

A Librarian's Toolbox

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Why Academic Libraries Matter

Academic libraries sit at the heart of university life — serving students, faculty, researchers, and the broader community. In an era of rapid technological change, their roles have multiplied and deepened.



Central Hub

The central hub of the university community — where lasting connections between people, ideas, and disciplines happen every day.



Digital Transformation

Digitalization has fundamentally reshaped librarians' duties, expanding their expertise well beyond physical collections.



Open & Innovative

Open access, digital tools, scholarly publishing, and innovation now define the modern library's service portfolio.



A Sanctuary

A calm, welcoming space to study, reflect, and create — one of the few places on campus designed purely for learning.

Quality Indicators for a Library

Library quality is no longer measured solely by the size of its collection. Accreditation bodies and university rankings now assess libraries against a rich set of criteria that reflect modern academic needs.

Resources, Facilities & Budget

Adequate funding, physical infrastructure, and breadth of collections — print and digital — form the foundation of quality assessment.

Services Adapted to Modern Tech Trends

Integration of digital platforms, AI tools, and responsive online services demonstrates institutional agility.

Frequency of Visits & Resource Utilization

Usage data — foot traffic, database queries, loan statistics — reveals how deeply the library is embedded in campus life.

Trained, Specialized Staff

Skilled librarians with expertise in information science, digital literacy, and research support are the library's greatest asset.

□ Library quality is a recognized criterion of evaluation and accreditation for universities worldwide.

The Outline

This presentation explores five interconnected dimensions of the modern academic library — from its evolving identity to its strategic significance within the university.



Evolving for the Future

How libraries navigated disruption and are planning for what comes next.



Facilities & Services

Physical and digital spaces designed around user needs and data-driven decisions.



The Open Movement

Open access, scholarly publishing reform, and the democratization of knowledge.



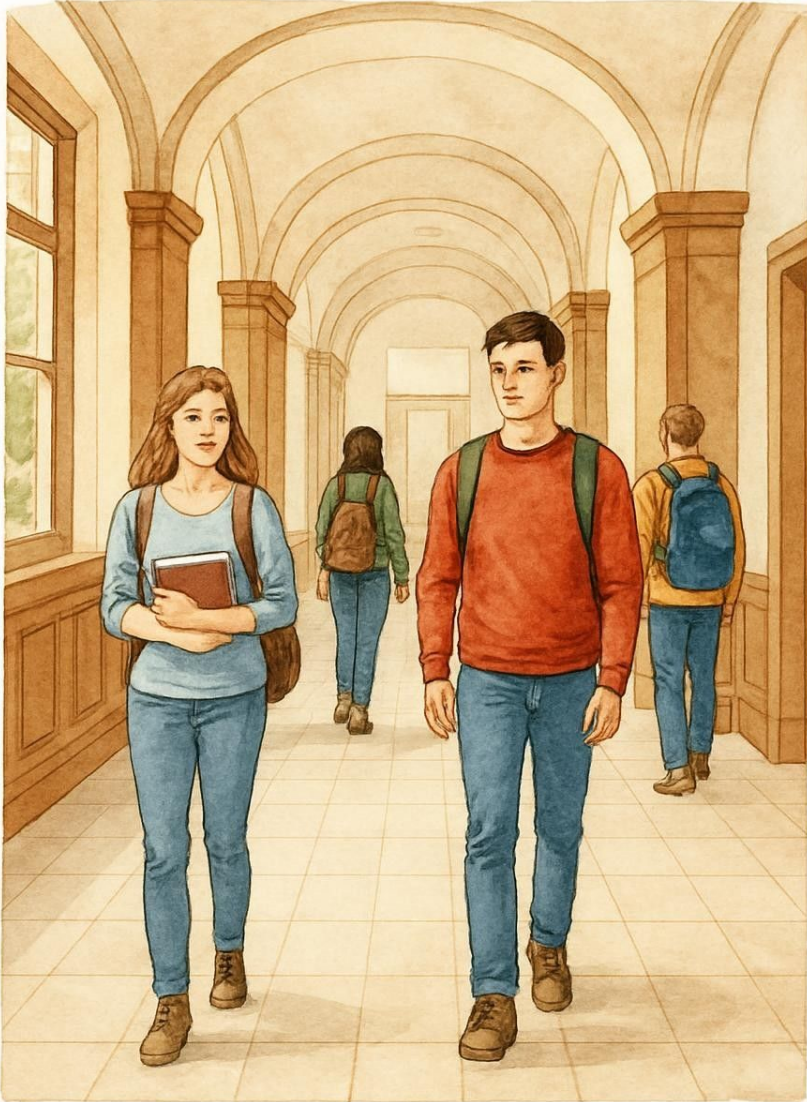
The Impact of AI

AI as a tool for enhancement — and the literacy skills librarians need to lead.



Strategic Significance

The library as a university-wide strategic asset, research partner, and student success hub.



CHAPTER 01

Evolving for the Future

Academic libraries led universities through the socially-distant era of COVID-19 — and now they are planning boldly for what comes next. The question is not whether libraries will survive, but how they will thrive.

Do We Still Need Libraries?

The pandemic put this question to the test — and libraries answered decisively. Library staff drove the institutional shift to fully-online university operations during COVID-19 in 2020, enabling contactless services, expanded digital collections, and remote research support with remarkable speed.

What Libraries Did During COVID-19

- Drove the shift to fully-online university operations
- Enabled contactless book retrieval and lending services
- Rapidly expanded digital collections and remote access

Where Libraries Are Extending Today

- Lecture rooms and research labs
- Virtual collaboration environments
- Maker spaces and innovation hubs
- Community outreach and alumni engagement

 What are the defining actions of a modern library?
The answer is richer than ever before.

Keeping Pace With Tech Development

How Libraries Adapted

- Reacted and adapted in the era of Google — and remained relevant to their communities
- Provide access to vast data repositories and support cutting-edge research
- Offer inclusive, welcoming spaces for all members of the campus community

Challenges Ahead

- Navigating the impact of AI on information discovery and research
- Advancing open access in a landscape dominated by commercial publishers
- Creating spaces where students genuinely feel they belong
- Broader university outreach and community engagement efforts
- Shrinking institutional budgets demanding greater resourcefulness



Libraries must keep pace with tech development — not as followers, but as institutional leaders.

AI presents an evolution, not an end.

From Caretakers to Curators

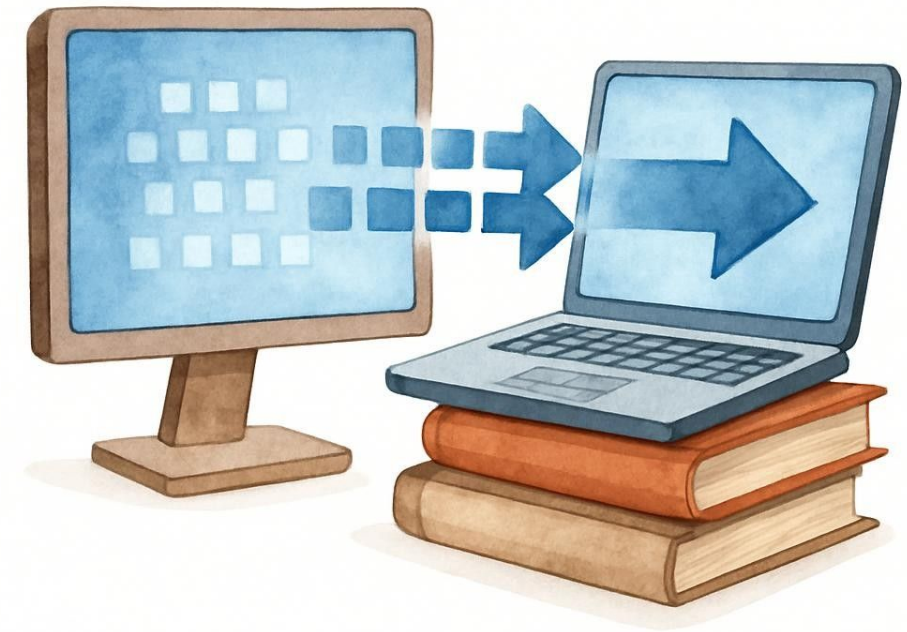
Libraries are evolving from stewards of physical collections to expert curators of reliable, high-quality digital resources.

Centers for Digital Literacy

The library is becoming the university's premier center for digital literacy — guiding students and faculty through a complex information landscape.

Continuous Staff Development

Ongoing training in AI tools, digital ethics, and emerging technologies keeps library professionals at the frontier of knowledge work.



The Digital Transition — Pros & Cons

The move toward digital and hybrid library services opens powerful new possibilities — but also introduces real organizational challenges that leaders must address thoughtfully.

✓ The Upside

- More engagement opportunities: workshops, information days, and online seminars reach wider audiences than ever
- Opens meaningful doors to alumni, donors, and the broader community
- Digital platforms enable 24/7 access to collections and support services

X The Challenges

- Demands deeper and more proactive staff engagement — online users disengage significantly faster than in-person visitors
- Raises important internal culture questions: who works online vs. onsite, and how are roles defined?
- Requires investment in new platforms, training, and institutional coordination



The Future of Campus Libraries

Sticky Interdependence

Tomorrow's campus library is defined by deep, mutually reinforcing relationships — between people, institutions, and ideas. Three forces will shape its future:

1 The Third Space

Design and ergonomics determine whether students feel the library is truly *theirs*. Belonging matters as much as bandwidth.

2 Resource Alliances

Shared collections across campuses and consortia free up institutional funds for innovation, rather than duplication.

3 Professional Identity

Are librarians staff or faculty? A service unit or an academic collaborator? This question shapes everything from budgets to institutional influence.

Libraries are one of the last public goods — the only place you're not asked to consume something.

Bridging the Divide

Fighting the digital and information divide by providing equitable access to knowledge for all members of society.

Multicultural Awareness

Promoting diverse perspectives, languages, and voices — cultivating the intercultural understanding essential in a globalized world.

Adapting to a Shifting World

As everything moves online, libraries adapt without losing their essential human character — a rare and vital balance.



Facilities & Services

The physical library is under pressure from all sides — including the climate. Heat, humidity, and power cuts pose real threats to irreplaceable collections, demanding that buildings and systems be built to protect what they hold.



Let the Data Decide

Ask the Right Questions

What do students *actually* want from a library space? The answer may surprise you. Group study stations, quiet zones, café-style seating, and maker spaces all compete for limited square footage — only data can reveal the true priorities of your community.

In the new era of library management, decisions should be **data-based, not assumed**. Usage analytics, satisfaction surveys, and space utilization studies reveal what stakeholders genuinely value — enabling smarter investment of limited resources.

What Data-Driven Libraries Track

- Peak usage hours and space utilization patterns
- Most-requested resources and collections
- Student satisfaction and service feedback
- Digital platform engagement and access patterns
- Staff time allocation across service areas



Data doesn't just inform decisions — it builds the evidence base needed to secure institutional investment.



Meeting Students' Extracurricular Needs

The modern academic library recognizes that students are whole people, not just researchers. An increasing number of university students are also parents — and their need to balance family responsibilities with academic demands is real and pressing.

Family-Friendly Study Spaces

Designated quiet areas where parent-students can study while their children are nearby — safe, welcoming, and non-disruptive to other users.

Not a Day-Care Center

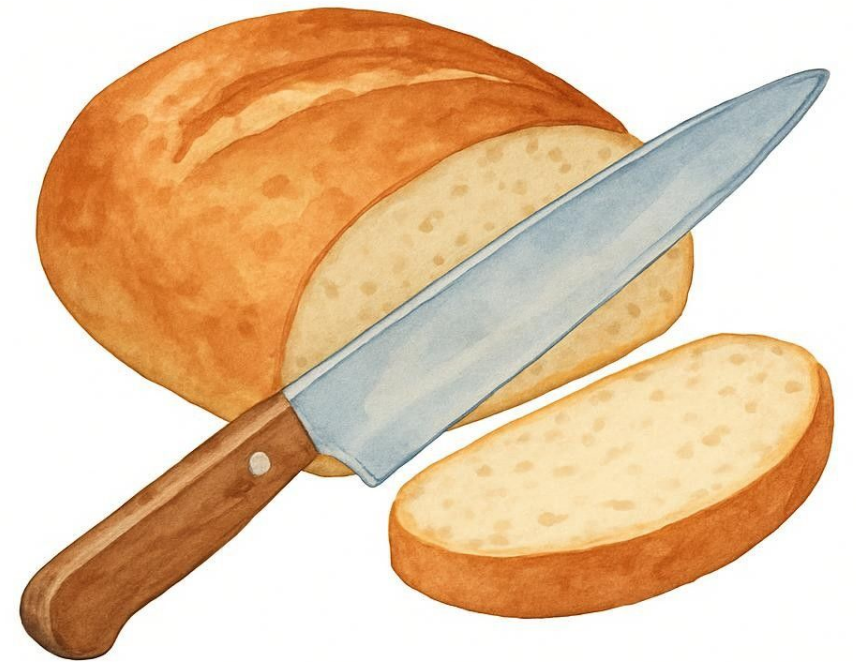
The goal is a family-friendly study *environment*, not a childcare facility — a subtle but important distinction that shapes design and policy.

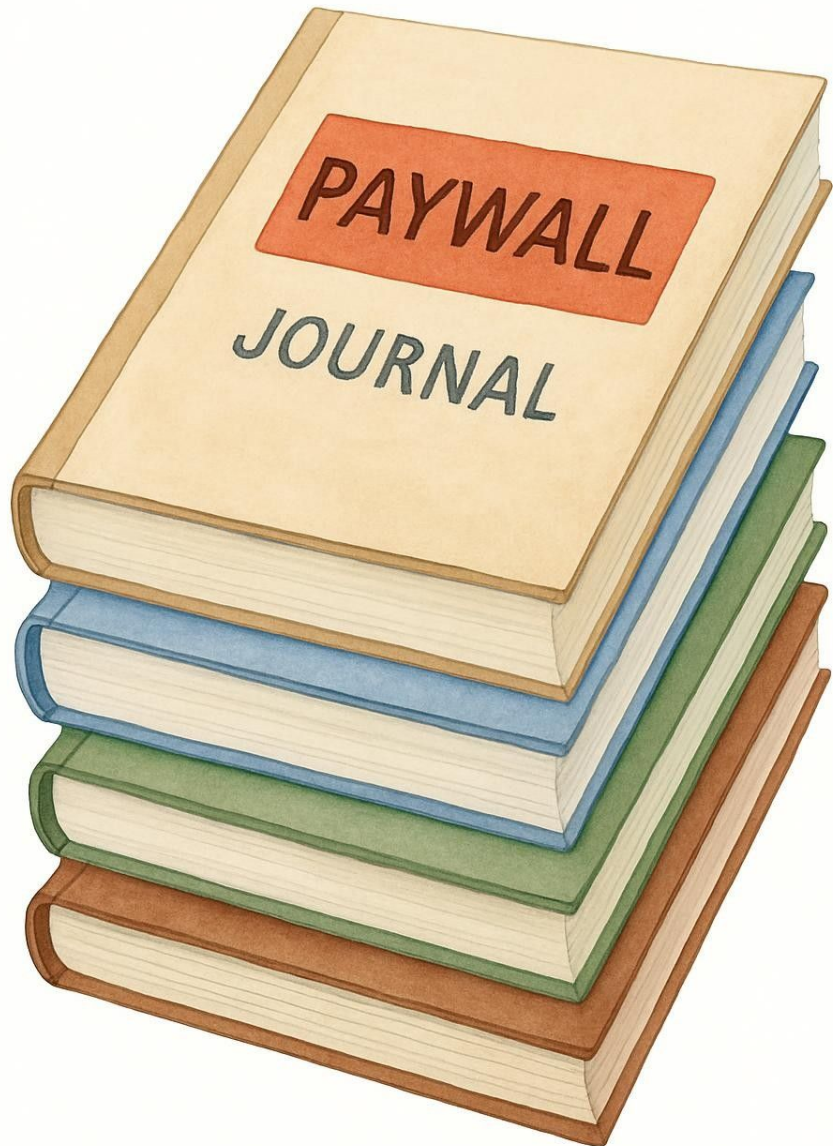
The Whole Student

Libraries that adapt to students' full lives — academic, personal, and professional — become indispensable anchors of campus belonging and retention.

The Open Movement

A turning point in scholarly publishing is underway. Expensive journal contracts widen the gap between elite and smaller institutions, while open access promises to build trust in science and democratize knowledge for all.





Scholars are pushed to publish in journals with subscription fees — for prestige.

Academic career advancement still overwhelmingly favors publication in high-impact journals — which are often the most expensive to access. This creates a paradox: the researchers who produce the knowledge are rewarded for placing it behind paywalls that exclude much of the world from reading it. Libraries sit at the center of this tension, both paying the subscription costs and advocating for change.

Gold vs. Green Open Access

The open access landscape offers two primary pathways, each with distinct implications for authors, institutions, and libraries. Understanding the difference is essential for shaping institutional publishing strategy.

Gold Open Access

A publishing fee — known as an Article Processing Charge (APC) — is paid by the author, institution, or funder so that anyone can access the published work immediately and freely. The article is published openly from day one.

Green Open Access

The manuscript is made openly available as a preprint or accepted version in an institutional or subject repository — before, during, or after peer review — at little or no cost. The publisher version may remain behind a paywall.



More university libraries are actively shifting funds from journal subscriptions toward open access publishing agreements.



**Shift the cost from readers
to researchers,
universities, and funders
— equitable access to
knowledge for all.**

The open access model fundamentally reframes who bears the cost of scholarly communication. Libraries play a critical role in building the structural infrastructure — institutional repositories, transformative agreements, and publishing support services — and the cultural norms needed to make open publishing the default, not the exception.

New Tactics, New Risks

As open access gains momentum, major publishers are adapting — and not always in ways that serve the academic community's best interests. New models are emerging that warrant careful scrutiny from library leaders and administrators.

Publisher Pivots: Gold OA & Read & Publish Deals

"Read & Publish" agreements bundle journal access with open access publishing rights — but costs often remain opaque and can escalate over time.

AI Data Extraction Risks

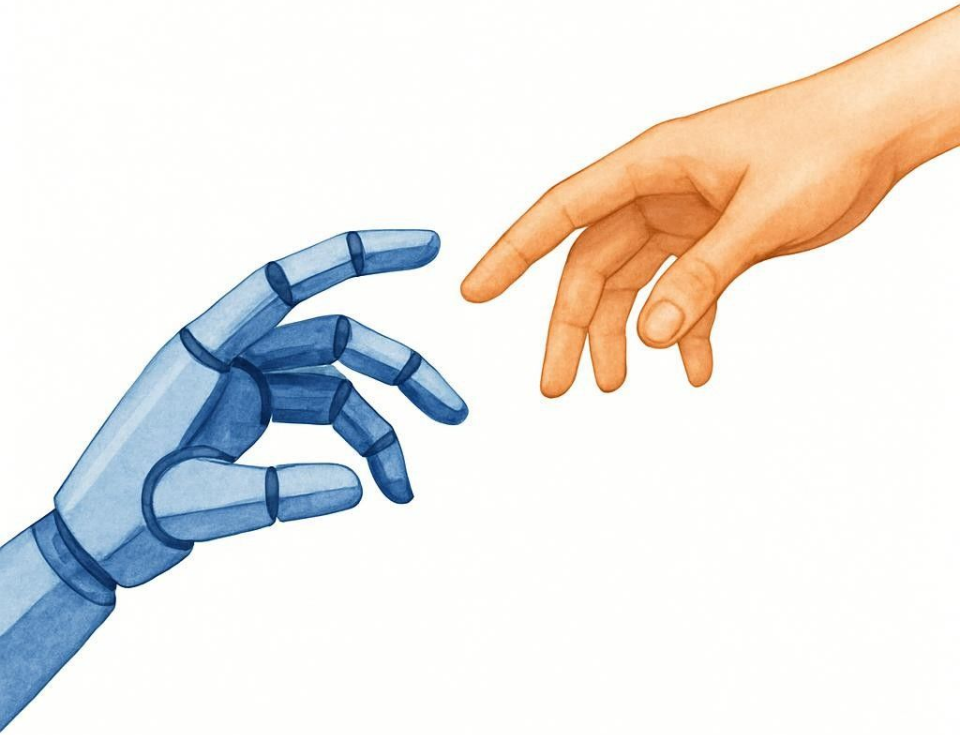
Publishers are increasingly granting or selling unrestricted data extraction rights to train large language models, raising serious questions about consent and intellectual property.

New Monopolies in Academic Data

The consolidation of academic metadata and analytics platforms risks creating new forms of vendor lock-in, replacing subscription monopolies with data monopolies.

A New Inequality

Well-funded universities can absorb rising APCs more easily than smaller or under-resourced institutions — potentially replicating the inequalities that open access was designed to solve.



The Impact of AI

Today's AI toolkit — **ChatGPT** • **Perplexity** • **Claude** • **Jenni** • **Scite** — is already reshaping how researchers discover, synthesize, and communicate knowledge. AI emerges as a game-changer for academic libraries: an evolution, not an end.

AI-Driven Enhancements in Library Services

Service Enhancements

- **Intelligent search & discovery:** AI surfaces relevant resources faster and more intuitively than traditional keyword search
- **Personalized learning experiences:** Adaptive recommendations tailored to individual research profiles and academic needs
- **Automated operations:** Cataloging, metadata enrichment, and routine inquiries handled efficiently, freeing staff for higher-value work

Librarians at the Frontier

- **Training centers:** Libraries are becoming institutional hubs for teaching and learning with AI tools
- **Responsible AI use:** Teaching students and faculty how to use AI ethically, critically, and effectively
- **Institutional guidelines:** Librarians are helping develop university-wide AI policies that balance innovation with integrity

What Is AI Literacy?

Information literacy has always been a core professional competency for librarians — the ability to archive, find, curate, and critically assess information in any format. AI literacy builds meaningfully on this foundation.

Information Literacy

Archiving, finding, curating, and critically assessing information — knowing where to look, how to evaluate sources, and how to synthesize findings responsibly.

AI Literacy

Technical knowledge of how AI systems work, what they are and aren't capable of, where their outputs should be trusted, and where human judgment must prevail.

- ❏ Is AI literacy an information skill? Increasingly, the answer is yes — and librarians are uniquely positioned to teach it.

AI Skills for Tomorrow's Librarians

The librarian of the future needs a new layer of practical AI competencies — not to compete with machines, but to guide their community in using them wisely and critically.

1 The Art of Effective Prompting

Crafting precise, context-aware prompts to extract accurate, useful, and relevant outputs from AI systems.

2 Understanding Model Limitations, Bias & Authorship

Recognizing where AI models fail, how training data introduces bias, and the complex questions around intellectual ownership of AI-generated content.

3 Knowing When *Not* to Use AI

Equally important as knowing when to use it — identifying tasks where human judgment, empathy, and expertise are irreplaceable.

4 Critical Assessment of AI Outputs

From information *seeking* to information *consuming* — critical thinking and source evaluation matter more than ever in an AI-saturated information environment.

Human – AI Collaboration

The most effective research support will emerge from the thoughtful combination of AI capabilities and irreplaceable human expertise. Neither replaces the other — they are strongest together.

AI's Role

- **Automated literature reviews:** Scanning and summarizing thousands of papers in minutes
- **Pattern recognition:** Identifying trends and connections across large, complex datasets
- **Faster research support:** Accelerating routine discovery and reference tasks

The Human's Role

- **Countering AI bias:** Identifying and correcting systematic errors embedded in training data
- **Fact-checking automated results:** Verifying AI-generated claims against authoritative sources
- **Upholding academic integrity:** Ensuring that research practices meet the highest ethical and scholarly standards

Challenges & Responsibilities

As AI becomes embedded in library services, institutions must address three foundational responsibilities — proactively and transparently — to maintain community trust.



Data Protection

Robust privacy safeguards, transparent data use policies, and secure storage systems are non-negotiable when deploying AI in library environments.



Algorithmic Transparency

Users deserve to understand how AI systems generate recommendations and surface results — black-box algorithms undermine trust in information services.



Equity & Access

AI tools must be accessible to all members of the university community — not just those with technical backgrounds or institutional privilege.



Strategic Significance

Libraries are closing while data centers rise — corporate efficiency is gaining ground over the human voice. As curricula are increasingly aligned to market demands, the question of where to draw the line becomes urgent and deeply consequential.

A Strategic University Unit

The academic library is no longer a passive repository — it is an active strategic partner in the university's research mission. When positioned correctly, it becomes an indispensable engine for institutional competitiveness and scholarly impact.

Research Intelligence

Tracking research trends across disciplines informs smarter policy decisions and stronger, more competitive grant proposals — directly supporting the institution's funding pipeline.

Evidence & Analytics Investment

Investment in research metrics, bibliometric analysis, and evidence synthesis capabilities gives the library a seat at the institutional strategy table.

Direct Research Community Engagement

Close, ongoing interaction with faculty and graduate researchers ensures library services remain precisely calibrated to evolving academic needs.



The Library as a Student Success Hub

The most forward-looking academic libraries are transforming from information providers into comprehensive hubs for student success — addressing academic, creative, and personal wellbeing under one roof.



Creativity & Collaboration Space

Beyond books and databases — libraries are becoming active spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration, prototyping, and creative work.



Writing Centers

Embedded writing support services help students at every stage of the research and writing process, building confidence and academic competence.



Mental Health & Wellbeing

As student mental health needs grow, libraries can house signposting, quiet retreats, and partnerships with counseling services — all in an accessible, stigma-free environment.

The Strategic Role of Academic Libraries

Taken together, the modern academic library performs a sweeping institutional role — one that deserves recognition, investment, and a prominent place in university governance.

Connecting People

Bridging students, faculty, researchers, and the wider community — and linking them to trustworthy, curated resources in every format.

Reflecting Institutional Mission

The library is a living embodiment of the university's values — its commitment to knowledge, inclusion, and the public good.

Supporting Working Students

Registration guidance, financial support signposting, and psychological resources — meeting students where they are, not where we assume them to be.

The Campus Information Center

From AI literacy training to writing centers to research support — the library is increasingly the connective tissue of campus intellectual life.

Conclusions

1 Libraries Are Far More Than Book-Borrowing

They are strategic assets, research partners, student success hubs, digital literacy centers, and guardians of the public good. Their value must be communicated boldly to administrators and stakeholders.

2 Talk to Students and Staff — Listen to Their Needs

Data-driven decisions begin with genuine dialogue. The communities libraries serve must shape the services they receive, from space design to digital tool selection.

3 The Library Is the University's Central Hub

It reflects and amplifies the institution's mission. Investing in the library is investing in the entire academic enterprise — and in the students and scholars who power it.

The future of academic libraries is bright — powered by the synergy of human expertise and AI, and anchored in an enduring commitment to equitable access to knowledge.

Thank you for your attention

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