

The RACC Library Collection Development Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the library staff and the College community when selecting and deselecting resources for the library collection. It covers the selection, acquisition, processing, housing, weeding, retention, preservation, and discarding of all types of library materials with reference to specified levels of collection depth.

The Library Environment

Reading Area Community College (RACC) located in the City of Reading, Berks County, is an open-access, 2-year institution that provides career and transfer associate degrees, credit and non-credit industry certificates and basic literacy. RACC's student population reflects the dramatic shift in the region's demography of the last decade from a largely homogeneous, traditional community to a culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged community. Today, 67% of Reading residents identify as Hispanic, and over half speak a primary language other than English. The average income for Reading residents is half that of county residents, and the percentage of residents below the poverty level is triple that of the county. A large portion of RACC's students are of non-traditional age with the majority being women. Sixty percent are low-income, forty percent are first generation, and over half are minorities.

The College plays an important part in the business community as well. The Schmidt Training and Technology Center provides training in senior leadership, manufacturing technology, information technology, workplace readiness and workplace literacy. RACC also partners with other community organizations to enhance the economic vitality of the city and county.

The RACC Library partners with most of the Berks County public libraries and share a common catalog and integrated library system. Because the County of Berks provides a delivery system for member libraries, RACC students, staff, and faculty have access to most of the half-million items contained in the collections of the local public libraries.

The Current Collection

There are approximately 30,000 physical items in the collection of The RACC Library, which includes about 20,000 books, 10,000 films, and 25 print periodicals. The library provides online databases and streaming services which provide access to thousands of full-text periodicals, ebooks, music, and films. In addition, the common Berks County library card provides access to approximately half-million physical items in the Berks public libraries as well as ebooks and streaming media. The library has several special collections which support the curricula, including the College Archives and a children's book collection.

Selection Responsibility

The collection development process is best achieved through a cooperative effort of teaching and librarian faculty. Teaching faculty are recognized as experts in their respective disciplines. The RACC Library actively solicits faculty recommendations and relies on faculty judgments to address the adequacy of collections in supporting the curricula.

All College students, staff, and faculty are invited to make purchase recommendations. There is an online form to make it easy to recommend purchases.

The library staff, working within budgetary limits, are responsible for the development of a strong basic collection. In addition, the library staff are responsible for the balance of the total collection. Because the library staff can best judge the balance of the total collection, final decisions concerning acquisitions rest with them. The Dean of Library Services and Learning Resources has overall responsibility for building and maintaining a balanced, useful library collection.

Budget

The Dean of Library Services and Learning Resources maintains control of the library budget and does not assign annual allocations to subject areas or academic divisions. Thus, the library can maintain the necessary flexibility to meet unanticipated demands, such as new courses/programs or increased course enrollments, and take advantage of economical purchase opportunities. Divisions planning new courses or programs should meet with the Dean of Library Services and Learning Resources to determine the level of library support required for these courses or programs.

Acquisition Priorities

The library's priority is to provide a teaching and learning environment for the College community in support of the curricula. Materials and resources which will receive priority include

- those which are appropriate for the first two years of the undergraduate curricula which are offered by the College
- those providing current reference sources
- those supporting the professional development of the College's faculty and staff
- those supporting the College's non-credit class offerings
- those meeting the cultural and recreational needs of the College community

Evaluation criteria

As part of the library's planning for annual goals, each year the library staff selects specific areas of the collection to evaluate and develop. Items or resources for purchase will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- content which supports curricula
- appropriate content level
- expected longevity in collection
- authority and reputation of the author and publisher
- accuracy of the information
- strength of the existing collection in that discipline
- provision of varied viewpoints
- inclusion in standard bibliographies and indexes
- availability in another format
- availability at partnering Berks County public libraries as directed by the Board of Trustees Resolution E-91-4
- need for multiple copies because of heavy demand
- meeting the need of students with differing levels of ability and learning styles
- meeting the need of remote and online students
- pricing

Format of materials

The library will select items or resources in the following formats:

- Print books – For their greater durability, hardback editions are generally the preferred format. Trade paperbacks are purchased for topics which change rapidly, for multiple copies, or when a hardback is unavailable or the paperback is better value. The library does not bind trade paperbacks. Mass market paperbacks are bought only when that format is the only version available for a desired title.
- Ebooks – The library purchases ebooks for the general collection primarily through established interfaces. In addition, the library subscribes to online databases which contain versions of traditional reference sources such as general and subject encyclopedias, dictionaries, and handbooks as well as subjects in demand including literature and philosophy. The criteria for choosing online versions are the same as the print versions.
- Textbooks – Textbooks are selected when they provide a good, general introduction to a subject. The library does not purposely select textbooks used in a RACC course. Faculty may place their own copies on reserve in the library. Workbooks and study guides are not purchased.
- Fiction – The library purchases bestseller fiction if there is demonstrated demand for the author from the RACC community. The library's ebook collection and our partnership with the Berks County Public Libraries provides the bulk of available fiction.
- Print Periodicals – The library subscribes to a limited number of popular magazines and local newspapers. If library statistics show little or no use of a print periodical, it will be considered for cancellation. Journals are no longer collected in print format.

- Online periodical databases– The library subscribes to online databases for access to most of its magazines, newspapers, and journals. The criteria for choosing online periodical databases are the same as for other library materials. The library subscribes to selected streaming databases for access to films and leisure reading and viewing demands. Databases must be able to be used remotely.
- Microforms –The library no longer acquires microforms.
- Non-English language materials – The library collects non-English language instructional materials, but it does not collect foreign language fiction or non-fiction unless the items support a specific course. The library strives to collect feature films in languages other than English if they have English subtitles except for operas.
- Government documents – The College collects government documents when they meet the same criteria as other library materials and includes them in the appropriate library collection. The Reading Public Library, a RACC Library partner, is the local federal and state depository library.
- Non-print media – The library considers non-print media an integral part of the overall collection but does not collect physical formats except for DVDs and Blu-rays. The library subscribes to streaming media services for access to most non-print media.
- Library of Things – the library acquires passes that offer free admission for patrons from Berks County and regional venues such as museums and sanctuaries. In addition, the library collects physical items that relate to the College curriculum or enhance the student experience based on student, staff, and faculty input and demand.
- Replacements – The library does not automatically replace items in the collection because of loss or damage. Each item is reconsidered individually based on demand, the availability of more recent publications, or other materials on the subject.
- Other materials – Art works, globes, and other similar items may be purchased to enhance the library collection and environment and that celebrate the diversity of the community.

Collection Maintenance

To keep the collection viable and useful, an active and continuing program of weeding will be maintained. Weeding, or the removal of obsolete, damaged, unneeded materials, is an integral part of the total effort to develop the library collection. The weeding process is as important to the library collection as the acquisition process.

Weeding Criteria

There are many criteria to consider when deciding whether to discard an item from the library collection. Weeding will not be done solely based on circulation statistics.

Criteria to be considered include:

- outdated or inaccurate information
- damage which cannot be repaired
- multiple copies of seldom-used titles
- print periodicals not heavily used
- non-print formats replaced by newer formats unless demand still exists
- materials too juvenile or too advanced for the College community
- older editions which are superseded by newer editions.
- items which are considered classics (a book or film accepted as being exemplary or particularly noteworthy by a field or culture) will not be weeded
- items in health-related subjects are weeded if they are older than five years unless the item is the latest edition available and still has useful information or is a classic work
- weeding shall not have the effect of biasing the collection in favor of one viewpoint
- consideration will be given to the amount of material in that subject area in the collection before weeding
- availability of similar materials in the Berks County Public Libraries

Gifts

The library accepts only unconditional donations having no special restrictions such as placement, treatment, or any other requirement. The library reserves the right to refuse gifts outright and to dispose of donated material according to its needs. The library does not return unwanted items to a donor. All donated materials will be reviewed by appropriate personnel and only those materials that meet the needs of the library and that are in good physical condition will be added to the collection. Library staff members are unable to estimate the value of any donation or provide a title list. Donors will be given an In-Kind Gift Form by the RACC Foundation. The College reserves the right to discard, give away, or sell any donated materials.

Intellectual Freedom

It is the responsibility of the library that all points of view relevant to the RACC mission are represented in the library collection.

Patrons with complaints about an item in the collection should be referred to the Dean of Library Services and Learning Resources, who will ask them to submit their concerns in writing. A complainant must read, listen to, or view the entire work in question before submitting a written complaint. The written complaint must include the name and

address of the complainant, a description of the work in question and the nature of the complaint.

An ad hoc committee consisting of library staff and faculty members will examine the item in question. Published reviews will be examined; the item will be read, listened to, or viewed individually by members of the committee. After reviewing the material, a decision will be made to retain or discard the item. Decisions will be based upon the collection development policy. The complainant will receive a written response which contains the decision of the committee from the Dean of Library Services and Learning Resources.

Policy Dissemination

This policy will appear on the library website.

REVISION SCHEDULE

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the library staff.

APPENDIX A

Reading Area Community College Board of Trustees
December 5, 1991

Resolution E-91-4

RESOLVED, That Reading Area Community College's Board of Trustees directs the College staff to work cooperatively with the County and City Library Systems to bring about common access of collections through inter-Library loans, to include each other's collections in their catalog systems, to have joint staff development programs, and consider joint ventures in computer systems and collection management programs.

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