



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY

Angus L. Macdonald Library

**The library as core to the academic mission of the
University**

**Strategic Plan
2022-2027**

“Engage & Transform”

Authorship statement

This strategic plan was developed collectively and in broad consultation with library staff and the university community. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee members were:

- Sandy Iverson, University Librarian (Chair)
- Meghan Landry, Librarian
- Lorena Brothers, Library Staff
- Tim Hynes/Bobbi Morrison, Dean representative
- Laura Estill and Monica Williams, Faculty representatives
- Siobhan Lacey/Tianna Williams, Student representative
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Further details on the planning and consultation process can be found in Appendix A.

Contents

Authorship statement..... 2

Background 4

Purpose 6

Introduction to the Angus L. Macdonald Library and University Archives 1st Strategic Plan 7

Value Statements..... 7

Mission & Vision Statements 8

Strategic Priorities..... 9

Strategic Directions: Engage & Transform 10

Appendix A – Our Planning & Consultation Process..... 13

Background

We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) is recognized as one of the finest universities in Canada. The University was established in 1853 and has a reputation for academic excellence and meeting the needs of today's undergraduates through outstanding teaching, exceptional hands-on research experiences, and unique opportunities to contribute to communities at home and abroad in a vibrant and community-focused town. As of October 2021, there were 5,027 full and part-time undergraduate students and 802 full and part-time graduate students, for a total of 5,829 enrolled students.

Angus L. Macdonald Library

- The Angus L. Macdonald Library houses a diverse collection of approximately 216,000 volumes, provides access to a variety of databases, facilities for digitization, university archives, a rare book room, a music and microfilm room, a unique Celtic collection, and provides access to the publications of StFX faculty and students through the institutional repository: StFX Scholar. The Library works in close collaboration with other University libraries in the region through the Novanet consortium and the Council of Atlantic Academic Libraries (CAAL). These collaborative and consortial arrangements benefit all scholars in Nova Scotia through increased access to print materials as well as cost-effective group buying arrangements.
- The Library has supported the social justice ideals and academic vision and mission of StFX through its resources, programs, and services since its opening in 1965. A substantive addition was added to the Library in 1986 and was designed to accommodate library collection and services needs for the proceeding twenty-five years. Thirty-five years later, our home is out of date and does not meet the needs of our students, staff, or faculty. Students consistently ask for more student-friendly study and creative arts spaces such as video production labs, comfortable reading rooms, private study rooms, more electrical outlets, better climate controls, and a café. These are the resources they are accustomed to and commonly find at other University and College libraries. A library that better meets the needs of our students will contribute positively to student recruitment retention and success.

Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027

- In 2011, the Library was staffed by 25 staff members, 8 librarians, and an archivist. Ten years later, the Library is staffed by approximately 15 staff, 5 librarians, and an archivist. To meet changing student needs now and in the future, increased staffing and skills development will be required to provide updated programs and services and include such skills as electronic resource management, web development, database administration, GIS, and other specialized software expertise.
- Previous external reviews (2015) and self-study reports (2019) have repeatedly drawn attention to weaknesses in the Library's infrastructure and service delivery models.

Purpose

The Library as Core to the Academic Mission of the University

Universities are spaces where people engage with knowledge, information, ideas, and other people to create new knowledge. The library is core to this academic mission. The primary purpose of the modern academic library is to inspire, advance, and transform teaching, learning, and research. Over the last twenty-five years, the academic library has embraced this role in new and innovative ways. The advent of the world wide web and the rapid adoption of internet technologies as a distribution mechanism for information has increased the supply of both scholarly publications and popular information, including unsubstantiated rumours and false data. It is imperative that today's students know how to access information in a rapidly changing technologically rich environment, and how to analyze and critically appraise information. University libraries play a vital role in preparing students to be lifelong critical consumers of various forms of data, research, and information.

While the campus library continues its historic and important work of developing and maintaining resource collections to ensure that the core functions of learning, teaching, and research can function, it is also a site of expertise in the management and delivery of electronic information and an academic unit responsible for teaching information literacy and critical appraisal techniques.

The 21st-century campus library is also evolving as a site of knowledge creation. New technologies have introduced alternative knowledge mobilization tools. Printed materials such as books, articles, papers, journals, reports, etc., are increasingly being joined by videos, online games, and three-dimensional products as not only items of learning but also as items of knowledge sharing. Libraries are increasingly offering the necessary tools and facilities to assist faculty and students in the research and production of these materials and the research and production of the traditional term paper, journal article, and academic thesis.

Postsecondary teaching continues to evolve to be more interdisciplinary and integrate far more collaborative or group learning. Likewise, the library needs to evolve to create more social spaces for students and faculty to meet and work together in this more collaborative model, which is increasingly the model of production in knowledge-based industries.

The library that the students and faculty of St Francis Xavier University deserve provides a welcoming, student-centred, and inclusive common facility that encourages exploration, creation, critical analysis, and collaboration between students, faculty, teaching staff, and the wider community. It should bring together the best of both the physical and digital worlds to create the learning and innovation hub of the campus community.

Introduction to the Angus L. Macdonald Library and University Archives 1st Strategic Plan

The Angus L. Macdonald Library and University Archives is core to the academic mission of the University. The time for a clear vision of our future is now. This Strategic Plan identifies key objectives and strategic directions to guide the Library for the next five years.

The core work of an academic library includes but is not limited to:

- developing and maintaining important resource collections
- delivering educational programming that fosters student acquisition of fundamental research, critical thinking, and information literacy skills
- providing guidance on scholarly publishing
- promoting innovation in teaching, learning, and research

To fulfill this broad mandate, seven broad strategic priority areas emerged. From these broad areas, we have developed two primary strategic directions to guide the transformation of the Library over the next five years.

Our focus will be transforming our facilities, services, and competencies to deliver an enhanced learning and research experience for StFX students, faculty, and staff.

This Library Strategic Plan is embedded within the broader context of continuous system improvement planning at the University. Included in this integrated planning framework are an established Research and Creative Works Plan, as well as Academic and Student Experience and Opportunity Plans that are currently under development. Together these plans will form the pillars of the next University Strategic Plan (2023-onwards). Consideration was paid to ensuring flexibility in this Library Strategic Plan so that it will continue to reflect and support the evolving strategic priorities of StFX moving forward.

Value Statements

- **People:** At the core of all libraries are people. We value our students, faculty, staff, community members, and our colleagues. We treat all people with respect and recognize the value that each individual brings to our Library and our campus.
- **Learning & Research:** We nurture exploration, innovation, inquiry, experimentation, collaboration, and creativity.
- **Literacy:** We foster information literacy and critical appraisal skills to support teaching, learning, research, and life-long learning.

Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027

- **Service:** We are committed to ensuring excellent people-centred service that is equitable, accessible, and inclusive, and reflects the social justice values of St. Francis Xavier University.
- **Sustainability:** We engage in planning and decision-making that is consultative, thoughtful, and evidence-based to ensure sustainability in staffing, collections, services, and the environment.
- **Engagement:** We embrace our role as the academic hub of the community and actively seek out opportunities for partnerships and collaborations.
- **Intellectual Freedom:** The Library protects and fosters intellectual freedom by ensuring that our environment and collections are inclusive, uncensored, respectful, and by encouraging interactive learning and the open sharing of knowledge.
- **Accessibility:** We are committed to ensuring equitable access to a wide variety of information, spaces, and services.

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission

The Angus L. Macdonald Library and University Archives provides services, collections, and an environment that inspires, advances, and transforms teaching, learning, research, and creativity for the St. Francis Xavier University community.

Vision

The Angus L. Macdonald Library and University Archives at St. Francis Xavier University provides a welcoming, accessible inclusive common environment that encourages exploration, creativity, innovation, critical analysis, knowledge generation, and collaboration between students, faculty, and the wider community. It brings together the best of both the physical and digital worlds to fulfill its role as core to the academic mission of the University and a hub for academic life on campus.

Strategic Priorities

Through an extensive review and consultation process (see Appendix A for details), the following priority areas emerged:

1. Our physical infrastructure is dated and inadequate. In order to fulfill our mission and vision, both short-term and long-term planning and attention must be applied to modernizing and enhancing our facilities to meet the changing needs of the university community.
2. Our technological infrastructure, and the resources needed to support it, is inadequate. We need a more functional website and catalogue. We need to build the capacity of library staff to adequately manage a rapidly growing collection of electronic resources and deliver technologically rich services such as digitization and creative tools labs (Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, 3D Printing, etc.).
3. In this era of 'fake news,' misinformation, and social media, the need to improve undergraduate students' critical thinking and information literacy skills is more urgent than ever.

“Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.”¹

The Library must collaborate with faculty and other educators to ensure that our students are equipped to be responsible and skilled users and creators of knowledge.

4. Strategic development of resource collections remains a fundamental need. It is acknowledged that the continued development of resource collections is fundamental to fulfilling our mission.
5. To ensure that the Library continues to play a pivotal role in the academic mission of the University and remains central to the student experience, there is a need to improve our efforts in the areas of communications, outreach, and engagement.
6. We must increase our attention to equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, decolonization, and sustainability in tangible and authentic ways that support students, faculty, staff, and the broader community.
7. The need for succession planning and staff development is urgently needed. With over 40% of the current staff complement reaching retirement age within the next 4 years, we must plan to ensure that we have the right people in the right roles to support technologically rich services and collections and to augment established library programs and services going forward.

¹ "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education", American Library Association, February 9, 2015. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework> (Accessed February 11, 2022) Document ID: b910a6c4-6c8a-0d44-7dbc-a5dcdb509e3f

Strategic Directions: Engage & Transform

Strategic Direction 1: ENGAGE

The library at StFX will be an active collaborator and connector to enhance the University's learning, teaching, and research activities and contribute to the vibrant life and history of the University and the community of Antigonish.

Goal 1.1 Develop collections and services to support teaching and learning priorities of the University with particular emphasis on developing critical thinking skills through enhancing students' information, data, and research literacy skills.

This goal could be accomplished through the following proposed initiatives:

- Collaborate with faculty and academic leaders to increase information, data, and research literacy instruction in the University curricula
- Improve collaboration between the Library and the Student Success Centre, the Teaching & Learning Centre, and the Department of Continuing & Distance Education
- Develop a roadmap for the assessment and enhancement of instruction delivered by the library
- Develop sustainable resource collections to support teaching and learning, prioritizing access over acquisition

Goal 1.2 Deliver Programs and Services to enhance student learning, life experiences, and wellness on campus, with a specific focus on underserved populations/equity-seeking groups.

This goal could be accomplished through the following proposed initiatives:

- Engage an Outreach & Engagement Librarian for a 2-year pilot project
- Develop an outreach and communications plan with a focus on Indigenous, Black, International, and First-Generation students
- Collaborate with the Senate Quality of Life Committee and others to develop a program of resources and services to support student wellness
- Contribute to student success and student wellness by increasing library involvement in first-year experience programs, including "X Starts here" and other initiatives

Goal 1.3 Deliver programs and services to support the Research and Creative Works Plan, including support for data management, open access publishing, and creative innovation.

This goal could be accomplished through the following proposed initiatives:

- Develop an institutional research data management strategy to support the national Tri-Agency research data management policy
- Increase content in StFX Scholar

Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027

- Educate, promote, and provide access to open educational resources (OER) through a partnership with the Atlantic Region Open Textbooks Project or Atlantic OER
- Launch a makerspace pilot project which may include a Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality and film studio component
- Develop and appropriately staff a robust data services program in collaboration with the Spatial Data Resource Centre and the Digital Humanities group

Goal 1.4 Engage with emerging key objectives identified in the Academic Plan, the Student Experience and Opportunity Plan, and the University-wide Strategic Plan to strengthen the Library's vital role in the academic and community life of the University.

Strategic Direction 2: TRANSFORM

The library at StFX will transform and modernize its physical and digital spaces, programs, and services to strengthen its role as the core hub for academic life on campus. We will be seen as the keeper and preserver of knowledge and a prime catalyst for creative knowledge production. We will focus on creating an inclusive and accessible environment that inspires innovation, creativity, and learning.

Goal 2.1 Redevelop the Library's physical infrastructure to appropriately meet the needs of the University community.

This goal could be accomplished through the following proposed initiatives:

- Work with the Advancement Department to establish a Library Vision Committee to begin work on the fundraising and creation of a new Library & University Archives (renovation or construction)
- Implement basic refresh projects to brighten our current physical environment and provide student-friendly spaces

Goal 2.2 Develop a flexible and sustainable organizational structure, succession plan, and staff learning development plan to ensure the Library can meet its strategic obligations.

This goal could be accomplished through the following proposed initiatives:

- Invest in staff learning and enable knowledge sharing
- Ensure our practices, projects and actions are sustainable through consultative and evidence-based decision making
- Develop a new organizational structure and accompanying succession plan
- Implement and monitor learning development plans for all staff

Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Goal 2.3 Improve the Library's digital infrastructure to preserve our knowledge and history better and improve access to current and historical knowledge to appropriately meet the needs of our students, faculty, and staff.

This goal could be accomplished through the following proposed initiatives:

- Preserve the history of St. Francis Xavier University through the continued development and preservation of historical records and special collections reflecting this history
- Develop a sustainable and collaborative digitization program to preserve historical materials and special collections with a focus on institutional and local knowledge
- Undertake a library website review and redesign
- Develop a roadmap of improvements/changes to our digital and online services infrastructure

Appendix A – Our Planning & Consultation Process

Our planning process

- In late 2020, the Senate Library Committee tasked the University Librarian (UL) with establishing a Strategic Planning Steering Committee to support the UL and library staff in establishing a strategic plan for the Angus L. Macdonald Library.
- A Self-Study and an External Review of the Library were conducted in 2015.
- Surveys of faculty and students had been conducted in 2019 along with an updated self-study.
- The Strategic Planning Steering Committee reviewed key literature and statistical reports from a variety of academic libraries and associations, including the Canadian Association of Research Libraries and the Association of College & Research Libraries, to create a possible vision of key services and priorities for today’s academic library.
- Following consultations with the StFX community in 2021, the Steering Committee presented the plan to the Senate Library Committee in early 2022.

Planning timeline



Review of existing documents – February/March 2021

- 2015 External Review provided recommendations for library improvements including:
 - Enhancements to the physical infrastructure
 - Improvements to internal and external communications
 - Improved planning processes
 - **Many of these recommendations hinged on hiring a University Librarian, which did not happen until 2019. Therefore, they are largely still pending or in progress.**
- 2019 Self Study surveyed students and faculty and produced further recommendations including:
 - Need for strategic, operational, and budget review and planning
 - Need for improving library information systems infrastructure
 - Need for re-evaluating and/or improving digitization strategies and programs
- Faculty & Student surveys (2019)
 - Faculty & Students were asked about the services and collections they used, how often they used them, and their satisfaction level with those services and collections.
 - Faculty were also asked if their use supported teaching (undergraduate or graduate) or research
 - 53 Faculty and 553 Students responded to the survey
 - Generally, satisfaction level with services and collections was good
 - Satisfaction level with library facilities was low
 - Voluntary qualitative comments overwhelmingly related to the status of the building (furniture, environment, power access, cleanliness, modernness, comfort, lighting, hours, signage)
 - Faculty qualitative comments also often mentioned dissatisfaction with staffing levels in the library

A review of the literature, as well as an exploration of some of our comparator institutions (Maple League and others), resulted in a shortlist of possible priority service offerings an academic library in the 21st-century ought to plan for:

- **Archives and Special Collections:** Preserves specialized knowledge for the researchers of today and tomorrow and attracts researchers here and abroad. Includes Celtic Collection, Rare Books Room, Music/Microfilm Room, and University Archives.
- **Café:** Access to coffee/tea/snacks – self-service vending or other

Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027

- **Collection of electronic journals and books:** Supports the current curriculum and academic priorities of the University. Easily available remotely. Items are usually bought as a package and may not remain available forever as they are not 'owned' by the University but are far more affordable.
- **Collection of print books:** Supports the current curriculum and academic priorities of the University. Items are owned by the University and considered an asset for the institution but require space and maintenance to preserve.
- **Computer lab:** Access to computers and printers for drop-in use.
- **Makerspace:** Space, materials, equipment, and training opportunities to support creative works. It could include such things as digitization equipment, scanners, 3D printers, software, circuitry kits, but also art & craft supplies, sewing machines, button makers, tools, etc., and staff to assist in learning how to use equipment. AV/VR, video & audio production labs could be included in this category.
- **Private Study Rooms:** Private spaces to study or work in small groups. These spaces would be equipped with computer monitors to allow you to project and share information from your own computers.
- **Reading Lounges:** Spaces with comfortable furniture to promote reading (in quiet spaces) and socializing (in less quiet spaces).
- **Reference and Consultation:** Librarians are available in person and online (including chat services) to help you 1:1
- **Scholarly Communications Support:** Information and services to support your understanding of the scholarly publishing landscape and includes access to Open Access (free) academic resources such as articles, theses, textbooks, etc. All published on low-cost platforms.
- **Spatial Data Resource Centre:** Access to geospatial data and maps. Access to other research data from Stats Canada and other sources. Access to GIS and research data software (SPSS, R, +) and staff to assist in learning how to use the software.
- **Study Halls:** Tables and private study carrels for quiet study.
- **Technology borrowing:** Laptops, tablets, chargers, DVD players, etc.
- **Unique items borrowing:** Tools, games, musical instruments, sports equipment, etc.
- **Workshops and Instruction:** Librarians provide workshops both in the library, but also in your classes to help students learn to use library resources (including databases, citation management software, etc.) effectively and to evaluate information in general.

This list of 15 possible service areas was frequently used in consultations to stimulate conversations about what people valued the most in a university library. A review of people's reactions to these suggestions, combined with an analysis of the literature and informal benchmarking, helped guide and shape the eventual development of strategic directions, goals, and 'suggested' projects for most of the goals.

Consultations – Iterative process

April – November 2021

A total of approximately 500 individual inputs were received as part of the consultation process for this strategic plan over a period of eight months. Various methods were used to invite people to provide input and feedback to the draft plan. Results from each consultation were presented to the Steering Committee, and subsequent revisions to the plan were made as input was received from stakeholders.

- April – Interactive dotmocracy exercise with students, faculty, and staff (~154 participants)
- June – Online consultations with departmental library reps (25 participants)
- July – Online consultation with student union council (15 participants)
- September – Open consultations with faculty and students (12 participants)
- September - Library Open House interactive dotmocracy exercise (50 participants)
- September/October – All departments were invited to receive a consultation session on the strategic plan. Several departments accepted this invitation (~16 participants)
- October – ½ day workshop with library staff to refine our Vision, Mission, Values, and review and provide input on the Draft Plan (11 participants)
- October - Information tables in high traffic student areas with interactive dotmocracy exercise (~100 participants)
- October/November - A simple online survey that provided an opportunity for community members to articulate their priority areas for the Library (61 respondents)
- November - Presentation to faculty (~50 participants)
- November - Meeting with student union council (15 participants)
- February 2022 – Consultation session with library staff (15 participants)

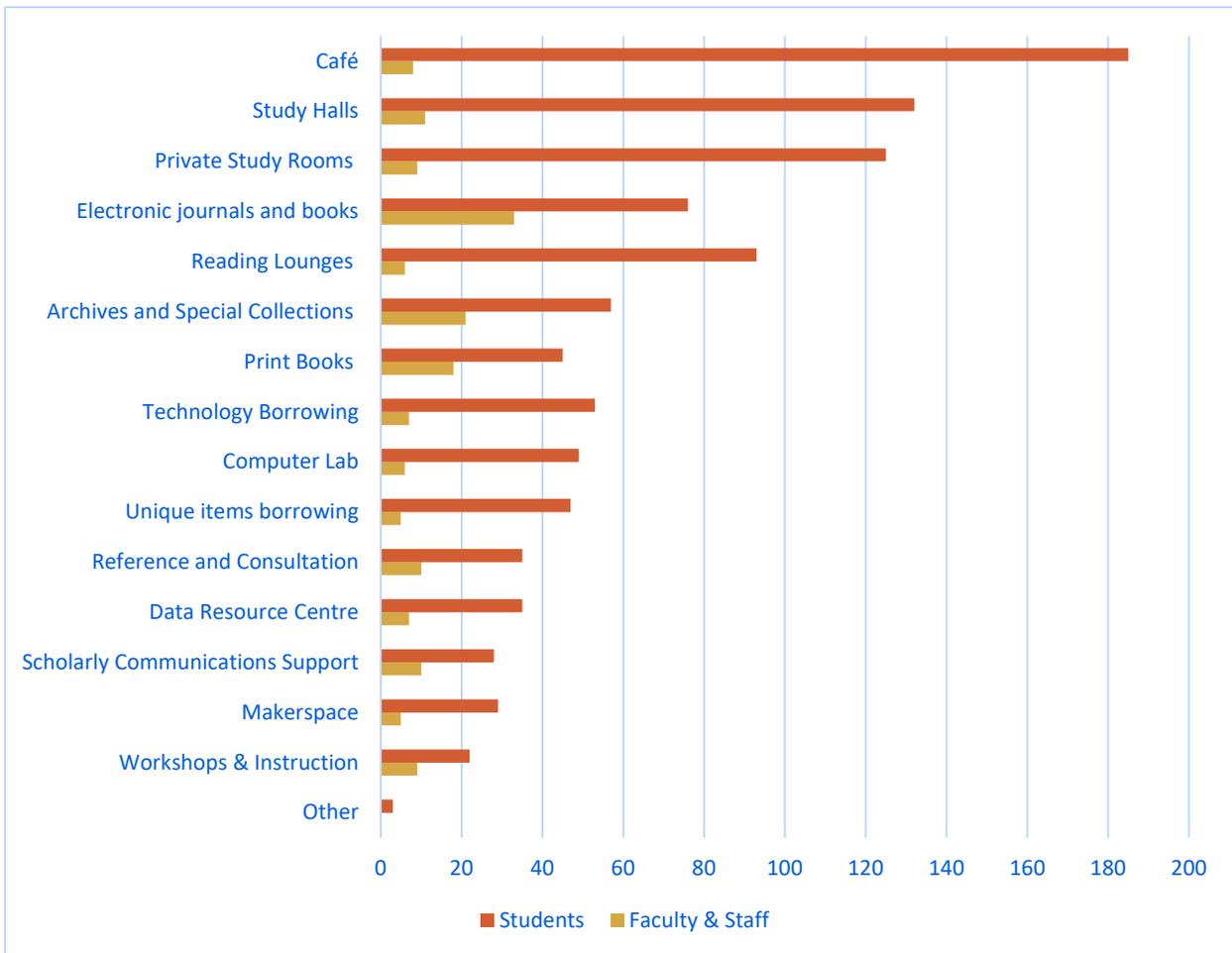
Dotmocracy Exercise Results

On a number of occasions, we utilized a dotmocracy board to invite people to articulate their priority service areas by ‘voting’ for their priorities using 5 dots. In total, throughout our consultations, approximately 250 people (primarily students) participated in this interactive exercise. The results of this exercise, combined with survey results, analysis of the literature, informal benchmarking, and consultation sessions, helped shape the draft strategic directions and goals.

Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027



Total 'votes' by category



Angus L. Macdonald Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Many of our consultation sessions primarily focused on the state of the library facility and infrastructure and staff capacity to deliver innovative programs and/or support electronic infrastructure. Students consistently reported dissatisfaction with the physical infrastructure: lack of comfortable study spaces, climate controls, access to power, etc.

Survey results

The survey asked respondents to order seven broad categories in the order they believed should be prioritized. The following graph shows the results of 61 community respondents (32 Students; 18 Faculty; 9 Staff and 2 'Other') and 10 library staff respondents.

