

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Western Libraries Space Master Plan (WLSMP) represents an exciting next step in the realization of the future libraries at Western University. Building on the 2015 *Western Libraries Strategic Plan*, the Space Master Plan was undertaken over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year. Together, the Strategic Plan and the Space Master Plan lay out a comprehensive vision and strategy for the future of Western Libraries.

BACKGROUND

The libraries at Western are among the most significant places on campus, and home to a series of unique and remarkable collections. Library facilities include:

- the D.B. Weldon Library (Weldon), located at the heart of campus, housing the Archives and Research Collections Centre (ARCC) and the Map and Data Centre (MDC);
- the Allyn & Betty Taylor Library (Taylor), located within the Natural Sciences Centre;
- the C.B. 'Bud' Johnston Library in the Ivey Business School;
- the John & Dotsa Bitove Family Law Library in the Law Building;

- the Faculty of Education Library in the John G. Althouse College Building;
- the Music Library in Talbot College;
- the Research Depository Library in the Dentistry Building, a non-occupied, staff-only storage location; and
- Library staff space within Elborn College.

The Master Plan includes an analysis of each of these facilities while focusing on Weldon and Taylor, the two largest and most heavily-used libraries on campus. With almost 2.1M combined visitors each year, and more than 9,800 daily visitors during busy periods, these facilities are a critical resource for Western's students, researchers, and faculty. Despite their importance, however, both face significant challenges:

- Learning spaces do not support the range of activities required by current pedagogy and contemporary scholarship;
- Navigation and wayfinding are compromised, limiting engagement with collections and services;
- Building infrastructure is outdated, compromising performance, energy efficiency,

- and occupant comfort while falling short of current code requirements;
- The experiential quality of the libraries as places does not reflect Western's commitment to excellence, and fails to inspire the sense of innovation, excitement, and discovery that characterizes a world-class academic institution.

The Master Plan addresses these challenges through development of a new program for each library, proposed plans for each library, and an infrastructure and phasing strategy that describes how these proposals could be undertaken as a series of discrete, phased projects.



PROCESS

The Master Plan draws on a wealth of input and insight that was gathered through three

mechanisms: the background data collected during the development of the Western Libraries Strategic Plan, the data collected as part of the 2016 LibQual Survey, and specific engagement sessions convened over the course of Master Plan development that focused on more detailed issues of programming and planning. All told, the Master Plan combines the input of more than 4,600 students and more than 300 faculty, staff, and campus partners.

VISION

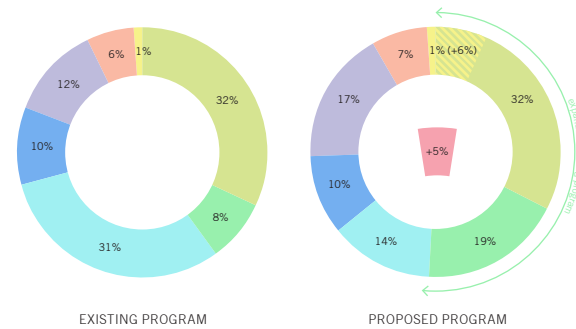
The engagement process culminated in the development of a Space Vision for the project:

"Western Libraries provides learning and research environments that inspire and engage Western's learners, teachers and researchers. Western Libraries' spaces are a dynamic, intellectual and cultural hub for campus. Our libraries, in form and function, are a platform for learning, discovery, research, and community engagement"

Onto this vision, the project team layered ten 'future trajectories' that reflect both the specific aspirations of Western Libraries and the broader changes shaping contemporary academic

institutions. Together, the Vision and Trajectories were distilled into five program goals for Western Libraries:

- to increase and improve learning and research space, enabling new modes of scholarship and collaboration;
- to decrease collections footprints, in order to accommodate new space for learning and discovery within the libraries;
- to provide community space that builds the library's role as the heart of campus;
- to provide staff space that functions well and improves collaboration; and
- to enable partnerships that enhance Western Libraries and are aligned with their strategic vision.



MASTER PROGRAM

From these goals, the project team developed a Master Program describing the programs, functions, and adjacencies required to fulfill the Vision, while acknowledging the opportunities and constraints that exist within the Library's existing spatial framework. Program and plans were developed in an iterative process in order to ensure alignment between Vision, Program, and Plans. Key elements include:

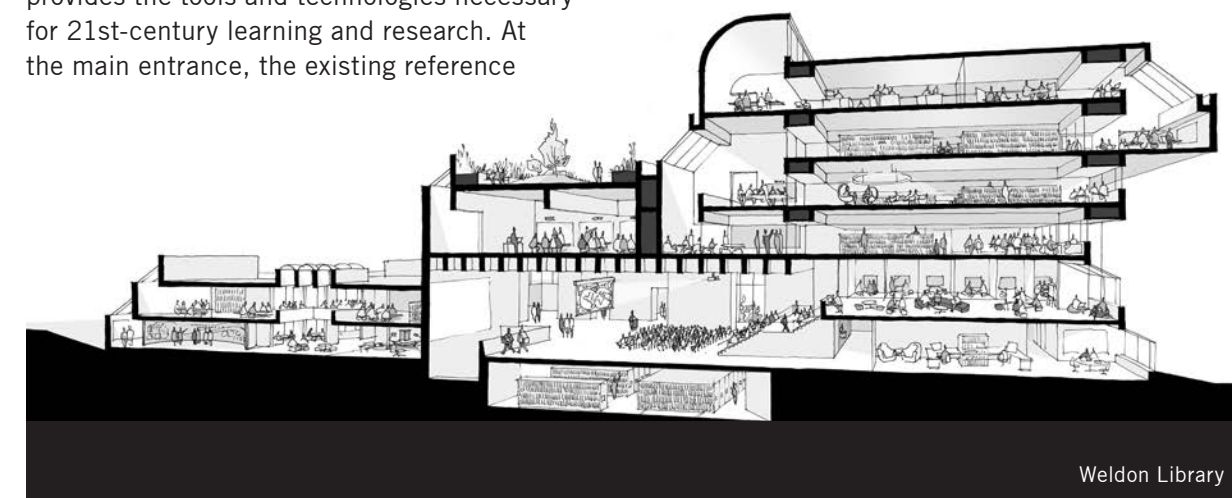
- A 23% increase in overall learning space, with an emphasis on collaborative, social, and technology-enabled programs;
- A 34% reduction in the Western campus' overall study space shortfall relative to Council of Ontario Universities standards;
- New showcase program components:
 Weldon: a two-storey Learning Commons; a Graduate Student Commons; a Digital Scholarship Centre; and enhanced space for community outreach and engagement
 Taylor: an expanded Learning Commons with associated Research Commons; new student support facilities; and an expanded program for specialised learning functions, including a technology sandbox and makerspace.

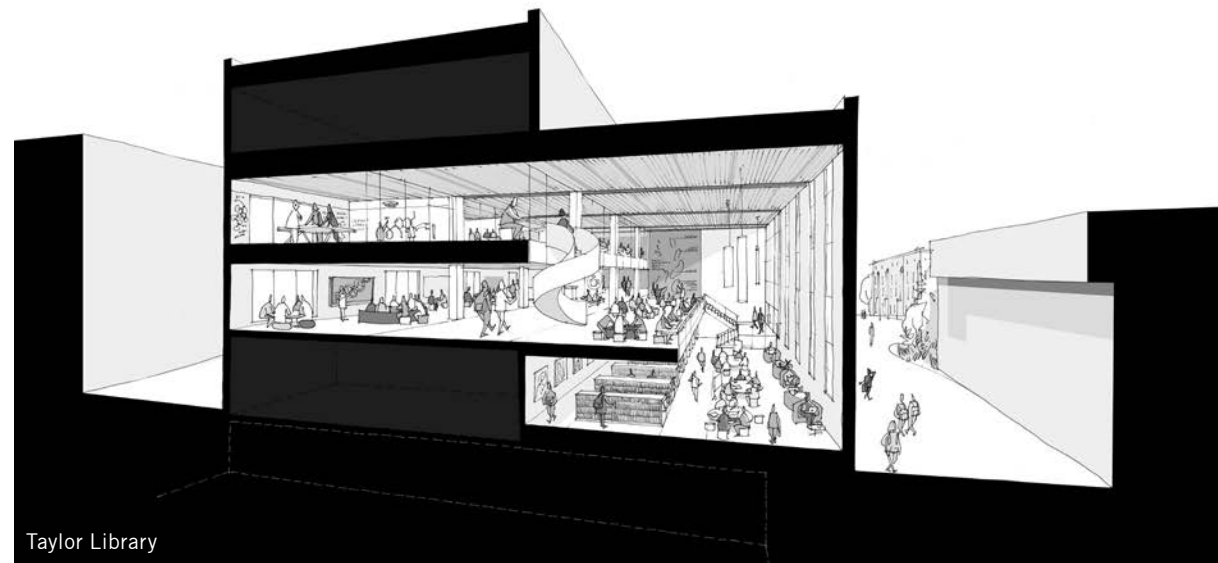
- Collocation of staff currently distributed across library facilities, in order to facilitate new models of work, improve collaboration and enhance service for students and researchers.

MASTER PLAN

Planning in Weldon is structured around a journey of discovery: strategic interventions open up new, more intuitive routes through the building, putting the environments, services, and resources of the library on display. At ground level, a new Digital Scholarship Centre provides the tools and technologies necessary for 21st-century learning and research. At the main entrance, the existing reference

hall is transformed into a vibrant two-storey Learning Commons that will support learning, collaboration and outreach in the heart of the library. Throughout the building, collections, learning spaces, and specialist programs are intermingled, creating a rich variety of learning environments and putting the spaces and resources of the library on display. An expanded circulation core, in keeping with the building's original design, will enhance circulation and access while giving Weldon a new and inviting aspect towards Western Road.





Taylor Library

At Taylor, the existing stack tower is reconceived as a three-storey atrium space, creating an expanded, multi-level Learning and Research Commons that will enhance the library's entry sequence and presence on campus. As at Weldon, new student services and specialised learning spaces are organized to put these programs on display. The intermingling of resources and learning spaces creates a range of different environments while maximizing moments of discovery.

Planning strategies for both buildings are grounded in fundamental principles of good spatial organization and design, with an emphasis on clear and intuitive navigation, spatial interest, variety, and quality, and thoughtful use of existing windows and other architectural elements in order to maximize daylight and views within the buildings. Building

the plans from these clear, consistent, and fundamental principles ensures that, while they describe transformative library environments, they also retain sufficient flexibility to adapt to unforeseen needs and technologies while accommodating a phased execution.

EXECUTION STRATEGY

Finally, the Master Plan identifies a potential phasing approach for the libraries, identifying necessary 'enabling works' required to undertake future projects; key 'quick win' projects that could be undertaken in the near term; and a longer-term project delineation and sequencing in order to enable the full transformation of the libraries. Engineering requirements are identified for both Weldon and Taylor, and preliminary cost estimates for each of the phased projects are provided.

CONCLUSION

The Western Libraries Space Master Plan provides a comprehensive road map for Western Libraries' transformation into a 21st century academic and research library system—one that reflects the needs of today's students while offering the flexibility and resources to accommodate the needs of tomorrow's students as well. Drawing on a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and stakeholder engagement, the plan combines the broad vision of the University's Strategic Plan, the Western Libraries Strategic Plan, and the specific aspirations of thousands of students, researchers, faculty, and staff. It synthesizes these aspirations into a project vision, program, and plans that will enable transformative and much-needed change while remaining responsive to future needs, programs and technologies.

The result is an act of growth and stewardship for Western Libraries: a transformation that will provide a new diversity of supportive learning environments for students and researchers, encourage collaboration across fields and disciplines, and embody the aspirations of the University as a whole.

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan serves several purposes:

1. It provides design team(s), users and administration with an integrated document summarizing high level requirements for future projects;
2. It acts as a reference manual with which to monitor and manage future development, ensuring that individual design solutions are oriented towards a larger vision;
3. It describes a programmatic vision that can be used to develop administrative and organizational policies, procedures, and services for the Library;
4. It provides a comprehensive project overview from which a funding strategy and philanthropic campaign can be developed;
5. It includes project information organized in such a way as to clarify opportunities for optimal building functioning for intended use and users; and
6. It provides administration with a reference manual in order to plan for the phasing of individual projects and the ongoing operation of the buildings.