

Acquisitions Policy

Riley-Hickingbotham Library
Ouachita Baptist University

Introduction

This policy is a guide toward consistent excellence in the choice of materials and is a statement of purposes and standards in building the University Library. As a policy, it is a set of principles, subject to change after due consideration as the institution changes. To that end, changes in this document shall be appended only after their consideration by the library faculty, the Library Committee, the Director of Library Services, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and University President, and adoption by the University faculty.

The Library is primarily an educational resource, and demonstrates the institution's commitment to educational excellence. It complements all classroom activity and is an integral part of the curriculum. It offers resources and enrichment material for students and faculty. Its materials are selected on the basis of the maturity and ability levels of all students.

As an integral part of the educational experience, as an extension of the classroom, and as the heart of the academic program, the Library is concerned with providing books and other materials which will aid the members of the University community in their pursuit of education (both narrowly and broadly defined), information, and the creative use of leisure time. The acquisitions program of Riley-Hickingbotham Library is expected to reflect faithfully the educational objectives of the University.

Responsibility for the Library

The Director of Library Services has the responsibility, as delegated by the University President through the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, for the maintenance and development of library collections, facilities and services.

Responsibility for Selection

The selection process shall be a responsibility of the Director of Library Services in consultation with the University faculty and the library staff. Departmental faculties have primary responsibility for recommending materials to support courses taught in their disciplines. Professional librarians have responsibility for recommending reference materials and titles in areas where current holdings are not adequately representative. All members of the academic community--faculty, administrators, non-teaching staff, and students--should recommend materials in areas and subjects of personal and general interest.

Intellectual Freedom

In its selection of materials, the Library subscribes fully to the American Library Association's "Freedom to Read Statement," the "Library Bill of Rights," and the "Statement on Labeling." See <http://www.ala.org>.

The student body at Ouachita Baptist University represents many and varied groups of people. As an academic institution, the University seeks to provide materials on as many points of view as possible. Subject to availability, the institution seeks to provide materials which give evidence of a desire to establish and present facts. Books on controversial subjects or issues may be acquired. Materials containing undocumented statements or accusations are added only when some special academic interest justifies their addition. The presence of any item in the library does not indicate endorsement of its content by the institution.

All requests for reconsideration of materials purchased under the principles of this policy will be handled in the following manner. Any patron complaining about library materials will be asked to fill out the appropriate form, which will be submitted to the Director. All such objections will be discussed by a joint meeting of the Library Committee and the Library's professional staff to determine whether or not the material was selected in accordance with this policy. After that meeting, the group will convey its findings as a recommendation to the Director. The Director shall then make the final determination, and convey the decision to the objecting patron in writing. The material in question will not be removed from the shelf while this process is underway.

Clientele

The Library seeks to serve the University community and the publics which surround it. The Library's primary mission is to serve the University community, but it extends privileges to members' families, Arkansas Baptists, and the local community. The clientele's maturity is assumed, although young adults and children may avail themselves of materials housed by the Library. The University provides resources for readers of limited skill in other departments, but an advanced educational level is assumed of the Library's clientele. In all cases, library usage is a privilege, and the institution reserves the right to restrict service and use in accordance with its educational objectives.

Material Categories and Priorities

The Library will collect general and specialized reference materials, bibliographic indices and catalogs for the identification of materials useful in specific curricular fields, interdisciplinary and broadly cultural materials not specific to one curricular field, and, in some instances, materials which relate to specific fields not currently included in the curriculum but which may reasonably be expected to be added in the near future.

Materials shall be selected for each field represented in the curriculum in the following priorities: 1. the field as a whole; 2. divisions of the field in which courses are offered; 3. divisions of the field in which courses are not currently taught, but in which courses may reasonably be expected in the near future; and 4. specialized or advanced aspects of the field which interest faculty members but are not yet represented by course offerings. In all matters of priorities, the preeminent one shall be to provide a balanced collection for the University's use, and one which meets the institution's curricular needs.

While both current and retrospective materials are essential to the academic community, all other matters being equal, current materials have priority. Current materials are those

in print in the original editions; retrospective ones are out-of-print, or available only in reprint (full size or microform).

In all cases, priority will be given to requests accompanied by citations of favorable, critical, academic reviews.

Policies by Format

As a general rule, hardback books and bound periodicals are preferable to softbounds. Exceptions to that general rule occur when cost of acquisition in hardback form or cost of binding is not warranted by projected usage, when periodicals are unindexed and therefore of limited value, or when softbound is the only available format. In the latter case, if usage warrants rebinding it should be done.

Textbooks will not be added as a matter of course, although designation as a text does not disqualify a publication from selection. Texts will generally be added only when they clearly serve the general weal. The Library is not an alternative to student purchase of the texts which courses require, for library material is to augment and supplement the curriculum rather than to replace the students' required texts. When a particular text offers the best coverage of the field in question at an introductory level it may be added. Other considerations in adding a text to the collection are whether another avenue is readily available, if the text is a classic in the field, or if it has proven reference or historical value. Texts housed for use by those in the field of education may be an exception to this policy.

Microforms shall be utilized as a method of relatively inexpensive acquisition of some materials, and for the economies of space utilization. The purchase of an item in microform should be guided by its availability in other formats, the degree and nature of its projected use, space considerations, and the adequacy of equipment. As they become available, mass storage of materials through machine-readable formats will be adopted once a particular format has been proven. Any limitations of access will dictate the extent to which these formats will be utilized.

Formats which require special equipment will not be added until the equipment for utilizing those formats is readily available, and in sufficient quantity to obviate unacceptable limitations on access. The exception to this rule will be formats which are easily duplicated, and for which equipment to utilize them are readily available at other places on campus.

Policies by Subject Matter

While the Library has a responsibility to encourage leisure reading, budget limitations will normally require that current, non-course-related popular fiction and nonfiction have low priority. The priorities for acquisitions in fiction will be: 1. classics, or those judged by critics likely to become so; 2. curricular support; 3. leisure reading. For leisure reading, the University community will be encouraged to utilize the resources of the local public library.

The Library shall purchase foreign language material to support the University's curricular objectives. Foreign language materials used as an aid in teaching and learning foreign languages will receive priority; in such cases, difficulty and appropriateness of the material shall be a prime consideration before it is purchased.

The Library will collect in the area of the law primarily those materials which will support the curricular offerings of the institution. Rare books and research materials shall be purchased as required to fulfill the aims and functions of the University. The Library's major responsibility lies with the teaching program, and this responsibility demands priority. Purchase of rare books and research materials will be pursued in curricular fields where their use can be clearly demonstrated.

Special Problems

As a rule, only one copy of an item shall be added to the collection. Unless specifically requested and justified by curricular needs or consistently heavy usage, additional copies shall not be added even as gifts, unless they are identified as classics through standard bibliographies like Books for College Libraries.

Because of access limitations, full-size reprints will be preferable to microforms, unless considerations of access, cost, and space utilization dictate otherwise.

Materials used for extensive required reading should ordinarily be duplicated at the rate of one copy for every fifteen students, with consideration given to length, difficulty, and time between assignments.

Because of the close cooperation between Ouachita Baptist and Henderson State Universities, cooperative ventures in acquisitions, especially in high cost areas, will be sought. The goal is to duplicate only those materials which should reside in each library.

Out-of-print materials will be sought when requests justify such efforts, and when estimated frequency of use indicate the importance of those materials.

Lost items shall be replaced if they are available, and if they are still considered appropriate for selection according to criteria stated in this policy.

Periodical Subscriptions

Our goal is to own any title that is needed more than six times annually, and to provide the requisite depth and diversity of holdings for the academic program. Because subscriptions incur on-going expenses, care should be taken in entering new ones. Requests should be checked against the holdings of Henderson State University, in keeping with our cooperative arrangements. Criteria for adding new titles will include access through indices and abstracts; the priority of basic over specialized titles; realistic anticipation of use; and listing in standard guides like Farber, CHOICE, and Katz. Requests must be justified in writing, a justification which should include cost and the cost and extent of back files (if a periodical is important enough for a subscription, it is important enough to back file--with the number of years dependent on the nature of the

discipline involved). Back files shall be purchased as deemed necessary in light of the nature of the periodical, the discipline involved, and the availability of funding. No title shall be retained for which a clear purpose is not evident in terms of academic programs or extra-curricular enrichment.

Gift Policy

The Library accepts gifts with the understanding that they will not necessarily be added to the Library collection. The material will be judged by the same standards of selection as those applied to the purchase of new materials. If materials are not suitable because of condition, out-dated information or other factors, they will be disposed of in a beneficial manner--gift to another library, sale at a nominal cost to increase the book fund, discard, or return to the donor (only upon the donor's request at the time of donation). The Library does not appraise gifts.

When the Library receives from an individual or an organization the gift of a book, group of books, or a sum of money for the purchase of books in memory of a family member, friend or co-worker, Library selection standards apply. A memorial gift plate may be placed in these books. The Library does not set aside a special section or set of shelves for gift or memorial books. Personal libraries, like all other gifts, will be integrated into the general collection, with appropriate bookplate recognition if warranted. In no case may the Library, or anyone on its behalf, accept conditional gifts without the approval of the University President.

Weeding

The Library will engage in a constant evaluation process to ensure that the collection meets the needs of the Ouachita family, and shall request the involvement of academic departments in the process. That process includes removing materials from the collection as well as adding to it. Because of the institution's nature as a liberal arts institution and the nature of research therein, weeding will be done cautiously with due respect for the historical record and the continued importance and use of older materials. Candidates for weeding are materials containing superseded editions, surplus copies of standard works no longer in demand for supplemental use, worn out or excessively marked books, and broken files of un-indexed journals. Additional criteria will include value to the collection, amount of patron use, and coverage of the subject versus suitable alternatives to the information contained therein. Any materials which no longer meet the selection criteria will be removed from the shelves.

Encyclopedias will be purchased on a five-year rotating basis, with out-dated editions being replaced. Any book which shows as missing for two consecutive inventories or five years, whichever comes first, shall be considered lost and its replacement considered. If it is not to be replaced, it will be removed from the Library's holdings list in the same manner as weeded material.

Cooperative Ventures

The Library believes in the principle of access to information, and will work diligently to ensure maximum access for the funds expended. To that end, the Library will engage in

cooperative ventures whenever feasible. That includes interlibrary loans, and the library's special relationship with other libraries through networks of which it may be or become a member.

Foremost in this category are the Library's joint endeavors with the Henderson State University library, as spelled out in agreements between the two institutions. Cross-institutional patron privileges and cooperative efforts at collection development will be two examples.

Budgetary Allocations

The Library seeks to maximize faculty involvement in the selection process. To that end, the acquisitions budget will contain allocations for each department's use. The size of each department's allocation shall be the responsibility of the Director as budgetary officer, with the advice of the Library faculty and the Library Committee. That determination shall be made with equity as a guideline, and the Library's overall excellence as a goal.

Although formulae are more useful as guides than as absolute determinants, four major areas of criteria will be used in determining departmental allocations: (1) book need factors such as student semester hours generated, numbers of majors, number of faculty members, and courses taught; (2) cost of materials (an average by department); (3) non-qualitative factors, like publication rates in different fields, publication rates and other professional activity of department members, teaching methods, permanent value of materials normally purchased, recent additions to the department (faculty or courses), department's past spending record, and adequacy of present holdings as judged against standard bibliographic guides; and (4) relative use by department, as determined from circulation records and course requirements as contained in syllabi (laboratory courses requiring little, occasional, or frequent library use, and non-text or textbook courses requiring the library as a major resource).

Requests for purchases will be submitted to the Director or a designated staff member. Because of the departmental chairmen's administrative capacity and responsibilities, all requests for expenditures involving departmental allocations for books must be approved by the appropriate chairman or a faculty designate. If requests meet selection criteria, are judged as viable additions in light of the Library's overall needs, and funds remain in the department's allocation from the budget, the materials will be ordered and become part of the collection.

The Library will maintain a deadline for requests of three (3) months before the end of the fiscal year. Any requests submitted after that time may be filled from the next year's allocation, at the discretion of the academic departments. Departments which do not utilize their allocation in any given year, under this policy, surrender to the Director or designate the responsibility for expending any remaining funds. Because the Library seeks to maintain resources which serve the entire community, except under unusual circumstances those funds will be expended for materials in the academic area in question.

Responsibility for the purchase of periodicals rests with the Director or a designate, in consultation with the departments, rather than being allocated specifically to departments. The decision to add or delete titles will be taken only after careful study, and on a systematic basis.

Budget Apportionment Plan

For each department, the following items should be used to compile an apportionment of the departmental portion of the acquisitions budget. That apportionment will consist of a minimum to which each department will be entitled, plus an incremental addition determined by the following factors, equally weighted, which will be used to produce a profile.

I. Spending Patterns:

A five-year rolling history of spending, broken into three categories--actual dollar amounts, % of allotment used prior to the annual request cutoff date, % of total spent for all areas.

II. Cost Patterns:

- A. A five-year rolling history of industry average costs for books by category.
- B. A five-year rolling history of industry numbers of books published in each category.

III. Usage Patterns:

- A. A five-year rolling history of DDC usage, according to check-out records.
- B. A five-year rolling history of student ILL usage by departments.

IV. Faculty

- A. FTE faculty by department as a percentage of the total.
- B. A five-year rolling history of evidence of faculty professional activity justifying need for library materials--publications, presentations, research grants & fellowships.
- C. A five-year rolling history of faculty checkouts, including ILL

V. Students:

- A. A five-year rolling history of student semester hours generated by department as a % of total number generated annually.
- B. A five-year rolling history of majors by department as a % of total number of declared majors.

Approved by the University Library Committee
November 10, 1988