

chapter six

Collection Development for Global Campus Libraries

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Beginning with the October 2007 announcement of creating New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi, through the opening of New York University Shanghai in August 2013, the NYU Division of Libraries has faced the challenge of building collections for a Global University Network. Although the work of collection development does not change substantially with the introduction of distance, there are nevertheless unique challenges involved. In this chapter, we discuss these challenges and the decisions made to ensure local collections at our portal campuses meet the teaching and research needs of the institutions.

Introduction

Early on the decision was made to handle collection development for the new portal campuses, along with technical services, from New York, rather than expect the local staff—who in some cases had not yet been hired—to take on this task among myriad others involved with opening a library. Although NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai were envisioned as liberal arts and sciences degree-granting institutions, the model used for collection development in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai had much in common with the familiar branch campus model. In many ways, both libraries functioned as branch campus libraries in their early days, with limited on-site staff and minimal print collections. This is no longer the case; both libraries are now well-staffed locally and their on-site collections have grown significantly.

While opening branch and international campuses of U.S. institutions is well covered in the literature generally, it is treated most often in terms of services,¹

and there is little written specifically on the topic of collection development for such libraries; Silveria and Leonard, and Gilreath being notable exceptions.² Robert Seal provides a thorough review of many of the issues involved in starting and maintaining academic branch libraries, including issues of developing print collections.³ Fortunately, the information landscape has changed to such a degree that it is now possible to open a branch library with an excellent research collection available electronically through pre-existing subscriptions and acquisitions by the university library system, in addition to increasingly rich and efficient delivery services provided by the main library. These, however, do not eliminate the need for excellent local print collections to support teaching and research.

Don Lanier provides an informative discussion of the tension between centralized and decentralized models of collection development in branch libraries.⁴ At the extremes, the centralized model places all decision-making with the main library, whereas in the decentralized model the branch library is responsible for all collection decisions. This model can be applied to any aspect of library administration or service, of course, and not just collection development. In the NYU Division of Libraries, our approach to collection development for the portal campuses operates according to a modified centralized model: insofar as the primary collection development librarians are based in New York, yet work directly with the faculty and staff in the libraries abroad to develop the collection. More recently, NYU Abu Dhabi librarians have begun to participate in selecting materials for the collection as well.

This modified centralized approach has many benefits, for example, easy access to subject specialist librarians at the main library, opportunity to attend general collection development meetings, and a better understanding of how the local collection fits with the broader university collection than might otherwise be possible. On the other hand, the centralized model, however modified, runs the risk of falling short in terms of responsiveness to local needs. In building the collections for our portal campus libraries, we have worked to balance these benefits and risks at each stage. In what follows, we will discuss the different stages of the process of collection development: needs assessment, initial selection, and ongoing selection. We will then briefly discuss the special communication issues involved with these processes.

Needs Assessment: Abu Dhabi

To build the collections in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai in a way that will best serve the current and future users, it has been necessary to undertake multi-faceted needs assessments. As collection development began before the campuses had opened—each with a rapidly developing faculty and curriculum—we were unable to assess the adequacy of any current collection. We needed to build a print collection from the ground up, albeit with the marked advantage of access to NYU's electronic holdings, as well as the print collection in New York.

After a great deal of planning at the highest levels of the university to articulate the vision, mission, academic program, funding, and infrastructure for the Global Network University, work to create the library began to move forward. By the 2008–09 academic year, a library director was in place in Abu Dhabi. Along with a very small library staff, the director worked with various administrative staff and faculty on-site as the temporary campus was taking shape. In the fall 2009, a part-time librarian was brought on board in New York to concentrate on collection development. Initial activities included a thorough review of curriculum documents describing the proposed academic programs, subject majors, and specific courses to be offered. Faculty designated to teach in Abu Dhabi were consulted, as were the Deans of various academic departments, to solicit input on the library collection. Because NYU Abu Dhabi academic and administrative staff had offices at the Washington Square campus in New York, scheduling in-person meetings was relatively easy and could occur frequently. Conversations with individual subject specialists in the New York libraries were another important form of outreach to gain insight into academic strengths, faculty research areas, and collection directions.

The near-term goal for the library was to support courses being offered to the incoming NYU Abu Dhabi freshman class in the opening fall 2010 semester and to build a solid interdisciplinary collection for the developing four-year institution. An equally important goal was to support research for faculty teaching in Abu Dhabi as well as faculty and post-doctorates affiliated with the NYU Abu Dhabi research institutes. Relying on course syllabi would go a long way toward meeting the near-term goal and developing a fast and efficient document delivery service would contribute greatly toward meeting needs for wider research.

The librarian for Abu Dhabi collections was in frequent contact with the NYU Abu Dhabi Associate Director of Academic Programs to discuss library support for the inaugural fall semester. From the outset, syllabi for all courses to be taught were shared with the library. The library would then purchase all required readings as well as all recommended or supplementary titles. In addition, syllabi were carefully reviewed to identify where the on-site collection needed to be strengthened. For example, five undergraduate degree programs in engineering were to be offered at NYU Abu Dhabi. Engineering as an academic department or major had not been present at the New York campus for many years; thus there was minimal support in the existing library collection for the new undergraduate engineering courses to be taught in Abu Dhabi. By reviewing the syllabi in consultation with faculty, Abu Dhabi's near-term collection needs in engineering were satisfied and long-term direction came into view.

Needs Assessment: Shanghai

In its first year, the NYU Shanghai campus was located in a building on the East China Normal University campus in the Putuo District of Shanghai. Capitalizing on

experience gained in creating the collection for Abu Dhabi, it was decided that we would not build a day-one collection for Shanghai. Instead, to meet general research needs, we would rely on delivery services from New York for physical materials and on electronic resources provided by NYU as a whole. In addition, a targeted collection of reserve materials, drawn from syllabi, was selected to support classes that would be in place for the first year. This is not to say collection development efforts at that stage were limited to reading syllabi. On the contrary, while fulfilling immediate needs expressed in the syllabi, we also began a more general needs assessment.

In the spring of 2013, collections librarians based in New York had a series of meetings with members of the NYU Shanghai academic leadership to discuss ways the collection could support teaching and research for the first few semesters and for the long term. We discussed not only plans for the curriculum and how the collection could serve teaching and research, but also a more general vision of the sort of collection most appropriate to a liberal arts campus. Meetings, both in-person and virtual, were arranged with members of the Academic Affairs office in Shanghai, helping to establish an ongoing relationship crucial to both the development of the collection and support for classes. A tangible outcome of this relationship is the formalized sharing of syllabi with the collection development librarian, which both ensures the collection holds texts necessary for courses being taught and aids the collection development librarian in supplementary collecting.

While it is sometimes the case that branch library collections are geared exclusively towards course support, this is only one aspect of the collections in Shanghai and Abu Dhabi. Despite significant limitations placed on the size of the print collections (particularly in Shanghai) both institutions are research institutions supporting research performed by teaching faculty and the separate research institutes at each site. When the collection needs to support faculty research, the syllabi and curriculum are not sufficiently informative. Thus, direct outreach to the faculty was a major early component in needs assessment for both new libraries. In the case of Shanghai, the collection development librarian personally wrote each incoming instructor, the semester before the campus opened when no other library staff were in place, to offer services and collection development for the instructor's teaching and research. The response rate was high and responses very positive, although there were few concrete outcomes at the time. However, this direct outreach began an ongoing process of building relationships with faculty that has borne fruit over time. Given the distance involved, regular contact with faculty by email has been a crucial part of the ongoing collection development process in Shanghai.

Initial Selection: Abu Dhabi

The required reading lists, which were a component of the syllabi, formed the basis of initial purchasing to build the day-one collection. Faculty and departmental contacts sent to the library rather extensive bibliographies of relevant materi-

als they felt would be appropriate for the collection. These lists greatly assisted in shaping the early collection and identifying directions for the purchase of supplementary material.

From the outset, a number of characteristics defined the NYU Abu Dhabi physical collection. As the language of instruction would be English, English-language materials would form the vast majority of the collection with selected non-English materials purchased to support language learning in Arabic and Chinese. European-language publications are being purchased over time, but the print collection remains mostly English-language materials. Acquiring materials published within the last ten years was another concentration for initial purchases.

Retrospective publications would be provided through a document delivery service established to leverage the circulating collection of NYU in New York. Interlibrary loan (ILL) would be available to the NYU Abu Dhabi population when an item cannot be provided from the New York collection. Both services are coordinated from New York and have been very well received. Even as the onsite library collection grows, because of additional faculty at NYU Abu Dhabi and a larger student body now spanning all four academic classes, document delivery remains a key extension of the collection. Expedited shipping of physical materials back and forth is not inexpensive but has proven its value. Regularly produced reports of items requested from the New York collection and via interlibrary loan assist with assessing the onsite collection in light of users' needs.

Additional decisions influenced the character of the NYU Abu Dhabi collection. Print references were kept to a minimum since a robust offering of electronic reference sources was already in place via the main NYU libraries. Similarly, NYU Abu Dhabi users would rely on online journals, both current and retrospective, as is largely the case for the user population in New York. A small collection of print journals is available in the Abu Dhabi library. Titles were selected to represent core subject areas, news and current events, and regional publications. Many publications are held for only six months, while some are retained and archived indefinitely.

Another influence on building the collection relates to media. Courses across the NYU Abu Dhabi curriculum included film titles as required viewing, so purchasing DVDs (and when not available, VHS) of documentaries and feature films was an important aspect of initial collection development. Use of media continues to grow at NYU Abu Dhabi and the library collection now holds over five thousand media titles. Also, a streaming service between campuses was developed to make DVDs held in the NYU New York collection accessible for courses taught in Abu Dhabi. The library even collected selected films and related materials related to the annual Abu Dhabi Film Festival for its Special Collections department. This resource will become increasingly significant as the Film Festival ended in 2015.

Expanding the acquisition of electronic books also influenced collection development for NYU Abu Dhabi. Adding electronic resources in new subject areas

important to NYU Abu Dhabi, such as engineering, contributed to the development of the collection. In general, titles would not be duplicated in both print and electronic formats. In a number of disciplines, such as the sciences, electronic materials would be the preferred format. Many publishers' frontlist electronic book packages were added for NYU-wide access along with the purchase of selective backlists. Whether e-books, online databases, or online journals, our licenses always take into account global access for all NYU campuses and academic sites. Weighing whether print or electronic is most appropriate continues to be an ongoing part of collection development.

Initial Selection: Shanghai

As in Abu Dhabi, course materials (including syllabi and curriculum documents) were the basis for the early steps in developing the collection, along with information gleaned from meetings and consultation with faculty and academic affairs departments. Another outcome of the meetings with NYU Shanghai Academic Affairs was the decision to collect textbooks needed for courses, something that is not a part of collection development at the main library in New York. The reason for modification to the collection development policy in Shanghai was a practical one. It could take several months for textbooks ordered for students to arrive in China. We wanted to ensure that students had access to at least one reserve copy. On more than one occasion, the library's copy of a textbook was the only one on hand.

The collection would be largely (but not exclusively) in English, the language of instruction on campus. As the library was to occupy a temporary space for only one academic year, we did not collect heavily in print materials or media, nor did we subscribe to any journals during this period. Similar to Abu Dhabi, we have been able to rely on excellent delivery services from New York, including ILL, to supplement the collection.

Ongoing Selection: Abu Dhabi

Once the initial selection of materials required to support immediate needs was underway, we began developing and implementing policies and procedures for ongoing collection development.

An approval plan was crafted for the library, shaped to reflect the overall liberal arts direction of NYU Abu Dhabi. All NYU librarians, using the vendor's website as part of their collection development, can observe which titles are going to which library whether selected from slips or received automatically on approval. The plan takes into account the increasing number of e-books being added to the NYU libraries via publisher packages so as not to duplicate in print what is available electronically. This means for specific publishers, identified by NYU

Libraries, titles published in electronic format will automatically be available to our global user community. Title by title selection is not necessary. In addition, librarians doing collection development can request specific e-book titles be ordered individually when reviewing approval slips or searching the system. These “firm ordered” e-books enable the library to add appropriate titles that may not be included in the publisher packages established for NYU, as well as acquire e-books from other publishers.

Initially, a shelf-ready approach was attempted so that both approval books and those purchased from slips would arrive fully cataloged, labeled, and ready to ship out. This approach ended early on because it slowed down the time it took to get materials into the hands of students and faculty overseas, and the cost savings was not sufficiently compelling. The profile has been modified several times and continues to be examined to ensure that appropriate titles are coming in. We have also designated e-preferred as the format for new publications in selected subject areas of the profile. Currently, librarians in Abu Dhabi are reviewing slips in specific subject areas, informed by consultation with faculty and users, and selecting titles for purchase as appropriate. These collection development responsibilities are a natural outgrowth of their role as liaisons to their academic departments.

A good working relationship between the staff of NYU Abu Dhabi Library and their campus bookstore was developed in the start-up year and continues to be mutually beneficial. Initially this led to efficiencies in handling syllabi purchases, course textbooks, and faculty-authored works. The bookstore continues to expand its inventory and services, such as providing non-course specific material and special purchase requests.

A librarian position in Abu Dhabi has technical services responsibilities and supports collection development with direct firm ordering, assisting with the approval plan, communicating with vendors, and serving as principal liaison with the New York-based Global Processing Unit. The librarian also contributes to collection development in several subject areas and for Arabic language materials. At this point, nearly all syllabi-specific ordering is handled directly from Abu Dhabi while the coordination of the approval plan and wider selection (e.g., retrospective material, special subject projects) is generally carried out from New York.

An area of collection development that has been increasing in the last year is acquisitions of archival materials and special collections. A few notable projects include: the Global Shakespeare collection (consisting of first and early editions of translations of the plays), a photobook collection (to support research in the history of photography), and a multi-media maps collection (comprised of contemporary and historic maps of the region). Collecting for special collections is done collaboratively by librarians in New York and Abu Dhabi with much mutual consultation and enthusiasm.

Ongoing Selections: Shanghai

In the first months after NYU Shanghai opened, the collection development librarian worked on site, both to help open the library as staff and professional positions were filled and to gain an understanding of the collection needs in Shanghai. This was an extremely beneficial time, as it allowed him to meet the faculty and students and discuss in great depth the work being done in Shanghai. In addition to the wealth of information gained, this was an opportunity to establish relationships with faculty and lend a face and shared experience to what would otherwise be another name or email address. As with any liaison work, this sort of personal outreach has significant effects and improves not only the collection, but also the relationship between the library and academic departments.

As we prepared to move to our permanent home in the second year, the approach to collecting shifted from meeting immediate course demands to building a collection in support of teaching and learning, as well as providing a rich selection of works to support student research. Using Abu Dhabi's approval profile as a base and leaning heavily on experience gained while in Shanghai, we created our own approval profile and tailored it to meet Shanghai's needs. In addition to using the profile for an ongoing approval plan, it was applied retrospectively to three years of publications to build a core collection. Lists were generated of items meeting the profile criteria and the collection development librarian selected the titles to be purchased. This approach required intensive work, not only in collections but also in technical services and acquisitions. In this way, we were able to open our Pudong campus in 2014 with a print collection of ten thousand items. It was at this time that we began to significantly increase the collection of DVDs, both feature films and documentaries, in addition to subscribing to a handful of periodicals. We have also recently begun acquisition of major electronic databases not previously held across the NYU network.

Communication: Abu Dhabi and Shanghai

Now that the print collection is well-established, selection has become more a routine; books come in regularly on approval, slips are reviewed, and selections are made according to the profile. However, given the developing nature of the two campuses, it is still of paramount importance to maintain active communication with faculty and staff in order to ensure the library continues to meet local needs.

Communication between New York and Abu Dhabi has been critical at every step of developing the on-site collection at NYU Abu Dhabi. Frequent emails and weekly virtual meetings, both one-on-one and as groups, were essential for sharing information, resolving problems, building strong working relationships, troubleshooting, and providing staff training. Meetings often included staff from multiple library units: technical processing, access services, collection develop-

ment, and public services. Once library staff were on-site in Shanghai, similar communication took place to coordinate efforts there with those in New York.

Time zone and workweek differences presented some difficulties in communication; typical notions of appropriate response time had to adjust given a time difference of eight or twelve hours between locations. Overall, the challenges of working remotely, from both the user population and from library colleagues, were offset by virtual meetings, email, and other computer-mediated communication. Written documentation for procedures, keeping track of decisions, and summaries of meetings were heavily relied upon, especially in the early stages. Now that processes are established, keeping the necessary documentation up-to-date is a greater focus of attention. The frequency of Skype meetings has declined, but email continues to be an essential form of communication.

Relationships made via email are not limited to communication at a distance, but serve as a foundation for more productive site visits as well. Although expensive and sometimes difficult on schedules, site visits have been instrumental in our ability to develop the library collections for the Abu Dhabi and Shanghai campuses. A visit by the collection development librarian for NYU Shanghai (going from New York to work in Shanghai) not only allowed for easier information gathering, but put a face to a name which helps to foster trust and bolster service. Especially since this visit occurred early in the process, it demonstrated the librarian's concern and readiness to provide the materials necessary to support teaching and research.

Site visits have been extremely important for staff training, sharing information, and gaining first-hand knowledge of how things work and who we are working with and for. Abu Dhabi and Shanghai librarians have spent time at the New York Washington Square campus for varying periods, from a week to several months. Selected librarians from New York, including the librarian for Abu Dhabi collections and the librarian for Shanghai collections, have gone overseas. These working visits have included staff training sessions and one-on-one meetings with faculty, instructors, deans, various administrators, and library staff. Visits have included sitting in on classes, attending various academic events, participating in instruction sessions or reference interviews, attending conferences, and even touring a local book fair. When in Shanghai, for example, the collection development librarian attended curriculum committee meetings and library advisory board meetings, thereby gaining important insights on academic directions and how the library collection can meet teaching and research needs.

Site visits also provide opportunities for building rapport, mentoring, and professional development. In terms of collection development, working in physical proximity to colleagues enables casual conversations about a wide range of topics which lead to helpful insights and shared learning about publishing trends, effective outreach to faculty, evaluating a new series of possible database offerings, tips for using the approval plan most effectively, and so on. It is impressive how much excellent work has been accomplished, largely via virtual communica-

tion, to bring the NYU Abu Dhabi Library collection to its current state. Yet every in-person interaction has contributed much to the overall success of this endeavor.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

The library collections for both NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai are a result of consistent and effective communication and collaboration among library staff in the U.S. and abroad, and of strong working relationships between the libraries and the academic and administrative staff locally and globally. Needs assessment for developing the collection followed thorough study of the university's academic plan and led to effective selection of materials for both the opening day curriculum and the ongoing teaching and research needs of students and faculty. Policies and procedures were developed to build a strong collection and ensure resources would be available based on direct faculty request, course syllabi listings, approval plan purchasing, document delivery, and librarian subject expertise. Along the way, challenges have been met and the resulting library collections at both new campuses represent the strengths of the NYU Global Network University. Clearly the work is ongoing; it will continue to be rewarding and successful in developing collections for NYU's global campus libraries.

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Biographies

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