

Assessing the Strategic Credibility of Special Collections

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Why is strategic credibility important now?

- In time of justifying budgets, people, positions, services, and space, how do we communicate our value and place within parent institutions (the university)?
- Necessary shift from just informing to influencing the stakeholder's point of view ("talk their talk")
- Accountability, assessment

Strategic Credibility

“...refers to how other others view the company’s overall corporate strategy and its strategic planning capability.”

Higgins and Diffenbach, “Communicating corporate strategy: the payoffs and the risks,” *Long Range Planning* (1989).

Benefits of Strategic Credibility

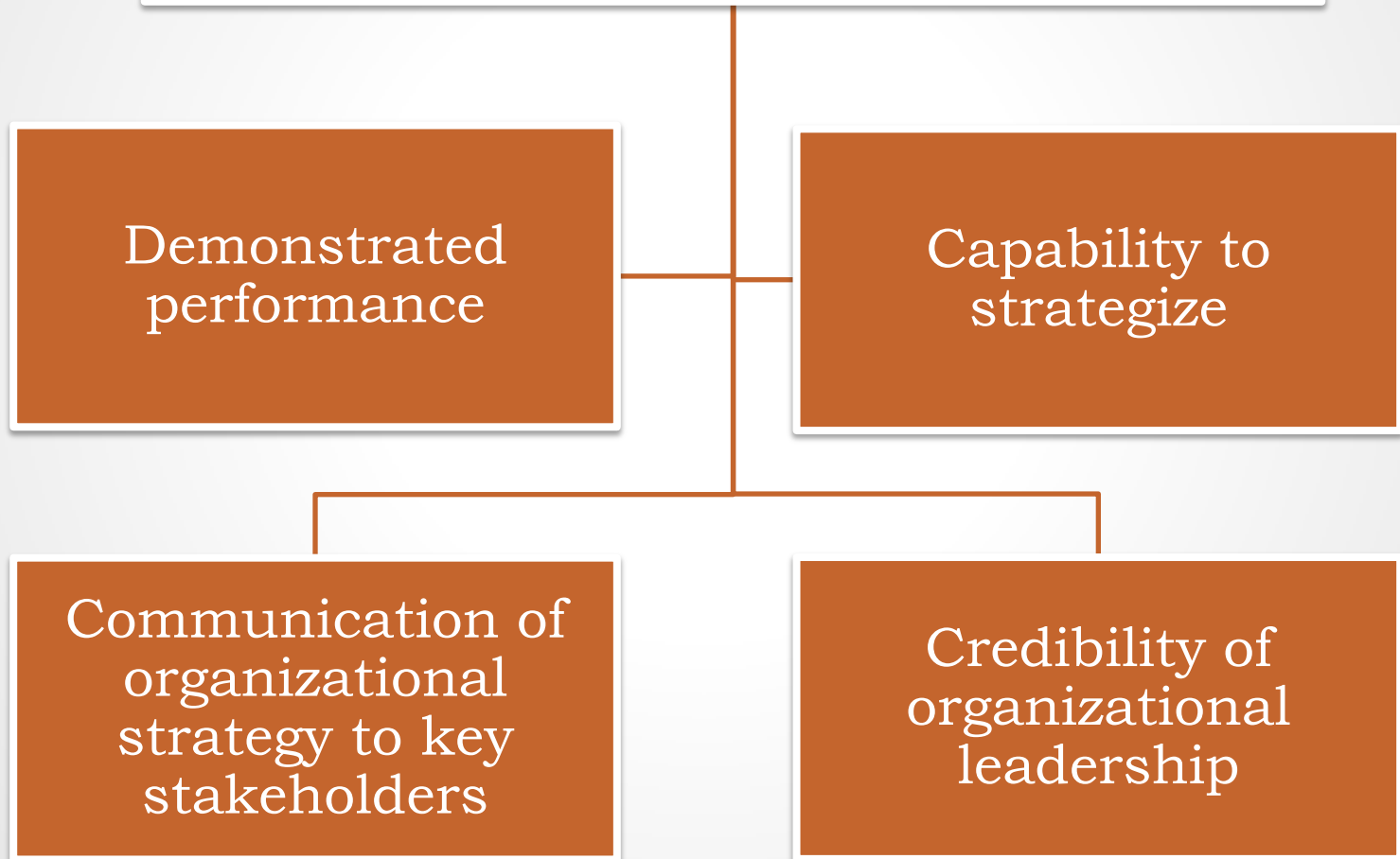
Improved relations with stakeholders

Better morale of employees

More goal focused employees

Attracting talented people motivated by the strategy

Strategic Credibility Factors



Library Strategic Credibility Factors

Demonstrated performance

- Assessment
- Annual reports

Capability to strategize

- Mission statement
- Vision
- Strategic planning
- Collection policies

Communication of organizational strategy to key stakeholders

- Website
- Newsletters
- Accessibility of information
- Performance

Credibility of organizational leadership

- Leadership
- Active librarians

Strategic Credibility of Academic Libraries

"Are academic libraries following through with their planning and objectives?"

Gail Staines, "Towards an assessment of strategic credibility in academic libraries." *Library Management* (2009)

- Decline in annual reports, rise in strategic plans
- Canadian libraries were user-focused vs. U.S. libraries more trend focused
- Themes: space, assessment, information literacy, offsite storage
- Overall limited communication of strategic planning

Library vs. Library Units



Budget

Resource Allocation

Collaboration opportunities

During times of transition

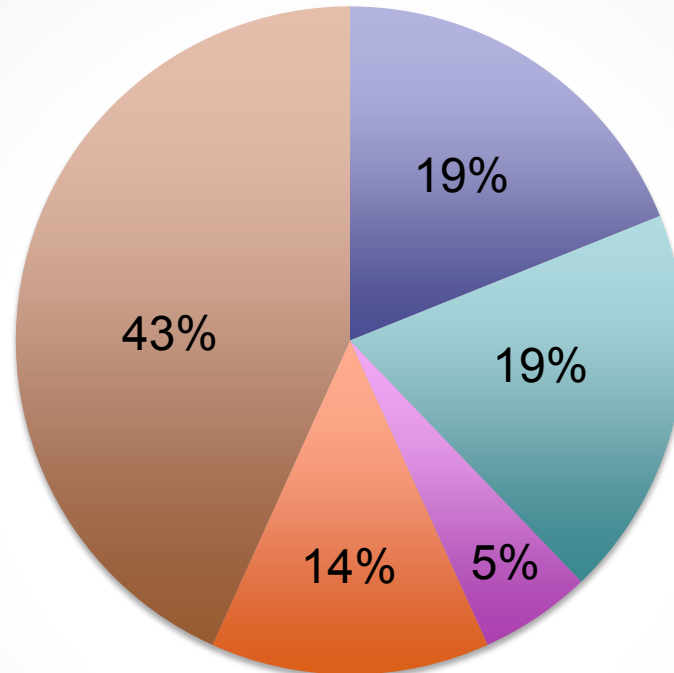
If a university administrator asked you how your library unit contributes value to the overall university mission, vision, and strategic goals... how would you respond, and with what evidence?

Our paper focuses on

- **Demonstrated Performance (evidence)**
- **Capability to Strategize (evidence)**
- **Communication to Stakeholders (action/use)**
- **Leadership (who)**

*A note on subjectivity

Methodology: Population Orbis Cascade Alliance (by institution type)



- Public 2-year academic
- Small public 4-year academic (less than 10,000 FTE students)
- Medium public 4-year academic (10,000-15,000 FTE students)
- Large public 4-year academic (more than 15,000 FTE students)
- Private 4-year academic

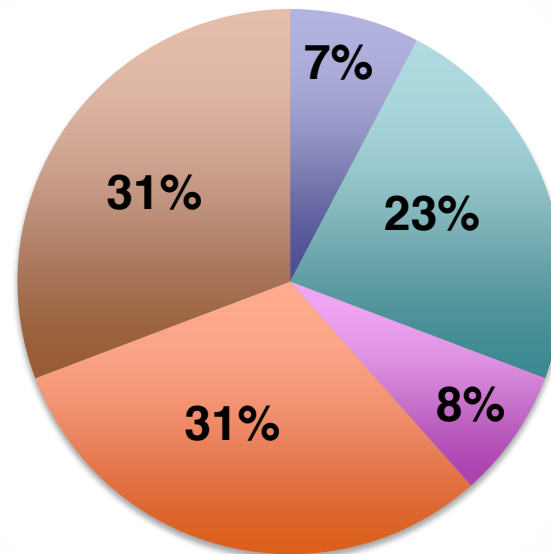
Strategic Planning: Population



Who had mission statements?

[only 13 out of 37]

By institution type



- Public 2-year academic
- Small public 4-year academic (less than 10,000 FTE students)
- Medium public 4-year academic (10,000-15,000 FTE students)
- Large public 4-year academic (more than 15,000 FTE students)
- Private 4-year academic

Methodology for “strategic planning”

- Individually examined College/University mission statements for themes
 - Discussed findings and reached consensus
- Individually examined Special Collections/Archives mission statements
 - Included multiple departments at one institution if they had mission statements (N=18, not 13)
 - Discussed findings and reached consensus
- Negotiated common themes (how well aligned)

Example: OSU Mission Statement

"As a land grant institution committed to teaching, research, and outreach and engagement, Oregon State University promotes economic, social, cultural and environmental progress for the people of Oregon, the nation and the world..."

<http://oregonstate.edu/main/mission>

- Teaching
- Outreach/engagement/land grant/Oregon serving
- Economic/promoting economic growth
- Cultural/social/social progress
- Competitive grads/academic excellence
- Search for new knowledge/research

Example OSU: Archives

Mission Statement and Access Policy

The University Archives is authorized to collect, describe, preserve, make accessible to the public, and display historical records created or received in connection with the transaction of University affairs.

- Canned language
- Historical records
- Internal serving

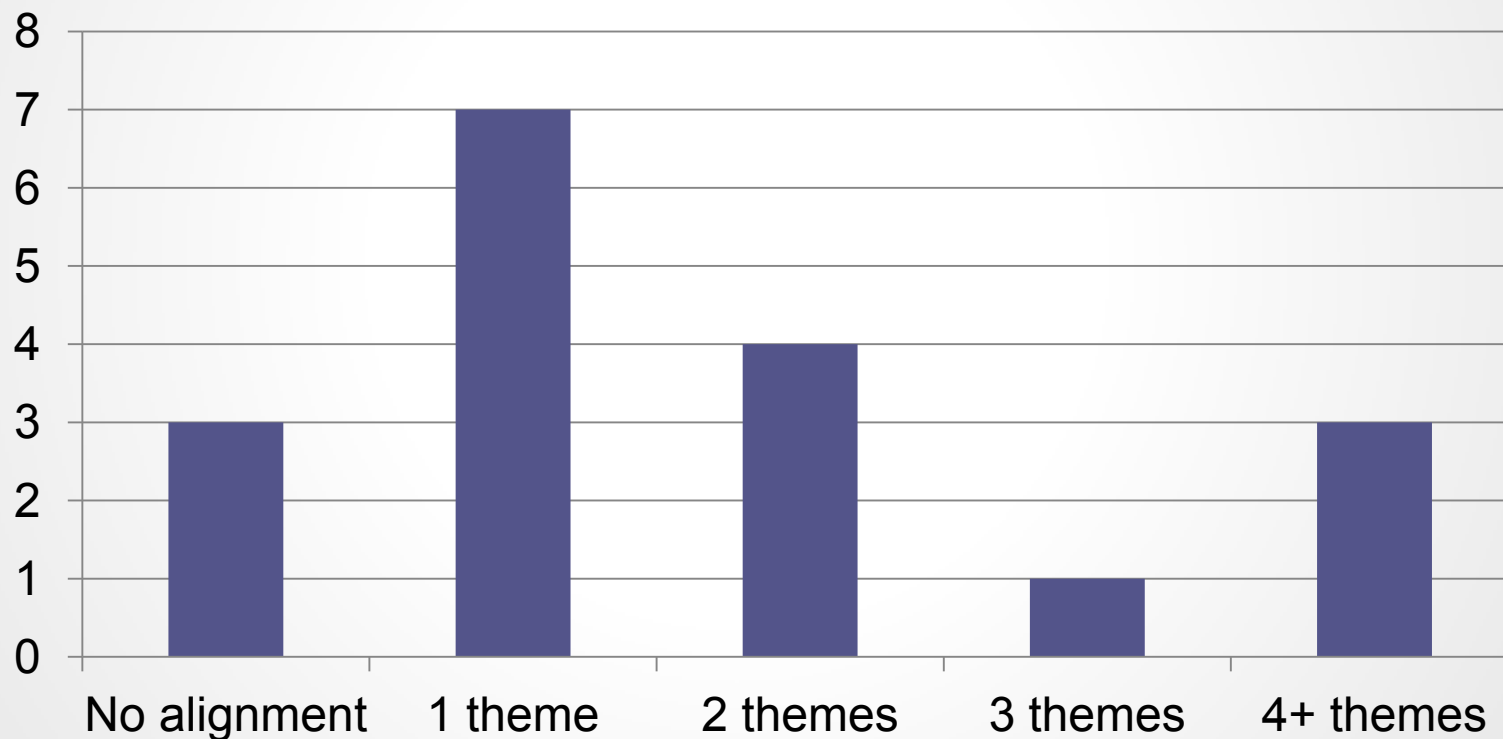
<http://archives.library.oregonstate.edu/handbook/chapter4/mission.html>

What are most archives/special collections mission statements saying?

A word cloud of terms found in mission statements for archives and special collections. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with 'canned language' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'historical value', 'long-term value', 'diverse collections', 'public programming', 'responsible stewardship', 'institutional history', 'permanent value', 'valuable collections', 'cultural heritage materials', 'collective memory', 'dynamic collections', 'enduring value', 'official repository', 'notable items', 'unique resources', 'mandated', and 'resource center'. The colors of the words range from dark brown to light green.

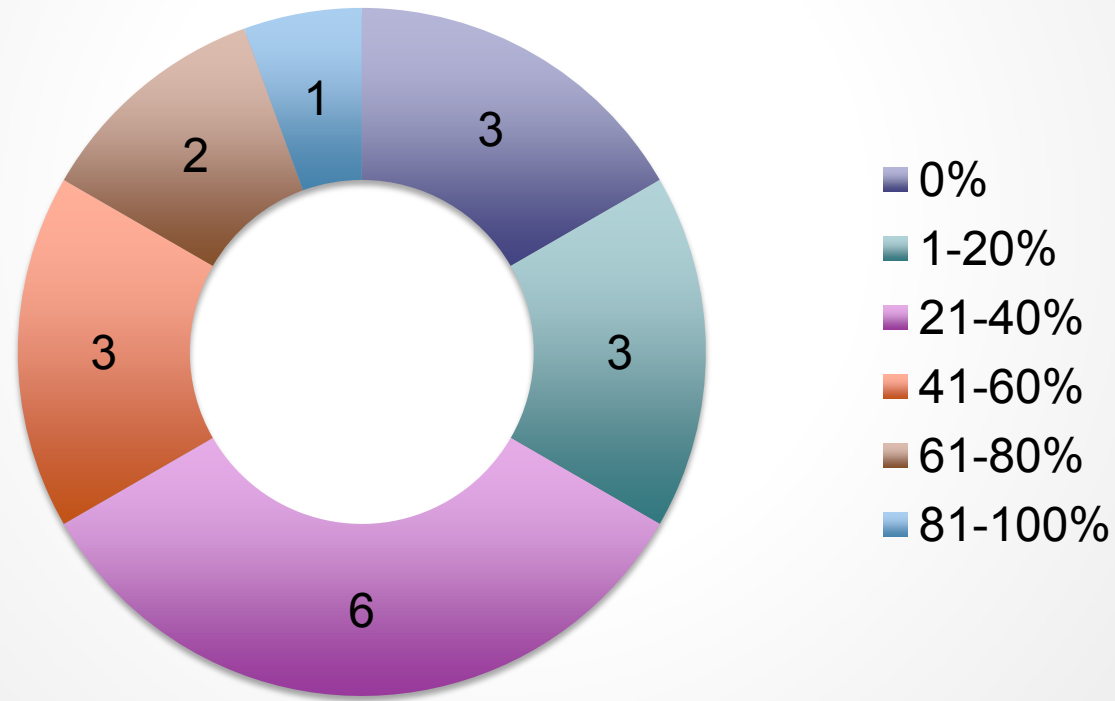
historical value long-term value
diverse collections guide to its past
public programming institutional history
responsible stewardship permanent value
canned language
valuable collections
cultural heritage materials
collective memory dynamic collections
enduring value official repository
notable items unique resources
mandated resource center

Overall Special Collections/Archives Alignment with College/University Mission



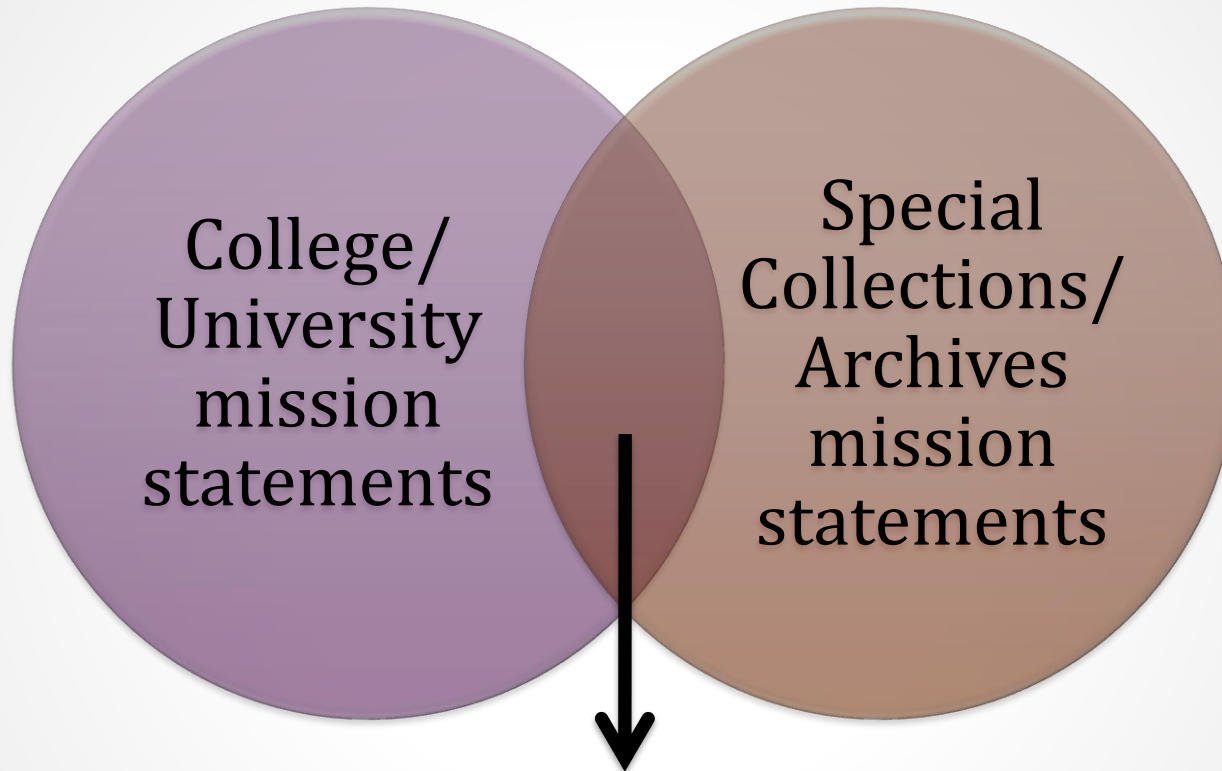
N = 18

Percentages of Alignment Between College/University and Special Collections/Archives



N = 18

Common Aligned Themes in Mission Comparison



Research (7)

Subject area (4)

Teaching, Education, Scholarship (3)

Denomination/Faith, Service (2)

Documenting Past Performance

“No single publication of a library can do more to enhance its reputation and increase its budget than its annual report.”

Mersky (1983), Staines (2009)

- Staines study found a decline in annual reports and a rise in strategic plans in academic libraries
- Public relations piece, brief reviews of current issues and need for additional resources, present historical information, and share future plans
- Used internally and externally for stakeholders

Methodology: Documenting Past Performance

- Annual reports, assessment
- How are they publicized (to stakeholders, internal documents)?
- Library annual report is usually condensed with good information lost; make available and usable



Communicating Mission

"Are academic libraries presenting their mission statements online? How much worth is assigned through this communication?"

Triveni Kuchi, "Communicating Mission"
Journal of Academic Librarianship (2006)

- Study looked at 111 ARL library websites, examined for presence and location of mission statements
- 78% of these academic libraries had a mission statement on their websites, although most were through indirect links ("locations were far from effective")

Methodology: Accessibility of mission statements

- Does the location of the mission statement on the website signify how much value the department placed on it?
- Judged the position and access to mission statements on each website
 - Counted number of “clicks” from main webpage
 - Looked at where mission statements were located
 - If not directly linked, we explored where it existed

Prominence of Special Collections/Archives

The screenshot shows the website for The Daniel J. Evans Library at Evergreen State College. The header includes the Evergreen logo and the college name. Below the header is a search bar with tabs for 'BOOKS & MORE', 'VIDEO', and 'JOURNAL TITLE'. The search bar contains a search box and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with categories: 'QUICK LINKS', 'JOIN US ON', 'BOOKS', 'ARTICLES', 'RESEARCH ASSISTANCE', and 'SERVICES'. The '& MORE' link under the 'BOOKS' category is highlighted with a red box, and a red arrow points to it from the bottom left. The '& MORE' link is positioned above the 'Archives' link.

EVERGREEN THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

The Daniel J. Evans Library

BOOKS & MORE VIDEO JOURNAL TITLE

- Keyword
- Author last name, first name
- Subject
- Title
- Call Number
- ISSN/ISBN Number

Search

Search for books, dvds, maps, music, etc (but not articles) at the Evergreen Library. For more options visit the [Evergreen Library Catalog](#).

A Slice of Return to Evergreen

A brief look at the reconnecting and celebrating at the Return to Evergreen Weekend.

[Video Gallery](#)

QUICK LINKS

- Depts. & Staff
- Dictionaries & Encyclopedias
- Electronic Resources
- Hours
- ILLiad/Interlibrary Loan
- My Account/Renew Books

JOIN US ON

- Facebook
- Twitter

BOOKS

- Books & More (Catalog)
- E-books via Databases
- Find E-books
- Other Local Libraries
- Program Reserves
- Reference via Databases
- Summit
- WorldCat
- & MORE**
- Archives
- Government Information
- Images via Databases
- Streaming Media via Databases

ARTICLES

- Articles via Databases
- Find E-Journals

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

- Chat: Ask-A-Librarian
- Research Assistance Form

HELP

- Chat: Ask-A-Librarian
- Choosing a Research Topic
- Citation and Styles Guides
- Contact a Librarian
- Copyright
- Find Your Program Workshop
- Going Mobile with Databases
- Maps of the Library
- Research Assistance Form
- What is peer-reviewed?

SERVICES

- Accessibility
- Depts. & Staff
- General Policies
- Hours
- Interlibrary Loan
- Media Services
- My Account/Renew Books
- Off Campus Access
- Suggest a Purchase

39%

of libraries directly
linked to Special
Collections/Archives
from their main page

Prominence of mission statement

The screenshot shows the Western Libraries website. At the top, the logo reads "Western Libraries @ Western Washington University" with the tagline "connects – people to people, people to place, people to learning". A navigation menu includes "Library Home", "Start Your Research", "Libraries & Collections", "Services", "About the Library", "Staff Directory", "Ask Us!", and "Search". A utility menu on the right lists "Renew Materials", "Blackboard", "MyWestern", "Viking Village", and "WWU Homepage".

The main banner features a large "Special Collections" title, with the subtitle "6th Floor Wilson Library, Western Washington University". Below the banner, the "Our Mission" section is highlighted with a red border. It includes a photo of a teacher and students, and the following text:

Our Mission

Special Collections collects, organizes, describes, preserves, and maintains unique intellectual and cultural heritage materials and promotes the use of these resources by the University community, scholars, and the public.

Our goal is to advance scholarship and further the educational, research, and service missions of the university.

Special Collections welcomes all members of the University community, researchers from other institutions, and members of the local community during **business hours**, or by appointment. Staff assistance and picture I.D. are required.

Below the mission statement are links for "Using Our Collections" and "Collections Policy".

To the right of the mission statement is a "Special Collections Information" sidebar with a list of links: "Special Collections Home", "Selection of the Month", "Collections Policy", "Giving to Special Collections", "Location and Hours", "News from Special Collections", "Research Links", "Staff", and "Using Our Collections". Below this is a "Collection Highlights" section with links to "Campus History Collection", "Digital Collections", and "Finding Aids for Archival Collections".

Only **1** institution directly stated their missions on their main pages

And the rest of Special Collections mission statements?

58%

- Within 1 click from the Archives main page

18%

- Within 2 clicks of the Archives main page

18%

- Within 3 clicks from the Archives main page

Strategic Credibility Summary

Demonstrated performance

- 59% of Alliance Special Collections/Archives do not have easily accessible mission statements online

Capability to strategize

- Of those with mission statements, many are indirectly linked on the website

Communication to stakeholders

- Most state WHAT they do (preserve) but not WHY (for learning, research)

We know – mission statements aren't everything – but it's a good start.

Portland State University

- “Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to utilize this rich collection in their scholarly and creative work.”
- “...promote learning and discovery and to advance research and scholarship.”

University of Oregon

- “Our diverse collections support all types of research, from K-12 education to international scholarship.”
- “We strive to play an active and creative role in the teaching, research, and serve missions of the University.”

Other types of value communicated through Special Collections/Archives websites

Oregon Institute for
Technology

- Library mission running along [bottom of all web pages](#)

University of
Oregon

- Special Collections and [Curriculum Support](#)

Western
Washington
University

- [Clearly displayed mission statements](#) for each department

Willamette
University

- Instructional service [webpage](#)

Recomendations

- Process of reflection is worthwhile
- (Re)Develop
- (Re)Align
- (Re)Deploy your mission



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