

Because of their numbers (more than 900 in the United States) and their long history, college libraries have developed a series of standards, some quantitative and some qualitative. A particularly good review of the standards and the issues surrounding them appears in an article by David Kaser in *Library Trends*.² Though standards are of some help in determining collection size, they do not have any influence in selection work, at least on a day-to-day basis.

Without question, the most widely used selection aid in American college libraries is *Choice* (published by the American Library Association). ALA created *Choice* to meet the specific needs of college library collection development officers by reviewing publications aimed at the undergraduate market. Subject experts, including librarians, write the reviews with an emphasis on the subject content and the title's overall suitability for undergraduate, rather than research, use. With small staffs (typically 10-15 people), few college libraries have sufficient subject expertise to evaluate all the potentially useful titles published each year, even with help from the teaching faculty. Because *Choice* annually reviews more than 6,000 titles of "potential use by undergraduates,"³ and because of its widespread use as a selection aid, several librarians have studied *Choice* to determine whether it is an effective selection aid. For example, do items receiving positive reviews receive more use than titles receiving neutral reviews? One such study concluded that *Choice*

reviews appear helpful in identifying the most worthy titles, as those most likely to be used repeatedly . . . titles appealing primarily to a more elite audience of specialists ought to be scrutinized if the selector is concerned about maximum use. The question of the level on which the book is written is an important one . . . selecting strictly on the basis of probable popularity runs the risk of developing a collection which could be categorized as 'light-weight' academically.⁴

The authors also note that a collection based on *Choice*'s so-called worthy titles may or may not be a collection that will address the needs of the particular institution.

University Libraries

University and research libraries' interests and needs dominate the professional literature, judging by the number of books and articles published about academic collection development in recent years. This domination arises from several types of numerical superiority. Though these libraries are not as numerous as libraries of other types, the size of their collections and the number of their staff, as well as monies expended per year on operations, far surpass the combined totals for all the other types of libraries. University and research libraries have collections ranging from a few hundred thousand to more than 10 million volumes. As an example, Tozzer Library (Harvard University) is a research library of about 180,000 items, a small library in the world of research libraries. However, it collects only in the fields of anthropology and archaeology. It

is, as a result, one of the two largest anthropology libraries in the world. Like all research libraries, Tozzer spends a good deal of money on materials each year, does much work that is retrospective, and collects in most languages.

Collection development and selection work requires more time and attention in university research libraries than in other academic libraries. Typically, there are full-time collection development officers. In other academic libraries, collection development is one of many duties a librarian performs. Looking at the history and development of United States academic libraries, one can see a changing pattern in regard to who does the book selection. In small libraries with limited funds, there is strong faculty involvement; sometimes the faculty has sole responsibility for building the collection. As the collection, institution, and budget grow, there is a shift to more and more librarian involvement and responsibility. At the university and research library level, subject specialists come back into the selection picture, but they are members of the library staff rather than the teaching faculty. Many, if not most, of the persons responsible for collection development in research libraries have one or more subject graduate degrees in addition to a degree in library science. Such individuals are usually responsible for developing the collection in a specific subject or language. There is no single method by which academic libraries divide the universe of knowledge among subject specialists. Local needs and historical precedent determine how the library divides the responsibilities. Some universities use broad areas (social sciences or humanities), others use geographic divisions (Oceania or Latin America), and still others use small subject fields (anthropology or economic botany) and languages (Slavic or Arabic). It is not uncommon to find a mix of all methods.

A significant problem in large university and research library systems with departmental or subject libraries is coordinating collection development activities. Budgets may be large, but there is always more material than money. Unintentional duplication is always a concern, but the biggest problem is determining whose responsibility it is to collect in a given subject. As the number of persons involved goes up and the scope of each person's responsibility diminishes, the danger of missing important items increases. Working together, sending one another announcements, and checking with colleagues about their decisions becomes a major activity for university collection development officers.

University libraries tend to depend heavily on standing and blanket orders as well as approval plans as means of reducing workloads while assuring adequate collection building. Using such programs allows selectors more time for retrospective buying and for tracking down items from countries where the book trade is not well developed. Knowledge of one or more foreign languages is a must if one wishes to be a collection development officer at the university level.