

# The Challenge of Library Collections

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2018/01/29/the-challenge-of-library-collections/>

The FAU Libraries' collection budget has remained largely unchanged for more than a decade. While the funding has remained steady, the rate of inflation for library collections in the past decade has been at least 84%, with a 7-10% annual increase in costs being standard for print and electronic books, journals, and other resources. Like all libraries in the State University System of Florida (SUS), the FAU Libraries purchase and license access to scholarly content through a complex array of consortial agreements and individual licenses or purchases. We consult extensively with our colleagues within the SUS and the state and apply best practices for the development of academic library collections.

The strategy followed by the FAU Libraries in the past decade has been to minimize the impact felt by faculty and students by funneling a greater percentage of our collections budget into electronic resources. The result is that today we effectively have no budget for monographs. While this strategy has enabled us to continue to provide access to a substantial set of electronic resources (although even that will no longer suffice as prices continue to go up and pricing models change), it has also placed those disciplines that still rely on print monographs at a disadvantage. The Libraries have not been able to purchase a significant number of new monographs for many years and the print collection is aging. Research in the field of collection management and best practices make it clear that libraries have a difficult time recovering from the loss of access to new monographs, even if budgets improve. What has been lost cannot be easily regained.

We have supplemented our collections budget every year with Technology Fee proposals to purchase archives of electronic content. We have been fortunate to receive such supplemental funding for many collections and this year we have ten separate requests in for Technology Fee funding for a wide variety of content to try to serve all disciplines. The Libraries have also utilized money from unspent salary savings every year to provide one-time injections into the collections budget. It is also our intention to request a budget increase for the collections budget from the University this year to place us on a better footing. We are also working on proposals for external donor funding.

In the fall 2017 semester, I made presentations to the Council of Deans, the University Faculty Senate, and to various College Councils or Executive Committees describing the state of the collections budget and the need to make cuts if no new funds were received. On November 20, 2017 we hosted the first open forum for faculty to give us their thoughts on a good process for making these difficult decisions. We have also made extensive use of survey data collected from our comprehensive fall 2017 survey of faculty use of and satisfaction with library services and collections to guide us in developing an approach. More input is needed but the reality is that we must make cuts, as the University will not allow us to overspend our budget.

For more information about Collection Management at FAU Libraries, we invite you to review the web pages at <http://www.library.fau.edu/depts/cd/colldev.htm> . We have also set up a Google site <https://sites.google.com/a/faulibs.com/committees/university-committees/library-collections> with access to various reports and presentations relating to our collections budget. Please feel free to contact the Head of

Collection Management, Maris Hayashi, the Assistant Dean for Research and Collections, Jeff Sundquist, or me, the Dean of University Libraries, with any questions or concerns.