

Description

The Gender and Sexuality Center is home to the Ana Sisnett Library. We have a large collection of literature in the GSC, including books, magazines, and DVDs all available for checking out. The GSC's library is one of the Center's most popular resources.

Process

Beginning in January 2021, I began reviewing the various materials for the Ana Sisnett Library (ASL) in the GSC Google Drive. This included historical documents, inventory information, training materials and the file that help information about who had checked out what materials. I also reviewed the LibraryThing account, which holds information about the entirety of the collection. I also began the process of having conversations with professional staff, former student staff, current student staff and Gina Bastone, the Humanities Librarian for English Literature and Women's and Gender Studies. Throughout this process I did research to better understand what the literature says about organizing small collections like the ASL, as well as best practices for cataloging materials on race and ethnicity - something that staff is currently navigating with the ASL. This document will contain general reflections and recommendations for the Ana Sisnett Library, as well as short and long term action items for staff. These action items will allow those who work with the library to maintain it, streamline library operations, make aspects of the library more accessible, and continue to have conversations about the future goals of the library. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and is a living document that should be amended and updated regularly!



Overall Library

Reflections

Current and former staff members noted several things they liked about the library and its functionality. Folks noted that they liked the variety of types of books, the library's physical location, a general good collection of fiction and nonfiction, the lack of fees, the library's

accessibility (both physical and virtual), the process to check in new books, staff recommendations, the wishlist, the zines collection and the donation model.

There were also some issues from folks regarding the library. One common concern was space. The lack of space, and the need to possibly “upsized” the library by expanding into a new physical space and/or getting more shelves. The other main concern was the issue of books “walking off the shelf”. There isn’t currently a streamlined process of reminders or overdue notices, nor are there any measurable consequences for not returning items. Other concerns include the need to acquire e-books and more audiobooks, the ability to orient people to the space, inventory management, increased representation of disability and disability studies, Asian/Indigenous identities, multiracial identities, asexual identities, bisexual identities, and the need for increased accessibility (including possibly having access to ASL through Perry Castaneda Library) and promotion.

Recommendations

Short Term

Note: While the issue of space isn’t something that can be addressed at this moment (but does have the potential to change in the future), modifying the use of space is something that can help maintain a collection in what is provided. More recommendations about weeding will be discussed later in the document.

Note: The timeline for short term goals is completion by 8/21

- Disability Studies
 - Create disability studies tag on Library Thing
 - Create disability studies recommended reads list

- Spanish Language
 - Create Spanish language tag on Library Thing
 - Add Spanish language sticker to Amazon wishlist - https://www.amazon.com/Library-Store-Classification-Permanent-Adhesive/dp/B08GV2YDOZ/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=the+library+store+espa%C3%B1ol&qid=1619030963&sr=8-3
 - Place stickers on relevant materials

- Primers/Recommended Reading
 - Replace the term “primers” with “recommended reading lists” or a similar title that more clearly reflects what the documents are about
 - Update recommended lists to more clearly and accurately reflect the current collection

- Intersex

- Use the tag “intersex” as opposed to “intersex studies” for all materials about intersex identity
- Wishlist
 - Create a form for the wishlist that is separate from the check out form
- Prioritized materials for selection
 - Prioritize less represented materials, including materials about asexuality, intersex, disability, bisexual and nonmonosexual identities and others
- DVDs
 - DVDs in the collection hold value, but aren’t often circulated and take up substantial space in the library. Discussions need to happen to determine the next best step for this aspect of the collection is needed.
 - One possibility is placing the DVD CD into a large binder, and having a document that lists the DVD and its description. These materials would be situated behind the GSC front desk.

Long Term

- Children’s/Young Adult Materials, Fiction & Graphic Novels/Comics
 - Create a children’s and young adult tag on Library Thing
 - Assign a color to children’s and young adult materials
 - Reshelf and categorize children’s material to its own section. Instead of reshelving young adult materials, assign the children’s and young adult tag as a secondary tag on Library Thing.
 - Continue to review this aspect of the collection and adjust as needed (for example, young adult materials may eventually be reshelved with children’s materials in the physical library)
 - **Timeline: This should be completed by 12/21**

- Health and Life Skills

Note: To allow for continuity for staff and library users now and in the future, and to help prevent individual biases from determining where materials are categorized (which is an issue of access), here are the recommendations for the Health category and the Life Skills category:

- For the Health category, the focus is on health for women/the LGBTQ community in general, healthcare, physical wellness, sexual wellness, intersex, sexual violence and body image.
- For the Life Skills category, the focus is on navigating spaces (workplaces, parenting, college, etc), dating, love & relationships, general life “improvement” and skill based materials.

- **Timeline: This should be completed by 9/21**

- A collection review should be completed to ensure that titles are cataloged in their appropriate section, and these guidelines should be added to library training materials to ensure that all staff that interact with the library are aware of these guidelines.
 - **Timeline: This should be completed by 12/21**
- Accessibility of materials
 - Investigate the possibility of providing materials in other, accessible formats, including e-books and streaming movies and audiobooks.
 - This may include coordinating with UT Libraries for assistance on resources, recommendations and infrastructure.
 - **Timeline: No recommended timeline - dependent on staffing levels, financial resources and need**
- Accountable and private library usage
 - Currently, there is no system to ensure that materials return to the library outside of occasional email reminders. There is no fine or fee system, and there is no tracking of users in such a way that wouldn't permit them from checking out further materials. There is a necessity to continue the values of the library, and fines and fees would go against those values. Further discussions and research is needed to determine what would be the best step to allow for the greatest amount of accessibility, while also allowing for there to be reasonable accountability from patrons.
 - Additionally, as the library and its patronage grows, use of an online catalog like Tiny Cat would allow for more streamlined processes and increased privacy for users. The Ana Sisnett Library would most likely be considered a volunteer library. The usage fee for a Tiny Cat catalog for the GSC would be about \$6/month, or \$72/year. Use of this resource would also allow for easier data collection, which could be used in end of year reports and during Ana Sisnett Week.
 - **Timeline: No recommended timeline - dependent on staffing levels, financial resources and need**



Race and Ethnicity

Reflections

In the focus group, these comments and questions were mentioned regarding race and ethnicity in the ASL.

- There was a general consensus that tags like "Critical Race Studies" have a specific meaning, which includes the academic movement of race studies, civil rights leaders, activists, "scholarly" writers, anti-capitalist and anti-state materials. While many books in the GSC's collection may fit this description, materials like "Becoming" by Michelle Obama do not fit within that criteria (which isn't to say that this isn't a valued material, but that does not fit within this particular cataloging tag).
- We need to account for the explicit writings, (ex. Toni Morrison has implicit meanings in her writings, but she didn't write in an explicit way). Author's intention matters
- Recommendation to have tags for black feminist studies, black queer studies, black disability studies. While this is a possibility, there would also need to be expanded tags for other racial and ethnic groups
- Acknowledging folks with disabilities, ESL folks, etc, may struggle with understanding/reading theory. The separation may come off as elitist.
 - Consideration: just having books about race, books about gender, not having "CRS" as a tag
 - Having a separate collection/different curations? Or on the website/primer for folks

Recommendations

Short Term

Note: The timeline for short term goals is completion by 8/21

- Have two tags for materials about race and ethnicity - "race and ethnicity" and "critical race studies". This is to acknowledge the history and value of critical race studies, while

also keeping space for all materials that focus on race and ethnicity. Keep the current “critical race studies” tag and color code, and create a new one for the “race and ethnicity” tag.

- Prioritized materials for selection
 - Prioritize less represented materials, including materials about Black identity, Latinx identity, multi-racial identity, Asian identity, Indigenous identity, and others. This also includes materials that discuss experiences from those from other countries and territories, as well as those in the diaspora.

Long Term

- Form a working group to evaluate the various materials on race and ethnicity and make recommendations for the guidelines of what should be included in the “race and ethnicity” tag and “critical race studies” tag. It is recommended that this group include Gina Bastone from UT Libraries, who also oversees the Black Queer Studies Collection.
 - **Timeline: Working group should be planned and formed by 12/21**



Deselection and Weeding

Reflections

In the focus group, these comments and questions were mentioned regarding deselection and weeding of materials in the ASL.

- Duplicates are weeded contingent on low circulation
- If a student complains about a book, a review is done, other student staff will review it and will be able to explain why
- Sometimes addendums are added to the books to provide context of the issues with it or why it's being kept within the library's collection
- Data on the backend would be guide what is prioritized and what's not would be useful

- Putting time on the calendar for staff to have dedicated time to review data and also weeding
- Staff could make the users aware what might be leaving
- Reviewing if the material still aligns with the center's mission but also honoring lineages and evolution of thought
- Being able to hold onto materials that are outdated for historical/archival purposes, maybe partnering with a local archive or library (note: doing this would require an amount of work and time)

Recommendations

Short Term

Note: The timeline for short term goals is completion by 8/21

- Cross check missing books with shelves to make sure there aren't missing books on the shelf (ensures accuracy of collection)
- Add label remover to the Amazon wishlist - <https://www.amazon.com/Scotty-Peeler-Label-Sticker-Remover/dp/B006WFMGYK?th=1>

Long Term

- Create a document that provides guidelines for weeding criteria. This process will require research, conversations and consistent updates to make sure the criteria are well known by all staff, and are frequently evaluated to ensure they continue to be in line with the library's values.
 - Resource: <http://lili.org/forlibs/ce/able/course4/05criteria.htm>
 - Resource: <http://rurallibrarydirectors.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/50060664/RLD%20-%20Weeding%20Library%20Collections%20REV%2012.pdf>
 - **Timeline: Should be completed by 8/22**
- Standardize the process for review of challenged materials.
 - This could include having a panel of 3 student staff and 1 professional staff members reviewing items, or having a section of a staff meeting to review the challenged material. Regardless, be sure to document what the process is and make it available to patrons.
 - **Timeline: Should be completed by 8/22**

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