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Collection  
Development

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Gifts  
Guidelines  
for the  
General  
Collections

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Howard-Tilton Memorial Library  
Tulane University  
New Orleans, LA 70118

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## **Gifts and the General Collections**

### **Introduction**

The gift process consists of four distinct stages: initial acceptance; acknowledgement; selection by subject bibliographers; and either processing by the Technical Services staff or disposition.

The guidelines described below apply to gifts made for the general collections of the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library. The general collections support the educational and research programs of Tulane University that are based primarily on its uptown campus. They are distinct from the collections provided by Tulane's separate libraries supporting its professional schools of law, business, and the health sciences. The general collections include a variety of print resources housed at the main library and at a large off-site storage facility. The general collections also include resources in non-print formats including sound and video recordings housed in the library's Music and Media Center. Most books and recordings in the general collections circulate, i.e., they are available to authorized borrowers for check out.

Separate considerations apply to gifts for the library's Special Collections in Jones Hall and for specialized donations to The Latin American Library.

### **Acceptance of Gifts**

The Howard-Tilton Memorial Library accepts gifts through inquiries to the Gifts Library Technician in the Technical Services Division or to subject bibliographers. The Gifts Library Technician may accept gifts of less than 100 items directly when appropriate in relation to the list below of materials generally accepted. Accepted gifts are placed on gifts shelves so the subject bibliographers may review them on a monthly rotation.

Inquiries about gifts of larger collections are forwarded to the appropriate subject bibliographer or, with offers of special collections material, to the appropriate contact.

The library staff is prevented by Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations from appraising the value or potential value of gifts.

### **Materials Accepted:**

- Hardback books in good condition in topical areas that support the curriculum
- Quality paperbacks in good condition in topical areas that support the curriculum
- Music scores
- Music compact discs
- Films in DVD and VHS format

### **Materials Not Accepted**

- Books of little use in an academic library such as "how to" books, vanity press publications, and condensed books (e.g. Reader's Digest)
- Books in poor condition such as damaged, dirty, moldy, missing pages, or heavily marked or underlined

- Incomplete or broken sets (unless needed to complete gaps in the collection)
- Popular magazines (unless currently collected and needed to complete gaps in the collection)
- Commonly collected, incomplete, or short runs of academic journals
- Current newspapers
- Encyclopedias (e.g. World Book)
- Inspirational literature
- Directories or telephone books
- Old textbooks (particularly in the sciences)
- Custom course materials
- Laboratory and repair manuals
- Most artifacts (objects)
- Workbooks and activity books
- Off prints such as a separately printed articles from a magazine or photocopies
- Materials in obsolete formats
- Pirated copies of CDs, DVDs, or other recordings

### **Selection**

The criteria for selection of gift items to be added to the collections shall be the same as for materials that are to be purchased and based largely on the potential value of the items to Tulane's academic programs. Adding volumes that duplicate existing collection holdings occurs only when potential demand for them clearly warrants the action.

### **Processing of Gifts**

Processing of items selected from the gift shelves is part of the library's routine workflow, but the processing of purchased acquisitions will take precedence. Therefore, the library makes no special commitments as to the time taken to process gifts, unless agreed to by the Associate Dean and the Director of Technical Services.

### **Disposal of Unneeded Gift Material**

Donors should be made aware that the library reserves the right to dispose of gift material not selected for addition to its collections. Disposition may be accomplished through sale to used book vendors or other means.

### **Acknowledging Gifts**

Once accepted, the library will acknowledge, in writing, each gift in a timely fashion. The requirement to acknowledge gifts does not apply when gifts arrive without information about who donated the material or materials distributed by authors, organizations, or publishers. The process of ensuring these acknowledgements begins for each donation with a Request for Letter of Acknowledgement for Gifts form (see Appendix A) filled out by the Gifts Library Technician in the Technical Services Division. This form identifies the donor, describes the donation, and is forwarded the library's administrative office where an acknowledgement letter is prepared and signed by the Dean of Libraries and Academic Information Resources. Then it is forwarded to the donor through Tulane's Development Office, which is responsible for communicating official gift acknowledgement to the donor.

## **Large Gifts Guidelines**

These guidelines establish parameters for the selection, acquisition, review, processing and disposition of large gifts. The goal is to ensure that large gifts are handled expeditiously and that they are addressed in relation to space and processing challenges. Generally speaking, it is the responsibility of the relevant subject bibliographer to remain attentive to large gifts as they move through the processes detailed below.

### **Assumptions**

- Bibliographers may not commit the library to acquire or accept a large gift without approval
- For purposes of these guidelines “large gift” is defined as any donation consisting of 100 or more volumes
- The guidelines cover collections that are acquired all at once and donations which come to the library in installments, either a finite number or ongoing indefinitely
- With donations exceeding 100 volumes, there should be a written record of the donor’s and the library’s agreed understanding regarding ownership and disposition of the gift (see appendix B)

### **Actions**

- Determining initially whether or not a large gift should be acquired is the responsibility of the subject bibliographer. The determination should be based primarily on the contents of the collection and its potential value to Tulane’s academic programs. Other factors such as condition, costs of processing, and staff time should also be considered. Generally, it is the donor’s responsibility to arrange for the packing and shipping of a collection to the library. The bibliographer should ask the potential donor for a list of the contents of the collection, and must assess the intellectual value of the contents, preferably by means of a physical inspection, even if a list of the contents has been made available. The bibliographer should check samples of titles against the library’s holdings, as appropriate. A large gift will add value to existing holdings if a reasonable percentage of its titles are not yet held, as determined by the bibliographer. Unless there is a strong expectation that items not likely to be added to the collection can be easily sold, the bibliographer should try to accept only that subset of the intended gift that will actually be added to the library’s holdings. It will be the library’s decision how and where the donated materials will be stored or shelved. Donors should be made aware that requests to shelve donated collections separately are rarely considered and generally cannot be accommodated because of space limitations and constraints related to long-term collection maintenance.
- If a large gift is deemed sufficiently valuable to accept, the bibliographer makes a recommendation to the Associate Dean. After consultation with the Director of Technical Services, and others as appropriate, the Associate Dean will inform the bibliographer whether or not money is available for packing and shipping the materials (in the event the donor is unable or unwilling to do so), and whether or

not space is available to house the collection while it is counted, acknowledged, sorted, reviewed, and processed. Local transport may be arranged by the Gifts Technician, depending on staff workload at the time and the size of the gift. If money, space, and transport are available, the bibliographer may then accept the gift with the Associate Dean's approval in conjunction with the Director of Technical Services and others.

- If the gift is accepted, upon arrival, and under the supervision of the Gifts Library Technician, the collection will be unpacked, counted, acknowledged and placed on shelves in the staging area designated by the Associate Dean. The reviewing space should be secure, environmentally appropriate, and conveniently accessible to staff for processing. The unpacking and processing of the material will be accomplished within a time frame based on the existing priorities and demands within the Acquisitions Department.
- When the gift has been mounted for review, the responsible bibliographer will address the collection, within 30 days or a reasonable time frame based on the size of the collection, by separating from it those items not wanted for the library. These items will be disposed of as stipulated above under "Disposal of Unneeded Gift Material." Disposition of the remainder will be decided according to the categories stipulated on the current "gift book" processing slip.
- The "gift book" slip, indicating the bibliographer's instructions, will be inserted into each book retained before processing begins. As stipulated above, processing of gifts is part of the library's routine workflow, but the processing of purchased acquisitions takes precedence. The library will make no special commitments concerning the time taken to process large gifts unless directed otherwise by the Associate Dean.
- Physical items given to the library as part of a large or especially valuable gift will normally will bear a bookplate indicating the source of the gift. In general, the wording of the bookplate for the gift will follow a standard template created by the library for donations. For gifts of exceptional merit, a special bookplate may be designed.