An analysis of the publishing and information environment in the digital age and its effect on both of the University’s Libraries highlights several current and future challenges. Market consolidation in the publishing of scholarly information and aggressive licensing agreements have constrained library budgets and reduced the ability to develop library collections that can serve the widest range of information stakeholders present on campus. The rapid evolution in technology continues to increase the need for library staff to be trained in the latest information management tools in order to respond to expectations of information consumers. Similarly, library staff need to keep current with new standards for tagging and processing data as older information formats become obsolete and new ones arise. Redeployment of progressively reduced staffing has been further complicated by the pressure to adapt to new information distribution and access paradigms.

From a staffing perspective, both libraries have been affected by hiring freezes and recent retirement incentives. Staff intensive activities – digital collection management, subscription maintenance, information technology administration, librarian outreach services, individual or group instruction activities requested for database searching, electronic resources, or library orientation – have so far been hampered by continued staffing shortages, thereby increasing the potential for delays in timely information availability and access. Yet, the reduction in staffing requires developing new ways to maximize existing employee skills and knowledge, restructuring position responsibilities, and reducing duplicative processes. Further reductions in personnel budgets combined with decreased buying power for library collections necessitates a new strategic plan that will address and remedy unnecessary redundancies, thereby optimizing funds that are currently being used within each library.

Historically, the Melville and Health Sciences Center Libraries have been administratively separate, with the Melville Library Director reporting to the University Provost and the Health Sciences Library Director reporting to the Vice President of the Health Sciences Center. When access to the collections and services of these libraries required physical presence in defined building spaces, there were many good reasons for keeping this administrative separation. The advent of digital technologies, networks, and the information age have since created an environment in which both library collections and services now coexist within a physical and virtual spectrum. With the prevalence of computer technologies, the resulting shift in the distribution and accessibility of library collections has highlighted the need for the University to re-evaluate this division of these two libraries.
The following plan identifies future goals common to both libraries on campus and strategies that can be implemented in order to improve service to the campus while achieving greater economies and efficiencies of existing resources. The plan is divided into key components of library operations and services in order to identify points of intersection within and across the two library systems.

I. Preserving, developing, managing, and accessing the Library’s collections:

The combination of interdisciplinary research and coordinated library collection development dictates a consolidated library administrative structure that increases support for the campus’ academic, research, and clinical missions through a broader set of standardized services and policies enforced at a centralized level. The core objectives in an administrative merger of the two libraries are to increase manpower, eliminate the need to replace vacancies, and establish several fundamental policy and procedural changes. At the same time, this new administrative structure should allow for collection building via financially separate accounting at subject levels, facilitating fiscal reporting at the campus level, and annual reporting to the various national associations to which the separate libraries are respectively accountable.

As activities on the campus increasingly encompass a wide variety of multi- and cross-discipline collaborations, the campus community is no longer interested knowing which library is their “home” library. For example researchers in marine sciences frequently need materials relevant to the medical sciences; neurologists may require access to studies in music or language in their research of brain functions. Similarly, the commercial publishing industry continues to package multiple titles pertinent to various subject areas into single subscriptions to databases and journals.

The Libraries must consider various options to develop appropriate collections that support the University’s missions and optimize the use of budgetary resources. The Libraries need to continue spending larger portions of their budgets on electronic resources each year in accordance with the needs of its users. Therefore, the Libraries will have to increase their focus on electronic resource management and related concerns with the converging issues of vast amounts of digital content, new information format types, limited budgets, and cutting edge technologies.

Goal I.1: Meet research and curriculum needs of existing, new, and emerging academic programs through increased coordinated collection development opportunities.

The Libraries need to regularly reassess the collections in terms of both relevance to campus mission and changes to information formats. The publishing
trends of the last decade show an increase in acquiring library materials through large multi-disciplinary databases and packages of research journals. Similarly, the current models for acquiring electronic books illustrate cost benefits from bundles of titles that cover a variety of subjects. Under such conditions, re-examination of library holdings needs to be done in consultation with representatives from the campus faculty. As the campus engages in further cross-disciplinary research and educational activities, it will be important to create a library faculty advisory group in the manner of the two current Advisory Committees to assist the merged administrative library structure in identifying needed library resources and sets of services that can educate the campus community in the retrieval and use of such library collections.

**Goal I.2: Aggressively move Library collections to digital formats.**

**Goal I.3: Reevaluate collection development strategies to guide and prioritize collections decisions.**

**Goal I.4: Regularly communicate the Library’s collection initiatives and decisions.**

**II. Acquiring, promoting, and preserving institutional knowledge and valuable research data:**

The pace at which the increased acquisition of digital resources will occur necessitates identifying alternate and less expensive information outlets to supplement library collections. Such a financial and collection development environment also dictates that the Libraries adopt new roles in the publication and dissemination of institutional knowledge. Library faculty and staff will need to work collaboratively with campus administration, faculty, state and national associations and publishers to continue to ensure the widest possible access to research resources, to inform the University about the changes occurring in scholarly communication, and to assist researchers with intellectual property issues.

**Goal II.1: Provide leadership and expertise to inform and mobilize the University community in the evolving scholarly communication landscape.**

Research journals and periodical titles have been readily available in digital formats for several years, and both Libraries have made great strides in providing the campus with access to such formats. Academic libraries and the publishing sector have also had time to develop standards and processes for the licensing and acquisition of electronic journal content. However, comparable developments in electronic book content have not been so formalized, requiring that the Libraries thoroughly investigate the various evolving acquisition, licensing, purchasing, and subscription models for e-book information. Currently, it is
anticipated that the perceived cost benefits of acquiring electronic books – unlimited access to unlimited numbers of readers, reduced need for shelving space, and reduced staffing for physical processing – will be counteracted by other increased costs needed to cover licensing provisions for limitless access, train staffing to be more technically proficient, and improve the computing infrastructure with updated technologies. In order to improve communication and be transparent about library collection development, it will be critical for library staff to regularly educate the campus community in the impact such changes in information formats and distribution will have on budgets and operations.

Goal II.2: Promote partnerships with campus research units to facilitate the development of well-organized, cohesive repositories for Stony Brook University-generated research content.

Retention of institutional knowledge will become increasingly important as options in the digital publishing landscape coalesce around large proprietary for-profit providers and federal granting agencies institute new data sharing and open access standards for scientific information. The Libraries could assume a new role as curators of institutional knowledge if the University similarly mandated research authors to make their writings and data publically accessible in an institutional repository.

While both Libraries currently contribute to the SUNY-sponsored DSpace institutional repository, assessment of the uniqueness of Stony Brook University-generated content could enhance the campus’ potential as a flagship within SUNY and a research partner with other AAU institutions. Additional collaborations could be established through memberships in open access initiatives, thereby possibly developing alternative and supplement information outlets to the totality of the campus’ Library collections. Extension of institutional knowledge and research partnerships should also be investigated with Brookhaven and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, with increased potential for collaboration at collection development and technological levels as well.

III. Establishing Library staff as partners in clinical, educational, and research activities:

The Libraries need to pursue and maintain rewarding and productive partnerships with faculty, staff, students, other SUNY libraries, and other academic research institutions. The Libraries should also strive to work with faculty to make libraries productive places for cross-disciplinary interactions.

Goal III.1: Increase awareness and use of Library resources and services among the campus community.

Goal III.2: Collaborate with and support faculty in scholarship and research.
Current staffing levels in both libraries have made it difficult to provide direct support in the areas of research, particularly in the hard and medical sciences. In the Melville Library, the majority of the library faculty and support staff are formally educated in the humanities and social sciences, while the Health Sciences Library has only three full-time faculty dedicated to supporting the five health science schools and the Hospital. However, there are some staff in each library who have held positions in the opposite library, thereby having broader knowledge and experience than what can be capitalized with separate library administrations. A singular administrative structure for library support of research and instruction would be better organized to improve partnerships between libraries and other academic, clinical, and research units on campus by calling upon a pool of library staff with subject specialization and expertise, analogous to the inter-disciplinary research collaborations occurring between the East and West campuses.

**Goal III.3: Strengthen faculty participation in the development and assessment of Library services and resources.**

An administrative merger of the two libraries capitalizes on existing limited resources and identifies benefits through commonality and centralization in the operational areas of collection development and management, research and instruction services, and processing of both physical and virtual library collections. For example, the existence of two separate inter-library loan departments has led to an extensive history of separate policy making that often confuses patrons who correctly consider both libraries part of campus library services. Problems have included:

1. A lack of clarity about which library should serve which patrons on campus.
2. A lack of common service and fee structures across the campus: some types of articles may be provided at reduced costs to one library, but not another.
3. Inadequate communication and a lack of transparency between the two departments; requests for materials not held by Stony Brook University are frequently and unnecessarily charged for or canceled.

An administrative merger of the two inter-library loan units would improve service to the campus and to the library’s consortial members with a common set of policies and procedures, as well as a larger singular staffing structure that is cross-trained for improved workflow. Under such a reporting structure, the concern of a “home” library as a service point vanishes.

**IV. Reconfiguring and reallocating Library building resources to foster Library as Place**
The use of library space should be reevaluated within the context of shifting collection formats, information access mechanisms, and campus community needs. The model of the Library as a physical place to conduct information research, reading, thinking, and writing has changed drastically. With the advent of nearly ubiquitous access to networked information from anywhere in the world, the Libraries should become more than a place for print materials and a center of information. Both Libraries should adapt physical facilities to provide places to work, create, study, collaborate, recharge, exchange ideas, tutor or be tutored, research, listen, learn, hone skills, and much more. Since online resources and services in libraries in general are rapidly expanding, it is essential that the Libraries assess and continue the process of reinventing spaces as a physical destination for students, faculty, and staff where they can conduct research, study, collaborate, socialize, and learn. Under a unified administrative structure, both Libraries can change user perceptions of what an academic/research library can be by taking advantage of combined academic resources, collections, staff, computers, digital media tools, and social spaces.

**Goal IV.1: Facilitate Library users’ need for collaboration neighborhoods and group learning by transforming traditional library spaces into interdisciplinary and multifunctional learning areas that support group and individual learning.**

**Goal IV.2: Continue to expand and improve the advanced information technology services needed by Library users.**

In the Melville Library, recent collaborations with the Department of Information Technology unit of Teaching, Learning & Technology has yielded the creation of a Collaborative Learning Area (CoLA) within the second floor of the Sciences & Engineering Library. Similarly, in the Health Sciences Center Library, the successful renovation of the Library’s interior space for the creation of an Information Commons has demonstrated for both Libraries an ability to reallocate space, thereby encouraging students to use the Library and its resources once they have had the chance to make them their own. Both CoLA and the Information Commons exemplify the shift from Library as a place dominated by information retrieval activities to a place of information creation and exchange opportunities. Predictable and stable budgetary support of a growing digital library collection combined with further reductions in print titles could allow for additional reduction of physical spaces for print stacks in favor of group study and collaborative working spaces.