

New Brunswick Collections Group Annual Report 2010

Submitted by Ryan Womack, NBCG Chair, July 19, 2010

Goals for the year were established at our July meeting.^{1,2} These included the implementation and study of the new approval plan with Coutts, discussion of potential collaborations on collections with regional institutions (with the Columbia-Cornell 2CUL partnership as a prime example), review of liaison roles and assignments, the study of available data on collections using Director's Station, and the exploration of funding sources for the approval plan. The outcomes of these goals are discussed below.

Part of the group's activity is to continuously monitor and respond to developments in collections, including budget priorities, major contract renewals, and database changes. The group also serves as a conduit to communicate the activities of the systemwide Library Resources Council to individual selectors and to take feedback from selectors to LRC.^{1,3}

At the beginning of the year, NBCG moved its communications to the Sakai platform, which provides a central listerv and archive, a place to store documents and resources, and a space for collaboration.³

Major agenda items included:

- A comprehensive comparison of costs between the former YBP approval plan and projected costs under the Coutts plan. This allowed the new approval plan to be implemented in a predictable manner, assuring comparable subject coverage and expenditure.^{1,2,5}
- Ongoing discussion and training on Coutts OASIS system, including visits by Coutts staff. Discussion of implementation of the approval plan.^{1,2,5}
- As part of the renegotiation of Science Direct contract and Wiley-Blackwell contracts, NBCG selectors were brought into the decision-making process.^{2,3,5}
- NBCG selectors also discussed steps being taken to meet the major cancellation targets for FY 2011.^{2,3,5}
- Collection projects including relocation and collection assessment at Alexander Library (business disciplines and Cinema Studies), Art Library, Physics Library, and Chemistry Library were discussed.^{4,5}
- Gifts procedures were reviewed with Carla Zimmerman from TAS.^{3,5}
- Thesis locations were reviewed with Jane Otto from TAS.^{3,5}
- Grace Agnew, AUL for Digital Library Systems presented on "Collection building from the digital technology perspective", stimulating discussion on the ongoing transformation of collections by digital technology.^{3,5}
- After presentation by Jim Neal to RUL, NBCG discussed the 2CUL project and other issues raised by the talk. The need both to be more experimental and to have support for "maverick" projects was stressed.^{3,5}
- The Liaison Relationship Working Group, chaired by Connie Wu and including Kayo Denda, Melissa Gasparotto, Karen Hartman, and Triveni Kuchi, was formed with the purpose of providing a comprehensive list of departmental, subject, research center, and collection responsibilities for our subject librarians. This group completed its work in a timely manner and provided detailed information about existing liaison relationships. It is envisioned that this information will be used to create a database that complements the Who's Who project and is easily accessible for both external and internal needs. Gaps in liaison coverage will be addressed by NBCG in the future.^{1,3,5}
- A Serials Forum was held to discuss system-wide serials issues, with presentations by Bob Sewell, Gracemary Smulewitz, Karen Hartman, and Ryan Womack. As journals have increasingly been bundled into large online packages controlled by the largest publishers, the way

in which journal holdings are analyzed and negotiated has changed dramatically. DTS has been working to consolidate pricing, licensing, and usage information into a format that is accessible to individual selectors by fund code. This will enable RUL to maximize the effectiveness of its journal purchases within the constraints of the journal packages (limited swapping/cancellation, long-term contract negotiation).^{1,2,3,5}

- Ryan Womack presented a study on circulation patterns at RUL, which showed steady declines in print circulation at most RUL libraries during the 2002-2010 period, with the exception of subject areas such as history and political science which were closer to steady, but still declining in circulation. Circulation is declining more slowly at Alexander Library than elsewhere, with the results that Alexander Library accounts for an increasing share of system-wide circulation over time (more than half). This presentation was combined with a comparison of collections budgets to peer institutions. Although RUL is not outstanding in comparison to peers, we still commit significant university resources in support of our faculty and students.
- Review of the approval plan expenditures indicate that we will fully expend our primary funding source for approvals sometime in FY 2012, if spending continues at the current rate. An Approval Fund Task Force, consisting of Tom Izbicki, Melissa Gasparotto, and Michelle Oswell, was formed in June to come up with recommendations on appropriate measures to restrict approval plan spending to roughly \$300,000 per year. At that rate, the approval plan could run into FY 2013, and we will have time to lobby for and seek alternative funding sources for monograph purchases. Since the approval plan accounts for more than half of our volumes acquired, such a cut will be a significant reduction in monograph acquisitions.

The major challenge for this fiscal year has been the continuing budgetary pressure, which continues to create a difficult environment. The magnitude of change apparent on the horizon will force painful decisions about essential collections and will force us to rethink many of our collections paradigms.

Strategic Goals

This report is keyed to the strategic goals as follows:

¹Organizational effectiveness (leadership, staff development, area expertise, recruitment)

²Financial Resources (for example: external support, budgeting effectively, leveraging resources)

³Collaborations and communication

⁴Enhancing library spaces

⁵Supporting academic excellence