

Allocation of Book Funds in College Libraries

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ALLOCATION of book funds to academic subject fields is still of widespread interest among college librarians. Theoretical and practical reports have been published.¹ In a study of recent practice in twelve colleges at the end of the year 1951-

1952 some interesting new data were compiled and are presented below. The three tables represent parts of three distinct phases of the allocation problem. The first shows the percentage of allocated funds allowed each department in each of nine college libraries. (Three of the twelve reported that they do not allocate.) This then is a small cross section of what was being done in 1951-1952. The second table shows a new method for determining one of the factors significant in the allocation formula.

¹ Randall, William M. "The College-Library Book Budget." *Library Quarterly*, 1:421-435, Oct. 1931.

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Library." *Library Quarterly*, 12:422-428, July, 1942.

Ellsworth, Ralph E. "Some Aspects of the Problem of Allocating Book Funds among Departments in Universities." *Library Quarterly*, 12:486-494, July, 1942.

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TABLE I
Percentage of Allocated Funds Allowed Each Department in Nine Allocating
College Libraries During 1951-1952

Department ¹	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Art	2.33	4.54	6.12	5.07	4.03	3.32	5.10	6.65	2.95
Biology	5.24	3.31	5.44	8.45	8.06	5.22	7.40	9.76	5.88
Chemistry	2.09	2.07	5.44	4.87	4.03	3.08	7.00	21.20	5.88
Classics	1.31		2.03		2.81	.47	2.50	3.05	3.68
Economics	5.24	7.44	4.76	5.90	7.25	9.72	9.40	3.42	8.82
English	17.05	15.70	9.53	14.29	14.91	12.09	8.90	6.34	14.71
Geology	6.05	3.30	1.35	4.23		4.03		3.54	
German	.66	1.65	4.08	2.28	3.09	1.42	4.60	1.16	2.94
Gov't. & I.R.	4.50	7.44	4.08	5.15	4.03	9.00	9.36	2.69	8.82
History	4.51	19.01	12.94	7.76	10.08	9.48	14.80	5.85	8.82
Math. & Ast.	4.18	3.31	3.40	1.78	4.03	2.37	5.30	.56	4.41
Music	6.58	2.89	6.80	3.24	2.82	2.84	.62	4.46	3.68
Phil. & Religion	14.45	4.95	14.98	9.48	7.25	7.58	8.10	7.10	8.82
Physics	2.62	2.07	4.08	2.41	4.03	1.18	3.18	3.72	5.88
Phys. Education	2.09	4.96	4.08	2.66	2.82	2.84		4.94	
Psych. & Ed.	9.18	8.26	4.76	8.69	10.48	12.80	8.80	8.72	5.88
Romance Lang.	1.31	3.31	6.13	4.55	6.18	3.32	4.94	2.33	5.88
Sociology	6.58	5.79	4.08	9.19	4.03	9.24		4.52	2.95
Percentage of total book fund allocated	41	86	68	65	89	38.7	62.5		68.8

¹ All colleges do not group their courses under identical departmental headings. It was necessary to take some liberties to separate or combine them into a uniform list. Where this was done an attempt was made to determine the proper proportions by studying the announcement of courses published by the reporting institution.

TABLE II
Average Cost of Books by Subject Field

Department	Total Net Cost	No. Units	Average Net Cost	Adjusted % of Total
Art	\$941.68	149	\$6.32	^a
Biography	134.42	47	2.86	3.77
Botany	163.13	34	4.80	6.33
Chemistry	221.68	27	8.21	10.83
Classics	110.69	27	4.10	5.41
Economics	297.90	86	3.46	4.57
English	423.55	135	3.14	4.15
Geology	177.53	31	5.73	7.56
German	76.90	17	4.52	5.96
Gov't. & I.R.	364.30	102	3.57	^a
History	545.84	110	4.96	6.55
Math. & Ast.	172.42	37	4.66	6.15
Music	95.02	21	4.52	5.96
Phil. & Religion	166.61	47	3.54	4.67
Physical Ed.	94.25	24	3.93	^a
Physics	124.41	26	4.78	6.30
Psych. & Ed.	229.14	50	4.58	6.04
Romance Lang.	137.37	43	3.19	4.21
Sociology	247.22	63	3.92	5.18
Zoology	216.90	45	4.82	6.36
Total			\$89.61	100.00

The third table shows the application of Table II and one other factor to the problem in one institution. The result, in terms of dollars, was a combination of the formula and a reasoned, frank discussion of local emphasis, aims, and lacunae. The figures were "rounded off" in the process.

^a Because endowed funds determine the amount available for Art and Government & I.R., and because Physical Ed. has negligible library use, allocations had no effect on these departments. Hence the factors were omitted for them and a readjustment became necessary. This will be true also of Table III.

In this study a method was used to determine the average cost of books by subject field which it is believed offered somewhat distinct advantages. In this method an analysis was made of net purchase prices paid by the library in the preceding year or two. Thus the cost factor was related directly to demonstrable needs specifically suited to one institution, while eliminating the disparity of discount schedules between subject areas likely to result when using list prices. A percentage factor was then evolved which appears in the last column of Table II.

TABLE III
Allocation at Carleton Based on Cost Factor and Enrolment Distribution

Department	Enrolment Index	Cost Index	Average Cost-Enrolment	Preliminary Allocation ¹	Average Expenditures 1946-52 ²	Final Allocation for 1952-3
Art ³						
Biography	3.73	3.77	3.75	129.75	121.00	110.00
Botany	2.34	6.33	4.34	150.16	151.00	150.00
Chemistry	3.75	10.83	7.29	252.23	214.00	240.00
Classics	1.08	5.41	3.24	112.10	95.00	100.00
Economics	4.49	4.57	4.53	156.74	238.00	200.00
English	17.44	4.15	10.80	373.68	431.00	395.00
Geology	3.81	7.56	5.68	196.52	155.00	170.00
German	4.90	5.96	5.43	187.88	222.00 ⁴	145.00
Gov't. & I.R. ³						
History	10.87	6.55	8.71	301.36	534.00	430.00
Math. & Ast.	5.56	6.15	5.85	202.41	157.00	200.00
Music	6.70	5.96	6.33	219.02	145.00	170.00
Philos. & Religion	6.18	4.67	5.42	187.53	249.00	185.00
Phys. Education ³						
Physics	1.88	6.30	4.09	141.51	105.00	140.00
Psych. & Ed.	5.66	6.04	5.85	202.41	278.00	200.00
Romance Languages	9.06	4.21	6.64	229.74	245.00 ⁴	215.00
Sociology	7.33	5.18	6.26	216.59	206.00	210.00
Zoology	5.22	6.36	5.79	200.33	216.00	200.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	3,459.96		3,460.00 ⁵

¹ Not including any postage charges, i.e. this is entirely for books.

² Includes postage pro-rated to each book purchased.

³ Omitted—see note, Table II.

⁴ In part "inflated" by special gifts of several hundred dollars on two occasions.

⁵ 69.5% of all book funds excepting endowment and grant funds, and postage.

For reasons in part peculiar to Carleton, the determination of the allocation pattern was initially based entirely on the cost factor (Table II) and enrolment distribution. Experimentally postage was also separated out of the entire book budget at the start. The preliminary allocation was then considered by the Faculty Library Committee in the light of the previous expenditures, 1946-52, and the practice in comparable schools elsewhere as shown in Table I. Special circumstances affecting Carleton were discussed and a frank but admittedly subjective appraisal of the book collection entered considerations before the final allocation was formulated.