

NEW BRUNSWICK COLLECTIONS GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT, FY 2008-2009

THE ROLE OF NBCG

Much of the day-to-day work of collection development and management occurs at the level of the individual selector, or, in a few instances, a small team of selectors (for example, the Business Selectors). On the other hand, because of the increasing digitization of our collections and the trend towards large journal packages and centrally funded databases, policies and budgets are usually decided at the system-wide level, coordinated by the AUL for Collection Development & Management and the Library Resources Council. The New Brunswick Collections Group occupies a middle ground between the individual selector in NB and the system-wide LRC. It brings selectors together, to consult, to share information and expertise, to advise on policies, and to lobby for resources. Unlike LRC, which is of necessity a representative body, drawing on selectors and colleagues from Access Services, Acquisitions, Cataloging, Distributed Technical Services, and Systems, NBCG comprises selectors and provides a forum for all interested selectors in NBL. NBCG also has responsibility for allocation and oversight of the New Brunswick share of the collections budget

COLLECTIONS BUDGET

Recent Budgetary constraints have restricted the allocation process to non-state funds alone (all state funds are required simply to maintain current standing orders), but NBCG's Budget Allocation team, comprising the elected NBCG Chair and elected team leaders for the Arts & Humanities, Reference, the Sciences, and the Social Sciences, retain responsibility for a budget usually totaling more than one million dollars. In FY 2008-2009, non-state allocations totaled \$1,229,222.13, with \$815,421.19 for monographs, \$285,489.10 for current periodicals, and \$112,891.67 for approval as the largest chunks. Of the allocations, NB spent \$497,652.41 on monographs (or firm orders), \$274,449.69 on current periodicals, and \$497,652.41 on approval. We thus significantly overspent on approval, and significantly under spent on firm orders. Both the under-spending on firm orders and the over-spending on approval are issues of concern for the future. It is also noteworthy that because of the difficulty in adding new subscriptions, selectors with stable non-state funds have increasingly used those funds to finance subscriptions, to databases and to journals. In FY 2008-2009, spending on current periodicals accounted for 21.56% of all NB non-state expenditures.

See attached spreadsheet for details.

APPROVAL PLAN

RUL's principal approval plan, with YBP, brought in 11,639 books, at a total expenditure of \$450,310.99 and an average price per book of \$38.69 during FY 2008-2009 (based on reports run on the YBP GOBI 2 system). This represents a relatively slight increase over FY 2007-2008 of 328 more books acquired, \$19,748.22 in additional expenditures, and an increase in the average book price of \$0.59. Spending on

other approval plans (primarily two Art approval plans) accounts for an additional \$47,000 in expenditures. While total expenditures for approval comprise less than 5% of RUL's total collection expenditures, support for the approval plan from state funds has evaporated over recent years (See Approval Trends tab of attached spreadsheet), and in 2008-2009 NBL relied entirely on non-state funds to pay for the plans. And since we have been tapping into the principal of a quasi-endowment, we are operating the approval plans—key sources of basic English-language scholarly books—on borrowed time.

As a result there has been significant discussion in NBCG regarding alternate sources of funding for the approval plan—treating approval as a fixed cost, as we currently do with journals and databases, or trying to develop an endowment. We have also spent a good deal of time working to refine our approval profiles and to identify other possible economies. One suggestion this year was to consider restricting the YBP plan to university presses only. Some brief studies (undertaken by the NBCG Chair) comparing circulation data for university press books and commercial press books cast indicate that at least in some disciplines, there is no clear distinction between usage of university press and commercial press titles. It is likely that any such restrictions by publisher type will need to be done—quite carefully—on a discipline by discipline basis, and not across the board.

It is clear to all that careful monitoring of the approval plan must continue, and that, in the absence of new and more stable funding sources, additional economies will need to be found. Since Rutgers has sent out an RFP for the approval plan, further refinements of the plan will wait on renewal with the current vendor or creating profiles with a new vendor early in FY 2009-2010.

See attached spreadsheet.

TEAM ACTIVITIES

After NB non-state money has been divided up among the Arts & Humanities, Reference, the Sciences, and the Social Sciences, the team leaders work with their teams to allocate money to specific subjects, developing priorities and criteria specific to their areas. The Arts & Humanities, for example, allocates proportionately more money to subjects with graduate programs than to subjects with undergraduate programs only. The team leaders then monitor expenditures and in some instances submit orders on shared funds in order to ensure equitable use of the funds.

In addition, a number of other team activities merit notice.

--The Arts & Humanities Team has developed a Sakai site for information sharing and discussion.

--The Social Sciences Team met to discuss future priorities and to have a review of new and important statistical sites.

--The Sciences Team met regularly to review priorities and procedures as part of the LSM Librarians meeting.

--The Reference Team solicited input from librarians and developed a list of e-reference books that were acquired with the reference allocation.

ELECTIONS

Elections were held in the spring for three positions. Ryan Womack was elected NBCG Chair, Rebecca Gardner was elected to another term as leader of the Science team, and Karen Hartman was elected to replace Ryan Womack as leader of the Social Sciences team. Sara Harrington continues as team leader for the Arts & Humanities, and Jeris Cassel continues as team leader for Reference.

SEARCHES

NBCG was delighted to welcome three new selectors: Qian Hu (Physical Sciences), Melissa Gasparotto (Area Studies) and Gene Springs (Business). NBCG members were active in all three successful searches, as well as in a fourth (Music & Performing Arts Librarian) that has been temporarily suspended because of budgetary reasons. The three new librarians met with the NBCG Chair and the appropriate team leader(s) as a key part of their orientation process.

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to Martin Kesselman, promoted to Librarian I, and to Karen Hartman, promoted to Librarian II with tenure

INFORMATION SHARING

As stated before, NBCG provides selectors with a forum for discussion and information sharing. It allows selectors to propose projects and receive input, to report on ongoing projects and studies, to share tips for the more effective use of our various systems, and to try to shape the future of collection development at RUL. Here are some of the topics from NBCG meetings in FY 2008-2009:

--Reports on weeding projects at Alexander, Douglass, and Kilmer from Gracemary Smulewitz of Distributed Technical Services (DTS) and the selectors involved.

--Discussion and endorsement of the Douglass Music Task Force Report.

--Proposal by Ryan Womack for a transfer of business titles from Alexander to Kilmer, with follow-up reports.

--Presentation on TAS organizational changes by invited guest Mary Beth Weber.

--Initiation of pilot project to improve selector notification on titles ordered for faculty.

--Regular updates from the Chair of the Library Resources Council and from other NBCG faculty serving on the Council.

--Open discussion on approval plan strategies.

--Open discussion on "Living in Hard Times", seeking strategies to spend more effectively and gain additional funding.

--Open Discussion on the future of books, the continuing value of books for scholarly research, and the likelihood of a transition to e-books.

--Sharing tips on using GOBI and interpreting GOBI records.

--Report on circulation patterns over time in Humanities books.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Mulcahy

NBCG Chair, July 2005-June 2009