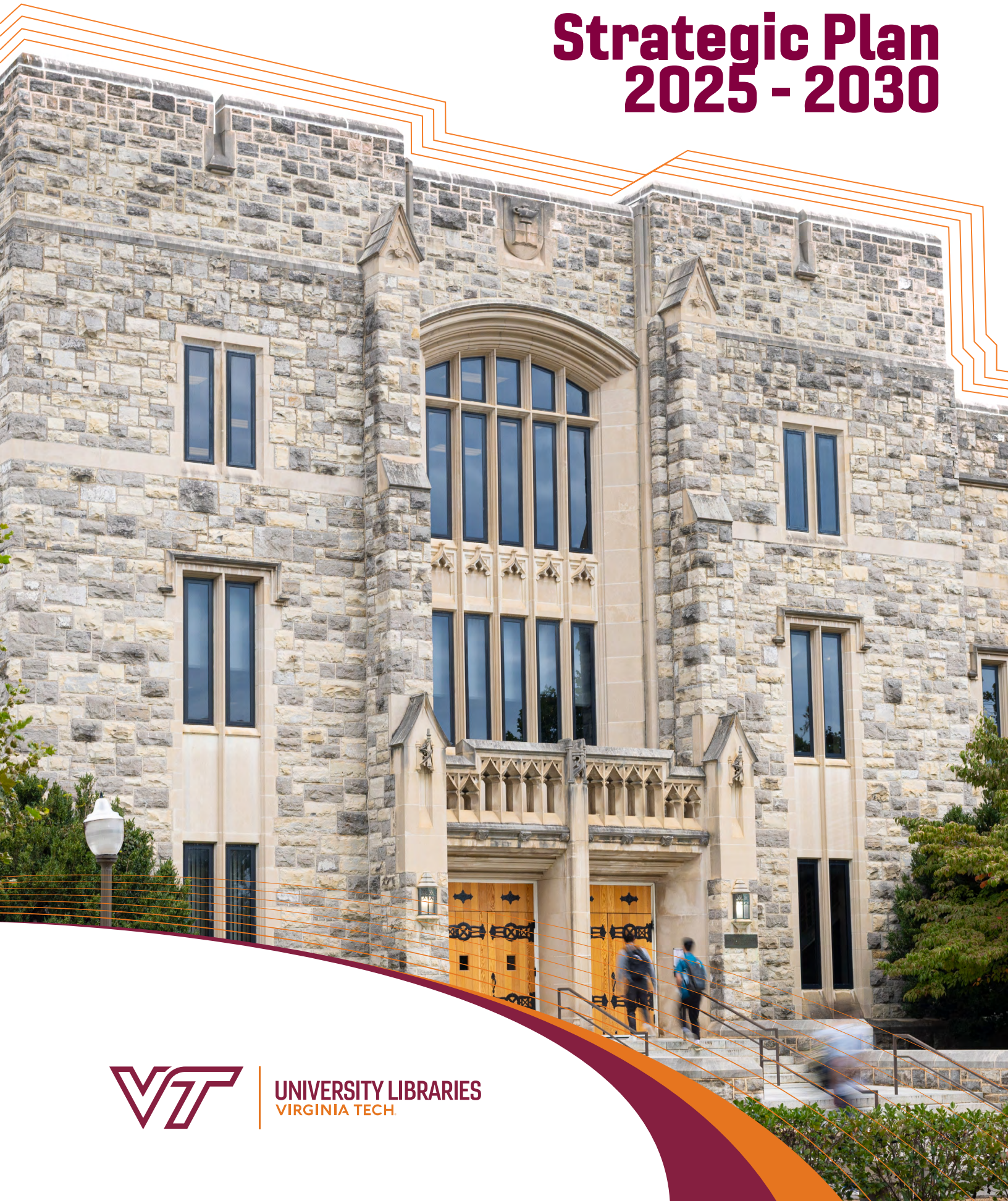


# UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

## Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
VIRGINIA TECH.



# INTRODUCTION

## Mission

We enable people to cultivate ideas, develop capacities, and create knowledge. Users do this through University Libraries' provision of collections, expertise, services, and environments.

## Vision

We aspire to transform the way people experience knowledge. We do this by providing new ways to discover, access, create, sustain, and share information. The Libraries aim to advance learning and research by enabling new types of questions to be asked, new forms of scholarship to be produced, and previously unimaginable problems or solutions to be explored.

University Libraries at Virginia Tech is entering a new strategic planning cycle following the 2020-2025 plan. As we look to the future, our goal is to increase our impact on the Virginia Tech community and beyond while ensuring that every employee sees how their contributions shape this impact.



This five-year plan aligns with Virginia Tech’s institutional priorities, specifically:

## Global Distinction

“Virginia Tech Global Distinction is the university’s commitment to empowering impactful research, scholarship, and creative activity. The initiative enables faculty to serve collaboratively as a force for positive change by prioritizing infrastructure that supports the creation of, enables connections and collaborations with, and elevates awareness of scholarly activities. The initiative does this to create the best environment for faculty to feel supported in their scholarly activities, and to accelerate both the breadth of interdisciplinary and the depth of single-disciplinary scholarly activity for the benefit of the academy.” Source: [Virginia Tech Global Distinction](#)

## Virginia Tech Advantage

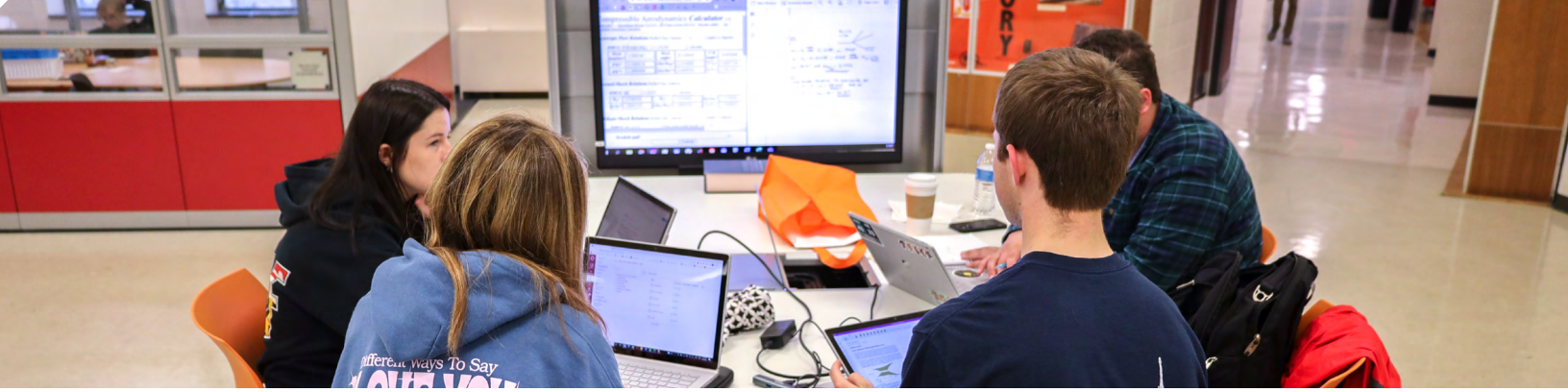
“Virginia Tech Advantage is a university-wide, multi-year commitment to offer a broad educational experience to undergraduate students from Virginia who have financial need. The initiative is composed of four support strategies: providing a significant amount of new scholarship money and financial aid to reduce unmet financial need and increased support for students’ basic needs, career preparation, and transformational learning experiences such as study abroad and internships.” Source: Virginia Tech Advantage

## Internal Priorities: **Building Capacity, Engagement, and Belonging**

While our first two priorities address the broader goals and strategic initiatives of the library, we have also made a deliberate commitment to developing priorities that center on our employees. These priorities focus our attention on enhancing the work environment, supporting professional growth, and improving the overall well-being of our organization.

In 2024, University Libraries established the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SSC) to develop a comprehensive five-year strategic plan aligned with Virginia Tech’s institutional priorities. The committee included senior leadership, two members from the Office of Strategic Affairs, and additional library employees with expertise in data, metrics, and publishing.

The committee’s task was to ensure that the strategic plan is grounded in the needs and aspirations of University Libraries. Taking an appreciative inquiry approach, we sought to identify our strengths and explore how we can build upon them while aligning with the broader university strategy.



# PLANNING FRAMEWORK

## Guiding Principles

**THE GUIDING GOAL** was to prepare an aspirational strategic plan through an inclusive approach. University Libraries Dean Tyler Walters tasked Director of Organizational Development Eric Glenn and Senior Associate Dean and Director of Scholarly Communications Julie Griffin with providing recommendations for a process for developing the Libraries' 2025-2030 strategic plan. The Dean's Group formed a Strategic Planning Steering Committee in October 2024 to work with Virginia Tech strategic planning experts Lauren Pollard and Jaida Smith in the Office of Strategic Affairs to facilitate the drafting of the plan, and to establish Subcommittees focused on university priorities: Global Distinction (Research and Scholarship), chaired by Assistant Dean and Director of Research Collaboration and Engagement Ginny Pannabecker, and Virginia Tech Advantage (Student Success), chaired by Associate Dean of Academic and Creative Engagement Patrick Tomlin. Dean Walters, as chair of Steering, encouraged Subcommittees to utilize an "Appreciative Inquiry" model in preparing reports for the plan (Hammond, 2013), and the Steering Committee to develop an aspirational 5-year plan to serve as a guide for the Libraries' divisions and departments in setting priorities and establishing annual goals.

## Planning Methodology

Our strategic planning process was grounded in Appreciative Inquiry, following the principles outlined in *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* by Sue Annis Hammond. With this strengths-based approach, subcommittees dedicated to Global Distinction and the Virginia Tech Advantage developed reports that served as foundational documents for their work. These reports helped shape the direction of our work by centering our strategy on what we do best and how we can build upon those successes. An essential component of the process was stakeholder engagement. We sought input from both internal and external sources to ensure that our plan reflected a broad range of perspectives. The strategic planning team gathered feedback from the internal library community through more than 17 stakeholder conversations facilitated by Lauren Pollard and Jaida Smith, as well as an internal survey and external stakeholder sessions with faculty, staff, and students. The data collection sessions included:

- Internal Focus Groups: Facilitated discussions with library employees to gather deeper insights.
- Internal Survey: Engaged library employees to capture staff perspectives.
- External Focus Groups: Collected feedback from departments and units outside of University Libraries.

The steering committee considered stakeholder feedback and identified the thematic areas most critical to University Libraries' success in the coming years, which would inform the strategic plan.

Together, these efforts have created a balanced and inclusive foundation for strategic planning, one that values our strengths, listens to our stakeholders, and challenges us to grow in alignment with our mission and values.



# VIRGINIA TECH ADVANTAGE

**AS WE ALIGNED OUR WORK** with Virginia Tech Advantage, University Libraries sought to define goals that strengthen our role as a vital partner in student success. These goals reflect our mission to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and champion broader access to learning. By emphasizing welcoming spaces, student-driven exploration, and open access to innovative technologies, we connect directly to Virginia Tech’s commitment to preparing students for life and leadership in a rapidly evolving world. The Libraries’ goals of providing critical spaces for learning, positioning the Libraries as a hub for transdisciplinary exploration, and advancing broader access to resources and expertise demonstrate how our work contributes to building a thriving academic community and supporting the university’s mission.

## **Goal 1. Provide Critical Programs, Spaces, and Technologies for Learning**

**Strategic Fit:** University Libraries is committed to removing barriers to student success. Our spaces, programs, services, and technologies aim to foster and encourage all modalities of learning, whether formal or informal, collaborative or individual. University Libraries help students build a sense of belonging and community, provide support that extends beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, and offer a platform for fostering connections.

### **Objectives:**

- 1. Support Academic Growth & Research Excellence**  
Strengthen the library’s role as a trusted academic partner by enhancing access to authoritative information resources, creative technologies, and digital and AI literacy support services.
- 2. Facilitate Exploration & Discovery**  
Expand opportunities for both formal and informal learning through curated programming, openly accessible collections, interactive exhibits, and technology-rich spaces.
- 3. Ensure Welcoming & Inclusive Environments**  
Maintain and improve library spaces to be accessible, safe, and affirming for all students, supporting open dialogue and a range of learning modalities.
- 4. Connect Campus Communities**  
Foster partnerships with academic departments, student organizations, and learning communities that position the library as a central hub for collaboration.

## Goal 2: Trusted Hub for Student Innovation

**Strategic Fit:** By offering access to emerging technologies, a diverse range of learning spaces, and experiential learning opportunities, the Libraries help students achieve their goals both within and beyond the classroom. Our work also contributes to the development of critical future-readiness skills, such as digital literacy and AI fluency, as well as the fostering of hands-on problem-solving. In short, we prepare students for a rapidly evolving future.

### Objectives:

- 1. Empower Creative Exploration**  
Provide students with freely accessible emerging technologies and expert guidance to support hands-on experimentation and innovation.
- 2. Enhance Career Readiness**  
Offer internships and employment opportunities that build practical skills and prepare students for professional success after graduation.
- 3. Support Undergraduate Research**  
Facilitate student-led research through services like Databridge, ARIES, and the Project Design Studio, promoting inquiry, academic growth, and career-readiness.
- 4. Expand Co-Curricular Learning**  
Develop and promote transcriptable experiences that complement academic programs and foster holistic student development.
- 5. Serve as a Trusted Academic Resource**  
Continue to be a reliable source for meeting students' information and research needs, supporting both formal learning and personal exploration.

## Goal 3: Remove Barriers to Student Success

**Strategic Fit:** Providing students with collections and open educational resources (OER), which are zero-cost resources, supports access to knowledge and contributes to Virginia Tech's global educational footprint. University Libraries help students avoid significant educational expenses and promotes fairness in access to learning.

### Objectives:

- 1. Expand Access to Zero-Cost Learning Materials**  
Promote and provide open educational resources (OER), including textbooks and software alternatives, to reduce financial barriers for students.
- 1. Deliver Comprehensive Collections**  
Ensure access to a robust, research-level collection of databases, datasets, journals and books, and streaming media.
- 2. Champion Accessibility and Usability**  
Align library resources and services with best practices in accessibility to support all learners effectively.
- 3. Equip Students with Creative Tools and Technologies**  
Maintain and grow the lendable equipment program, providing freely accessible spaces equipped with up-to-date technologies and well-trained staff.
- 4. Offer Personalized Learning Support**  
Deliver expert instruction and consultations across modalities, meeting students where they are.



# GLOBAL DISTINCTION

**AS VIRGINIA TECH ADVANCES** its global research activity, University Libraries pursue goals that embed library expertise in the research lifecycle. These goals address the infrastructure that preserves and disseminates scholarship, the methods that support the use of data and evidence, the practices of publishing and engagement, the integration of emerging technologies such as AI, and the development of students as researchers. Through this work, the Libraries position Virginia Tech’s scholarship within durable, interoperable, and accessible systems that support collaboration and visibility across disciplines and borders.

## Goal 1. Partnerships for Research and Scholarship

**Strategic Fit:** Collaborative and reciprocal partnerships within and beyond Virginia Tech strengthen research capacity, advance interdisciplinary and societal impact goals, and ensure the Libraries’ role in institutional planning, funding, global reputation building, community embeddedness, and creative research and scholarship endeavors.

### Objectives:

1. **Engage in ethical, reciprocal, and long-term relationships**  
Engage with university and external partners in academia, community organizations, industry, and funding agencies in collaborative research and authorship, scholarly publishing, curation and preservation, and public engagement initiatives.
2. **Collaborate in strategic partnerships**  
Foster transdisciplinary networks, team science, interdisciplinary research, and large-scale proposals. Expand research capacity and infrastructure by building connections, providing methodological expertise, and supporting shared tools and workflows that advance Virginia Tech’s priorities and global reputation.
3. **Partner in institutional systems and strategy**  
Enhance open access, community engagement, and impactful knowledge sharing with the Office of Research and Innovation, TLOS, Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness, and others through collaborative and leadership roles in areas such as faculty activity reporting, research impact metrics, research information systems, data governance, as well as research infrastructure and support.
4. **Assert active leadership in shaping national and global research infrastructure**  
Participate in governance roles, advisory boards, and professional coalitions focused on scholarly communication, open science, and digital infrastructure. Use these positions to advance shared infrastructure, open standards, and policies that support sustainable, interoperable, and accessible research ecosystems.

## Goal 2. Research Infrastructure

**Strategic Fit:** Library-managed infrastructure supports Virginia Tech’s research visibility, compliance, and preservation, therefore advancing global rankings, promoting open access, and fostering local-to-global engagement. These platforms and collections create the university’s core scholarly infrastructure and provide essential tools, data stewardship, and reputation-building capabilities for institutional and societal impact.

### Objectives:

- 1. Sustain and expand scholarly infrastructure**  
Support research visibility, access, compliance, and long-term preservation by sustaining and expanding infrastructure for scholarly communication, digital libraries, metadata systems, open repositories, research databases, and library collections.
- 2. Provide interoperable research information systems**  
Link Virginia Tech researcher outputs to research infrastructures by providing interoperable research information systems that are compliant, accessible, and align with institutional goals.
- 3. Lead adoption of emerging technologies**  
Adopt emerging technologies in research analytics, data curation, and scholarly communication that align with funder mandates, institutional priorities, and global ranking frameworks.
- 4. Preserve and expand access to cultural, archival, and scholarly materials**  
Support spaces and platforms that assist research, teaching, cultural memory, and community engagement to preserve and expand access to cultural, archival, and scholarly materials.

## Goal 3. Research Methods Core

**Strategic Fit:** By embedding expertise in research methodologies in library services and initiatives, including data education, data management, evidence synthesis, creative design and prototyping, collections and archives, and responsible AI, University Libraries strengthen research rigor, collaboration, transparency, reproducibility, and funding competitiveness while advancing inter- and transdisciplinary scholarship and experiential learning.

### Objectives:

- 1. Expand and provide expert, agile, researcher-centered support and methodological services**  
Assist in strengthening research design, reproducibility, and research funding proposal competitiveness by expanding and providing research-centered support and services in areas such as: evidence synthesis, data analysis and management, computational methods, research impact and intelligence, and digital scholarship.
- 2. Expand and coordinate research skills training**  
Expand and coordinate training in research skill areas such as data education and training, Carpentries leadership, and library-led instruction in data analysis, visualization, and responsible AI.

- 3. Expand library-supported access to collaborative and domain-specific research software**  
Maintain cost-effective, sustainable, and well-supported tools that meet the needs of researchers across disciplines.
- 4. Continue developing studio-based and virtual research environments**  
Foster prototyping, immersive media, and creative method development for researchers, collaborative teams, and students' course-based projects to continue to develop studio-based and virtual research environments.
- 5. Foster innovative library-conducted and library-partnered interdisciplinary research**  
Provide infrastructure, time, and collaborative structures for library faculty and staff to engage in grants, methodological innovation, and publication.

## Goal 4. Publishing and Engagement

**Strategic Fit:** Library-led publishing amplifies Virginia Tech's visibility and alignment with global research frameworks through open access, peer-reviewed, and multimodal scholarship that advances public engagement, compliance, and alignment with university impact rankings.

### Objectives:

- 1. Expand Virginia Tech Publishing & Press**  
Expand Virginia Tech Publishing & Press into a leading platform for open-access, peer-reviewed, and multimodal scholarship that aligns with global research impact frameworks.
- 2. Further develop the foundation for university press status**  
Sustain publishing capacity, editorial services, and faculty education on scholarly publishing practices to continue to build the foundation for university press status.
- 3. Support faculty, students, and research teams**  
Support faculty, students, and research teams in producing high-quality publications, including books, journals, OER, and digital editions.
- 4. Advance public-facing and experimental publishing**  
Facilitate multimedia, collaborative, and nontraditional formats that serve both local and global audiences.

## Goal 5. Student Experiential Learning

**Strategic Fit:** Library-based experiential learning provides student-centered research-focused roles within library services, initiatives, and partnerships that produce tangible project outcomes and strengthen student research skills, academic outcomes, and career readiness to align student development with Virginia Tech's global distinction goals and research productivity.

### Objectives:

- 1. Provide research-aligned student-centered roles**  
Provide undergraduate and graduate research assistantships, internships, and student employment that integrate across library initiatives and research partnerships.

2. **Offer formal training tied to real project outcomes**  
Enable students to contribute meaningfully to library initiatives and to library-, faculty-, partner-, or student-led research.
3. **Support interdisciplinary research engagement**  
Support interdisciplinary research engagement through areas such as: creative studios, digital scholarship, informatics, evidence synthesis, and project collaborations from local to global.
4. **Continue to develop the Libraries' partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Research**  
Develop partnerships with university offices to align student research-focused experiential learning with curricular and co-curricular programs and expand research skills training and experiences.

## Goal 6. AI Fluency, Experimentation, and Practice

**Strategic Fit:** The Libraries are a trusted site for responsible, exploratory, and practical engagement with AI across the university, where faculty, students, and research teams critically engage with emerging AI tools. Through research partnerships, instructional programming, and operational development, the Libraries contribute to the university's technical fluency and scholarly competitiveness while maintaining a commitment to transparency, reproducibility, and ethical practice. This work deepens institutional understanding of emerging technologies and builds institutional capacity for innovative, impactful, and ethical use.

### Objectives:

1. **Develop and sustain services and training**  
Help students, faculty, and research teams critically engage with AI in research, instruction, scholarly communication, and publishing.
2. **Establish University Libraries as a site for exploratory, scholarly use of AI**  
Establish the library as a site where researchers, students, and library personnel collaboratively test, evaluate, and document applications of AI in research, publishing, and digital collections.
3. **Conduct applied research on AI systems**  
Conduct applied research on AI systems in scholarly and library contexts, with emphasis on classification reliability, information retrieval, and structuring, describing, and synthesizing content from digital library collections.
4. **Advocate for fair, AI-permissive licensing practices** that enable Virginia Tech researchers to lawfully engage in text and data mining, model training, and large-scale content analysis, as digital scholarship increasingly depends on machine-readable corpora, and restrictive licenses pose a structural barrier to innovation.
5. **Integrate AI into University Libraries' operations and services** to advance discovery, metadata quality, evidence synthesis, and scalable scholarly publishing.
6. **Build capacity to understand, use, and assess AI tools and methods**  
Increase library-wide capacity by supporting learning, experimentation, and internal knowledge-sharing to ensure that faculty and staff can critically engage with AI systems and shape their use in library practice.



# INTERNAL PRIORITIES

## Building Capacity, Engagement, and Belonging

**LEARNING FROM THE PAST**, one of the strongest pieces of feedback we received, both during this cycle and in prior planning efforts, was the importance of developing a plan in which all employees feel engaged and see their role in shaping the future of University Libraries. To honor that, this strategic plan places intentional emphasis on building capacity within our workforce, strengthening employee engagement and retention, and expanding opportunities for collaboration and innovation. These priorities ensure that our employees remain aligned, supported, and empowered to make a meaningful impact on University Libraries and Virginia Tech as a whole.

This commitment also reinforces our mission: to enable people to cultivate ideas, develop capacities, and create knowledge. When our employees are engaged and equipped to thrive, they are best positioned to provide the collections, expertise, services, and environments that allow our patrons to succeed.

### Goal 1. Strengthen Campus & Community Connections

#### Strategic Objectives:

1. **Fund campus projects that align with Virginia Tech’s mission and strengthen collaboration across departments.**
2. **Expand collaborative partnerships with university partners**  
Build library visibility and shared impact through collaborative partnerships across the university.
3. **Promote Ut Prosim and the Principles of Community**  
Embed service and community values into outreach initiatives that connect University Libraries with students, faculty, and the New River Valley community.

## Goal 2. Cultivate Ideas

### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Reinvigorate collaborative library grants**  
Increase opportunities for employees to generate ideas by providing collaborative library grants.
- 2. Enhance employee participation in collaborative grant proposals**  
Encourage library employees to participate in collaborative grant projects.

## Goal 3. Empower Library Employees for Success

### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Emphasize library employee professional development**  
Formalize professional development expectations for all employees, including wage staff.
- 2. Ensure access to professional development opportunities**  
Prioritize free and accessible training for staff and wage employees to ensure access to professional development opportunities.

## Goal 4. Develop Capacity

### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Improve the employee intranet**  
Ensure that the library intranet serves as a reliable and up-to-date hub for information, communication, and resources.
- 2. Promote a culture of transparency and accessibility**  
Create consistent internal communications.
- 3. Expand internal and external knowledge sharing**  
Increase the number of articles, guides, and documents available.

## Goal 5. Employee Engagement and Retention

### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Encourage library employees to pursue innovative projects and share ideas**
- 2. Grow the library's professional development budget**  
Annually grow the library's professional development budget and ensure funds are consistently and fully utilized.
- 3. Align employee retention to the national average**  
Use intentional strategies to increase retention.
- 4. Strengthen University Libraries' well-being**  
Explore employee needs and foster a positive work culture.