

# Collection Development Policy

George Mason University Libraries

Revised April 8, 2025

## Purpose of the Policy

The Collection Development Policy identifies and communicates the long- and short-term collection goals and policies of the George Mason University Libraries. The Policy states the principles and guidelines to be followed by librarians in developing and maintaining balanced collections across disciplines. It also takes into account the mission and goals of the University while being responsive to the changing needs of a dynamic institution. When this policy refers to “collections,” it implies all library resources, whether owned, leased, borrowed, or open; physical or electronic. The Collection Development Policy will be reviewed periodically in order to ensure that its provisions continue to reflect the current requirements of academic programs, collection needs, and allocation of resources.

## University Profile

George Mason University is a public, comprehensive research university with an enrollment of 49,583 students (33,521 FTE<sup>1</sup>) and a residential student population of approximately 6,100<sup>2</sup>. The University’s main campus is located in Fairfax, Virginia, but the University also includes distributed campuses in Arlington and Prince William counties, as well as other locations throughout Northern Virginia and one campus in South Korea. Mason offers around 200 degree programs, including more than 130 at the Master’s and Doctoral levels<sup>3</sup>. The University mission is to serve as an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

## Libraries Profile

The University Libraries’ mission is to serve as both a repository of and digital portal to the wider universe of knowledge for the Mason community. The Libraries strive to foster innovation, originality, and imagination, providing expert consultations in the research process, actively teaching the effective and critical use of information, and disseminating research and scholarship through publishing endeavors.

The University Libraries are an integral part of Mason’s distributed campus system; as such, there are three distributed libraries: Fenwick Library in Fairfax, Mason Square Library in Arlington, and Mercer Library in Manassas. To ensure that patrons derive the maximum benefit from library resources, the Libraries’ collection is conceived of as a unified whole, with centers of distinctive strength at each of the Libraries’ locations and shared access to the collection for all members of the university. (In relation to physical collections, the University Libraries has a fourth location – at the Shared Collections Facility of the Washington Research Library Consortium, Upper Marlboro, MD.)

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<sup>1</sup> [Annualized FTE as reported to SCHEV](#), 2023-24 (most current numbers available).

<sup>2</sup> From the GMU website, [Campus Community](#), 2025 (most current number available).

<sup>3</sup> From the GMU website, [SCHEV Degree Inventory](#), 2024-25 (most current number available).

The Law Library, located at Mason's Law School in Arlington, is administered separately from the University Libraries. Electronic resources are shared between the two entities as permitted by licenses/contracts with publishers and/or vendors. Also, the Law Library is connected to the University Libraries programmatically in various other services and operational aspects.

### **Scope of Collections**

The primary goal of the University Libraries' collection is to meet the information and research needs of the Mason community, including supporting current curricular requirements and anticipating future areas of growth and demand.

The Libraries also serve to promote learning partnerships between Mason and other nearby communities.

#### *Fenwick Library*

Fenwick Library (on the Fairfax Campus) is the main research library for the University and contains the most diverse collection, covering all subject areas to at least a basic extent. Distinctive collections held at Fenwick include maps, microforms, theses and dissertations, U.S. and Virginia government documents, a curriculum and young adult collection, music materials (including reference resources, monographs, scores, media, and listening stations), and the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC). Fenwick Library also holds the majority of the Libraries' print periodicals for the last 25 years and the largest of the University Libraries' circulating collections, with an emphasis on upper division, graduate, and research titles.

#### *Mason Square Library/Mason Square Campus*

The Mason Square Library facilitates scholarship, research, and discovery for all academic programs and research centers located on the Mason Square campus, including the Schar School of Policy and Government, Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Graduate School of Education, Costello College of Business, College of Engineering and Computing, and programs in Arts Management, Economics, and continuing professional education. The collection focuses primarily on public policy, government, international relations, economics, conflict resolution, and peace studies. The Mason Square Library also houses the John N. Paden Nigerian/African Collection.

#### *Mercer Library/Science and Technology Campus*

Mercer Library, located in Prince William County, facilitates scholarship, research, and discovery for the Science and Technology Campus community. The collection includes a small reference collection and selection of print journals, as well as materials on recreation, health, tourism, education, biodefense, bioinformatics, computer science, and other subject areas as appropriate. Mercer Library currently houses the Libraries' pre-2010 criminology collection as well as a STEM Graphic Novels collection.

### **Collection Priorities**

The University Libraries' collection priorities will align, as much as possible, with University priorities, as outlined in the current Strategic Direction Document (2023 Version) and listed below.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.** Cultivate a high-quality experience that embodies the Mason values and promotes student success, well-being, collaboration, and a lasting connection.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: Expand the impact of Mason's research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.** Bolster the infrastructure and systems to support research, creativity, and collaboration
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3: Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.** Strengthen partnerships, alumni relations, and community building and engagement informed by Mason's research and pedagogical expertise.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4: Exemplify a university culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.** Live a culture of belonging and inclusion and address disparities to support the values of access, diversity, equity, and inclusion at Mason.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #5: Invest in faculty and staff success.** Ensure appropriate resources, processes, and technologies are in place to better support the faculty and staff experience.

### **Intellectual Freedom**

The University Libraries subscribes to the ALA policies on intellectual freedom as expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Freedom to Read Statement*. In its collections, the Libraries will attempt to present a broad spectrum of perspectives. The Libraries will not exclude materials because of the race, gender, nationality, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or social, cultural, or political views of the author or the content of the work. Library materials shall not be proscribed or removed from the Libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

### **Diversity**

The University Libraries commits to building world-class collections that reflect, serve, and are accessible to our users. The Libraries recognizes that our commitment to diversity requires intentional action to address any historic and ongoing exclusions.

Therefore, the Libraries will work to:

- Purposefully acquire works created by people and communities of diverse experiences and identities;
- Update approval plans and other selection workflows to include materials from independent, small, and local publishers, as well as publishers led and owned by members of marginalized communities and from the Global South;
- Provide resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities (and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Regulations);
- Identify and challenge exclusionary practices in academic publishing and collection development;
- Critically examine access restrictions, description, and location of materials in the collections to avoid *de facto* exclusion of historically overlooked materials and authors.

### **Selection Responsibilities**

The Head, Collections Strategy, coordinates the collections work of subject librarians and other selectors, who are responsible for building the collections in their areas of focus. A liaison system is in effect, with one selector acting as liaison to each academic department; these selectors are encouraged to work with faculty in their assigned academic departments to identify resources for acquisition. Additionally, subject librarians are divided into three subject teams to help coordinate and prioritize larger disciplinary resources: arts and humanities, social sciences, and STEM.

Subject librarians have primary responsibility for developing reference and periodicals collections within their assigned subject areas. The Head of each broad disciplinary team has responsibility for general reference and periodicals sources within their area, and for coordinating the development of their respective reference and periodicals collections.

Final decisions on purchases exceeding \$2,000 are made by the Head, Collections Strategy, the Associate University Librarian for Access and Resource Management, or the Dean of Libraries (University Librarian). Large purchases exceeding the budget of any particular subject area are coordinated centrally by the Head, Collections Strategy.

### **Collecting Methods**

Materials for the University Libraries are collected through a variety of means. These include:

- Approval plans. To ensure timely delivery of academic books from university presses and academic publishers, the Libraries have an approval plan. Subject librarians and Collections Strategy staff work together to oversee the maintenance and development of over sixty separate discipline-specific individual profiles, which cover the range of subject areas taught in the University's departments and institutes. Approval profiles include books and electronic notification slips and may include monographs in both print and electronic format.
- Faculty recommendations. Through the concerted efforts and collaboration of Subject Librarians with academic department liaisons and other faculty, department-specific library materials funds are spent acquiring materials specifically requested by faculty for research and/or instruction.
- Other user recommendations. Students, staff, and members of the community may suggest resources for acquisition by the University Libraries.
- Librarian selection. (See **Collecting Guidelines**, below.)
- Gifts and donations. (See **Appendix A: Gifts-in-Kind Policy**.)

### **Collecting Guidelines**

Library materials are selected according to the following general criteria:

- Quality of the material
- Scholarly level
- Relevance to curriculum
- Expectation of use
- Usability across multiple platforms (including mobile)
- Accessibility to users with disabilities
- Contribution to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our collections

Additional factors taken into account, regardless of resource or format, include:

- Currency of materials. The emphasis is on current materials, though retrospective collecting is pursued as appropriate to develop the depth of certain subject collections.
- Duplication. The Libraries generally purchase only a single copy of any item, except if the information needs of multiple campuses—or unusually high demand—warrant duplication.
- Language. Materials are collected primarily in English, though foreign language materials will be acquired as appropriate to support the increasingly global scope of the University.

#### *Subject-Specific Guidelines*

Subject-specific collection development policies are written by each subject librarian and refreshed on a regular basis. For more information, please contact the Head, Collections Strategy.

#### *Format-Specific Guidelines*

##### **Monograph Guidelines**

Specific considerations to take into account when selecting monographs include:

- Binding. Cloth is the preferred binding for monographs, though paperback monographs will be purchased if paper is the only format available, or if the price difference is substantial. Paperbacks may be sent to the bindery if use warrants. Loose-leaf or spiral-bound monographs are acquired only if the content is of high value and is not available in any other format. Pamphlets, booklets, and brochures are generally not collected.
- Imprints. The Libraries will only acquire one imprint if multiple imprints are available simultaneously; the U.S. edition is the preferred edition.
- Reprints. Reprints are purchased if the original edition is not available; facsimiles are usually not purchased. Periodical reprints (i.e. collections of journal articles published as monographs) may be purchased when the Libraries do not own the journal issues in question or if the selection covers a specific topic or subject area.
- Edition. Unabridged editions are preferred.
- Authorship. Whenever possible, at least one copy of each monograph written by a Mason faculty member will be acquired for the circulating collection.

Materials which are published once a year or less are considered ‘continuations.’

Continuations that are identified by a subject librarian as appropriate titles may be put on standing order to ensure that materials are acquired as soon as they are published, and that all volumes in a series are included. Materials that require only occasional updating should be firm ordered; subject librarians should determine which category is more appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

##### **Periodicals**

Periodicals are selected to support university programs, courses, teaching, and research. Subscriptions in all forms (print, microform, and electronic) are collected, though preference is given to electronic options with good provisions for access, discoverability,

accessibility (meeting the needs of users with disabilities), and content retention rights. Differences in content and cost among formats also play a role.

Suitability of subscriptions depends on factors such as usefulness for academic programs; professional reputation; language; indexing and abstracting; cost (including maintenance and inflation costs); percentage of department's fund already committed to subscriptions; and other local or regional holdings.

Each distributed library selects subscriptions to support programs and courses on its individual campus. Duplication within the system is avoided; if a print subscription is thought to be needed at more than one campus, subject librarians will confer with the Head, Collections Strategy.

### ***Media Guidelines***

See separate **Media Collection Development Policy**, **Streaming Media Guidelines**, and **Guidelines for Licensed Physical Resources and Hybrid P/E Resources** available from the Head, Collections Strategy upon request.

### ***Electronic Resources***

Electronic resources play a key role in supporting University growth in the area of online learning and in better meeting the needs and expectations of our users.

The same general selection criteria should be used for electronic resources as for resources in other formats (see **Collecting Guidelines**, above). Additionally, the following factors should be considered:

- multi- and/or inter-disciplinary appeal;
- significance of resource for the discipline;
- online learning needs within the discipline;
- improvement or enhancement of electronic resource over existing print materials;
- currency and relevancy of content;
- frequency of updates;
- extent and permanence of backfiles or availability of archival materials;
- ease of use;
- accessibility (meeting the needs of users with disabilities);
- availability of user support;
- availability of discounted pricing and/or increased support through consortial agreements;
- technical requirements and/or limitations; and availability of IP authentication (rather than password authentication).

General responsibility for selection of very expensive, multi-disciplinary, or general e-resources rests with the Head, Collections Strategy, in consultation and cooperation with the subject librarians and other selectors.

Subject librarians nominate electronic resources for potential purchase or subscription by submitting requests to the E-Resource Team, which is composed of members of the Collections Strategy Department and Resource Acquisition. The E-Team conducts an initial

investigation into resource pricing and technical requirements, after which a decision to purchase can be made by either the subject librarian or, for more expensive resources or new subscriptions, the Head, Collections Strategy. All nominated e-resources are carefully tracked through this process (from nomination through selection, licensing, and implementation) by Resource Acquisition and Collections Strategy staff. In some cases, a trial may be necessary to fully evaluate a prospective e-resource.

The Libraries will comply with existing copyright laws and promote copyright compliance among its users and staff. Additionally, licenses should include language that explicitly permits Fair Use of all resources by authorized users for educational, instructional, and research purposes. In keeping with the diverse and dynamic nature of the e-resources market and the changing needs of the Libraries and the University, this policy is designed to be flexible.

### ***Microform***

Due to its durability and compact storage, microform is the format of choice for certain categories of library materials that may not be available electronically, such as newspapers backfiles. Decisions to purchase microform material will be made by subject librarians in consultation with the Head of Resource Acquisitions and/or the Head, Collections Strategy.

Microform subscriptions will be maintained to replace paper copies of periodicals that regularly disappear, are mutilated, get worn out quickly through heavy use, are printed on paper that will deteriorate rapidly, or are issued in formats that are not receptive to binding.

The Libraries will acquire and maintain microform readers and printers in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of microform users.

## ***Special Kinds of Materials***

### ***Commonwealth of Virginia Curriculum Materials***

A state-approved collection of curriculum materials for teaching K-12 programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia that has been provided to the University by the Commonwealth is housed in Fenwick Library.

### ***Datasets and Text- and Data-Mining***

Datasets may be collected in consultation with the Head, Collections Strategy and the Director, Data & Digital Scholarship Services. For data that involves a physical component (e.g. CD-ROM, hard drive, etc.) see separate **Guidelines for Licensed Physical Resources and Hybrid P/E Resources** available from the Head, Collections Strategy upon request.

### ***Dissertations and Theses***

The Libraries are the depository for dissertations and theses produced by Mason students. The Libraries hosts the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS), in which digital dissertations and theses are deposited. Dissertations submitted in January 2013 or later are available in electronic format only; dissertations submitted between December 2007 and January 2013 may be available electronically or in print. Earlier dissertations are available in print through the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) and in the circulating collection.

Theses and dissertations not written at Mason are not generally collected. Electronic copies of theses and dissertations from 1997 forward are often available through the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Database. Other dissertations may be available in print through Interlibrary Loan or electronically through another institutional repository.

### ***Faculty Monographs***

The Libraries strives to collect one copy of every monograph authored by George Mason faculty and, on a case-by-case basis, staff. Titles are primarily acquired through an approval plan; they may also be purchased on request using a designated Faculty Authors fund. Titles are marked in the Libraries' catalog with a "George Mason Author Collection" note that is searchable.

### ***Gifts***

See **Appendix A: Gifts-in-Kind Policy.**

### ***Government Documents***

The Libraries have been a selective depository for United States Government Documents since 1960. The Government Documents Coordinator selects government documents, as do subject librarians in their subject specialties. The Libraries are also a full depository for Virginia State Documents and retain historic documents pertaining to the restoration, cleanup, and ongoing maintenance of the Potomac Bay. Historic emphasis for government documents was placed on the following subject areas: biodefense, biology, business, conflict resolution, economics, education, earth sciences, engineering, environmental sciences, fine arts, geography and cartography, history, information technology, nursing and health sciences, public policy, international affairs, criminology, sociology, social work, and statistics. In addition, in accordance with relevant government requirements, the Libraries historically collected materials to meet the needs of the constituents of the 11th U.S. Congressional District, which include federal employment, federal law, federal procurement, federal taxation, international trade, regional economics, and science and technology transfer.

As of October 2023, when the Government Publishing Office changed most Government publications to electronic only, the Libraries now select all available electronic resources regardless of subject area in coordination with the WRLC. Of the few titles still available in tangible format, the Libraries have selected six titles: United States Code, United States Reports, United States Statutes at Large, Constitution of the United States Analysis and Interpretation, Astronomical Almanac, and Nautical Almanac. The Libraries follow or exceed guidelines for access to all electronic government information as outlined in Depository Library Public Service Guidelines for Government Information in Electronic Formats and FDLP Internet Use Policy Guidelines. Any item withdrawn from the government documents collection must be cleared with the Government Documents Coordinator and with the Regional Depository Coordinator. Weeding complies with official guidelines as outlined in the Instructions to Depository Libraries.

### ***Open Access & Open Electronic Resource Guidelines***

Open Access (OA) resources and other open content will be added to the Libraries' collection based on the same criteria as commercially available resources (e.g. quality of



the material, scholarly level, relevance to the curriculum, and expectation of use). While major open resources (such as the Directory of Open Access Journals) may be identified by Collections Strategy and added to the collection centrally by Resource Acquisition, subject librarians are responsible for the development of robust open collections within their subject areas. Open resources will be added to the library catalog if discovery is not available through the discovery layer and/or the e-resource management system (ERMS).

### ***Reference Materials***

Reference materials selection is based on standard bibliographical guides and review sources. Criteria for selecting reference materials may vary depending on the needs of each distributed library but generally include usefulness for academic programs; current coverage, strengths, and weaknesses of existing collection; positive reviews; currency and timeliness; language; and price.

Works chosen for the Reference Collection at each distributed library – either print or electronic – should supply as much information as possible without duplication. As a general rule, only the latest edition of a reference work is shelved in the reference section. Older editions are transferred to the circulating collection or discarded.

Because it is a working collection of important, frequently consulted publications, periodic evaluation of the materials in the Reference Collection is important. This evaluation includes regular review of standing orders.

### ***Reserves***

The Reserves Collection at each campus is a temporary collection of materials obtained in a number of ways: received from faculty, purchased, or gathered from existing holdings. Reserves holdings are subject to limited loan periods to provide maximum access to students. Copyright law and licensing agreements may limit aspects of the service, such as the number of photocopies permitted or the volume of electronic material that may be provided.

In addition to general Course Reserves, the Libraries also provides reserve copies of textbooks required for Mason Core courses and other required undergraduate courses (see **Textbooks**, below).

### ***Scores***

The Libraries collect scholarly anthologies and collected editions of composers' works; study, full, and reference scores; as well as performance editions for orchestra, chorus, solo instruments, and chamber music. Operas, oratorios, and other dramatic works are collected in both full and vocal score.

### ***Special Collections Research Center Guidelines***

Materials such as manuscript collections, rare books, oral histories, university archival records, local histories, games, unpublished works, and other primary source materials are typically not collected for the general collection; instead, they are acquired by and housed in the SCRC. See **Appendix B: Special Collections Research Center Collection Development Policy**.

**Standards and Codes**

Standards and codes for engineering, IT, accounting, and other appropriate subjects are purchased for the collection, including revisions and reissues as needed. Any subject librarian can select these materials, though there is also a designated fund line for standards.

**Study Guides**

The online resource *Testing & Education Reference Center* (Gale) provides full-text of standard tests and study guides. Print study guides are purchased only if not included in the Gale product or if needed for Course Reserves.

**Textbooks**

Textbooks for Mason Core courses and courses required for undergraduate majors in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, conflict analysis, and business have been collected as part of the Libraries' TextSelect textbook reserve program, a program that is currently under review. TextSelect items are available on 2-hour reserve at the campus most relevant to the course. When no longer used by a course, TextSelect materials are incorporated into the circulating collection. Duplicate textbooks may be purchased for TextSelect if a course is taught on multiple campuses or if the book is not available on the appropriate campus. Other college-level textbooks will only be purchased for the collection if they constitute a unique source or serve a specific research purpose.

**Collection Assessment**

Subject librarians are responsible for ongoing assessment and maintenance of collections in their subject areas. This may include soliciting constituent feedback, monitoring usage, and other day-to-day and ad-hoc assessment projects. The Collections Strategy Department supports these assessment efforts by providing data and analysis as needed.

**Replacements**

Selection criteria for replacements are the same as criteria for new materials. Notice of materials worn out, or otherwise not serviceable will be sent to the Preservation Librarian for replacement consideration. The Collections Strategy Department will notify subject librarians of lost or missing items. Subject librarians may recommend titles for replacement.

**Deselection**

Deselection, also known as deaccessioning or weeding, is done on a continual basis as part of curating the Libraries' collection. It is the process to officially and permanently remove an item from a collection. This is done because the Libraries have a finite amount of space, and it is important for the collection to be relevant to the University's research and teaching needs. Examples of materials considered for deaccessioning include (but are not limited to) damaged items or superseded items. All materials are checked against any consortium print retention commitment and are also reviewed by subject librarians prior to deaccessioning. Materials are either donated to Better World Books or recycled following University guidelines.

**Preservation**

The Libraries endeavor to protect the physical integrity of materials in the collection through preservation measures, such as temperature, humidity, and dust control. In addition, appropriate means will be taken to preserve items through such means as conservation, repair, binding, reproduction, or acquisition of a duplicate copy.

### **Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery**

Given the diversity of published materials available for purchase and the inherent limitations of the library budget, the University Libraries have shifted from a traditional “own everything” mentality to the more pragmatic “own some things, get anything” approach. Interlibrary loan (ILL) and other forms of document delivery play a key role in providing as-needed access for our users to the wealth of materials outside the scope of what the Libraries can collect.

In addition to providing short-term access to needed materials, ILL and document delivery provide Collections Strategy with data on user needs, collection gaps, and other relevant information to support selection decisions.

### **Cooperative Collection Development**

Memberships in the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC), the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA), and other consortia provide Mason and its users with access to substantial and diverse collections at other institutions in the DC Metropolitan Area, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and beyond. In particular, intra-consortium loan policies provide access to monographs, while joint collecting of electronic resources provides access to bibliographic and full-text databases at substantial cost-savings. The availability of materials in consortia will be considered when infrequently used materials are suggested for purchase. The WRLC storage center provides a space where little-used but still-valuable portions of the Mason collection can be housed off-site.

## **Appendix A: Gifts in Kind Policy**

Due to space concerns as well as limited staffing resources available to add materials to our collections, the George Mason University Libraries only welcome gifts of books, manuscripts, music, and other research materials in rare circumstances. The following guidelines are offered to assist donors. Based upon these criteria, the Libraries retain the right to accept or decline all potential gifts.

### **General Guidelines**

Due to the high costs of managing the gift process, the Libraries’ goal in accepting gifts is to acquire only materials which are highly relevant to the university’s needs. All potential gifts will be evaluated by subject expert librarians in accordance with the collection development policies of the George Mason University Libraries. Potential gift items will meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Support the University’s current and evolving curriculum and academic disciplines;
- Sustain the research needs of faculty and students;
- Augment collections of depth;

- Enhance the unique and noteworthy holdings of George Mason University Libraries special collections.

### **Types of Donations that are Generally Considered Inappropriate**

- Materials that are not in good physical condition, e.g., contain mold or mildew, tears, stains, water damage or are in any way impaired in a manner that results in limited or restricted use. These are potentially harmful to existing collections.
- Large museum type artifacts. Such items cannot be accommodated by the Libraries.
- Materials that require significant restoration or conservation or unique storage, unless accompanied by appropriate funding.
- Gifts on which a donor places restrictions that will negatively affect access to and use of the materials.
- Textbooks.
- Popular trade paperbacks.
- Single issues of periodicals or broken runs of bound periodicals, unless they fill gaps in our current collection.
- Outdated, superseded titles.
- Outdated media formats such as LPs, cassettes, etc.
- Materials which duplicate current holdings.
- Photo copies/facsimiles of original materials.

### **Process for Accepting Gifts**

The University Librarian ensures adherence to George Mason University's policy on accepting gifts-in-kind. Only (1) the Dean of Libraries, (2) the Libraries' Director of Development, (3) the Head of the Special Collections Research Center, or (4) the Head, Collections Strategy can accept collections on behalf of the University Libraries.

Donors will provide a title list and description of any gift before it can be considered. In the absence of such documentation, the Libraries may require on-site evaluation of the collection by subject area specialist or other library staff before a determination whether to accept can be made. These expert individuals will evaluate potential gifts for appropriateness to the collections.

Gifts delivered without prior arrangement or contact with the Libraries' acquisitions and gifts staff or staff listed above will not be accepted or acknowledged.

Potential donors of materials should contact the Director of Development for the University Libraries.

## **Disposition of Gift Materials**

With the exception of some archival materials, all gifts added to the collection will be cataloged and listed in the Libraries' online public catalog. Archival materials are principally accessible through electronic finding aids as published by the University Libraries.

Since all gift materials that are added to the general collections are shelved in the appropriate subject classification, the Library cannot maintain separate named collections, unless by prior agreement by authority of the University Librarian, though appropriate donor recognition language may be placed within the online catalog record in certain instances.

The University Libraries retain the right to accept or decline all potential gifts. Not all donated items will be added to the collections. Gifts that are not added to the collection may be disposed of in one of the following ways:

- Sold to a book dealer.
- Donated to charitable organizations focusing on book donations.
- Recycled.

Only in special circumstances, and if arranged in advance, may items be returned to donor.

## **Donor Information**

Under current tax law for gifts over \$500 but less than \$5,000, donors must file a completed [IRS Form 8283](#) which must be signed by the George Mason University Foundation. Gifts exceeding \$5,000 require a [formal appraisal](#), which must be secured by the donor, to accompany filing IRS Form 8283. The value of the gift should be determined by the donor prior to transfer to the Libraries. If possible, a copy of the appraisal should also be submitted to the Libraries.

In order for the Libraries to accept gifts under \$500, donors must complete a form stating the value of the donated materials is under \$500.

Should the Libraries decide to sell a donated item valued over \$500 within three years of receipt, the University must file [IRS Form 8282](#), which discloses the actual proceeds from the sale of the gift and restates the gift value indicated by the donor on form 8283. The IRS uses this to determine if the gift value claimed by the donor was reasonable

IRS law prohibits librarians and staff from appraising materials or the Libraries paying for or arranging for appraisals if the donor is seeking a tax benefit. Pertinent information is available in [IRS Publication No. 561 "Determining the Value of Donated Property."](#) Because tax laws change frequently, it is advisable that donors seek professional tax or estate counsel prior to making a gift.

Donors who offer materials or collections that the George Mason University Libraries cannot accept may be referred to other libraries or charitable book donation programs.

Financial support is crucial for our collections and services; it enables us to preserve and thoroughly catalog the materials we collect, making them accessible to users, and helps us better meet the needs of researchers. Although monetary donations are never a requirement for the acceptance of a collection, donors who are able to assist the Libraries by making contributions toward the cataloging and conservation of their gift would be providing much needed assistance and are encouraged to do so.

## **Appendix B: Special Collections Research Center Collection Development Policy**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) acquires, preserves, and provides access to original manuscripts, rare books, and other primary source materials relating to the University's teaching and research mission. The SCRC also manages the non-current and archival records of George Mason University, including theses and dissertations. Through the Oral History Program, the SCRC creates audiovisual documentary resources related to the University and local community in support of collecting priorities.

We promote the use of our collections through outreach to faculty and students across campuses for use in instruction and research. The SCRC also has a robust physical exhibit program, and identifies relevant collections for digital access. Special Collections makes its collections accessible to a broad spectrum of users, including the George Mason community (faculty, students, staff, and alumni), scholarly researchers from other institutions (national and international), K-12 teachers and students, and the general public, particularly the citizens of Virginia.

### **Additions to the Collections**

The SCRC acquires material through

- donations, solicited and unsolicited
- transfer from other University departments and offices
- purchase

Material accepted into the collection should supplement existing collecting areas or strengthen areas that have been identified as areas of interest by this policy.

### **Responsible Collecting**

A responsible level of collecting should be maintained by staying within the constraints of available storage space, ability to process material within a reasonable amount of time, and ability to provide for the care and preservation of, and access to, the material. In addition, consideration must be given to the best placement of materials. Dispersal or fragmentation of a research collection is inconvenient to researchers and does not contribute to the reputation of the institution. The Special Collections Research Center will try to avoid acquiring material known to be primarily collected by another institution, unless there is a strong connection with an existing SCRC collection or some other compelling reason to accept the material. Donors will be directed to appropriate repositories if their material is not deemed relevant to our collections.

### **Nature of Ownership**

Material will be accepted into the collection by deed of gift, bequest, or other forms of documentation by which full and absolute title is transferred to the George Mason University Foundation. We reserve the right to determine retention, location, description, and other considerations relating to the use or disposition of the material. Any limitation on use must be approved by the Director, Special Collections Research Center at the time of accession into the collection. To the best of our ability, material accepted into the collection will be appropriately housed and stored in secure, climate-controlled areas.

The Special Collections Research Center will not accept items and collections on deposit or loan or by any other means whereby George Mason University Foundation does not become the owner of the items. SCRC will not knowingly acquire items that have been stolen or illegally obtained.

### **Subject Areas We Collect**

1. Theatre and Performing Arts
2. Planned Communities and Community Development
3. Northern Virginia and Virginia history and development
4. GMU academic programs and related material, with an emphasis on:
  - a. Performing Arts
  - b. Humanities and Social Sciences
  - c. Conflict Analysis and Resolution
  - d. Policy and Governance
  - e. Economics
5. Transportation
6. University Archives
7. Rare books and Artists' Books
8. Photography

### **Formats We Collect**

#### Printed or Published Material

- Books and pamphlets
- Broadsides
- College publications
- Directories
- Ephemera
- Games
- Maps
- Memoirs and other primary sources
- Moving images
- Musical scores and sheet music
- Newspapers and Periodicals
- Playbills
- Press kits

- Sound recordings
- Student publications
- Student organizational publicity
- zines

#### Manuscript and Archival Material

- Business records
- College records
- Correspondence
- Diaries and similar first-person accounts
- Maps, surveys, and similar items
- Organizational records
- Professional, personal, and family papers

#### Audiovisual Material

- Photographs of all varieties
- Engravings
- Lithographs
- Audio recordings
- Moving images, including videos
- Music
- Oral histories
- Postcards
- Posters

We do not accept photocopies of materials held in other repositories; photocopies or other reproductions of original material, unless the originals are no longer in existence or are unavailable to the public; images of museum objects; duplicates of material already in the SCRC, unless the duplicate is in better condition than the SCRC copy; research notes, unless included as a sub-unit of a collection of related primary material; and, current local, state, and federal government records.

#### **Electronic or Digital Material**

Where items originally existed in a non-digital format, we prefer to acquire items in the non-digital format, accepting the digital format as a supplement, or – if the original no longer exists – as a substitute.

Material that is born digital will be considered if it is accessible for research, can be migrated and preserved relatively easily using accepted industry standards and common technologies, and includes appropriate metadata. In addition, Special Collections accepts electronic records from the University for University Archives.