoting an ethical and critical understanding of their use.
D. Empowering Student-Driven Learning: Design frameworks, services, and resources that enable effective peer-to-peer learning experiences.	1. Increase the number of unique-student utilization of peer-support services by 20% in the next three years. 2. Increase peer to peer learning resources by 20% in the next year. 3. Integrate Libraries & Learning based resources and experiences into the new FYE framework. 4. Coordinate a University Hour learning series across Libraries & Learning units by summer 2026. 5. Complete a needs assessment for the prospective implementation of a

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
	new Peer Research Assistant service. 6. Expand the number and visibility of student-driven learning experiences such as workshops and study sessions.

III. Place: Optimizing Dynamic Environments for Engagement and Innovation

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
A. Cultivating Integrated & Experiential Learning Hubs: Design, develop, and maintain adaptable physical and virtual spaces that facilitate diverse modes of active learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, creativity, and community engagement.	1. Create a public humanities lab to elicit storytelling, capture oral histories, and showcase films associated with local priorities, concerns, and challenges. 2. Identify a mechanism to measure success of Integrated & Experiential Learning hubs. 3. Create active learning spaces across USM libraries.

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
B. Building Robust & Adaptable Digital Infrastructure: Develop, maintain, and secure a cutting-edge, scalable digital infrastructure and robust technology platforms. This infrastructure will ensure seamless, equitable access to resources, support innovative library services (including those for the Humanities Lab and makerspace technologies), enable effective data management, and protect intellectual assets for the entire university community.	1. Implement an AI-enhanced chatbot to provide entry-level, 24/7 research and learning assistance, freeing up librarians for more complex, in-depth support. 2. Continue to collaborate with University of Maine System (UMSL) and URSUS to expand access to materials through shared resources. 3. All new digital resources and services purchases meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA. 4. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing and prospective institutional repository platforms. The evaluation will focus on the technical compatibility with digital humanities lab outputs, user-centric design and usability, and the strategic allocation of institutional resources.
C. Enhancing Seamless Digital Presence, Service & Discoverability: Continuously optimize the USM Libraries' internal and external digital presence (websites, discovery layers, online platforms, virtual tours) to provide intuitive navigation, access the depth and breadth of library resources and services, and enhance user experience. This includes prominently featuring and providing access points for the Humanities Lab,	1. Design and launch a comprehensive Libraries & Learning site in MyUSM. 2. Integrate the libraries and learning components on the external-facing website. 3. Create a single entry point for all digital services available across Libraries & Learning. 4. Create a single entry point for all shared resources across academic libraries across the State of Maine.

Strategic Priorities	Goals for that Priority
makerspace resources, co-located services, and active learning initiatives.	
D. Valuing the Enduring Significance of Physical Space: Recognize and champion the unique and indispensable role of the library's physical environment as a foundational element for learning, collaboration, and community building, complementing and enhancing our digital offerings.	1. Design an inviting and flexible first-floor space that serves as a dynamic "academic home" for students, promoting a sense of community and belonging, and providing essential support services. 2. Strategically upgrade the libraries' physical infrastructure in order to achieve a modern, reliable, comfortable, and productive learning environment. 3. Optimize the use of physical space on all floors by balancing print collections with distinct "zones" on each floor to cater to diverse study preferences and needs for our learners.

Assessment and Review

L&L will regularly assess its progress toward achieving the goals outlined in this strategic plan through:

- Development of specific metrics to measure goal achievement and initiative effectiveness
- Regular collection and analysis of user needs and satisfaction data
- Periodic reviews of the plan to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness
- Annual progress reporting on strategic priorities and goals

This strategic plan provides a framework for L&L to advance its mission and vision over the next five years. Through focused effort and collaboration, L&L will continue to play a vital role in supporting the success of our students, faculty, and the University as a whole.