

**NEW BRUNSWICK COLLECTIONS GROUP  
ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006**

A. Introduction

The opening of Howard Dess's NBCG Annual Report for 2004-2005 remains an apt description of this organization: "NBCG [is] the forum where New Brunswick selectors meet to discuss and resolve common problems across the full spectrum of collection development functions and to share ideas about future directions for collection development." As in 2004-2005, discussion of the collections budget, including recent trends and future projections; distribution by subject and format; and its adequacy—or inadequacy—for the needs of curriculum and research dominated our agenda. We also wrestled with policies and procedures for accepting and processing gift collections, preservation issues, and the evolving role of selectors. We examined Elsevier's SCOPUS database as a possible replacement for *Web of Science*, made revisions in the Yankee Book Peddler profile as a prelude to moving to a shelf-ready approval plan, and explored the need for table of contents information in the IRIS record. We began the year with good news about collections, permitting the first allocation of state money for science monographs in years and enhanced state support for film and video purchases with state money. But while Howard Dess was able to report that NBCG ended 2004-2005 "on a note of cautious optimism about future support" for collections, we ended 2005-2006 confronting a state budget crisis of unprecedented proportions, and initial planning for projected cuts dominated the final months of the year, crowding out most other activity.

B. Collections Budget Overview (see attached spreadsheet)

As in past years, the budget was delivered in an incremental fashion. The initial State FY 2006 Allocation for NB covered periodicals and other fixed costs and allowed nothing for the approval plan and firm orders, but an additional state allocation of \$396,141 was given in October 2005, dedicated to approval, firm orders, and other one-time costs. This additional money allowed for modest sums to be allocated to individual state monograph funds, including the sciences, and kept us from relying solely on non-state money for the approval plan. Phonothn money was also distributed in October (showing a marked decrease from the previous year), and gift and endowed monies were distributed in November and December.

1. State Funds (all figures taken from SIRSI on 8/8/06)

The overall RUL state allocation was \$7,825,850.00, an increase of 4.75% over 2005, and of 8.58% over 2004. Rutgers overspent that allocation by more than \$16,000, and including encumbrances and invoices the state budget shows a negative free balance of \$245,049. The final New Brunswick allocation was \$3,173,268.00, an increase of 5.11% over 2005 and of 5.13% over 2004. While NB underspent by around \$200,000, encumbrances and invoices left us

with a small free balance of \$51,645. New Brunswick of course benefitted enormously from the RUL central budget, and the combined allocation for central state and RU-Online funds was \$3,637,190.00, with a total expenditure of \$3,943,655.00.

State monograph funds rebounded from significant cuts in 2005 without being restored to the level of 2004. New Brunswick received \$216,808.00 in state monograph money, an increase of 407% over 2005, but even this huge increase left NB with only 63% of the 2004 allocation of \$343,362.00. Of that NB spent \$182,821 leaving a free balance of \$33,920. The large free balance (16%) likely represents orders for books that were not received in time to be paid during the fiscal year. State support for the approval plan in 2006 was \$188,141.00, only 47% of the figure for 2005, though an increase of 21% over 2004 levels. Almost all of the state approval money was expended, with a remaining free balance of \$554. The data reveal a kind of yo-yo effect in state support for the purchase of books, and reinforce the perception that books are now seen as a luxury purchase, funded only with the money left over from periodical and database expenditures and with non-state money. Howard Dess's summary from the 2005 report remains all too true: "the overall level of monograph purchases (state plus non-state) . . . is still considered inadequate to the requirements of the university research and teaching missions, and the continuing trend toward ever greater reliance on non-state funds (phonothon, gifts, endowments) for this purpose is viewed with increasing concern by NBCG which advocates recognition by the university of the need for an expanded base state funds budget." Projections for 2007 indicate that all support for the purchase of books (and sound recordings, videos, and other firm orders) will depend on non-state funds, severely eroding our ability to support research and instruction.

Current periodical allocations for NB totaled \$2,273,362.00, an increase of 7.6%. As in the recent past, the apparent increase primarily covered inflation for a static collection, but at least avoided cuts. All but \$23,161 of that sum was paid, invoiced, or encumbered. Reliance on centrally funded journal packages continued to grow, with RU-Online allocated \$3,439,766 for current periodicals, and an expenditure of \$3,450,072. While the increased number of titles in these packages and enhanced access are great benefits, the cost is high both in money and in the loss of selector and even library control of individual titles. The absence of money to fund new periodical subscriptions remains a critical problem, most acutely in the sciences, but in the arts & humanities and social sciences as well. It poses a particularly difficult problem for selectors who are asked to support new programs and new faculty without new funds.

## 2. Non-State Funds

The total NB allocation of non-state funds totaled \$1,201,263.00, only 93% of the 2005 total. This decrease of \$92,000 reflects reductions in the Phonothon and other gifts. Workflows however shows that non-state spending in NB totaled \$1,350,884.00, with an additional \$6834 invoiced or encumbered. The discrepancy appears to come entirely from the principal of the Van Wagoner fund, which has been used to subsidize the New Brunswick approval plan.

Because Van Wagoner is a quasi endowment, we are allowed to spend principal as well as interest. Our decision to tap into the principal has proved a Faustian bargain. Interest from the endowment, state money, and a contribution from New Brunswick gift funds provided a total allocation for approval of \$318,531.00, but NB spent \$771,623.00 on approval books for a staggering negative free balance of \$453,281. It is clear that at this rate we will very quickly exhaust the remaining Van Wagoner principal (currently about \$450,000), and it is equally clear that non-state money alone is grossly inadequate to fund the type of monographic acquisitions (and the acquisition of films, scores, sound recordings, etc.) expected of a major research library. We are on an unsustainable course, and the crash will come soon.

### 3. NBCG Budget Allocation Committee

The Allocation Committee is responsible for the distribution of state funds and certain non-state funds (those not dedicated to a specific subject or discipline) among selectors and disciplines and also oversees expenditures and fund transfers throughout the year. The elected members of the Committee are: Jeris Cassel, Reference Team; Rebecca Gardner, Science Team; Kevin Mulcahy, Chair; Lourdes Vazquez, Arts & Humanities Team; Ryan Womack, Social Sciences Team; and, serving as an ex officio member, Gracemary Smulewitz of Distributed Technical Services. The committee's work has lessened in the last two years as a system-wide decision was made to fund all current subscriptions and cover inflation. In 2005-2006 the committee, after consultation with NBCG as a whole, distributed \$208,000 for state monograph funds and \$188,000 for the Approval Plan. Of the monograph money, \$85,150 was allocated for the Arts & Humanities, \$45,850 for the Social Sciences, \$37,000 for the Sciences, \$10,000 for Reference, \$20,000 for Media, and \$10,000 for the reserve transfer fund. The great challenge for the committee, of course, was trying to divide an inadequate sum of money in as fair a manner as possible, and the committee sought to provide funding for science monographs, enhanced support for media purchases, and a greater level of support for area studies. The normal procedure was for the budget allocation team to make initial division of the available money, and then for the individual team leaders, in consultation with their teams, to make allocations to specific funds. The committee also followed a similar procedure in allocating Phonothon money and unrestricted gift and endowed money.

### 4. YBP Approval Plan

NBCG endorsed, after some discussion and with some reservations, the plan to move to a "shelf-ready" plan. Receiving books with cataloging records, bar codes, and labels was expected to result in reduced processing costs, freeing TAS staff for other tasks. First it was necessary to refine profiles and to determine, by call number ranges, to which library books would be sent. Selectors reviewed their profiles, consulted with colleagues, and after meetings with Mary Page from Acquisitions and Steve Hyndman from YBP developed a workable scheme for book location. NBCG also endorsed ending selector review of books as a way of saving TAS staff

time even prior to the implementation of the shelf-ready plan. For the time being, however, the budget situation has caused an indefinite delay in that implementation.

Viewed from one perspective, the approval plan has been a great success. In FY 2005-2006 the YBP and L&C plans brought in around 15,000 books at a price of more than \$710,000—with a savings of more than \$165,000 due to the YBP discount (note: there are two other small approval plans). From another perspective, however, that of the RUL budget, the approval plan is a great problem. Since the university has not supported library collections adequately, and since the university library has determined that databases and journal subscriptions are a higher priority than books, non-state funds last year provided 75% of the money for approval books—with the bulk of that non-state money coming from the principal of the Van Wagoner endowment. As noted above, we cannot sustain this rate of expenditure, and one of this year's urgent tasks for NBCG will be a revision of the approval profiles in order to bring expenditures into line. It should be stressed, however, that the approval plan brought in more than half of the books acquired by the New Brunswick Libraries this year, and is the principal source of English language scholarly books. Given the decision to privilege subscriptions over books, cuts in the approval plan are a fiscal necessity but a terrible setback for the collections—and the scholars and students who rely on them.

## 5. Gifts

The acquisition and speedy processing of gifts—both individual titles and collections—have posed a significant challenge to NBCG and to the Rutgers Libraries as a whole. NBCG selectors have at times accepted gifts of dubious value or gifts whose physical condition demands significant remediation and a commensurate expenditure of money and labor. Gifts have been accepted en masse when selectivity would have been more appropriate. It should also be noted, however, that serious research libraries recognize gift collections as an important way of strengthening library holdings—filling in past gaps or building strength in new areas of programmatic emphasis. The Rutgers Libraries have not been able or willing to do accommodate gift collections in a timely manner. There is inadequate space for storing or processing gifts, little support for preliminary searching, and insufficient resources accorded to cataloging gifts. Too often RUL regards gift collections as a burden, not as a resource.

In the coming year, NBCG will need to address both aspects of this problem. We will need to work within the guidelines and procedures currently being developed for acquiring gifts, including greater attention to the physical condition of gift books. We will also need to press the case for adequate support for acquiring, storing, and processing gifts, especially in a budgetary climate that has caused books to be seen as secondary resources, increasingly purchased only with limited gift and endowed funds. We look forward to working with the AUL for Collection Development and Management, the Head of Cataloging, the Preservation Librarian, and others involved in this area. The NBCG Chair has had several meetings with the Head of Cataloging

and her staff during the past year to share concerns, identify problems, and develop new strategies.

## 6. Preservation

The challenge of preserving our print collections is perennial but has been posed dramatically this year by the discovery of more than a thousand books with mold in Alexander Library. It is likely that what has been discovered is a small part of the problem—perhaps caused by years of leaks and an inadequate HVAC system or by mold spreading from gift collections. And it is entirely possible that other NB libraries will discover similar problems. NBCG will need to work with the Preservation Librarian and her staff to address preservation issues and seek solutions, including funding for remediation, for replacement volumes where available, or for digitization. We will also need to address methods for preventing additional contamination, including greater care in the acquisition of gifts and used materials, and to resume discussion of how to prioritize collections for treatment in the event of serious damage to any of our library buildings.

## 7. Other Developments

–Mei Ling Lo and Laura Mullen arranged for an Elsevier representative to demonstrate *SCOPUS*, (a product intended to compete with and improve upon ISI's *Web of Science*) at the NBCG October meeting. This allowed selectors to assess the product and offer feedback to Elsevier. RU also enjoyed a one-year free trial of *SCOPUS*.

–As part of an ongoing effort to improve bibliographic and fiscal control of subscriptions, Gracemary Smulewitz and Collection Services instituted an “N” fund for irregular serials. This innovation should help to reduce false encumbrances.

–Laura Mullen has spearheaded a movement to develop a *Selector's Toolkit*, an initiative that began in NBCG and was brought to the Collection Development Council. This toolkit would bring together in one web location all the policies, procedures, and practices relating to funds, gifts, and all the other traditional lore of collection development at RUL.

–NBCG sponsored several open discussions on the evolving role of the selector, covering topics like the impact of vendor packages on selector choice, the possibility of a team approach, the role of liaisons with centers and institutes.

–Guests at NBCG meetings included Farideh Tehrani in her new role as Preservation Librarian, Mary Beth Weber, Head of Cataloging, Sharon Favaro, Gifts Coordinator, and Ian Bogus, now part of the Preservation staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin P. Mulcahy  
Chair, NBCG

8/16/06