

Redefining Butler Libraries' Collections and Spaces

The Butler University Libraries have joined 35 other academic libraries in Indiana in the Shared Print Collection Project, an initiative of the Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) and its partner organization the Academic Libraries of Indiana. *The purpose of the project is to ensure that rare or unique materials are preserved and placed in secure environments and to identify redundant copies that can be withdrawn so that the space they occupy can be used for more critical purposes.*

This project, which was awarded \$225,000 by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., compares the print book holdings of the participating libraries and 100 other comparator collections to identify both overlapping and rare or scarcely held resources. The project also lays a foundation for future collaboration among Indiana academic libraries.

The Shared Print Collection Project aligns with our collection management policy to focus primarily on “provid[ing] access to an active, useful collection that reflects the curricular, research, and cultural needs of the students, faculty, and staff.” Desired outcomes from this initiative include:

- **A vital collection of print materials** that supports the current Butler curriculum and meets the needs of our students;
- Increased capacity for **both quiet and group study spaces to meet student demand** as Butler enrollment increases;
- **Low-cost access to print resources** through library lending agreements within Indiana;
- **Increased space for established library services** such as library instruction, as well as for **emerging library services** such as e-publishing and digitization of archival collections;
- Spaces within the libraries for **academic support programs** whose services are congruent with library services, both to enhance collaboration across the programs and to ease space constraints within the academic division.

Once titles that met any of these criteria are removed from consideration, Butler University's circulating print books number **185,161**. Of this number, **76,408 (41%)** have had zero uses within the last twenty years, the period for which we have circulation data.

FAQs

Which books will NOT be candidates for deselection?

Books defined by the Shared Print participants as “scarcely held” will NOT be candidates for deselection. “Scarcely held” is defined as:

- 1) not held by Indiana University, Purdue, or Notre Dame **or**
- 2) fewer than 20 copies held in libraries across the US **or**
- 3) fewer than 5 copies in the state of Indiana.

Books held in the Rare Books, Special Collections, and University Archives of Irwin Library are also excluded from the project.

Which books WILL be candidates for deselection?

After rare items are removed from consideration, liaison librarians will decide which items to remove from the collection based on criteria appropriate to the disciplines for which they have collection management responsibility. (See “How does the deselection process work?” below.)

Why remove the books? Why not just store them?

The project is intended to result in cost-effective distributed storage among academic libraries in Indiana, rather than at storage facilities funded by and maintained at each institution.

Why not have a big book sale?

The timeline for this project is limited; the data set from which we are working is only considered valid for the next six months or so. The project is large in scope, so liaison librarians and library staff will be focused on the decision-making and logistical processes of deselection. The space, time, and human resources necessary for a big book sale make it unfeasible. Butler Libraries will receive a small percentage of resale revenue from Better World Books.

How does the deselection process work?

Step 1. Project vendor Sustainable Collection Services has completed an analysis of our holdings, including comparative data with local and regional libraries, and made the data available in a database called GreenGlass.

Step 2. Each liaison librarian defines a GreenGlass query using criteria based on disciplinary needs of his or her liaison area(s), as well as circulation data, local/regional availability, and public availability in the HathiTrust digital archive.

Step 3. Working from the resulting spreadsheets of candidate titles, liaison librarians use their subject expertise to make informed decisions about items to deselect. They flag books to be pulled from shelves by library staff.

Step 4. Staff check the physical item to ensure the correct volume has been pulled and to check for anomalies (e.g., wrong barcode number).

Step 5. Staff remove the titles from the library catalog and send them to our resale partner, Better World Books, which may re-sell or donate the materials.

After this large review is completed, Butler Libraries will integrate a routine deselection process into our collection management operations.

How can I help?

We are seeking your input on how spaces within the libraries should best be redefined to support student learning. Please send your suggestions to rethinkinglibraryspaces@butler.edu.

For more information about deselection in your discipline, please contact your [liaison librarian](#).