Appendix 2

History of the Collection (1996)

Prior to establishment of the UNM School of Medicine, the Bernalillo County Medical Society maintained a modest-sized library collection for its members. Other local groups associated with the healthcare professions such as nursing students were welcome to access this small collection, located originally in 1949 at St. Joseph's Hospital. Each society member paid a $15 annual assessment to build and maintain this small collection. In the mid-1950's this library was moved to the Bernalillo County Indian Hospital. In 1963 the library was merged with the newly-formed UNM Medical School under the guidance of two separate oversight committees from each organization. An abandoned 7-Up bottling plant building became the location of this new, reconstituted library. By 1965, the library collection contained 21,000 volumes and offered nearly 1200 subscriptions.

Space shortages, undesirable environmental conditions, and inadequate staffing plagued the library as its collections grew to meet the demands of an expanding medical center. The Table 1 documents collection growth for representative years during the 1954-1995 period. The mid-1970's witnessed efforts to design and finance a new building to house this library charged with serving a rapidly-growing parent institution. Bond monies in the late 1970's and early 1980's enabled the Library to build its collections. Table 1 documents this period of growth linked to these supplemental budgets.

By the mid-1980's the impetus for rigorous collection evaluation started to be driven by factors other than quality assurance. The expanding scope and depth of Medical Center programs were producing increased user demands upon services and collections. The Table located in the Appendix A, documents the growth of user populations. Annual collection development budgets, particularly since the diminution of bond funds, did not increase to keep pace with growing user demands. The divergence between static allocated funds and expanding demands, however, was overshadowed by the spectre of inflationary price increases for medical monographs and journals.

These three factors -- growing user demands, modest budget allocations, and inflationary price increases -- prompted the Library to pursue a number of evaluation projects. Journal cancellations were extensive. During the years 1987 to 1994, nearly 600 subscriptions were cancelled in attempts to reduce the extent of Serials budget deficits. Declining quality for some titles and the peripheral relevance of subject scope of other titles also led to some cancellations. The Library managed, with some success, to suppress unit costs of monographs purchased in spite of inflationary trends. The Table in the Appendix B, juxtaposes budget allocations with rates of inflation for books and journals during representative years.
The HSC Library has limited power to influence price increases, budget levels, and expanding user demands. These challenges pose a worldwide problem facing many libraries. In regards to this current context, the past three decades' history for what now has been renamed the Health Sciences Center Library suggests that the challenges similar to those facing librarians developing collections in the past will continue to demand innovative responses in the future to meet users' needs.

1. The first part of this historical sketch was based upon Theresa Gervais Haynes, "Twenty Years and Beyond: A Backward Glance" in the University of New Mexico Medical Center Library's Annual Report 1983-1984, pp ii-ix.


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