
Weeding by Committee: Involving Faculty in the Deselection Process

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Abstract:

Weeding is often an emotionally charged topic for both librarians and faculty. However, a print collection needs weeding in order to be stronger and more relevant. Despite the merits of deselection, the prospect of discarding books often makes the campus community nervous, concerned, and defensive. At California State University, Fullerton's (CSUF) Pollak Library, librarians were preparing for a large-scale monograph weeding project. The library faculty and administration grappled with how to productively and efficiently involve the large CSUF teaching faculty in the weeding process, knowing that many in the campus community were very concerned about the project. Staff from the library systems department were tasked with developing an innovative web-based tool that would enable faculty to easily provide feedback on deselection candidates on a title-by-title basis. The initial pilot, in which 1700 titles slated for deselection were loaded into the interface for faculty feedback, resulted in faculty requesting that nearly every title be retained in the collection. A second load of over 30,000 titles had very different results. This paper discusses CSUF's weeding process, the creation of the deselection tool, and the design of the user interface. It also analyzes the results of faculty feedback entered via the weeding interface, comparing results from the initial pilot to the larger, ongoing project.

Keywords: weeding, deselection, collection management, library faculty collaboration, campus politics

Introduction

In response to recommendations made by a statewide taskforce as well as the local campus community, California State University, Fullerton's (CSUF) Pollak Library has been actively engaged in transforming its collections to free up physical space and improve access. Several campuses in the California State University (CSU) system created the Library of the Future Taskforce (LoFT) to reenvision space use across the CSU libraries to reflect the needs of the modern student. The task force recommended increasing student reader space, providing

more areas for collaboration, as well as adding more space for faculty to engage in high impact practices (California State University 2013). To achieve this, the report recommended the implementation of a deselection policy to remove unused print items from the collection. To accomplish the goals set forth by LoFT, the Pollak Library prioritized collecting in electronic formats when possible and started a massive weeding project. Deselection projects for print journals and audio-visual materials on older formats proceeded without incident; however, the faculty raised concerns about weeding the monograph collection. To create an atmosphere of transparency and inclusion, the Library Administration sought to involve the campus teaching faculty in the weeding process. The library took great steps to provide a way for faculty to express their opinions on titles slated for deselection by creating an online tool that allowed the faculty to review weeding lists and provide feedback on a title by title basis. This paper describes the reasons behind the creation of the interface, the results of an initial pilot, and the adjustments made in response to findings from the pilot.

Literature Review

Weeding for Space and the Shift from Print to Electronic

Pollak Library's major drivers for the weeding project, the need for physical space and the transition to electronic collecting, are certainly not unique. A study at the University of Maryland Libraries found that "many students, faculty, and even some staff are comfortable with reducing the browsing collection size in public stack areas" in order to meet the goal of more space that was open and allowed for both independent and group study (Ruschoff 2012, 6). Ruschoff also noted that print circulation had been declining over the years with the Libraries acquiring the vast majority of new content in electronic format. In a study that surveyed graduate students at three UK universities on their use of the physical library building, Beard and Bawden (2012) found that even for these advanced students, study space was of higher priority than physical collections. While noting that weeding will be the most "difficult politically and logistically," Lewis predicts that by the early 2020s, most academic libraries will replace at least half of the space currently used for print collections with "a combination of enhanced reader spaces and other activities" (2013, 169, 172).

Collaboration and Communication with Faculty

As Cottrell notes, weeding "is the one of the most sensitive subjects in the world of library management" (2013, 98). Thus, collaboration and communication with faculty was a high priority for Pollak Library. However, attempts at collaboration have had varying results at different institutions.

For example, while librarians at Monmouth University provided faculty with the option to physically evaluate titles that had been pulled for withdrawal before they were permanently removed from the collection, Dubicki found that "very few books were returned to the shelves by faculty during the review process although there were a number of requests to send the withdrawn books to the faculty member's office" (2008, 134). Faculty members' desire for withdrawn materials to be sent to their offices also occurred at Virginia Tech, predominantly in the English Department (Metz and Gray 2005). Similarly, Soma and Sjoberg (2010) explained that teaching faculty at Concordia College typically agreed with librarians' deselection choices. While it was very rare for a faculty member to ask that a title slated for deselection remain in the library, some faculty requested selected withdrawn materials for their own collections (Soma and Sjoberg 2010).

Weeding decisions vary broadly from completely within the library—as at Mina Rees Library in the Graduate Center, City University of New York (Handis 2007)—to completely with the faculty, as at Montana Tech of The University of Montana (MT Tech) (Juskiewicz and Harper Garlish 2013). Juskiewicz and Harper Garlish explain that at MT Tech, librarians prepared packets that included collection statistics, information on the depth of collecting by subject area, predetermined criteria, and supplies to make notes and flag books for deselection. Librarians then reviewed the selections of faculty and posted a final list of titles to be withdrawn online, giving faculty two days to provide further feedback (Juskiewicz and Harper Garlish 2013).

The Weeding Process at Pollak Library

GreenGlass

Before undertaking a massive weeding project, it is advisable to conduct a thorough inventory of the existing collection. To aid in this task, Pollak Library used GreenGlass, an online tool created by Sustainable Collections Services (SCS), which enables libraries to thoroughly analyze their collection and its use. Additionally, GreenGlass provides overlap analysis, allowing the user to see which other institutions have a particular work in their collection. Librarians using the tool were able to see all of the other libraries in the CSU system that also held that title. The analysis revealed that only ten percent of Pollak Library's collection was not held by the other CSU libraries. This includes local theses and dissertations that no other CSU would hold. Additionally, GreenGlass showed us that the vast majority of our holdings were published between 1960 and 1980, indicating that our collection had become stagnant and out of date for some disciplines.

By analyzing collection overlap, both within the CSU system and globally, in conjunction with circulation statistics, and publication information, librarians were able to make more informed, data-driven decisions about deselection. As Ehret Snyder (2014) demonstrates in her analysis of weeding using SCS data, having access to a wide variety of criteria, outside circulation data alone, can aid librarians in decision making.

All of the subject librarians were given training in GreenGlass and Excel, another tool that facilitated the decision making process. Once they were given the necessary tools and training to complete their task, librarians were assigned classification ranges within their area of expertise and were told to draft a list of weeding candidates. Like at the University of Maryland Libraries (Ruschoff 2012) and Mina Rees Library in the Graduate Center, City University of New York (Handis 2007), individual selectors were heavily involved in setting weeding criteria in individual subject areas. However, while the details of the criteria varied by subject area, the primary criteria used in all subject areas were past circulation and availability at other libraries. Like at Monmouth University, Pollak Library librarians followed the “prevailing weeding theory that past usage patterns predict future use” (Dubicki 2008, 134). Once the librarians had concluded their deselection work, they provided the collection development librarian with an Excel file containing their selections. Librarians were also required to supply the collection development librarian with a brief explanation of their criteria.

Leadership Change

Soon after the weeding project began there was a leadership change in the library, and the new Interim University Librarian had a profound effect on the scope of this project. In 2013, the Pollak Library University Librarian of over twenty years retired and was replaced by a

librarian from within the library for a one-year interim appointment. After the conclusion of that appointment, which was one month after the start of the weeding project, campus administration appointed a teaching faculty member from the Chemistry department with no prior library experience as the new Interim University Librarian. This new Interim University Librarian was a former chair of the Academic Senate and had many years of experience dealing with the politics of the University. He brought with him a great deal of knowledge about how faculty interact with the campus library. His grasp of the faculty's opinions and feelings about the library significantly informed the public facing strategy of our weeding initiative.

The Interim University Librarian indicated that a number of faculty would be upset by any mentioning of deselection, particularly those within the college of Humanities and Social Sciences. It was his belief that securing support from the faculty would be key to the success of this project, and that the best way to get buy-in from the faculty would be to make the weeding project transparent and collaborative. There are other benefits to this approach, as Soma and Sjoberg note, "engaging faculty in the weeding process benefits all involved because it not only creates the best collection possible but also fosters relationships between faculty and librarians" (2010).

At this point, the decision was made to survey the faculty to determine their opinions about a number of library services, policies, and decisions. In the body of the survey, which was a Google Form distributed to all faculty members via email, was a section asking for opinions about the deselection of physical materials. The question posed to the faculty read, "The library is currently working to increase student centered space. This will involve weeding, or removing, various parts of our physical collection (print book, media, periodicals, government documents). What are your thoughts on changes to the physical collection? How strongly do you support this change?" The responses to this question ranged from ambivalent to outraged. Some faculty noted that they were "extremely supportive," while others pointed out the need for careful decision making, stating, "I like the idea of removing some of the physical collection IF the replacement actually meets students' needs." Not all reactions were supportive of the idea, with one faculty member noting that, "any book removed is a tragedy." Another faculty member was more forceful, stating, "I think this is a disaster!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" This wide variety of opinions, some of which were strongly held, validated the Interim University Librarian's decision to proceed with the project with an abundance of caution. While both Berry (2013) and McKinzie (2013) note that the term "weeding" does not properly communicate that practice of deselection and adds an unnecessarily negative connotation, Pollak Library specifically chose to use this term over "deselection" after an initial meeting with faculty expressed concern with "deselection."

The Interim University Librarian wanted assurance that the faculty could be active participants in the project should they decide to do so. He wanted the complete list of titles slated for deselection to be made available to the faculty online. It was his intention to give the faculty a thirty-day period to submit comments on the titles they wanted to remove from the deselection list. Each department was to have one vote per title. He envisioned sending out a link to a list of titles to each department chair, who would then be responsible for reporting back to the library which books their department wished to retain. Two librarians from the Systems and Collection Processing and Services Departments as well as a programmer were tasked with developing a system that would achieve these goals.

The Weeding Interface

While some libraries, such as Rollins College (Ehret Snyder 2014), have offered faculty the opportunity to physically evaluate weeding candidates through inserting paper flags in books on the shelf or relocating the books to be weeded, Pollak Library sought an electronic solution. The first proposal was to have a spreadsheet of all the materials slated for deselection made available for download on our website, a webform with which faculty could enter the title of the book they wanted to retain would also be available. The Interim University Librarian, however, was dissatisfied with this proposal stating that a list of thousands of titles on an Excel spreadsheet could be seen as intimidating, and dealing with a static list would be too inefficient and create a barrier to participation. He stressed that the process should be as streamlined and easy to use as possible.

The systems department then proposed a model that would incorporate an interactive web tool. Library Administration envisioned a system where users could browse book lists by call number or search for individual titles or authors. He wanted the faculty to be able to select books for retention directly from the webpage itself. Using Photoshop, the systems librarian created several mockups that were sent to administration for approval.

The systems librarian was tasked with creating a simplified interface that provides relevant information about each title, but does not overwhelm the user. There was some debate about what information from GreenGlass should be included. Ultimately, the decision was made to include title, author, publication date, call number, US holdings, recorded checkouts, and last checkout date. The latter two were considered to be very important as they would help explain the rationale behind the decision to weed the title. This is in line with Cottrell's advice that when communicating with stakeholders on library weeding practices, "statistics and rationale behind choices should be made available to users while the process is underway" (2013, 101). It was reasoned that if a faculty member could see that a title had not been checked out in 20 years, or had never been checked out at all, it might be of little value to students. The inclusion of the US holdings was meant to inform the faculty that they or their students could still request the title through interlibrary loan if needed. The faculty member would be presented with two options for each title, "Send to Department" or "Retain in Collection." If a selection was not made, then the book would be weeded by default. Once approval for the final interface was approved, the programmer in the systems department began work on the back and front end. Figure 1 illustrates the final user interface.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON A-Z INDEX | SEARCH CSUF

Pollak Library

Home > Browse book by area of study > Book List Log-out

Search Result for "smith"

Sorted in Call Number Order

Total number of records (Title): 238
 Total number of records (Author): 180 | Download File

Search for a Book

smith

You can search by title, author or keyword

TITLE & AUTHOR	CALL NUMBER	TITLE CIRCULATION	Retain in Collection	Send to Department
Title Search				
Thematic guide to popular short stories / Patrick ... By- Smith, Patrick A., 1967- Published- 2002	PN3373 .S62 2002 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 0 Last Checked Out= Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business and professional speech [by] Clara Krefti... By- Mawhinney, Clara E. Krefting Published- 1950	PN4121 .M335 US Holding=171	Recorded Checkouts= 1 Last Checked Out= 37771	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion, by William S. Howell and Donald K. Smi... By- Howell, William Smiley Published- 1956	PN4193.D5 H6 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 0 Last Checked Out= Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Smith Act as a restraint on the press / Don R.... By- Pember, Don R., 1939- cn Published- 1969 no. 10*	PN4722 .J6 no. 10 US Holding=87	Recorded Checkouts= 0 Last Checked Out= Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flash! : the Associated Press covers the world / i... By- <i>Not Available</i> Published- 1998	PN4841.A85 F56 1998 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 1 Last Checked Out= 37105	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Let's be Frank about it / by Frank Blair, with Jac... By- Blair, Frank, 1915- cn Published- 1979 1st ed	PN4874.B54 A32 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 0 Last Checked Out= Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Colonel : the life and legend of Robert R. McC... By- Smith, Richard Norton, 1953- Published- 1997	PN4874.M48395 S64 1997 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 1 Last Checked Out= 41455	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal file, by Paul C. Smith By- Smith, Paul Clifford, 1908- Published- 1964 [1st ed.]	PN4874.S564 A3 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 1 Last Checked Out= Prior to 1993	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper voices : the popular press and social change... By- Smith, A. C. H. (Anthony Charles H.), 1935- cn Published- 1975	PN5129.L7 D277 1975 US Holding=200	Recorded Checkouts= 0 Last Checked Out= Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 1: End-user interface for weeding or retention, presenting bibliographic, holdings, and circulation data

The next step was to determine who would be able to make retention decisions and how they would gain access to the front end interface. It was decided that only faculty should be involved in retention decisions, which necessitated the use of authentication to insure that non-authorized individuals would not have access to the deselection list. Additionally, it was decided that rather than giving every faculty member access to the list, each department would be granted one login ID that would be distributed to the Department Chair. It would then be up to the chair as to how each department would proceed. The chair could do the selection on behalf of the department, distribute the logins to select faculty within the department, or, as many ultimately decided to do, distribute the login ID to everyone in the department. Each department was given a unique ID and password which was then distributed to the chairs. Lastly, users were required to provide their individual email addresses upon login. This would allow library staff to see if one person was making an inordinate amount of retention selections on behalf of their department. As results from the pilot indicated, this proved to be a valuable inclusion.

Once the back end interface was completed, training sessions were scheduled for the librarians to instruct them on how to navigate that part of the system, which is illustrated in Figure 2. In order to make large lists of books less intimidating and easier to navigate, administration required that librarians break their lists of weeding candidates into groups of roughly 200 books organized by subject. This would also allow department chairs to distribute weeding lists to individuals within the department based on their subject expertise should they choose to give out the login information. Librarians were assigned Library of Congress (LC) call number ranges and were then asked to create relevant, descriptive headings for each sub-grouping of titles. Library systems designed an interface that simplified the creation of each group. Figure 3 illustrates how these groupings were displayed to the faculty user of the weeding interface. However, it soon became apparent that the database was having issues grouping standard call numbers. This was remedied by using the normalized call numbers for each item that were supplied by GreenGlass. Librarians would enter the standard call number ranges they were grouping which would then be normalized on the back end, then they would come up with a name and description for that group. In assigning names to these groups, the subject librarians were told to avoid library jargon that might confuse a faculty member with little library experience.

Pollak Library

Level 2 Setup

PROGRAM SETUP

- Departments
- Class
- Level 1
- Level 2

REPORTS

- Reports

Class: Q-SCIENCE

QA-Mathematics

List of Sub Level

- Create A Sub Level
- General Mathematics
- Mathematical Instruments and Machine
- Elementary Math
- Algebra
- Probabilities & Mathematical Statistics
- Analysis
- Geometry, Trigonometry, & Topology
- Analytic Mechanics

Delete

Sub Level Name: Probabilities & Mathematical Sta...

Description: Includes books on theory and in...

Starts With: 273

Ends With: 279

Activate:

Figure 2: Back end weeding interface used by librarians to define sub-categories of weeding lists

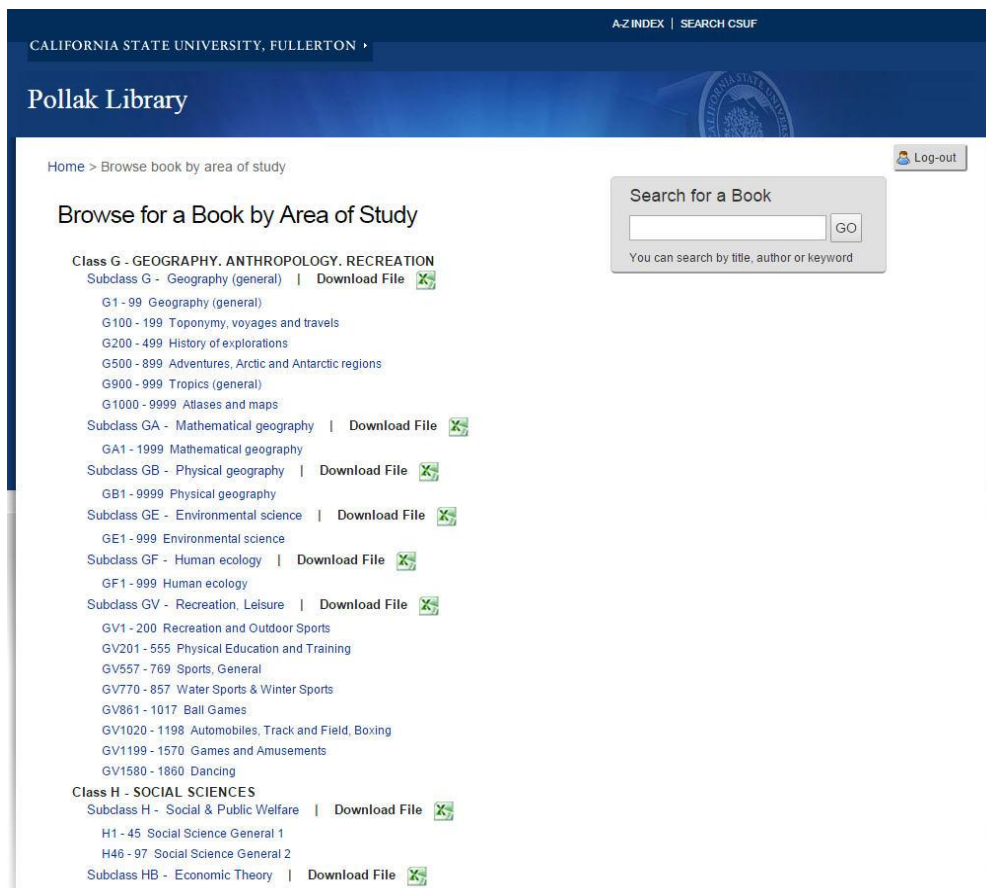


Figure 3: Weeding interface for faculty to review weeding candidates by browsing by classification or searching

Once the groupings were created and the weeding selections were loaded into the system, a pilot program was set in place. It was determined that a small call number range would be released for the faculty to peruse. The GV section was chosen for the pilot because of its relatively small number of titles, 1744, and its subject matter, recreation and leisure, which administration deemed would be of little use to the majority of faculty members. While CSUF does have a large Kinesiology department that uses this section, they are generally interested in content published in the last ten years. It was expected that the weeding selections on this list, with titles like “The Practical Man’s Cruiser; an Introduction to Deep-sea Yachting” published in 1940, and “A-boating We Will Go; a Cruising Manual for Women” published in 1958, would be of little use to even those within the Kinesiology department. The subject librarian for Kinesiology attended a department meeting and informed the faculty that a section in their area would be part of the pilot project. This proposal was met with some interest, but no resistance.

After preparations were complete, the Interim University Librarian sent out an announcement to all of the faculty informing them that weeding was underway, starting with the areas of recreation and leisure. The email explained what weeding is and why it was being done, stating that weeding is one of the “strategies being used to free up space.” The email introduced the weeding website as a tool to provide faculty with a way “to examine these [weeding] lists and provide direct input into which books are retained and which are

weeded.” The email also contained instructions about how to contest weeding decisions using the weeding website, stating that “selecting the checkbox for the book to be retained in the library collection, or selecting the checkbox for the book to be withdrawn from the collection but sent to the reviewers’ department” would eliminate that title from the weeding process. The Interim University Librarian also advised the faculty that, “If these books are not important to your department classes and faculty, then your department does not need to do anything at this time.” Additionally, the letter indicated that “every department will have the option of making choices for every subject area,” which was an effort to include those with cross-disciplinary interests. Faculty were given one month to make their selections.

After this email was distributed, the system was brought online and faculty were able to make retention selections. The login screen repeated the information that was sent in the original email. Once the user selected the Start button, they were taken to the breakdown of all the categories in the GV section. They could then select one of the groupings, which were named by the subject librarian, and they would be presented with all of the titles in that area.

Pilot Results and Lessons Learned

Shortly after the site was opened to the public, the faculty retention requests started populating the database. Some of the results were expected, while others were very surprising and enlightening. It was initially expected that members of the Kinesiology department would be active in retaining books; however, that was not the case. Faculty members in that department elected to retain 227 of the 1744 titles. Kinesiology was the only department in the College of Health and Human Development to participate. It was, in fact, faculty in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences that were the most active. This result echoes what Dubicki (2008) found at Monmouth University, that faculty participation in weeding activities varied greatly by department, with some departments actively engaged in reviewing the lists, while others did not participate at all. Departments making selections for retention included:

- History (2175 requests)
- American Studies (279 requests)
- Kinesiology (227 requests)
- Geography (52 requests)
- English, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics (44 requests)
- Asian American Studies (14 requests)
- Liberal Studies (13 requests)
- Chicana and Chicano Studies (7 requests)
- Modern Languages and Literatures (3 requests)

This data contained some duplicate selections, indicating that some did not comply with the one vote per department rule. If the library were to honor this selection list, only twenty-three of the 1744 titles, or one percent, would be weeded.

Analyzing the data showed that one faculty member from the History department had been particularly active. This professor elected to retain all but twenty-three of the titles on the list. If this one professor's selections were removed, the library would be able to weed 1095 titles, or sixty-three percent of the total list. This illustrates the value of requiring users to identify themselves by email. Including an individual identifier made it easier to differentiate between the needs and desires of a department, from those of an individual.

Lessons learned in the pilot led to some changes with the second round of weeding. While the original intention had been for the weeding interface to be as easy to use as possible, Library Administration determined that the interface made it too easy for a faculty member to retain as many books as possible. To combat mass selection, a feature in the interface that required faculty to state a reason for retention was instituted. When a faculty member selects the Retain radio button, a Javascript-initiated popup asks the user “Why retain it?” The user must then enter a reason before they are allowed to continue. A reason is not required when the user selects the “Send to Department” option. Additionally, we decided to release a far larger selection of titles, over 30,000, in the second round making it far more difficult for one faculty member to select all of the titles for retention.

Results of the Second Round of Weeding

For the initial pilot project, 1744 books to weed were presented to faculty, and faculty requested that 1716 of them be retained. However, results differed when a larger list was presented and a reason was required for retention. In the second round, a list of 30,888 items was presented to faculty, and faculty requested that 1816 (six percent) be retained in the collection. Thus, the results of the large list were nearly opposite the results of the pilot. Of the remaining 29,072 books to be weeded, faculty requested that 323 of them be sent to their departments after withdrawal. Metz and Gray (2005) noted that after the initial phase of weeding at Virginia Tech, those faculty who had shown initial interest gained trust in the process and did not request to review future lists. While this may be true to an extent for Pollak Library, the larger list and the requirement of a reason for retention likely caused the major difference in the second round. As Figure 4 illustrates, in all but two subject areas, faculty requested that fewer than ten percent of the titles slated for weeding be retained.

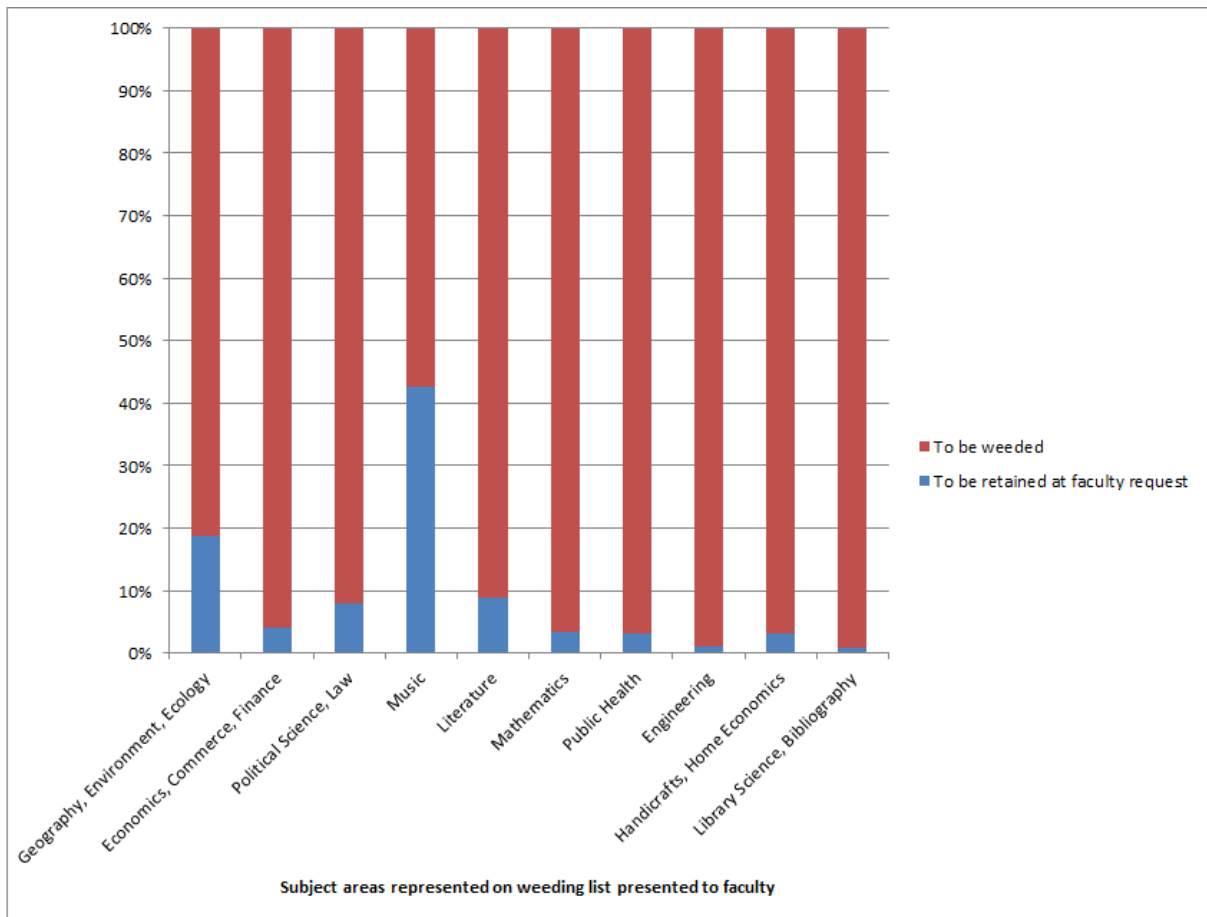


Figure 4: Percentage of titles on weeding lists requested for retention by faculty, by subject area

While faculty from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, most notably the History department, continued to be heavily engaged in the process, a greater diversity of departments was represented. This is to be expected, since while the pilot list only included titles classed in GV, the second, larger list included a broad range of subject areas. As illustrated by Figure 5, faculty from twelve departments made retention requests, and ninety-one percent of those requests were from three departments: History (788 items retained), Music (537 items retained), and somewhat unexpectedly, the Library (325 items retained). CSUF librarians have faculty status and were given access to the weeding interface just as teaching faculty were. While History and Library faculty made retention requests across a variety of subject matter, Music faculty only made retention requests for Music titles. While the departments engaged in the process would naturally vary based on the subject areas represented in the lists of books to weed, there were some surprising results. For example, while the Geography department was active in the pilot, requesting that fifty-two of the 1744 titles be retained, Geography faculty made no retention requests from the large list. This was surprising, as the initial pilot only included recreation and leisure titles, while the large list contained 1187 geography titles.

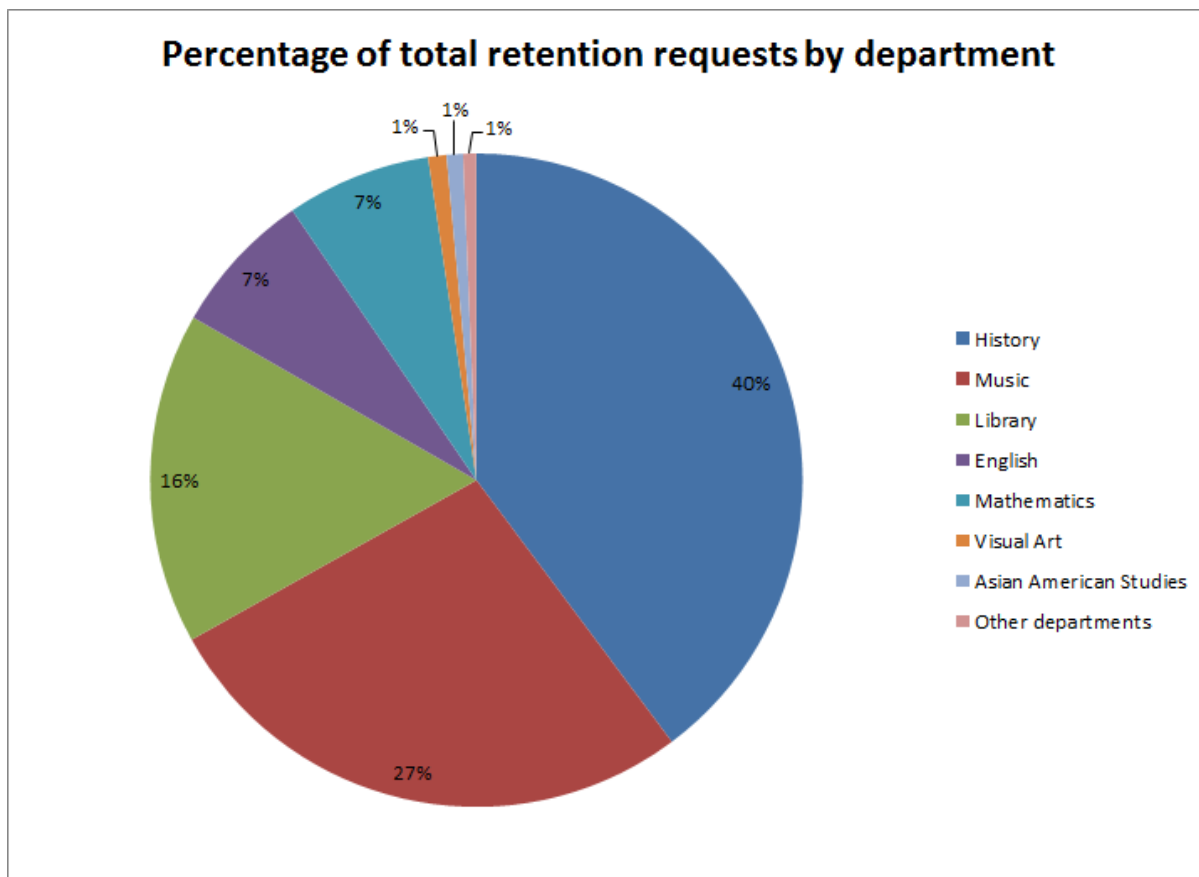


Figure 5: Percentage of total faculty retention requests by department

While faculty provided a number of reasonable reasons for retention, sometimes noting specific courses or research projects for which a specific title could be used, other faculty, especially those who made a high number of retention requests, provided very generic reasons, such as “important” or “keep this important book.” Some of the faculty had similar reactions to those noted by Handis, who describes an instance in which a librarian informally consulted with teaching faculty on a weeding project, and received the response that “that every book in the subject was important and nothing should be discarded” (2007, 86).

Some justifications for retention could be considered trivial, such as one faculty member who stated that “An Atlas of Fantasy,” a book published in 1979, which had never circulated, should be retained because it is “a fun book about maps in fantasy.” One faculty member opted to retain a number of History titles, all volumes of the Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers, that had no record of circulation, noting, “the only reason they have not been checked out was that for many years the policy was that they could only be used in the library.” This reason, which was copied and pasted 111 times, has some merit as we had no way of knowing if a non-circulating title was being used. Prior to this project, a number of titles that were non-circulating, mostly reference materials, were added to the circulating collection in another effort to free space on the first floor of the library. While subject librarians were asked to keep this in mind when creating their lists of weeding candidates, there was no strict rule that previously non-circulating books should be excluded from weeding lists.

Some of the comments were very detailed and suggested areas for future collection growth. For example, while a book published in 1964 would often be considered too old to be useful in the health sciences field, a faculty member requested retention, noting “[this is] one of the few Pacific Islander books in public health we have.” This is a helpful comment, which suggests that the library should improve its collection in this area. While engineering could also be considered a subject area that goes out of date more quickly than others, a faculty member noted that a 1960 publication on thermoelectricity addressed a topic that “has become a very important topic in energy harvesting in the last few years. Even though this book is old, it has historical perspective, and theoretical and valuable experimental methods used.”

Conclusion

Pollak Library’s monograph weeding strategy has been to be both aggressive and inclusive. In order to update and improve the collection, while making more space available, the library’s large scale weeding project has gone through many variations. A leadership change in the library was the impetus for a new approach that focused on active collaboration and feedback from teaching faculty. The original approach was to make it as easy as possible for faculty to request that a title be retained. However, this quickly proved both inefficient and counterproductive when faculty requested that nearly all of the titles presented in the original pilot be retained. After some adjustments, including presenting a larger and more diverse list of weeding candidates and requiring faculty to state a reason, the process improved considerably. Regardless of the size of the list presented, it is clear that some departments will participate more than others, and that reasons will vary greatly from trivial to useful. Once the initial alarm that was felt by a small, but passionate, group of faculty waned, weeding moved forward productively and reasons provided offered suggestions for collection growth.

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