Unit 1 Assignment: Collection Development Policy Analysis

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I chose to analyze the Collection Development Policy for the Connecticut State Library because I am interested in working in a museum library or college library after earning my Master of Library Science degree. Since the Connecticut State Library is a special library, I thought that looking at their policy would be beneficial even though it is not a museum library. The policy is available at http://www.cslib.org/coldevplcy.htm. At first glance, I thought that the policy was a very lengthy document, however, the main page and "Resources, Formats & Collections" page were fewer than eleven pages in total when printed. As I began to read the main page sections describing the actual collection seemed very vague. That was when I noticed that the material which first appears is intended to serve as the overview with links to more detailed descriptions of each collection in the library as well as coverage of different formats. It is nice that the document begins with a "Table Of Contents" so that someone can easily access the topic that they are interested in without having to scroll through pages of information.

The complete mission statement of the Connecticut State Library is included in the Collection Development Policy. It seems to meet the level of specificity required by a mission statement. Although, I wondered how the term "equitable" would be interpreted. Part of the Library's mission is "to promote the development and growth of high quality information services on an equitable basis statewide" (Connecticut State Library, 2010). Evens and Saponaro listed that how the library supports the larger organization should be noted (2005, p. 54). In this case the Library is the only organization. The community served by the library was briefly described in the "Mission Statement" as "state government and the citizens of Connecticut" (Connecticut State Library, 2010). Evans and Saponaro felt that the community served should be described briefly and that changes that are occurring should be noted (2005, p. 54). Some changes were noted. The Collection Development Policy states that the current time was "a

period of enormous financial stress for the Library" (Connecticut State Library, 2010). It was

noted that "At the same time, we are also facing the tremendous challenges and exciting

opportunities presented by the rapidly changing and expanding electronic and networked

information technologies" (Connecticut State Library). The document does not make mention of

changes in the lives of the Library's clients and it does not describe them in greater detail as

Evans and Saponaro suggest (2005).   The only other information given about library patrons on

the main page was that "The Library provides direct services to some 500,000 individual

annually" (Connecticut State Library, 2010). The site does not say what year this statistic is

from, which should have been included.

The section titled "Selection of Library Materials" gives a more detailed description of

what materials should be collected. However, it is still very vague. It seems to be a general

overview for use in all of the collections. This listing does not include a description of which

subjects should be included in the collection. Although Evans and Saponaro write that there

should be "A general statement regarding the parameters of the collection" (2005, p. 54). This

seems even more general than what was recommended. "A detailed description of the types of

programs or patron needs that the collection must meet" (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 54) is also

recommended for a collection development plan, but this information is not listed on the main

page for the Connecticut State Library Collection Development Policy.

The second component of the Collection Development Policy is subtitled "Resources,

Formats & Collections." It can be accessed through links in the "Table Of Contents." The

"Resources, Formats & Collections" page fills in many of the missing details from the

"Collection Development Policy" main page. Each of the various formats that the library collects

is defined. Several of the library's collections are then listed. Under the title of each collection is

listed what subject area will be collected or what type material will be collected. The level of specificity varies by collection. For example: the "Government Information And Reference Collections," section lists the subject areas that materials will be collected from. It also indicates to what level each subject will be collected. Evans and Saponaro recommended that a library identify the level of collecting that should be done in each subject area (2005). The Connecticut State Library does this, but does not use any of the systems described by Evans and Saponaro.

The description of who will use the library is still very vague on this page. For example, electronic resources in the "Government Information and Reference" section "provide connectivity to all subject fields to meet the needs of state government, libraries, and Connecticut's citizens" (Connecticut State Library, 2010). Who the citizens are is never defined. It is possible that the state has a set working definition, which is simply not listed here. A few of the collections have clearer explanations of their users. The Connecticut Municipal Documents Collection is "used by government officials, the legal community, and the general public" (Connecticut State Library, 2010).

The Connecticut State Library Collection Development Policy seems to be well thought out. It includes much of the information that is recommended by Evans and Saponaro. More detail could be added to the Collection Development Policy. Library patrons should be described in greater detail than being citizens of Connecticut. Also, a description of what the document means by "citizen" would be useful. The descriptions for each collection are well written, but they could benefit from more details. Gifts to the library were also addressed as Evans and Saponaro suggested (2005).

Evans and Saponaro did not address in their list how often a collection development policy should be revised. I am concerned that the Collection Development Policy for the

Connecticut State Library is not being reviewed frequently enough. It says "This policy was approved by the State Library Board at its meeting on March 25, 1993" (Connecticut State Library, 2010). I would have expected that the document would have been revised more recently since then to take into account even more changes in technology and funding than those mentioned. Also, I imagine there have been changes in patrons' needs since 1993. Perhaps the policy is general enough to allow for any necessary changes without a formal revision. However, there are notes within the Policy suggesting that it be updated frequently (Connecticut State Library, 2010).

References

Connecticut State Library. (September 28, 2010). Collection Development Policy - Library

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Evans, G. E., & Saponaro, M. Z. (2005). *Developing library and information center collections*

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