COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT: FIVE YEAR VISION

The Harold B. Lee Library has some incredible collections. We have a strong history of building collections that regularly meet the needs of our patrons. Hundreds of talented people have contributed to selecting, acquiring, and preserving these collections. With that as our foundation, a vision for managing our general collections will be required to maintain and build upon what we already have.

Collection Development

To develop the best possible collections, we should identify both collecting areas of strength and areas that need more attention. Concurrently, we should identify the research and curricular needs of our patrons. Only then can we begin to sensibly and appropriately build collections and allocate funding.

Identify Collecting Areas Needing Improvement and of Strength

The Association of Research Libraries previously rated the strength of member library collections. What they ultimately found was there is a direct causal correlation between funding and strength of collections and abandoned the complicated formula in favor of a simplified one that centered around funding. A first step in identifying our collections' strengths and weaknesses is to examine the budget to see how collections are being funded.

This is not as easy as it may sound. We have so many collections that are interdisciplinary that it becomes difficult to determine how well, or not, collections are being funded. Figuring out how to account for that and come to a meaningful conclusion is a critical first step in identifying our interconnected collections' strengths and weaknesses.

There are many other ways, quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal, that can contribute to identifying strengths and weaknesses of our collections. In addition to talking with teaching faculty and asking them directly what they think the strengths and weaknesses of our collections are, we can also find out what books and journals they are buying themselves which could help identify weaknesses in our collection. Looking at ILL usage patterns, doing citation analyses of works published by BYU faculty, and surveying their needs can all contribute to a more complete picture of how well our collections are meeting our patrons' needs. Knowing this can help us more efficiently allocate our flat collection development budgets and improve our ability to help our patrons.

Identify Research and Curricular Needs

Historically, to assess collections we have looked outward to see how our collections compare with aspirational and peer academic libraries. We now have more data available that should assist us in looking inward to see how we are meeting the needs of our patrons. For a quantitative analysis, this will require the assistance of the University in acquiring accurate numbers for enrollment, graduation, and employment, among other data. Talking with teaching faculty and students will also be critical for a qualitative analysis. Identifying research and curricular needs would allow us to focus on our collecting areas of most importance.

Allocate Funding

Knowing our collections' strengths and weaknesses, along with our patrons' research and curricular needs, gives us a matrix to assist in allocating scarce budgetary resources.

<center>Research and curricular needs</center>

	Meets	Doesn't meet
Strong	Maintain funding	Reduce funding
Weak	Increase funding	Deaccession

(Vertical axis label: Collection)

The vertical axis shows strengths and weaknesses of a collection while the horizontal axis shows how well a collections meets the research needs of our users. For collections that are strong and meet patron needs, we should maintain or increase funding levels. For strong collections that do not meet patron needs, we should reduce funding and possibly deaccession some, or all, of the collection. For weaker collections that would theoretically meet patron needs, we should increase funding. Finally, for weaker collections that do not meet the needs of researchers, we should deaccession the collection.

Additionally, flexibility in the way we think about our sometimes rigid budgets will be required to survive in a flat budget environment. Subject librarians must continue collaborating across disciplinary and division lines, and even team up with colleges, to meet our patrons' needs. Our monographic budgets were set historically and adjusted incrementally since. Examining the current appropriateness of funding levels will be a critical task towards being wise stewards of the collections budget we have been given. Working across disciplinary silos, as well as budgetary categories, will allow us to stretch our budget and use it to its full potential.

Collection Management

There is a strong connection between managing collections and our material acquisition activities. We need to continue experimenting with the various business models publishers are introducing and streamlining our work processes to accommodate appropriately and effectively manage our collections.

After acquiring content, we should continually assess whether that material is still meeting our patrons' needs (both presently and speculatively into the future). Finding ways to further routinize our assessment of collections will be critical going forward.

Finally, collection management must be concerned with collection discovery. Enhancing the discoverability of collections should be a top priority for any library that hopes to remain relevant. Ensuring availability of acceptable records, or creating our own when necessary, would be priority one. Priority two would be to enhance the way those records are used within, and made available to, discovery systems. Librarians have long created rich metadata that discovery systems do not use to the full extent possible. Properly managing collections requires them to be discoverable.

Conclusion

The Harold B. Lee Library has a very strong reputation. Our collections are a critical and foundational component of that reputation. To maintain this reputation, appropriately assessing and funding our collections is essential. Building upon the solid foundation that has already been laid, we will be able to enhance our reputation as a solid research library through identifying and responding more directly to the needs of our patrons.