Staying Ahead of the Future: Developing Your Library's Collection Philosophy and Policy

HANDOUT

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Session Description

In this interactive session, attendees will explore current trends in health sciences library collections. They will delve into the purpose of a collection development policy or philosophy statement, including considering the audience and elements of a statement suitable for their own library. They will also learn about resources and best practices that can keep collection policies and philosophies current. This session will provide impetus and inspiration to write, review, or update their own institutions' statements.

"As technologies advance, values transform, and audiences shift, your collection development philosophy and policy should change to keep pace with and even anticipate these developments..." *(Excerpt from 2022 Symposium program booklet)*

Contents

- ➢ **Quotations & Excerpts**
- ➢ **Collection Philosophy & Policy: Elements / Parts**
- ➢ **Collection Policies: Models**
- ➢ **References**
- ➢ **Sample Collection Development Philosophies, Policies, Guidelines**

Selected Quotations and Excerpts

From flip clips shown during the session

...When I think about collections, I think about Ranganathan's fifth law of library science – that the library is a growing organism. And I think about how I'm helping that organism grow...
--Karen Gau

...To be plain, who the library reports to is a big factor in the library's collection development...
--Karen L. Hanus

...I think that we have to consider a library collection broadly. It's everything that we purchase, license, create, digitize, host, support, borrow, share, or even simply link to. All of that has to be considered when we make collections decisions...
--Susan K. Kendall

Collection development policies also are called selection policies, collection statements, or collection development plans-reflecting the reality that they serve as the plan for building and maintaining a collection, both locally held and accessed remotely. If the library has no recorded rationale for decisions, selection, deselection, and priority-setting for the library will occur in isolation and without coordination.
--Peggy Johnson (reference #2, p. 83)

The purposes that collection policies serve can be divided into two broad categories: to inform (presenting the library's mission and then describing current collections in terms of strengths and weaknesses and setting future goals) and to protect (protects the library against external pressures).
--Peggy Johnson (reference #2, p. 86, 87)

Requests for nontraditional online resources continue to grow in quantity and volume, especially among medical students. With this growth in use and demand, should libraries support these types of resources? & Nontraditional online resources pose challenges to standard collections practices and policies in academic health sciences libraries that extend beyond licensing.
--Mary Shultz, Donna R. Berryman (reference #7)

Many libraries and library types utilize collection development policies as the standard for guiding the content and format of current and future collections. While these documents retain value as a summary of a departmental desires and acquisitions planning, the multidisciplinary nature of teaching and publishing may be diminishing their use and effectiveness as a means of disseminating library intent...
--IN: "Something's Gotta Give: Is There a Future for the Collection Development Policy?" Matt Torrence, Audrey Powers and Megan Sheffield (**Charleston Conference Proceedings** 2011, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt6wq4sf.23; https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wq4sf.23).

<h1 style="color:red; text-align:center">Collection Philosophy & Policy Elements / Parts
(<i>a sampling</i>)</h1>

"...All listed components might be found in a single policy [but] such comprehensiveness is neither common nor necessary...Most libraries focus on those areas that most clearly speak to their own priorities and issues..."
                                                                      --Peggy Johnson (reference #2, p. 89)

Element	Description	Source
Title page / cover	*Identifies type of document, library name, date written and approved*	#5 (Chapter 3)
Signature page	*May be included in title page; signatures; confers legitimacy*	#5 (Chapter 3)
Table of contents		#5 (Chapter 3)
Overview / Introduction		#2, #4
General and narrative statements		#4
Guidelines	*System-wide selection guidelines*	#2
Mission & vision		#2; #3 (Chapter 2)
Background statement	*User community, demographics, insights gained through needs assessment, define institutional mission of the library, special features, location of library, cooperative agreements.*	#5 (Chapter 3)
Library scope		#3 (Chapter 2)
Library mission, goals, and objectives		#2, #5 (Chapter 3)
Background or history		#2
Purpose of the policy		#2, #5 (Chapter 3), #6 (Chapter 2), #8
Statement of purpose		
Detailed list of programs or users served by library		#1; #3 (Chapter 2)

Library user community		#3 (Chapter 2)
Identification of target audience		#5 (Chapter 3)
Description of user needs	*The core community requires teaching, clinical, and research materials focused on...*	#3 (Chapter 2)
Cooperative / collaborative factors	*The library belongs to the x consortium...*	#3 (Chapter 2)
Collaboration and resource sharing		#8
Consortial activities and commitments		#8
Collection responsibilities		#2
Responsibility for collection development and management		#5 (Chapter 3)
Responsibility for the collection development policy		#6 (Chapter 2)
Collaborative collection development		#8
Diversity statement		#8
ALA and Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) statements		#8
Scope of collection		#2
General selection criteria (applicable to all resource considerations)		#8
Selection criteria (*formats collected, subjects collected, depth of collection, other selection criteria*)		#1
Selection or evaluation criteria	*General criteria (eg. user needs & wants; hlgs of other libs; gaps) Specific criteria*	#5 (Chapter 3)

Collection depth indicators	*(eg. currency; reputation of publisher)*	#4
Collection intensity levels		#8
Format considerations		#3 (Chapter 2)
Formats and genres included / excluded and the rationale for these decisions		#2
Analysis of collection by format		#5 (Chapter 3)
Journal selection criteria		#8
E-resources criteria		#8
Digitized and born-digital Collections		#8
Faculty publications		#8
Open access resources		#8
Subject profiles		#4
Analysis of subject fields Collection mapping Support levels Phase levels		#5 (Chapter 3)
		#1
RLG Conspectus collection levels for each subject area	*Subjects collected, at the described levels*	
Subject profiles		#3 (Chapter 2)
Chronological coverage		#3 (Chapter 2)
Geographical coverage		#3 (Chapter 2)
Language coverage		#3 (Chapter 2)
Selection tools		#2
Selection aids		#5 (Chapter 3)
Selection aids and handling of user recommendations		#2
Patron-drive acquisitions and pay-per-use (if used)		#2
How are requests of additions to collection evaluated?		#1

Weeding / deselection guidelines		#1; #4
Collection maintenance and weeding		#5 (Chapter 3)
Retention policy		#3 (Chapter 2)
Replacements		#5 (Chapter 3)
Intellectual Freedom: *Access to collections		#2
Intellectual Freedom: *Reconsideration of materials	*Sample challenge form.*	#2, #5 (Chapter 3)
Processes for challenges to materials in the collection		#2
Intellectual freedom	*Philosophy statement concerning intellectual freedom and procedures for handling complaints.*	#5 (Chapter 3), #8
Review of policy; process for revision		#2
How often is the collection policy reviewed and what is the process? Who as the authority to change and/or approve?		#1
Revisions	*At conclusion of policy, should be an indication of process for revision (ideally continual).*	#5 (Chapter 3)
Overview of collection budget and funding sources		#1
Budgeting and funding		#5 (Chapter 3)
Policies related to special collections and archival materials		#1, #3 (Chapter 2)
Special Collections		#5 (Chapter 3)
Special Collections & Archives		#8
Government publications		#2

Reference collection	*Purpose of policy, responsibility for policy, purpose of collection, target audience, budgeting & funding, selection criteria, aids & methods, formats, duplicates, preferred language/s, circulation, treatment of specific resource groups, resource sharing, maintenance, weeding & reviewing, policy revision*	#6 (Chapter 2), #8
Policies related to data

Datasets | *Scope, formats, chronological factors (mirrors general policy)* | #3 (Chapter 8)

#8 |
| Donation / gift procedure and/or policy
Gift Policy
Gifts and exchanges
Gift policies and procedures | | #1, #2, #3 (Chapter 2), #8

#5 (Chapter 3) |
Licensing considerations		#1
Glossary	*Definition of terms*	#2
Bibliography	*Bibliography of sources consulted*	#2
Appendixes		#2

Collection Policies: Models

Type	Description	Source
Narrative	*Text-based, often called a subject or collection profile*	#2, pp. 94-97
Classed	*Sometimes called enumerative description describes the collection and current collecting levels; may describe preservation levels and proposed future collecting levels. (Use same classification system as that used for collection).*	#2, pp. 94-97
Combined Narrative and Classed	*Takes most useful features of each to describe the collecting plan.*	#2, pp. 94-97
Supplemental Policies	*Deal with special issues, eg. donor relations, accepting and declining gifts; preservation; weeding, deselection.*	#2, pp. 94-97

Selected References

1. ***Collection Development Best Practices, version 1.0, 2019.*** Medical Library Association, Collection Development Caucus. [available online] (version 2.0 is in process, 2022)
   - Section- "Collection Development Policies"

2. ***Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management,*** 4th edition / Peggy Johnson. Chicago: ALA Editions, an imprint of the American Library Association, 2018.
   - *Chapter 3. Planning, Policy, and Budgets, section: Collection Development Policy Statements*

3. ***Health Sciences Collection Management for the Twenty-First Century*** / edited by Susan K. Kendall. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield (Medical Library Association), 2018.
   - *Chapter 2. Managing a Health Sciences Collection, section: Collection Development Policies, Formal and DeFacto (Susan E. Swogger)*
   - *Chapter 8. Data in the Library: Considerations for Collection Development Policy and Practice (Lisa Federer)*

4. ***Health Sciences Librarianship*** / edited by M. Sandra Wood. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefiedl (Medical Library Association), 2014.
   - Part II. Collection Services. Chapter 4. Collection Development in Health Sciences Libraries / Holly E. Phillips. (Collection Development Policies, pp. 90-97)

5. ***Collection Development and Management for 21st Century Library Collections : An Introduction*** (2nd edition) / Vicki L. Gregory. Chicago : ALA Neal-Schuman, 2019.
   - Chapter 3: Collection Development Policies

6. ***Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences*** (6th edition, updated, revised, and expanded) / compiled by Jeffrey T. Huber and Susan Swogger. Neal-Schuman (Medical Library Association), 2014.
   - Chapter 2: Organization and Management of the Reference Collection (Collection Development Policy, pp. 26-28)

7. Shultz M, Berryman DR. Collection practices for nontraditional online resources among academic health sciences libraries. ***J Med Libr Assoc***. 2020 Apr;108(2):253-261. doi: 10.5195/jmla.2020.791. Epub 2020 Apr 1. PMID: 32256236; PMC7069827.

8. Levenson HN. Notes on Operations Nimble Collection Development Policies: An Achievable Goal. ***Library Resources & Technical Services***. 2019;63(4):206-219.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5860/lrts.63n4.206

ALSO:
   - ***Collection** Development Policies for Health Sciences Libraries.* David H. Morse and Daniel T. Richards. (Medical Library Association Dockit #3, 1992)
   - ***Collection Development and Management for Electronic, Audiovisual, and Print Resources in Health Sciences Libraries***. Compiled by Linda J. Walton et al. (Medical Library Association DocKit #3, 2nd revised edition, 2004.

Collection development philosophies, policies, guidelines
(a sampling)

Louisiana State University Health Shreveport Medical Library
Library Policies - Louisiana State University Health Shreveport (lsuhs.edu)

Michigan State University
Sciences & Health Sciences
Collection Development Policy Statements | MSU Libraries
Medicine
Purpose or Scope of Collection - Collection Development Policy Statement: Medicine - LibGuides at Michigan State University Libraries (msu.edu)

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Galter Health Sciences Library & Learning Center
Galter Health Sciences Library & Learning Center | About Collections Philosophy (northwestern.edu)

University of Iowa
https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/collections/selectionpolicy/
Related policies: https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/about/policies/ *under "Collections and Scholarly Communication."*

Virginia Commonwealth University
https://www.library.vcu.edu/research-teaching/collections-overview/collection-guidelines/
See Guidelines by Academic Program: Allied Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy...

[pre-MLA 2022, 4/28/2022]

On-site discussions in New Orleans
(notes from the scribes)

What elements belong in your library's collection policy/philosophy?

- Philosophy / mission statement- driving principles, definition of patron base, funding source(s), collection formats/ scope of collection (and how requests for purchase are handled), criteria for deselection, procedure for challenges, who is responsible for collection development
- *Elements for philosophy*: who we serve with library collections, library mission statement, time: current & future; *Elements of policy*: Timeframe for renewal / revisions: format priority, material types (journals, books, AV), age & currency, donation / gifts, historical, weeding, DEI priorities, accessibility, licensing requirements – only institution-wide purchasing or other restrictions, roles of / responsibilities of liaisons & collection responsibilities, level of material (graduate or above, specific to their mission), ILL policies, copyright (# of requests, then moves to purchase situation), scope, challenge or reconsideration of a title, intellectual freedom
- Audience, currency, scope, procedure for challenging, follow best practices, diversity, incl. mental health

- <u>Primary</u> population (ie. whom do you serve?), alignment with mission of institution, keep it broader in general, avoid continuous updating
- Scope of the collection (level of collecting), statements about: weeding, format (print / electronic / textbook), patron bases (for whom are you collecting), diverse voices, language, donation / gift policy
- Currency (current biomedical collection), if retain older editions, explain (regional medical library), statements about: open access, diversity / equity / inclusion, historical / archival material, self-published books
- Policy revisions/updates, statements about: patron requests, weeding, selection criteria and acquisitions, print & electronic format rules, audience
- What we collect and why, nature of the library, the audience/disciplines served, type and format of collected materials, (sometimes) timelines for what materials are considered "current", special collections and their parameters, weeding criteria, donation policy

What would you express this in an elevator pitch? (informal, free of library jargon, persuasive, customer-oriented)

- "More of what you need, less of what you don't"
- Know your audience for an elevator pitch
- More jargon may appear in a philosophy than a policy
- "We collect current & electronic, have a duplicate policy"
- "We are collections, not repositories"--Focus on articulating the broad philosophy, esp. the priorities
- What is the goal: clinical excellence, patient outcomes, student success; prioritize suggestions that will be actively used rather than predicting what might be useful
- Library collections materials in X formats to support the mission of the institution & current & future needs in a way that stewards financial resources
- The library's policy tells the "why" and "how" to purchase, and also the "why not"

What are some reasons to NOT have a public-facing collection philosophy/policy?
       Are they surmountable? Are there workarounds?
       Is there a reason to have a policy for only library staff?

- No reason to NOT make public
- A public-facing policy is for the people served by the library
- Approval process may affect desire to make public. eg. policies (that are approved) may be made public, while SOPs – standard operating procedures are internal/not public facing (might be common in military, government agencies)
- To avoid backlash (eg. some faculty are sticklers); they don't need to know
- Public facing: May be misunderstood; needs to be defended when challenged; Internal: May need a policy internally for staff to offer more details to support decision. In order to keep the public facing policy broad, an internal policy may be needed to prevent multiple revisions
- May include jargon
- Handling difficult situations (eg. discarding materials) can be sensitive
- Reasons may include: if institution gets public funding; jealousy & funding squabbles for funding bodies; the public often misunderstands the role of

weeding; visceral anger from public about weeding; outdated ideas of what libraries are for; could dissuade people from engaging with the library; not posting gives you leeway to make exceptions; leaving nuanced/detailed policy internally facing can make things more accessible

General from speaker, Montie' Dobbins & table group discussions:
- A library is a growing organism
- Libraries are not "cookie cutter"
- A philosophy is an ideal, policies- how we carry it out
- Don't be trapped into promises you can't keep
- A library is a bridge
- Policies give direction & protection (eg. regarding acceptance or not of donations; funds) & are shaped by expertise (eg. separate contacts for staff with expertise in accepting historical materials, discussing data, etc.)
- Is electronic collection weeding warranted?
  - Some libraries align with curriculum in making only current additions discoverable (after a transition period so reading lists lead to most recent edition)
- What do other libraries do with donations or weeded items?
  - Some do not accept any donations
  - Some accept / direct questions for items of possible historic interest
  - Some hold book sales with weeded, donated material
  - Some restrict what they will accept (eg. "no journals")
  - Some point to donation sites such as those listed in a guide maintained by University of Buffalo - "A guide to non-profit organizations worldwide that request book, journal and other educational material donations.": [Home - International Donations Program - Research Guides at University at Buffalo](#)

  - Some states' legislation mandates (for state institutions) that book sales are not permitted, and withdrawn items must be discarded. They may also mandate that records be kept (ie. item records in the ILS are the "accession record", even when suppressed)
- Comments:
  - Didn't have a collection philosophy / policy & after this session- may write one
  - Had a collection development policy "in the works" and after this session- plan to revise

[post-MLA 2022 notes added, 5/9/2022]