



William L. Clements Library Strategic Long-Range Plan

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IDEAS  FOR ACTION

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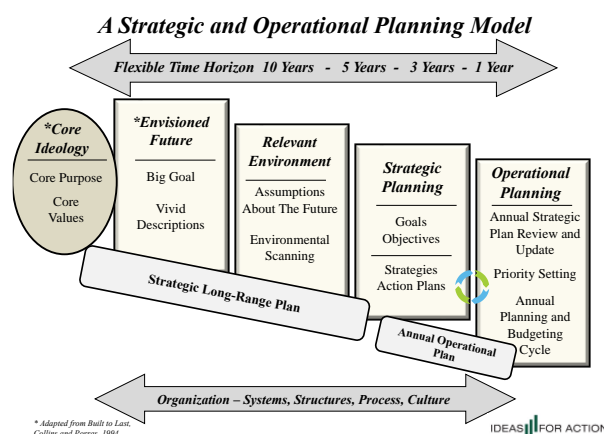
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OVERVIEW

The William L. Clements Library (WCL) has developed the following strategic long-range plan. It describes a desired vision and what will be essential to achieving that vision. It is grounded in *core ideology* and driven by an *envisioned future* that realizes the full potential of WCL's ability to serve its stakeholders. The library's commitments are articulated in *goals* that declare the outcomes or attributes the organization intends to achieve. *Objectives* represent key metrics affecting the library's ability to achieve the goal and articulate the direction in which these issues must be moved. *Strategies* describe how the WCL plans to commit its finite resources to make its vision a reality.

In the future, WCL must adapt to the many differing needs of a constantly evolving campus and scholarly community. Therefore, underlying this plan is the adoption of an ongoing process of planning and thinking strategically, designed to ensure relevance of direction and action over time.

In developing this strategic plan, a framework for planning was utilized, based on a model that organizes conversations about the future into four distinct planning "horizons." Ideas for Action, LLC has found the use of this framework to be a powerful tool. It helps organizations in prioritizing and executing outcomes as well as in ensuring relevance of long-range direction over time.



Envisioned future. The “four planning horizons” framework consists of crafting a comprehensive strategic direction based on the balance between what doesn’t change--the timeless principles of the organization’s core purpose and core values (core ideology) -- and what the organization seeks to become within a 10- to 30-year horizon--what would be possible beyond the restraints of the current environment. The 10- to 30-year horizon is characterized by the articulation of an envisioned future--a BAG (big audacious goal) --and a vivid description--what it will be like to achieve the goal.

Critical factors. The articulation of the envisioned future guides the organization as it considers the factors that will affect its ability to achieve its goals. Building foresight about

the 5- to 10-year horizon--assumptions, opportunities, and critical uncertainties in the likely relevant future as well as emerging strategic mega-issues--suggests critical choices about the potential barriers the organization will face. This foresight also suggests the responses the organization will need to consider in navigating its way toward achievement of its 10- to 30-year goal.

Strategic plan and operational planning. The linkage continues into the 3- to 5-year horizon through the development of a formal long-range strategic plan, in which the organization articulates the outcomes it seeks to achieve for its stakeholders. How will the world be different as a result of what the organization does? Who will benefit and what will the likely results be? How will the work that the Clements staff currently do help to support the goals articulated in this plan? In developing an annual Operational Plan, WCL staff will develop strategies that define the people, dollars and time resources devoted to making incremental progress toward the long-range goals. Action plans, checkpoints, and milestones help to define resource needs and monitor progress.

A strategic long-range plan is not intended as a substitute for an annual operating plan. It does not detail all the initiatives, programs, and activities the organization will undertake in the course of serving its stakeholders and the community, nor can it foresee changes to the underlying assumptions on which key strategic choices were based. Instead, the strategic plan identifies what the Clements is not doing today but must be doing in the future to be successful. Consequently, the strategic plan implies change--doing new things or doing more or less of current activities to ensure successful outcomes. Therefore, a formal Strategic Plan review should be held annually, where WCL can assess changes in the environment, continued relevance of purpose, values, vision, and goals, assess progress made in the previous year, and set priorities for the coming operational planning year.

Strategic planning for the Clements should become the methodology for the organization's operations. If it is successful, this process will not have yielded a plan to be placed on the shelf but will have served as a catalyst for the "process of planning strategically," at all times and at all levels of the organization. This process will require all Clements staff to keep in mind the library's key strategic goals when evaluating new opportunities and reconsidering current processes. In order to achieve its vision, WCL must not look at strategic long-range planning as a one-time project that produces a milestone document of its best thinking at the moment. Instead, the Library must adopt strategic planning as an operational philosophy of ongoing reevaluation of the critical knowledge bases that form the framework of its world, including:

- Sensitivity to campus, stakeholder, and community needs
- Insight into the future environment
- Understanding of the capacity and strategic position of the organization
- Effective analysis of the ethical implications of policy, program, and service choices

The Clements' strategic long-range plan represents a compass the organization will use to guide its work over the next five years. Each year of its life, the plan will be updated based on experience or new circumstances or as new opportunities or challenges emerge. In 2027, WCL should author a new strategic long-range plan based upon the new environment expected to exist in a rapidly evolving world.

10-30 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

~ CORE IDEOLOGY & ENVISIONED FUTURE ~

CORE IDEOLOGY

*Core ideology describes an organization's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. Core ideology consists of two notions: **mission/core purpose** – the organization's reason for being – and **core values** – essential and enduring principles that guide an organization over time.*

Mission/Core Purpose:

- To collect, preserve, share, and promote the study and discussion of primary sources related to all aspects of the history and culture of North America and the Caribbean to 1900.

Core Values:

- **Access** - We provide members of the University of Michigan community, scholars around the world, and the general public with access to the library's intellectual, digital, and physical resources.
- **Stewardship** -We are committed to the ethical acquisition, preservation, and continuing availability of primary source materials that can tell the full story of our history, and to ensuring their availability to future generations of students and scholars.
- **Research** -We support research in our broad collections sparked by intellectual curiosity, ongoing critical evaluation, and a desire to discover and present new knowledge about the past, rooted in the belief that much of our history remains to be written.
- **Inclusion** -We seek to foster a warm and welcoming environment where all staff and visitors feel valued and respected.
- **Partnership** -We collaborate with public and academic communities through substantive conversations and partnerships rooted in mutual trust and awareness of the limits of our own ability and knowledge.

ENVISIONED FUTURE

Envisioned future conveys a concrete, but yet unrealized, vision for the organization. It consists of a **big goal** – a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort – and a **vivid description** – vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

Big Goal:

- Be a dynamic hub for the exploration and study of early American history and culture, where users from all backgrounds and disciplines feel comfortable accessing collections, thinking expansively about them, and building collaborations in the community and across campus to tell their stories.

Vivid Descriptions:

- Everything that the Clements Library does rests on two pillars: the collections and the staff. The Clements continues to build on the strengths of its remarkable holdings as well as builds new collections to support future directions in research. We also continue to build the capabilities and skills of our staff in order to improve how we do our current work and to meet new challenges.
- The reading room is a consistently busy place, populated with a mix of users: Clements Library fellows, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, genealogists, community members, and artists. We are excited to work with researchers of all kinds and have the capacity to accommodate those who need to consult collections, but we also have space and resources for those who are just curious about who we are and what we do. We have ample hours for research as well as ways for people to engage with us and our collections beyond the reading room.
- It's a given that the Clements is a key resource for students across the disciplines at Michigan. They learn about us early in their time here, whether through classes, tours, programs, or training opportunities, and they feel confident using the collections and reaching out to staff for support.
- Clements research fellowships are seen as an exceptionally rewarding program for a wide range of individual scholars that also brings benefits to the campus and the general public. Our fellowship program supports a wide base of users and is adaptive to the needs of different audiences, rooted in the quality of the in-person experience in the reading room.
- We are proud to see the seeds of big projects sprout here—whether that be with fellows connecting with each other in conversation about their work, community members knowing about our resources and trusting that they can approach us with a question or idea, K-12 teachers turning to us for resources as they explore history with their students, faculty members reaching out to us when they are planning new classes or research projects, conference planners wanting to partner with us to build spaces for

scholarly creativity and conversation, and other libraries and museums seeing us as a partner to collaborate or connect collections.

- Undergirding all this work is a fundamental commitment to inclusivity. We are able to take time to assess whether our actions and ideas increase access to our collections, and we have the training and resources to be able to address challenges in this area.
- Clements staff members are well-known and respected in their professional fields and are active at academic and professional conferences. Staff have the ability and interest to pursue new initiatives and engage in collaborations, and are supported in these efforts
- The Clements collections and the community built around them are valued by the university's administration and faculty, and they support the library as a key contributor to the university's academic mission to build critical thinking skills, engage with the community, and educate future leaders.

5-10 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

~ ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE RELEVANT FUTURE ~

Assumption statements will help the Clements purposefully update its strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on the vision of the future that appears in this section, an annual review of these assumptions will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of WCL's strategy and goals.

Social/Cultural Context

1. American history will continue to be a highly charged and politicized area of public discussion.
2. Institutions that cannot show a visible commitment to collections and programs that are of interest and accessible to the widest possible audience will be at an increasing disadvantage in attracting new users.
3. The perceived irrelevance of the humanities to large social questions will likely continue, and it will be necessary to demonstrate continued relevance.
4. The ongoing impact of the pandemic will lead audiences of all kinds to prioritize virtual research and programs over in-person experiences. The pandemic has shown that digital programming is important and will continue to be a need.
5. Climate change disaster planning may be important in the future.
6. Political polarization may make it more difficult to expand our audience of supporters.

Higher Education Context

1. Humanities departments may continue to face declining enrollments in the face of increasing college costs and perceived desirability of STEM degrees.
2. Learning that prioritizes hands-on experience and the creation of projects beyond the traditional research paper will be increasingly important. New models of teaching that prioritize communication and collaboration will become more prevalent.
3. Increasing numbers of students will continue to arrive at college lacking the training to engage with primary sources from the American past, whether in person or virtually.
4. The disappearance of tenure-track positions in the humanities fields that most heavily overlap with the Clements collections and the likely decline in significance of the scholarly monograph will impact our pool of potential researchers and will require us to seek new audiences of users.

Library Sector Context

1. Libraries of all kinds will be under increasing pressure to provide digital access to their collections.
2. The staff pipeline into careers in special collections and archives will continue to be limited by the small number of open positions and the constrained composition of the field.
3. Libraries with collections that do not represent perspectives that represent the full span of the historical experience will face challenges in making their holdings relevant for instruction and research.
4. Materials that reflect the experiences of communities in America that are underrepresented in the documentary record will continue to rise in price and scarcity on the auction and resale market.
5. Special collections libraries and archives will continue to be seen by most students and community members as elite spaces where they are not welcome unless those institutions conduct meaningful outreach.

Institutional Context

1. Contribution to the university's academic and instructional mission will continue to be the primary scale of evaluation for all units on campus.
2. Units that are easy for students and faculty to work with and that provide multiple different modes of engagement will be better positioned in the competition for university resources.
3. Retention of students and faculty of color will continue to be a significant challenge.
4. Budgetary pressures on non-tuition-generating units will continue, if not increase.
5. Our approach to our cataloging backlog across our divisions will continue to limit the discoverability of our collections for audiences on campus and beyond.
6. The demographic makeup of our primary pool of supporters will need to change to ensure the library's future viability.
7. Our lack of connections with other units on campus as well as national/international collections may continue to limit awareness of the Clements.
8. The University's major fundraising campaign will impact WCL fundraising priorities.
9. The impending changes in the University's leadership will have an impact on WCL.
10. Cultural collections will continue to be a niche, and we don't fit easily anywhere in the university's structure.
11. The University's controlling infrastructure--building constraints, additional storage, phone lines, internet, etc.--represent things that are out of our direct control.

Clements Context

1. The Clements staff will remain loyal and dedicated to its work and mission.
2. Decisions at an administrative level will continue to be accomplished with a Board that will be interested in the projects that we do.
3. There will be an increasing need for a diverse set of viewpoints. A more fully representative demographic makeup of supporters will ensure the library's future viability, and the Clements will continue to struggle with recruiting.
4. There will continue to be ongoing reparative legacy work.
5. Until an equity review is performed, there will continue to be concerns among staff about the degree to which they are valued.
6. Continued challenges of limited physical space may make reaching goals difficult.
7. Staffing levels will make attainment of vision goals difficult.
8. Absence of a map curator will be a challenge going forward.
9. Connections with other units on campus as well as international and national connections will enhance the reputation of the Clements.
10. There will be continued assumption of a model of scarcity – the Clements will have to keep trying to get resources and funding from the university.
11. The cost of living in Ann Arbor will increase, impacting both staff and researchers.

3-5 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

~ OUTCOME-ORIENTED GOALS ~

Goals are outcome-oriented statements that represent what will constitute the library's future success. The achievement of each goal will move the organization towards the realization of its vision. The goals are not in any order of priority. Every goal will need to be accomplished if the organization is to fully achieve its vision.

On the next pages, each goal is accompanied by a set of objectives, which represent key issues affecting the library's ability to achieve the goal and articulate milestones against which to measure progress, and strategies, which define specific actions to be accomplished in order to make progress toward the goal.

Goal 1: Heightened National Profile

The Clements will increasingly be seen as a must-visit destination for scholars, broadly defined, interested in American history and culture. The library's reputation for excellence in supporting research will rest on the patrons' interactions with staff as well as the strength and discoverability of the collections.

Goal 2: Student Experience

UM students will be aware of the Clements, its contents, and that the library exists to support their objectives. Students will learn that they are welcome to the Clements and will experience a supportive learning environment when they visit.

Goal 3: Professional Development

CL staff will have the opportunity to engage in professional and scholarly organizations in their fields and will have the financial and organizational support to attend, network, gain skills and knowledge, or present work that increases awareness of the library and its holdings.

Goal 4: Instruction

Instructors at UM [(and elsewhere)] will have a clear understanding of what resources the Clements can offer to their classes and will [think of Clements first when] partner with Clements when planning classes that intersect with our collections.

Goal 5: Community Outreach

Through community outreach the CL will build authentic relationships with a variety of constituencies, creating programs with them, and becoming a key partner in their work.

Goal 6: Organization

The Clements will foster a supportive institutional culture with a structure and processes in which staff and visitors feel valued and empowered.

GOAL 1: HEIGHTENED NATIONAL PROFILE

Goal

The Clements will increasingly be seen as a must-visit destination for scholars, broadly defined, interested in American history and culture. The library's reputation for excellence in supporting research rests on the patrons' interactions with staff as well as the strength and discoverability of the collections.

Objectives:

1. Increase staff participation in conferences.
2. Increase discoverability of collections.
3. Increase partnership with external institutions.
4. Expand our definition of "scholar" and determine which groups we want to focus on reaching.
5. Increase our efforts to play a leadership role in emphasizing the humanities as essential to education of all kinds including STEM.

Strategies:

1. Re-evaluate staffing structure and add staff where possible.
2. Give staff more support/capacity to engage in national conversations.
3. Broader catalog department rather than divisions to tackle backlog and set priorities.
4. Modify/streamline cataloging processes.

Priority - reducing backlog, figuring out day to day operations, determining our core responsibilities and what staff we need.

GOAL 2: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Goal:

UM students will be aware of the Clements, its contents, and that the library exists to support their objectives. Students will learn that they are welcome to the Clements and will experience a supportive learning environment when they visit.

Objectives

1. Improve student and faculty pre-visit and entry protocols.
2. Establish flexible processes related to instructional capacity.
3. Remain creative, open, and excited about student-focused primary source instruction.
4. Educate external partners about the Clements.
5. Establish an assessment program and reevaluate accordingly.

Strategies

1. Gather data about existing student experience and compare with internal objectives.
2. Encourage teaching staff to consider new pedagogies and methods.
3. Continue to build relationships with faculty and external partners, both new and existing.
4. Begin stakeholder discussions re capacity.

GOAL 3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal:

WCL staff will have the opportunity to engage in professional and scholarly organizations in their fields and will have the financial and organizational support to attend, network, gain skills and knowledge, or present work that increases awareness of the library and its holdings.

Objectives:

1. Increase staff development opportunities.
2. Increase staff knowledge of opportunities.
3. Increase staff knowledge of available funding for professional development activities.
4. Increase staff activities in this area, including presentations, publications, and participation.
5. Sustain and grow where possible involvement in internal and external groups, organizations, conferences.

Strategies:

1. Encourage staff who attend an event to report back to the group so that the knowledge can be shared throughout the organization.
2. Expand articles from the Quarto to other publications.
3. Establish peer mentoring/recognition programs within the library.

GOAL 4: INSTRUCTION

Goal:

Instructors at UM [(and elsewhere)] will have a clear understanding of what resources the Clements can offer to their classes and will [think of Clements first when] partner with Clements when planning classes that intersect with our collections.

Objectives:

1. Increase Clements exposure to a wide range of faculty/units/departments.
2. Increase partnership with other cultural institutions.
3. Increase collections processing for increased awareness.
4. Increase understanding of the value of engaged learning on campus.

Strategies:

1. Compile metrics re: instruction and research activities.
2. Gather qualitative feedback from instructors and students.
3. Continue to identify and engage with other units.
4. Develop standard instructional modules that will streamline the process of planning for class visits.
5. Develop description strategies to increase discoverability beyond sending students to the online catalog.

GOAL 5: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Goal:

Through community outreach, the WCL will build authentic relationships with a variety of constituencies, creating programs with them, and becoming a key partner in their work.

Objectives:

1. Increase the ability of interested staff to participate in outreach.
2. Build a staff with the skills to engage with a broad range of stakeholders.
3. Expand creative ways of leveraging our collections to engage community members.
4. Build on university and donor partnerships.

Strategies:

1. Invite new constituents to engage with new accessible technologies and online platforms (e.g., Zooniverse).
2. Set parameters for staff participation in community outreach.
3. Work with people who can connect us to a broader audience.
4. Explore outreach mechanisms that are available with technology.

Priority - Setting parameters around our limited resources, hoping that these parameters will expand over time.

GOAL 6: ORGANIZATION AND CULTURE

Goal:

Clements will foster a supportive institutional culture with a structure and processes in which staff feel valued and empowered to do their best work.

Objectives:

1. Establish clear institutional priorities that will drive staff work and culture.
2. Expand alternative funding sources that can support permanent staff.
3. Improve processing workflows.
4. Increase the sense that WCL is a welcoming environment for a wider range of people.
5. Enhance staff compensation and professional development.
6. Expand and improve communication practices among staff.
7. Increase managers' responsiveness to staff input and solutions to known problems.
8. Increase bi-directional trust, both in the knowledge of staff and in the knowledge of management.

Strategies:

1. Conduct an equity review, including review of classifications, job descriptions, and compensation levels.
2. Compile metrics of accomplishments/ disparities re: other units.
3. Utilize survey/feedback mechanisms.
4. Forecast and acquire space needed for staff and operations.
5. Seek to achieve a more desirable work environment, including:
 - a. Fair and equitable pay, and a clear and concise promotion process.
 - b. A more effective balance of institutional priorities, with opportunities for revision/adaptation as things change.
 - c. Improved communication across the board, including staying up to date on what others are doing, and being included in discussions that impact one's work.
 - d. Greater clarity about decision making, with individuals being empowered to do what they need to do, balancing autonomy with accountability.
 - e. Valuing collaboration, having the chance to do new things together, respect for each others' work, and frequent opportunities for reflection