

Collection Development Policy

The Purpose of the Policy

This policy exists to aid the collection development at Murphy Memorial Library by establishing guidelines for selection. But since the mere existence of a policy does not guarantee a good collection, the selectors must be aware of the policy and must follow it consistently when making selection decisions. Only then will the growth of the collection be in accord with the stated objectives.

This policy shall not be considered unalterable but must be responsive to needed change. It shall be reviewed periodically by the Head Librarian in consultation with the professional library staff. The policy exists with the approval of the Provost.

Library Clientele

The library endeavors, first of all, to supply the resources needed by students, with proportionate consideration given to each of the degree-granting programs of the institution. Although no library collection may be expected to meet all the demands which are placed upon it, students should not have to go to other libraries for materials used in their studies, except in the case of research for which rare, highly specialized, or very expensive items are required.

The library will also supply for faculty members those resources which are directly related to their teaching. Books for faculty will normally be secured through interlibrary loan. Resources needed by administrators in the conduct of college business will be supplied to a limited extent.

Borrowing privileges may be extended to individuals not affiliated with the institution at the discretion of the library. However, library resources are not selected to meet the needs or wishes of community borrowers.

Acquisitions Objectives

The primary purpose of this library is the provision and servicing of expertly selected resources to reflect the educational objectives and to support the approved programs of this college community in the pursuit of education, information, and the creative use of leisure time. To accomplish this goal, there is recognition of the importance of both books of basic permanent value and timely materials of value on current issues.

Priority for books and other materials to be acquired is given to those materials which meet the curricular needs of the students in the courses offered. These include items needed for class assignments, collateral reading, supplemental study, and term papers, as well as those reference and bibliographical tools which will facilitate finding and using these materials. Students will remain responsible for acquiring personal copies of required course materials. The library will attempt to acquire the most important books and periodicals in the fields of the undergraduate and graduate teaching programs, appropriate to each level of instruction.

Special effort will also be made to acquire works which are broader in scope than any particular discipline or field of interest defined in the curriculum. Through the acquisition of selected material on nearly all major subjects, a basic collection will be provided for a broad exposure to human knowledge. Support will be given to the development of a strong reference collection because such a collection is the basic tool of scholarship and because it is comprised of books which cannot be borrowed from other libraries.

After the primary needs have been met, consideration is then given to other desirable materials which will give balance to the collection or meet special interests or needs of the students or faculty. The library tries to encourage the habits of browsing and independent reading and to foster an appreciation for books by providing an interesting collection of accessible materials. For the most part, fiction will be purchased only if a class has a need for it.

Responsibility for selection

The most important aspect of acquisitions work takes place before materials are actually ordered. This work involves the planned selection of items best qualified to strengthen the library's resources for instruction and research. The importance of selection has grown in proportion to the increase in the volume of available materials, the cost of these materials, and the costs of acquiring, cataloging, housing, and servicing them.

The professional library staff is ultimately responsible for the selection of all books and other materials to be acquired for the library, with the aid and advice of the faculty, and within the limits set by the budget. This is one of their major professional activities and they must apply to it all of the knowledge, experience, bibliographic tools and time at their command.

Faculty members are largely responsible for recommending the acquisition of materials to support their subject areas and curriculum. Departments are expected to recommend library purchases which will develop the total library collection in accord with this Collection Development Policy. Any member of the faculty or administration may request that an item be added to the collection by completing a requisition form and submitting it to the appropriate Division Director or first-line administrator for approval. Staff members and students may submit suggestions to the Head Librarian.

The library staff will encourage the interest and activity of individual faculty members in selecting materials. The librarians will endeavor to secure and distribute book catalogs, reviews and bibliographies to aid the faculty in the selection process. However, the library does not guarantee the purchase of all materials which the faculty may request.

Because the librarians are in the best position to observe the quality and balance of all subject areas in the collection, it is not felt advisable to allocate the library materials budget among the various divisions or departments of the faculty. The Library Director assumes the responsibility for coordinating the collection as a whole by determining the priorities for purchase at any given time. A new class or program will be given extra consideration in meeting its most pressing needs.

The librarians will be responsible for the selection and development of general works which do not fall within the scope of any single department's program or which may be interdisciplinary in nature. The librarians also assume responsibility for systematically reviewing bibliographies, catalogs, and reviews and for making selections in all subject areas, as they perceive the most need.

Intellectual Freedom

As a responsibility of library service, materials will be selected and made available without regard for the race or nationality or the political or religious views of the writer. The library is a forum for the free exchange of all ideas in the pursuit for knowledge. Accordingly, it will make available to the students and faculty materials offering the points of view of the best spokesman on all sides. The library's holdings will reflect the historic Baptist heritage of the institution, while not discriminating against any other viewpoints.

Neither the faculty nor the librarians need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they select for the collection. Ownership or possession of an item by the library does not necessarily imply agreement with, or advocacy of, the particular viewpoint(s) expressed in that item. Librarians do not foster education by establishing their own viewpoints as the sole standard for determining which books should be secured. This does not mean that what people read is unimportant, but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a legitimate education. All criticisms of library-owned materials should be evaluated in the light of this policy.

Selection Principles

Current Acquisition. It is felt that it is wiser to obtain books and periodicals at current prices when they are readily available than to proceed through expensive search procedures in the out-of-print market and pay escalated prices for materials if they can be found at all.

Evaluation of Individual Titles. Criteria that are important include the author's significance as a writer, the importance of the subject matter to the collection, the scarcity of material on the subject, the timeliness or permanence of the book, the appearance of the book in bibliographies or indexes, favorable book reviews, the authoritativeness of the work, literary and aesthetic standards, the reputation of the publisher, the format, and the price.

Differing Editions. When more than one edition of a title is available, preference shall be given to editions which are marked by completeness, quality of edition, and readability. While it is important on occasion to acquire an original edition, it is frequently just as satisfactory and less expensive to purchase a commercial reprint, photocopy, or microform.

In the case of titles which have gone through several editions, the latest edition will automatically be acquired unless an earlier edition is specified because of historical value or because it contains material not in a later edition. If an older edition held by the library is superseded by a newer one, the former will be withdrawn in most instances. Variant editions of a title will be retained only if they are needed for research purposes.

Multiple Copies. In most instances only once copy of a title is purchased, unless the library has reason to believe that additional copies may be necessary. The library accepts the responsibility for having on hand a sufficient number of copies of titles which are assigned reading for classes, with the exception of required textbooks, provided that adequate advance notice of need has been furnished by the faculty member.

Program needs. It must be remembered that some curricular programs require more resources than others. New programs need considerable attention in their initial stages of development. Some programs are heavy on research, while others are performance-oriented. The number of students majoring in each area is of great importance in determining the quantity of resources to be acquired.

Long-Range Development. One of the dangers of advanced education is the development of narrow special interests at the expense of a strong, balanced collection. Individual selectors must be careful to avoid tying their recommendations too closely to present curricular needs. The long-range development of the institution with reference to its programs, both actual and potential, must be kept in mind.

Library Cooperation. It is not the library's purpose to purchase every item of potential interest to the college family. Interlibrary loan relationships are maintained with other libraries in accordance with the Interlibrary Loan Code and the ILL policies of consortia to which the library belongs. Materials of limited value to this campus and highly specialized materials may be borrowed in accordance with our Interlibrary Loan Policy.

At the same time, this library recognizes a reciprocal responsibility: 1) to lend liberally to other college libraries, 2) to purchase, if possible, the works repeatedly requested on interlibrary loan, when these works can be identified, and 3) to purchase a reasonable number of research materials to enhance total regional resources.

Special Categories

Microforms. The library infrequently may acquire books, periodicals, theses, documents and other materials in microforms if availability, cost, and anticipated use seem to justify it. An attempt will be made to provide adequate equipment for viewing the microforms.

Out-of-Print Titles. Upon request and at the discretion of the library, books which are out-of-print may be added to the library's Want List. Attempts will be made periodically to secure used copies at a reasonable price. Need, cost, and condition of the books will be taken into account before such purchases are made. The Want List will be revised periodically, in consultation with the faculty.

Gift Books. By giving materials as a gift to the library, the giver forfeits all rights to those items. Gifts to the library will be judged on the same basis and according to the same criteria as all purchased materials. No commitment to accept gifts shall be made to anyone except the Head

Librarian. The library retains the right to dispose of gifts at any time and in any manner deemed appropriate. If kept, material will not be separate in any way but will be merged with the regular collection, identified only with a book plate.

The appraisal of a gift to the library for tax purposes is the responsibility of the donor. The library will supply an acknowledgement of the items, if requested at the time the gift is received, but no monetary valuation statement will be furnished.

Limiting Factors

The following categories of material will not be acquired, under normal circumstances:

1. Excessively priced books, especially if reprint or antiquarian;
2. Textbooks of a general survey nature, published primarily for classroom use, unless the particular title represents an exceptional source of information in its field;
3. Foreign language materials for which neither faculty nor students have reading skills;
4. Out-of-date materials which are no longer useful;
5. Material whose poor physical condition will not permit ordinary library use;
6. Material in slight demand for which interlibrary loans are more feasible economically;

Acquisitions Procedures

Orders should be submitted on the standard library book requisition form. The form should be filled out (preferably typewritten) as fully as possible, although it is understood that full information will not always be available to those initiating orders. Especially in the case of small publishers and publishers outside the United States, catalogs or brochures will be a helpful supplement to the requisition. They will be returned to the person placing the order if requested. When orders for out-of-print titles are submitted on the basis of a listing in a dealer's catalog, it is essential that the catalog accompany the order, and that the order reach the library as quickly as possible.

The normal ordering period will be from September 1 to April 1 of each year. Orders will usually be processed in the same sequence as received, with the Head Librarian making the necessary decision to ensure collection balance and fair treatment to all departments. Requisitions which are not processed within the academic year in which they are received will be held until the following ordering period. Occasionally, budgetary considerations make it necessary to shorten or lengthen the ordering period.

Priority can be given to genuine "Rush" orders, but this designation should be used sparingly, and only for titles which are genuinely needed by a specific date. Books which are not so designated will become part of the cataloging backlog and will be added to the collection in due time. Except in the case of titles which the college bookstore has in stock, the library cannot guarantee to supply "Rush" titles, cataloged and ready for use, in less than six weeks from the date of requisition. Titles which are needed for reserve reading assignments should always be requisitioned at least two months in advance, and should be accompanied by an appropriate notification of their intended use.

All decisions with regard to the source of purchase will be made by the library. Materials will be ordered from the jobbers or publishers giving the best service and price discounts. Unless otherwise instructed by the Head Librarian, faculty members may not secure approval copies for library purchase, nor instruct the college bookstore to order copies for resale to the library.

Periodicals and Newspapers

Funds are budgeted each year for the acquisition of periodicals and newspapers to support the academic programs, as well as to provide materials for cultural and leisure reading. Periodicals are purchased, or accepted as gifts, chiefly for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To keep the library's collection up-to-date with current thinking in various fields;
2. To provide information not available in books;
3. To provide in some measure for the research needs of advanced students and faculty;
4. To keep the faculty informed of developments in their fields;
5. To provide book selection aids;
6. To meet the leisure needs of library users.

Faculty advice is requested in determining which titles to receive. The library will endeavor to keep in balance the various disciplines represented in the periodical literature. Individual titles will be chosen for the following reasons:

1. Accuracy and objectivity;
2. Accessibility of content through indexes;
3. Demand;
4. Representation of a point of view or subject needed in the collection;
5. Cost of the subscription in relation to its use.

Broken or incomplete sets of periodicals have little value to the library. Therefore, a particular title should be in existence a minimum of one year before the library subscribes. In order to secure reduced rates, most periodicals are ordered in cycles of three-year subscriptions. As funds permit, if the need exists, attempts are made to secure back files. The current subscriptions are evaluated annually.

Certain periodicals are bound on a regular basis, while some periodicals will be discarded when their usefulness has ceased. In many cases, the availability of the periodical in electronic format will be significant factor to consider in determining whether a print subscription is maintained and/or bound. Discarded periodicals will be first offered to other libraries on a gift and exchange basis before making them available to our faculty and students.

Subscriptions to selected newspapers will be maintained for the purpose of providing current information on local, national and international events. Their retention will depend upon the availability of storage space. Normally, a back file of three months will be maintained. From 1974-1985 the New York Times was received on microfilm as a permanent acquisition.

Collection Maintenance

Normally, when there is a choice, hardbound books will be purchased rather than paperbacks because of their greater durability. Exceptions to this policy will be made in the following circumstances:

1. When the cost of a hardbound book is considerably more than the cost of binding a new paperback;
2. When the paperback shows promise of withstanding considerable use;
3. When the book has only a temporary usefulness, as in the case of reference books which are revised annually;
4. When the book is not likely to be heavily used;
5. When pamphlet binders will serve the purpose more economically;
6. When budgetary considerations necessitate a reduction in the quantity of binding.

To prevent the shelves from retaining materials of questionable value, a systematic and periodic program of evaluating the collection is carried out by the library in cooperation with the faculty. Obsolete materials, such as outmoded books, superseded editions, broken files of un-indexed journals, superfluous duplicates, and worn-out or badly marked volumes are withdrawn from the collection and discarded. When it seems advisable, the advice of faculty members will be solicited in regard to their areas of expertise.

Periodic inventories of parts of the collection will be undertaken to determine which books may be missing from the library. Normally, a period of at least six months will be allowed to transpire before missing books are withdrawn from the library's records. Many titles reported lost are in fact only temporarily misplaced. Replacement copies may be secured earlier as needed for teaching or research.

Persons who lose or damage books will be required to pay the cost of replacement. However, it is not the library's policy to replace automatically all books withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. The need for replacement in each case is weighed with regard to several factors:

1. The number of duplicate copies;
2. The existence of adequate coverage of an area;
3. Other similar material in the collection, especially later and better material;
4. The demand for the particular title or subject.