

**Cooperative Collection Development for the Five Colleges of Ohio Libraries:
A White Paper Submitted to the Chief Academic Officers by the Library Committee
September 30, 2003**

The Five Colleges of Ohio have been pioneers in the world of liberal arts colleges by working together to provide higher quality service to our constituents than any of us could deliver alone. These initiatives have continually resulted in grant opportunities and projects to move the consortium forward into new areas of cooperation. The consortium's libraries hope to continue this forward momentum by advancing cooperative collection development and management, so that our information resources can be most judiciously applied to the greater good of both the constituents of the Five Colleges of Ohio and our statewide partners through OhioLINK.

Answers to Key Questions About Cooperative Collection Development

What is cooperative collection development? How is it accomplished? For the Five Colleges of Ohio, joint collection development (as opposed to individual campus collection development) is being accomplished by:

- Deliberately selecting materials in consultation with the other members, so that more unique titles are acquired
- Extended lending and reserve borrowing periods for faculty
- Reducing delivery time for materials (currently proposed, a feasibility study is underway)
- Using the storage facility effectively.

Are there examples of specific benefits and enhancements?

- CONSORT offers greater benefits than OhioLINK by allowing circulation of videos, full-semester loans for faculty, sharing of materials for course reserves, and use of special collections by classes
- The transfer of materials to CONStor results in increased availability of material to our faculty and students, as they may now borrow bound periodical volumes and have longer loans of Oberlin materials
- The designation of a "library of record" ensures the retention of print copies of journals included in the electronic JSTOR collection
- A "last copy" policy ensures the retention of singularly held items.

What were the motivations to begin cooperative collection development?

- To provide more unique resources
- To strengthen and diversify local collections while improving access to research level materials
- To retain and preserve lesser-used materials in storage in order to free valuable campus library space for new acquisitions.

How long will cooperative collection development take? How do we judge success?

- The development of library collections will never truly be complete, because it is an ongoing process, one that is not easily quantified. Collection development, cooperative or at an individual institution, is influenced by changes in educational programs, modes of

scholarly communication, expectations of students and faculty, technology, material formats (e.g., videotape is replaced by DVDs), and economic factors

- The best measure of success comes from improved research support and from greater faculty and student satisfaction with available information resources
- Our immediate goal over the next three years is to select two mainstream disciplines and create a readily available, research level library collection among the Five Colleges of Ohio, while maintaining strong collections on each campus.

Why should independent liberal arts colleges engage in cooperative collection development? Because together we can:

- Build a richer shared collection
- Reduce unnecessary duplication
- Improve the utility of our shared catalog
- Improve access to materials in the shared collection
- Maximize use of on-campus library space through the use of shared off-site storage

Our colleges offer students the opportunity to interact closely with faculty and to engage in critical thinking and research, but the libraries struggle to provide adequate local collections to support these programs within existing budgets. Through cooperative collection development the libraries can strengthen local collections on each campus while improving users' ready access to research level material. The shared off-site storage facility, also a cooperative collection development endeavor, enables us to retain and preserve older, lesser-used materials, freeing valuable campus library space for new acquisitions.

Since we already have OhioLINK, why do we need to improve the local library collections?

OhioLINK membership offers us access to a rich collection of scholarly books, journals, and digital media with statewide delivery. Nevertheless, the strength of OhioLINK is only as great as its constituent collections, which must continue to grow and improve. Meanwhile, our access to OhioLINK materials is limited by the same policies that govern all OhioLINK members, e.g., limited circulation periods, limits on sharing some formats, and delivery times that frequently reach five days or longer. Duplication of materials statewide remains a problem.

Through deliberate cooperation among the Five Colleges, we can focus on acquiring those materials most suited for research-oriented, liberal arts colleges and working towards sharing our materials in a seamless way. We already offer non-OhioLINK services, such as sharing non-print resources and books for course reserves, and extended borrowing periods for faculty. Delivery time among the Five Colleges is under review, and we hope to improve it within the foreseeable future.

Our goal is to build and share a readily available, research level library collection among the Five Colleges of Ohio, while maintaining strong collections on each campus.