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It's Time to Look That Gift Horse in the Mouth: Approaches to Managing Gifts

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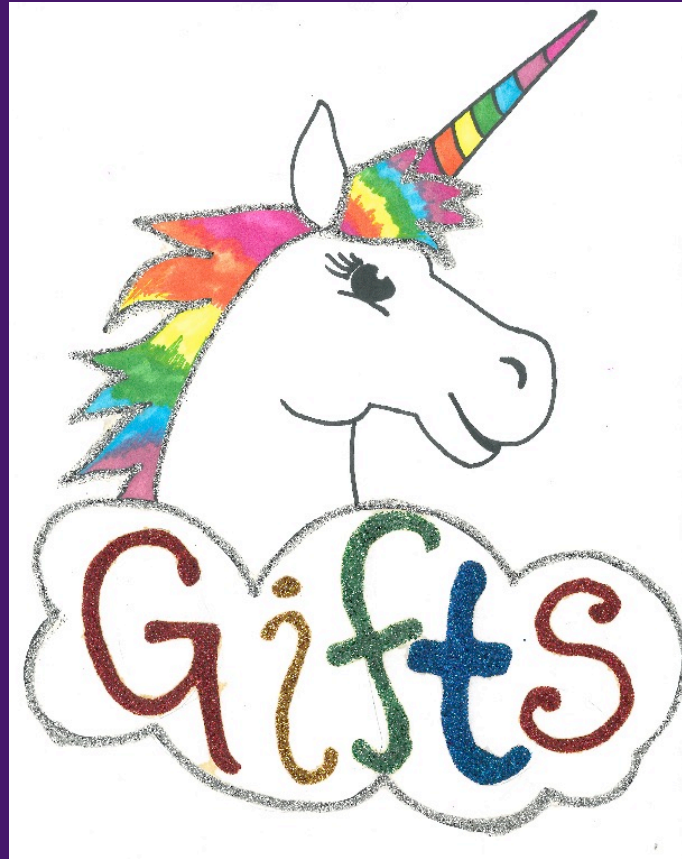


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It's Time to Look That Gift Horse in the Mouth: Approaches to Managing Gifts

Kathleen Spring, Linfield College

Charleston Conference, November 7, 2019



Policies



Policies

- Do you have an explicit gifts policy? If so, how restrictive is it, and how does your policy help or hinder your workflow?
- Are all your policies related to gifts explicitly stated, or do some exist only as part of internal documentation or practice?



Policies

- How regularly do you think a gift policy should be reviewed and revised?
- Do you have separate policies for special collections or archives? If so, what are the main differences in your policies?



Processes



Processes

- Who is responsible for gifts processing at your institution? What other responsibilities do they hold? Has staffing related to gifts changed in the last 5 years?
- How are you using students or volunteers in your gift processes?



Processes

- What type of a gifts backlog do you currently have? If you have a backlog, is it only for gifts that will be added, or does it include materials to be reviewed?
- Do you utilize any kind of screening process for potential donations? If so, what is involved?



Processes

- Do you review for scope first and then for value, or vice versa? How much time (if any) are you spending on reviewing for value?
- In your review, do you give any consideration to gifts as historical artifacts (e.g., marginalia, inscriptions, insertions)?



Processes

- How do you determine who has to “touch” a gift once it’s in the door?
- What do you do when you get a windfall donation?



Processes

- What tools have been most useful in helping you learn how to effectively assess gifts?
- Do your gifts go through standard acquisitions processing (from order to receipt)? If not, how does your process vary?



Processes

- Do you ever go on “hiatus” from gifts processing? If so, what factors influence that decision?
- What unique challenges accompany gifts processing at a multi-campus institution? Do you centralize processing?



Processes

- Do you maintain a wish list for gifts you'd like to acquire? If so, how much time do you spend maintaining this list?
- What space challenges, if any, do you face with regard to gifts?



Disposal



Disposal

- How do you dispose of unwanted gifts?
- How can we better educate potential donors about disposal as a necessary option in gifts processing?



Disposal

- Does willingness to aid in disposal of unwanted gifts (for instance, helping to carry items out to a recycling bin) have any negative impacts? Do you think it has the potential to contribute to a de-professionalization of the work of librarians?



Donor Relations



Donor Relations

- What are your methods for working with retiring faculty or staff?
- Do you recognize donors through your OPAC or discovery layer or by other means? If so, how (e.g., notes in catalog records, physical or virtual bookplates)?



Donor Relations

- Do you offer a way for donors to contribute funds to support processing costs for gifts?
- Do you offer a way for donors to sponsor the purchase of specific gifts for the collection (for instance, from a list of pre-selected titles)? How successful has this been for your library?



Statistics/Assessment



Statistics/Assessment

- How do you track gifts? Do you count them at all? Do you only count a subset (e.g., gifts actually added to the collection)?
- What types of gift stats do you keep? How have you been able to use them within the scope of your other collections work?



Statistics/Assessment

- What kinds of collections assessment have you conducted on gift materials? Are there barriers or roadblocks preventing you from doing this type of work?
- Is it worth it to track staff time spent on gifts processing? Why or why not?



Outreach



Outreach

- Do you actively market or advertise for gifts you'd like to acquire? If so, where and to whom are you marketing, and how do you determine criteria or set parameters for what you hope to collect?
- Do you use gift donations as outreach or storytelling opportunities to communicate your library's value?



Outreach

- What partnership opportunities on your campus have been especially fruitful in advancing gift donations? In which areas are you hoping to develop additional opportunities?



Additional Questions to Consider



Additional Questions to Consider

- What do you think you lack in terms of your ability to accept or process gifts?
- Are gifts seen (and treated) as an integral part of your acquisitions or collections duties? If not, what can be done to make that happen?



Additional Questions to Consider

- What are the costs (visible or hidden) of donations?
- Are you seeing any significant donations in electronic formats? What issues are specific to digital gifts that might be cause for concern?



Additional Questions to Consider

- Steve Johnson (2003) argues the function of gifts is fundamentally different from the function of purchased materials (purchases are meant to acquire materials as they're published, gifts are meant to acquire materials retrospectively) – do you agree? How might this notion shape your thinking in terms of policies, prioritization of gift work, the amount of time dedicated to gift work, etc.?

Johnson, S. (2003). Gifts: Are they worth it? In R. Bazirjian & V. Speck (Eds.), *Charleston Conference proceedings 2002* (119-124). Libraries Unlimited.



Slides & Resource List

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