Florida Atlantic University Libraries

Dissertations and Theses Bibliography Project: Collection Development

2007-2010

Assessment Report

Prepared by:

Maris Hayashi

**Objective**: Each University college will be assessed by the appropriate Collection Development Program selector. For the first project, the FAU Libraries will focus on the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters.

**Outcome**: The librarians in the Collection Development Program will identify the subject areas that need improvement in the selection of materials appropriate for FAU graduate research.

**Assessment** **Method**: 201 dissertations and theses written between 2002 and 2006 by Arts & Letters graduate students will be assessed. The Libraries’ collections will be a significant source of citations for the students’ dissertations and theses.

**Implementing** **Strategy**: We will use the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database to gather bibliographies of each of the dissertations and theses that were published between 2002 and 2006. Each resource that is listed in the bibliographies will be searched in the FAU Libraries Catalog (<http://fau.catalog.fcla.edu/fa.jsp>) and/or the Serial Solutions electronic journal database (<http://www.fau.edu/library/ecollect/ejournals.php>). A percentage of the number of resources available through the FAU Libraries will be generated. This will determine how successful the FAU Libraries have been in purchasing materials needed for student dissertations and theses.

**Criterion** **for** **Success**: The library expects to find that at least 65% of the resources listed in each bibliography were available through the FAU Libraries.

**Data** **Summary**: A total of 201 dissertations and theses were reviewed and assessed. The majority of these published student works were Master of Arts theses (84.6%) followed by Master of Fine Arts theses (7.5%), Doctor of Philosophy dissertations (7.5%), and Master of Arts in Teaching (0.5%). 180 of the 201 dissertations and theses contained bibliographies. The other 21 contained no bibliographies because they were mainly creative writing works: short stories, poetry, or novels. On average, **68.7% of resources listed in the 180 students’ bibliographies were available through the FAU Libraries.** English dissertations and theses contained the highest percentage of resources available through the FAU Libraries (78.8%). English was also the department that had the greatest number of published theses: 79. Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature (which includes Linguistics and Spanish, French, and German Literature) had the second highest number of published theses (31), but 61.2% of the resources were available through the FAU Libraries. The department or program with the lowest percentage of resources was Visual Arts & Art History (30.0%). This was also the only department or program that had a percentage below 50%. Three departments were within the 50% mark: History (53.8%), Liberal Studies (55.6%), and Music (55.9%).

The following should be noted: The bibliographies for some of the dissertations and theses contained incorrect information. In some cases an author’s last name was misspelled, the title of a journal was incomplete, or the publication year for a book or journal was not accurate. Thus, the selector needed to research and locate the correct information. If a citation could not be corrected, that resource was assigned “n/a.” Other resources that received “n/a” were interviews, open access journal articles, email messages, and websites. Also, if a bibliography contained a certain edition of a book, but the FAU Libraries owned a different edition, the resource was assigned “Yes.” It is possible that particular resources were not available through the FAU Libraries at the time the research was conducted even though they were available when this assessment study was taking place. (For example, if a book was listed as a resource, but was not available when the student wrote the dissertation or thesis, it could have been purchased retroactively or been received as a gift and would, therefore, have been assigned a “Yes.”) Due to time constraints, the selectors have opted to not find out when each item was acquired by the Libraries. However, even if the Libraries did not have a specific resource at the time the research was conducted, the selectors believed it was a noteworthy resource and eventually selected it for the collection, thereby ensuring that it be made available to future library users.

**Program** **Improvement**: Based on the results of this study, the subject selectors will want to pay close attention to the graduate programs and courses that are being offered in each college. Although the holdings at the FAU Libraries for resources related to history are quite high, several graduate students from this department utilized primary resources from archives, something that is not overly abundant in the FAU Libraries’ collection. This could explain why the percentage for History was in the lower-fifty percent. With regards to the Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature, the Libraries’ holdings in Spanish and French literature may need to be reassessed so that the research needs of faculty and graduate students are met. Resources for Linguistics appeared to be more readily available for students’ research. Holdings related to the arts will also need to be reassessed in the near future since theses and dissertations from Visual Arts & Art History had the smallest percentage of library resources available.

Appendices

* Theses and Dissertations Analysis Study – Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters
* Theses and Dissertations Breakdown