

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2016–2020

A world-class and innovative information  
service and learning space

*Biblioteek- en Inligtingsdiens*

*Library and Information Service*



UNIVERSITEIT  
STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY

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**In a rapidly changing world — and library environment — there is significant risk involved in focusing only on the immediate strategic terrain.**

# Introduction

**The *Strategic Directions 2016-2020* plan builds on the Library and Information Service's previous plan for the period 2010-2015 as well as the external quality assurance review conducted in 2013.**

In a rapidly changing world – and library environment – there is significant risk involved in focusing only on the immediate strategic terrain. This implies amongst others that a core-competency approach can be easily blindsided if the capabilities that create great value today should suddenly become obsolete tomorrow.

Most strategies (of terrain) tend to look from the present to the future. Strategies of trajectory, however, start with the future and then work back to the implications this has for action today.

That was the focus of the Library and Information Service's strategic session of 11-12 November 2015, which opted for participative strategic conversation to generate scenarios instead of mere procedural strategy formulation. At a follow-up workshop on 21 January 2016, a new vision and strategic objectives were formulated and agreed.

The Library and Information Service (hereinafter 'the Library') consists of the central JS Gericke Library and the five branch libraries of USBI, Medicine and Health Sciences, Engineering and Forestry, Music, and Theology. The Library is staffed by 102 permanent employees and approximately 40 student assistants.

Although some 80% of the Library's resources are virtual, it does also contain physical resources, such as books, special collections, sheet music and audio-visual files.

One of the Library's main functions is the so-called 'out and in' of its resources – sending the Library's knowledge out into the world, and incorporating the world's knowledge into the Library.

Library spaces include storage space, computer rooms, study space (the learning commons and research commons) as well as collaborative and discussion spaces (e.g. the auditorium). The Library maintains an online, virtual presence through its website.

Core services include information and reference services; research support; teaching, learning and literacy skills; document delivery and inter-lending services; digital library services, and collection management.

## The Library's key uncertainties are as follows:

1. Keeping up with technology and/or staying one step ahead
2. Client expectations, including who the Library's future clients are and what they would expect
3. The future landscape in which the Library operates – will this be collaborative or competitive?
4. The shift to open access – does the Library explore this with stakeholders, or has it been exploited?
5. How do ill students learn, and what will teaching look like? How will research be done?
6. Will the Library still be relevant in 2030?
7. Managing the growth and size of the Library with fewer resources

Many of the key uncertainties above – keeping abreast of technology, meeting client expectations, coping with and managing open access, and particularly also managing the Library's income budgets and expenditure – have been labelled so-called 'hygiene factors'.

These are issues that have to be managed, and managed well, if the Library is to remain a successful and, in this instance, relevant organisation going forward. Additional hygiene factors are the content of the Library and the part it plays in supporting Stellenbosch University (SU) and its goals. To a certain extent, these hygiene factors are 'known must-dos', but could take on a very different form in different future scenarios. It was therefore decided to play out and explore each of them in the different scenarios.

Two opposite extremes of the key uncertainties were subsequently identified and elaborated on, namely a scenario where the Library is operating in a super-collaborative vs. a super-competitive environment and world, and where the Library is creating and distributing knowledge, and students are learning and being taught, in a fragmented and local vs. an open and global fashion.

As part of the strategic conversation, participants collectively agreed that a 'Brave New World' is the preferred future for the Library. In such a collaborative, global and open future, the Library can come into its own and deliver the sort of services that SU requires to help it reach its goals.

The Brave New World was described as the Library's 'natural world' and the future that should be envisioned and pursued. As one participant put it: Achieving the Brave New World is possible, because it feels realistic.

The belief that the Library can indeed make the quantum leap to a Brave New World has originated from, amongst others, the late Rector Prof Russel Botman's view that the Library is one of the divisions that take the University

Will the Library still be relevant in 2030?





forward. With a stellar track record, the Library has achieved what it set out to do five years ago, and it has done so by incrementally adjusting its strategy every year.

The time has now come for a new phase of bold changes. A key question is whether the Library currently has the organisational structure that befits a Brave New World.

This will possibly be reviewed and may result in the organisational structure being realigned. In embarking on these changes, constant excellent communication with all stakeholders, as well as trust and sound relationships, will be of critical importance.

## Vision

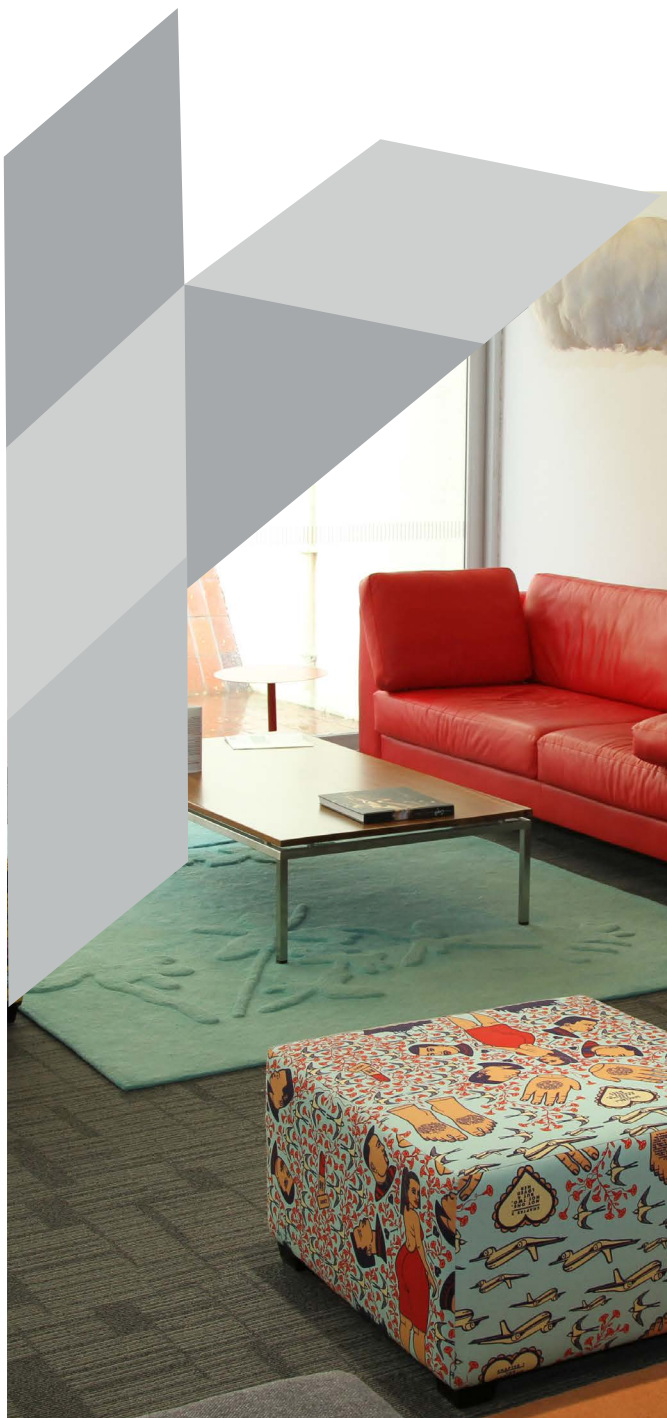
A world-class library empowering you to discover, share, learn and excel.

## Mission

To provide a world-class and innovative information service and learning space to the Stellenbosch University community

vision

mission



The time has now come for a new phase of bold changes.

# Values

**I**nnovation

– to be open to change  
and new ideas

**E**mpowerment

– to advance  
development and  
professionalism

**C**lient focus

– to exceed customer  
expectations

**E**xcellence

– to be the best and  
world-class in what  
we do



## Strategic objectives and actions

- I. Provide and sustain state-of-the-art spaces and technologies that allow users with diverse needs to effectively discover and create knowledge
  - I.1 Develop green, environmentally friendly spaces for all libraries
  - I.2 Create and develop flexible spaces (physical and virtual, experimental and creative) in all libraries to adapt to users' changing needs, e.g. Makerspace
  - I.3 Complete the refurbishment of the JS Gericke Library within the agreed timeframe
  - I.4 Complete the refurbishment of the Medicine and Health Sciences Library within the agreed timeframe
  - I.5 Complete the refurbishment of the Theology Library within the agreed timeframe
  - I.6 Complete upgrade or construction of/changes to the Business School Library (USBI), Bellville Park campus

Provide world-class, diverse, innovative and client-oriented services.

2. Develop and sustain skilled, diverse, adaptable and engaged staff
  - 2.1 Retrain staff and encourage lifelong learning
  - 2.2 Continuously address matters of diversity (e.g. staff recruitment; sensitisation to race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, disability and cultural practices)
  - 2.3 Implement effective mentoring and coaching programmes to motivate and engage staff
  - 2.4 Implement exchange programmes for staff
  - 2.5 Create and sustain a more flexible organisational structure to meet the changing needs of the contemporary information services landscape
  - 2.6 Enhance the wellness programmes and collaborate closely with the Wellness Office to create a positive organisational climate
3. Ensure availability, sustainability and discoverability of information resources
  - 3.1 Investigate and implement new and flexible models of acquiring content, including short-term rental/lease options, such as acquisitions of chapters in books as well as pay per view
  - 3.2 Advocate alternatives to commercial academic journal publishing amongst researchers
  - 3.3 Enhance access to and promote use of special collections
  - 3.4 Enrich and diversify special collections by sourcing new collections
  - 3.5 Enhance discoverability of all information resources (e.g. use of metadata in discovery tools, electronic brochures for special collections, etc.)
4. Provide world-class, diverse, innovative and client-oriented services
  - 4.1 Engage with and learn more about our user and non-user community to meet their evolving needs
  - 4.2 Collaborate with faculties and academic support services to enhance e-learning
  - 4.3 Partner with faculties and other research support services to enhance the Library's research support (e.g. research data management, new modes of research)
5. Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with a range of external and internal stakeholders
  - 5.1 Collaborate with partners to design, develop and implement workflows, products and services for an enriched research and learning environment
  - 5.2 Build strategic partnerships to ensure sustainable access to resources
  - 5.3 Participate in and contribute to research and development pertaining to the evolving library and information services landscape
  - 5.4 Advance local, national and international initiatives with regard to open scholarship



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