

Acquisition Policy: A Symposium

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The Larger University Library

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IT MAY be appropriate to begin this part of our discussion by observing that librarians like to think of the library as "the heart of the university." We should recognize that with greater frequency than we may care for, at least in the past, the library has been more of an appendage to the university than its heart. Yet the growth, increasing complexity, and specialization of contemporary knowledge and information are increasing the critical responsibility and central position of the library to university research and teaching. This more fundamental and critical relationship is, of course, welcomed by librarians, but we cannot assume that a growing functional relationship will be satisfactorily met by a mere quantitative extension of the past. There are indications that the forces producing this shift will also force changes upon the library and upon scholarly customs and habits as well. It thus becomes increasingly apparent that we need to know much more than we do about what scholars and students actually need, as distinguished from what they may think they need, how they will use it, and how they will get at it. We have a long tradition by which we have governed our affairs in these connections, but the tradition is more and more deficient in providing the precise kinds of knowledge required for rational planning. Acquisitions policies as I conceive of them are an important part of this essential planning and appraisal of services and objectives.

The nature of the topic suggests that a division into two somewhat different but closely related parts may be useful. The first part might loosely be described as an outline or description of some of the underlying problems and characteristics of the research library

which point to the desirability or necessity of acquisition policies, while the second part of the discussion might be directed more toward the uses, limitations, and operating realities of acquisition policies in universities.

Underlying Problems and Characteristics

Beginning with the first area, we must recognize that all libraries have acquisition policies, whether they are recognized or not, and whether the policies are stated or not. It is apparent that this is true because no library is getting all publications. A library's acquisition policy may represent anything therefore, from the purely fortuitous to the most rigorous selection, but these practices in themselves constitute a policy of sorts. The extent to which a library fails to recognize the kinds of policies which it is following may possibly be a measure of the potential inadequacies of its collection over a long period of time.

It would seem to me that many of the fundamental needs for research library acquisition policy have their origins in the increasing quantity, variety, and uses of print, broadly defined. We are living in a civilization where the outpouring of print has become enormous and is likely to become even more so—if it continues at all. The flood of print in all its forms is almost certainly increasing at exponential rates and at rates substantially in excess of the growth of libraries. If these assumptions are true, the conclusion is inevitable that the individual library will, as time goes on, hold a smaller and smaller percentage of the totality of print produced and in existence at any point in time. From this assumption, it would appear to follow that as the percentage held diminishes, the margins of permissible error in acquisition are likely to diminish also. This further assumes, of

course, that the totality of print will continue to have some relevance to general scholarly problems, an assumption which requires critical examination.

This general situation presents certain fairly obvious and very fundamental, broad, intellectual questions that must be solved jointly by librarians and scholars and which do not appear to be a proper part of this paper. They should be mentioned here, however, because their ultimate solution will directly affect the final determination of acquisition policies for the individual library. Among these questions are the following: (1) the determination of the optimum amount and character of the literature that requires world preservation in libraries for the current and future needs of scholarship and civilization; (2) the optimum amount and character of the literature which must be preserved in the libraries of this country; and (3) the optimum amount and character of the literature which must be collected and retained for immediate access within a particular institution.

No one has satisfactory answers to these questions at the present time, but the questions are very real, and as time goes on are likely to require increasingly critical answers. The answers will involve (1) more meaningful distinctions than we have commonly made between direct access to materials and deferred access to materials, (2) considerations of what optimum size really means for a country or a particular institution, and (3) more precise determinations of our obligations in the conservation of knowledge and information.

The answers to these questions, which so directly determine general acquisition policies, inevitably will affect the nature, substance, geographic location, and efficiency of research and teaching, not only in the individual institution, but in the country as a whole. The critical relationship of the library to this facet of acquisitions policies must receive a great deal more attention in the future than it has in the past from scholars, librarians, and administrative officers of universities.

Recognition of this relationship of the library and its resources will emerge not only for the intellectual reasons which I have tried briefly to sketch, but because of economic pressures which will require more realistic appraisals of need and the adequacy with

which needs are being met. It is quite unrealistic for any university library to assume that money is unlimited, though the view of the private university library in this connection may currently be more conservative than that of the publicly supported university library. The economic pressures upon both privately and publicly supported university libraries have changed and have changed quite drastically. There are not only more books and more needs for books, but books cost more, the space in which they are housed costs more, and the costs of cataloging and preparation are showing possibly even sharper increases. In addition to these costs is the emergence of the physical preservation of materials as an expensive auxiliary to their initial acquisition and organization.

Largely out of these economic forces, cooperative measures of acquisition and access are increasing and appear likely to increase substantially more in the future. In order to participate successfully in cooperative measures, one must know with some precision what the needs of the particular institution actually are and what obligations it is prepared to meet in a cooperative enterprise. These needs and commitments are of relatively long range significance, and are made additionally complex because of current concerns with the security of materials from the risks of war.

In addition to these broad, general questions and problems, there are a number of rather fundamental characteristics of large research libraries which focus in one way or another upon the need for acquisition policies.

With the acquisition methods thus far in use in large scholarly libraries, we are forced to recognize that great research strength cannot usually be established in a library quickly for any broad or even a highly specialized field, barring the single acquisition of a major collection appropriately comprehensive in scope. That is to say, if an institution wants strength in a particular subject field, it must recognize the need for strength in order that the library may accumulate the required materials over a reasonable period of time. Conversely, it is quite apparent that great research strength in certain subject fields, once established, has an institutional kind of survival that is greater than the actual or institutional lifetime of the scholars and librarians, as individuals, who contributed to

the establishment of the strength. The problems presented by this are very tangible and very real. They relate in part, of course, to cooperative responsibilities and access, but not exclusively so.

Next, we might recognize that in the university library the responsibility for the determination of acquisition policy, however it is stated, is inevitably shared with the faculty of the university, and in some degree with the university administration. Furthermore, the application, execution, and interpretation of the policy usually is also shared with the faculty or individual members of it. It is my impression that the number of faculty members who are both able and willing to carry this participation in the actual detailed selection of materials is a diminishing one. Academic promotions seldom grow out of skilled bibliographical services in building research libraries. This means that in many, if not most, of the larger university libraries, the library staff, rather than the teaching faculty will increasingly carry the burden of implementing the acquisition policy. The transfer of this traditional responsibility from the faculty or, to be more realistic, a very limited portion of the faculty, to members of the library staff imposes real hazards, unless the library staff and the faculty both understand the required acquisition policies and are able to match the policies with adequate resources in money, space, and staff.

Finally, there are two other characteristics of research libraries that are important in relation to the underlying problems of acquisition policies, though their specific impact is now difficult to interpret or explain. First, we should note that book buying for a large research library tends to be very strongly oriented toward future or potential use, even in subject fields where the institution has a current and well established interest. What percentage of books are bought on this basis in any large university library is probably impossible to ascertain, but it is quite apparent that a very high proportion of books are bought on the assumption that they contribute to the completeness or overall adequacy of a research collection without any specific current need for the books at the time they are acquired. For major source materials, monumental sets, works of reference, distinguished or major works and authors, this practice is

obviously a necessary part of the building of the resources of a research institution. However, when it extends, as it does, into more recondite subject fields, works clearly of a secondary nature, the sub-branches of a field, and very minor source materials, it presents an interesting and conspicuous aspect of the research library's operations.

This characteristic becomes more significant when we note, secondly, that most of the books in a large research library are subjected to an extremely low, almost negligible, amount of use. The use of a large research library is clearly concentrated at any one point in time over a small percentage of its total holdings. It is, of course, the balance of the library's holdings which *are* so infrequently used that in part distinguishes a research library from a college or reference library. The phenomenon of widely scattered limited use is far more conspicuous in the social sciences and the humanities than in the physical and biological sciences, where current research uses tend to be concentrated over more limited quantities of material. These two characteristics: (1) extensive buying for future assumed potential needs, involving highly subjective measurements, and (2) the very low ratios of use of vast quantities of material, present the case for acquisitions policies with, it seems to me, considerable forcefulness.

Limitations and Realities

This brings us now to the concluding part of these remarks, that is to try to examine acquisition policies more concretely in terms of their uses, limitations, or realities. By this time it should be apparent that perhaps the principal uses of acquisition policies are three in number. (1) The discussion of acquisition policies with a university faculty is one of the most fundamental bases on which faculty-library mutual understanding can be built. (2) An acquisition policy makes explicit, no matter how imperfect it may be, that a university research library cannot produce all the relevant literature for all the subjects in which its constituency may be interested at any one point in time. The policy statement thus becomes a priority statement of the library needs of a scholarly constituency. (3) This approach is doubly constructive, for, if it is done with any sense

of reality, it will focus attention of the faculty and the university upon the need for basic decisions of the institution, i.e., what can the institution do, what should it not attempt, and what are the implications of changes in scope or direction?

It is at this point that the librarian may well become dispirited and cynical, for I think most of us will have great difficulty in trying to secure clear-cut statements describing with any degree of precision the kinds of books that the library should buy in all fields of knowledge. Certain subject fields can always be ruled out with ease, certain fields can easily be included under general headings, e.g., economics, but within those fields in which the university has an interest, close definitions of policy, it has been my experience, are likely to be difficult to establish. Nonetheless, the effort to establish the policies may, as I have tried to indicate, have beneficial results.

These difficulties in establishing useful policies arise for a number of reasons. The matter is in the first place basically quite complex, and it can only confuse the situation to assume that a very simple solution can be found if one is only sufficiently ingenious. Furthermore, our library tradition is inconsistent with narrowing or restrictive definitions, for each library has until quite recently felt that it was, or ought to be, autonomous in wide areas of knowledge and therefore should be able to supply virtually all of the needs of its constituency. The constituency, I may add, has greeted this library policy with enthusiasm.

Our scholarly tradition also appears to be in conflict with the establishment of acquisition policies in a variety of ways, some through custom and some through conviction. It is apparent that scholars and librarians behave in part as they do because we know we have only fragments at best of many earlier literatures. Secondly, scholarship has felt properly jealous of its freedom to turn at the initiative of the individual to new subjects and topics for research investigations at any time, and there is a fairly strong tradition that with this freedom went an obligation of the institution to support the new research. Out of this freedom has grown much of the vitality of universities and it is, of course, one of the great attractions of university life. Neither of these traditions may be lightly ignored.

But we must also determine whether the conflicts they seem to present with the formulations of acquisition policies are real or superficial.

The formulation of acquisition policies is a joint responsibility between the administrative officers of the institution, its faculty, and its library. Acquisition policies which are presented to faculty members and administrative officers solely as devices to limit expenditures, reduce the rate of library growth, or curtail acquisitions, deserve, and are likely to get, very little support. But in practice this is very unlikely to be the case, for scholars have frequently been very unrealistic about the potentialities and resources of libraries, and have expected the acquisition of great quantities of material with insufficient justification in terms of their own use and needs, the basic importance of the material to the institution, and the stability of the topic or their interest in it. The key rests in convincing the faculty that the library does not have, and is very unlikely to secure, the resources to cover the universe of knowledge and the totality of print; therefore it must choose what it can do. In choosing what it can do, the university must be reasonably realistic in its choices, for only out of realistic choices can there come genuine and distinguished strength for the library, the faculty, and the university.

Out of these discussions we should not anticipate the formulation of acquisitions policies which will tell us what books we must buy. The policies may occasionally tell us of subject areas which we should examine more closely in order to find out whether there are books that we should buy or not. But to look at an acquisition policy as a potential formula into which one can feed the author, title, date, language, and subject matter of any book and come out with a priority rating indicating how much should be spent for it and whether it should be bought instantly, later, or not at all, is to ask for disappointment and frustration.

Finally, acquisition policies will vary not only from one institution to another, but will vary for different areas and levels in the book collection of a single university. And perhaps at this point we might suggest that it may be possible to plan the policies more realistically in terms of three broad general levels within

the book collection of the large university library. The first part of the collection may loosely be described as a broad reference base, that is, the basic literature on a wide variety of subject fields of probable or even possible interest in an intellectual community. This collection, however, would not contain primarily the materials for original research investigation except as it supplied general guides, bibliographical information, and a good deal of factual data. The responsibility for the definitions of policy and the selection of much of the material can probably best be carried through by members of the library staff with advice and suggestions from the faculty.

The second great area—and a far larger one in terms of volumes—is the basic research collection for the university. This area would contain the books to support original investigation and research in a large number of defined fields. The fields would be selected with care, and would represent subjects in which the institution recognized a sustained teaching or research interest and responsibility. The determination of the acquisition policy and the execution of the acquisition policy would be shared between the faculty and the library staff.

Lastly, there is a third area which I think perhaps we have not always recognized as distinguishable from the major research core which I have just described. This last area would consist of the special, and, in part, transitional needs of individual faculty members over and beyond the materials in the general research core. The faculty would

use these special materials, of course, in conjunction with the broad research core, but in a way they are superimposed on it. The faculty member would take the initiative in suggesting these areas, and the library might expect some faculty support in financing such acquisitions. Money spent here would not necessarily produce what we loosely call “well rounded collections.” The materials would be highly specialized and contribute to direct and specific studies of immediate, current interest to the faculty. Anticipation buying should be held to a minimum. When the faculty’s interests change, or the faculty changes, the value of these materials to the university would tend to depreciate. The library would be under no obligation to keep up acquisitions in such an area when the interest declined. It would be therefore a kind of expendable operation, even though the books are now commonly retained and are specifically indistinguishable from books in the basic research collection.

The role which I think acquisition policies may play in this last analysis of the problem is to focus the attention of the faculty on the middle area. It would minimize some of the risks which I think many of us may be facing currently in which individual faculty members may all too easily come to think that acquisitions at the third level of high specialization are sufficient for, or even identical with, the building of adequate, useful, and basic research collections in subject areas where the university must maintain such strength.

By ROBERT VOSPER

Acquisition Policy—Fact or Fancy?

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AS A MATTER of fact a mighty small number of us have ever sat down to the trying task of stating an acquisition policy, and I am afraid that several of us who have done so have produced only a matter of fancy, or a sort of copy-book exercise, or in some cases a cartographic exercise.

We do have before us in this regard, as in so many, the thoroughly sensible and effective job recently done by Harvard; we respect the primacy of the Library of Congress ‘Canons of Selection’; we hear, to be sure, the moral voice of conscience from the Midway; moreover, a good many of us who are desperately searching for the Word think it may appear in an acquisition code. Why then haven’t we done anything?

In a few cases we have. Interestingly enough most of the codified acquisition policies that I can locate have been written in the three Pacific Coast states. Washington had one for several years but presently has put it aside. Both Oregon institutions have fairly concrete documents of recent construction. The omni-present California institutions have a series of statements, of which I will only say that the best are from the subject-specializing campuses. Why this efflorescence out there on the Coast? It's true that the Northwest rains should sprout anything, and that California creates creeds with the greatest of ease, but perhaps a greater factor is that in both Oregon and Washington the state schools have a measure of administrative unity.

Most of the Southeastern people profess scepticism about acquisition policies, and this is curious because their distinguished record of coordinated effort would seem to be based in a pretty clear understanding of their book needs and their acquisitions plans. Giving substance to their coordinated activities is the well-known Southern Regional Compact for Higher Education; less well-known is its youthful progeny, the Western Governors' Compact which is already effective in terms of medical education and will soon operate in other fields of health service. Obviously there are important similarities between these two large areas in regard to state-supported higher education.

Powerful agreements of this sort at the university level, intra- and preferably interstate, which tend to limit socially wasteful duplication in graduate and professional education, are perhaps prerequisite to any kind of realistic inter-library acquisition agreement. I presume here that acquisition policies that reflect inter-library agreements are what most people have in mind when they speak in moral tones about impending doom and the need for such policies.

What then holds the rest of us back? Several of us are dead set against stipulated acquisition policies in the first place; just about as many of us consider them desirable but have not taken on the task or consider it too tough to tackle. Opinions range from those that would save the bibliothecal future thereby, to those that consider a written acquisition policy presumptuous and based in either idleness or a sense of inadequacy. On both

sides the reasons are about the same, and they are familiar to most of us.

Many of the reasons revolve around the changing programs of the university and the variety of faculty opinion or, on the other hand, the limiting effect of any written code. These reasons suggest that there is some uncertainty as to what an acquisition policy may be.

Librarians with elephantiasis of the book-stacks generally, and reasonably, look on a code as a cure for the swelling. Difficulties often arise, however, when these same librarians, with paternal smugness, warn their colleagues in smaller institutions against tasting the sins of their fathers. Obviously we need to guard against wasteful growth or duplication through the application of definite acquisitions policies and by other means, but we must not thereby justify either mediocrity for our libraries or frustration for our faculties.

The problems of the increasing flood of printed materials and the increasing growth of libraries have too frequently led us to issue jeremiads when we should, particularly in so-called medium-sized institutions, be leading a positive crusade for better library support as a primary answer. We are led to state a magnificent phrase "To know a book is to covet that book" in a tone of distress when it should be the symbol of our highest hopes. We worry about the increasing percentage of a university budget going into library service, but perhaps we wear our conscience too much on our sleeve. How many engineering deans worry about the square footage and the dollars that their expanding enterprises cost the university? Recently I was pleased to note that in book-rich England the Bodleian in 1950-51 cost Oxford 7.13% of the total university expenditure; this was a rising figure and yet no one seemed concerned! I grant that the Bodleian is unique; the Redbrick situation is probably quite different.

But this is off the main track, and an acquisition policy need not be a limiting factor full of "Thou shalt not"; it may be quite the opposite, a statement of hopes and plans.

For some of us an acquisitions policy has been a mere listing and evaluation of the university's fields of teaching and research with an indication of the relative adequacy of the library collections in each case. Such an

analysis takes time and at best is rough, but for the life of me I can see only good in any such increased self-knowledge. However, some of us take to our bed of tears when we find that an enumeration of our masters' departments reveals that each of them hopes to be able to give a first-class doctorate.

From Harvard to California we tend to believe that ultimately our acquisition policy must depend on the needs of the users of our libraries, but we are all a bit vague as to ways of grasping that need or even of learning about it. K. D. Metcalf's articles in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* are recommended here.

Many of us cannot develop an acquisition policy because the university will not sit still long enough for us to describe it, and again we lament when we should cheer. Obviously, a university library must be a vital organism, and we cannot very well foresee the research needs or the book market opportunities that may affect our futures, but there is nothing inherent in a sensible and sensitive acquisition policy that will militate against change. As a matter of fact a good hard look at the past and present of our book collecting may enable us all the better to act wisely in the future when a critical decision is required. At least this is the professional thesis of our brethren in the history faculty and I am inclined to think them right.

Some of us are stumped by the variety of any university, and we yearn for the nice tight situation that allowed the John Crerar to restate its acquisition policy in 1948 with great clarity. Too frequently we are defeatists, although obviously in specialized institutions the problem is simpler.

Others of us profess inability to set an acquisition policy because the faculty have too much authority or opinion and we too little. Such an opinion is based on the strange assumption that we and the faculty are not going in the same direction and that a measure of democratic government is a dangerous thing.

I know that most of us really have acquisition policies, but for reasons of diplomacy or otherwise we have not stated them. Some of us feel that the unwritten body of doctrine and experience developed in our own institutions is of purely local interest. Let me assure everyone that there is so much concern and

so much uncertainty in this matter that all local statements would have broader interest. Generalization might come from an opportunity to review several specific cases, and I really doubt the validity of the frequent belief that each case can be only specific. The Harvard analyses are of great interest, but state universities operate within a different financial atmosphere. We need to know more about patterns of book selection at the university level, how they have grown up and how they are being influenced and modified by modern developments in inter-library cooperation and other factors.

It would not hurt to interpolate at this point that the library schools by and large teach "book selection" in public library terms. But how can they teach about acquisition policies at the university level if we don't state any doctrine or experience?

Where the state universities have a very special problem in all this I really don't know, except it may be that the larger private institutions have recently seen all state-supported schools as rolling in wealth and needing a fraternal warning against the evils ahead. But of course this is not as true now as it was when the veterans brought in a fat federal income. It is true that if we aren't really strapped for funds and if we have a sanguine future, it's much easier to avoid trying to see where we're going. We aren't absolved of responsibility though.

What then do we need in order to project an acquisitions policy besides the will to do it? In asking this I finally come forth and vote in favor of one. I have only one concrete proposal to put before you. The problems of libraries are large and complex and the solutions difficult. It may be that we can't and shouldn't try to solve them all on our own. Yet I have the impression that too much of our talk is with ourselves and too little of it with our faculties. Harvard does a superb job of explaining to its faculty and thereby seeking their understanding and advice. But how many of our faculties in the hinterlands are really aware of the problems libraries face and the steps taken toward their solution? We write in our own journals, but the chemist has problems enough in reading chemical journals. He may not even be aware of the ferment over literature abstracting in his own professional society; certainly he has

little specific knowledge of present library trends and needs.

I have been impressed by plans laid in the MILC group to hold a meeting of geologists from the member institutions in order to discuss the services the Center can offer to geological research in the Midwest. I suggest that we watch this closely and that ACRL seriously consider the advisability, perhaps at Midwinter, of similar round table meetings on set topics, participated in by faculty and administrative people. Many of the problems revolving around an acquisition policy might begin to find a solution in that kind of atmosphere.

A major obstacle to realistic thinking in the areas under discussion is, as Herman Fussler has pointed out, our inadequate

knowledge of how research workers on an advanced level actually use libraries. He and Carl Hintz, Arthur McAnally, and a few others have begun to explore this problem—and here reference may be made to Rolland Stevens' recent contribution to *ACRL Monographs*—but again I want to suggest a co-operative approach. Is it conceivable that the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council and similar bodies would join us in some large scale investigations or conferences on the use of and need for library materials in broad areas of study? The ACLS gave some effective thought, but for too short a time, to the problem of getting scholarly material into print. Why not go a bit further?

By EILEEN THORNTON

The Small College Library

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I AM HERE to try to represent not the huge university libraries, not the middle sized libraries, but the small college libraries. The assumption is that within each of these groups the libraries have a good deal in common.

But because I am privileged to speak for by far the largest number of institutions, please do not think for one moment that I know what is fact or know what is fiction except for one library, and I may mislead myself about that one now and then.

Library literature is studded with studies concerning college library acquisition affairs. To attempt a factual summary of college library acquisition policies and programs would be a six-months' job in itself. I haven't done that job. What I have to say is unscientific. It may be such common knowledge that everyone already knows it, or it may be so peculiar that I am talking only to myself.

The big universities probably now and then lean over the fence to admire the succulent green grass of bucolic college library field. They may envy us what they blithely assume

to be our freedom from responsibility for research materials. They may envy us our freedom from the problems of sheer mass: clientele, personnel, collection, building. They may envy us our relatively clear-cut programs and curricula. What I am sure they do not envy is the minuteness of our budgets, which makes the expenditure of every single dollar a crucial affair.

It is not very high-minded to start off in such crass terms, but at the heart of the matter for the small institution stands the dollar sign. It stands there for the big institutions too, I am well aware, but it is in the comparison of the size of the budget with the size of the demand that the college library is in a worse—or at least a quite different—position. The demands on the college library are fairly specific. The demands on the university library have, seemingly, no upper limit, yet the major general needs can usually be met. This is not always true of the small college library.

With the exception of those relatively few separate undergraduate colleges where the enrolment is in the many thousands, financial support must be geared, first and foremost, to the curriculum and the methods of imparting

that curriculum. For instance, a library needs as many titles for students in a class of five in, say, monetary systems as for a class of ten or twelve. In fact, one may need more titles for the smaller group because highly individualized work may be possible, with an increased spread through the pertinent literature.

In a sense, then, I believe college librarians will agree that there is an irreducible dollar minimum needed by any college with a liberal arts or equally book-dependent curriculum.

So far this sounds as though I thought money—too little money—is the root of all evil, and that lots of money would be the cure of all evil. This is obviously fatuous, but unless there is a reasonable amount of money at hand it is equally fatuous to talk about an acquisition program.

It is true that an acquisition program boils down to a few questions of which these are samples: Acquisition for what purpose? Who knows what literature will fulfill these purposes? Acquisition by what methods and from what sources? Acquisition within what financial, physical, traditional, governmental or other limitations?

The questions are easy to dream up; the answers, even in a single institution, are not.

"Acquisition for what purpose" is obviously much more complex than the pat answer, "to meet curricular need." Here we come up against variety and change in teaching method, change of course content, shifts in registration, new faculty members, the problem of interstitial and reference material; the problems involved in that loose term, "general reading," that looser term, "recreational reading."

We come up against some of the effects of our cherished and characteristic open shelves, for the book the student stumbles upon on the shelves may serve a different purpose from the book found through the refining process of pursuit through bibliographic channels.

"Acquisition for what purpose" also raises the vexing issue of the line between faculty research needs and student needs—that line which is no line but just a blurred overlap for so many of us. It raises problems of obsolescence, of supersession, of elimination.

These purposes can be analyzed only in the given institution, and once the analysis has been made there is no guarantee that it won't need constant modernization.

The analysis of purpose leads logically to this question: "Who can and will select library materials to match these purposes?" Through what selective processes can this be done most effectively, and where do final decisions best lie? General tradition has it that this lies almost wholly with the faculty, man by man, with a little slice left over for the librarian. Newer views incline toward great freedom and encouragement of faculty participation but hold the librarian responsible for final judgment. While the arbitrary and self-perpetuating allocation of the budget to departments has perhaps kept a sort of peace and assured a rough equity, with the enormous increase in the proportion of serial holdings as compared with monographic holdings, and with the growing overlap in fields of knowledge, in course structure and in general literature this process may also need careful review.

The capacity of faculty and library staff members to select wisely and in cooperation is invaluable, but not easily developed. It is hampered by questions of prestige, by the absence of tools for selection, by the internal structure of the college, by a confusion between the long and the short view, by viciously proprietary feelings on the part of departments or the library.

"By what methods and from what sources" are essentially problems within the libraries, yet complications here play back on the primary issues of knowing the general nature of the library's obligation and of having the responsibility for selection lie with those most competent to accept it.

There is one function which tends to rest with the heads of small libraries. Unlike the large libraries we do not commonly have an acquisition librarian except as we split off a part of ourselves to perform that function. While there is value in having acquisitions an integral part of head librarianship, there is also sometimes loss, as this facet of the work may get snowed under by other crises.

Knowledge of methods and sources of acquisition is an area in which library schools have given us the least specific help and in which many of us, by performing inefficiently, handicap the acquisition program more than we like and shake faculty confidence in us. Sheer relative availability and speed figure very often and very importantly in the development of small college library collections.

Financial, physical and other limitations also affect policy development. The restrictive nature of certain kinds of endowment arrangements is obvious. The college library already bursting its walls with sixty to seventy thousand volumes may induce a policy to hold that line as to size, which makes the withdrawal policies, already important for all libraries, easily as difficult to evolve as are positive acquisition policies.

Even in small colleges facts imbedded in the structure—land-grant commitments, public library service, accreditation pressures and such—have to be lived with even if impossible to love.

In some small colleges, access to dependable buying guides is so lacking that ready-made lists, appropriate or not, take the place of local judgment and initiative.

In some small libraries, new dimensions (such as the administration of audio-visual materials) have to be accommodated and accommodated without enough advice, time, or money to be accommodated well.

We are all cheered by scattered reports of specific studies and experiments being carried forward by librarians and faculties together in realistic examination and planning of acquisition activities. It helps to know, too, that

cooperative projects, even though slow to gain headway, are drawing faculty and librarian together with those in other colleges in shaping workable acquisition policies.

The facts cannot help but differ from college to college. The fiction of what we say about acquisition policies may wander from the too bright to the too dim view of our success.

There is increasing backing for policies which, while they urge full faculty participation in book selection do give the librarian final responsibility for decisions. It is easier now to point to reputable literature in librarianship or in educational administration which defines the faculty library committee as advisory rather than as executive. Many of our complaints concerning the difficulties we meet in establishing good acquisition policies will be reduced when these two factors become common characteristics of our colleges. But our struggle is not wholly against other elements and forces than those we can control. Our struggle is with our own boot-straps, more often than we like to admit. We need more demonstration from ourselves of our competence to evolve and keep running well the acquisition programs of our institutions.

Announcement of Study Grants

The Fund for Adult Education is offering approximately 100 awards for academic study, supervised field experience, or combinations of the two for the improvement and advancement of persons concerned with the liberal or general education of adults. These awards are the beginning of a continuing effort to help meet the recognized need for additional and more highly skilled leaders in adult education. The awards will be made by a National Committee on Study Grants appointed by the Fund for Adult Education to plan and administer the program.

The study may be undertaken with any agency whose primary function is adult education. The recipient of an award may spend up to one year, on a full-time basis, in association with such an agency in a learning-by-doing situation or in a full academic year's study at an institution of higher education. No specific sums are designated for any type of award, but varies with the program to be followed. For fuller information write to Mrs. Grace Stevenson, ALA Headquarters, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago 11, Illinois. Requests for application blanks should be addressed to The Fund for Adult Education, National Committee on Study Grants, 141 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago 4, Illinois. The deadline for applications for scholarships and fellowships is November 1. The deadline for applications for study awards is October 1, but those received later will be considered for training beginning after March 1, 1954.