FY15-16 Strategic Planning Staff Survey Report

Executive Summary
As an initial step in the UT Libraries FY15-16 strategic planning process, a survey was sent to all library staff to elicit feedback that would contribute to the refinement/creation of mission statement, values, and vision statement. These three aspects of strategic planning are core to the process and provide a foundation for further planning.

There were 105 total responses to the survey, for a response rate of approximately 49 percent. The text responses were analyzed using basic coding techniques in NVivo to identify predominant themes. This report details the results.

The survey asked questions pertaining to the following areas of strategic planning:

- Mission Statement
- Values
- Future Trends
- Vision Statement
- Additional Comments and Questions

Key findings include:

- A majority of respondents (63%) feel our current mission statement reflects our core purpose to some extent, but several comments expressed that the statement could be expanded. Comments also expressed concern that those outside of UT and unfamiliar with UT’s slogan might not understand the connection.

- The top-rated values, chosen from a provided list, were (in descending order): service, collaboration, knowledge, innovativeness, and a tie between stewardship, excellence, and diversity.

- The most commonly cited future trends related to the areas of technology, collections, and the continuing relevance of libraries and librarians.

- Respondents asked to envision a successful future for UT Libraries spoke of an organization that is responsive to rapidly changing technologies; successful in collaborating with researchers, campus partners, and the wider community of Knoxville and the state of Tennessee; managing storage issues creatively and effectively and providing innovative and inspiring user spaces; inclusive and respectful with an internal atmosphere of support for professional development, innovation and excellence; and leadership, both among libraries and the university, in the areas of developing information products and solutions, Open Access, creative responses to funding issues, community engagement and staff development.

- Other comments expressed a desire for a transparent strategic planning process and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in and contribute to this process.
Mission Statement

The first question of the survey asked: "In strategic planning, the purpose of a mission statement is to state our core purpose or the fundamental reason we exist. The UT Libraries' current mission statement is: We empower Big Ideas. How well does this statement reflect your understanding of our mission or core purpose?"

One-hundred and two respondents answered this question and fifty-seven made an additional comment.

![Bar Chart]

**Figure 1. How well does our mission statement reflect our core purpose?**

The majority of respondents who answered this question (63%) felt that the current mission statement, "We empower Big Ideas," reflects our core purpose very well or perfectly. (Figure 1). Comments, however, illuminated this finding somewhat, pointing out that there was not a more neutral option between "Very well" and "Very little." A number of comments like the current mission statement as far as it goes, but feel it needs something more and may be less than clear to people outside the university who are unfamiliar with the current UT slogan, "Big Orange, Big Ideas."

A word cloud of the comments on this question illustrates some of the major themes related to how we might expand the mission statement. (Figure 2).
Figure 2. Word cloud of comments on mission statement.
Values

The question related to values asked: "In strategic planning, the purpose of a values statement is to state our core values or what we stand for. These values define the guiding principles we will follow as we go about meeting our goals. Please choose the 5 words from those listed below that represent your understanding of the UT Libraries’ most important values."

Ninety-four respondents answered this question and thirty-nine made an additional comment. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Many respondents expressed in the comments that it was difficult to select only five from among the choices. Some suggested other words that were not among the choices and some expressed concern or confusion over whether these were meant to reflect values that we actually currently practice as an organization or that are aspirational.
Future Trends

This question asked: "Things are changing rapidly, both in libraries and in higher education. In your view, what are the most important trends, events, and developments that will continue to impact libraries in the future?"

Eighty-eight respondents answered this question. The majority of responses to this question fell into three broad categories: technology, relevance, and collections.

Library spaces, Open Access, and funding were also trends identified as likely to have an impact in the future. These are discussed in more detail in the responses to Question 6.

Major themes in the responses include:

Technology
• Many (39) of the responses to this question regarding technology expressed a need remain up to date with technological advances. Particular advances included app and mobile technology, discoverability tools, and computers and equipment.
• Tech savvy staff was also a common theme.
• Respondents expressed concern that advances in search engines and the availability of resources online would dissuade users from believing the library and librarians are relevant to their academic pursuits.

Collections
• There was a major emphasis on digital collections and electronic resources and how those are changing the definition of what the library is as a place.
• Some respondents felt we should de-emphasize our print collection in favor of focusing on digital collections (35). Whereas others wanted the print collection to remain a priority and de-emphasize our dependence on e-resources (5).

Relevance
• Many (23) comments expressed a concern for the continued relevance of librarians, library services, and even higher education in general.

Vision Statement

This question asked: “In strategic planning, the purpose of a vision statement is to define where we are headed. It is a statement about what we want the future to look like. A vision transforms the organization. A good example of a vision statement is the University’s goal to become a Top 25 University. It’s not a roadmap, but rather a picture of the destination you want to reach. It helps set priorities and facilitates goal setting and planning. Keeping in mind the trends and developments you just reflected on, pick a time 5 to 10 years in the future and imagine UT Libraries has been wildly successful. What would a press release to the media about our success include?”

Seventy-six respondents answered this question. The majority of these responses fell into six broad categories: collaboration, library spaces, research, leadership, open source, and civility.

Technology
• A majority of the comments to question 6 relating to technology fell along the same lines as those to question 5. (Please also see innovation below)
• The automation of services making librarians unnecessary ("Virtual Holographic Librarian")
Partnerships and collaboration

- Respondents are happy with the emphasis on forming partnerships within the library and among university departments. They would like to see a continuation and expansion of these efforts.
- A large number (40) of respondents expressed the need and desire to partner and collaborate with outside partners within the community such as high schools, public libraries, parks, museums, and social services.
- As a result of lower funding from the state, some respondents felt that corporate partnerships and collaborations would be a benefit to the library as well.
- In addition to library faculty producing research literature there is also an interest in collaborating with researchers in other disciplines as partners in research, rather than simply playing a supporting role.

Space (Library as place)

- A large number (40) of respondents saw the need for versatile and collaborative spaces throughout the library. These included researcher commons for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty, collaborative study areas, increased dining options, maker spaces, and more laid back “living room” type spaces.
- Some respondents were also concerned with a lack of space, and the need to reconfigure physical collections in order to accommodate new multipurpose spaces.
- Storage of physical collections was also a common theme.
- There were also a few respondents who would like to see plans for a renovation of Hoskins library.

Research

- Ten respondents cited a greater emphasis on undergraduate research as a trend that would affect how research collections will be developed.
- Respondents felt that the Libraries should be producing research both on their own and in collaboration with those in other disciplines, in addition to playing a supportive role for university researchers.
- Others would like to see the Libraries become incubators of research in which all aspects of the research process are completed through the Libraries’ services, spaces, resources, and expertise.

Funding

- As stated in question 5, respondents are concerned with a decrease in funding and increasing costs of resources.
- Ideas were proposed on possible ways to raise funds for the library including the development of ILS, discovery tools, and other software programs. A greater focus on development (donors) was another suggestion.
- Careful budget planning in the wake of decreased funding and more complex purchasing and licensing models were also common themes concerning this question.

Innovation and Risk-Taking

- Interest was shown in the possibility of the Libraries developing software for in-house use to eventually license to the library community.
- Respondents would like to see an environment within the library that encourages innovation and risk-taking.

Leadership

- Lead other libraries, university departments, and be leaders in the community.
- The retirement of library leadership and university leadership could drastically change the way the university and libraries are administered and the direction they are going.
- Respondents would like to see more open communication and a more civil environment for new ideas.
- Participants proposed more professional development opportunities supported by the library administration to encourage and motivate staff.

Open Source

- Participants felt strongly that Open Access would affect the future of libraries and scholarly communication, but did
not get very specific about how this will affect that future.

- A few participants felt that eventually UT Libraries should make its resources readily and freely available to a wider group of users including those outside of the university and possibly even to a global user base.

Civility and Inclusion

- Participants would like to see open communication and inclusion and for the administration and tenured faculty to encourage risk-taking and innovation within the library.
- The development of a better sense of community, tolerance, and courtesy.
- One respondent summed up many of the concerns in this area well:
  “To move in any direction towards implementing “big ideas” we need to first make sure that we offer a welcoming, energetic and open environment for proposing them. If there is a way for us to ‘plan’ to be more open as a faculty and to feel more empowered, regardless of our rank, I would love to see it be a part of the strategic plan.”

Services

- Providing high quality services and materials was a predominant priority respondents wanted to include in the strategic plan.
- Some expressed concern that the continuing increase in digital services affects the level of service being provided to our users.
- Others recognize a shift in the expectations of users that services be more on demand and remotely accessible and felt we should be adaptable to these changes.

Outreach and Information Literacy

- Participants want to see a continued emphasis on instruction and acknowledge that the changing demographic of students and their increased expectations will affect how this type of instruction will be delivered.
- A continuation and expansion of our outreach and marketing to the university and to the larger community.

Additional Comments and Questions

A final question asked: “Do you have any other comments or questions about the strategic planning process?” Responses were primarily positive with most comments expressing gratitude for being included in the process and many expressing the desire for transparency throughout the process.

- Respondents would like to see more transparency in the strategic planning process and wish to provide insights and feedback throughout the process.
- Many respondents were grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the process and present their ideas and feedback.
- A few respondents expressed concern that we follow whatever strategic plan we develop in order to achieve our goals, and hope that strategic planning would not be merely an academic exercise.