

## DePaul University Library

### **Alternate Assessment Project Report**

Academic Year: FY22  
Date of Report Submission: July 1, 2022  
Name of Department/Unit/Program: University Library  
Name of Contact Person: Jennifer Schwartz

Names of Assessment Committee Members: Jennifer Schwartz and Ashley McMullin

**Please submit reports on this template and not in a separate document. Please type responses below prompts for each item in this word document. Attach all supporting materials as appendices.**

#### **Part I: Follow-Up on Last Year's Assessment Report Recommendations**

**Based on the recommendations and planned actions** from the last assessment report you submitted, please discuss actions you took and/or follow-up, as well as their results.

The 2020-2021 Library assessment project was a learning outcomes assessment designed to determine whether students enrolled in online Writing, Rhetoric & Discourse (WRD) 104 courses can evaluate an article's usefulness based on a provided set of criteria. Our assessment question was: to what extent are WRD 104 students able to evaluate the appropriateness of information sources based on their format, structure, and purpose?

Our key findings showed that overall, the majority of students (77%) who were part of the assessment project were able to successfully evaluate the usefulness of an article related to structure and format, although students were more successful with certain criteria than with others.

Based on the results of this assessment project, the investigators undertook the following action steps during the Summer of 2021:

- A task force was assembled to add the evaluation component to the library curriculum for WRD 104 online courses.
- The task force simplified the evaluation component of the online assignment for better student comprehension and ease of grading.
- To maximize student success and improve the grading process, the task force converted the grading rubric to a holistic one after consulting with the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- The task force created a course guide to accompany the assignment and provide additional instructions and video tutorials for students.
- The task force updated the Library module in D2L to incorporate the updated library assignment, the new grading rubric, and the course guide.
- The Instructional Services Librarian provided training for librarians who embed in WRD 104 online courses on the new curriculum, revised assignment, and revised rubric.

The investigators shared the results of the assessment project with the following stakeholders:

- The Instructional Services Librarian met with the Assistant Director of the First-Year Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse during the Summer 2021 to discuss this assessment project findings.
- The Instructional Services Librarian shared an overview of the assessment project and the findings with the First-Year Writing Faculty at their annual meeting in August 2021.
- The investigators shared an overview of the assessment project and the findings with the Library staff in March 2022.

## **Part II: Report on This Year's Project**

### Type of Project

What type of Project did you conduct? \*all alternate projects need to be approved by your college or division\*

Other

## Abstract

Provide a short abstract (no more than 250 words) **briefly** highlighting major sections of this report (project description, methodology, evaluation of information, results, interpretation, and recommendations).

The University Library assessed diversity in the book collection by comparing lists of diversity-related award-winning titles to our holdings. Of 618 total titles under consideration, the DePaul University Library holds 281 (45%). By genre, the library holds 37% of the available fiction titles (75 of 202), 54% of the non-fiction titles (185 of 345), and 30% of the poetry titles (21 of 71).

While it's not guaranteed that all of these award winners match our collection needs or scope, we can take some simple steps to share awareness of these and similar books so that librarians can easily browse the titles for selection. We recommend creating a shared space for posting award winning titles and other titles that reflect diverse voices and content, on a regular schedule. We will work with the incoming IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) Coordinator to determine the details around the acquisition of these titles, the maintenance of the lists, and the responsibility for making purchasing decisions. We can also increase campus awareness by posting newly acquired diversity-related titles of interest on social media, the library blog, our online collections space, or through direct emails with faculty.

## Project Description

Please describe the project you conducted.

- How will this project help you better understand student learning in your program?

For the FY22 Assessment Project, we assessed whether or not the DePaul University Library had purchased a selection of award-winning book titles that reflect diverse voices and/or content. By providing these selections to the DePaul community, students can see their experiences and identities in the material that they consume, and can better engage in the learning process. Ensuring that diverse authorship is present in the collection will also work toward centering voices in scholarship that have been traditionally “othered.”

## Data Collection and/or Methodology

How did you collect information about student learning for this project?

- How did you evaluate the information you collected?

I gathered a list of book awards (See Appendix B for Awards List) that are granted based on diversity criteria either related to the author's identity, or related to the content covered, spanning a range of different expressions of diversity, including race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and religion. I further included a list of books tagged as part of a diverse collection by our book supplier, GOBI. This additional list, the GOBI DEI Award Winners (G-DEIA), did not always provide specific information about the award won, or which diversity criteria were used. There were 618 total books in the final list, spanning over 10 years of awards, from 2010-2021, that were cross-checked with the library's holdings. List checking is a widely accepted collection-centered, quantitative approach to assessing collections.

In addition to determining if we had access to these titles, I collected additional data, including: date published, date of purchase, date of award given, genre of the book (fiction, non-fiction, or poetry), format of the book (print or e-book), number of times the book was checked out (if any), and which fund code was used for the purchase. Much of this work was automated, and was made possible through collaboration with the library's Technical Services department and our customer service representative at GOBI.

## Results

- What were the results of this project?

Checking the list against our holdings, I found that the DePaul University Library holds 281 of the 618 books, representing 45% of the total. By genre, the library holds 37% of the fiction titles (75 of 202), 54% of the non-fiction titles (185 of 345), and 30% of the poetry titles (21 of 71). Of the 337 titles that we do not have access to, 37% are fiction (n=127), 47% are non-fiction (n=160), and 15% are poetry (n=50).

56 of the 281 (20%) titles in this study that the library makes available are e-books. Some of these e-books are part of a collection to which the library subscribes, and some have been purchased outright.

### **Funds Used for Purchase**

The library has approximately 60 funds with allocations to support book purchases for different schools or departments. The funds are used by library liaisons to purchase books to support those areas. Examining the titles that DePaul has in our collection, 43 different funds were used to purchase those

titles. 5 funds<sup>1</sup> were used to purchase more than half of all of the titles (N=141). Figure 1 shows how many books were purchased with each fund, measuring those funds that were used more than twice. Because of limitations in our records, we were not able to gather fund information for 41 titles.

## **Usage**

Of the 281 titles in our collection, only 17 did not circulate at all. 71 circulated between 1-4 times. 119 circulated more than 4 times. Because of limitations in our records, there was no circulation data for 74 titles. Of these 74 titles with no circulation records, 56 are e-books.<sup>2</sup>

## **Different Awards Lists and Criteria**

Of the 618 total titles, 345 were included from the G-DEIA (GOBI DEI Award Winners). Of those, there were overlaps with only 27 titles found in the other awards lists included in this study. Looking at the 318 unique titles in the G-DEIA, the DePaul University Library has access to 105 of these 318 titles, or only 33%. This is a lower percentage than the 45% of titles owned overall.

Examining only the titles from the awards lists, not including the G-DEIA, we have access to 157, or 57%. Figure 2 shows the percentage of Award Winning Titles that are made accessible by the library, by year of award given, but excluding the G-DEIA titles. Although there is a drop in 2019, the overall percentages stay close to 50%.

## **Purchases by Year Published**

Of the 337 titles that DePaul does not currently provide access to, more than half (n=170), were published in 2019 or later.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of books held by year published, and also notes the total number published each year.

The percentage purchased by year published holds steady at 50% or more until 2017. The total number of books under consideration increased dramatically in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> The five funds are: REC-B, HST-N, ENG-B, OTH-N, and LIT-N.

<sup>2</sup> The way that e-book usage is compiled and calculated is distinct enough from circulation of physical books, that it was best not to compare this data with the data on print books for this report.

In contrast to Figure 3 that shows acquisition by year published, Figure 4 shows acquisition by fiscal year. The largest number of the award-winning books were purchased in FY20, with a steep drop in FY21. Before FY21, the trajectory was to generally purchase more of these each subsequent year, with FY14 being a small outlier in this trend.

13 of the books that were part of the list were acquired before FY11. 75 have no information about which fiscal year it was acquired. FY22 was not included since the numbers were not complete at the time of the data collection.

We additionally have information about when the books were published in relation to when they were recognized with an award. While 72 books were acquired sometime after they won the award, 134 books were acquired before they won the award. There is no information on when 75 of the books were acquired.

### Interpretation of Results

Based on your evaluation of the information you collected, what did you learn about your program that will assist with improving student learning?

Describe your program's satisfaction with the results.

We collect approximately half, or just under half, of the diversity-related award winning titles each year, as a part of our normal operations. At least 48% (n=134) of these books were purchased by the library before the books won the award in question. This suggests that there is no comprehensive effort to retrospectively collect award winning books.

The library purchases books on a number of different fund lines, spread across multiple selectors and multiple subject areas. The fund used most often to purchase diversity-related titles is our recreational reading collection that actively seeks out award winning titles and other fiction and non-fiction best sellers. Only eight of the books were initially purchased for course reserves.

The books that we do have from this list are well-used by the DePaul community. Only 6% (n=17) were never checked out. This data supports the underlying assumption that there is a need for adding more diverse award-winning books to our collection in order to meet demand and support student learning.

The library's normal purchasing cycle was seriously disrupted in FY20 and FY21 by the pandemic, as the library pivoted to remote operations, and the library adopted an e-preferred policy for acquiring books. E-books are generally more

costly, and popular bestsellers are often completely unavailable for libraries to purchase as e-books. The library may have been less likely to purchase books under consideration that were published in 2019 and 2020 because of these factors.

Part of this assessment has been a revealing examination of the 345 titles in the GOBI Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Awards List. According to GOBI, this list includes books having won “those Awards identified as honoring titles addressing topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion, or which were written by authors of diverse voices.” Some of the categories of diversity include: Asian Studies, Jewish Studies, Latin American Studies, Native American Studies, Black Studies, LGBTQ Studies, Islamic Studies, poverty studies, and English translations. The exact awards given to the GOBI titles were not always supplied.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations to what this assessment project does. This report does not assume that all of the books in these lists are necessary for our collection; and does not maintain that the awards lists used in this project are a complete list of all books from diverse authors and voices that are important for our collection. Further, this report does not examine any books published by differently abled authors or about disability studies.

This research, instead, provides one way to critically examine our holdings, our processes for acquiring books, and supplies some data to allow us to see where improvements to our core services are possible.

### Recommendations and Plans for Action

Based on the results of your assessment project, what recommendations do you have to improve student learning in your program in the future?

Recommendations may include:

- Areas for improvement and/or maintenance
- Areas for further inquiry
- Any necessary curricular changes
- Any necessary instructional changes
- Anything else?

Based on your recommendations for improvement, please describe your plans for implementing your recommendations. Please include:

- A timeline for each of these actions.

- Names of individuals and/or groups responsible for these actions.
- Requests for additional resources you will need to take these actions (ex. budget, training, hardware/software). Please note that resource requests will be directed through the normal budgeting process.
- Any potential barriers you see to implementing these actions.
- How you will share the results of your assessment
- Your stakeholders and how you will share the results of your assessment with them.

We recommend the following to improve the awareness of these titles to the library selectors who purchase books, improve our collections, improve discovery of these books, and improve outreach to the DePaul community:

- Share the results of this project with the incoming IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) Coordinator (beginning July 2022)
- Share the results with the University Library's Collections Steering Committee during Summer or Fall 2022.
- Investigate titles from the awards list that were not acquired for possible acquisition.
- Highlight lists of books with diverse authors and voices and post them on a shared space regularly, for all library staff to access. This should be implemented in 2022, in coordination with the incoming IDEA Librarian.
- The Collection Steering Committee and IDEA Coordinator will work to develop Library-wide goals for increasing representation of diverse authors and subjects in Library collections, including identifying specific areas of focus.
- Ensure that funding for diverse titles is available, and that library liaisons are encouraged to purchase these titles when appropriate for the collection. This effort may be spearheaded by the Collections Steering Committee, in coordination with the Library Director of Business and Administration, and the incoming IDEA Coordinator. As the budget is already determined for FY23, a focus on diverse award winning titles may be factored into the budget for FY24.
- Explore ways to encourage DePaul faculty and staff affinity groups to provide title recommendations.
- Investigate ways to display and/or promote these titles to the DePaul community. This suggestion will be brought to the Marketing and Communications Committee, in consultation with the incoming IDEA Coordinator during Fall 2022.
- Investigate ways to tag inclusive books at the time of purchase, so that they can be more easily discovered on our catalog and more easily promoted to the community.



Appendix A  
Figures:

Figure 1: Top Funds used to Acquire Titles, where funds were used more than 2 times

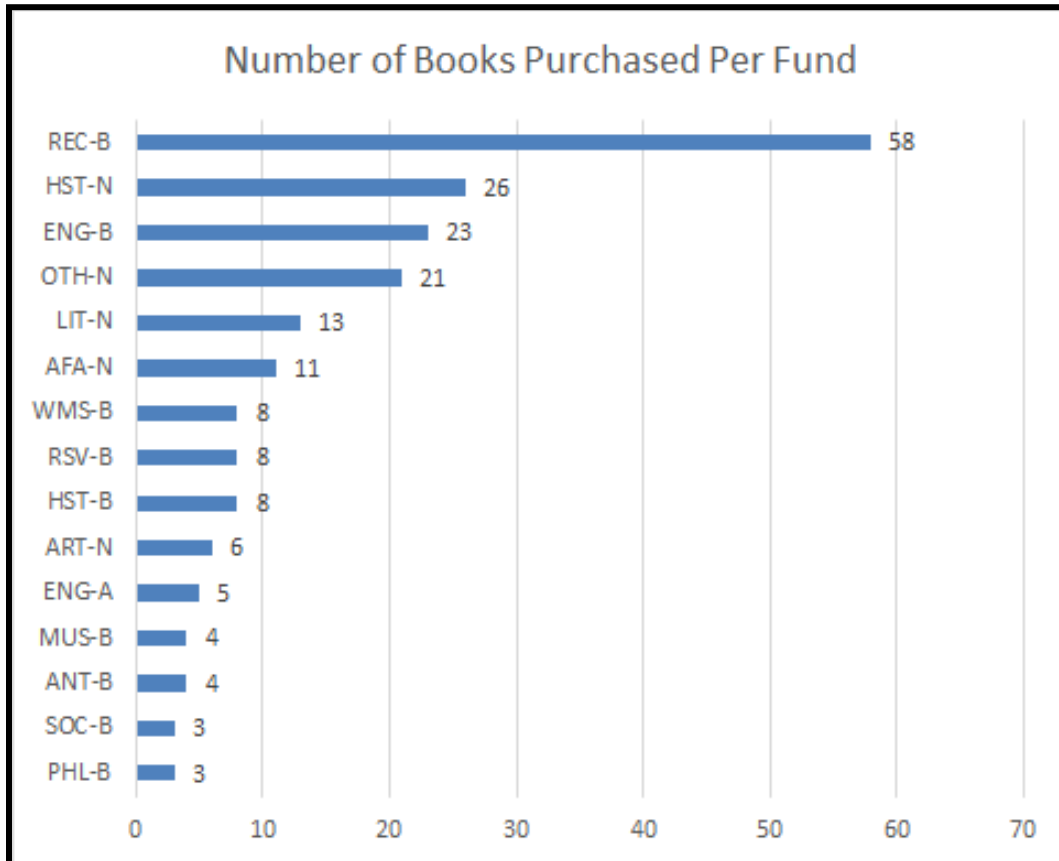


Figure 2. Titles Held by Year of Award Given, excluding G-DEIA

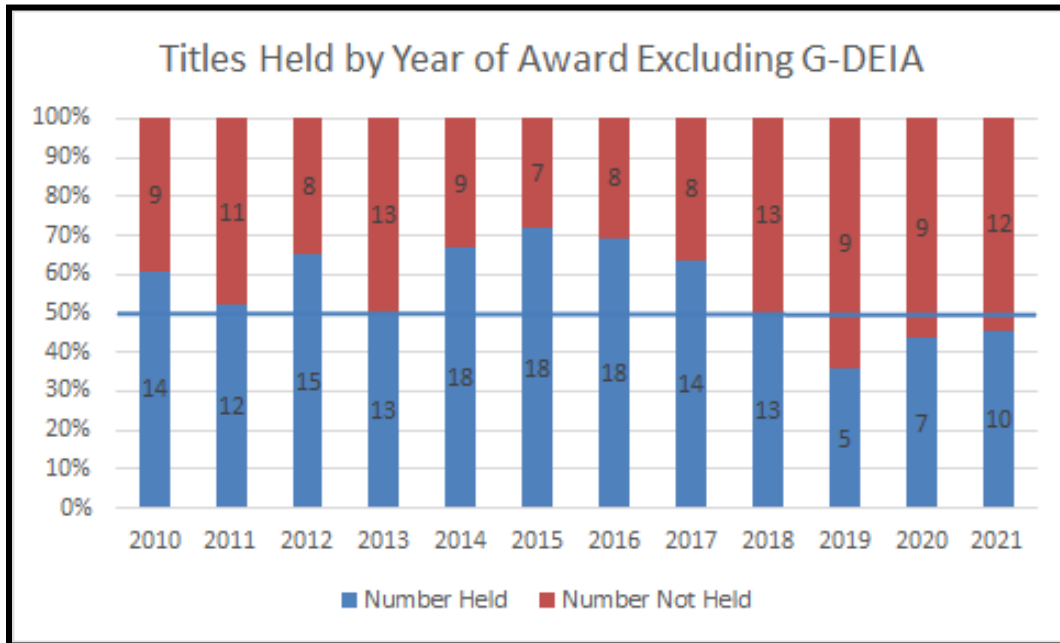


Figure 3. Percentage of books held by year published.

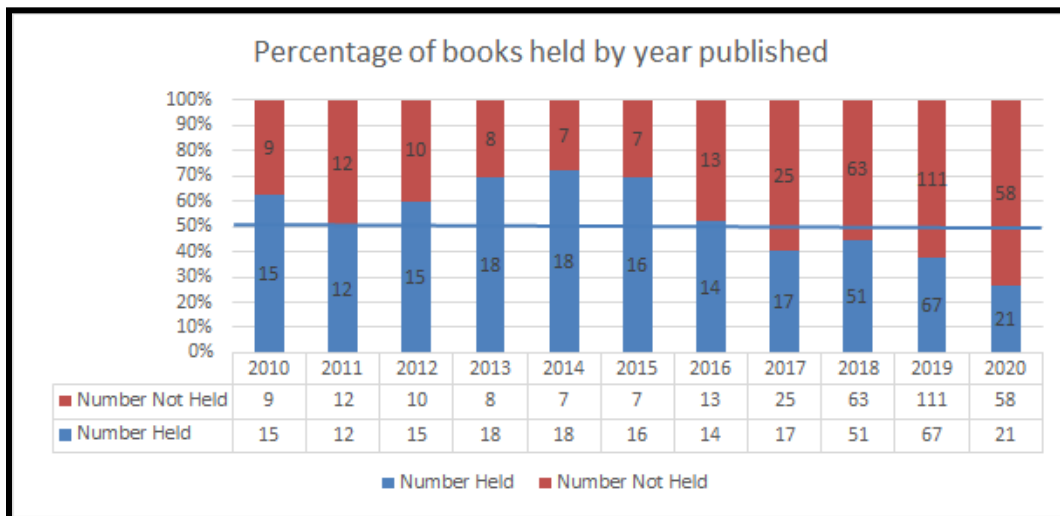
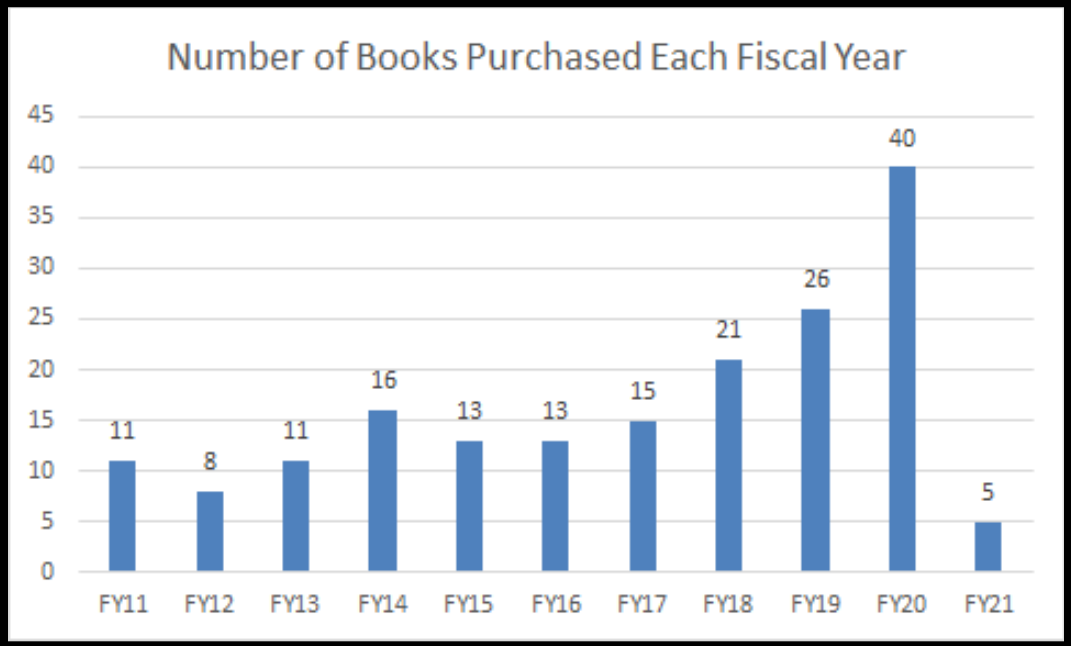


Figure 4. Number of Books Purchased Per Fiscal Year



Appendix B:  
Book Awards Lists Consulted

AAHHEE (American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education) Books of the Year Awards

<https://www.aahhe.org/books-of-the-year-awards>

Anisfeld-Wolf Book Awards:

<https://www.anisfeld-wolf.org/>

Arab American Book Award:

<https://arabamericanmuseum.org/2021-arab-american-book-award-winners/>

Asian Pacific American Librarians Association:

<https://www.apalaweb.org/awards/literature-awards/>

Association for Asian American Studies Book Award

<https://aaastudies.org/awards/>

Black Caucus of the American Library Association Literary Award

<https://www.bcala.org/>

PEN Open Book Award

<https://pen.org/pen-open-book-award/>

Stonewall Book Awards

<https://www.ala.org/rt/rrt/award/stonewall/honored>

Sophie Brodie Award

<https://rusaupdate.org/awards/sophie-brody-medal/>

## Appendix C: Bibliography

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