

LOOK
NORTH
UNT 2030

DEVELOP | DISCOVER | DRIVE



WHO WE ARE

The UNT Libraries make a difference.

We facilitate teaching, learning, and research for students, faculty, and information seekers at UNT and around the world.

Our expert staff, spaces, services, and collections support academic success and lifelong learning.



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Executive Summary

Strategic Direction Through 2030

The UNT Libraries will be an essential learning, teaching, and research partner for all students and faculty from day one of their UNT experiences through their working careers. By 2030, we will improve coordination, prioritization, and assessment of high-impact initiatives, and invest in data-informed decision making needed to expand successful efforts across the university. We will generate campaigns to strengthen technological literacy and collaborate with campus units to enhance career readiness, preparing students for scholarly pursuits and increasing what they can do for the Texas workforce.

Unique Role, Contribution, and Strengths

The UNT Libraries make a difference. Our portfolio of services and breadth of collections are here to positively impact everyone: every single student, each faculty member, and all of the employees. We empower student achievement through welcoming, user-centered library services, spaces, and collections that support their learning and discovery, and directly impact learning, research, daily life, affordability, and retention. Our expertise and willingness to collaborate enable faculty to enhance student learning, achieve their scholarship goals, and conduct in-depth research. Our renowned digital and physical collections bring worldwide recognition to the library and to the university. Together, these strengths make the Libraries a trusted, visible, and impactful presence at UNT.

Navigating External Forces, Trends, and Contexts

UNT Libraries face the same challenges as the entire campus when it comes to changing workforce demands and declining budgets. As colleges alter degree programs and faculty adapt their research interests, the libraries' collections and services must adapt — different scholarly resources are needed, and our expertise needs also change. The UNT Libraries have extensive experience in making adjustments, as evidenced by our adaptation to new types of literacies, open educational resources, digital scholarship, and increasing interdisciplinary research.

As colleges face recruiting and enrollment challenges, the corresponding variation in student fee funding affects the libraries' budget. Reduced funding presents an opportunity to assess scalability of services, collection formats, and increase partnerships.

External challenges facing the UNT Libraries include pervasive misinformation and the emergence of AI, allowing us to lead in information literacy, introduce an AI literacy campaign, and convene campus constituents in those pursuits. This work reinforces the university's commitment to student success, innovation, access, and lifelong learning.

Strategic Goals (2026-2030)

- **Career Readiness @ the UNT Libraries:** Building social and professional momentum is a *Look North* priority. Furthermore, *Look North* centers high expectations and levels of support as a centerpiece of research, workforce readiness, and experimentation.

The UNT Libraries equip students, faculty, and staff with information literacy, research skills, and experiences they need to thrive academically and prosper in a rapidly evolving workforce, while ensuring access, affordability, and the removal of barriers through research assistance and support. To achieve this, library employee development must be intentionally aligned with career readiness, equipping staff to build strong campus partnerships and deliver scalable, hands-on learning opportunities that develop transferable skills and prepare students for meaningful careers.

- **UNT Libraries, the Research Lifecycle, and Digital Transformation:** UNT is the largest R1 institution in North Texas, and *Look North* encourages academic environments that foster research, discovery, and transformation, as well as the application of AI and other technologies.

To accomplish this, the UNT Libraries will be embedded early and deeply across the research lifecycle, from undergraduate discovery to advanced, interdisciplinary scholarship. We will cultivate research skills and AI literacy, provide access to technologies, and develop unique collections that strengthen a culture of innovation on campus. Students will graduate with research literacy, innovation expertise, professional viability, and real-world experience.

- **UNT Libraries = Trusted Hub for Collaboration:** Innovative learning environments, strategic partnerships, and community engagement are key tenets of *Look North*. The UNT Libraries are a convenor and connector — a trusted hub with hands-on learning opportunities and scholarly gatherings linking students, faculty, industry, artists, nonprofits, and communities.

The UNT Libraries aspire to expand our reach, share our expertise, and demonstrate our role as an integrated partner in the university's teaching and research mission. To accomplish this, the UNT Libraries will intentionally expand interdisciplinary partnerships, strengthen cross-campus and community connections, and create scalable engagement models. We will host programs and gatherings that bring groups together, promote capabilities such as in-depth research and grant assistance, and extend the Libraries' presence and impact across physical, digital, and community spaces.

Key Outcomes & Metrics

Core Metrics: Established Benchmarks that Define University Performance

1st to 2nd year retention

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **77%** | UNT Target (2030): **90%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Through open educational resources, course reserves, and research assistance, UNT Libraries reduce financial and academic barriers that affect whether students return for their second year.

4-year graduation rate

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **42%** | UNT Target (2030): **65%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Affordable access to course materials and academic support services reduce financial barriers that affect student persistence toward degree completion.

6-year graduation rate

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **61%** | UNT Target (2030): **80%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Affordable access to course materials and academic support services reduce financial barriers that affect student persistence toward degree completion.

Annual R&D expenditures

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **\$124M** | UNT Target (2030): **\$250M**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Subject librarians, specialized research collections, and evidence synthesis services support faculty and student research productivity across all disciplines.

Doctoral degrees awarded

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **286** | UNT Target (2030): **300**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Specialized collections, subject librarian expertise, and research lifecycle programming support doctoral scholars from proposal development through completion and publication.

Time to value

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **6 years** | UNT Target (2030): **Decrease time for programs over median**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Open educational resources and course reserve programs reduce the cost of education, while career readiness programming helps students build workforce-ready skills before graduation.

Emergent Metrics: Important Dimensions of Our Success that Require New Approaches

Post-graduation placement: Percentage of graduates placed in high-demand occupations or graduate and professional programs

N/A

Career-aligned learning: Percentage of academic programs that integrate internships, industry-sponsored projects, or other work-integrated learning experiences

The UNT Libraries is one of the largest student employers on campus following Dining and Housing. Through employment of over 250 students and hosting numerous practicums and internships each year, the Libraries help students gain practical experience, transferable skills, and technical competencies that they will take into the workforce.

We will conduct a career readiness survey to establish baseline satisfaction levels of career preparedness with our student employees (students, graduate services assistants, graduate research assistants). The UNT Libraries intend to expand this assessment to more students outside of the libraries through partnerships with other on-campus employers.

Awards and recognitions: Prestigious awards, exhibitions, and performances achieved by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni

The UNT Libraries, its departments, services, and employees receive regular recognition from local, state, regional, national, and international bodies. Employees also hold prestigious roles in professional associations. This information will be systematically assembled and reported beginning in FY27.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: New ventures, startups, and public impact projects launched by students, faculty, and alumni

N/A

Student and alumni engagement: Perceptions of how well UNT prepares graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose

N/A

Unit-Level Metrics: Other Important Priority Metrics Tracked at the Unit Level

- **Contribution to Affordability: Provision of required course resources and tools, including support of open educational resources, course reserves, and technologies such as laptops and calculators.** Removing barriers to affordability and accessibility by providing open educational resources and other no-cost content benefits students academically and financially, contributing to persistence and retention.
- **Faculty and Staff Research: Contributions to university recognition and awareness through grant proposals, awards garnered, and the resulting scholarship.** Research effort results in impact; impact garners recognition; recognition affects reputation; reputation affects recruitment; and recruitment affects retention, partnerships, and funding. Highlighting the research and scholarly successes of the UNT Libraries is highlighting UNT's successes.

Goals in Action

Develop the potential of UNT students, faculty, staff, and community members

Career Readiness @ the UNT Libraries

The UNT Libraries equip students, faculty, and staff with information literacy, research skills, and experiences they need to thrive academically and prosper in a rapidly evolving workforce, while ensuring access, affordability, and the removal of barriers through research assistance and support. To achieve this, library employee development must be intentionally aligned with career readiness, equipping staff to build strong campus partnerships and deliver scalable, hands-on learning opportunities that develop transferable skills and prepare students for meaningful careers.

Our intent over the next five years is to:

- Integrate career readiness competencies into library services, collections, programming, instructional activities, and operations.
 - Adapt collections, services, and discovery tools to support new educational and workforce models.
 - Expand collaborations on campus in order to improve resources related to career readiness.
 - Allocate revenue to support stipends/paid short-term internships and fellowships
 - Assess our student employees' experiences related to skill development and professional growth.
- Develop library employees to support expertise in teaching, research, outreach, and emerging technologies.
 - Support professional development opportunities that align with evolving student, workforce, and institutional needs.
 - Foster a collaborative workplace that empowers employees to innovate, contribute ideas, and sustain high-quality, student-centered services.
- Strengthen mentorship, teaching, and experiential learning opportunities.
 - Deepen partnerships with faculty and embed librarians in coursework for career-connected learning.
 - Increase internships/practicum opportunities and inter-departmental mentorships for student employees.
 - Investigate and implement various immersive and experiential learning spaces.
 - Allow for student participation on teams applying for the internal University Libraries Research and Innovation Grant program.
 - Develop more opportunities for students (and our student employees) to present posters, publications, and work experiences through events like our current Student Snapshot Symposium.

Discover new knowledge and insights that bridge traditional academic disciplines

Libraries, the Research Lifecycle, and Digital Transformation

UNT is the largest R1 institution in North Texas, and *Look North* encourages academic environments that foster research, discovery, and transformation. To accomplish this, the UNT Libraries aim to be embedded early and deeply in the research lifecycle, from undergraduate discovery to advanced, interdisciplinary scholarship. We will cultivate research skills and AI literacy, provide access to technologies, and develop unique collections that strengthen a culture of innovation on campus. Students will graduate with research literacy, innovation expertise, professional viability, and real-world experience.

Our intent over the next five years is to:

- Grow research literacy programming, offering programs covering the stages of the research lifecycle, from initiation through execution to authoring and archiving.
 - Establish and promote evidence synthesis assistance, grant-seeking resources, and repositories.
 - Embed ourselves early and often in research, grants, and fundraising conversations, becoming partners in proposals.
 - Expand undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, such as creating student-driven research groups.
 - Host symposia, showcases, competitions, and events that build resumes and highlight student innovation.
 - Increase opportunities for experiential learning by incorporating library resources into curricula.
 - Facilitate research discussions that explore both successful and unsuccessful outcomes to strengthen a culture of innovation and foster student creativity.
- Develop resources, technology, and physical/virtual spaces that encourage interdisciplinary experimentation, discovery, and problem-solving.
 - Support emerging research areas and promote access to high-cost tools and spaces across majors.
 - Ensure flexible, inviting learning environments for focused study, collaboration, and experimentation.
 - Provide opportunities through our unique research collections for original research accessible to students in all disciplines.
 - Strengthen our open educational resource and open access initiatives, reducing financial barriers.
- Serve as the campus nexus for sharing basic skills, critical thinking regarding application of AI, and highlighting its practical utility for employees.
 - Establish sustainability plan for AI initiatives.
 - Refine the libraries' AI literacy framework.
 - Cultivate staff competencies.

- Pilot AI literacy through instruction sessions for students, workshops for faculty, and events showcasing employees' use of AI.
- Establish partnerships with campus AI initiatives.

Drive creative advances, partnerships, and new models of higher education

UNT Libraries = Trusted Hub for Collaboration

Innovative learning environments, strategic partnerships, and community engagement are key tenets of *Look North*. The UNT Libraries are a convenor and connector — a trusted hub with hands-on learning opportunities and scholarly gatherings linking students, faculty, industry, artists, nonprofits, and communities.

Our intent over the next five years is to:

- Build trust.
 - Develop and assess robust systems to track and tell impact stories related to student career outcomes, grants, and community benefits.
 - Demonstrate the Libraries' institutional impact through transparent assessment, storytelling, and partnership engagement.
 - Build institutional trust by documenting and communicating the Libraries' contributions to student success, research activity, and community engagement.
- Increase awareness of library programs, services, spaces, and collections.
 - Construct a UNT Libraries 'road show' to promote offerings to various campus committees, student organizations, residence halls, etc.
 - Take the 'road show' into the community, highlighting services and collections relevant to groups like Chambers of Commerce, city governments, and K-12 institutions.
 - Create more direct marketing to research clusters, department chairs, and adjuncts.
- Increase community outreach.
 - Initiate regular interactions with libraries at other educational institutions in the metroplex to reduce duplication of effort, pool resources for programming and instruction, and idea generation.
 - Cultivate and strengthen community engagement and regional partnerships with campus and regional organizations that advance teaching, learning, and research.
 - Host community lectures, workshops, and events, expanding UNT's reach and illuminating UNT faculty and student research in the community.
 - Partner with external organizations to provide spaces to exhibit student and faculty work and student curated exhibits.