

Don't Leave the Faculty at the Station: Introducing Faculty to Collection Development Grants

Don J. Welsh
College of William and Mary, djwels@wm.edu

Martha E. Higgins
College of William and Mary, mehiggins@wm.edu

Stephen D. Clark
College of William and Mary, sdclar@wm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/charleston>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

An indexed, print copy of the Proceedings is also available for purchase at:

<http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston>.

You may also be interested in the new series, Charleston Insights in Library, Archival, and Information Sciences. Find out more at: <http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston-insights-library-archival-and-information-sciences>.

Don J. Welsh, Martha E. Higgins, and Stephen D. Clark, "Don't Leave the Faculty at the Station: Introducing Faculty to Collection Development Grants" (2014). *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315567>

Don't Leave the Faculty at the Station: Introducing Faculty to Collection Development Grants

Don J. Welsh, Head of Research, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

Martha E. Higgins, Research Librarian, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

Stephen D. Clark, Collections Strategist, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

Abstract

In 2012, a collection analysis report was published outlining the results of a year-long study of the College of William and Mary Library collections comparing it to those of other peer institutions using OCLC's collection analysis software. As a means to address some of the deficiencies brought out in the report as well as provide outreach and curricular support, the library began to offer collection development grants to college faculty. This has been a fruitful experience to build collaborative efforts with faculty; to fill gaps in the library collections; enhance curricular and faculty research support; and to provide outreach to the faculty community through library liaisons.

Introduction

In 2012, Swem Library performed a collection analysis using the OCLC collection management software in regard to monographic and database holdings. This analysis showed where we were lacking in certain call numbers—foreign languages materials, non-US history, music, and several other areas.

At William and Mary, monograph acquisitions are normally done by both liaisons and faculty members using YBP's GOBI. The ratio of faculty/liaison workload varies by academic department depending on the people involved, their interests and expertise, and so on.

Of course, faculty focus changes with the retirement of some faculty, the arrival of new faculty, and the expansion of new and interdisciplinary programs. Swem has an endowment fund to purchase materials for new faculty but this is not always enough. Every year brings new faculty, new courses, and new degree programs such as Middle Eastern Studies and Latin American Studies. The new faculty also bring new research interests to support.

How Did We Decide to Start the Collection Development Grants?

For approximately the last 10 years, Swem library has had a flat collections budget. Of course, with

inflation and the increasing prices of monographs, this negatively affected our buying power.

However, in the 2013-2014 budget, an additional influx of money was given to the library from the College as requested from the Dean, as it was still part of her "honeymoon period," that was to be used to address any deficits mentioned in the final collection analysis report. One staff member was familiar with the collection grant concept and we began brainstorming and came up with several positive reasons to introduce the program:

1. Public Relations: Faculty needed to know that we wanted their input, that we were listening, and that we were willing to spend money to address their needs.
2. Outreach: The collection grant process was an excellent outreach opportunity for our liaisons.
3. Attempt to fill in gaps in the collection analysis report.
4. Curricular support for new classes: Many new classes are being offered, new faculty, new minors, and shifting faculty interests.
5. Support for faculty research.
6. Build collaborative relationships for the future.

To start with, an amount of \$50,000 was set aside with a maximum amount of \$3,000 per grant to

be used towards one time purchases. It was specified that these purchases were not to include journal subscriptions or databases with multiyear obligations.

Faculty and liaisons were to provide an itemized list of requested resources including prices, ISBN numbers when applicable, and ordering information. The faculty and liaisons were asked to write a brief proposal and answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the materials you wish the library to purchase and the program, course or research for which they are intended?
2. How essential are these materials to your achieving the goals of the program, course, or research for which they are intended?
3. How will these materials strengthen the collection or address a recognized area of deficiency?
4. How often will courses be taught? How many students could benefit?

During the process, we got numerous questions from faculty about what these funds could be used for items other than collections. One wanted to buy equipment such as a 3D printer, one wanted to use the funds for travel, one wanted to buy some software for personal use, etc. We refused all requests which did not benefit our collection.

How Did the Liaisons Promote These Grants to Faculty?

- A letter from our Dean was sent to all faculty through the Provost's office.
- Personal emails.
- Visits to their offices or meeting faculty for coffee.
- Main library website featured it as a story.
- Our university daily news digest (which goes to all faculty and staff).

- We developed a LibGuide with guidelines, forms, and the 2012 collection analysis report.

Collaboration between the faculty and the liaisons was varied:

- Searching for new books on the topic.
- Going through title list to check if we already owned it.
- Checking title lists for pricing and availability.
- Going through extensive bibliographies to search for what we did not own.
- Collaborate with other groups/departments on campus to get more information.

Review of Collection Grant Proposals

The Collections Advisory Committee designed a basic rubric to grade the proposals. We received 29 applications from 38 faculty members representing all different areas of the college. Our rubric was very basic: giving 1-10 scores based on the materials relevancy to courses or research, interdisciplinary in nature, and would the materials strengthen Swem Library's collections or address a recognized area of deficiency that was indicated in our collection analysis.

In total, we awarded more than \$70,000 in grants, with the average award being \$2,400. The committee decided that for this year alone, we had enough money to fund them all—this will not be the case in the future! Some of the proposals were:

- Gifted education materials.
- South Asia and Indian Ocean history.
- Tudor and Stuart English history.
- Frederick Wiseman documentary films.
- Byzantine studies.
- Musical scores.
- Sustainability inspired design materials.
- Caribbean diaspora.
- Asian cinema films.

- Polynesian archaeology.
- Chinese art scrolls.

One librarian submitted a proposal to increase our holdings of local Williamsburg history, which will be greatly appreciated by our many local historians and genealogists.

Budgetary Aspect of Collection Grants

As has been stated previously, with a boost in the library's materials budget, we felt as though we had enough flexibility in our materials budget to offer small grants to faculty for the enhancement of their research and classroom support, with the added plus of filling in some gaps of our collection as reflected in our recent collection analysis. We initially started out with the goal of awarding \$50,000 worth of grants with each grant totaling no more than \$3,000. In the end, we granted nearly \$70,000 in small grants to faculty. The grants which were awarded ranged from \$340 to \$4,000. The one grant which was over our "limit" of \$3,000 was one that was very popular with our administration when they heard about it, so we felt that it would behoove us politically to award it.

The grants ranged in format from books to DVDs to CDs to a microfilm collection (we asked the distributor if this collection was in line for digitization, and were told that it was not) to reproduction Chinese art prints and scrolls to a materials library collection (samples of different types of materials in the areas of design, architecture, packaging, etc.).

There were some challenges in this venture. They related to timing, pricing, the types of materials requested, and some miscellaneous vendor problems.

Timing. Dealing with faculty at any time can be dicey, but it is best not to try to interact with them right at the beginning of the semester or around exam time. The announcement of the grants was made in late October and the proposals were due on December 2. Yes, this was a short turn-around time, and we received some blow back on it. Proposals were reviewed about a week later by the library's Collections Advisory Committee and awards were made the middle of the month. A

real timing kerfuffle was getting the proposals to the Acquisitions Department at the same time that folks in that area were under the gun to place a sizable amount of orders and in the throes of a myriad reorganization meetings. Adding all of this up, not all of the requests in the proposals—around \$10,000 worth—were processed until the beginning of the new fiscal year. This year, all of the proposals which are given awards are going to the Acquisitions Department by the end of November for processing to begin.

There were also faculty who submitted grant proposals to support classes which they were teaching in the spring 2014 semester. Some material was able to be ordered and received in time for use in these classes.

Pricing. The pricing of items became problematic with some lists of items since the faculty members found much of their prices for their requests from Amazon.com. The library does a good deal of rush ordering from Amazon, but still is obligated to work with vendors with whom it has contracts. As a result of this, some of the grant ordering began to exceed the amount of funds which were awarded. In a few instances, where there was the possibility of over expending, it was minimal enough that it was allowed, but in other cases, there were negotiations between liaisons and faculty to cover the over expenditure with their departmental funds. As a result, we asked faculty to prioritize their requests so that once we reached their award, we would stop processing orders.

Materials. We ran into some interesting format obstacles. The first thing that we learned was that we needed to approve formats that were supported by the library. We had a situation with sound files which needed to be downloaded and then we were stuck with the question of how do curate and be able to distribute them. There was also the issue of licensing for these files, which needed to go through the College's Procurement Office. These two obstacles right then and there put a halt to the purchase of the sound files. As was mentioned earlier, we also approved the purchase of reproductions of Chinese art prints and scrolls. Arrangements were made ahead of time by the requesting faculty member and the liaison working with her to place these items in

our Special Collections Research Center for the special handling and viewing needs that they presented. Then, there is the issue of formats which are becoming obsolete. We doubt that we will be awarding grants anymore which involve the purchase of microforms.

There were also issues involved in the types of materials which were applied for. We had queries as to whether the grant could pay the cost of digitizing material, whether we could purchase a 3-D printer, and even though one of our guidelines was that items would be for one-time purchases, there was a request for a subscription for a limited amount of time.

Miscellaneous vendor problems. Dealing with third-party vendors associated with Amazon or Alibris turned out to be a nightmare. Some proved to be difficult when there were issues of non-receipt, but our credit card was billed anyway. Some of these vendors just wouldn't deal with us. Another problem was with an order for a group of DVDs from a foreign country. The price which we were given on the website for the items was very good, but the vendor wanted more than twice the purchase price of the DVDs in shipping charges. As it turned out, the faculty member who wanted these DVDs was taking a group of students to this country for a study trip this past summer. He volunteered to purchase the DVDs that he wanted, bring them home to us, and we then reimbursed him for the cost of the items.

Dealing with used and out-of-print materials can be a problem. Several proposals included used or out-of-print titles in their requests and by the time the proposals were approved and the Acquisitions Department attempted to purchase them, they were either sold and no longer available, or in some instances, the prices had gone up dramatically.

The result of going through this process once is that we learned several things to do and not to do with successive collection grant projects.

- Stand firm with original grant funding guidelines. Even though we could afford to go over expend awards a little in the

first year of the process, it can set a bad precedent, and we really needed to be more strict and tighter in applying the guidelines which we had set.

- Make sure to give all parties involved enough time to get their proposals together for submission and to process the requests to order and to pay for everything in the same fiscal cycle.
- Only award grants for materials that can be supported by the library. It can be very problematic purchasing material that cannot be technologically supported, curated, or handled in a manner that is appropriate for that material.
- Pricing for items requested needs to be accurate and not "Amazonized."
- Be ready to deal with proposals for material offered by vendors who use dubious pricing practices or those with whom it may be difficult to deal.
- Warn faculty ahead of time to schedule at least one semester ahead in making proposals to support specific classes in order to allow enough processing time to procure materials and have them ready for use.

Outcomes

This was a really positive collaborative experience for Swem Library. The liaisons received more faculty input from some departments than we had received in years. Faculty and liaisons were genuinely interested and excited about these new collections. Great relationships were formed between the librarians and the faculty, not only tied to the grants, but further partnerships in instruction and research as well as friendships.

Swem Library acquired some wonderful research materials that we may not have known about, or may not have known were wanted and needed. This was an excellent public relations program, and was definitely worth it. We just started our review process for our second year of collection development grants, and are looking forward to diversifying and building our collections.