

Louisiana State University Women's Center Library Collection Development Policy¹

Overview

General description of the service community

The library is open to all members of the campus and local community. However, the primary focus of the library is serving students. More students use the resources of the library each semester and the staff is continually attempting to better serve students.

Items are available for checkout to anyone holding an LSU ID card, including students, faculty, and staff. The primary users are both internal users, including undergraduate student workers and the Women's Center Manager, and external users, including undergraduate and postgraduate students, faculty, and staff of LSU. Thus the age groups served span from about 18 years old to 65+. The nature of the collection has by no means limited the user population to women only.

General parameters of the collection

The collection covers women's history, women's health, career information, violence against women, works of fiction written by or about women, literary criticism, gender, cultural diversity, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) topics.

In addition, the Women's Center collects information on community resources, available both in-house and through the Women's Center website. This collection includes contact information and online links to organizations within the community and is made available for guidance and referral. Inclusion is based on relevance to the Women's Center Mission Statement.

Services

The library is available specifically to provide information needed for the research and planning of Women's Center programming, and for academic, educational, social, and leisure purposes. Reference and referral are the main services provided through the library resources. Internet access is provided within the library to aid research. Finally, the library maintains display areas to promote current issues and is organized for ease of browsing in order to facilitate unstructured uses of the library such as leisure reading.

Priorities and limits of collection

All materials in the Women's Center library are selected and acquired to serve the needs of users

¹ Created January 11, 2005 by Joseph Greene for the LSU Women's Center. The format of this document is adapted from Evans, G. Edward. *Developing Library and Information Center Collections*, 4th ed. Greenwood Village, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000.

who are concerned about issues of women, gender, and diversity.

The library is not currently involved in any cooperative collection development programs. Generally, the library collects items that will complement libraries with similar collection aims, including the library belonging to the LSU Women's and Gender Studies Program and Middleton Library, however, the Women's Center library collects materials that support the Women's Center mission and objectives and maintains a position of self-sufficiency.

As a growing collection, the library acquires retrospective materials on an as-needed basis. Due to limited space, duplicate copies generally are not collected, but there are cases where this is acceptable, such as maintaining reference copies for in-house use.

Details of Subject Areas and Formats Collected

The majority of future purchases will likely be made based on catalogs and lists such as the Association of College and Research Libraries: Women's Studies Section.² The core lists from these catalogs and lists are compared to the holdings of Middleton Library and any books not owned by Middleton are selected for acquisition. The intention of the Women's Center is to purchase books that are not available anywhere on campus. This is in the hopes of best serving the needs of our users and contributing to the body of available information and knowledge on campus.

As programs are developed to meet the information needs of the user population, the library's collection will become more subject specific. As of the creation of this policy, a detail of subject areas will remain open for future development.

The Women's Center collects mainly print materials, however future purchases may include databases, software, and other electronic and multi-media items. The Library Coordinator, the library intern, or the student worker fulfilling the necessary duties selects items for the collection. All purchases are made only with the approval of the Women's Center Manager.

Miscellaneous Issues

Gifts

Many of the items in the Women's Center Library collection are generous donations from users and interested parties. While the library welcomes such gifts, the primary criterion for retaining such items is relevance to the collection. Storage and technical processing are important and often costly considerations. Donations are accepted on the condition that the library may use them in any manner it deems appropriate.

²Association of College and Research Libraries: Women's Studies Section
(<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/core/coremain.htm>)

Deselection and Discards

The deselection (weeding) process is a vital function for any collection. By comparing circulation data with relevance to collection, scope and content, quality, currency, price, physical condition, duplication, accessibility and ease of use, and historical interest, books can be selected for weeding. Considering limited shelf space and changing information needs, weeding will be a regular part in maintaining a balanced and well-formed collection.

Discarded books may be given away to other non-profit or charitable organizations or may be sold in book sales or at retail stores. Proceeds go to the LSU Women's Center, or directly back into the library for acquisitions or the purchase of supplies.

Evaluation

Evaluation is used to determine the usefulness of the collection and its governing policy and assess the strengths and weaknesses of collection. Evaluation can occur through compiling user statistics, obtaining opinions from regular users, and/or examining the collection directly. Many of these activities occur on a daily basis, but it should be noted that physical records of evaluation are of utmost importance in the review of the collection over time.

Information derived from the collection evaluation is for internal and/or comparative purposes.

User Privacy

The LSU Women's Center Library Statement on Privacy is:

Information sought or received within any library or information center can be of a sensitive nature to the seeker or recipient. For this reason, we at the Women's Center Library uphold the position taken by the American Library Association (ALA) on library ethics, in particular with respect to privacy, as stated in the ALA Code of Ethics:

We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

This includes but is not limited to circulation information (who has checked out books, what they have checked out), information/ research requests, computer data, and personal information. (September 22, 2004).

Policy Review Statement

This policy is flexible and subject to ongoing review and can be amended to reflect changes at the Women's Center.

Sources

The ALA Code of Ethics. The ALA website.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.htm> Accessed January 12, 2005.

ALA Collection Development. Collection Services homepage.

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=collectiondevb>. Accessed January 11, 2005.

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Dublin College University Collection Development Policy. Dublin College University Library web page. <http://www.library.dcu.ie/about/Coll-dev-policy.htm>. Accessed January 10, 2005.

Evans, G. Edward. *Developing Library and Information Center Collections*, 4th ed. Greenwood Village, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000.