Research Agenda — Collection Development and Evaluation

Policies and Strategies

McLean (2002) has analyzed the usage, usefulness, and content of collection development policies in women’s studies.

- What are some examples of forward thinking collection development policies and how can they be useful in envisioning comprehensive but cost-effective hybrid print/electronic collections?

Lee (2002) traced the historical pattern of collection development for women and gender studies materials in the Rutgers University System.

- In what ways are traditional collection development strategies still useful and in what ways do they need to change to reflect an online information environment?

Ideological Diversity

Searing (2002) argues for creating collections with materials representing multiple points of view on issues of women and gender, not just feminist ones, and on preserving transgressive ideas, not just those that are socially-sanctioned within women and gender studies scholarship and mainstream culture.

- Are materials representing all points of view on women and gender, not just feminist ones, currently being collected by women’s studies librarians? How can
collection development policies and strategies be altered to include these points of view?

A 2007 study by Goldthorp illustrates that collections and services for lesbians are still not adequate in Scottish public libraries.

- To what extent are the needs of the LGBTQ community being met by academic libraries, including their needs for leisure reading, services, and outreach? To what extent is lesbian/queer fiction being collected by academic libraries?

Davis-Kahl (2008) advocates for the inclusion of chick lit in academic libraries by defining the genre and bringing out themes related to cultural and literary criticism, demonstrating that the genre has academic value.

- To what extent are academic libraries collecting popular genres relevant to women and gender studies such as chick lit, graphic novels, and third wave feminist titles?

Format Diversity

A 2002 report on the collection of grey literature by Blomqvist and Nielsen discusses the difficulty of winnowing out women-related material in an environment of mainstreamed gender research and burgeoning electronic publications. In 2009, Magnuson examined the electronic grey literature holdings for four U.S. libraries at institutions with graduate women’s studies programs and determined that websites and databases (as opposed to digital special collections and online course guides) were the most popular types of electronic grey literature collected.

- How is online grey literature such as websites and blogs being selected, collected, and maintained by women’s studies librarians? How is access to these items being given and how will access be maintained over the long term?

Dilevko and Dali (2004) showed that the book review source Counterpoise has a more concentrated coverage of alternative and small press titles than mainstream
review sources.

• Given the massive amounts of online information available and the push for an online collection, are women’s studies librarians still seeking out alternative and small press titles in print?

Some institutions, such as Barnard and Duke, have focused on collecting zines, which would otherwise be lost to history.

• How many institutions are collecting zines and is there an effort underway to digitize those zines for greater access?