Strategic Plan

Charles C. Sherrod Library

East Tennessee State University

2018-2026
Strategic Planning at East Tennessee State University:
The university plan is intended to be the guiding document for academic and administrative units when developing and prioritizing their strategies for achieving the strategic goals of the university and to guide budgeting and resource allocation decisions. The hope is that decision-making will become a more decentralized process that will encourage innovation among the units, and this template is an extension of that process.

VISION

Developing a world-class environment to enhance student success and improve the quality of life in the region and beyond.

MISSION

ETSU provides a student-centered community of learning, reflecting high standards and promoting a balance of liberal arts and professional preparation, and continuous improvement. The university conducts a wide array of educational and research programs and clinical services including a comprehensive Academic Health Sciences Center. Education is the university’s highest priority, and the institution is committed to increasing the level of educational attainment in the state and region based on core values where:

PEOPLE come first, are treated with dignity and respect, and are encouraged to achieve their full potential; RELATIONSHIPS are built on honesty, integrity, and trust; DIVERSITY of people and thought is respected; EXCELLENCE is achieved through teamwork, leadership, creativity, and a strong work ethic; EFFICIENCY is achieved through wise use of human and financial resources; and COMMITMENT to intellectual achievement is embraced.

VALUES

ETSU endorses the value of a liberal education and provides enriching experiences in honors education, student research and creative activity, study abroad, service-learning, and community-based education.

ETSU honors and preserves the rich heritage of Southern Appalachia through distinctive education, research, and service programs and is actively engaged in regional stewardship.

ETSU affirms the contributions of diverse people, cultures, and thought to intellectual, social, and economic development.

ETSU offers students a total university experience that includes cultural and artistic programs, diverse student activities, a variety of residential opportunities, and outstanding recreational and intercollegiate athletic programs.

ETSU awards degrees in over one hundred baccalaureate, master, and doctoral programs, including distinctive interdisciplinary programs and distance education offerings that serve students from the region and beyond.
Core Goals

Six institution-wide areas of focus are fundamental to the University’s vision, mission and future success:

1. Supporting a strategic growth agenda that maximizes the student experience both inside and outside the classroom.

2. Ensuring the diversity and inclusion of people and ideas.

3. Empowering employees to make ETSU a great place to learn, work, and grow.


5. Expanding the foundation for scholarly (research and creative activity) excellence and innovation in all disciplines.

6. Leading the region forward through community engagement and service.
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Letter from the Dean

It has been difficult for myself and for Sherrod Library faculty and staff to envision ultimate goals for the year 2026. Libraries have changed so rapidly in recent years that what now seems innovative and far sighted may not be what the library or the university needs eight years down the road. Furthermore, I am an outgoing dean whose time at ETSU is limited; I am certain that my successor will want to review, reevaluate and possibly rewrite this plan to meet the changing environment and expectations that he or she will encounter. No matter what our goals, however, significant investment in new resources for the library, as well as realignment of existing resources, are necessary for success. I’m encouraged by the recent commitment of the university to support an annual inflationary increase for electronic collections. However, Sherrod Library cannot be expected to support increasing numbers of students, faculty and programs, as well as a renewed emphasis on research, without recognition that we need more to accomplish more.

That being said, I hope that by 2026:

- Sherrod staff and faculty numbers have increased, and staff and faculty are reorganized to meet the needs of 21st century students, faculty and researchers. Flexibility in staffing and responsibilities is key as external circumstances change. We cannot be tied to the way things have always been done. We also cannot continue to operate with an inadequate number of staff and faculty, currently the lowest among our peers and compared to other Tennessee institutions. There can be no attainment of strategic goals with our current numbers of staff.
- As keeper of the academic resources of the university, Sherrod has sufficient funding to make ETSU competitive with its peers in the number of books, journals, databases, staff, and other resources necessary for successful support of teaching and research at the university. As the primary support for teaching and research, Sherrod is actively involved in and consulted during the proposal and formation of new courses and programs.
- Sherrod partners with colleges, programs, departments and units across ETSU to make unique digital resources available. This could include, but is
not limited to, materials from the Archives of Appalachia (including University Archives, the Gray Fossil Site, research datasets, etc.

- Sherrod Library will have a comprehensive building plan that reflects student, faculty and staff academic needs for study, research, and programming. The Sherrod building is currently the academic center of campus but is restricted in what it can offer by a 20th century edifice that does not reflect 21st century practices. If the building is not renovated according to the plan by 2026, it will be scheduled for renovation.

- Sherrod is a one-stop shop for academic support on campus, provided by better integration with other units providing similar services, such as Archives of Appalachia, the Center for Academic Achievement, etc.

- Information literacy, key to success for 21st century students and vital for a civil and literate society, is built into the curriculum.

- Sherrod’s sponsorship for the open educational resources initiative, in partnership with others on campus, has resulted in significant cost decreases for textbooks for students.

- Sherrod Library and the Medical School Library have one administration, not only to better serve the needs of health students and researchers on campus, but also to increase financial and staffing efficiencies.

During my term as Dean, I have had solid support from the Vice President for Academic Affairs, both personally as I have become comfortable with the position, and professionally from his appreciation of what the library has offered and can offer to the university. However, it will take uniform recognition across campus of the library's importance, combined with appropriate financial and staffing support, for Sherrod Library to excel and be ready to meet the needs of future students and faculty.

Sincerely,

Pat Van Zandt
Dean of University Libraries
Charles C. Sherrod Library
East Tennessee State University
Sherrod Library Overview

The Charles C. Sherrod Library serves the information and research needs of East Tennessee State University. A team of 10 library faculty, 22 administrative and support staff, 22 graduate assistants, 82 student workers (and one dean) provide services for ETSU’s more than 14,000 students, both online and on ground, and more than 2,000 faculty and staff. The fact that Sherrod manages to provide excellent services with so few people is a testament to their hard work and dedication.

The faculty and staff are divided into three reporting units: Research and Instructional Services, Technology and Content Services, and Administration. Faculty members are tenure-track and include two full professors, three associate professors, and five assistant professors. There are two faculty vacancies in Research and Instructional Services (including the Director of the division), both of which have had failed searches and have been vacant for the last academic year; whether this is the result of low salaries offered comparable to other institutions, geographic location, or other factors, it is nonetheless discouraging for staff and faculty struggling to meet the demands of their daily responsibilities.

Despite inadequate staffing and funding, Sherrod faculty and staff have developed innovative services and programs in recent years. Sherrod is a student-and user-centered library. Our active Student Advisory Council provides feedback on library services, collections, and facilities, and takes an active role in the expenditure of the student library fee. That fee has supported building initiatives, print and electronic collections, and most recently the Open Educational Resources initiative. Library faculty from the Division of Research and Instructional Services have developed programs directly aimed at student success and retention, including the peer to peer library ambassador program and the online library research course offered through the School of Continuing Studies and Academic Outreach. Librarians offer workshops for faculty and students on a variety of topics including citation management and copyright.
Sherrod Library has a Faculty Advisory Council providing input and feedback on services for faculty. In addition to supporting faculty needs by offering research instruction to classes, Sherrod recently opened 309, a flexible, technology-enabled space intended to provide a venue for ETSU faculty-led activities with an academic focus such as collaborative learning and presentation. Our Digital Commons and Selected Works showcase the work of ETSU students and faculty, and provide a platform for peer-reviewed journals and conferences. Both of these initiatives come from the Technology and Content Services division, which has also completed a total (and excellent) revision of the library website, a reservation system for group studies, a collection inventory, and other user-centered technologies to enhance the online experience.

Sherrod Library is an active partner with other units on campus. The building houses the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Center for Academic Achievement, the Archives of Appalachia, Academic Technology Services, the Graduate and Undergraduate Student Success Specialists, and the Information Technology Services help desk. All of these units serve the academic and research needs of students and faculty. Most exciting is the partnership with the Center for Teaching Excellence on the Open Educational Resources initiative which, if successful, will significantly affect the costs of education for our students. We will soon welcome departments now housed in the Culp Center during that facility’s renovation, and look forward to exploring new ways to serve our students in cooperation with them.

While our primary focus is our ETSU family, we offer events for the broader community to acquaint them not only with Sherrod Library but with the academic side of ETSU. Most notable is Tables of Content, a dinner with tables hosted by ETSU faculty discussing their research and interests with members of the community. Such events help increase our donor base, which in turn has allowed us to offer scholarships to our student workers and graduate students, a research award for graduate students, an award for an outstanding staff member, and more.
Sherrod Library Mission

The mission of the Charles C. Sherrod Library is to provide innovative, effective, and accessible resources, spaces, and services that support the University’s programs of teaching, research, and service and that promote lifelong learning.

Sherrod Library Vision

The Charles C. Sherrod Library will be an integral partner within the University, preparing our community to shape the future.

Sherrod Library Values

• Civility: We believe that each member of the community deserves to be treated with civility. Civility encompasses: listening when others speak and responding in a courteous manner; speaking and acting with forethought; and showing patience and using tact in dealing with all.

• Excellence: We are dedicated to an excellence centered on a strong work ethic, pride in our work, and service and accountability to our community.

• Collaboration: We believe that collaboration within and outside of the library is the best way to identify and utilize the expertise and creativity necessary to serve our community.

• Innovation: We value innovation and creativity and embrace positive, relevant change that benefits our community.

• Integrity: We adhere to the highest ethical standards of honesty and fairness and we recognize that integrity and ethical behavior are essential elements of our profession.

• Respect: We recognize, value and encourage the varying differences and opinions of others throughout the organization and the community, while providing an environment that is inclusive and diverse.
Sherrod Library Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats/Challenges

The External Environment

**Strengths** – Sherrod Library’s fortunes follow those of ETSU: we are the largest academic library in the largest academic institution in the region. If ETSU’s reputation and financial resources grow, the same can be true for the library. Currently, Sherrod Library has excellent support from students not only monetarily because of the student library fee, but also because the library has become the center of campus geographically and academically. Even more students will visit the library during the time the Culp Center is closed for renovation. We have good relationships with faculty through our Faculty Advisory Council, through events such as Celebration of ETSU Authors and Tables of Content, and through individual contacts among library faculty and staff. The library has established partnerships with units in the building and across campus which have growth potential, most notably, the Center for Academic Achievement, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Archives of Appalachia, Sustainability, the Mary B. Martin School of the Arts, various departments in Student Affairs, the Student Government Association, the Honors College, and more. We have good relationships with the office of Academic Affairs and the President’s office. Sherrod Library is in an excellent position to become an even more vital resource to the campus.

**Weaknesses** – Despite Sherrod’s positive reputation, university circumstances, policies and processes contribute to significant problems. Our funding has been flat for more than a decade, and given inflation, our purchasing power has decreased drastically, resulting in cuts to necessary resources. Our staff numbers have decreased overall during that time, although we have not lost positions over the last six years and have gained one faculty position. We are virtually last among our academic library peers and in the state in library funding, collections, and staffing. We have little voice in defining the programs and courses that we support. Librarian salaries are not competitive with other Tennessee universities and rank last among our peers, and staff salaries are inadequate and embarrassing. The difficulties of
upgrading positions through university human resources, combined with a lack of funds to provide any approved upgrades, make it extremely difficult to reward staff for jobs well done and to train staff for constantly changing technology and library needs. Communication issues on campus mean that we are often not aware of circumstances that may affect us. The campus, despite best efforts, is still siloed and the library is often the last to know.

**Opportunities** – Established partnerships lay the groundwork for continued cooperation, especially around student-centered initiatives such as Open Educational Resources. The recent developments in local healthcare restructuring may provide new pathways to cooperation with the medical school library in the provision of services, collections and research support for the health sciences. The new budget model could encourage the elimination of silos and opportunities for creative funding. For 2018, as part of the new budget process, the Provost supported an annual inflationary increase for library electronic collections. The temporary move of offices from the Culp Center to the library should provide opportunities for innovation and cooperation in providing services contributing to student success and retention. Since almost every student on campus will now have to enter the library for advising, we will happily welcome and assist new users.

**Threats** – The new budget model, while also an opportunity, is a definite threat not only for the library but to virtually all cost centers and units that do not create credit hours. Already underfunded, the library must now compete with all of these units for a very limited amount of funds. The fear is that we will receive only enough funding to keep up business as usual (if that), with no additional funding for innovative projects which contribute to the strategic initiatives of both the library and the university. The Culp Center move, while providing opportunities for collaboration, could be a threat to the existence and perception of the library as library. With Culp closed, students will have very few places to just hang out; Sherrod, as a large building with some open spaces, may seem the next best alternative. Whether this happens or not, the increased number of employees and visitors will result in noise, wear and tear to an already challenged building, and possible security and safety issues. Regarding safety, the overall atmosphere in our country which questions the
value of academia and disregards civility and civil discourse, is an ever more worrisome threat to the security of our building, our university, and our students and employees.

The Internal Environment

**Strengths** - Students are our biggest supporters, with the Student Advisory Committee an active and enthusiastic partner. Our building is open 24/5 and the variety of spaces for study and collaboration are heavily used. Staff from other units in the building join library faculty and staff in contributing to student success and retention. The experience of Sherrod librarians and support staff, some of whom have been at ETSU for many years, make them invaluable contributors to the library and the university. In fact, the faculty and staff are our biggest asset, and do work expected of a much larger number of people. The programs they have developed, such as the peer to peer library ambassador program, are examples of creativity and initiative. Strong and innovative technology services such as Sherrod 309 and a user-friendly website enhance the user experience. An outstanding interlibrary loan service supplements our own limited collection, especially in the area of print books.

**Weaknesses** – To do more than simply provide basic services, we need more faculty and staff, plus more flexibility in changing job descriptions to meet current needs as well as to offer paths to advancement and succession planning. Related to this, we require a larger monetary investment in staff training and development. One of our major areas of need is assessment, and given how stretched our staff are already, we need a person dedicated to assessment. Despite our small numbers, we need better communication and more open conversation within our own library ranks and with the other units in the building. We also need better communication with and development of our donors (in the form of a full-time director of development). Our current development officer is outstanding but can only give us 25% of her time. Our overall marketing efforts to donors and to our own students and faculty need new life. The building is a 20th century edifice trying to meet 21st century needs; it was never meant to welcome the numbers who visit daily, and shows
its age. Finally, we are weakened psychologically by years, really decades, of decreasing investment in library resources and staff.

**Opportunities** – Retirements and staff turnover, while unsettling, provide opportunity for reorganization to meet new needs. With new employees come new experiences and new ideas. The Digital Commons and the Open Educational Resources initiative provide venues for establishing relationships with faculty. The expansion of the online research course and peer to peer ambassador program increase our credibility as partners in the achievement of student success. New and current tenants in the building provide us with collaborative possibilities for expansion of services to students and faculty in exciting ways. A new dean can provide inspiration and leadership. A building plan can demonstrate how the library can be further transformed into a space dedicated to student and faculty success.

**Threats** – Staff retirements and turnover create openings, which recently we have had difficulty filling, particularly in faculty positions. Open positions mean additional work for remaining staff, which in turn fosters resentment and discouragement. New initiatives, while successful, cannot meet their full potential without additional staff to manage them. While change is inevitable with a new dean, change is never easy and is often threatening, and a new dean is an unknown quantity. Relocation of Culp Center offices mean more wear and tear for a building that is already showing its age. The building’s age and design also make it difficult to keep safe and secure.
Sherrod Library Strategic Plan Primary Focus Areas

Sherrod’s plan is organized according to the strategic priorities of the university. Our focus areas and initiatives are briefly summarized below, and expanded in the next section:

1. **Supporting a strategic growth agenda that maximizes the student experience both inside and outside the classroom** – emphasize services and spaces that contribute to student success, including an initiative to encourage adoption of open educational resources by faculty.

2. **Ensuring the diversity and inclusion of people and ideas** – provide a venue for display and discussion of diversity and university values.

3. **Empowering employees to make ETSU a great place to learn, work, and grow** – focus on flexibility in staffing to meet changing needs.

4. **Supporting Excellence in Teaching** – expand current partnerships to integrate information literacy into the curriculum and ensure collections in support of teaching.

5. **Expanding the foundation for scholarly (research and creative activity) excellence and innovation in all disciplines** – support research with collections, technology and personnel.

6. **Leading the region forward through community engagement and service** – develop external programming to engage the community with the library and with ETSU.
Sherrod Library - Succeeding in Our Strategic Focus Areas

1. **Supporting a strategic growth agenda that maximizes the student experience both inside and outside the classroom.**
   a. Ensure library participation in university committees, councils, task forces, and activities involving student engagement and academic success.
   b. Increase services, staffing and activities around student research skills that contribute to student academic success.
   1. Provide academic support for targeted groups: the Library Ambassador peer learning program targets first-year and transfer students on campus with plans to extend to off-campus sites. Support for international/graduate students is planned.
   2. Continue to expand the Digital Commons Faculty Mentor Gallery and Undergraduate Researcher Gallery to encourage undergraduate student research.
   3. Collaborate with academic support units in Sherrod Library to provide expedited student services and to create innovative new services
   c. Provide appropriate spaces and services to encourage student engagement
   1. Involve campus and library building personnel, library users and outside consultant to develop long-term space plan for Sherrod Library, in coordination with campus master plan
   2. Investigate coordinated provision of academic support services within the library, as corollary to b.1. above
   3. Re-imagine TAF-funded labs to include 3D printing, Makerspace and coordinate with interested programs/colleges/departments to establish such a space in the program-neutral library building.
4. Investigate technologies to improve student experience locating and using library resources in the building.

   d. Reduce the costs of education
      1. Collaborate with the Center for Teaching Excellence, Sherrod Student Advisory Council, Student Government Association and others to provide incentives for the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OERs)
      2. Explore options to put textbooks on reserve in the building or online through commercial providers.
      3. Expand library-sponsored donor-funded student scholarships.

   e. Establish regular assessment of library support for student academic success and alignment with student needs
      1. Administer ITHAKA S+R local surveys of undergraduate and graduate/professional students every 4 years beginning in FY18-19.
      2. Collaborate with the Center for Teaching Excellence to design assessment of the Library Ambassador peer learning program
      3. Review and revise library assessment data collection and reporting systems

2. **Ensuring the diversity and inclusion of people and ideas.**
   a. Provide a venue to promote diversity and inclusion to campus and the community
      1. Design, produce and install regularly changing displays in Sherrod Library to engage library visitors and promote university values (e.g., intellectual curiosity, diversity of ideas, critical thinking, and civility).
      2. Collaborate with other units on campus to sponsor programming and to showcase their work in the library (e.g., sustainability, multicultural center, Geosciences, etc.)
3. **Empowering employees to make ETSU a great place to learn, work, and grow.**
   a. Improve internal communication, both within the library and throughout campus
   b. Develop and maintain a staffing plan and budget for professional development and position upgrades per plan.
      1. Establish targets for staffing to meet current and future needs.
      2. Require individual professional development activities aligned with the staffing plan. Provide funding and release time for approved professional development.
   c. Explore and experiment with staffing alternatives to respond to demand for services.
      1. Chatstaff consortial reference service.
   d. Develop and deploy dashboards to show current, relevant performance measures to support data-informed decisions.

4. **Supporting excellence in teaching.**
   a. Partner with academic faculty to improve academic research skills and assess related student learning outcomes.
      1. Collaborate with Center for Teaching Excellence to pursue opportunities to integrate academic research skills with the curriculum
      2. Grow enrollment in online Library Research Skills classes (BGSD 1800)
   b. Expand and improve library collections, both print and online, related to teaching and learning
      1. Increase funding allocated for faculty-requested materials for teaching. Establish investment targets for the planning period.
      2. Coordinate cost sharing by colleges to support multidisciplinary resources.
      3. Use evidence-based assessment program(s) for eBook collection investments.
c. Hire appropriate personnel to support faculty partnership and research consulting services. Consider professional staff, joint faculty appointments, lecturer-faculty, and coordinator appointments.

d. Provide space for faculty collaboration and presentation, and for interdisciplinary cooperation (for example, Sherrod 309, new Quillen presentation space)

5. **Expanding the foundation for scholarly (research and creative activity) excellence and innovation in all disciplines.**
   
a. Assess, prioritize and enhance library collections to support research.
   
   1. Establish investment targets for the planning period.

b. Ensure library participation in/representation on university committees, councils, task forces and activities involving academic and research program planning.

c. Establish regular assessment of library support for research and alignment with faculty needs
   
   1. Administer ITHAKA S+R local survey of faculty every 4 years beginning in FY18-19

d. Provide appropriate technology and personnel for systems and services supporting research (Alma/Primo, OpenAthens, ILLiad/Tipasa, Digital Commons)
   
   1. Maintain adequate staffing and financial support for critical systems

e. Collaborate with the medical library, the offices of the Vice Presidents for Health and Academic Affairs, and others to provide consistent library services for health sciences and participate in planning library support for research resulting from the Ballad Health merger.

f. Collaborate with ITS, ORSPA, and colleges to develop infrastructure and support services for research.
   
   1. Maintain library representation on University Research Advisory Council
2. **Expand Digital Commons @ ETSU and SelectedWorks**
   Expert Galleries for discovery and access to ETSU researchers and their works.
3. **Support collection and use of research impact metrics.**
4. **Provide and promote digital scholarship services including publishing support for eJournals and conferences; ORCID iDs; open access publishing.**
5. **Collaborate with ITS on data management plans, data set description (for discovery) and preservation.**
6. **Plan to develop the capacity to create, maintain, and provide access to unique digital collections relevant to university research.**
7. **Support faculty publishing by funding open access publication charges.**

6. **Leading the region forward through community engagement and service**

   a. Develop external programming aimed at alumni and the surrounding community in order to build the reputation of the library and ETSU and to expand the donor base.

   1. **Tables of Content**
   2. **Collections in Digital Commons @ ETSU**
      - ETSU Alumni Bookshelf
      - Collections in University Archives (e.g., yearbooks, photographs)
   3. **Event for students to get a public library card**
   4. **Explore options to provide alumni access to library collections and services.**