

Kennesaw State University Library System's Collection Development and Technical Services units have well-established practices and workflows for spending the remaining monographs budget at the end of each fiscal year. In March 2020, all of the Library Resources employees began working remotely due to the pandemic. The Interim Directors for the two units decided to pursue this unique opportunity and include four paraprofessionals currently pursuing their Master of Library Science degrees and a newly hired librarian in this process of selecting books for the collection. The Interim Director of Collection Development and the STEM Collection Development Librarian served as mentors.

The Process

The Interim Director of Collection Development determined which subject areas would be selected for and divided the remaining funds between those departments. Each selector was then able to choose their areas of interest, which created opportunities to explore various topics or to select for subjects in which they have undergraduate degrees. Selectors were encouraged to watch pre-recorded GOBI Training videos to have a basic overview of the process. The videos provided a step-by-step guide on selecting, which fund code to use, and how to reach out to the acquisitions department.

We utilized Microsoft Teams for all of our collaborative work. It allowed our 'Selector Team' to meet virtually, to ask questions, and to support one another through ongoing posts. Files were also located in one central area and could easily be updated as the program progressed.

The Challenges

One of the challenges of this process was the lack of in-person guidance. For the selectors, it was difficult to go through all of the learning materials and to rely on email for instruction and asking questions. For the Interim Director, it was difficult to know if enough support was being given and to know where selectors might encounter problems.

One of our selectors noted, "At first, locating the titles was difficult as I was unsure what I was looking for. I had never worked with e-books in this capacity before, and what if I select the wrong books?"

The Benefits

Tomeka Jackson, Cataloging & Metadata Assistant – "I was excited to jump at the chance of learning something new. For me, this project became a way to open our KSU students' minds to new ways of learning about various historical topics and social issues. Also, it is rewarding to put the history degree I earned in college to use! The more I selected electronic books, the less I became afraid of the process. Furthermore, this project helped me get to know the co-workers in the Acquisitions section of Technical Services and their job duties. I feel cross-training and collaborating with various departments is a great idea! Not only does it develop a person professionally, but it also helps them to get to know their co-workers beyond casual encounters at the office."

Shannon Plummer, Liaison Coordinator – "As a new academic librarian, it was insightful to work across departments and better understand each department's workflows. From collaborating with different departments, learning about different subjects, using new software, and receiving support from my fellow librarians, I highly recommend this approach. While I do learn from training sessions that are given by various departments, this mentorship approach took learning to the next level by creating an empathic understanding of other librarian's duties, and encouraging team building."

Shelby Moore, Resource Management Assistant – "I learned that the selectors who came before me were thorough and thoughtful. I learned how to collaborate on a large-scale project with others outside of my department without actually seeing one another in person. My communication skills have only strengthened through this process and I feel like I am better able to learn and ask detailed questions through text, video chat, and over the phone. I also learned how to slightly alter search terms to ensure I get the desired result, especially with subjects that don't have a lot of resources. It was important to me to offer a more diverse collection for our students to access because I used the same collection as an undergraduate English student. Knowing the holes in our collection so intimately regarding these subject areas, I was able to home in on diversifying the collection and filling in some gaps I noticed as a student."

Laurie Aycock, Interim Director of Collection Development at the time of this project – This project was very successful. Everyone learned quickly and finished selecting titles for their areas ahead of the deadline. Leading this project helped me

All Hands on Deck: Developing a Job Shadowing Program in Collection Development

develop leadership & project management skills. As a mid-career librarian, I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to mentor and build relationships with colleagues who are early in their librarianship career.”

Future Possibilities

This learning experience between departments forms the foundation for future programs in the Collection Development Unit to give our staff experience as well as to build relationships between departments. We hope to expand mentorship opportunities for paraprofessional library employees in library school, incorporating all areas of Collection Development, including collection maintenance & electronic resources. We also want to develop a cross-training program to allow employees from other units of the library to learn Collection Development functions and workflows.