

Abigail L. Pore. Creating Space for Flourishing: Student Representation and Needs in North Carolina Theological Library Collection Policies. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April 25, 2022. 43. Advisor: Melanie Feinberg

This paper primarily focuses on encouraging human flourishing in North Carolina's Christian theological libraries by observing how collections policies approach materials and theological education as a holistic experience. This holistic experience can be achieved by practitioners by emphasizing human dignity and justice when introducing popular and diverse materials to theological collections. It will be of particular importance to individuals interested in seeing how the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) changes to language around diversity in collections policies are interested as well as theological librarians looking to incorporate goals of human flourishing when assessing and developing their collections. Findings include a focus on students within the curriculum, intellectual diversity as the primary means of including demographic diversity in the collection, and a lack of popular materials in most policies. In light of these findings, this paper offers suggestions for beginning to view students in collections policies as holistic beings.

Headings:

Theological Libraries

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Collection Policies

Diversity

Popular Materials

CREATING SPACE FOR FLOURISHING: STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND
NEEDS IN NORTH CAROLINA THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY COLLECTION
POLICIES

by
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ABSTRACT

This paper primarily focuses on encouraging human flourishing in North Carolina's Christian theological libraries by observing how collections policies approach materials and theological education as a holistic experience. This holistic experience can be achieved by practitioners by emphasizing human dignity and justice when introducing popular and diverse materials to theological collections. It will be of particular importance to individuals interested in seeing how the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) changes to language around diversity in collections policies are interested as well as theological librarians looking to incorporate goals of human flourishing when assessing and developing their collections. Findings include a focus on students within the curriculum, intellectual diversity as the primary means of including demographic diversity in the collection, and a lack of popular materials in most policies. In light of these findings, this paper offers suggestions for beginning to view students in collections policies as holistic beings.

INTRODUCTION

Theological libraries, especially in academic contexts, have been known for an exclusive focus on preparing future clergy within a specific religious tradition or denomination. However, major shifts in theological education that have changed the opportunities and goals of students receiving theological education. Some of these shifts were reported in *Shifting Stacks*, the 75th Anniversary publication for what was known as the American Theological Library Association, now Atla. The introduction noted an increased likelihood of seminary graduates to receive part time ministry positions rather than full time positions (Estes & Kennedy Stephens, 2020). Career preparation is no longer the only goal, as many of these positions work in tandem with other streams of income or even felt vocations. Other changes include denominational interest and the increasing conversation between religions outside of the original mainline Protestant Christian members of Atla, and an increasing focus on Christian growth in the global South rather than the West. In response to these developments, Atla began the process of redefining theological librarianship and *Shifting Stacks* is one such endeavor to outline these changes. One of the highlighted issues is a desire to approach theological education and library services from a holistic perspective—offering resources for information literacy, academic excellence and/or career preparedness, and personal growth, rather than focusing on only one need: career preparedness (Rogers, 2020). Yet, there is also a developing need that is left out of *Shifting Stacks*: the need for diversity in the field and in

the stacks when it comes to demographics such as race as well as in represented religions in theological librarianship groups like Atla, and even diversity of thought (Estes & Kennedy Stephens, 2020).

The renewed focus on a holistic view of the student and on a need to affirm diversity and differences in scholars, views, and student experience is in conversation with a revival of thought on human flourishing. Human flourishing as a theory works within the fields of psychology, philosophy and ethics, and theology. The idea of flourishing dates to ancient philosophers such as Aristotle before it was adapted into the Christian imagination through prominent figures like Thomas Aquinas. Human flourishing within moral philosophy and moral theology can be treated as separate approaches to ethics, though they have some cross over. Psychology adopted this language of flourishing especially within the still-emerging field of positive psychology, which will be what this paper draws from the most.

This paper focuses on encouraging human flourishing in North Carolina's Christian theological libraries by observing how collections policies approach materials and theological education as a holistic experience. This holistic experience can be achieved by practitioners by emphasizing human dignity and justice when introducing popular and diverse materials to theological collections. It will be of particular importance to individuals interested in seeing how ATS changes to language around diversity in collections policies are interested as well as theological librarians looking to incorporate goals of human flourishing when assessing and developing their collections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When determining student needs and assessing the quality of their presentation in theological spaces, theories of human flourishing can offer a theoretical framework to work from. The cross-disciplinary nature of theories of human flourishing parallel well with the increasingly interdisciplinary experience of theological education (Rogers, 2020). In a volume of collected essays on human flourishing and moral theory in relationship entitled *Human Flourishing*, editors Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul made a case for the relevance of human flourishing to happiness and also virtue or justness towards others (Paul et al., 1999). Two of the essays focus on the political implications of human flourishing—not seeking to organize institutions to align with a neutral view of humanity and seeking universal social justice, or “the moral assessment of social institutions in terms of how they treat the persons affected by them” (Paul et al., 1999). While their ideas look at broader government, the editors of *Human Flourishing* still see institutions as places where these ideas could be embedded and protected in the organizational culture.

Especially in moral theory, human flourishing is popularly known to come from ancient philosophy, but in Christian theological education it is passed down through the interpretations of Thomas Aquinas. Stephen Theron’s *Thomas Aquinas on Virtue and Human Flourishing* brings the theological perspective of human flourishing to the contemporary resurgence. Once again, virtue and flourishing are associated with each other and justice is considered to be a way of helping others flourish and of encouraging

flourishing in one's own life (Theron, 2018). Theron describes Aquinas's overall approach to human flourishing and virtue ethics, saying:

“Nonetheless, to speak of the most natural of our inclinations is to concede that we have a plurality of inclinations, among which, however, there has to be a certain order, both because order itself is something to which we are clearly inclined and because that inclination to universal good (*bonum in communi*) which we discuss in the text, identifying it as an end with that end which in fact specifies the human will in its being as a will and indeed with God, is already sufficient to order the rest” (Theron, 2018).

Aquinas recognizes that humans are complex, but he argues that these complexities can be re-ordered toward the good, in his case, to the will of God. He also sees the human soul as having an inherent dignity that is uncovered by the individual through faith, but is always present and must be cared for by the self and by others (Theron, 2018). This leads to the idea of inherent human dignity in which each person should be cared for physically, emotionally, and even spiritually and that actions and living or creating systems outside of virtue can be soul-damaging especially when it neglects the dignity of others.

A recent shift in the use of human flourishing occurred in the development of positive psychology. Spearheaded by Martin E.P. Seligman, who directs the Penn Positive Psychology Center, the movement seeks to add human flourishing to the model of psychology. In an article introducing positive psychology Seligman hopes to use social and behavioral science to “articulate a vision of the good life that is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Seligman introduces this idea in response to the cultural problems and potential paths for the U.S., but also understands the importance of people having basic needs met for individual wellness and eventually group wellness. Positive psychology is a response to

the stricter medical model of psychology that developed after World War II, which Seligman recognizes as a model that created great strides in the understanding treatment of mental illnesses, yet stopped at getting people to their baseline, rather than helping them to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). He draws from humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, but structures his own theories a bit differently, as we see in his description of subjective, individual, and group wellness which has been synthesized into Table 1.

Table 1: Levels of well-being

Level	Emphasis	Types of Needs
Subjective	Valued Subjective Experiences	Past: well-being, contentment, satisfaction Future: hope, optimism Present: flow, happiness
Individual	Individual Traits	“Capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom”
Group	Civic Virtues & Institutions	“Responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic”

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

In positive psychology, the individual level houses many aspects of the person including but not limited to vocation, and institutions are partially responsible for growth within the collective. As Seligman updated his theory, he switched from positive psychology as a theory of happiness toward an approach as a theory of well-being. Positive psychology as a theory of well-being promotes a more holistic approach than simply emotional wellbeing and allows for aspects like mastery to come into play (Seligman, 2011). A

holistic approach to students and the materials they may need meets an individual need, while a focus on collecting underrepresented voices in theology meets a group need.

Human flourishing has also been applied to education, and with the emphasis on Christian education in the Christian divinity libraries that are the scope of this project, *Education for Human Flourishing: A Christian Perspective* by Paul D. Spears and Steven R. Loomis offer an insight into human flourishing within theological education. In their chapter on “Social Ethics and the Institution of Education,” the authors present an alternative to what they describe as “how decision making and leadership in education is often predicated on utility and self-interest” (Spears et.al, 2009). They argue instead for an approach that maximizes moral education. The rejection of pure, measured utility to do a job and not for moral formation presents a base for including popular materials and other materials that help to form students’ spiritual and moral minds. However, there is a push back against what the authors describe as pluralism or tolerance, including materials that challenge the moral formation that the institution itself is aiming towards. Instead, this paper sees diversity of thought and offering healthy challenges to the broader thought may lead to further flourishing and moral development rather than a degradation of this form of development.

When analyzing collection policies in an academic and theological context, standards from both the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and Association of Theological Schools (ATS) must be considered. In the ACRL, library collection policies should align with the “research and teaching missions of the institution” but have no mention of potential stakeholders, leaving it up to the

interpretation of the institution (ACRL, 2006). The ATS offers a more specific standard for what collection policies must do in order for the school to be ATS accredited:

“6.7 The library curates and organizes a coherent collection of resources sufficient in quality, quantity, currency, and depth to support the school’s courses and degree programs, to encourage research and exploration beyond the requirements of the academic program, and to enable interaction with a wide range of perspectives, including theological and cultural diversity and global voices.
6.8 The library has a collection development and access policy that is consistently used, regularly evaluated, and periodically updated to ensure it meets the current and future needs of the school” (ATS, 2020).

The ATS standards also focus on the institution and standard course requirements, but also create a space for moving outside of the academic program and for intentional cultivation of diverse voices. This implies a shift in the ATS toward meeting these growing student demands.

Student demands have shifted toward wanting acknowledgement and help towards flourishing, as ATLA’s new approaches have indicated. ATLA has also provided potential trajectories for collections development through a chapter in *Shifting Stacks* by Megan E. Welsh and Alexander Luis Odicino. Some of their development strategies were more traditional featuring accreditation standards from the ATS or automating certain parts of the development process, while others were more personalized to the specific school and their needs and the current culture of their school (Welsh & Odicino, 2020). They focused not on specific theological schools, but schools with religious library collections that may or may not serve the entire population. Because of that they found an average of 25 students or less in undergrad using the resources from their survey respondents, but an average of over 100 graduate students using the resources from their survey respondents (Welsh & Odicino, 2020). Many collections were described as sufficient for meeting library needs, but not for going beyond the basics and faculty

requests set the tone for development of most of the libraries in question, rather than student input (Welsh & Odicino, 2020). Diversity and popular materials aimed at student wellbeing did not appear to factor into their questions.

Many models of human flourishing within the theological context center around information literacy, spiritual formation, and/or physical place as hospitable ((Grenert, 2020; Gundry, 2015; Osinski, 2015), but *Shifting Stacks* offers a glimpse into these student demands and how Atla, which works closely with the ATS, would like to implement them at the library level. Christopher A. Roger's chapter on a holistic model for library engagement forms the basis for moving outside of simply assisting with classes or assignments within the library. Rogers draws on Augustine and the principles of "theological education as *transformation*" and the importance of "our human *will* and *commitment*" in staying the course and sticking to the vision of theological education for librarians, faculty, and students (Rogers, 2020). He is pushing back against the casual, unchallenged adoption of the professional model "which stressed the formation of ministers as professionals with the requisite skills and knowledge in the standard theological disciplines, as having been the prevailing pedagogical norm for more than a century" (Rogers, 2020). Instead, he proposes a holistic model that takes into account the major cultural changes taking place as well as the need for personal development in many spheres of wellness to sustain not only ministers but the theologians, scholars, and others who may require or be interested in a theological education. Even mentioning these other roles challenges the professional model of theological education being only for those whose goal is to go into ministry. Instead, the student population is recognized as more diverse in their goals and may need different kinds of materials to support these goals.

When it comes to popular materials, there is little to no research in the context of theological libraries. However, there has been a resurgence of research on popular materials in academic libraries that can be drawn from to create a context for this project. In their article “Don’t Call it a Comeback,” Elizabeth Brookbank, Anne-Marie Davis, and Lydia Harlan challenge the myth that popular materials truly disappeared when popular opinion shifted to a “traditional” academic approach to only have reference related materials available (Brookbank et.al., 2018). They argue that popular material collections never truly went away and that they were embraced for both practical, demand-based, and philosophical reasons which all lead to the idea that students are whole people and academic libraries have and should continue to reflect this in their collections (Brookbank et.al. 2018). Pauline Dewan went into more depth with these reasons in “Why Your Academic Library Needs a Popular Reading Collection Now More Than Ever.” Dewan points out that “reading for pleasure provides opportunities for the focused and sustained reading that students are doing with less frequency since the advent of the Internet” which connects to “cognitive development, verbal skills, and academic achievement” (Dewan, 2009). Dewan’s findings demonstrate that connecting to non-digital leisure provides a form of rest that improves performance in literacy and also revive an interest in reading overall. In this context, those skills would help to equip students for the reading-heavy careers of ministers and theologians as well as offer materials for personal development.

Within theological librarianship, there has been a push to recognize the racism in the pasts of both librarianship and theology as fields of study and work. Within *Shifting Stacks*, there was a realization that diversity within the field and within collections was

being left out due to a lack of related contributions, but there is a desire to emphasize the importance of diversity in this space. While working with the updated ACRL Framework in 2020, Anita Coleman found a crossover between the framework and anti-racist resources and presented these findings to ATLA. Her goal was to merge anti-racism literacy using tools like the Anti-Racism Digital Library and Thesaurus with current religious and theological (Coleman, 2020). Developing diversity-centered skills through other initiatives such as mentorship and therefore hiring and having representation of voices has also been proven to help students toward flourishing (Hartog et al., 2015). Overall, being able to see oneself represented and be understood helps the majority of people to flourish. One of the ways that theological libraries can represent and offer tools for understanding is through having diverse materials at the disposal of students. In the case of North Carolina Christian theological schools, diverse materials are materials written by scholars of color, of differing gender identity, of a different religion, of a prominent non-English language, and even of different denominations than the theological school's tradition.

Diverse materials have become widely agreed on as a need within academic libraries in the past decades, yet, there is a need to define what expectations are and how to assess collections and their diversity. Laurel Kristick's article "Diversity Literary Awards" offers a potential model. Looking particularly at bibliographies of awards for books by members of specific groups from people of color to individual identities to gender or sexual orientation-based groups, she compiled a list of potential titles to hold against the Oregon State University collections (Kristick, 2020). Similarly, Linda Salem used historical bibliographies in addition to other tools provided by Diverse

BookFinder's Collection Analysis Tool (DBF CAT) in assessing the picture book collection at San Diego University (Salem, 2021). Matthew P. Ciszek and Courtney L. Young used another collection analysis tool through WorldCat in addition to standard bibliographies and patron input through surveys in interviews (Ciszek & Young, 2010). Julia Proctor took on a different approach in comparing Penn State University's collection to its peer institutions, which was personalized to their benchmarking approach in their collections and their sharing between peer institutions (Proctor, 2020). While there are some similarities in approaches, one can see that there is not a standardized approach to collections assessment within academic libraries.

Theological libraries are experiencing a shift influenced by the long history of human flourishing and its theological and psychological expressions today. Because of this there is an increasing focus on how theological students are integrating the many parts of wellbeing: subjective, individual, and group within their education. Some solutions have been having more popular materials within theological library collections to allow for intellectual, emotional, and spiritual exploration outside of class work, focusing on the subjective and individual levels. Others have been having diverse perspectives represented in the collection, affirming the identities and subjective and individual wellbeing of minority students while also creating a better rounded educational environment that may hopefully impact the group wellbeing of the campus and its surrounding community.

METHODS

Research Questions

The leading questions for this study are:

- How do the collections policies at North Carolina theological schools incorporate student needs?
- Are popular resources prioritized in these institutions according to their collections policies?
- How do these institutions incorporate diverse materials into their collections policies?

Selecting Schools to Collect Policies From

When selecting schools for gathering collection policies, I first went to Atlanta because they list major consortiums on their site. The Carolina Theological Library Consortium (CTLIC) provided fifteen library names, but the CTLIC covers both North Carolina and South Carolina. Some libraries on the CTLIC list were connected to schools out of state with their physical locations in North Carolina, others were connected to a North Carolina or South Carolina school, but found in the other state, and one was in North Carolina, but was connected to a Bible Translation organization rather than a college, university or seminary. When eliminating from this list, I prioritized the physical location of the library (North Carolina only) and a connection to a college, university, or seminary associated with the library and their services. After using these criteria, I was left with twelve schools.

Next, I gathered the ATS accredited schools from the ATS geographic membership list on their website. While I am relying on ATS accreditation standards as a standard for student needs in collections and collection policies, I am not requiring all schools that I am analyzing to be ATS accredited. There were six schools on this list, which were required to be ATS members and also undergo the ATS accreditation process. Three schools were already added from the CTLC list, so adding the other three brought the total of schools with policies to analyze up to fifteen.

Gathering Collection Policies

When gathering collection policies from these schools, it's important to note that the schools that ended up meeting my criteria are private schools. I began with a cursory glance through their library and school websites for policies and attempted to location a collection policy. Three universities had their policies published in an easily accessible way (such as Wiggins Memorial Library), and others did not (such as Duke Divinity Library). When faced with the latter situation, I contacted the librarians most closely associated with collections according to the school's directory. Of the twelve schools that I reached out to, four were able to send in policies, two were in a revision stage in which sending a policy would not be useful, and six did not respond. One of the available policies, for Southeastern Baptist Seminary turned out to be focused on a specific archival collection and was left out of my later analysis due to this reason. The remaining schools represented were Campbell University, Carolina University, Gardner-Webb University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Southern Evangelical Seminary, and Union Presbyterian Seminary.

Institutional Research

After receiving the final count, I determined to do some research on the institutions presented and how the logistics and history of the institution may impact their collections. As mentioned under Gathering Policies, some of the schools pulled from the lists mentioned in the selection section are not divinity school/seminary specific. In these cases, they may have a more general library policy that would also apply to their theological library, or they may have a specific theological collections library policy. In both instances, it is assumed that the students using this collection are both undergraduate and graduate students and not all students using the collection are in a theological education program. Some schools are also part of a multi-campus institution and the interaction between campuses and how holes are filled should be taken into account. Other concerns include denominational history of the institution, its age, and its location. Some schools may have a foundational collection that is over one hundred years old and it's possible that its collections look or prioritize new subjects over new materials about current subjects. Similarly, institutions in urban areas like Carolina University and Gordon-Conwell in Charlotte may have different areas of concern than institutions in more rural areas such as Campbell University

Analyzing Collection Policies

Once all the offered policies were gathered they were grouped by undergraduate included and graduate only, and addressed in alphabetical order. With two undergraduate universities represented of the six, this became a note of which had undergraduate students in case of implied changes, but all results were then grouped together again. On

the first round of reading through the collection policy, I highlighted any references to students, popular materials, and diversity or marginalized voices. The first round is meant to locate these references in order to go back to the specific language later. If none of those subjects are found, then that will factor into the analysis. If students are not mentioned, I checked for any mention of users or community members, but it cannot be fully assumed that this is referencing students or students alone.

Questions for Round One

- Are there any overall themes or priorities holding this collection policy together?
- Who is responsible for collecting materials?
- Who is the primary concern when collecting materials?
- Do students appear in the text of the policy? If so, what is the specific language?
- Does student wellness or popular materials appear in the text of the policy? If so, what is the specific language?
- Does concern about diversity make its way into the policy through specific statements about inclusion/lack of exclusion due to demographic differences? If so, what is the specific language?
- Does concern about diversity makes its way into the policy through non-English, non-Hebrew, and non-Greek languages represented in the collection?

Once any initial observations and quotes are gathered, then I read through the policies again, giving special attention to the sections that were highlighted. Important aspects of this read through include connecting these sections to the overall mission of the policy and to each other if possible. I also investigated the connotations of the words chosen for the highlighted sections of the policy. When looking at connotations, the goal

was make sure that the whole policy is considered. The amount of specific language about students, popular materials, and diversity as well as where it appears and the specificity of the policy when it comes to these three areas will be of particular importance.

Questions for Round Two

- How do the passages referencing students contribute to the overall priorities of this collection policy?
- How do the passages referencing student wellness and/or popular materials contribute to the overall priorities of this collection policy?
- How do the passages referencing diversity contribute to the overall priorities of this collection policy?
- What does the language of the policy imply about users, students, or student needs? How detailed is the language?
- What does the language of the policy imply about the role of popular materials within the library? How detailed is the language?
- What does the language of the policy imply about diversity and marginalized voices in the collection? Are there specific groups that are considered to be marginalized in this particular library? How detailed is the language?

Comparing Results

After collecting the material and having a preliminary look at the content and implications of the collected collection policies, the language was compared to the other

policies in each demographic group. Concerns addressed, specificity, and proposed actions were the main priorities in the comparison.

When comparing concerns addressed, I asked the following questions of each policy: 1) How much room is given for each concern? 2) Is one concern given more room than others? 3) How does it compare to the room given in the other policies?

When looking at specificity, this is about the detail that the language surrounding the presented issues goes into. This will be more qualitative by nature. Questions to be answered are: 1) How does the language about this concern define the concern? 2) How will the concern be addressed? 3) Are there clear steps to address the concern or is it left up to interpretation?

If there are proposed actions, that would be determined in the specificity segment. From there, any proposed actions would be analyzed according to the following questions: 1) Who is responsible for the action? 2) How is the library held responsible for the action being done?

RESULTS

Students in Theological Library Collections Policies

Students appeared in the collections policies in a number of ways. In policies that included either general library policies or pieces from the general library policy such as a mission statement or purpose, language surrounded students was likely to appear.

Gordon-Conwell's statement connected more broadly to the university mission when addressing students: "The Gordon-Conwell curriculum is oriented toward graduate professional degrees designed to prepare its students for vocational Christian ministry in

church, world missions, and para-church contexts, as well as professional practice in fields related to counseling and mental health.” (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Libraries, 2014).

Many other policies referred to curriculum as the means of supporting students in the library collection. Union Presbyterian Seminary, for example, describes meeting the curriculum needs as “oriented toward graduate professional degrees designed to prepare students for vocational ministry in church and/or social and community settings and will provide support for faculty research and writing” (Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2022). Southern Evangelical Seminary describes curriculum in tandem with general information needs, citing “Jamison Library shall contribute to the achievement of the mission and goals of the Seminary by serving the curricular and information needs of the faculty, students, and staff in accordance with the mission of the Seminary” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022). Carolina University sees supporting students’ curricular needs as a way to “reflect the patron population, which are CU faculty, staff and students” (George M. Manuel Library, 2021). Campbell University’s policy goes so far as to mention specific degrees supported by the theological collection: “Bachelor of Art in Religion, Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry as well as Master of Divinity/Master of Business Administration, Master of Divinity/Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling, and Master of Divinity/Juris Doctor dual degrees. It also supports the Christian Studies requirements for the general college curriculum” (Campbell University). In many of these cases, students and faculty are both included in major users of the library and have some impact on the collections.

Garner-Webb University’s policy seems to come directly from student influence as their purpose for the policy cites “Feedback from students and faculty indicate an overall impression that our collection is old, outdated, and does not contain content that supports current research interest.”

Union Presbyterian Seminary also offers a description of their average student in the collections policy. Their average student “tend[s] to be second-career students who work full-time during the week and attend classes on Saturdays” (Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2022). The policy goes on to state the need that “the size and type of the print collection in Charlotte reflects the needs of the Charlotte curriculum and patrons,” with patrons being students. (Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2022).

Table 2: Quotes on Students in Collections Policies by Institution (abbreviated)

University	Quotes about Students
Camp. U.	“The collection supports the following degrees: Bachelor of Art in Religion, Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry as well as Master of Divinity / Master of Business Administration, Master of Divinity / Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling, and Master of Divinity / Juris Doctor dual degrees. It also supports the Christian Studies requirements for the general college curriculum. Inasmuch as possible given budgetary limitations, the collection provides support for the research needs of the faculty. Other patrons such as area ministers may also use the collection for a fee” (Campbell University).
Car. U.	“The library’s collections should reflect the patron population, which are CU faculty, staff and students. As such the collection has the following main objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the curricular needs of CU students • To support the research needs of faculty and doctoral students in particular” (George M. Manuel Library, 2021).
G.W.U.	“Feedback from students and faculty indicate an overall impression that our collection is old, outdated, and does not contain content that supports current research interest” (Gardner-Webb University, 2019).
G.C.T.S	“The Gordon-Conwell curriculum is oriented toward graduate professional degrees designed to prepare its students for vocational Christian ministry in church, world missions, and para-church contexts, as well as professional practice in fields related to counseling and mental health” (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Libraries, 2014).
S.E.S.	“Jamison Library shall contribute to the achievement of the mission and goals of the Seminary by serving the curricular and information needs of the faculty, students, and staff in accordance with the mission of the Seminary” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022). “ <i>The raison d’etre of the library is ministry to persons. [The] factual and objective nature of Christianity requires that books and other information resources be used for education, and that system and order be applied to information services. As an integral and essential part of the Seminary, the Library is a service-oriented agency existing to serve the needs of the Seminary community</i> ” (Southern Evangelical Seminary,

	2022).
	“9.1.1 Primary patrons The library exists primarily for meeting the information needs of SES students and faculty, including students enrolled in online studies. All Seminary employees, alumni and Board members have full library privileges” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022).
U.T.S.	“The Charlotte Library carries out this purpose in the context of part-time, non-residential students who live in and outside the Charlotte metro area. These students tend to be second-career students who work full-time during the week and attend classes on Saturdays. The size and type of the print collection in Charlotte reflects the needs of the Charlotte curriculum and patrons. The Charlotte library staff and patrons also benefit from having the Richmond collection, services, and staff to support greater library requirements” (Union Theological Seminary, 2022).
	“Resources will be purchased to support both the subject areas addressed by and the research methods employed by each of the Seminary’s degree programs. They will be oriented toward graduate professional degrees designed to prepare students for vocational ministry in church and/or social and community settings and will provide support for faculty research and writing” (Union Theological Seminary, 2022).

Diversity in Theological Library Collections Policies

Most of the collections policies collected referred to some form of diversity in thought, denomination, author’s demographic, or language within their collection. Only one school did not seem to provide an indicator of diversity in their policy, Gardner-Webb University, which focused more on the process of developing the collection than regulations for the items in the collection.

Beginning with demographic diversity, Campbell University cites “a broad spectrum of perspectives, including feminist, African-American, and Third World approaches in each major field of study, while providing substantial collections in the institution’s historical interests, such as Baptist studies. Each subject division will collect works related to women” (Campbell University). Southern Evangelical Seminary looks from a perspective of reasons not to exclude a work saying, “resources are not excluded because of the author’s origin, age, sex, background, or viewpoint. The library will actively pursue getting significant works in core areas including classic texts and texts in original languages” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022).

Another facet of demographic or cultural diversity is diversity of language and geography. All the institutions seem to primarily collect in English, but many offer a look at their range in their primary collection. Campbell University states that “Due to the need for English works or those readily available in English translation, the United States and Western Europe are emphasized” (Campbell University). Carolina University comes from the perspective of “languages studied at CU: English, Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, and Portuguese” as pertinent for collections (George M. Manuel Library, 2021).

Specific to theological libraries, many collections reference diversity within their denomination and the theology and extra-denominational materials they collect. For example, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary collects “a diversity of viewpoints related to biblical and theological subjects[; however,] the Seminary’s theological posture means that the libraries focus on evangelical Christian theology and practice. Each of the libraries, where possible, maintains membership in regional theological library consortia that provide access to other Christian theological traditions including Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and mainline Protestant,” allowing for more denominations to be represented (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Libraries, 2014). Union Presbyterian Seminary references an authorization to also collect United Methodist materials and expands into “materials related to African-American Christian traditions and curriculum resources produced by multiple denominations and faith traditions. Beyond these particular foci, the Library strives to provide resources that represent the wide spectrum of beliefs, theological perspectives and traditions to be found in the Christian community, past and present” (Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2022). Some collections policies even reference non-Christian materials such as Campbell University.

While outside of the initial scope of diversity in this paper, the most common diversity statement closely related to intellectual freedom and diversity of thought. Due to this commonness, it cannot be ignored. Campbell University cited the ALA guidelines regarding intellectual freedom and affirming their acceptance of these guidelines in their own policy. Southern Evangelical Seminary included two sides of intellectual freedom, stating that ““Jamison Library collections include a wide range of theological and philosophical viewpoints, some of which are critical of [their] own tenets” and “[they] make available for use, without excision or censorship, resources espousing a wide range of viewpoints” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022).

Table 3: Quotes on Diversity in Collections Policies by Institution (abbreviated)

University	Quotes about Diversity in Collection
Camp. U.	“Geographical: Due to the need for English works or those readily available in English translation, the United States and Western Europe are emphasized” (Campbell University).
	“Works on non-Christian religions are collected at a lesser level, although the major sacred texts of all major religions are acquired” (Campbell University).
	“The theological collection will represent a broad spectrum of perspectives, including feminist, African-American, and Third World approaches in each major field of study, while providing substantial collections in the institution’s historical interests, such as Baptist studies. Each subject division will collect works related to women” (Campbell University).
	“The Library supports fully Article II of the Library Bill of Rights, ‘Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.’ It also supports the ALA Interpretation of the above, ‘A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials in the languages in common use in the community which the library serves. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures’” (Campbell University).
Car. U.	“Language: Materials will be collected in the languages studied at CU: English, Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, and Portuguese” (George M. Manuel Library, 2021).
G.W.U.	N/A
G.C.T.S	“While the Gordon-Conwell libraries collect a diversity of viewpoints related to biblical and theological subjects, the Seminary’s theological posture means that the libraries focus on evangelical Christian theology and practice. Each of the libraries, where possible, maintains membership in regional theological library consortia that provide access to other Christian theological traditions including Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and mainline Protestant” (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Libraries, 2014).
	“English will be the principal modern language for the collection. Foreign language materials will include Bibles, original historical resources, significant reference materials, and materials necessary to support

	degree programs” (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Libraries, 2014).
S.E.S.	“Jamison Library collections include a wide range of theological and philosophical viewpoints, some of which are critical of our own tenets” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022).
	“Select, acquire, and make available a well-balanced collection in keeping with the philosophy and purposes of the Seminary” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022).
	“We make available for use, without excision or censorship, resources espousing a wide range of viewpoints. Resources are not excluded because of the author’s origin, age, sex, background, or viewpoint. The library will actively pursue getting significant works in core areas including classic texts and texts in original languages” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022).
U.T.S.	“Because Union Presbyterian Seminary is a Presbyterian institution, the Library seeks to maintain a strong collection of resources relating to the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions. UPSem is authorized by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church to prepare United Methodist candidates for ordination; consequently, the Library collects resources in the United Methodist tradition. The Library also collects materials related to African-American Christian traditions and curriculum resources produced by multiple denominations and faith traditions. Beyond these particular foci, the Library strives to provide resources that represent the wide spectrum of beliefs, theological perspectives and traditions to be found in the Christian community, past and present” (Union Theological Seminary, 2022).

Popular Materials in Theological Library Collections Policies

Popular materials was the least represented subject in the collections policies.

Only one school, Campbell University, included them in their policy saying:

“Popular and devotional works are collected more selectively as appropriate for the spiritual formation of theological students. Popular works in practical ministry areas are more actively collected than in other areas given the nature of the discipline.” (Campbell University).

DISCUSSION

Students in Theological Collections Policies

The appearance of students in collections policies through the inclusion of the mission statement either of the library, the institution, or both, were unsurprising. As the purpose of the institutions is to train up students in the particular denomination and religious tradition of the institution, their experience would understandably be a focal

point. Similarly, a focus on degree programs as the major indicator of collections continues to draw a bridge to the purpose of teaching and equipping students.

However, Southern Evangelical Seminary took the focus on students further by stating “the raise d’etre of the library is ministry to persons” (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022). This implies an elevation of library services as a ministerial opportunity and equal to the work that graduates would expect to be doing. From that inference, one could say that the library is also a model for students, as well as a minister and provider. This goes beyond the typical expectations of the relationship between students and their academic library. It also puts patrons, including students, in an honored position. Feedback from patrons may have more weight in a library that views their service as a ministry. Yet Southern Evangelical Seminary only mentions suggestions as part of the collection-building process in regard to faculty. So it appears that format and library privileges are the place where the ministry is carried out, not in selecting materials for the collection.

Another surprising aspect of the role of students in these policies was in Union Theological Seminary’s policy, which defined their students very specifically from the area they were living in, “in and outside the Charlotte metro area,” their schedules “work full-time during the week and attend classes on Saturday” and ambitions as “second-career students” (Union Theological Seminary, 2022). As Union Theological Seminary has multiple campuses, having specific information for each campus helps them to differentiate between the needs of their respective student populations. However, it also

offers an example of how theological libraries can improve their services: through creating a profile of their average students and embedding it in the collection policy and processes, creating a student-forward focus. Union Theological Seminary may have the added bonus of other collections and services to access resources, but their tight focus allows them to use those resources as a supplement for students outside of their normal student base or for rounding out thoughts. Most of their students are likely able to meet their informational needs with the resources available to them due to the narrow lens of the library being student-led rather than only faculty-led.

Some suggestions for theological libraries looking to expand their scope of student-focus in their collections policies include regularly assessing and writing out a model of the average student making use of the library resources, creating a process for student suggestions, and considering if the policy needs to better define the specific role collections play in the experience of students.

Union Theological Seminary offered an example of assessing and presenting a model of the average student, but this could also be in another document that the collection policy links to, or within the section on the library's purpose or patrons in general library policies. The goal is to have an idea of the general demographic, schedule, experiences, and needs of the institutional students. Narrowing one's focus helps to create tangible ways that the collection can support this population, such as if there are many online students, one may want to focus on digital resources rather than physical resources when collecting for the library or planning the collection budget. However, one should

use this model as a guide, not the only conception of students in the library to avoid neglecting minority populations or justifying biased behaviors.

Student suggestions seemed nonexistent in most policies, aside from Gardner-Webb's feedback on the outdated collections including student information. When it comes to making purchases, the major indicators are curriculum and faculty suggestions, which may supplement curricular materials or may be part of their personal research. Faculty may be empowered at these institutions to put in requests for the research projects of their students, but creating a form or avenue that's meant for student suggestions may streamline the process and allow the library to build trust and garner feedback from students based on what topics may be most requested and by allowing a new avenue of communication with students.

Overall, it is difficult to see how students are factored into most of the theological collection policies outside of being a patron with faculty, staff, other ministers, and even alumni. While all patrons should be valued in the collection policy, highlighting student roles may help to show students the value that the library and its collections bring to them outside of being a space to study in or where they can get an article for a paper. By creating a place for students in the collection policy, institutions are taking traditional library hospitality a step forward.

Diversity in Theological Collections Policies

As revealed in the results, there were four major ways that diversity was presented in collection policies:

- Specifying collecting within specific demographic groups such as by race or gender
- Specifying collecting non-English, non-Hebrew, and non-Greek languages and/or collecting materials outside of a Western geographic context
- Collecting for denominations outside of the institution's primary denomination, and collecting for intellectual diversity.

Overall, these concerns seemed to build toward a picture of the updated ATS guideline restated below:

“6.7 The library curates and organizes a coherent collection of resources sufficient in quality, quantity, currency, and depth to support the school's courses and degree programs, to encourage research and exploration beyond the requirements of the academic program, and to enable interaction with a wide range of perspectives, including theological and cultural diversity and global voices” (ATS, 2020).

The expectation going into this paper assumed that a primary focus within the policies would be on collecting in different demographic groups in response to the ATS guidelines, but in the policies received, there were little references to specifically collecting materials for and/or about a specific demographic group. Campbell University specifically included that “each subject division will collect works related to women”, and they included African American perspectives as part of the “broad spectrum” of their collection (Campbell University). However, African American approaches are treated more like a branch of thought within theology alongside feminism while “works related to women” appeared to be more of an integration of a specific demographic, women, into

the full collection. On the other hand, Union Theology Seminary “collects materials related to African-American Christian traditions,” which implies a mixture of both, the traditions seem to stand out within the collection, but are not limited to being an approach (Union Theological Seminary, 2022). This raises questions about the nature of diversity in theological libraries. To use their examples, is it enough to have an African American theology section? Is it more or less important to intentionally collect books written by African American authors embedded within the collection if both is not viable? What is the library’s responsibility to try for both? These are questions that must be explored further as discussion of diversity increases in theological librarianship.

Materials in languages outside of English and the two majorly taught languages for biblical translation, Hebrew and Greek, offer another way of integrating the diverse identities of students, especially those who speak English as a second language. Half of the represented schools made it clear that they collect in English: Campbell University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Carolina University. Carolina University stands out, however, because they include other languages so long as they are taught at Carolina University (George M. Manuel Library, 2021). Because Carolina University includes undergraduate students, there is likely influence from a foreign language department and this may not apply to theological materials. However, that cannot be decided without a survey of the collection, which is outside of the scope of this paper.

Because these institutions are all set within a context of a particular Christian denomination, looking at denominational and religious thought diversity was considered

as a facet of student well-being as it may round out student's theological education or provide support for students who are attending but may not be within that denomination or even Christian. Most institutions acknowledged or implied a mostly-Christian collection. Campbell University cited the inclusion of "sacred texts of all major religions" but not many texts to supplement the study of those sacred texts (Campbell University). On a denominational level, Union Theological Seminary's authorization to ordain and collect resources for United Methodist churches despite being Presbyterian shows a willingness to step outside of one's denomination to more ecumenically while still supporting the more specified approach to their students discussed above (Union Theological Seminary, 2022). Southern Evangelical Seminary did not specify that their "wide range of theological and philosophical viewpoints" were outside of the evangelical tradition, but because they did say that some of their materials may be "critical of our own tenets," we see a willingness to engage ideas outside of their denomination and that even challenge their denominational viewpoints (Southern Evangelical Seminary, 2022). This willingness to be challenged bodes well for students who may need to feel safe to question what is being taught to them or may be coming from traditions that don't agree with all the tenets of evangelical belief. Overall, the willingness to collect materials that may contradict or challenge the core beliefs of the institution offers an opportunity for collaboration and growth among students and their faith communities.

While extra-denominational materials do imply a level of intellectual diversity, the prominence of intellectual freedom and thought diversity in collections polices over

other kinds of diversity measures were surprising. Allowing for many opinions and thought expressions is another increasingly visible conversation in the academic sphere and will likely continue to be part of the conversation of theological librarianship.

However, statements of intellectual diversity that were common in these policies seemed more about saying that collections will not exclude an opinion because of their gender, race, background, etc., but did not seem concerned with including more viewpoints or creators that have been underrepresented in the canon of Christian theological literature.

Suggestions for including more diversity measures in collection policies are focused more on finding a balance between intellectual diversity, community needs, and active growth. Intellectual diversity is important and should continue to be protected in academic libraries, but it appears to be taking up the most space for diversity measures in this sample of library collections. A demographic-led action plan may be in order to intentionally collect materials created by women, racial minorities, and across different backgrounds and locations in multiple parts of the collection, like Campbell University's choice to look for women-related materials in all subject areas. While there may be more or less of a need for representation of populations by subject area, creating a plan to look into each subject area for potential gaps and identify the source of those gaps may be a helpful exercise in seeing where the collection and its development policy is at currently. As Atla has made clear, increasing diversity in collections is an area that requires more research and listening more to theological librarians of color that have been underrepresented. Seeking out these voices as a collection staff may help to inform better

practices to include in one's policy and must be done outside of the context of this paper, which is written from the dominant perspective in theological librarianship.

Popular Materials in Theological Collections Policies

As briefly mentioned in the results, popular materials were surprisingly not mentioned in all but one policy of the six available. Devotional works were identified as one of the forms of popular materials in Campbell University's policy, but it is possible that they are part of normal collections or curriculum at other schools, but only collected on that basis (Campbell University). Including popular and devotional materials outside of classroom use would help with the focus on students for many of the institutions which hope to shape them as people ready for ministry, not just as academics in the field. The beginning suggestion for bridging this gap is adding a popular material policy, making it either a section of the library or mixing in devotional materials with their relevant subject materials.

CONCLUSION

Theological librarianship has increasingly recognized the need to see students as holistic beings, but these changes are slow to take place in written policy. By assessing the collection policies of six North Carolina Christian theological libraries, text surrounding students, diversity, and popular materials have revealed some gaps between the goals of Atla and the ATS and current practices. By looking into the implications of students as mostly beneficiaries of curriculum materials and some stand-out examples of

students being specifically represented in the collection, one can begin to imagine a more student-focused policy that allows for increased hospitality in theological libraries. Similarly, by acknowledging the primacy of intellectual diversity in policy diversity statements, libraries can build on what is available and move into actionable steps to increase the demographic diversity within the collection. Finally, by acknowledging the lack of popular materials consideration, libraries can consider the role of devotional materials in forming the whole person of the student and consider collections that may support the student in and outside of their academic pursuits to better equip them for ministry.

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