

Library Strategic Plan

Version 7

Introduction

The Hekman Library's mission is: "To support the curricular needs and scholarship of the Calvin community by maintaining a relevant and expansive collection of easily accessible resources and offering knowledgeable research assistance and instruction in a hospitable environment." The library's strategic plan (LSP) outlined here takes its direction from that mission, and has been composed to align with Calvin's college-wide strategic plan (CSP). This alignment to the CSP is most evident in the LSP's Themes I and II, although elements of Themes III, V, and VI of the college's plan can also be found throughout the library's plan. In each of the themes and our work of carrying out this plan, it is the sincere desire of the library staff to be part of "[Calvin's] shared mission . . . to guide us through this decade" (CSP, p.1).

The library's strategic plan also addresses a shift in the roles and purposes of the academic library on all college and university campuses today, including here at Calvin. Through a combination of acquisitions and teaching, academic libraries traditionally have provided many of the components necessary for the growth of the mind. But today academic libraries are no longer the sole source of research materials for the intellectual endeavors taking place around our campuses; and therein lies a tension. At Hekman Library we are faced now with these questions: What is essential for an academic library in the twenty-first century; and, what must be added, changed, or abandoned? How we strategically meld the traditional role and purpose of an academic library with the transformative opportunities in front of us informs this plan because success will incorporate both. The following paragraph from the introduction of the college's strategic plan offers guidance for moving forward:

Key to our success will be our commitment to make demonstrable progress in our effort to strengthen, secure, and support long-held commitments to teaching, scholarship, community, diversity, and partnering on a sustainable operational foundation. . . . [O]ur present circumstances require us to think strategically and articulate and pursue measurable objectives, with the goal of ensuring that the College remains rooted in its traditions and mission and that it adapts to meet the challenges and opportunities of changing circumstances (pp. 1-2).

Similar to the goal of the college's strategic plan, the Hekman Library's strategic plan aims to build on our historic mission and to envision and pursue new opportunities:

It assumes that we will continue to do what we are already doing well. It focuses on some specific new initiatives . . . and more effective and systematic measuring of how well we are doing these [traditional tasks and new tasks] . . . A strategic plan such as this one is not a blueprint. It is a framework to help us keep the College [*Library*] on task, both when we have consensus and when we disagree. . . . Between now and 2019, we commit ourselves to new levels of accountability in all of our endeavors . . . (CSP, pp. 2-3).

I. Integrate information literacy into Calvin's educational mission (CSP Themes I.1.b & I.1.c)

The college's strategic plan states that "educating undergraduate students is our core activity" (p. 3). Information literacy, a major aspect of academic librarianship, encompasses many skills that support this core activity. Information literacy has been a long-standing component of the library's mission: "To support the curricular needs and scholarship of the Calvin community by . . . offering knowledgeable research assistance and instruction in a hospitable environment." LSP Theme I represents the goal of the Hekman Library staff to formally embed information literacy into the mission of educating students.

- I.1 Work with relevant college and seminary committees as appropriate to embed information literacy and research skills into the emerging Calvin framework and learning outcomes. [Note: Relevant committees include the Educational Framework Task Force, Core Curriculum Committee, First-Year Experience (FYE) Committee, and the seminary's Committee on Curriculum and Pedagogy.]
 - a. Communicate with the chairs of these committees as appropriate.
 - b. Write a white paper describing model programs, relevant supporting research, etc. to inform discussions of the curricular framework in relation to research skills.
 - c. Identify and propose model learning outcomes associated with information literacy that are appropriate for Calvin.
 - d. Work to integrate information literacy into the freshman-year experience.
 - e. Lead one or two college-wide discussions on the topic. For example, lead a discussion at the Faculty/Staff Fall Conference 2014.
- I.2 Work with interested academic departments in the college and seminary to embed information literacy skills into curricula.
 - a. Identify up to six receptive departments and focus on two annually.
 - b. Work with the Provost to secure targeted small grants, which will support faculty in redesigning courses and/or assignments to advance this strategic direction (CSP I.3.d).
 - c. Develop strategies for librarians to assist departments as they integrate information literacy into their curricula.
 - i. Design workshops for librarians and professors that: In collaboration with professors, define what it means to do research in the discipline; identify the relevant skills and knowledge a student in a particular major should have upon graduation; determine how and where these will be taught in the departments' curricula; and develop criteria and rubrics for evaluating progress.
 - ii. Perform a curricular assessment for targeted departments to determine where information literacy components may fit.
- I.3 Support and strengthen the existing academic librarian liaison program to advance Calvin's mission of education.
 - a. Increase professional development for librarians in this area.
 - b. Enhance and refine non-teaching aspects of the liaison program by restructuring the duties of the library staff.

II. Secure access to the scholarship and institutional records of Calvin College and its constituents

This theme acknowledges the traditional mission of libraries to collect, organize, and disseminate knowledge. Moreover, it is designed to complement Hekman Library's mission: "To support the curricular needs and scholarship of the Calvin community by maintaining a relevant and expansive collection of easily accessible resources . . ." Not only is this theme important for acknowledging the continuing role of libraries in learning, but it also aligns with Themes I, II.2, II.3, II.4, and V.3.a of the college's strategic plan.

Maintaining a healthy physical collection, as well as expanding access to electronic knowledge, is essential for both the mission of education (CSP Theme I) and the mission of scholarship (CSP Theme II). Hekman Library "provid[es] faculty with adequate resources to do scholarship and engag[es] students in faculty research" (CSP, p.5). Additionally, the library's collection is augmented by two special collections: Heritage Hall and the Meeter Center. Together, these three collections provide exceptional resources for all levels of teaching, learning, and scholarship. Furthermore, these collections benefit members of the seminary community, the CRCNA (Heritage Hall), and the international community of scholars (Meeter Center).

LSP Theme II works toward sustainably maintaining the college's institutional capital by upgrading archival functions to a database of digital objects, typically referred to as an *institutional repository* or IR (CSP V.3). The goals and objectives, likewise, support the preservation, promotion, and dissemination of scholarship using the same system (CSP Theme II.4).

- II.1 Maintain a strong library collection that supports the college and seminary. (CSP I & II.2)
 - a. Generate specific percentile targets in response to the college's strategic plan: "Calvin will support Hekman Library so that it compares favorably with peers in key library indicators related to student learning and success" (CSP I.2.b).
 - b. Maintain a robust journal collection.
 - c. Increase the percentage of the budget used to purchase electronic books by 5% annually.
- II.2 Develop an institutional repository (IR) to preserve, organize, and disseminate resources typically deposited into Heritage Hall.
 - a. Create a digital archivist position to oversee the project.
 - b. Consult with CIT to establish a strategy for managing IR data.
 - c. Curate the digitally-born archive records of the three institutions (Calvin College, Calvin Seminary, and the CRCNA).
 - d. Identify and implement best practices for metadata management.
 - e. Partner with all departments affiliated with Heritage Hall to gather, organize, preserve, and disseminate "institutional capital," which will optimize college-wide aims and activities.
 - f. Selectively digitize paper records currently archived in Heritage Hall.
- II.3 Secure the scholarship of Calvin College and Calvin Seminary (CSP II.3 & 4).
 - a. Partner with college and seminary departments to collect digital objects that represent the life of the college. For example, local lectures, *Inner Compass*, the *Banner*, *Acts & Agendas of Synod*, *Making of Michigan*, rare books, and other objects or multimedia.
 - b. Collect and promote faculty and student scholarship. For example, collaborate with the Faculty Research Office and the Honors Program.
- II.4 Partner with the Meeter Center to support worldwide scholarship related to Calvin and Calvinism. (See also VI.1.b).

- II.5 Partner with relevant academic departments in educating students to manage information repositories and analyze relevant data (CSP I.4.d).
- a. Cooperate with the History Department to develop curricular support for a digital humanities course.
 - b. Establish internships in digital humanities and records management.

III. Strengthen library programs and services through outcomes-based assessment

Assessment is a thread running through the entire strategic plan of the college (see especially CSP Theme I.1.c), and it is an expectation of every oversight entity. Success in LSP Theme III will demonstrate how well the library aligns with the college's mission and goals. Meaningful assessment will also either validate the library's efforts or impel us to improve.

- III.1 Participate fully in college and seminary assessment planning activities.
 - a. Cooperate with the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness to integrate the library's assessment data and findings into the college-wide assessment plan.
 - b. Work with appropriate seminary committees to integrate the library's assessment data and findings into the seminary's assessment plan.
 - c. Annually identify a manageable set of library activities to assess, including the measurement of key statistical data regarding collection coverage and collection usage.
- III.2 Develop a culture of assessment among the library staff.
 - a. Establish a team to steer assessment activity within the library.
 - b. Develop a library assessment plan that provides both a set of longitudinal data in selected areas and useful one-off assessment results that can inform program improvement.
 - c. Develop a set of agreed outcomes related to student learning.
 - d. Generate specific percentile targets in response to the college's strategic plan: "Calvin will support Hekman Library so that it compares favorably with peers in key library indicators related to student learning and success" (CSP I.2.b).

IV. Formulate a library master plan for “new or renovated learning space” (CSP Theme V.4)

As the first building constructed on the Knollcrest Campus, the Hekman Library has held up relatively well over the years. But while the librarians have graduated to electronic catalogs, myriad databases, and accessible electronic books, the library’s infrastructure has struggled to keep up. Likewise, millennial students demand around-the-clock connectivity in whatever learning space they find themselves. LSP Theme IV proposes that the library work within the college master planning process in order to formulate a library master plan for “new or renovated learning space in or adjacent to the present library” (CSP Theme V.4). Furthermore, the theme purposefully has the library collaborating with CIT and other academic support units in order to realize shared goals and to build efficiency.

- IV.1 Partner with CIT and other academic support units to develop options and plans related to the library’s physical space for the benefit of students and faculty.
 - a. Form an ad hoc team of CIT and library staff to begin dialogue.
 - b. Begin to experiment with technological solutions within the library space that improve student learning. For example, create a plan to address patron technology needs during hours when the library is open but the CIT lab is closed.
- IV.2 Assess needs and opportunities for optimizing the use of the library building in service to the Calvin community.
 - a. Critically examine signage, way-finding, location of service points, and collection components.
 - b. Conduct ethnographic research to determine where students study campus-wide, to identify the characteristics of good study spaces, and to guide planning for use of space in the library.
 - c. Conduct modest experiments with new configurations of furniture and services in order to study how students respond and to gather data that will inform space planning.
 - d. Work with the seminary to ensure that learning space needs are adequately met for graduate theological education.
 - e. Write a white paper outlining the library’s needs and opportunities related to learning spaces, which will be openly disseminated and discussed.
 - i. Develop a set of principles regarding effective learning spaces.
 - f. Participate in the college’s master plan initiative.

V. Strengthen the library's operational effectiveness

Theme V partially answers the question: How will the library staff accomplish these new initiatives with the same number of staff and the same budget? Mirroring both the concerns and the financial foundation outlined in the CSP's Theme V, LSP Theme V provides the organizational scrutiny that will give the library staff the ability to accomplish the initiatives outlined in the rest of our strategic plan.

- V.1 Monitor and coordinate the implementation of the library's strategic plan.
 - a. Charge the library's Leadership Team with overseeing the implementation.
 - b. Create a communication system to disseminate information so that all staff may participate.
 - c. Develop an ongoing prioritization plan that includes prioritization of the strategic plan's goals and objectives, as well as recommendations for changes that will enable the library to pursue those priorities.
- V.2 Review the library's organizational structure and job descriptions, and implement changes to optimize organizational and individual effectiveness.
- V.3 Develop ongoing workflow and services analyses, taking into account the impact on users, library staff, cost-effectiveness, and priority.
- V.4 Evaluate emerging technological innovations and current technological solutions.
 - a. Improve speed, accuracy, and effectiveness of discovery and access tools for faculty and students.
 - b. Improve standard functions of the library's collection management system (integrated library system or ILS) in support of library staff operations.
 - c. Establish a technology life cycle review for existing systems.
- V.5 Increase support for staff development and training.
 - a. Reallocate current library funds to meet professional development needs.
 - b. Encourage supervisors to aid their personnel in identifying appropriate development opportunities.
 - c. Utilize local expertise, for example, from the library's Technology department and Technology Integration Committee, Human Resources, and CIT.
 - d. Trade expertise with peer institutions for mutual benefit.
 - e. Establish library site visits and conversations with regional library staff.

VI. Establish and sustain the library's partnerships (CSP Theme III.3 & VI)

An excerpt from the introduction to Theme VI of the college's strategic plan explains well why partnerships are important for the library:

The challenges and opportunities in this goal involve sustaining historic ties while deepening and strengthening new ones, locally, nationally, and globally. These goals need not conflict, but they do often involve tensions. How should Calvin [*the Library*] invest the finite resources it has? How does it pursue new relationships without losing sight of sustaining existing ones? This goal is essential in following the College's [*Library's*] mission, and it is practical and self-interested in finding partners to collaborate with and to share the financial burdens of such ties. It involves finding new ways to promote the College's [*Library's*] mission and tell its story and making new practical connections with other communities and institutions. Measuring our progress in this goal involves both empirical measures of success in various kinds of partnership and evaluating how such partnerships continually reinforce and renew the fundamental aspects of the College's [*Library's*] mission (p. 11).

- VI.1 Identify and act upon internal partnerships that can be productive in helping the library meet student and faculty needs.
 - a. Strengthen the library's partnership with CIT by identifying one or two areas of common cause on which to cooperate each year.
 - i. Move the partnership beyond physical space, as described in IV.1 above.
 - ii. Establish regular meetings between library and CIT staff to identify intersecting interests.
 - b. Strengthen the library's partnerships with entities that reside within the library building. For example, the Rhetoric Center, Career Development Office, Meeter Center, and Heritage Hall (see also Theme II).
 - c. Enlist liaisons from the entire library staff to partner with non-academic departments and other programs on campus. For example, Broene Counseling Center, Healthy Habits, and Student Academic Services.
 - d. Work with Calvin's Teaching and Learning Network to educate the Calvin community about trends and issues in scholarly communication. For example, develop ways of informing the Calvin community about the benefits and implications of the open access movement.
- VI.2 Identify and act upon external partnerships that can be productive in helping the library meet student and faculty needs.
 - a. Identify areas of professional improvement where the library staff would benefit from cooperating with external organizations.
 - i. Proactively seek out libraries and other organizations that are receptive to cooperation.
 - b. Improve the library's relationship with feeder high schools in order to bridge information literacy skills, support high school librarians, and contribute to Calvin's recruitment.
 - i. Communicate with teachers and school librarians by leading a workshop at the Christian Educator's Association (CEA) Convention.
 - ii. Reboot the library's former listserv to school librarians as a way to prompt new dialogue.
 - iii. Collaborate with the college's Admissions and Enrollment Departments in order to reach out to common feeder schools to Calvin.

Standardized Strategic Plan Language

It is understood that the words and phrases and the definitions used within strategic plans are not standardized.