

### **Collection Development Policy Statements:**

#### **X Library System vs. Y College Library Media Center**

Two libraries with a presence in my local community in [REDACTED] are the X Library System (XLS) and the Y College Library Media Center (YCLMC). The collection development policies of these two institutions can be found on their respective Web sites. A close examination of the two policies reveals that while the policies are very different, they are each effective and appropriate for the institutions that created them.

In considering the two libraries' policies side by side, many differences are immediately apparent. XLS's policy, at least as presented on its Web site, is entitled "[REDACTED]" (XLS, 2008). It is comprised of six sections, four of which carry their own titles ("[REDACTED]", "[REDACTED]", "[REDACTED]", and "[REDACTED]") and two of which do not. Besides making statements about the library's criteria for selection and its procedures related to collection management, XLS's policy draws heavily upon the library's mission, values, and goals. For this reason, and because the policy deals with not only selection and collection management but also Internet use and filtering guidelines, it is quite lengthy and dense with information. YCLMC, on the other hand, in the "Policies" section of its Web site, presents three separate links to its "[REDACTED]", "[REDACTED]", and "[REDACTED]" (Y College, 2011c). Each of YCLMC's three guidelines statements is presented in very simple language and occupies less than two pages of text. Each guidelines statement begins with a succinct, one- or two-sentence statement of the LMC mission and collection development goal and then goes on to describe the guidelines for that particular

area of the collection. The emphasis of YCLMC's guidelines statements lies in descriptions of procedures and selection criteria. There is no mention of the materials budget or allocation of funds among different areas of the collection as there is in XLS's policy statement. So some obvious differences between the two policies are in the level of detail and specificity of the policy information and in the way it is organized and presented.

What might account for the differences between these two libraries' collection development policies? I think the answer lies in the purpose and function of the two libraries. XLS is a public library system serving a diverse population of individuals and groups distributed across a wide geographical area, and according to XLS' Web site, in 2010 XLS "[surpassed] the busiest library in the U.S. (Queens NY) with 22.4 million items checked out" (XLS, 2011). YCLMC, on the other hand, serves a much narrower population of users. Y College, which until 2009 was known as Y Community College, is part of [REDACTED]'s community and technical college system (Y College, 2011a). The college changed its name to reflect its offering of a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree in an increasing number of subject areas. According to the LMC Mission statement at the beginning of each of the three sets of collection development guidelines, the YCLMC "plays a central role in accomplishing the college's mission and goals of being student-centered and committed to teaching excellence," and according to the LMC Collection Development Goal that appears just below, "The primary purpose of the Library collection is support of the college curriculum" (Y College, 2009a, 2009b, and 2011b). Because the service population of XLS is much more inclusive than that of YCLMC, and because XLS is a multi-branch system with a wide geographic distribution, the complexity of its collection development policy reflects the complexity of the organization and its users. YCLMC's stated

purpose, supporting the college curriculum, is much more straightforward, and therefore, its policy guidelines are simpler and less detailed.

Each of these two libraries' collection development policies should be helpful to collection development staff in its own way. YCLMC's guidelines address many concerns that collection developers are likely to encounter, such as whether to collect textbooks, how to handle gifts, who may request the addition of specific materials to the collection, and considerations for selecting periodicals, databases, and eBooks. XLS's policy addresses similar concerns that collection developers are likely to encounter, but it also provides specific selection criteria, a selection philosophy to guide selectors' decisions about specific materials, and goals both for materials distribution among branches and for collection evaluation, weeding, and refreshment.

Overall, I think that both XLS and YCLMC's collection development policies are useful, well-written, and effective. Each policy reflects the scope of its library's service population as well as its mission and goals, and each anticipates the needs of collection development staff who will need to utilize it in performing their work. Clearly, staff at both institutions have put considerable thought and effort into creating and maintaining their collection development policies, helping to ensure the smooth and effective functioning and the responsiveness of their library collections.

References

- Y College. (2009a). [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. Retrieved from [REDACTED]
- Y College. (2009b). [REDACTED].  
Retrieved from [REDACTED]
- Y College. (2011a). [REDACTED]. Retrieved from [REDACTED]
- Y College. (2011b). [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. Retrieved from [REDACTED]
- Y College. (2011c). [REDACTED]. Retrieved from  
[REDACTED]
- X Library System. (2008). [REDACTED].  
Retrieved from [REDACTED]
- X Library System. (2011). *History of your X Library System*. Retrieved from  
[REDACTED]