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stage. Of course, this applies only to underselection. There is, to my knowledge, no short-term answer or even indicators to overselection, i.e., those materials that probably should not have been acquired. This is a worthwhile research topic in its own right. In the third selection stage, which is often omitted because of talent and fund shortage, the retrospective review of the collection as well as selection processes takes place. This third process includes identification and selection from bibliographies and bibliographical references as well as the careful perusal of offerings through the second-hand booktrade, of course. Availability in other libraries may become an important issue here.

I hope that I have not given the impression that the selection process can be reduced to such small decision-making frameworks that it is possible to program them for automatic decision making. The selector, however, should be aware as well as familiar with the many fixed items and variables in the subject world. The model should be constructed and actual selection decisions as well as use patterns should be tested against it at regular intervals. The selector, the director of libraries, as well as the audience should have the benefit of these processes. It also is clear, however, that the role of the individual selector and the collective participation of librarians and faculty and other outsiders will provide the necessary "couleur locale." Each collection or segment of it represents the ambition and abilities of a few individuals and the ultimate subjective approach is one of the greatest values of academic freedom in action. History has shown that strengths in collections, at least as perceived by generations of users, have been the result of the composite of such macro- and microdecisions. Much more work is needed in this area, especially for each of the subject fields.

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The Necessity for a Collection Development Policy Statement*

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The heart of the library lies in its collections, and collections have to be built continuously. Budgetary constraints perforce stress the need for better defined collection development policy, although the ultimate goal should be an improvement of library service rather than any reduction of library cost. A written collection development policy facilitates a consistent and balanced growth of library resources, and a dynamic policy is one that evolves as the institution grows. Such a policy is based on the understanding of the needs of the community it serves and seeks to define and delimit the goals and objectives of the institution. A collection development statement is not a substitute for book selection; it charts the forest but does not plant the trees. It should be used as a guidepost, not a crutch. Book selection requires judgment and the courage to choose. A sound collection development policy, on the other hand, provides the necessary rationale without which a collection may grow amoebalike, by means of pseudopodia.

"THE LIBRARY is the heart of education," we are told. When the Widener Memorial Library was first built in the midst of Harvard Yard, there were some professorial grumblings about its "ungainly size" which prompted the famous and beloved (at least by librarians) retort from George Kittredge: "You could destroy all the other Harvard buildings and, with Widener left standing, still have a university." But I am sure even the architect of that building would not mistake Professor Kittredge's remark for an aesthetic appreciation of his edifice. True, buildings are important, just as clothes are important. "The basic elements of any library are books, people, and buildings," and, to quote Lawrence S. Thompson, "in precisely that order of importance." In other words, the heart of the library lies in its collections.

The foundations of the Boston Public Library were not made of

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bricks and mortar but rather the private collections of books and documents from Edward Everett, George Ticknor, Theodore Parker, and a munificent gift from a Boston boy made good, Joshua Bates, a systematic, intensive, global acquisition program to stock the new library with "a collection of books in as many departments of human knowledge as possible." The three-year Bates plan itself netted the fledgling institution some 27,000 volumes, "purchased in the great book marts of Europe." And these are the cornerstones that made the BPL a research library.

So, collections are important. And collections have to be built continuously. Learning, so goes a Chinese saying, is like sailing against the tide: if you don't advance, you retreat. So does a library collection. A first-rate collection, if not properly nurtured, will invariably deteriorate—and not merely in its physical aspect. But growth is a complex and many splendored thing. We grow taller and indeed sometimes shorter as we grow older; we grow fatter or thinner, stronger or weaker, prettier or, alas, homelier; we grow older but may feel younger; we become happier or sadder, and if we are blessed, wiser and kinder. A collection also grows in a myriad of ways. It may grow in size, it may grow in market value, and it may grow in its relevance and use. It may grow in the scope of its coverage, and it may grow in the depth of its specialization; or, it may just grow, amoeba-like, by means of pseudopodia—in this case, a mixture of available funds and articulate personal preferences, whether from the librarian or the user.

And somehow, in each case, it implies a collection development policy; for even the conspicuous lack of it describes a practice that reflects a certain philosophical rationale. And many libraries, while not in possession of a *written* collection development policy statement, nevertheless do operate with certain goals, objectives, and guidelines when selecting the materials to be acquired. And while some libraries follow detailed collection development policies with minute subject breakdowns and specific imprint requirements, others may opt to pursue their task with broad outlines and general objectives. And, either way, good library collections have been developed. But we are here this morning to consider the need for a written collection development policy statement, or rather, a standardized statement to allow comparison and facilitate cooperation.

Do we need it? And if so, why? In these days of universal fiscal constraints, it is only natural to bemoan the information explosion and to contemplate library ecology. Budgetary limitations necessitate the setting of priorities, which in turn requires a reexamination of goals and objectives and the definition of the precise role and function of the institution. In this sense, the present shortage of money is perhaps a blessing in disguise in that it forces us to think. Here, at the very outset, I should like to say that I don't believe we should formulate collection development policy to save money. In fact, I don't believe the

prime purpose of the library is to save money. Consortia, networks, resource sharing all are important, but the purpose of librarianship is to provide better library service, not to reduce library expenditure. If library A chooses not to subscribe to certain journals or purchase other books because it can rely on the holdings in library B, it can claim to have improved its service only when it thereby can use the money "saved" to subscribe to other journals or purchase other books which otherwise would not be available to its users. Resource sharing must be progressive, not regressive. Library consortia as well as technological innovation may very well cost money instead of saving money, but the governing criterion lies in the services increased and improved, not in the dollar figure decreased. If saving money be the primary goal, there is no surer way than simply to close down the library.

Returning to the rationale for a collection development policy, one may ask why it should be desirable to have a written statement. First of all, the very process of writing one affords the opportunity for self-examination and reflection, two essential ingredients for growth and renewal. All work, however creative or interesting at the beginning, can easily settle down to a routine that sometimes breeds boredom and blurs, if not kills, vision. Times change, people change, our needs change, and our resources change. What's best for the past may not always be best for the present, not to mention the future. Collection development policy, once defined, must serve at once as a base for current operation and as a springboard for future growth.

The second reason, which is the *raison d'être* for any collection development policy, is that such a statement assures a consistent and balanced growth of library resources. Book selectors, be they faculty members or librarians, specialists or generalists, are, like the rest of us, susceptible to personal preoccupations and not immune from the temptations of the popular and the trendy. Sound development of a collection must pay due attention to long-term needs as well as immediate demands, from the smallest popular library to the largest research institution. The difference lies mainly in the kinds of materials collected and in the degree of intensity in collecting. In referring to "the temptations of the popular and the trendy," I am concerned not merely with best-sellers and gadgetry. The "temptations" can be scholarly and serious but nonetheless inappropriate in terms of the goals and objectives of the specific institution. And consistency also means a continuous commitment to a set of policies regardless of the personal interests and specialties of those who select the books. Professors and librarians come and go, but the books in the libraries stay. A library collection is not merely an assembly of books, not even an assembly of good books; they have to relate to each other. There has to be a rationale for the presence of these, but not others. And that rationale is provided in the collection development policy statement.

And that statement also seeks to insure the desired balance between

the subject matters covered. This, of course, does not mean equal depth of coverage, nor equal allocation of book funds; it does mean a considered definition of emphasis from the perspective of the whole. Furthermore, a clearly stated policy serves to remind and alert the book selectors of the legitimate needs of the inarticulate as well as the articulate members of the community, and this is equally important in an academic library and public library.

Two supplementary, and perhaps practical, reasons for the formal establishment of collection development policy are:

1. To provide a guarantee against undue special interest pressure.

This is perhaps particularly, but by no means exclusively, true in public libraries. A well-defined policy statement should serve to resist undue pressure to *include* irrelevant materials as well as to *exclude* unpopular or controversial materials. How many of us can recall with relief the occasions on which we could graciously refuse a gift or request for material of limited value on the grounds that the subject matter, or the format, or the language fell outside of the library's established collection development policy? And how often we have pointed with pride and conviction to our credo that the library "must provide free access to all points of view on public questions."

2. To serve as a vehicle to facilitate interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing. Union lists provide the means by which libraries share what they already own. Coordinated collection development policies provide the means by which the libraries can share their future resources. And in order that such cooperation can be operable, terminologies need to be standardized, and criteria need to be comparable. Hence the RTSD "Guidelines".

However, the standardization of guidelines does not mean uniformity of goals and objectives. Each library serves a unique community, be it a township, metropolitan city, high school, multiuniversity, or the United Nations. The library must therefore first of all know its community and assess the needs of all segments of the community, not merely the conspicuous and the vocal. For the objectives and goals of the library must be to serve the whole community. Merely meeting the demands of the known and the articulate cannot assure the development of a collection that will serve the immediate present and the long-term future. Perhaps I should add here a word of caution. In setting goals and objectives, it behooves us to be realistic—realistic in seeking the attainable, realistic in accepting what's needed, not what's attractive, and realistic in defining one's own role, not somebody else's.

No man is an island, and no library is totally self-sufficient. But there are degrees of self-sufficiency, and libraries are fundamentally different from one another. As a result, each library needs to assess its own resources. Collection development requires not only maintaining a balanced growth but also building on strength. A strong collection

needs to grow to retain its eminence. This is no vainglorious indulgence. Scholarship is better served by one great collection than two or three incomplete ones. And in our days of library cooperation, it is only logical that we take into consideration the resources of other accessible libraries. I said "accessible," because cooperative collection development is only feasible when resources can be readily shared. Pie-in-the-sky pronouncements of cooperative enterprises lead only to disappointment and worse, distrust, and thus do a great disservice to our profession.

A collection development policy statement must therefore define the library's goals and objectives, identify the short-term and long-term needs of the community it serves, assess the degree of strength and weakness of its existing resources, and determine the depth and scope of its acquisition policy. The "meat" of such a statement usually consists of a listing of subjects, with accompanying annotations indicating the degree of coverage recommended. Delimitations by language, date, format, and cost offer further refinements. As in the case of almost all library tools, the usefulness of such an instrument, especially if it is a detailed one, will be greatly enhanced if an index is provided.

And now, some thoughts on what a collection development policy statement is *not* or should *not* be. First, a collection development statement is not a substitute for book selection. At best, it defines a framework and provides parameters, but it never selects a specific book. Each title has to be individually chosen, whether by means of blanket order, approval plan, or a corps of specialist book selectors. And no matter how specific and detailed the collection development policy statement may be, individual judgment still needs to be applied in the last analysis. Collection development charts the forest, but it does not plant the trees.

Further, a written statement, whether broadly outlined or specifically itemized, should not be fossilized for eternity. Just as institutions grow, collections grow; so should the collection development policies grow. The strength of tradition lies in the proper use of the past to nurture the present, and the purpose of such a policy statement is to assure stability, not rigidity. Therefore, the presence of a written policy statement cannot be a substitute for intelligent discernment, nor for an ever-alert awareness of the changing needs of the community it serves. For this reason, too, therefore, it is highly desirable, indeed imperative, that such a statement undergo regular, periodic review.

Even the dictum of "building on strength" mentioned earlier is not an immutable law. There may be times when it is wiser to "call it quits." The continuous maintenance of a collection, regardless of its intrinsic worth and accompanying prestige, must always be justified by its relevance—immediate or potential—to the community it serves. And ultimately, perhaps, by its contribution to scholarship and knowledge in general. One does not collect just for the sake of collecting.

And sometimes it may be more appropriate to give up or transfer some responsibilities to other institutions which are better equipped to assume them. One must not be afraid to admit past errors or to change directions when good judgment so indicates; nor should one be trapped in one's own past virtues. We need constantly to use our judgment and exercise our right—indeed, duty—to think, and sometimes having a piece of paper in front of us may make us forget that duty.

To confuse what's good for one library with what's good for another is to be intellectually lazy or socially irresponsible. Many factors come into play. What's adequate for one first-rate library may not be adequate for another. For years I watched with considerable concern some undergraduate libraries dutifully acquiring titles listed in the *Lamont Library Catalog*, thinking perhaps that if they had everything Lamont had, they too would serve their students well. But Lamont has Widener next door, not to mention Houghton and the dozens of other library facilities in the Harvard University system. Often what's unwanted by one library may well be treasured by another. A collection of third-rate novels adds little to the quality of a suburban public library, but the same collection may fit in well in a special collection which makes a large research library great.

And speaking of large libraries, perhaps we should remind ourselves once more that size is not synonymous with excellence, maybe not even eminence. Quantity does not assure quality, although neither does it preclude it. The nineteenth-century pipe dream of acquiring every worthwhile book has long evaporated in the puff of twentieth-century information explosion. True, very large collections of books are necessary to scholars, whether the books are used frequently or not, and indeed many will not be used frequently. And libraries, at least some libraries, are repositories as well as circulating entities and as such need to be both diverse and deep. But just as no newspaper can really print "all the news that's fit to print," neither can any library collect all the books that seem desirable to collect. Indeed, to seek and even to acquire everything is not to have the best. Harvard University Library prizes the preeminence of its collections by their excellence, not their size. Its book collection is always selective. And a well-coordinated smaller collection is indeed much more useful than a topsy-turvy mass of unguided growth. Acquisition requires skill, and book selection requires judgment. Collection development policy statement is a guidepost, not a crutch. A good collection development policy statement does not guarantee a good library collection, but it helps. To decide what to select and what not to select requires the courage to choose—to choose what to have, and what not to have, however tempting. And a sound collection development policy provides both a rationale and a reminder, lest vanity or timidity should lead us astray.