

## Jones Library Collection Development Policy

### Mission Statement

The Jones Library will be a community hub to a diverse population of Amherst residents, where books are celebrated and all members of the community can enhance their educational, cultural, and lifelong learning pursuits.

### Introduction

The Jones Library acquires materials and resources that offer ideas, knowledge, and recreation for members of the Amherst-area community. With free and equal access to the collection, the Library helps to sustain the values of democracy and intellectual freedom. The Jones Library adheres to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*

[\[https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill\]](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill) by providing materials and information that express varying points of view.

This *Collection Development Policy* guides staff decisions regarding selection and deselection of Library materials to ensure collections that are useful, relevant, current, and integral to residents. Library staff continually gather and analyze data, including circulation statistics, professional reviews, and patron requests, to anticipate demand for new materials and new formats and to improve the usefulness of the Library collections.

### Selection Criteria

Standards and criteria employed for selection decisions include:

1. Demonstrated interest, need, or demand by patrons
2. Individual merit of each title
3. Significance of the creators, including their popularity, authority, and competence
4. Representation of diverse points of view
5. Recent publication date or contemporary significance
6. Relationship and importance to the entire collection
7. Format, durability, and ease of use
8. Scarcity or availability of materials elsewhere
9. Physical space required for shelving and display
10. Local significance or interest
11. Locally produced or created content that meets standards and criteria outlined above
12. Financial resources

Materials need not meet all criteria to be selected. In particular, an item may be purchased if there is heavy demand, even though reviews may be unfavorable or other items on the same subject are in the collection.

### Scope of the Collection

The Jones Library seeks to maintain a collection that is of value to people of all races, cultures, religions, socioeconomic statuses, ages, visible and invisible disabilities, political and social viewpoints, sexual orientations, and gender identities. Library staff prioritize expanding our collections to meet the needs of previously underserved members of our community more fully.

Amherst is a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse town. (Recent census data shows that more than 20% of its residents do not speak English at home.) Library collections will respond to community

demand for materials in world languages and for materials on learning to read, speak, and write in English.

More than 60% of adult residents age 25+ years have academic degrees at the Bachelor's level or higher, and local employment is concentrated in education and professional positions. Collections will reflect the fact that a majority of Amherst adults read at the college level.

The Jones Library does not sanction particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given item equivalent to an endorsement of the creator's viewpoint.

The youth collections support learning and creativity for young people from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and are a source of information for caregivers and educators. The youth collections enable growth in literacy and lifelong learning by providing materials that stimulate creativity and encourage curiosity, as well as giving readers symbolic "[mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors](#)" that develop their sense of identity and empathy. Materials are organized and displayed for ease of access given the various capabilities of children and young adults.

A collection of materials specifically selected for young adults is maintained by the Library. Materials are selected as a bridge between the juvenile and adult collections. Novels and recreational materials are selected because of their special appeal for this age group.

Children and young adults are not limited to the youth collections. They are encouraged to make full use of the entire Library collection to the extent that their interests and capabilities allow. We support the American Library Association's principle that caregivers have the right and responsibility to restrict access of their children-- and only their children-- to Library resources. Librarians and governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users.

The Jones Library, Munson Memorial Library, and North Amherst Library are all integral parts of the Jones Library system and must be viewed in relation to one another. The main Library houses the largest collection and includes reference materials, archival materials, and an extensive popular materials collection. It has a generally high level of subject strength intended to meet the varied needs of users. At the Branches the focus is on current and popular materials, including those reflecting diverse views. The Special Collections department has its own *Collection Development Policy*, which reflects its particular mission.

### **Formats and Access**

In order to meet the entire community's needs, the Jones Library acquires books and media in a variety of physical and digital formats. The Library also acquires other equipment and items (for example, musical instruments) in response to community demand. In some instances the same title may be acquired in several formats or with multiple copies. The Library also funds its patrons' free access to digital books and audiobooks, recorded music, and films.

### **Resource Sharing**

The Jones Library participates in several cooperative resource sharing networks, including CW MARS, a consortium of over 150 libraries with over 8 million items; the statewide Commonwealth Catalog; and a nationwide interlibrary loan program. Purchase of specialized materials already held by university or college libraries is avoided unless justified by recurring demand. No attempt is made to offer textbooks if those materials lack general interest.

### **Suggestions for Purchase**

The Library welcomes suggestions for purchases from members of the community. Suggestions may be made to Library staff or online via a form on our website. All suggestions are subject to the same selection criteria as any other materials.

### **Gifts and Donations**

All items become property of the Jones Library. The decision to retain items is made by designated Library staff who evaluate them by condition and other selection criteria. The staff does not provide a financial estimate of any gifts' worth for tax deductions or other purposes, but will provide a receipt of those items received if requested by the donor. Financial donations for materials are welcome. The Library will evaluate whether to accept funds in instances where additional restrictions have been placed upon them.

### **Retention and Withdrawal of Materials**

In order to maintain a collection of current and relevant Library materials that meet the needs of Amherst-area residents, Library staff assess materials for retention. The standards and criteria employed for retention decisions include:

1. Condition
2. Demand
3. Accuracy or currency of information
4. Availability elsewhere
5. Number of copies in the collection

The Library strives to ensure that discarded Library materials are handled in an environmentally responsible manner.

### **Responsibility for Selection**

The Jones Library Board of Trustees delegates to the Library Director the authority and responsibility for selection and management of all collections within the framework of this policy. The Library Director entrusts these responsibilities to professional staff who are responsible for collection management.

#### Reconsideration of Library Materials

Jones Library cardholders who are concerned about the appropriateness of a particular item in the collection are encouraged to speak with Library staff for more information about the item and its place in the collection. An official request for the Jones Library to reconsider materials must be made in writing using the Jones Library's *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form, which is available in the office. The Director will review the title, meet with staff, and meet with the individual(s) to review the complaint, and then will make a written ruling that is in accordance with the *Collection Development Policy*. If unsatisfied, the individual(s) may pursue the complaint with the Board of Trustees by making a written request to the Board. A ruling by the Board of Trustees is final.

Library employees are protected by Chapter 322 of the *General Laws of Massachusetts*, which states that no employee shall be dismissed for the selection of Library materials under an approved policy that is in accordance with the standards of the American Library Association.