



University Libraries



2025 AND
BEYOND

INTRODUCTION

The libraries are the heart of the university. In adopting this simple statement as our vision for 2025 and Beyond, we position Mason Libraries as vital, central, and organically connected to every person, entity, and function at Mason. No other unit on or off campus aims, as the libraries do, to speak to all disciplines and to reach all populations – students and faculty, staff and administration, postdoctoral fellows and adjunct instructors, alumni and visitors. We are uniquely situated to enrich the student experience, lead the university through the changing information landscape, and boost the impact of Mason research.

The libraries are vital to research, teaching, and learning at Mason. Researchers depend on our distinctive collections, open access initiatives, and faculty-community partnerships to develop and sharpen their ideas, reach global audiences, and bring hidden stories into the light. Instructors seamlessly integrate library resources into their online and in-person classrooms, partnering with librarians to help students critically engage with primary sources, data, media, and emerging technologies. Students turn to us as a lifeline to success, from access to textbooks to individual research support on their learning journey. By making information available to all, and welcoming multiple perspectives, the libraries foster critical engagement with the world.

The libraries are a space for the entire community. We are a place of learning, discussion, and discovery; a place for interaction, collaboration, and serendipitous encounters; a place where research begins and where it lives on for future generations. We celebrate and showcase Mason research and scholarship and their contribution to the public good. We offer a welcoming space for students to study, rest, collaborate, and pursue their curiosity. We build partnerships with artists, local historians, businesses, and others in Virginia. Open to all, the libraries impact every member of the Mason community.

The libraries are constantly evolving. We have been an integral part of George Mason University since its founding. We have grown from our original location on the second floor of the West Building, to the opening of Fenwick Library fifty years ago, to serving three Northern Virginia campuses and online students across the globe. We have also faced challenges: budget cuts that reduced our collections, as well as loss of space in the Johnson Center and at Mason Square. Despite these challenges, the libraries have continued to transform our collections and services as Mason secures its status as a top-tier research institution.

Just as Mason is changing what it means to be a research university, we can change what it means to be a university library. All-together different, Mason is a dynamic, fast-growing, and historically underfunded research university. The libraries, in turn, are constantly innovating and realigning finite resources to ensure we remain the heart of this university. We must balance our dedication to our core functions with also meeting rapidly evolving information needs such as challenges to intellectual freedom, equitable access to the scholarly record, and the rise of artificial intelligence. The 2025 and Beyond strategy establishes the values and priorities that will guide the libraries as we meet these urgent challenges.

VISION

The libraries are the heart of the university.

MISSION

We enable creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking through our people, spaces, and resources.

VALUES

Inclusive Excellence – We intentionally engage with diverse worldviews and learn from each other’s experiences. Inclusive excellence necessitates opening ourselves to surprising and perspective-changing knowledge from those around us. There can be no excellence without actively choosing to sustain an inclusive environment.

Celebration – We celebrate our community. We use our unique position as a central, public, and interdisciplinary space to showcase diversity in our faculty, staff, and student work, including the work of our library colleagues.

Openness – We make our spaces welcoming to all and our resources meaningfully accessible to all. We work for greater openness in the libraries, the university, and research and publishing to build the structures that support inclusion.

Collaboration – We depend on each other to thrive. When we cultivate a supportive community, we find opportunities to collaborate, enhance individual strengths, and create space for innovation and risk-taking. Working together across campuses and spaces requires intentional efforts to encourage connection and be accountable to one another.

Person-centeredness – We treat individuals with dignity, respect, and care. We listen deeply to one another, center diverse perspectives, and recognize the strengths in each of us. A person-centered workplace fosters holistic well-being and psychologically safe spaces.

Ethical Stewardship – We manage the resources entrusted to us with care and transparency, in partnership with our community. We work with communities and creators to develop culturally responsive practices. When allocating resources, we consider implications for equity, inclusion, privacy, and financial and environmental sustainability.

Future orientation – We anticipate the evolving needs of the university, ensuring the Mason Libraries’ relevance and impact for generations to come. The spaces, collections, and partnerships we build today are the foundation of Mason’s future as a research institution. We act now to ensure that core library resources and functions endure.

PRIORITY AREAS GOALS AND STRATEGIES

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Students see the libraries as a place where they can learn, work, rest, and build community.

1.1 > **Provide inclusive spaces and resources to meet the evolving needs of our diverse student populations.**

Update library spaces to foster interdisciplinary connections, creativity, and critical dialogue among students. (1.1.1)

Engage students as partners to better understand their library needs. (1.1.2)

Connect students with one another in their research and creative endeavors. (1.1.3)

1.2 > **Further integrate the libraries into students' academic development and life beyond the classroom.**

Expand partnerships with student support services to foster student engagement and success. (1.2.1)

Develop partnerships with student groups to connect and nurture ongoing relationships. (1.2.2)



Left: Emily Encarnacion studying at Fenwick Library.



Right: Karen Escobar in Fenwick Library.



RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

Library collections and expertise are fully integrated into the university's research infrastructure.

2.1 > Develop and realign faculty and staff expertise to support the research, scholarship, and creative enterprise for a growing R1 university.

Realign staff expertise to grow our research services as Mason's research portfolio expands. (2.1.1)

Recruit and retain faculty and staff dedicated to information literacy instruction to meet the needs of Mason's growing student population. (2.1.2)

2.2 > Build collections that meet the needs of the university.

Expand and deepen the libraries' collections to support Mason's growing research and curricular portfolios. (2.2.1)

Invest in sustainable approaches to scholarly publishing and cultivate campus-wide awareness of open access. (2.2.2)



Top: Students studying at East Building Student Lounge. (y. 1965)

Bottom: Students walking by student organization benches in the quad. (y. 1968)



PARTNERSHIPS

We are a valued, trusted partner within and beyond the university community.

3.1 > Broaden partnerships with on-campus academic and support units.

Increase outreach to academic units to integrate information literacy and research skills into the curriculum. (3.1.1)

Work with student and faculty support units to align services and identify areas for collaboration. (3.1.2)

3.2 > Expand strategic local, regional, national, and global partnerships.

Deepen consortial partnerships that increase affordable access to research materials and offer opportunities to expand services. (3.2.1)

Strengthen community-based partnerships to document and share local histories. (3.2.2)

Top: First Tuesday Speaker Series in Reading Room.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

We embody the value of inclusive excellence and cultivate a community where everyone can thrive.

4.1 > **Take intentional action to ensure that our collections and services are welcoming to and reflective of our broad and diverse community.**

Evaluate and update descriptions of library materials for inclusive language. (4.1.1)

Ensure that all library instructors are skilled in inclusive pedagogies that meet our students where they are. (4.1.2)

Build collections that reflect, serve, and are accessible to our users. (4.1.3)

4.2 > **Refine the libraries' workplace structures and practices so that everyone can be successful and experience a sense of belonging.**

Develop and implement a recruitment and retention plan to foster a diverse and inclusive library workforce. (4.2.1)

Revise policies and procedures to be consistent with the value of inclusive excellence. (4.2.2)

Top: Students walking outside of Fenwick Library.



FACULTY AND STAFF SUCCESS

All University Libraries' faculty, staff, and student workers feel valued, experience a sense of belonging, and have opportunities for growth.

5.1 > Develop a workplace culture that affirms and respects diversity, employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations, and provides community-building resources to the libraries' faculty and staff.

Create opportunities for library workers at all levels and all locations to engage in library decisions. (5.1.1)

Develop spaces and practices that foster organizational health and build trust. (5.1.2)

5.2 > Provide consistent opportunities and experiences for all library workers.

Improve formal recognition and appreciation programs for the libraries' workforce, including students. (5.2.1)

Align opportunities, workload, and support for library workers across all library locations. (5.2.2)

Top: Amy Sullivan, Head, Preservation Services at the University Libraries.



PROCESS

THE MASON LIBRARIES: 2025 AND BEYOND PLAN was developed through a consensus-focused, collaborative process that engaged the entire library faculty and staff, student workers, and university stakeholders.

The effort was anchored by in-person and virtual all-staff retreats and substantive meetings with the Library Transition Leadership Team; Management Action Council; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council. All faculty and staff were given opportunities to provide feedback on each section throughout the process. University leadership and University Libraries champions provided valuable guidance.

The good work of these groups came to life through the hard work of the writing team: Kat Bell, Stephanie Grimm, Christopher Lowder, and Helen McManus.

Bill Potapchuk and Cate Rodman of the Community Building Institute designed and facilitated the collaborative process. The final document was designed by Viviana Calderon.

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