

Assessment of Library Collections
Academic Program Review

Liberal Studies and Humanities
combined

**Overview of Collection Assessments
in the Social Sciences and Humanities**

Tony Schwartz
Associate Director for Collection Management

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<p>The six appendices to this report are not on the web site of the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness—but may be requested from the library.</p>

While the library will go forward, as annual budgets allow, with acquisitions recommendations of program reviews, a more durable approach is the comprehensive collection development plan set as a university Millennium Strategic Goal.¹ That planning process will broaden the library's collaborations with each program, identify resources needed to build research-level collections, and provide a framework for long-range budgeting. This report lays some of the groundwork.

In the past year, the library has made collection assessments for 11 program reviews in the social sciences² and seven in the humanities.³ This report combines the Liberal Arts and Humanities programs into an overview of those 18 assessments. Rather than go over old ground, it begins to assemble the comprehensive collection development plan for the College of Arts and Sciences. This report does not extend to the sciences⁴ but draws some comparisons.

¹ Cross-functional plan for graduate education, goal 3 at <http://www.fiu.edu/~pie/>.

² The social-science programs completed include African New World Studies; Criminal Justice; Economics; History; International Relations; Journalism/Mass Communication; the Latin American and Caribbean Center; Political Science; Psychology; Sociology/Anthropology; and Women's Studies. Most are posted at <http://www.fiu.edu/provost/aaproreview/prarchives.htm>.

³ The humanities programs completed are Art; English, Linguistics, and Creative Writing; Modern Languages; Music; Philosophy; Religious Studies; Theatre and Dance.

⁴ Science programs reviewed include Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics. A complete journal evaluation for strategic planning was done with the Chemistry faculty. Other reviews involve Education, Architecture, and several health sciences programs.

SUMMARY

1. **Books.** In the triad of books, journals, and online resources, books are the strongest part of the library's collections in the social sciences and humanities. FIU's fairly comprehensive book approval plan for U.S. and U.K. publishers provides for broadly balanced, cross-disciplinary coverage ([spreadsheets 1-2](#)). Some needed improvements to the plan in the humanities (and the sciences) are now complete—but for a planned expansion of approval books for Latin America and the Caribbean studies that awaits adequate funding. Thus, the comprehensive collection development plan should not require a reassessment of the framework of book acquisitions.

2. **Journals.** Journal-acquisition decision models differ for the social sciences, humanities, and sciences. In the **social sciences** the library can make decisions largely on its own that involve the core literatures, based on citation-impact rankings. [Spreadsheet 3](#) shows the comprehensive plan for such journals.

However, the citation-rankings approach to collection evaluation, with its focus on established journals, has somewhat of a conservative bias. It generally does not account for newer or less mainstream titles that, though lacking a certain impact in the scholarly system, may be relevant on campus. In that regard, the library still relies on social science programs' self-studies and on consultations with the faculty to learn (a) new fields of emphasis and (b) *non-core* journals that pertain to campus research and curricular interests.

The **humanities** lack such rankings or other indicators of the core journal literatures. Lists of titles drawn from databases (e.g., *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*) are not comprehensive enough in terms of interdisciplinarity, particularly at advanced research levels. Thus, this part of the comprehensive plan will depend on the humanities programs to create lists of needed titles.⁵

In the **sciences**, the library has an abundance of core-journal rankings (as in the social sciences) but lacks faculty-level knowledge of campus needs (as in the humanities) to determine from such lists—most with hundreds of titles—the journals that should be acquisition priorities. The plan in the sciences (as in the humanities) depends on the faculty to shape those journal collections.

3. **Online Resources.** [Spreadsheet 4](#) is an overview of nearly 50 online resources identified in program reviews of the social sciences and humanities for the faculty's consideration. As shown, five have been acquired and the remaining ones have an aggregate annual cost of about \$59,000. Obviously, the library working with the relevant programs must prioritize them in terms of their relative importance to campus interests.

⁵ The comprehensive plan is well under way for **Religious Studies** (whose faculty did a complete journal-collection review) and for **Music** (for which the library liaison, Dan Hardin, has a Ph.D. in the discipline). Other programs that have completed their journal collection plans are **Psychology**, **Journalism/Mass Communication**, and **Chemistry**.

MAIN REPORT

SCOPE. This report covers books, journals, and databases.⁶ Five spreadsheets are appended. The first two outline the operation of the book approval plan in the social sciences and in the humanities. The next shows how social-science journals have been prioritized for the collection development plan. The fourth summarizes the online resources identified in program reviews for the faculty's consideration. The last spreadsheet, a comparison of benchmark library budgets—with a sixth appendix, a graph of inflationary pressures in the scholarly communication system—puts the financial situation in perspective.

BOOKS

The library's fairly comprehensive book approval plan for U.S. and U.K. publishing provides for broadly balanced collections. Spreadsheet 1 delineates the operation of the plan in FY02 for the social sciences. As shown, the vendor handled a total of 18,594 such titles. The library received 36% (6,636 titles); with 852 additional orders, the overall coverage was 40% (7,488 titles).

Spreadsheet 2 delineates the plan's operation in the humanities. Of the 16,054 total titles, the library received 23% (3,700 titles); with 1,760 additional orders, the overall coverage was 34% (5,460 titles).

The plan has no substantive subject restrictions in the social sciences. In the humanities, the few subject restrictions reflect the university's limited foreign-language interests. The categories of books *not* received involve non-academic levels (e.g., textbooks, popular-level literature) and unsuitable formats (e.g., unrevised dissertations). Thus, variations in subject coverages are a function of the proportion of academic titles to total book output per field (e.g., 70% coverage in political theory versus 3% in recreation/physical education).

Overall, such coverage appears to be above average for that of doctoral-extensive universities of FIU's size. There are two main sources of the plan's strength: (a) its inclusion of all adult-level titles in *The New York Times Book Review* or *Times Literary Supplement*, and (b) its coverage of area studies—primarily, Latin American and Caribbean—which have had such a decline in library acquisitions nationwide as to be considered “endangered species” in scholarly publishing.

⁶ Other categories of library support—special collections, digital collections, geographic information systems, sound and image collections, and government documents—will have distinct collection development plans.

The collection development plan should not require a reassessment of the framework of book acquisitions for U.S. and U.K. publishing. The needed improvements in this plan, involving the humanities and the sciences, have already been done.⁷ However, an expansion of the approval plans (created in 2000-2001) for books published in or about Latin America and the Caribbean awaits adequate funding.⁸

Retrospective Book Acquisitions. Part of the comprehensive collection development plan will be to acquire all relevant university-press books of the postwar decades (before FIU existed) that are still in print. The library will also look at bibliographic essays. For example, *Choice* began publishing such essays in the 1970s.

JOURNALS

As a rule, it is not feasible to make a comprehensive assessment of “all” library resources that may be relevant to a particular program or literature, given the interdisciplinarity of programs and literatures alike, as well as library budget lines. The method for structuring this situation for the journal literatures in the social sciences and sciences is to focus on the citation-impact rankings in a field according to the *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* database.⁹

⁷ In the humanities, the only major change was in **Religious Studies**. Its coverage in a few fields was shifted from approval books to notification slips (for direct orders) to afford certain new resources, such as an approval plan for South Asian books. However, this was an isolated case involving highly specialized fields of no cross-disciplinarity with other programs.

In summer 2003, the library added university-press titles to the approval plan for all of the **science and health fields** that had lacked adequate coverage. This was an affordable expansion in that university presses generally account for just 10-20% of book-publishing in the sciences and tend to have considerably less expensive book prices than trade publishers.

⁸ Expansion of the **Latin American** book approval plans will focus on Brazil, Peru, and Mexico. For **Caribbean** countries, plans based on title-by-title selections will be more effective.

⁹ The core science and social science titles are ranked in the *Journal Citation Reports* database. Citation-impact analysis is based on Bradford’s Law, that most of the important papers in a given field appear in a relatively small set of journals. See Hans Verner Holub et alia, “The Iron Law of Important Articles,” *Southern Economic Journal* 58 (1991): 317-28.

This method is highly expedient in the social sciences, where the library is relatively independent of the title-by-title faculty review process that is required in the **sciences**. Citation-impact factors do not apply to the humanities, which lack large-scale, salient patterns of journal interactions (most citations are to books or primary sources). Journal lists drawn from humanities databases (e.g., *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*) are generally not comprehensive enough to cover the interdisciplinarity of faculty research needs. The library relies on those programs to make their own lists from the faculty's knowledge of the journal literatures in their specializations.

Even in the social sciences, the citation-rankings approach is not complete. It focus on the more established journals does not account for newer or less mainstream titles that, though lacking a certain impact in the scholarly system, may be relevant on campus.

Since it is not possible to identify all of the journals relevant to a field (given interdisciplinarity), the question is whether the library is missing needed or important journals. *Local need* is based is ascertained from consultations with the faculty and also from interlibrary loan data.¹⁰

Importance can be gauged for fields that have citation-impact rankings. Spreadsheet 3 shows the prioritization for acquisition of the ranked journals for 18 social science program reviews. The overall measure (not shown in the spreadsheet listing) is that, of the total 2,026 ranked journals in 35 social science fields, the library has 72% (1,463). Most field coverages are in the 80% range (with those in the biomedical social sciences having, appropriately, much lower coverages).

For the collection development plan, of the total 563 titles not in the library, 80—one in seven—appear to be relevant to campus research and curricular interests. Those would have an annual aggregate cost of about **\$27,900** (on average, \$349), as shown in spreadsheet 3.

The 80 titles are prioritized on the basis of cross-disciplinarity. At the top are 46 with rankings in two or three fields; these would have an aggregate cost of about \$18,500 (on average, \$402). Next are 34 titles with single discipline rankings; those would have an annual aggregate cost of about \$9,400 (on average, \$254).

Latin American and Caribbean Journals. Comparison of the library's holdings of journals published in or about Latin America and the Caribbean to the *Hispanic American Periodicals Index (HAPI)*, found that FIU has 35% (98 of 281 titles). The library identified 78 additional *HAPI* titles for the collection development plan; they would cost of about \$3,600 annually and bring the library's coverage of *HAPI* to a satisfactory 65% level.

¹⁰ To assess local demand, the library identified the journals most often requested through interlibrary loan over the past three years. They involved, in the main, Educational Psychology, Biology, Medicine, and Environmental Science. In terms of access-versus-ownership economics (royalty payments compared to subscription prices), 18 titles of the total set of 135 proved to be more cost-effective to own. Those subscriptions began January 2003.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The library's collections of databases and other online resources, about 275 in number, include nearly all of the basic ones in the social sciences and humanities. The comprehensive plan will focus on such resources at the advanced research level. Spreadsheet 4 is a summary list of 25 in the social sciences or humanities identified for the faculty's consideration over the past year. As shown, these would have an aggregate annual cost of about \$63,000. Obviously, they must be prioritized in terms of cross-disciplinarity and relative importance to campus interests.

OVERVIEW for COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The collections in the **social sciences** are in good shape, certainly in terms of *core* resources. The collections in the **humanities** are always difficult to gauge for journals and online resources. The question is whether all these collections are commensurate with the faculty's needs—and, concomitantly, with the university's aim to have research-level library resources and services in appropriate fields.

For **books** the approval plan, having no substantive subject restrictions or gaps in the social sciences and humanities, should not require reassessment for the comprehensive plan. However, expansion of approval plans for books published in or about Latin America and the Caribbean is not yet funded.

For **journals** the library can make largely on its own acquisition decisions for the *core* journals in the social sciences—but relies on program self-studies and on consultations with the faculty to be advised of subject emphases (particularly in terms of new Ph.D. programs) and relevant *non-core* journals. At the other poles of scholarly publishing, the sciences and the humanities, the library depends on the faculty to shape the journal collections in their areas of specialization.

For **online resources** the collections are in good shape at the core level. The library looks to the **social science** programs to cooperate on cancellations of print subscriptions to journals that are included in online-journal packages to make such acquisitions cost-effective. In the **humanities**, where online resources tend to be costly but also cross-disciplinary, the plan will require some consensus across programs on the relative importance of each major resource.

As indicated earlier (in note 6), all categories of library support—special collections, digital collections, geographic information systems, sound and image collections, and government documents—will have distinct collection development plans.

OTHER LIBRARY RESOURCES / SERVICES

Archives and Special Collections (Vicki Silvera, Head)

Special Collections span the disciplines, from the sciences to the humanities, but generally focus on Cuban, Caribbean, and Miami interests. The following collections should be singled out: *Association of Caribbean Women Writers' and Scholars* (Women's Studies); *Levi Marrero Archives* (Cuban History); *Cuban Exile Archives and History Project*, including the *Cuban Pamphlets Collection*; *Dana Dorsey Collection* (Miami history); *Marrero Ms Collection* (Cuban History); *William Rio Collection* (Puerto Rican politics); *Papers of Dr. Jan Tucker* (Caribbean education and society); *Papers of Ralph Renick* (journalism, history of 20th century); *Papers of Elaine Gordon* (Florida legislative history) Special Collections also include comprehensive series on the U.S. Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the *Collección Tabula Americae*.

Wolfsonian–FIU Museum

The Wolfsonian–FIU (<http://www.wolfsonian.fiu.edu/>) contains artifacts and print materials primarily of North American and European origin, documenting the post-industrial revolution era through the close of the Second World War. The objects and artifacts in the collection comprise a wide variety of media: furniture, industrial-design objects, glass, ceramics; metalwork, textiles, paintings, posters, architectural drawings, textiles, rare books, periodicals, and printed ephemera. Objects are interpreted to explore key issues in design history—the way design has both altered and been altered by cultural change, industrial innovation, and strategies of persuasion.

Geographic Information Systems / Remote Sensing Center

Jennifer Fu, Head <http://gislab.fiu.edu/>.

The Geographic Information Systems /Remote Sensing Center (Green Library) provides computerized mapping and image-processing resources and services. The user groups tend to be in the fields of urban affairs and public health, biology, computer science, environmental studies, architecture, earth science, international studies, and civil and environmental engineering.

Principal resources and services include LandsAT imagery; USGS color-infrared aeriels; high resolution (1-foot) panchromatic aeriels photographs of Miami-Dade County; land cover, land use, vegetation, hydrological data, and digital elevation models (IHC's LIDAR data); Decennial Census data and associated TIGER/Line Files (both online and print); property parcel and appraisal data; as well as commercial mapping and image processing software.

The center maintains broad collections of demographic and social-economic data sets of South Florida counties and municipalities. It provides consulting services on geo-statistical analysis, image processing, data modeling, 3d visualization and geo-spatial metadata creation. Scanning and digitizing of large-format maps serves research units university-wide.

Government Documents (Sherry Mosley, Head)

University Park campus is a selective (partial) Federal depository. In addition, it receives a broad range of publications from Florida state and local governmental agencies. Two milestones were reached last year when FIU was granted European Documentation Center status by the European Union (the only such center in the state, other than the University of Florida) and full United Nations depository status. See <http://www.fiu.edu/~library/internet/subjects/govern.html>.

Resource-Sharing Networks (Douglas Hasty, Head)

The library belongs to several general consortia for interlibrary lending: the State University System, Southeast Florida Library Information Network, Southeastern Library Network, and Association of Southeastern Research Libraries. For foreign resources, the Center for Research Libraries (<http://www.crl.uchicago.edu//index.html>) is important.

Reference Services (Sherry Carrillo, Head)

Basic reference services are provided on site, by e-mail, and in real-time chat service in English and Spanish (<http://www.fiu.edu/~library/services/asklib.html>). An information literacy program serves students' library-instruction needs at the lower division level, and targets core classes for instruction sessions at the upper division and graduate levels. Consultations for research projects are a faculty- and graduate-level service.

BROADER PERSPECTIVES

Benchmark Institutions and Subject Literatures

From the broader perspective of benchmark institutions, challenges of developing research-level collections are evident. As [spreadsheet 5](#) shows, the library's budgets are just average to those of other universities in the \$10M total library budget range and comparable to only a few of the universities selected by Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness for such purposes.

Scholarly System and the University

On the broadest level, prospects for collection development are conditioned by prolongation of inflation in the scholarly communication system. As the appended graph shows, since the mid-1980s journal expenditures for research libraries have increased 210% and book expenditures 66%. The nationwide decline of library book acquisitions in the wake of journal inflation has sparked commentaries for over a decade—with a restructuring of sorts for university presses.

Apart from inflationary pressures “out there,” collection development may become increasingly problematic as a campus resource-allocation process, in face of increasing research and curricular interests, program diversification, and the university’s goals for a broad expansion of new Ph.D. programs. Thus, it is of fundamental importance for each program to advise the library on the specific resources and research services that will best serve the faculty’s needs. While the library endeavors to stay abreast of new markets and opportunities in the scholarly system, collection development is an area of mutual knowledge and concern.