Sudden Collections
Coordinators:

When you don’t know what you don’t know

Ariel Pomputius -- Megan Daly -- Trey Shelton -- Pat Reakes -- Tara Cataldo
Overview

• Who are we?
• Basics for success
• Evolving collections
• Growing into your role
• Modern collection management
• Connecting
• Managing vendor relations
• Discussion questions
Who are we...

...and how did we get here?
University of Florida

George A. Smathers Libraries

- Large R1, research intensive institution
- Land grant university + major medical center
- Combination of large undergrad enrollment (55K) and high number of Ph.D. programs
- Seven libraries
- Approximately 60 selectors
- Over 5M volumes; 1.5M e-books; approx. 150K ongoing serial titles
- $13M materials budget
Megan Daly

– Humanities Collections Coordinator
– Classics, Philosophy, & Religion Liaison Librarian

Bio:

• Ph.D. in Classics
• From academic to area selector to Humanities Collections Coordinator, all in a year and a half!
• 1.5 years of collections experience
• Research Interests:
  • Roman Historiography
  • Intellectual Freedom
  • Print vs. Electronic
Ariel Pomputius

– Health Science Center Library Collections Coordinator
– Liaison Librarian to departments in the College of Medicine

Bio:

• MLIS
• Previous experience with collections as a clinical librarian at a small, rural hospital
• 3 year of collections experience
• Research Interests:
  • Graphic Medicine
  • Wellness
Tara Cataldo
– Marston Science Library Collections Coordinator
– Biological Sciences Liaison Librarian

Bio:

• MLS
• Former roles:
  • Veterinary Medicine Librarian
  • Biological Sciences Coordinator
• 20 years collections experience
• Research Interests:
  • Electronic resource usage
  • Identification and credibility of digital information
Trey Shelton

– Chair, Acquisitions & Collections Services
– Co-Selector for Library/Information Science Fund

Bio:

• MLIS
• Former Roles:
  • E-Resources Librarian
  • Acquisitions Manager
• 8 years collections experience
• Research Interests:
  • Acquisitions/Collections Assessment
  • PDA/DDA/EBA/PoD
  • OER/Affordability
Patrick Reakes

– Senior Associate Dean, Scholarly Resources & Services

Bio:

• MSLS
• Former roles:
  • Business Librarian
  • Law Librarian
  • Mass Comm Librarian
  • Department Chair
• 20 years collections experience
• Research Interests:
  • Newspaper digitization
  • Impact of technology on newspaper research and preservation
  • Leadership strategies
Basics for Success...

...an administrative perspective.
What you *DO* need:

• Knowledge of the discipline(s) you support
• Effective organizational systems/processes
  • training, policies/procedures, effective organizational structure, communication flow, etc.
• Context that comes from being engaged in your other liaison duties
• Communication!
  • With your fellow collection managers, faculty in the discipline(s) you support, fellow librarians, acquisitions and collections support personnel
• A mentor
What you DON’T (necessarily) need:

• An MLS/MLIS or equivalent degree
• Prior collections experience
Evolving Collections...

...evolving librarian roles.
Not Your Father’s Selection Process

• Electronic resources now make up approx. 85% of total materials purchases for most institutions
• Big deals and large multi-disciplinary databases dominate the landscape
• Shrinking (or already shrunken) firm order/book budgets can mean more importance is placed on how those funds are spent
• Variations in approach based on discipline
• UDA/PDA/DDA models can be highly effective
  • ...but should be used in conjunction with traditional selection by a collection manager
Increased Centralization

• Acquisitions is now Acquisitions & Collections Services
• Selector Librarians are now Liaison Librarians
  • Direct control over relatively small amount of discretionary funds
• Advent of PDA/DDA/EBA/Etc...
Growing into your role...

...without pushing daisies.
Non-MLIS Perspective

• Academic perspective
• Learned selector’s role right away
• Inherited predecessor’s role as Humanities Collections Coordinator
• Learning through listening and asking questions
• “Mentored” by Social Sciences Collections Coordinator
• Now leading selectors meetings for my department
Accidental Apprentice

• Had two years of “training” under previous collections manager before her retirement

• Realized quickly there was a great deal of institutional knowledge that was not passed down
  • Subscriptions that weren’t under library umbrella
  • No centralized system for notifications

• Current state of HSC Library Collections:
  • Overpacked subscription list where renewal increases mean cancellations
  • Many years of NO monograph budget, reflected by an outdated collection
Training New Librarians

• Collections knowledge is built with on-the-job training
• A Ph.D./non-MLIS and a just-graduated MLIS start on the same page
• A hands-on project is the best training ground
  • Weeding
  • Gifts review
  • Use Assessment
• Public service training is condensed, intense, and takes 1-2 months
• Collections training is broad, project driven, and takes 12-18 months
Training New Librarians

✓ Acquisitions overview/timeline
✓ Budgets
✓ Ordering books – e-book options
✓ New journal/database requests protocol (Wish List)
✓ Shared resources
✓ Using endowments
✓ Troubleshooting
✓ Gifts policies and protocols
✓ Reports and usage statistics
Modern Collection Management...

...a few approaches.
Independent Selectors

• 13 selectors, each with their own set of budgets
  • 2 Collections Coordinators – Humanities and Social Sciences/Business
• Endowment funds and large or collaborative purchases handled by coordinators
• Department-wide selectors meeting once a month
  • Discussing procedures and current issues
  • Reminders and refreshers
  • Making collective decisions
  • Coordinating with Stacks, Cataloging, Acquisitions
Extreme Democracy

• Every decision about budget allocations decided unanimously by all selectors (or at least discussed to a majority)
• Every major increased renewal notice reviewed by all selectors; cancellations approved by all selectors

Pros:
• Every selector is aware of and contributing to collection decisions

Cons:
• Takes longer to reach consensus
Centralized Oversight

• 12 Librarians & 3 Funds
  • Smaller pots
  • Interdisciplinary research

• Maximizing effort
  • Collections coordinator – 40-50% of position in collections
  • Subject specialists – 5-10% of position in collections

• Hive mind
  • Collection projects
  • Who is the queen bee?
Connecting...

...and communicating
Working with Administration

• Keep in mind that admin has a bigger picture view
  • Where the collections fall within the overall budget
  • Utilize endowments

• Competing priorities!

• Chain of Command
  • There’s a reason why it works...
Working with Coordinators

• Inherently collaborative
  • Importance of two-way communication
• Refining systems and processes
• Providing training and support
• Establishing roles, expectations, and boundaries
Working with Acquisitions

• Who is who in Acquisitions
  • Organizational hierarchy
  • Who is appropriate to contact for what?

• What questions are Acquisition questions (and which are not)?

• How not to repeat questions/answers
  • Useful handouts and instructions (with screenshots!)
  • LibGuides
Managing Vendor Relations

...who’s talking to whom?
Internal Coordination

• Who talks to vendors when (and under what circumstances)
• Who handles what issues
• What is appropriate to communicate to vendors
• What is appropriate to communicate to stakeholders
Positive Vendor Relations

- It’s a partnership, but libraries are still the customer
- It’s OK to say “No”
- Communicate early and quickly
- Setting clear expectations and boundaries
- You won’t get what you don’t ask for
Discussion Questions

...exchanging ideas.
Q1

Did your MLIS prepare you for your role as it concerns collections? How or how not?

OR

If you come from a non-MLIS degree, how did you learn about collections?
What are your tips and tricks for learning more about collections issues?
Q3

Other questions?
Thank you!

- Ariel Pomputius – apomputius@ufl.edu
- Megan Daly – mmdaly@ufl.edu
- Trey Shelton – tshelton@ufl.edu
- Tara Cataldo – ttobin@ufl.edu
- Patrick Reakes – gtrsr96@ufl.edu