

# College Library Collection Development Policy

Revised 01/2021

## Introduction

It is the mission of College Library to facilitate discovery and learning, especially for those new to academic research. Through its collections and services, the library strives to meet the information needs of University of Wisconsin-Madison undergraduates. Because undergraduates seek information for course-related papers, speeches, and research projects in all disciplines, College Library offers materials on a wide range of subject matter reflecting the broad spectrum of courses offered by the University. Most of these titles are located in the Main Collection, where emphasis is placed on current materials that will support and enrich class assignments and projects while also stimulating students' desire to learn. College Library also collects materials to support recreation (i.e., popular fiction, board games, video games, feature films), career planning, and personal and cultural development.

College Library's collections support the research, teaching, and work of individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, physical and mental abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. At the same time, we acknowledge that historic and systemic inequities have created gaps in our collections. We are committed to identifying and addressing these disparities as we work toward building anti-racist and anti-oppressive collections that represent and reflect the diversity of our campus community.

When selecting new materials, librarians consider current course offerings and their content. Multiple formats are purchased, including ebooks and print books. College Library selectors routinely use several selection tools: *Choice Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *Books in Print*, Amazon, and *Booklist*. Many other alternative sources, which include reviews of books, journals, and Internet sites, are also employed. Reviewing and publishing sources that are specific to a particular selection area or collection are identified when relevant in the following descriptions.

New materials are also added to the collection through our review and awards-based approval plan. The majority of books reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review* are automatically added to our collection. ALA Diversity Award winning titles and many titles from *Choice's* Outstanding Academic Titles list are also received on approval.

College Library does not serve as an archival collection, but rather as a provider of high-use materials. All collections, including serials, are regularly evaluated and weeded according to content and usage. The collections reflect current issues and controversial topics and include materials for which there is a high demand. Books and items in many other formats are housed together in all collections to facilitate students finding materials that may be useful for their research. Apart from some bilingual editions, most titles are in English. College Library has a responsibility to make available a representative selection of resources on subjects of interest to the University community, including materials that represent a variety of beliefs and opinions. In an academic or research library, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression.

## Main Collection

The Main Collection is our largest academic collection, spanning the [Library of Congress Classification Outline](#). Materials are added to the Main Collection through firm orders initiated by collection development staff, orders originating from the College Library approval plan, and items relocated from active Course Reserves when they are no longer being used for a class, and the occasional gift.

### **B – Philosophy, Psychology, Religion**

Titles selected for the Bs are added sparingly with an emphasis on original sources over critical works. Priority is given to materials on issues of current interest to undergraduates.

- The philosophy collection (B-BD) includes important works of the major philosophers from ancient Greece to today.
- The psychology collection (BF) features the standard works in the field, e.g., Freud and Jung, in current editions.
- Books on aesthetics (BH) are rarely purchased. Books on ethics (BJ) at an introductory level are added.
- For the religion collection (BL-BX), titles at an introductory level on all major religions are selected.

## **C, D – History**

The history collection includes introductory, popular, and general material on world history, archaeology, and the history of areas, regions, and countries.

- Time periods ranging from Ancient to Modern
- Events, Well-known people, Conflicts
- Contemporary world and regional themes

## **E – History: United States**

The United States history collection provides information to support a wide range of introductory-level history courses that students may choose for their undergraduate studies.

- Topics include the history of immigration to the United States, slavery, Colonialism, America during the Cold War, Civil Rights, and individual decades in US history.
- Materials on historical events such as the Civil War, Revolutionary War, and the Vietnam Conflict are collected.
- Titles on current politics and government are selected.
- Biographies and studies of the presidents and other historical figures are collected at a popular, general level.
- Introductory historical surveys are updated as necessary.

## **F – History: Central, South America, and United States Local History**

Topics emphasized include the political, social, and cultural history of countries in Central and South America.

- Special attention is placed on current topics, such as democracy in Latin America, human rights and the struggles of indigenous people, and inter-American relations.
- Although more scholarly treatments of United States history are left to the library of the Wisconsin Historical Society, some emphasis is given to Wisconsin history and general history of major U.S. cities and national parks.

## **G – Geography, Anthropology, Recreation**

The geography collection includes introductory, popular, and general material on Geography, Anthropology and Recreation.

- Physical Geography and the Earth Sciences
- Geospatial Science (GIS) and Cartography
- Human Geography along with contemporary issues in Environmental Sciences and Human Ecology
- Folklore and Dance
- Physical, Social, Cultural Anthropology; Ethnology
- Some basic world or regional/state atlases
- Recreation and Leisure, especially contemporary issues in athletics

## **H – Social Sciences**

The social sciences collection supports a wide range of undergraduate research and includes information needed for writing English papers and preparing speeches for communication arts classes. Books and videos found in this collection

support many of the Undergraduate Research Guide topics. To enhance the Library's collection on current issues, more than one copy of a title is sometimes purchased.

- Some introductory level statistical (HA) and how-to-do research titles are purchased.
- The economics collection (HB, HC) includes standard authors in the field in up-to-date editions as well as current economic issues and controversies.
- Books on labor-management trends and issues (HD) and historical studies of workers and management are collected at a popular, general level.
- Undergraduate-level radio and television broadcasting (HE) titles are added.
- Since there is a Business Library on campus, upper-level business (HF, HG, HJ) books are not purchased.
- Test preparation guides for the GMAT are purchased each year.
- Books of general interest, such as the future of the modern corporation, business ethics, globalization, world trade, advertising and personal financial planning are added.
- The sociology (HM) collection includes introductory level works. Books on the family, marriage, and gender studies (HQ) cover many current social issues and social problems that are of interest to undergraduate students. Books on social pathology, public welfare, and criminology (HV) are selected and used by students from many disciplines.

## **J – Political Science**

Political Science materials support political science, history, and philosophy courses, and include a wide range of topics and authors.

- Foundational texts such as the works of Plato and Aristotle in new translations, works by Machiavelli and Hobbes, and the Federalist papers are included.
- Studies on the American presidency, democracy, voting behavior, and voter suppression (JK) are collected.
- Emphasis is given to current controversies and issues.

## **K – Law**

College Library's law collection supports current and future law research including interdisciplinary study.

- Works on law as a profession are included.
- Current legal issues, such as free speech are emphasized.
- Law school test preparation guides are collected and updated regularly.

## **L – Education**

The education section covers current issues in education and resources for success in the classroom.

- Materials on special aspects of education such as bilingual education, minority education, private vs. public schools, violence in schools and other controversial aspects of education are selected.
- Special emphasis is placed on acquiring heavily used materials in topics such as writing styles, how-to-do research, and test preparation. These materials are updated regularly and multiple copies are purchased.
- Materials dealing with descriptions of colleges and university programs, applications for scholarships and financial aid are not selected. These titles are reviewed by selectors for the Career & Student Success Collection.
- Other topics not selected for (L) include K-12 teaching methods, international education, educational psychology, special education, and philosophy of education. These subject areas are heavily covered by both MERIT and Memorial Library.

## **M, N – Music and Art**

General music and visual arts books are selected to provide ample coverage of music and art history at an introductory level.

- Works about non-classical music and musicians (e.g. jazz, rock, folk, pop, and rap) are selected as they pertain to undergraduate research interests, overviews of eras, or groundbreaking individuals or movements.
- Books that provide context for a specific musical genre, particularly contemporary popular music, are preferred to those which focus on individual artists.
- Books about social issues in the arts (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, controversy, censorship) are emphasized as they support popular research topics.
- Titles which focus on artmaking, technique, and design are purchased at an introductory level.
- Art History surveys are included in the collection with an emphasis on titles about modern, post-modern, and contemporary art.
- Seminal works of art criticism are included, but with an art library on campus, upper-level theoretical or critical works are rarely added.
- College Library generally does not select exhibition catalogs for the collection.

## **P – Language, Literature, and the Performing Arts**

The P-PZ area includes four major categories: language, literature, performing arts, and mass media (film, radio, television, and journalism).

- Collected in the area of language are class support materials in various languages, linguistics, and the communication arts, as well as more self-help materials such as vocabulary drills and books on college-level writing assignments.
- The literature collection ranges from ancient to modern. It includes both the works of and critical material on the literature and authors of all areas of the world. Emphasis is on areas and authors taught more routinely in classes. Material not collected or collected only minimally includes very scholarly criticism, most primary material such as journals and letters, works not in English, multi-volume sets of an author's complete works, children's literature, and recreational fiction. An effort is made to select fiction translated into English.
- Titles collected in the performing arts area include plays, drama criticism, and material on performance. Collections of monologues are especially popular. Materials on film, film studies, and film techniques are collected; film scripts are not.
- There is material on the mass media in general, and on the social issues and major personalities involved in drama and the mass media, as well as material on radio and television programs, criticism and studies. DVDs and boxed sets of critically acclaimed films and television series have been added to the collection, but the advent of streaming services has curtailed such acquisitions.

## **Q, R, S, T – Mathematics, Science, Medicine and Technology**

The Science Collection (Q-T) includes mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, biology, botany, zoology, health care, agriculture, computer science, and technology.

- The primary format for the collection is books, but other non-print formats are also included. Works are popular rather than scholarly and written for a general or undergraduate audience. Proceedings of conferences are generally not collected.
- The collection is focused on social problems that: 1) are created by scientific research, for example, the ethics of bioengineering; 2) can be addressed by the use of science (AIDS research); 3) affect the physical world (endangered species, climate change), and 4) concern the health of individuals (healthcare reform, euthanasia, use of legal and illegal drugs).
- Popular books are also collected on topics such as using the Internet and creating web pages. Introductory science books are collected on a very limited basis (e.g. Schaum outlines).

## **U, V – Military Science, Naval Science**

The Military (U) and Naval Science (V) collection supports research that is often interdisciplinary and related to the sciences and technology, the social sciences, and the humanities.

- Current issues are emphasized.

## **Z – Books, Bibliography**

The Z collection contains a limited number of titles. It includes books on libraries, book culture (printing, publishing, censorship), the Internet, and a few miscellaneous topics. Titles selected include those of interest to undergraduate researchers.

## Reserves

Collection development in College Reserves is instructor driven. The Curricular Content Librarian, frequently working in consultation with requesting instructors, determines whether a title will be ordered for College Library or borrowed from another campus library for a semester's duration. The Curricular Content Librarian also determines the number of copies of a title to be ordered, if more than one is needed. Requested out-of-print titles are acquired, subject to cost considerations and availability. AV materials (e.g., videos and other streaming media) are also included in the collection.

The active Reserves Collection is weeded annually. Monographic titles failing to meet minimum usage standards are removed from the active collection and are either shelved in the College Library Main Collection or withdrawn. Two limitations apply to the weeding policy: an item must have been on reserve for at least two years before it can be considered for weeding, and one copy of any title must be kept in the collection until the requesting instructor indicates that it is no longer needed on reserve. Ephemeral materials remain in the collection until instructor providers request that they be returned or indicate that they are no longer needed for course reading.

## Featured Collections

In addition to the Main Collection and the course-reserve collection, featured collections in College Library provide a topical focus in areas of current interest, allowing students to browse and expand their awareness.

### *Computer & DesignLab Collection*

The Computer and DesignLab Collection includes materials that help students, faculty, and staff learn more about hardware, graphic and web design, and other computer topics. This collection is located within the 2nd Floor Computer Lab, Room 2250.

### *Ethnic Studies Collection*

The Ethnic Studies Collection began as a collaborative venture with the Dean of Students Office and Multi-Cultural Council in 1975. It was called the Ethnic Collection and was designed as a current awareness multicultural reading area. To support the L & S Ethnic Studies requirement, in 1989, the collection expanded in scope and was renamed the Ethnic Studies Collection.

Included are books and videos which cover course-related subject matter and topics that are of current interest to students, staff, and faculty in Ethnic Studies Departments and for courses that fulfill the Ethnic Studies Requirement.

### *Gaus Collection*

The John M. Gaus Collection in Poetry and Literary Studies supports coursework, in addition to encouraging people to read poetry for fun and pleasure. It is funded by an endowment established by friends and students of Professor Gaus.

The scope of the collection includes poetry by twentieth- and twenty-first century American and British poets and related secondary works. In addition, books on the art of creative writing are collected, especially those written by the poets represented.

The collection was founded with the donation of Gaus' personal collection. Current criteria for selection include a wide range of American and English poetry award winners with an eye toward representation.

### *Gender & Women's Studies Collection*

College Library's Gender & Women's Studies Collection was established in 1975 when librarians worked with the faculty of the new Women's Studies Department to create a women's reading area called the Women's Reading Collection. Today the collection provides books and videos emphasizing current gender, sexuality, and women's studies topics of interest to undergraduates, including students in Gender and Women's Studies and LGBTQ+ Studies courses.

These materials, which would be scattered throughout the library collection, are presented together to encourage browsing and discovery by undergraduates.

### *Open Book Collection*

The Open Book Collection supports the extra-academic interests of all user groups. In keeping with the informal nature of the collection, books are primarily purchased as paperback editions. Topics include, but are not limited to popular fiction, mysteries, science fiction, travel, sports, hobbies and cooking. DVDs, board games, and video games are also included. Suggestions for additions to the collection are requested from students. The collection is regularly reevaluated to reflect current interests. This collection is supported by gift funds.

A recent addition to the Open Book Collection is the Career & Student Success Collection, a circulating collection that is funded by earnings from the University Bookstore Endowment. It includes materials related to student success (e.g., study skills, time-management, roommate conflict), well-being and life skills (e.g., self-actualization, motivation, personal finance) and career exploration (e.g., job-hunting strategies, résumé/cover letter guides, networking). Suggestions for additions to the collection are requested from campus career and job placement counselors, other campus libraries, and students. Books in the collection are reviewed on a regular basis. Outdated titles and those that are no longer being used are deselected. (The original Career Collection was created at the request of the UW-Madison Career Counseling and Placement Council, which recommended that the university was in need of a visible, conveniently-located facility, open during and after regular university office hours, that contained in one place a broad range of career and placement information accessible to undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, and the university community at large.)

The serials collection contains print magazines and newspapers that appeal to undergraduates for general reading and browsing. The collection emphasizes areas of interest to undergraduates: news, health, recreation, lifestyle, the environment, entertainment, multicultural, and LGBTQ+ topics. Only the two most recent issues of any publication are retained.

## Online Collections

E-Resources are made available through the UW-Madison Libraries Website. Individual ebooks are selected by College Library staff and ebook packages are purchased at the GLS or consortial level. In our reference service we provide instruction and support to students seeking journal and other information through databases offered by the UW-Madison Libraries. Some of these resources have been selected and identified as Introductory Databases.

Introductory Databases are defined as resources of all types that have been identified by the Comm-A Committee as appropriate subject resources/databases for non-majors, meet introductory-level research needs, and are starting places for research by library users of any level who are unfamiliar with the subject discipline.

Funding for e-resources is provided by a variety of sources including General Library System (GLS) central funds, the UW System budget, BadgerLink and the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). College Library also assists with funding some of the resources through their GLS allocation.

## Weeding Guidelines

College Library is the sole library on campus dedicated to a population rather than a subject area. As a result, it does not serve as an archival collection, but rather as a provider of highly used materials that are appropriate for undergraduate research. Librarians are responsible for keeping their selection areas or assigned collections up to date. All collections, including serials, are regularly evaluated and weeded according to content and usage. The criteria may vary according to main collection selection area or the focus of a special collection. Weeded materials are offered to the campus research libraries before being sent to the Friends of the Library book sale. Following are some guidelines/criteria that may be used.

### **GUIDELINES FOR DESELECTING BOOKS AND MEDIA**

- No circulation in the last three or more years
- Other copies in College Library
- Other copies on campus
- Other/newer books on the same topic in College Library
- Poor condition
- Superseded edition
- No courses on the topic currently being offered
- Topic not of current academic or recreational interest
- Author not of current academic or recreational interest

### **GUIDELINES FOR DESELECTING SERIALS**

- Little or no circulation or usage in the last three or more years
- Available full text in College Library
- Other copies on campus
- High cost

# Appendix

## *Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.” A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library’s selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection’s diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user’s right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator’s viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “[Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#),” adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title “Services to Persons with Disabilities”; amended June 26, 2018.

<sup>2</sup>*ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* “Diversity in Collection Development”; and June 24, 2019.

## *The Freedom to Read Statement*

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among

conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression  
The Association of American University Presses  
The Children's Book Council  
Freedom to Read Foundation  
National Association of College Stores  
National Coalition Against Censorship  
National Council of Teachers of English  
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## *Freedom to View Statement*

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**