Mission Impossible: Weeding on a wing and a prayer.

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Reference/Cataloging Librarian
A little context about IUP

- 1875 Indiana Normal School
- 1927 Indiana State teachers college
- 1965 Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- One of the 14 state owned universities of the PASSHE
- 12,500 students and 700 faculty
- 14 doctoral and 45 masters programs
Librarians are:

• Faculty at IUP
• Same responsibilities as subject faculty for evaluation, tenure and promotion
• May teach credit courses
• Work fall and spring semesters with optional contracts for summer
• Unionized
The Library

• Sutton Hall Library, 1905)
• A hodgepodge of textbooks and various Pennsylvania newspapers.
Wilson Hall Library

- Early 1950’s
- Occupied the first floor only
The New Library

- Dr. Willis Pratt was president, a true scholar and visionary.
- Started the 60 by 60 library project
- 60,000 volumes by 1960
Stapleton Library

In 20 short years a new library was built holding a much larger collection – 500,000 volumes!

Today, about 440,000 volumes with the majority from the 1960’s and 70’s
Back door
How weeding the circulating collection of Stapleton Library became:

Mission Impossible
The Timeline -

- **Time line – Spring 2016** Dean first mentions a large weeding Project. The Librarians offer to put together a plan. **It's rejected.**

- **October 2016** meeting with the representative from Greenglass – tells the librarians, its **NOT** to be used for mass weeding.

- **February 2017** the Excel spreadsheets of titles from SCS Greenglass are received
Basic Project Parameters

**Goal**: Freeing physical space in the IUP Libraries building(s)

**Means**: Deaccessioning up to 44% of the IUP Library’s book holdings

**Deadline**: Initial review complete by August 10, 2017, later changed to December 1, 2017

**Items to Review**: 209,668 at first

**Only Criteria Used**: No recorded circulations*
Challenges

• Simultaneous implementation of a new library management system –
  ALMA began in April 2017, Primo in June
• Faculty expected to do both
• Limited summer contract time
• Only 8 of 12 faculty available for weeding
• Revised the criteria to exclude works 2000+ copyright, Children’s collection, Branch campuses, and Music library.
• Need to inform and include Subject faculty
What we requested from the dean

- A written plan for the project, including key dates, targets and “process to follow”

- Information on how to communicate this project to the University.

- Information about the amount of space the project is targeted to recapture and—what the vision is for the recaptured space
What We Got

• *Nothing* we asked for

• Librarians decided to practice with the “A’s” in LC classification = 800 titles to evaluate

• All librarians given a chance to review titles

• Approximately 25% were retained and 75% removed.

• Great learning opportunity
What We learned

• Looking at the books was important to us

• The list did not differentiate between editions, volumes, condition, or gift books.

• Time consuming but considered worth it
  – With new criteria 172,000 books now on the list

• Following ALA guidelines on weeding to ensure professional and ethical practice was essential

• Identify books for removal with red dots
The Red Dots
A series of Unfortunate Events

• By September 2017 – 33,000 books had been evaluated (red dots)

• Dean realizes we will not be done by December 1

• Demands that we now just mark all titles on spreadsheet with 5 or more holdings for removal
Librarians Response

• Give us more time - No
• We can not evaluate from a list - You Must
• What is the demand for space, never explained – 24/5 and second floor
• If 5 or more holdings is all you want don’t need us – run the Excel formula
• NO, I need to say it was the librarian’s decision – This was the “proverbial straw”
Humorous interlude

OMIGOSH! THIS LIBRARY BOOK WAS DUE TWO DAYS AGO!

WHAT WILL THEY DO? ARE THEY GOING TO INTERROGATE ME AND BEAT ME UP? ARE THEY GOING TO BREAK MY KNEES?? WILL I HAVE TO SIGN SOME CONFESSION???

THEY'LL FINE YOU TEN CENTS. NOW GO RETURN IT.

THE WAY SOME OF THOSE LIBRARIANS LOOK AT YOU, I NATURALLY ASSUMED THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE MORE DIRE.
The county librarians are at the door. They say you have an overdue book.

Tell 'em I'll give it to 'em when I'm good and ready.

They'd like it now.
Barricade the streets

• Good leaders take responsibility for their decisions
• Our dean was not a good leader
• Obvious that he wanted to be able to blame us for his decision
• He knew or maybe anticipated that there would be hell to pay from the University community
The Court of Public Opinion

• Through campus meetings including Council of Chairs, the University Senate, and APSCUF Representative council the weeding at the library became public knowledge.

• A series of articles were published in the Hawkeye, the student publication of the Journalism department

• Also, the local paper, radio, and television news media picked up the story
Books marked with stickers, meaning they might be removed, are displayed at Indiana University of Pennsylvania library.

http://wesa.fm/post/library-without-books-universities-purging-dusty-volumes#stream/0
Library ‘weeding’? Or ‘clear-cutting’?

Posted on September 17, 2017
Change.org Campaign

Save IUP Library Books and Reference Materials

2,251 have signed. Let’s get to 2,500!

Alyson Fennell signed 2 hours ago

Concerned Student started this petition to Dean of Libraries at Indiana University of Pennsylvania Mr. Luis J. Gonzalez

Approximately 43.08% of IUP’s library books are going to be purged from the shelves without being replaced by newer additions or contemporary material. If students wish to access...
Spring 2018

- A University-Wide Ad-hoc Deacessioining Committee was started by the Provost to review the weeding project.

- Result – Deacessioining will be the purview of the library faculty and subject faculty will play a role.

- The dean was invited to pursue “other interests.”
Moral of the story

• Weeding is a necessary and important function of all libraries.

• To do weeding well - A comprehensive plan that includes all stakeholders, needs to be created and agreed upon

• Communication is the KEY

• The why’s and how’s must be answered with realistic goals and time lines

• The whims of dictatorial leader will be punished.
The Bright Future and happy ending

• Librarians are working on a comprehensive plan for weeding the collection.

• There is no longer a set number of titles to remove or deadlines to be met.

• All information is being shared with the university community and they are invited to participate in the process.
In fall 2016, the library began a project to evaluate the physical titles in our general collection in Stapleton Library, and to identify titles that were candidates for deaccessioning and removal from our holdings.

These pages explain deaccessioning (also known as “weeding”) at IUP, elements and stages of the overall process, and how feedback from the Ad Hoc Deaccessioning Committee has been used to modify the approach.
• The Greenglass list is still being used, but now as a guide.
• The Provost offered to pay for our membership in the Hathi Trust which will replace electronically about 15,000 titles.
• With the stress of the last two years concerning weeding gone, the library is a good place to work again! :D
A last thought

“Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend.

Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.”

Groucho Marx.
• QUESTIONS?