INFORMING OUR FUTURE:
THE ZSR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
Z. SMITH REYNOLDS LIBRARY | July 2024

The Z. Smith Reynolds Library's Strategic Framework was developed to support the vision articulated in _Framing Our Future_, Wake Forest University's Strategic Framework. Our Framework also follows the mission of the Library:

Mission: The mission of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library is to inspire learning, advance knowledge, and build community at Wake Forest University. We accomplish this by providing resources, opportunities, and spaces that connect students, faculty, and staff to information, each other, and the wider world.

The Library is dedicated to improving diversity, equity, and respect among our staff, students, collections, and services. We strive to overcome historical and divisive biases in our society and embrace diverse points of view as assets to the fabric of our community.

We used an inclusive process designed to gather information from students, faculty, staff, and the ZSR Board of Visitors to help inform our goals and aspirations. This process is outlined in the **Appendix**. Our strategic aims and initial action steps are organized under the three thematic goals of **Framing our Future**. In addition, we added a fourth thematic goal, _Organizational Excellence and Continuous Improvement_, that captures the internal processes and strategic directions ZSR needs to pursue to support the goals and aims of the Strategic Framework.

Goal 1: Community of Learning

ZSR Strategic Aim 1: Facilitate Cross-School and Transdisciplinary Collaborations

Position the library as a campus leader in facilitating collaborations, including information, data, and media literacies, empowering campus-wide research, scholarly and creative inquiry, teaching, and learning excellence. (Aims 1.2, 2.2)

Initial Action Steps:
- **Data Literacy Program:** Design a comprehensive program addressing data management, analysis, and visualization. Hire a data librarian who coordinates data literacy efforts and builds partnerships with relevant campus units.

- **Empower Faculty Collaborators:** Implement programs and services designed to cultivate collaborations with faculty, especially early-career and contingent faculty, such as creating flexible spaces for faculty co-working or providing funding for joint teaching and research projects with ZSR faculty and staff. We see these programs and services done in cooperation with or complementary to existing campus efforts.
- **Literacy Center Partnership:** Partner with the new Center for Literacy Education to develop a cross-campus initiative on information, data, A.I., and media literacies. This partnership could include shared programming, resource development, and collaborative research projects that leverage the expertise of both the library and the Center.
- **Targeted Training and Outreach:** Provide tailored workshops, consultations, and embedded support on information, data, and media literacies for faculty and students, aligning with departmental needs.
- **Lifelong Learning**: Work with university partners to enhance the support we provide to our alumni as they pursue lifelong learning.

Goal 2: Community of Inquiry

ZSR Strategic Aim 2: Reimagine Faculty & Teaching Support

Renew the library's role as an essential partner in the pursuit of knowledge, driving world-class teaching, learning, and research including scholarly inquiry and creative activity through adaptable services, diverse collections, and innovative courses. (Aims 2.1, 2.3)

Initial Action Steps:
- **Review the Liaison Program:** Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the liaison program, which presently assigns librarians to academic and interdisciplinary programs, to ensure that it aligns with the University's expanding academic programs, evolving broadly defined research and teaching priorities, and emerging areas of scholarship.
- **Promote ZSR's Strengths:** Develop strategies to promote ZSR's unique strengths in the process of recruiting prospective faculty and students, demonstrating how the library's resources and expertise can advance their teaching and scholarly pursuits.
- **Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Identify ways to situate ZSR as a site of multiple opportunities for experiential learning, including the ZSR Ambassadors, student employees, graduate research assistants, and LIB courses.

ZSR Strategic Aim 3: Build Collections Strategically

Develop a dynamic, diverse, and sustainable collection development strategy that anticipates evolving needs, balances print and electronic resources and funding requirements to support scholarly excellence at Wake Forest. (Aim 2.2)

Initial Action Steps:
- **Data-Driven Collections Strategy:** Conduct a comprehensive collections assessment that combines usage data, faculty feedback, curriculum analysis, and peer benchmarking to identify collection strengths, gaps, and alignment with evolving teaching and research priorities.
- **Targeted Support for Growth Areas:** Develop collections and services specifically aligned with the University's expanding offerings (School of Professional Studies, African American Religion Program, Health, Medicine, and Humanity, etc.).
- **Forecasting and Alignment:** Assess collection budgetary needs based on forecasted institutional growth, including the possible change in Carnegie classification.

Goal 3: Community of Partnerships

ZSR Strategic Aim 4: Commit to Community Partnerships

In response to university priorities and community needs, develop and implement an engagement plan that strengthens partnerships across the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County area, leveraging the library's unique resources and expertise to foster knowledge sharing, educational opportunity, and community impact. (Aims 3.1, 3.2)

Initial Action Steps:
- **Student Success Initiative:** Partner with community organizations such as Crossnore, Crosby Scholars, and the YMCA Achievers to create programs that respond to community-identified needs, such as preparing first-generation or underrepresented high school students for college libraries and research.
- **Local Library Partnerships:** Expand partnerships with local public and school libraries and other Winston-Salem area colleges, such as Winston-Salem State University, the UNC School of the Arts, Salem College, and Forsyth Tech, to explore resource sharing, collaborative programming, or joint professional development opportunities.
- **Centering Local History:** Proactively engage with local historical organizations to provide expert archival support, joint programming, and secure spaces to

preserve and share community history, establishing the library as a resource for the documentation of the region.

Goal 4: Organizational Excellence and Continuous Improvement

ZSR Strategic Aim 5: Review and Reorganize Staffing Structure

Establish a more agile, collaborative, and empowering organizational structure that supports the evolving needs of our diverse and dynamic university community and programs as well as prioritizes the well-being and professional growth of ZSR employees.

Initial Action Steps:
- **Comprehensive Skills and Interest Assessment:** Survey staff and faculty to identify existing skills, professional interests, desired growth areas, and potential contributions beyond current roles, while being mindful of employee capacity.
- **Team and Service Review:** Analyze team structure, current service offerings, and employee skills and interests to identify areas of need, gaps in services and skills, and opportunities to more efficiently distribute workloads.
- **Strategic Organizational Plan:** Design and implement a more flexible organizational structure that addresses skill and service gaps, strategically maximizes cross-departmental collaboration, and prepares the library to proactively respond to emerging needs.
- **Dedicate Sufficient Capacity:** Prioritize the creation of internal capacity to support new campus initiatives (such as our expansion of programs in Charlotte), develop new collection strategies, and cultivate partnerships explicitly dedicating sufficient staff time and resources.
- **Culture of Continuous Development:** Building upon existing pathways for professional growth, mentorship, and knowledge sharing, establish more robust supports for professional and leadership development. Prioritize approaches that develop internal capacity through upskilling, reskilling, and cross-training.
- **Competitive Compensation Strategy:** Work with Human Resources to conduct a market salary review to inform a compensation structure that attracts and retains skilled library professionals.

ZSR Strategic Aim 6: Modernize Library Infrastructure

Update our facilities, technology infrastructure, and online presence to foster a welcoming and accessible environment where all experience belonging. Prioritize safety,

accessibility, and academic community needs while responsibly safeguarding our valuable collections for future generations.

Initial Action Steps:
- **Comprehensive Space Assessment:** Conduct an audit of current library facilities, prioritizing student spaces and archival collections storage, identifying areas in need of upgrades for safety, accessibility, comfort, and wayfinding. Work with the University Space Planning Group and the University Master Planning process to prioritize urgent building issues and assess how existing spaces can be adapted to better meet evolving community needs.
- **Space Strategy:** Develop a long-term space strategy that incorporates insights from the assessment of the current space, aligns with the library's broader mission, and considers flexible, multi-use spaces. Create a phased plan for upgrades, renovations, and maintenance, ensuring fire suppression, HVAC, and accessibility are top priorities.
- **Inclusive Design Principles:** Engage with disability and neurodivergent communities to establish space design principles that address both physical and online accessibility standards that authentically reflect their needs, priorities, and lived experiences. Collaborate with advocates, experts, and campus partners to define best practices and create designated neurodivergent/sensory-friendly spaces.
- **Building Viability Plan:** Work with University Advancement to prioritize fundraising for the necessary improvements or eventual replacement of the Reynolds wing.

Appendix: ZSR Strategic Framework Process

Dean Tim Pyatt appointed Senior Librarian Steve Kelley as the ZSR Strategic Framework coordinator in October of 2023 to help direct the process of creating a framework for the library. Together they formed a working group of ZSR faculty and staff with the following charge:

The Strategic Framework working group will review the strategic aims and proposed initial action steps in the university's strategic framework, Framing Our Future to determine the following:

- *Where do the goals and objectives of ZSR align with the thematic goals and strategic aims of the Framework?*
- *What action steps does ZSR already support and what should be our role going forward? What resources, partnerships, and changes would be needed to achieve that goal?*
- *What action steps should ZSR be supporting that it is not already supporting? What resources and partnerships would be needed to achieve that goal?*
- *Are there action steps where ZSR should be leading campus plans?*
- *Are there areas where ZSR brings distinctiveness and excellence to the university?*

The working group will engage broadly with the library and campus with the goal of creating a draft framework for ZSR by mid-March.

Working Group Members:

- Daisha Bunn, Communications and Events Coordinator
- Kyle Denlinger, Digital Pedagogy & Open Education Librarian
- Maia Dickinson, Public Services Assistant
- Megan Mulder, Special Collections Librarian
- Kate Silton, Electronic Resources Librarian
- Meghan Webb, Instruction & Outreach Librarian
- Steve Kelley, Head of Continuing Resources & Database Management (Coordinator and Chair)
- Maddie Koontz, ZSR Fellow (working group staff support)

The working group solicited input from a broad range of campus groups including:

- ZSR Faculty and Staff (Nov. 28 in-person forum; Jan. 8 virtual forum)
- ZSR Administration Retreat (Jan. 10)

- ZSR Board of Visitors Winter Call (Jan. 22)
- Committee on Library Planning (Jan. 23)
- Student Focus Group (Jan. 28)

In addition, they sent a survey to faculty departmental liaisons to the library for them to distribute to their departmental faculty and hosted comments sessions several times at a table near the library service desk. The comments and information collected informed the creation of the six strategic aims presented in this document. Additional data collected will inform ZSR priorities and goals in the coming years.

The survey of faculty collected responses from 44 faculty members. Three questions were asked on the survey: 1) What do you think ZSR is doing well? (44 responses), 2) Where would you like to see ZSR improve? (35 responses), 3) What new initiatives do you think ZSR should undertake (31 responses). There were comments about library services and collections, but the one unique theme that emerged from a number of comments was that the library could facilitate collaboration between faculty members, which was incorporated into ZSR Strategic Aim 1.

The Student Focus Group on January 28th was only attended by 8 students, but they were very talkative. The students were asked about three aspects of the library: Facilities and Study Spaces, Library Services and Events, and Library Resources, Technology and Accessibility. The issue of Facilities and Study Spaces was clearly of paramount importance to the students and the bulk of their relevant comments were directed to this area. This was also true of the white boards/comment tables that collected student feedback. There was very little feedback on these boards and some of the responses were jokes. Two questions were asked: What do you love about ZSR? (16 serious comments), and How can ZSR enhance your experience? (4 serious comments). Responses to the second question included requesting more single person study spaces and more outlets in the stacks. The recurring theme of students' perceived need for improvements to the library building and its facilities was a major factor in the development of ZSR Strategic Aim 6.