"Pulling Together"
to Build a Good Collection

Faculty members and librarians who work together can accomplish much for their schools.

A t a fair, spectators watched to see which horse could pull the heaviest load. Various weights were placed on an old-fashioned sled to test the horses' strength. People cheered when the champion horse pulled a 4,500-pound sled. The runner-up pulled 4,400 pounds. Some wondered how much the horses could pull together. So they hitched the two winners together and eagerly waited for the result. The sum total of separate loads was 8,900 pounds. However, by working together, the two horses pulled more than 12,000 pounds![1]

This story illustrates the power of collaboration. Faculty members and librarians who work together can accomplish much for their schools. This is especially true in the area of library collection development. However, it is not always easy to hitch faculty members and librarians together. Librarians must take the initiative in planning and working with teachers.

In my experience, librarians normally encounter three problems when trying to involve faculty members in collection development:

• *Misconceptions about collection development.* Teachers may not clearly understand the process and significance of collection development. Because they have difficulty relating collection development to teaching and research, they may conclude that it is the work of the librarian.

• *Apparent lack of interest.* Teachers may acknowledge the importance of the library in the life of the institution, but due to lack of knowledge about collection development, they may hesitate to get involved in the process.

• *Lack of time.* Teachers with heavy responsibilities may feel they have no time to assist in collection development.

This article will suggest ways the librarian can facilitate collaboration in collection development.

Collection Development Plan

To build up a collection, the librarian must draw up a Collection Development Plan that includes the mission, objectives, priorities, and parameters.[2] This will provide policies that guide the implementation of the plan. To monitor expansion of library holdings, the librarian needs to work with the department chair or dean to ensure that collection development appears on the annual agenda of faculty meetings.[3]

One vital element of collection development is the selection of materials. In a recent

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book-buying survey of personnel at 1,000 academic libraries in the U.S., 96 percent said that faculty selection helped inform purchasing decisions.[4]

Possessing a doctoral degree in a subject area does not automatically qualify a faculty member as a selection expert for the library! Highly trained teachers usually do a good job of critically analyzing and evaluating graduate-level books and journal articles in their area of expertise. However, they need to take a broader view to select materials that will be useful to an undergraduate student population.[5]

Therefore, any collection development plan must include policies that enable faculty members to select library materials that support the courses they teach and the research needs of their students. This will ensure that faculty turnover does not deter the long-term development of the collection.[6]

Selection of library materials must take into account the needs of the various courses (including how frequently they are offered) and the student population. Curriculum mapping can predict the level of library support required for each course. Table 1 offers a sample curriculum-mapping chart.[7]

Using the curriculum-mapping chart, faculty members are asked to list the level of support required for each course. Below are the different levels of support:[8]

1 = Minimal library resources needed for students and teachers; basic resources are textbooks and specially purchased classroom resources.

2 = Library resources needed to support one or two student projects per year plus some teacher resources; textbooks used as guides with some supplemental, teacher-developed units.

3 = Library resources needed to support several student projects per year and classroom instruction; minimal textbook use; most units teacher-designed with local resources; some units include the instruction of core information skills by the library media specialist.

The librarian and faculty members can modify the table to fit their college or university. Curriculum mapping will answer questions such as "How much should be spent for library materials in the various subjects?" and "What are the subject area parameters for collection development?" The data from curriculum mapping will ensure the wise use of acquisition funds.

When faculty members examine the library collection, they often make exciting discoveries.

The Collection Development Plan will also provide common ground for teachers and librarians to collaborate on other

Table 1: Curriculum Mapping				
Course	Enrollment	Frequency of Offering	Level of Support	Comments

AIIAS faculty members enjoy twice-yearly trips to shop for new library books.

issues, such as how much to spend on various formats or for expensive reference sets, journal subscriptions, online databases, etc.

Classroom instruction and collection development are inextricably linked. Faculty members can enhance their teaching and research by collaborating with the librarian in book selection.

Antidote for Apparent Lack of Interest

If the teachers seem disinterested in library acquisitions, the librarian should determine why. In many schools, only a fraction of the faculty members use library resources. Because they have a personal library in their office or study, they may use the library only to check the accuracy of information or to browse.[9] Others may use secretaries or student assistants to search for library materials.

The librarian can excite interest by inviting faculty members to visit the library. Here is an example of how that can work for collection evaluation, an important element of collection development.

Evaluation requires direct examination of the collection to pinpoint its strengths and weaknesses. To do this, the librarian should ask the department chair or the dean to schedule a time when the

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teachers can visit the library.

The best time to do this is at the end of the semester or after the library inventory. The librarian should determine ahead of time the call number ranges, locations, and subject areas to be assessed. To encourage a sense of camaraderie, the librarian can prepare some refreshments or snacks for teachers and library personnel. During the visit, the librarian should present the guidelines for evaluation.

Although teachers can learn what is available through the Web-based Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), direct examination of the collection allows them to browse titles. Hands-on examination will allow the faculty members to discuss and analyze the collection's strengths and weaknesses. This can generate discussion for faculty meetings.

Direct examination also allows the teachers to see which titles have been checked out. They may discover outdated

or irrelevant materials that need to be discarded or relegated to storage. Finally, they may discover previously unknown items useful in their classrooms and research. The librarian should also schedule time for teachers to directly examine reference materials, non-print items, and journal subscriptions.

Facing the Problem of Time

Faculty members who understand the relationship between collection development, teaching, and research will be eager to work with the librarian. For their part, librarians must organize collection development activities in such a way as to maximize faculty input.

At the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) in the Philippines, where I work, the librarians invite our faculty members twice each year to visit book fairs in Manila. Library personnel arrange the details of the trips with great care. They even rent an air-conditioned van. The librarians provide the selection guidelines, and faculty members spend their time selecting titles from various book vendors. They need not get involved in the logistics of the acquisitions process or business transactions with the vendors, as the librarians take care of this.

Since faculty schedules vary, we often make several trips to the book fairs. The trips are well organized and interesting, and faculty spouses often beg to be included!

During my 18 years as librarian at AIIAS, some faculty members have asked me if they can get involved in collection development. By working together, we have created a strong collection in the various subject areas, as well as a pleasant relationship. These faculty members:

• recognize that the goals and objectives of collection development both support and improve their classroom teaching and research.

• usually do not rely upon a single textbook. Their course outlines require students to read from a large number of books and to search for journal articles.

• read widely in recent publications in their disciplines. They often send the librarian photocopies of critical book reviews or book advertisements from journals.

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• attend conferences in other states or countries, and take time to visit booths where books are sold. They gather information or brochures to give to the librarian, and may even make prior arrangement with the librarian to purchase books for the library.

• are research oriented and love to write journal articles and prepare books for publications.

These points illustrate how teachers and librarians can collaborate in collection development that leads to excellence in teaching and research.

Involving faculty members in collection development may initially seem time-consuming for the librarian. However, making teachers and administrators aware of the relationship between collection development, instruction, and research, and the important role that teachers can play in the acquisitions process will pay dividends for everyone. ✑

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REFERENCES

1. John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1995), pp. 11, 12.

2. For help in formulating a Collection Development Plan, the *Guide for Written Collection Policy Statements* (Chicago, Ill.: American Library Association, 1996) is highly recommended. Another useful title is *Library Collection Development Policies: A Reference and Writers' Handbook* by Richard J. Wood and Frank Hoffmann (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1996). In addition to discussing collection development policy, Wood and Hoffman also include collection development policies various types of libraries.

3. The librarian must take the initiative in involving faculty members in collection development. If the librarian is not invited to faculty meetings, he or she must arrange for this with the dean or the department chair. For other ideas, see Doug Cook, "Creating Connection: A Review of the Literature" in *The Collaborative Imperative: Librarians and Faculty Working Together in the Information Universe* edited by Dick Raspa and Dane Ward (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000), pp. 29-35.

4. Barbara Hoffert, "Book Report, Part 2: What Academic Libraries Buy and How Much They Spend," *Library Journal* 123: L14 (September 1998), pp. 146, 150.

5. Larry Hardesty, "Book Selection for Undergraduate Libraries: A Study of Faculty Attitudes," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 12:1 (March 1986), p. 23.

6. G. Edward Evans, *Developing Library Collections* (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1979), p. 123.

7. The chart in this page is a modified version of the one by Debra E. Kachel in *Collection Assessment and Management for School Libraries: Preparing for Cooperative Collection Development* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), p. 164.

8. Kachel, pp. 58-68, 163. For a comprehensive classification of collection intensity levels, see *Guide for Written Policy Statements*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1996), pp. 13, 14.

9. Constance McCarthy, "The Faculty Problem," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 11:2 (July 1985), p. 143.

The AIIAS librarians relax with faculty members after a day spent "weeding" the collection.