

## **Collection Management and Planning Working Group**

### **Preamble**

Space for the storage of printed materials ranks among the most ignored costs in managing a research library. Yet, there are real costs to managing the physical footprint necessary to house a collection, real costs to ingesting new collections, and real costs in terms of sustaining the personnel necessary to service the collections housed within. These costs have become all the more apparent as the primary means of servicing most user requests have moved online.

Currently, the University Library participates in and contributes to the maintenance of four types of storage for general, print collections. These materials are located in four different types of facilities: Decentralized – Directly Accessible (departmental libraries); Centralized – Directly Accessible (Stacks); Local High Density – Indirectly Accessible (Oak St); and Remote High Density – Indirectly Accessible (CIC SPR, or other remotely stored collections in which we have an ownership stake). There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these storage environments. However, each of them plays a vital role in serving our community and fulfilling our role as a memory institution, and each of them should be managed consistently and to the greatest advantage to our institution.

The Collection Management and Planning Working Group codifies a long-standing, informal Stacks Management Group that brought together key stakeholders in the physical management of our collection.

### **Charge**

The Collection Management and Planning Working Group is charged with developing a comprehensive, print management strategy for the University Library's collections that is informed by relevant data, making recommendations to the Library about the continued management of its holdings, and overseeing the implementation of said recommendations. Initial tasks will entail: quantifying current fixed shelving capacity and availability, documenting efforts implemented to date and their impact, detailing pending programmatic efforts that have not yet been implemented (providing approximate costs, timelines, and benefits for said implementations), making recommendations for new and additional efforts that can be implemented to improve the management and leverage the asset that is the University Library's physical collections, and overseeing the continued management of the Library's physical collections. Ongoing project activities will seek to incorporate special collections into the development of an overall plan for the management of our physical collections.

### **Membership**

Tom Teper (chair)

Mary Laskowski

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Appendix A: Stacks Services Working Group (2008)

Available Here: <http://www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/stacks/stacksreport.html>.

Appendix B: Rethinking the Management of Our Physical Collections (Teper, 2009)

Approved: Executive Committee October 26, 2015

## Appendix B: Rethinking the Management of Our Physical Collections (2009)

The University Library faces significant financial challenges. These have manifested themselves over the last decade in declining numbers of faculty and staff, shifting demands upon our collections, and the need for entirely new skill sets required to support collections and services in the coming decades. In order to meet these challenges, the University Library must rethink the mechanisms by which it manages its physical collections.

What physical collection should occupy the space currently designated as the Main Stacks? What materials should and should not remain in Oak St? How should those collections be managed? Given the declining number of personnel available to manage a collection that continues to grow, part of the change that we must internalize is an acceptance that the efficient management of the University Library's collections cannot occur exclusively on an item-by-item basis. That statement is not intended to belittle the expertise of subject specialists or any other individuals; rather, it is an attempt to make us all examine when such item-by-item treatment is appropriate and when it is not.

The following table was designed by the Stacks Services Working Group in order to outline criteria that define each of the broad collection categories and maps them to existing storage models at UIUC.

Type of Storage	Decentralized, Directly Accessible	Centralized, Directly Accessible	High-density, Indirectly Accessible
Location	Unit Libraries (multiple locations)	Main Stacks	Oak Street
Collection Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low density</li> <li>• Physical access</li> <li>• High direct access need</li> <li>• Monographs</li> <li>• Unbound serials</li> <li>• Low theft risk</li> <li>• Directed at user groups</li> <li>• Collections with pre-existing cataloging/location needs).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium density</li> <li>• Physical access</li> <li>• Material expected to have higher access needs</li> <li>• Monographs</li> <li>• Bound serials with no digital surrogate</li> <li>• Low theft risk</li> <li>• Low preservation need</li> <li>• Limited duplication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High density</li> <li>• Mediated physical access</li> <li>• Materials expected to have low circulation</li> <li>• Monographs and serials with good digital access</li> <li>• Items with good cataloging and/or indexing</li> <li>• Items meeting RBML criteria (mediated circulation)</li> <li>• Items with defined preservation problems (mediated circulation)</li> <li>• Items in need of protection from theft (mediated circulation)</li> </ul>

**Managing the University Library's Physical Collections Prior to Oak St:** Prior to Oak St's opening, the University Library's physical collections included the holdings of many unit libraries (including the Undergraduate Library) and the Stacks. The Main Stacks were, for most unit libraries, the equivalent of a remote storage location. While directly-accessible to patrons, they were necessarily limited in their utility by deficiencies in bibliographic access, overcrowding (exceeding 120% in some areas), and the

absence of an environment that could be considered moderately appropriate for on-site use. Because there was no attempt at a consistent collection development or management policy for the Main Stacks, the holdings could be best described as being heterogeneous, meaning that the collection contained items from all disciplines, both relevant and irrelevant to current scholarly needs as well as being scholarly and popular. The serials included current receipts, older bound volumes, and runs that had been superseded by backfiles. The unit served as both the high-density, remote storage of its day and the primary repository for current receipts depending upon the foot-print of the unit library in question. In short, the Main Stacks served a multitude of purposes, but primarily served as location for the institution to warehouse materials as no overarching policy governed the collection being created in that unit. Such oversight was not necessarily feasible or constructive at the time; even if such oversight was available and empowered to manage the collection in that space, there was no safety valve – no location to move items, and no means of getting around the volume-count as signifier of value . However, that time has passed.

***Managing the University Library's Main Stack Collection After Oak St:*** Currently, our collection management practices in the Main Stacks do not differ substantially from those in place prior to the opening of Oak St. While we may have moved substantial numbers of items from the Stacks to Oak St, the overall management has not changed. The University Library's physical collections still include the holdings of many unit libraries (including the Undergraduate Library), the Stacks, and the Oak Street Storage Facility,. These physical collections are not going away. However, these collections cannot be considered in isolation from one another, from the Library's significant investment in electronic resources, or from developments in our profession, especially when it comes to discussions about how the University Library can manage, in a cost-effective manner, the collections and the facilities that house them. While similarities exist between the holdings in each of these unit-types, there are differences that are largely defined by the constituents they are intended to serve. These are differences that the University Library must be attuned to on an institutional level, and they are differences that we must be prepared to exploit in order to maximize our resources in the coming years. No longer can we consider the collections of a single departmental library separately from the larger institutional holdings.

### **Addressing the Need: Effectively Managing Our Largest Collection**

The presence of a high density storage facility on campus provides the institution with a unique opportunity to shape the collections that we hold within the Main Stacks relative to our holdings in other locations. Previously, the Stacks served as a central repository for lesser-used content in many disciplines and as a restricted but directly-accessible location for many others. They also held a heterogeneous collection. In all likelihood, the Main Stacks will continue to hold a heterogeneous collection, although we should explore whether the emphasis of this collection should shift. It is fair to say that direct access will continue to play an important part in the research and intellectual exploration for some fields, but it is also fair to say that direct access is not the mechanism that the majority of scholars and students prefer. That does not mean that direct access lacks value; what it does mean is that the University Library must take an intensive look at the types of materials that should be housed within different locations, how many copies of materials should be maintained within those locations, and the disciplines best served by having collections housed in different locations. To that end, I present the following collection management models for the Main Stacks:

#### **Model One: Management Through Pre-Defined Criteria**

In some respects, this represents to smallest departure from standard operating procedure, but if taken in a proper direction, could be the most effective program for managing materials in an

equitable manner. Currently, when there is no space for transfers in a particular area within the Stacks, individually-selected materials are transferred from these areas to Oak St. All subject areas are generally treated in the same way, and the management rests on the foundation of what space is needed/available in a particular area.

While the physical growth of the collection has always presented a challenge within our environment, the problem that we face increasingly results from our diminishing personnel resources. Fewer individuals are available to manage the materials, make selection decisions, and physically move the items. Yet, the need to make decisions does not change; indeed, it is accelerating. More items are being purchased every year, and greater resources are being dedicated to process backlogs. Neither of these factors will change at any point in the immediate future. So, how can the University Library more effectively manage the collection in the Central Stacks?

In this model, I propose that the University Library manage this collection by the numbers. Well-defined criteria focusing on date of publication, circulation history, availability of electronic backfiles, and projected growth should all contribute to this model. These criteria could be tailored to individual Dewey classifications by subject specialists, but no areas would be given a pass on establishing criteria that would govern the suitability of materials to be housed in the Central Stacks. If subject specialists declined to participate, overall criteria developed by the Office of Collections would be applied. Combined with decisions that would impact the processing of new materials, e.g., should materials in languages not taught on this campus be considered for browseable storage, or should we keep digitized government documents in browseable storage? - the University Library could make significant inroads in shaping a more useful, manageable collection in the Stacks. Criteria could be reviewed periodically, but this model would afford Central Stacks personnel to work through the collection in a manner that would maximize efficiency while retaining physical access to those items that meet criteria developed by subject specialists.

#### **Model Two: Creating a Humanities and Social Sciences Hub**

In this model, I propose taking the first model a step further in an attempt to dovetail with the measured consolidation of science expertise into the Grainger and Funk Libraries. In essence, the University Library would be establishing the Main Library's Stacks as a hub for collections that serve the Area Studies, Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. This would mean that the University Library would aggressively concentrate near-term selection of materials from the Stacks for Oak St on subject areas in the Physical and Life Sciences, on serials that are available online, and on other classes of material such as US Government Documents that will likely emerge as online content in the near-future.

While this would result in shifting portions of the University Library's overall collection to a departmental library to Oak St. collection management model, it would provide a more comprehensive collection in the Main Library's Stacks and reserve most of the directly accessible space for those materials whose faculty and graduate students have exhibited the greatest demand for such access. Such a move would not, of course, mean that these areas would be exempt from moving materials to Oak St, but it does provide an opportunity for the Main Library to focus those collections within its walls on those subsets of the University Library's collections that support particular areas of research that one can arguably claim are more dependent upon browseable access

### **Managing the Oak St. Storage Facility**

For the sake of this document, we must put aside the need for this facility to serve special collections; we acknowledge that need and support it. That stated, one of the significant challenges that the University is going to face in the coming decades is in building and maintaining facilities, and the value of building new facilities will be increasingly scrutinized, especially those facilities that do not provide a direct value to students and scholars in terms of delivering the services and materials that they need. While Oak St does fulfill these needs, it also does something else – it provides the University Library with a location to warehouse redundant material that, once valuable in adding to a volume count, is now just redundant.

Given that both new and existing spaces carry very real costs, it is time for the University Library to begin to follow in the footsteps of our colleagues in the UC system, Ohio State, and elsewhere. Just as we occasionally wonder about the multiple copies (in multiple formats) of items like the British Parliamentary Papers (microcard, microfiche, print, online), it is time for the University Library to begin examining whether there is a benefit or drawback in maintaining duplicate copies of serial runs that are also available online. Do we need to maintain half a dozen copies of such journal runs? What about monographic titles and series deemed appropriate for remote storage? Are two copies of superseded reference works enough, or do we need five?

### **Managing Gifts and Backlogs**

With the support of IPM and CAM, the Library made significant progress in the processing of gifts and other cataloging backlogs bound for the general collections. A policy of not classifying gift books that are added and sending them directly to Oak St enabled the Library to eliminate most of its gift backlog. Applying this same model to the LABO backlog has made that collection accessible to our patrons. Such processing must be continued – indeed, it should be expanded to include gifts that are considered intellectually valuable, but not in need of browseable access.

In terms of physical storage, gifts have presented a unique problem for the University Library. Currently, the University Library is accountable for minor spaces in several buildings across campus. These spaces hold many gift collections. While we are making progress in clearing several of them (Children's Literature from the Press Basement, Archival materials from the attic of Wohler's Hall, etc...), the Library needs to avoid using these marginal spaces for the storage of materials that are valuable enough for us to acquire.

In order to help address this issue, the University Library needs to identify suitable space to hold new unprocessed collections and to continue its efforts at processing backlogs that are scattered throughout the Library system – whether they be in marginal auxiliary spaces or stashed in carrels and other nooks within the Library's primary facilities.