Wesleyan University Library Strategic Plan 2016

Mission Statement:

The Wesleyan University Library fosters teaching, learning, and research by engaging with the Wesleyan community in the discovery and exploration of information and knowledge creation.

Introduction:

Academic libraries have long been an integral part of the American higher education experience. In a residential liberal arts college environment with an undergraduate-focused curriculum, like that of Wesleyan University, the close relationship between the students and the faculty, and the resources available through the campus library, facilitated by the expertise of the library's staff, have been a foundational component of student and faculty intellectual interactions. Since the University's establishment in 1831, the library has evolved to become a rich source of wide-ranging materials that have supported the teaching of students, faculty research, and independent researchers. These strong collections in many formats, including the library's legacy collections, as well as unique materials held in Special Collections & Archives and the World Music Archives, all comprise the Wesleyan Library of today. The library and its staff serve as the hub for actively engaging library users with these materials in order to inform and teach them about the collections' significance and their role in intellectual pursuits. While the library most often does this through its own holdings, it also takes advantage of strategic collaborations with other libraries to expand available resources.

Challenges:

The Wesleyan Library of the 21st century is markedly different than in the past. The transition that began in the late 20th century from traditional, physical (i.e., tangible) resources, primarily in the form of books and journals, to a combined collection of physical and ever-growing electronic resources has changed how students interact with their classmates, teachers, the library, and the world at large. The financial and people resources within

the library to support the growing number of information delivery options, however, have not kept pace. Continually expanding electronic resources and the ongoing financial commitments to maintain access to them can cost far more than their physical counterparts, yet these resources are now imbedded in the intellectual academic landscape, and they must be provided to ensure the level of educational quality for which Wesleyan is known. Moreover, to take full advantage of working with these often complementary virtual and physical resources calls for library spaces to be flexibly configured and designed to intellectually engage library users with relevant materials in differing formats.

To ensure uninterrupted learning across the resource continuum, it is equally essential for the Wesleyan Library to preserve its circulating physical collections, its unique materials, and historical archives. By doing so, the library is better positioned to teach its current and future students and faculty about Wesleyan's rich and varied past through the effective integration of these resources into the Wesleyan curriculum and to provide robust research support for faculty. On a holistic level, these collections also serve to exemplify the impact that Wesleyan students and faculty have had and will continue to have beyond the immediate Wesleyan community.

As a result of this complex environment, the Wesleyan Library in the 21st century is challenged in several different but ultimately linked ways:

- How to effectively reach and work directly with Wesleyan students to provide awareness of the wide variety and depth of resources that benefit intellectual growth and how to use them effectively
- How to prioritize and provide robust collections that enhance pedagogical pursuits of faculty as well as support student scholarship within a budgetary environment where resource costs increase at a higher rate than sustainable economic models
- How to staff a library with personnel having the appropriate skill sets necessary to address the best application of rapidly expanding technologies as they relate to the library's role for information access within a higher education context

- How to effectively determine the right mix of resources to address curriculum needs and assess their impact on student learning outcomes

- How to best organize, provide access to and communicate the expanding role of digital collections, including open access scholarship, to the Wesleyan community

- How to provide flexible library spaces that are conducive to learning, foster intellectual collaborations, and are technologically rich to promote active engagement

- How to highlight resources and materials unique to Wesleyan to the larger world and provide appropriate facilities to incorporate their physical and digital manifestations into the academic work of students

- How to take advantage of changes in technology to improve internal workflows and communication within the library, and use staff time effectively both internally and externally throughout the campus community for the enrichment of Wesleyan students and faculty

The economic uncertainties and digital transitions that higher education and libraries within that context are facing are unlikely to subside or be resolved in the near future. In recognition of those trends, the library upholds the following precepts:

Values:

Community, Diversity, and Inclusiveness: Wesleyan University Library serves as the information hub for the campus, and it endeavors to provide unimpeded access to its resources within the Wesleyan community and to the larger world. The library welcomes all information seekers and researchers at all levels to work with its collections and encourages taking advantage of working with highly knowledgeable library staff in the pursuit of intellectual growth. The library seeks diversity in its staff by hiring personnel from a variety of backgrounds who are well-educated, highly-skilled, enthusiastic, and service-oriented. Hiring opportunities are used to evaluate current and future needs of users and library long-term goals in the broader context of University priorities. The

library targets opportunities for staff for further professional development on campus and through professional organizations.

Innovation and Experimentation: The library inculcates a culture of innovation and experimentation with regard to the presentation of library materials, library services, and outreach to the Wesleyan community. New initiatives are regularly evaluated and used as opportunities to apply assessment concepts regarding expansion or improvement, as well as to re-energize or launch new processes. The library explores and is open to new ideas that benefit the Wesleyan community and practices flexibility and creativity in its approach to services as well as resource collection and discovery. The library encourages and enables its staff to explore, plan, and pilot new ideas and experiment with new services and workflow models to improve services. The library remains flexible and responsive to environmental changes in technologies, collections, and campus priorities to allow for reassessment of its people resources in order to ensure that critical needs are matched with the right staff in providing exemplary service. Librarians and support staff are open to new approaches and ideas in facilitating organizational and workflow changes, including potential adjustments in responsibilities that expand their own knowledge and ultimately benefit library users. The library does not assume status quo.

Stewardship: The library recognizes and acts proactively within a sustainable economic model to acquire, curate, and sustain the library's collections for present and long-term, future scholarship. It stewards its physical collections for long-term preservation in order to protect Wesleyan Library's deep historical resources. It supports the scholarship and teaching missions of the University by investing in its people and appropriate technologies to allow for robust and facile collections discovery. Concurrently, the library has a keen awareness of the need to preserve digital assets and utilizes available technologies to preserve its digital resources for present and future scholars.

Teaching and Learning: Wesleyan University Library is a place of ideation, teaching, research, and learning. Librarians actively participate in the educational experience by collaborating and partnering with faculty in

campus-wide teaching and in curriculum planning that utilizes library resources. The librarians teach students to use digital and physical library materials effectively to develop the life-long learning skills needed to become effective global citizens. The library serves as the nexus between scholarly communication and pedagogy by providing avenues of access to all materials, including the expanding universe of digital sources.

Library as Place: The library offers secure physical and virtual spaces that allow for intellectual exploration, collaboration, and creation of new knowledge among all its users. The library partners with University stakeholders to plan and provide appropriate library spaces, physical and virtual, that are conducive to intellectual growth, promote the incubation of new ideas, and allow for active engagement with people and their use of the library's wide-ranging collections in order to demonstrate the integral link between the learning process at a liberal arts university and the library's role in that experience.

Professionalism and Service: The library provides stellar service to the wide diversity of students and faculty in all research and curricular endeavors by understanding there are a multiplicity of effective approaches to learning. Library staff is responsive to user needs and prioritizes addressing the resource needs of the Wesleyan community with the purpose of supporting the curriculum of its students and faculty. All members of the library staff demonstrate the utmost respect in working with library users and treat fellow library staff with collegiality and courtesy. Library policies are clear, known to all staff, and are consistent across the entire organization. Moreover, the library recognizes the importance of sharing its staff's expertise within the library profession and strongly encourages library outreach on a regional and national level to convey professional knowledge and explore new practices that benefit the Wesleyan community in its educational mission.

Collaborations: The library seeks on-campus and off-campus collaborators in order to broaden the reach and expand visibility of library staff in campus initiatives where library input is valuable and in order to offer the widest variety of resources and library programming possible to the Wesleyan community at sustainable financial levels. It maximizes its existing external collaborations (e.g., CTW, HathiTrust) to offer appropriate

collections for the education of its students and the research pursuits of faculty. It seeks to bring talented personnel from other institutions to work with Wesleyan library staff and other campus stakeholders in supporting academic and scholarly pursuits where common interests exist. It explores new partnerships and collaborations to sustain and expand its physical and virtual collections.

Scholarly Communication: The library understands the rapidly changing environment of scholarly communication and how the continued and unrestricted exchange of information benefits the larger world. The library seeks partnerships with authors, publishers, and information providers to address the need to create a sustainable financial model for publishing and information dissemination while preserving the rights and the freedoms granted by copyright law to academic institutions in print and digital publishing models for purposes of teaching and scholarship. The library takes a leadership role in partnering with appropriate University stakeholders in discussions regarding the future of open access and its role in the Wesleyan educational experience, including the incorporation of open educational resources where possible and when they are suitable in the curriculum.

Wesleyan University Library 3-5 Year Strategic Goals:

Community, Diversity, and Inclusiveness: Library staff turnover in the next 3-5 years is expected. The library will use these opportunities to reorganize as appropriate to create efficient workflows while incorporating goals for library staff personal growth and broader campus priorities. It will work with Academic Affairs and the Vice President for the Office of Equity & Inclusion to actively seek a diverse pool of candidates for librarian positions in areas of University mutual interest and priorities such as assessment of learning outcomes, data, outreach, digital/scholarly communication, and Wesleyan's unique special collections and archival materials.

Innovation and Experimentation: The library will establish a library cross-departmental innovation committee to create a rubric to evaluate cost versus benefit of proposed projects, to assess projects in relation to overall strategic goals, and after identifying funding sources, pilot those initiatives that have the potential to improve

the user experience. As needed, the committee will work with other campus departments in the evaluation and assessment of proposed projects.

Discovery, Stewardship, and Collections: The library will evaluate, select, identify funding, and implement new software interfaces as appropriate for its physical and digital collections for the purpose of effecting wide audience reach under the condition that benefits outweigh costs. The library will collaborate with Information Technology Services to perform due diligence including systems support where needed. The library will devote resources to inventory, assess, catalog, and properly preserve legacy collections aligned with curriculum.

Teaching, Learning, and Library as Place: Library representation will be part of the campus curriculum planning process through the Educational Policy Committee within three years. The library will be a deliberative part of the faculty hiring process by being apprised, prior to hire, of needed resources to support the pedagogical interests of faculty candidates or being apprised in a like manner when new campus programs are being proposed in order to determine if resources are in place. The library will pursue the funding of an architectural plan to design physical spaces conducive to the use of Wesleyan's unique collections as well as flexible classroom and study spaces that promote active learning.

Professionalism and Service: Library policies will be reviewed and updated to ensure that policies are consistent in all library locations and expectations are clear with regard to personal interaction with colleagues and all library users. The library will develop sustainable, funded programs for outreach to the Wesleyan community and the library community at large to convey staff expertise.

Collaborations: The library will partner with key campus stakeholders (e.g., Information Technology Services; Office of Corporate, Foundation, and Government Grants; Center for Pedagogical Innovation) to fund projects in the library that will enhance the educational experience of students and faculty. It will partner with Connecticut College and Trinity College to coordinate collections policies and to consider workflow changes that will benefit all three libraries. The library will seek collaborators within CTW as well as institutions beyond CTW for digital

projects (e.g., Oberlin Group). It will pursue and fund memberships in consortia or organizations beyond the CTW consortium (e.g., EAST, HathiTrust, Center for Research Libraries) to expand access to library materials that fit the Wesleyan curriculum.

Scholarly Communication: The library will partner with Academic Affairs in facilitating a campus conversation and solution to serial publishing models that require article processing charges, in informing the campus community about open access alternatives for publishing scholarly output, and in educating faculty about open educational resources to address student concerns regarding high textbook prices.