

Assessment of Library Collections  
Academic Program Review  
**Philosophy**

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The nine 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.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

### SUMMARY

**Current Books.** Through a fairly comprehensive approval plan, the library receives about 48% of U.S./U.K. book-publishing output in Philosophy—51% with additional orders. Such coverage appears to be above average for doctoral-extensive libraries of FIU's size.

**Journals.** The library has 105 titles (75 print, 30 online) funded under Philosophy, not counting for interdisciplinarity. To facilitate the selection of new journals, four lists drawn from the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* or the *Journal Citation Reports* database are provided. However, in the humanities such lists are usually not comprehensive enough, so Philosophy should make a list of own for needed journals, based on the faculty's knowledge of the subject literatures.

**Electronic Resources.** The library's collections of databases and other online resources, about 275 in number, include all of the basic ones in Philosophy.

**Collection Development Proposal.** *POIESIS* is a new electronic-journals database specifically for Philosophy. It has 51 titles, with another 23 under license and a planned expansion to 100. At present, 33 of the 51 are full-text. To gain access to the full-text of a journal, the library must have a print subscription to it. Of the 33 full-text titles, the library has print subscriptions to 20. Print subscriptions to the other 13 journals—if all are important to have for full-text access—would cost about \$983. The overall cost of *POIESIS* has two components: the \$3,000 annual license plus whatever additional print subscriptions would be added.

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

**Program Decisions.** For the library’s collection development plan, Philosophy should (a) make a list of needed journals somewhat prioritized; (b) decide on the *POIESIS* database and the print subscriptions involved; and (c) advise on other needs, such as retrospective book acquisitions if outside of the U.S./U.K. pool of publishers.

## MAIN REPORT

**SCOPE.** This report for Philosophy focuses on books, journals, and electronic resources, with other categories of library support—special collections, Wolfsonian collections, sound and image collections, resource-sharing networks, and reference services—briefly described.<sup>2</sup> The final section draws some conclusions.

There are nine appendices. The first outlines the framework of the U.S./U.K. book-approval plan in Philosophy, the next four are journal-collections evaluations. The sixth describes the proposal for the *POIESIS* database. The last two appendices—a comparison of benchmark library budgets and a graph of inflationary pressures in the scholarly communication system—put the financial situation in perspective.

**METHOD.** 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.<sup>3</sup> The method for structuring this situation in the sciences and social sciences—focusing on the core (citation-ranked) journals in a field—does not pertain to much of the humanities.<sup>4</sup> The library uses general sources, such as the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*, but relies primarily on the humanities programs to make their own lists of needed journals.

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<sup>2</sup> Some categories, such as digital collections and geographic information services, are not included for Philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the Department’s self-study identifies as strategic themes in its curriculum *health, environment, information, and contemporary urban and international issues*. As the library completes its assessments of collections for program reviews involving such fields, they are posted at <http://www.fiu.edu/provost/aaproreview/prarchives.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> 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. *JCR* does not cover the humanities, which lack large-scale, salient patterns of journal interactions since most citations are books or primary sources. Most articles in the humanities are hardly cited. See David P. Hamilton, “Publishing by—and for?—the Numbers,” *Science* 250 (December 7, 1990): 1331-32; and “Research Papers: Who’s Uncited Now?,” *Science* 251 (January 4, 1991): 25.

## BOOKS

**U.S. / U.K. Imprints.** The library has a fairly comprehensive book approval plan. Appendix 1 delineates FY02 acquisitions in the humanities, with Philosophy highlighted. As shown, the vendor handled 1,061 titles in the five subject classes of Philosophy; the library automatically received 48% (514 titles) of this publishing output. With 24 additional orders, the total coverage was 51% (538 titles) at a cost of about \$17,400.

Such coverage in Philosophy—greater than that in the humanities generally<sup>5</sup> and comparable to that in the social sciences—would appear to be above average to that of other doctoral-extensive libraries of FIU’s size.<sup>6</sup> One source of FIU’s general strength is the approval plan’s inclusion of all adult-level titles in either *The New York Times Book Review* or *Times Literary Supplement*. Another is the plan’s cross-disciplinary coverage of Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

The fund for faculty book orders for the Philosophy Department has been \$3,000 for University Park campus and \$1,500 for Biscayne Bay campus. However, as appendix 1 shows, the approval plan has covered some direct orders (in FY02, 24 titles amounting to about \$800) in Philosophy.

**Retrospective book acquisitions.** In its comprehensive collection development plan, the library will likely acquire all relevant university-press books of the postwar decades (before FIU existed) in print and focus on subjects treated in bibliographic essays.<sup>7</sup> Philosophy may have an interest in certain schools of thought (e.g., Continental Philosophy in French and/or German).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In some fields of the humanities, book publishing is not predominately academic, and universities generally have rather focused interests in the humanities, so their libraries collect smaller portions of those literatures. FIU receives on approval about 23% of the U.S./U.K. books in the humanities overall, 34% with additional orders. However, in Philosophy (and Music, Art, and Religious Studies) library acquisitions are par to the social sciences.

<sup>6</sup> The supporting data are of low precision but broad reliability. In the 1980s (the only period for which analyses exist), university libraries tended to acquire about 35% of academic books in the social sciences. That level marked a salient decline (of about 25 points) from the 1970s in the financial capacity of academic libraries to maintain book collections in the wake of journal inflation. Charles A. Schwartz, "Modeling Scholarly Literatures," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 10 (Summer 1994): 29-35. Given the continuation of such inflation since the 1980s, FIU’s roughly 40% coverage would appear to be above average for academic libraries.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Wayne Ouderkirk, "Earthly Thoughts: An Essay on Environmental Philosophy," *Choice* 35 (November 1997): 421-24; and V.V. Raman, "Science and Society," *Choice* 9 (January 1973): 1399-1410.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix 7 is an example of the *major authors* approach to structuring a retrospective book acquisitions project in Philosophy or other humanities.

**Online Books.** Of the 27,280 *NetLibrary* electronic books owned by the library, 601 titles have various *philosophy* subject headings; and 1,587 titles have *philosophy* as a keyword descriptor. The library does not make title selections of its holdings but relies on bulk acquisitions through a regional network. The *NetLibrary* portal is at <http://www.fiu.edu/~library/elibrary/ebooks.html>.

## **JOURNALS**

The journals fund for Philosophy is \$16,949 (\$11,368 for University Park campus and \$5,581 for Biscayne Bay). It covers 105 titles: 75 print, 30 online (including some duplicate subscriptions for the two campuses and 11 titles having duplicate print and electronic editions).

The basic question is whether the library is missing needed or important titles. *Need* is based in part on local demand, according to interlibrary loan data. *Importance* in Philosophy (and across the humanities) is also a local-institutional matter in the main, given the lack of citation-impact rankings or other indicators of core literatures.

To assess local demand, last year the library identified the journals most often requested through interlibrary loan over the past three years. 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. None of the 135 titles are in Philosophy. On that single measure of cost-effectiveness, the collections in Philosophy do not require immediate attention.

To facilitate the selection of new journals, four lists were provided the Department at the outset of this review.

- Appendix 2, drawn from the *Journal Citation Reports* database, is **Ethics**; of the 30 ranked titles, the library has 16 (53%).
- Appendix 3, from the same source, is **Medical Ethics**; of the five ranked titles, the library has one (20%).

The other lists, drawn from *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*, are not ranked.

- Appendix 4 is **Philosophy**; of the 101 titles, the library has 57 (56%).
- Appendix 5 is **History and Philosophy of Science**; of the 32 titles, the library has 20 (63%).

As noted earlier, humanities departments generally do not find such lists comprehensive enough in terms of interdisciplinarity and should make lists their own lists for acquisitions.

## ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The library has about 275 databases and other online resources. Those that relate to Philosophy include *Philosophers Index*, *Humanities Abstracts*, and the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*. Descriptions are at <http://www.fiu.edu/~library/subjects/humanities.html>.

### Collection Development Proposal:

*POIESIS* (<http://www.nlx.com/posp/>) is an electronic-journals database (with some monograph series) produced by the Philosophy Documentation Center. It has 51 titles, with another 23 under license and a planned expansion to 100 titles ([appendix 6](#)). At present, 33 of the 51 are full-text. Print subscriptions to the other 13 journals—if all are important to have for full-text access—would run about \$983. The cost of *POIESIS* has two components: the \$3,000 annual license plus whatever additional print subscriptions would be involved.

While back issues of about 10 journals are available, the focus of the database is on current and recent issues. *POIESIS* tends to pick up where JSTOR leaves off.

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The library's 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: *Levi Marrero Archives* (Cuban History); *Cuban Exile Archives and History Project*, including the *Cuban Pamphlets Collection*; *Judge Mattie Belle Davis Papers* (the inaugural collection of the *Miami Dade Women's Archives*); *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); and *Papers of Ralph Renick* (journalism, history of 20<sup>th</sup> century). Special Collections include comprehensive series on the U.S. Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the *Colleccion 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.

## SOUND and IMAGE RESOURCES

Of the library's collection of 14,204 sound and image resources, 45 relate to Philosophy.

## **RESOURCE–SHARING NETWORKS**

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**

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.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Specific Collections**

On three broad measures, the library's collections for Philosophy are in reasonably good shape. First, the book-approval plan provides for fairly comprehensive coverage of the U.S. and U.K. literature.

Second, the library's electronic-resources collections include the main ones in Philosophy, other than the new database *POIESIS*, which is proposed for acquisition.

Third, access-versus-ownership evaluation of the journals collections (comparison of royalty charges for titles in interlibrary-loan demand against their subscription prices) found that the collections in Philosophy meet this single criterion of cost-effectiveness.

However, this report does not attempt to grade the journal collections in the Philosophy program. There are no published rankings, and lists from the *A&HCI* or the *Journal Citations Reports* may not cover the program's stated interests in health, the environment, information, and other urban and international issues. Once the faculty makes a list of its own of journal needs, the library will provide cost analyses.

### **II. Benchmark Institutions and Subject Literatures**

From the broader perspective of benchmark institutions, challenges of developing research-level collections are evident. As appendix 8 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.

### III. Scholarly System and the University

On the broadest level, prospects for collection development following any program review are conditioned by prolongation of inflation in the scholarly communication system at large. As the accompanying graph ([appendix 9](#)) shows, since the mid-1980s journal expenditures for research libraries on the whole have increased 210% and book expenditures 66%. The nationwide decline of library book acquisitions has sparked commentaries for over a decade—with a restructuring of sorts for university presses.

So-called “endangered species” in book publishing involve fields of declining economic viability for publishers, given the loss of academic libraries as a ready market to fulfill break-even revenue levels.<sup>9</sup> Yet, little is known about the true dimensions of the “endangered species” problem. Clarification may come from a four-year study, begun in 1999 by the Association of American University Presses.

The first AAUP report is on book-publishers’ revenues (<http://aaupnet.org/programs/data.html>). It found that in most fields university presses may be “leaving money on the table” by not pricing aggressively enough. Indeed, in **Philosophy** for the period 1989-2000, university press books had an inflation rate of 13.76%, trade publisher books had a rate of 120.07%.

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.

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<sup>9</sup> Among the “endangered species” are Latin American and other area studies; some fields of History; Literary Criticism; and the Performing Arts. See Karen J. Winkler, “Academic Presses Look to the Internet to Save Scholarly Monographs,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 12, 1997, A18; and “University-Press Group to Study Whether Books in Some Fields Are Disappearing,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 1, 1999, A24.

Some observers envision a solution in electronic-book publishing, the exemplar being the *Gutenberg-E Project* (<http://www.gutenberg-e.org/aboutframe.html>), which publishes six revised dissertations a year. The designated fields include colonial Latin America, as well as Africa, South Asia, Europe before 1800, and diplomatic and military history not primarily of the United States. Library subscriptions are \$195. See Danny Postel, “New Series to Focus on Works by Young Scholars; Gutenberg-E Project Rolls Out Its First 6 Books,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 27, 2002, A17; and Robert Darnton, “The New Age of the Book,” *The New York Review of Books*, March 18, 1999 at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/546>.