DIMENNA-NYSELIUS LIBRARY



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

Message from the Dean

It is my honor to present the DiMenna-Nyselius Library Strategic Plan, 2026-2031.

Grounded in the Jesuit values of *cura personalis* and *cura apostolica*, this plan is built upon three foundational pillars: **The Modern Academic Library, Institutional Memory: University Archives,** and **Organizational Strength and Development**. Together, they reflect our commitment to academic excellence, preserving Fairfield's legacy, and cultivating a thriving organization.

This plan represents a year of deep collaboration among our staff and stakeholders. We look forward to implementing these goals, ensuring the DiMenna-Nyselius Library stands as a "third place"[1] for scholarly inquiry—an inspiring gathering place distinct from the classroom and the residence hall where connections become collaborations and every member of our community is empowered to pursue intellectual and personal growth.

Kind regards,
Christina S. McGowan
Dean of the Library & University Librarian

[1] https://courier.unesco.org/en/articles/third-places-true-citizen-spaces

MISSION STATEMENT

The DiMenna-Nyselius Library empowers the members of our community in the development of their whole person, including their intellectual, psychological, spiritual, and professional exploration; their growth as critical thinkers; their endeavors as knowledge creators; and their quest for lifelong fulfillment.

Fairfield UNIVERSITY

DiMenna-Nyselius Library

Organizational Values

Exceptional Service
We strive to proactively meet the needs of our community and put our users first by providing timely service, equitable access, and diverse resources. We assist our users with compassion and care for their whole person.

Inclusive Community
We value the diversity and experiences of our community and aspire to create welcoming, inclusive, and equitable spaces, both within the physical building and online.

Collaboration
We work closely with each other and with a broad spectrum of community and campus partners, building relationships to improve services, resources, and programs for all.

Institutional Memory
We play a lead role in the stewardship of Fairfield University's historical and cultural resources, through the preservation and management of institutional records and objects, for current researchers and future generations.

Innovation
We rise to the challenge of our users' rapidly changing needs through adaptability, creativity, and trying out new tools, methodologies, and ideas.



Curiosity
We encourage a culture of engagement and exploration through the development of critical thinking and thoughtful reflection. We prepare our community with the information and skills needed to become knowledge creators and to develop a desire for self-education.

Academic & Intellectual Freedom
We believe our community's right to free inquiry is essential to the mission and success of our institution. We provide access to a wide range of information and viewpoints through the resources we make available.

Staff Development & Professional Growth
We appreciate the diverse talents of our staff and encourage one another to develop our potential by taking advantage of opportunities to grow our skills and abilities.

Goal: The Modern Academic Library

As Fairfield University has grown in national prominence and expanded its geographic footprint, the Library has risen alongside it—not as a supporting player but as an essential partner, woven into the intellectual fabric of the institution. The modern academic library is defined by the relationships it forms with its community and by its contributions to the academic success of students and faculty.

The Library excels at forging meaningful connections in an increasingly complex and expansive University environment. We connect people with resources and ideas; we connect students and faculty with scholarship and community; we bridge disciplines and distances. This connective power is fueled by two core strengths: the spaces we create and the expertise we share.

Foster discovery and meaningful engagement with ideas by connecting people to opportunities, resources, and collaborative experiences that spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and advance the University's intellectual and spiritual mission.

- Ground Library services, collections, programs, policies, and partnerships in the University's Jesuit mission and identity.

- Cultivate meaningful connections across the University community and beyond by positioning the Library as a catalyst for intellectual exchange, interdisciplinary collaboration, and civic engagement.
- Advance the research capacity of the University community.
- Establish staff as thought leaders on emerging technologies, and work with the University community to understand implications for scholarship, research, and the common good.
- Enhance student success and retention by coordinating with Academic Commons partners to provide academic support, and inclusive and welcoming spaces that inspire creativity, critical thinking, and intellectual exploration.





Goal: Institutional Memory – University Archives

The University Archives embodies the Jesuit practice of *cura apostolica*—care for the institution and its mission—by preserving and providing access to Fairfield's institutional memory. Documenting our past and present in both physical and digital formats is essential for institutional stewardship that will enable us to tell our own story: who we are, who we have been, and who we aspire to become. As Fairfield University continues to grow in national prominence and organizational maturity, a strengthened Archives—with enhanced staffing, technology, and space—will safeguard our legacy for future generations. By becoming more visible and integrated across campus, the Archives will empower our community to draw upon our shared history as we shape our future and continue to educate people for others.

Strengthen the University Archives as the enduring steward of Fairfield University's institutional memory and an engaged partner with the community.

- Ensure that space, staffing, and policies for the University Archives are commensurate with the University's stature as a nationally prominent institution.
- Adopt technology that enhances the discoverability, accessibility, and preservation of Fairfield's institutional memory, at a level commensurate with the University's national prominence.
- Increase the visibility and integration of the University Archives so that institutional memory is accessible, valued, and actively used to advance teaching, research, and University identity.

Goal: Organizational Strength & Development

A thriving organization begins with its people. Guided by *cura personalis*,[2] the Library invests in the holistic flourishing of each staff member — fostering clarity in their roles, confidence in their expertise, and the professional development and scholarly engagement that empowers them to lead in the field. Guided by *cura apostolica*,[3] this care extends outward — expressed through staff who serve as campus partners, mentors to the next generation, and ambassadors of the University's Jesuit mission, sustained by operations that honor our responsibility to our common home.

This is a mutual investment. When staff have what they need to flourish, the Library's full mission becomes achievable — making this goal the foundation upon which our other priorities rest.

Cultivate a thriving organization rooted in *cura personalis* and *cura apostolica* that enables staff to flourish and strengthens the Library's capacity to advance the University's mission.

- Foster a workplace culture where staff feel valued, supported, and connected through practices that promote well-being, diversity, belonging, and a shared commitment to the Library's mission.
- Support staff in pursuing professional development and scholarly engagement that deepens expertise, advances individual growth, and strengthens the Library's contributions to the profession.
- Continue to foster a culture of University-wide engagement that amplifies staff influence, facilitates connections, and enhances Library visibility across University campuses.
- Draw on the depth of staff expertise to mentor and develop the next generation of library professionals — creating experiential learning opportunities that prepare Fairfield students and early-career librarians to make meaningful contributions to the academic library profession.
- Strengthen the Library as a contributor to student flourishing and long-term success by expanding student employment, internships, and other opportunities that foster belonging, workforce readiness, and achievement.
- Integrate sustainable thinking into Library decision-making and daily operations, creating systems and practices that reflect the universal apostolic preference of "caring for our common home."



Acknowledgments

A strategic plan is only as strong as the people behind it—and we are deeply grateful to the library staff whose dedication and trust brought this plan to life. Special thanks to Melissa Clark, assistant to the dean, for coordinating all logistics and scheduling.

The Strategic Planning Committee included Christina S. McGowan, dean of the library and university librarian; Curtis Ferree, associate dean for public services and coordinator of the academic commons partnership; John Novak, former associate dean for technical services and the budget; Vic Johnson, assessment librarian; Ann Victor, acquisitions and cataloging librarian; and Brendan Aucoin, head of systems.

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[2] https://www.jesuits.org/about-us/glossary

[3] https://www.jesuits.org/stories/care-for-the-person-care-for-the-mission-why-cura-apostolica-with-fr-matt-carnes-sj

[4] https://www.jesuits.global/uap