Assessment of Departmental Journal Requests and Impact on an Academic Health Sciences Library Collection: An Unanticipated Benefit

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Background
- Decision made for SY2005 to convert to predominantly electronic journal collection (conversion completed 2007)
- Requirement established that all converted titles be available by site license and with intent to provide content back to 1995 whenever possible
- Intent for increased collaboration with Main Campus Library to take advantage of site license discounts and to improve access to interdisciplinary materials
- Library operating under Medical Center budget constraints

Objectives
- To reduce spending on duplicate purchases by departments through:
  - Identification of journal titles already held by Himmelfarb or Gelman (Main Campus Library)
  - Assessment of availability of titles at the desktop
- To evaluate and fine-tune the Himmelfarb journal collection in light of departmental requests
  - To identify funds for new resources if possible

Guidelines
- Promise made not to cancel subscriptions included in society memberships
- Requests for duplicate purchases were denied if:
  - Table of contents was easily available at the desktop
  - No embargoes/time delays were in effect
  - Online content equaled or exceeded print content
  - Titles were of broad interest to Medical Center community, i.e. supported major programs

Results
- 93 forms from 39 departments received
- 50% of journal titles requested were fully available in electronic format; requests were denied
- Additional areas for growth identified especially in nursing, education, health policy areas, and business of health
- Departments with changing needs identified
- Need for additional education about electronic journals became painfully apparent

Ongoing Impact
- Three new nursing titles added to collection
- Major indexing tool purchased with money saved from use of process
- Major changes made to electronic journal page containing optimal titles selected, aggregator titles dropped, subject headings updated
- Ongoing reorganization of faculty regarding nature of library's collection
- Plans made to meet with faculty on campus to assess Himmelfarb collection further
- Begin discussions with GWU Law Library for sharing health policy/legislative policy materials
- More electronic health law compilation selected and implemented
- Other procedures:
  - Over 50 educational sessions scheduled as a direct result of subscription assessment discussions
  - Interactive electronic journals month (flyers, contests, luncheons)
  - Plans made to increase number of training sessions for accessing e-collection
- Searches continue to be submitted and the process will be repeated in the upcoming budget cycle

Subscription Assessment Process

Subscription Assessment Spreadsheet

Subscription Assessment Policy and Form

Subscription Assessment Form by Library staff
Form posted on Internet/Letter sent by the Vice President for Health Affairs to all department heads
Review and approval of form by Medical Center Administration
Requesting department gets form off Internet and fills in first section (Subscription Information)
Form submitted to Budget Officer for department for review
Form sent to Himmelfarb Library

Preliminary Steps

Review Process

No Embargoes in place?

No
Departmental purchase denied (Disposition section of form)

Yes
Departmental purchase approved (Disposition section of form)

Does Gelman Library have electronic holdings at the TOC level?

Does online content equal or exceed print?

Preliminary Steps

Meets Himmelfarb subscription criteria?

Is title owned in electronic format by Himmelfarb Library at the Table of Contents Level?

Review Process

No

Yes

Completed Subscription Assessment Form with decision returned to department

Yes

No

Yes

Decision logged on spreadsheet