

UBC Library's 21st-Century Roadmap

By Glenn Drexhage



An accelerated digital agenda and community engagement are among the key planks of UBC Library's new strategic plan (www.library.ubc.ca/strategicplan), a succinct four-page document that sets the stage for the next five years.

Shortly after Ingrid Parent arrived last summer as UBC's 14th University Librarian, she initiated the process to form a new direction for the Library. The timeframe was tight – a plan was to be finalized within a few months, in order to cultivate change and support *Place and Promise*, the recently released strategic plan for UBC as a whole (see <http://strategicplan.ubc.ca> for more information).

Hitting the high notes

Work began in fall 2009. Leonora Crema, the Associate University Librarian for Planning and Community Relations who led the Library's strategic plan effort, notes that the process focused on two key questions: what does it mean to be a 21st-

century research library, and how can UBC Library best support *Place and Promise*?

Crema and the 16-member strategic plan steering committee tackled these issues by inviting input from many contributors, including Library staff, UBC faculty and Deans, students, community members and several provincial library groups.

"Strategic planning is exciting work – it's about envisioning and creating the future," Crema says. "We hope we've hit the high notes from everything that we heard."

Strategic directions

The plan features five strategic directions: Enhance Student Learning; Accelerate Research; Manage Collections in a Digital Context; Engage with Community; and Create an Exceptional Work Environment.

One of the main themes concerns the digital agenda, and the need to balance the impact of ever-changing technologies with the Library's more traditional roles.

"Technology is a huge driver – thinking and being digital," Crema acknowledges. "But we also heard from faculty and students that print still has a strong place in a modern-day research library."

Engagement with community is another key direction. Such connection is exemplified by the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, which offers valued programs that reach throughout the province. For example, the BC History Digitization Program, launched in 2006, provides matching funds for community digitization projects within BC (see www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca/ps/BCDigitInfo.html for more information).

The Small Business Plan Accelerator (SBA) is another Learning Centre community initiative. The program, developed in part with the David Lam Library at UBC's Sauder School of Business and generously supported by the Sutherland Foundation, will provide market resource guides and related resources to assist entrepreneurs and the small business

community. The SBA's website launch is scheduled for fall 2010.

As ever, the Library will continue to seek collaborations with other libraries, archives, and educational and cultural organizations.

A living document

The outlook, then, is inspiring. Now, the tough part – implementation – is underway. Some highlights for the first two years of the plan include supporting the ongoing growth of cIRcle, UBC Library's digital repository; the continued upgrading of student spaces, including renovations of the Woodward and Asian libraries; the development of new resources and services, such as a Research Commons that combines both physical and virtual spaces; and establishing preservation programs for print and digital collections.

It's important to note that the strategic plan is a "living document" – that is, it's a flexible guide that will be updated periodically to reflect changing times and needs.

If you have questions or comments about UBC Library and its strategic plan, please let us know – we want to hear your feedback. You can reach us at lib-plansc@interchange.ubc.ca.

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