

Collaborative, Staff-Led Strategic Planning... in a Global Pandemic!

Background

In March 2020, the Ohio University Libraries embarked on a staff-led, collaborative project to refresh the organization's strategic plan. At the same time, the Libraries transitioned to a remote work environment in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. A grassroots strategic planning process was bound to be a challenging, but rewarding project... these experiences were magnified in the remote work environment. The strategic planning process was completed over a 10-month period with most staff working remotely.

Approach

The executive committee, made up of the dean and assistant deans, initiated a charge for a staff-led strategic planning process. The charge outlined the goals and important values of the project. We were named co-chairs of the strategic planning coordinating committee and were tasked with carrying out the charge included designing our approach, project management, and participating in all phases of the work. We employed a hub-and-spoke model with subcommittees assigned to major tasks anchored by the coordinating committee.



Communication

- + Weekly coordinating committee and subcommittee meetings
- + Biweekly all-staff meetings
- + Blog
- + Internal shared document storage

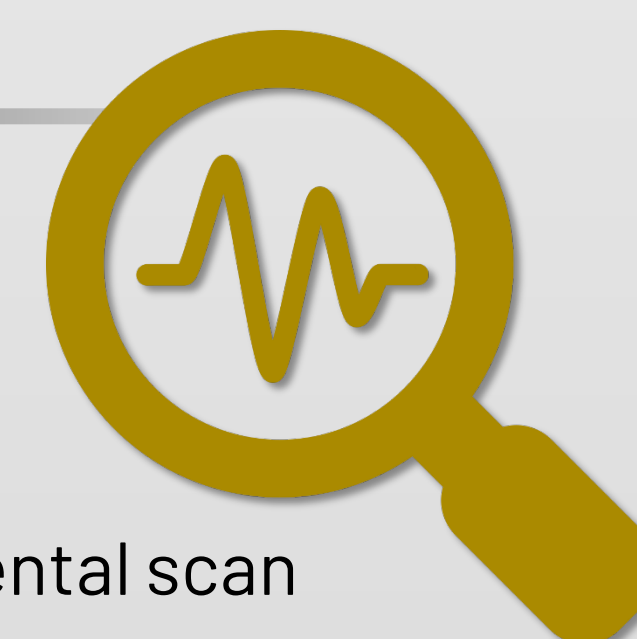


Coordinating Committee

- + Led by co-chairs Katy and Ryan
- + Made up of representatives from all functional units of the library
- + Each member served as a co-chair of a subcommittee
- + Met weekly to communicate progress, brainstorm, and provide feedback

Environmental Scan Subcommittee

- + Tasked with conducting an environmental scan to highlight contemporary issues.
- Methods included:**
 - + Review of 21 peer institutions
 - + Literature review of library and higher education journals
 - + Review of institutional communications



Stakeholders Research Subcommittee

- + Tasked with understanding the needs of stakeholder and identifying service gaps.
- Methods included:**
 - + Surveying stakeholders including library staff, students, faculty, community members, and others.
 - + Conducted focus groups with library staff, students, faculty, and community members.
 - + Analyzed a sample of online chat reference transactions.



Themes & Initiatives Subcommittee

- + Digested findings and surfaced themes.
- + Conducted staff surveys and open sessions to refine possible themes and initiatives.
- + Wrote strategic plan with iterative staff and executive feedback.



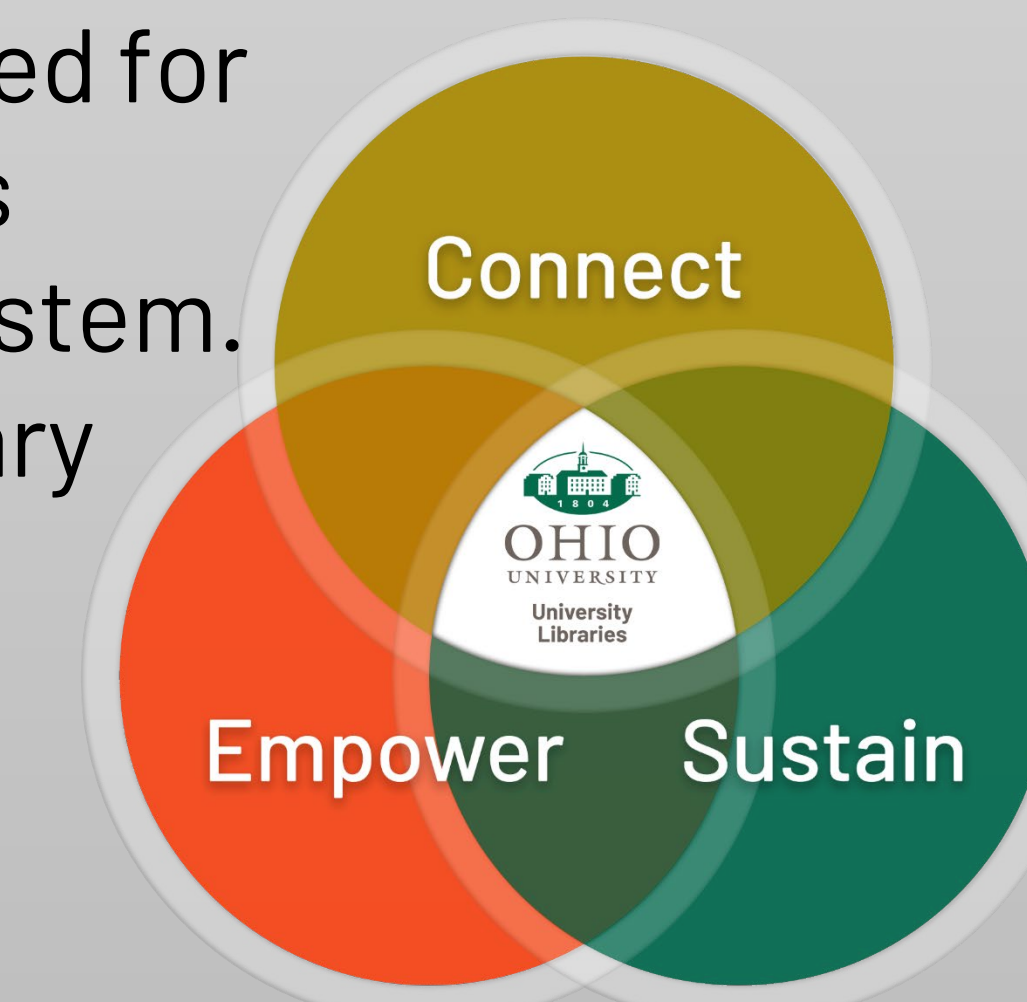
Challenges

- + Stakeholder research happened in the summer during a pandemic. This made stakeholder availability extremely limited.
- + The process was entirely conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams. This added to the already or busy schedule of online meetings for colleagues.
- + Immense workloads as we took on this project as we also reimagined our workflows in response to COVID-19.



Rewards

- + The strategic planning project provided an opportunity for colleagues to connect and work toward a common goal.
- + The online environment allowed for equitable participation across campuses in the university system.
- + Helped library staff distill library values and goals as we envisioned services in a world changed by a global shared experience.
- + Strengthened organizational culture.



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