Developing a Strategic Plan for the Slover Library

Strategic Goals and Assessments

Group 3

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Abstract

Five goals were identified for Slover Library's strategic plan. These goals were discovered through an environmental scan and SWOT analysis which brought to light current shortcomings and opportunities for the Slover Library. The following goals are aimed to help improve Slover's marketing tactics and media presence, programming for teens and adults, resources and programs for social services, literacy promotion, and digital literacy education. All five goals are determined to be beneficial to the Norfolk community and will assist in the future relevance of the Slover Library. This strategic plan covers goals that will be actuated over the next five years (FY 2023-2027) and details the application of tools and methods to meet these goals.

Developing a Strategic Plan for the Slover Library

Strategic Goals and Assessments

Through the analysis of previous research contained in an environmental scan and a SW/OT analysis of the Slover Library in Norfolk, Virginia, strategic goals were identified and assessed. These goals include improving Slover's marketing campaign, expanding its programming and educational resources for all ages, growing its social services, and promoting digital literacy through the use of its technological assets. The implementation and assessment of the identified goals will take place over the next five years (FY 2023-2027). These goals are intended to further the growth of Slover's patronage and better serve its community. The following goals are designed to be attainable and further affirm the library's mission.

Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The Slover Library is a national leader in technological resources provided for library patrons. It is the goal of this strategic plan to not only highlight the technology of the library but also increase its connection with the community. Through the implementation of these goals the Slover Library will continue to flourish and establish value through the services it provides. Shortcomings identified in previous research will be addressed and opportunities will be created that align with Slover's values, vision, and mission.

Goal 1: Improve the library's online presence by utilizing efficient marketing strategies and highlighting patron and business relationships.

Objective 1.1: *Introduce an online marketing plan and multi-level staff training for social media and website presence.*

Action Plan: In early FY 2023, Slover's library leaders will utilize ALA's library marketing course (American Library Association, 2017) and other library marketing resources to

support their understanding of opportunities and gaps in Slover's library marketing. Leaders will gain an understanding of the capacity required to manage an online presence and its connections throughout the library. Equipped with this knowledge, leaders will create a thorough social media and website marketing plan in the first two quarters of the year. Subsequently, leaders will build and introduce social media and web training to key staff responsible in quarters three and four. The training will include the overall marketing plan, its value, the strategy, implementation, and feedback cycle for staff leading this effort. In FY 2024, staff will review the initial iteration of marketing plans and training and provide feedback. Leaders will assess staff and patron responses to develop a new refined marketing and training plan to use and improve for subsequent years. By FY 2026, the refined plans will be codified in library standard operating procedures.

Assessment: After implementing the marketing and training plans, staff will conduct qualitative surveys assessing the implementation's value and usefulness. For patrons, staff will conduct surveys on the change in social media and site presence, including patron's reactions and feedback. For staff, feedback surveys will include how functional the marketing training has been and if it was helpful in their individual functions of managing the library's online presence. Staff will review survey data and support revising the marketing and training plans on a biannual basis. Amalgamations of surveys will be combined to have comprehensive data annually. The plan's success will result in an increase of 15% in social media user engagement and website views in the initial implementation of the marketing plan and 20% annually in subsequent years.

Objective 1.2: *Create initiatives and social media campaigns around programming that support patron's online advocacy of the library.*

Action Plan: Throughout FY 2023-2027, staff will create quarterly initiatives and social media campaigns around past, existing, and future programming that prompt patrons to share their library experiences online. Campaigns and initiatives inviting patron participation will include library hashtags, photo and video challenges like scavenger hunts and showing off the library, staff social media takeovers, and program-related prompts. Prompts will vary in topics that align with the library's values, including technology, information literacy, equity, and community-building. Staff will support creating campaigns and initiatives through creative brainstorming meetings that are inclusive of diverse voices to ensure campaigns are inclusive. Staff will repost the content of patrons across social media and create related blog posts and social media highlights on the library website about patrons' online engagement. Staff will request the necessary user permissions to retain social media content on the library website.

Assessment: Staff will review patrons' engagement with library content online, using qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze engagement data quarterly. Staff will assess if the quality of content aligns with the library's mission and values and shift plans if necessary. The review of user engagement will point to changes that need to be made for online community engagement. Expected visits to the webpage on social media campaigns should be consistent with views on the library's key web pages, an anticipated increase of 10% annually.

Objective 1.3: *Utilize local business partnerships and events to advertise library support and collaboration on and offline.*

Action Plan: In FY 2023, staff will include social media and online visibility in negotiating partnerships with businesses and donors. The team will also reach out to local partners quarterly, with sample social media posts that promote the business and library relationship online. Staff will actively seek out ongoing local events, including First Fridays, and

negotiate library sponsorships or marketing materials, including redirects to social media and the library website using QR codes and URLs. Staff will develop strategies for local event marketing and recognition for at least two external local events a month. The team will also reach out to local partners quarterly, with sample social media posts that promote the business and library relationship online. Throughout FY 2024 - 2027, staff will refine plans and negotiations and standardize online visibility practices in standard operating procedures.

Assessment: Partnership-related content across social media to increase by 5% each year. The staff responsible will review Slover's partners' content quarterly to support planning and implementation. Staff will review monthly library visibility at external events and maintain data on increased social media engagement. Staff will add questions on feedback surveys for patrons to identify how patrons found out about a program or the library with options that specify business partners to ensure efforts are valuable and support the library.

Goal 2: Increase engaging programming and events geared towards adults & teens

Objective 2.1: *Extend library hours to accommodate evening events.*

Action plan 2.1: As of right now, there are not enough programs and events for teens and adults. To change this, in FY 2023 Slover will remain open later so adults will have time to attend evening programs after work and teens have more time to attend library programming and events after school. This will be implemented by hiring more evening staff to handle the programs and events. Since Slover Library is located in a busy downtown area it would be beneficial to allot time for people to enjoy events, such as poetry readings, live music, studio producing programs, art exhibits, etc. The adult and young adult librarians will oversee organizing and implementing the events and programs for their respective demographic along

with the help of their assistants. There will be at least two young adult programs and two adult programs each week and at least one event a month for adults and young adults.

Assessment 2.1: During each program and event staff will ask patrons if they would fill out a survey on their phone through a convenient QR code that the library has created. The survey will ask them questions about their thoughts on the library being open for longer in the evening, if the program or event felt enriching, or if they learned something new from it. With the data collected, the manager and director can gain a better understanding of what their patrons need and use the information accordingly to develop further programming.

Objective 2.2: *Update the Cuisine at Slover restaurant to make it an appealing event space for patrons.*

Action plan 2.2: Currently the Cuisine at Slover restaurant closes at 3 p.m., does not offer coffee, and is not used for any events. In FY 2023 the restaurant will be updated to sell more traditional coffee house items that will appeal to younger adults and students. The layout of the restaurant will be updated to better accommodate study groups, clubs, and other casual meetups. By FY 2024, library staff will begin planning events centered around the restaurant, such as weekend breakfast fundraisers, or spoken word nights on evenings when the library will be open late.

Assessment 2.2: The success of the restaurant and coffee bar will be assessed by tracking sales as well as traffic throughout the day. Tracking the busiest and slowest times of the restaurant will determine the best hours of operation. There will also be a poll taken that patrons can fill out while they wait for their food on what items they would like to see on the menu, and events they would like to attend.

Objective 2.3: *Establish more book clubs & other social clubs to increase community among teens and adults.*

Action plan 2.3: Beginning in FY 2023, staff will plan more book clubs and social events at the library. Staff will partner with local businesses, schools, and community groups to invite them to utilize the library for their existing group meetings. Staff will also survey patrons to ask what types of clubs they would be interested in attending, and plan new meetups based on the survey results.

Assessment 2.3: These events will be assessed by tracking patron attendance at club meetings and asking for feedback via questionnaires at the close of each meeting. Based on attendance and feedback library staff will determine the appropriate clubs to host at the library and frequency of meetings.

Goal 3: Expand programming to address social issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, health matters, employment, and veterans' services.

Objective 3.1: *Create easily accessible information guides designed to help patrons access social service resources.*

Action Plan: Starting in FY 2023, Slover Library will gather a list of commonly used social services available to Virginia residents and create an informational guide that can be accessed on the library website and in person at the library. In the first two quarters of FY 2023 leaders will assign library staff to begin researching and gathering relevant resources. In quarters three and four staff will create an informational brochure that will be available to pick up near the library entrance and help desk. The brochure will have websites and contact information patrons can use to apply for benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), health insurance, unemployment, or veterans' resources. Throughout FY 2024, the

library website will be updated to include a “Resources” page available on the main website, with subcategories to address subjects such as homelessness, food insecurity, health matters, employment, and veterans' services. Within each subcategory the library patron will find the same contact information available on the physical brochures, as well as step-by-step guides to assist patrons in completing applications, book recommendations for applicable subjects, and notices about relevant events. Key library staff will be trained to assist patrons with the resource guide by directing them to relevant services and guiding them through application processes. After the initial set up, the resource guide will be routinely evaluated and updated for currency and effectiveness, and it will regularly be mentioned on the library’s social media pages and other marketing materials.

Assessment: In the beginning stages, staff will issue surveys to library users to identify specific areas of need and use the results to focus the guide on the most relevant subjects. After brochures are created staff will follow up with surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the guide. When feedback is received on the brochure the library staff will adjust the website design accordingly. Users will be surveyed again after the website update goes live. Staff will monitor the traffic of the brochures and website and use feedback from surveys to determine the effectiveness of the program.

Objective 3.2: *Hold regular career development events to assist patrons in finding employment.*

Action Plan: Beginning in FY 2023, Hendrix Business Center staff will send surveys to library patrons to determine how many are seeking employment, and to learn information about industries they are interested in, their general qualification levels, and resources they would find helpful. After evaluating the survey results, staff will reach out to relevant local businesses to

participate in a job fair, as well as volunteers to help plan and work on the day of the fair. The first job fair will be scheduled in the third quarter of FY 2023. Leading up to the fair, staff will organize smaller events such as resume workshops and mock interview sessions. The job fair and other events will be advertised on the library's social media pages and other marketing materials. Each event will be assessed to determine effectiveness, necessary changes, and appropriate frequency. This will be an ongoing program with the goal of repeating events throughout FY 2023 - 2027.

Assessment: Library staff will follow up with the participating businesses to see how many hires were made at the job fair. Staff will also send surveys to the participating job seekers to ask them to evaluate their interest in the job openings available at the fair, how well the openings matched their qualification levels, if they attended any of the other events leading up to the job fair, and if they were able to find a job or make a network connection. Success will be determined by turnout and the feedback received after each event.

Objective 3.3: *Promote health literacy through curated book collections, events, and informational posting on social media and the library website.*

Action Plan: In FY 2023, library leaders will assign staff to spearhead programming to improve the health literacy of patrons. Staff will survey library patrons to assess health concerns and determine ways that the library can assist. Librarians will regularly curate book selections addressing specific health topics such as nutrition, family planning, and long-term illness. Book selections will be available in the display area of the library, featured on the Slover social media accounts, and will be live on the website once the resource guide is live in FY 2024. Librarians will use survey results to plan health related events, such as seminars on health and wellness, exercise classes, or support groups for people with long-term illnesses. Once key areas are

identified, librarians will reach out to relevant volunteers to assist with the events and determine the appropriate frequency. This program will also be ongoing throughout FY 2023 - 2027.

Assessment: Library staff will determine the success of these programs through engagement and survey results. Librarians will track how often their suggested books are checked out in comparison to similar titles, track website and social media traffic, and collect feedback from surveys. Adjustments to the program will be made as needed.

Goal 4: Establish initiatives and programs that advance, foster, and teach information literacy.

Objective 4.1: *Propose and create an ESL Program based in a formal learning environment.*

Action Plan: In 2017, the Slover Library established a weekly meeting program called ESL/ Citizenship. Attendees met every Wednesday for interactive lessons that employed conversation circles held in an informal learning environment. While this program was a step in the right direction, it did not generate long-term results. For this reason, in the first quarter of FY 2023, the Slover's library directors, along with the Slover foundation and the City of Norfolk, will begin to meet to consider ideas, proposals and a budget that funds ESL programs that are based in formal learning environments. Library leaders will hire ESL teachers, consider lesson plans, and acquire ESL-related books and other material formats. If budgets are accepted and funds are dispersed as planned, we intend to inaugurate in the FY 2024.

Assessment: ESL teachers will meet with library directors as needed and report on student attendance, on the effectiveness of lesson plans, and thus, on meeting or not meeting learning milestones. Library directors will meet with the ESL program's major funding partners in FY 2025 to propose budget adjustments.

Objective 4.2: *Partner with local schools to teach information literacy and research skills to grades K-12.*

Action Plan: While the Slover Library youth and children's programming is complete with a playscape, a KidZone, early literacy gaming computers and tablets, children's art studio, children's program room, and robust juvenile fiction and nonfiction sections, beginning in early FY 2023 the Slover Library will reevaluate these services. Following this assessment, through 2023, the librarians at the Slover will partner with local teachers and schools to discuss standards, resources and preparation, and instructional plans. The information literacy and research skills lessons will be taught by a youth librarian during school hours and followed by a class visit to the Slover Library. Depending on the grade level, lesson plans will focus on building research skills, on utilizing databases, and on evaluating the reliability of both primary and secondary sources.

Assessment: Librarians and schoolteachers will report on how these lessons have improved the information and media literacy skills of their students, and whether the format of the lessons successfully captured the students' interests. It is not a matter of eradicating these lessons if they do not give the desired results right away, but about improving the process and the approach, with the intention to create a long-term and established effect amongst the Norfolk community.

Objective 4.3: *Implement a GED Online Program.*

Action Plan: In FY 2024 the Slover Library will introduce a GED online certificate program for Norfolk community residents. Those who are interested must be 19 and over and have completed the 8th grade. To initiate, Slover funds will cover information sessions that are complete with panelists and Q&A sessions. Further, the information session will cover the

structure of the program and the application process. Students will not accrue fees; our funding will provide about $1500 to each student who is accepted. For this reason, an application process is necessary. Once accepted, students will be paired with a counselor, who will guide the student throughout the program.

Assessment: As a means to preserve the program and to increase funds, graduation rates and student attendance will be recorded and monitored closely.

Objective 4.4: *Reassess financial education programs and collections to formulate new purchasing criteria and new program implementation.*

Action Plan: In FY 2024, the Slover Library will propose a budget that will extend funds to reevaluate and address the gaps associated with disseminating information about financial literacy. Library staff will evaluate current collections to assess if it meets the needs of the community and determine if the Slover Library is addressing the gaps and the stereotypes related to personal finance. Planned programs will teach users about financial concepts and about the skills associated with money management. Library staff will implement new criteria that will determine how Slover can enhance its financial education collection.

Assessment: By FY 2025, the new criteria for purchasing financial education books and materials for children, youth, and adults will be fully implemented. Library staff will consider user program attendance and how often items in our financial education collection are utilized.

Goal 5: Increase access to and promotion of digital literacy for Slover Library patrons of all ages.

Objective 5.1: *Identify and address Norfolk's pre-teen and teen digital literacy needs by using outreach, instruction, and Slover Library's innovative technological resources.*

Action Plan: While Slover's creative technology resources, (i.e., video production studios, sound studios and makerspaces) are extensive and up to date, there is currently no programming or outreach that utilizes these resources for the creative digital literacy of middle and secondary school students in the Norfolk area. In FY 2023, Slover staff will embark on a two-part assessment to address this issue. First, staff will reach out to Norfolk schools in the surrounding area to identify how Slover's technological resources can support after-school programming, in-class curriculum and/or summer programming. The second part of the assessment will be devoted to researching similar and existing instructional programming (with the inclusion of basic digital literacy concepts) at other libraries and educational institutions. With this knowledge in hand, staff will design instruction and programming that address the digital literacy needs of local students while using Slover's creative technological resources. By the beginning of FY 2024, staff will implement the first phase of instructional classes and/or outreach programs. By the final quarter of FY 2024, individual classes will be designed for the maker space, recording studio, and video production studio for secondary students as well as classes for middle school students' needs.

Assessment: The digital literacy needs of middle and secondary students will be determined through the two-part assessment outlined above, and attendance and learning outcomes will be monitored to determine effectiveness of the programs.

Objective 5.2: *Create a digital literacy program designed specifically for Norfolk seniors that furthers their digital knowledge as well as introduces seniors to Slover's existing electronic resources.*

Action Plan: Since the Slover Library is the most technologically advanced library in the greater Norfolk area and devoted to lifetime learning, it should lead in the responsibility of

ensuring Norfolk's senior's digital literacy needs are being met. Beginning in FY 2023, Slover will develop senior friendly programming that targets the different digital literacy needs for the Norfolk senior community. This too will be implemented through a two-part plan. The first part of the plan will include outreach to local senior centers and interviews with both seniors and senior center staff. The goal of these interviews will be to identify the digital literacy needs of this community and how Slover's existing resources can better serve them. After analyzing the data, an on-site instructional program and/or outreach program will be developed to address the community's immediate needs by the end of year. By FY 2024 and through the latter assessment plan, Slover staff will be implementing senior centric digital literacy outreach, instruction, and programming. The focus will be on digital skills ranging from the ability to use technology to evaluating quality digital information, and programs may occur either onsite or at senior centers. It may also include an introductory course to internet, cell phone and email basics, or a permanent kiosk at Slover for troubleshooting phones, tablets, e-readers etc. A senior centric e-newsletter could be created including information about electronic scams, e-books and library news and events.

Assessment: Attendance will be monitored to determine program popularity, and patrons will be asked to rate the effectiveness based on their learning outcomes and interest in the programming. This is an ongoing project that will continue to grow through FY 2027 as new needs, larger skills, and ever-changing technologies are introduced to the community. At the end of FY 2026 the existing program will be evaluated, edited, reorganized, and added upon. The same will happen in FY 2027.

Objective 5.3: *Utilize Slover's technological resources to teach classes that will empower adults with digital literacy skills to create original projects for work and personal use.*

Action Plan: Through FY 2023 and 2024, staff will identify and develop introductory project-based classes for the makerspace, recording studio and video production studio. They will do so through a three-part process of evaluation, design, and testing. The first part of the process will be through the evaluation and research of existing curriculum, identifying digital skills that have real world applications, and recognizing project ideas that are of high interest in the creative fields. Staff will design a course for approval that will then be tested on other staff members, transferring important library-related job skills, and creating project examples for the patrons' courses. Staff created projects will be Slover library centric in the vein of advocacy and marketing. Once the courses have been evaluated by leadership and approved, they will be administered to the public by FY 2025.

Assessment: Media created in these classes can be applied to the library's marketing plan by the creation of library marketing materials as classroom examples, and the display of student work in the library. The program will be assessed by tracking attendance and measuring student interest and output of creative projects. Though this is documented as a two-year process, the goal would be to implement classes as soon as all stages of the plan are executed and before or no later than the two-year mark.

Conclusion

The goals discussed in this strategic plan will be implemented by the Slover Library staff over the next five years, beginning in 2023 through 2027. These goals are intended to promote and build upon the already existing services and resources Slover offers while encouraging a more diverse patron community. There will be marked improvements to Slover's marketing and media presence. Adding additional events, such as late-night poetry or book clubs, will increase patronage and the utilization of the library's resources. Development of social outreach programs

will allow for growth in the community and accessibility for those it serves. Offering classes to promote information literacy, GED classes, and financial literacy will address inequality and digital access within Slover's community. And the further promotion of digital literacy will create a more diverse and age inclusive program that will utilize the outstanding technological resources of the Slover Library. The goals discussed in this strategic plan will provide continuous growth for the Slover Library as it gives to its community in ways it did not before. These goals improve upon the mission, values and vision of the Slover Library while encouraging the expansion of the library's community.

References

American Library Association. (2017, March 9). *Library Marketing*. Education & Careers. https://www.ala.org/educationcareers/elearning/library-marketing