

Acquiring Rare Books by Purchase: Recent Library Trends

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THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS THE RESULTS of a survey (reproduced as appendix A) designed to collect data related to the purchase of rare books by American libraries. (The survey left the definition of the term rare book to each respondent, but it excluded all nonbook materials.) Survey questionnaires were distributed to 164 American libraries, including one to each U.S. member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Additional academic, public, and independent libraries known to have important rare book collections also received survey questionnaires. Questionnaires were returned by 136 libraries representing 83 percent of the total distributed (responding libraries are listed in appendix B). Data gathered by the survey are presented and analyzed later under five general questions intended to explore current trends and recent changes in funding patterns for rare book acquisitions in American libraries. *The data will be followed by pertinent commentary supplied by survey respondents.* Because of the confidential nature of the survey, no individual or institutional names are included in the article.

Summary Findings

Although virtually all American libraries rely heavily on gifts to sustain and build their rare book collections, the great majority of the libraries surveyed stated that they also purchase rare books. This is equally true of large and small libraries, public and privately supported

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libraries, and libraries of widely differing financial capabilities. It is also equally true regardless of whether the library is an academic, public, or independent library.

Despite the large number of libraries that purchase rare books, twice as many spend under \$50,000 per year for that purpose as spend over that amount; indeed, a sizable proportion of respondents stated that they spend under \$10,000 per year on rare books. To some extent, this situation reflects obvious differences in financial capability though this is not necessarily the case. In a substantial number of instances, there is no relationship between the size of the overall library budget for acquisitions and the amount spent for rare books. Some libraries with smaller budgets including several that are hard pressed to support "general" collection needs, spend more proportionately (as well as in actual dollars) than do a substantial number of wealthier libraries. Similarly, institutional goals and mission frequently influence decisions regarding the level of financial support directed toward rare book acquisitions. The usual assumption is that those libraries with a tradition of supporting research or curricular interests in the humanities also support the purchase of rare books, and to a considerable extent this assumption is borne out. However, there are again interesting exceptions particularly in the number of academic institutions that sustain extensive graduate programs in the humanities but whose libraries do not substantially support their rare book collections through purchase. Essentially, therefore, the survey shows that neither in terms of overall acquisitions budget nor in institutional goals and mission can the level of support for rare book purchases be equated with library or institutional size, wealth, or complexity.

The survey shows that most of the responding libraries employ a wide range of funding sources for rare book acquisitions, usually some combination of endowment income, annual appropriations, unbudgeted discretionary funds, and funds supplied by a support group such as a Friends of the Library organization. Perhaps most significantly, the survey underscores the important role played in most libraries by *both* endowment income and annual appropriations. For example, 85 percent of the responding libraries that spend over \$50,000 per year for rare books, and 76 percent of those that spend under \$50,000 utilize endowment income. However, 67 percent of the libraries that spend over \$50,000 per year for rare books also utilize annual appropriations as do 70 percent of those libraries that spend under \$50,000 per year.

Although both discretionary funds and support group funds were often included as sources for rare book acquisitions support, neither is as important a factor as endowments or annual budgeted allocations.

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This is demonstrated by the fact that almost 100 percent of the survey responses indicated that discretionary funds and support group funds are used in combination with endowment income and/or annual allocations; only three respondents reported that their libraries use discretionary funds or support group funds to the exclusion of endowments or annual allocations. Further, the survey result shows that discretionary funds and support group funds do not, in general, provide as much financial support for rare book acquisitions as do endowments and annual appropriations. For example, 90 percent of the libraries that use support group funds for purchasing rare books receive less than half of their acquisitions funds from that source.

Nearly two-thirds of the surveys stated that funding for rare book acquisitions is insufficient and only five respondents declared their funding for this purpose to be ample. No matter the level of support in terms of dollars spent for rare books, the percentage of responding libraries' total acquisitions funds allotted to rare book purchases, including funds restricted for that purpose, is in the majority of cases quite small. Of the responding libraries, 61 percent disclosed that less than 5 percent of their library's total acquisitions funds are applied to rare book purchases; of the remainder, 17 percent receive between 5 percent and 10 percent, and 22 percent receive over 10 percent of their library's total acquisitions allocation.

A majority (56 percent) of the surveys reported that growth patterns in rare book acquisitions funding have not increased consistently between 1980 and 1986, although virtually the same percentage of respondents stated that their ability to purchase rare books in 1986 is equal to or greater than it was in 1980. The surveys indicate that roughly the same number of independent libraries and public libraries have experienced consistent growth as have not. The most significant discrepancy occurs among academic libraries for which statistics show that publicly supported libraries, including several with sizable base budgets for rare books, experienced considerably more erratic funding patterns between 1980 and 1986 than did libraries in privately supported institutions.

As noted earlier, over half of the respondents stated that their ability to purchase rare books is better in 1986 than in 1980, a figure that includes some libraries that did not experience consistent growth during the same period. The survey also shows that some libraries that *did* experience consistent growth between 1980 and 1986 did not necessarily find their actual ability to purchase rare books to be equal in 1986 to what it had been in 1980. Various reasons were cited by respondents as

factors, either in causing funding patterns that did not produce consistent growth and/or did not result in an acquisitions picture that was better in 1986 than in 1980. Chief among these were inflation, static or declining budgets, and the perception that inflation in the cost of rare books generally exceeds inflation in the economy as a whole.

The majority of responding libraries have not in the past five years undertaken fund-raising efforts that include acquisition funding for rare books. Furthermore, only ten respondents indicated that their libraries are planning fund-raising efforts that will benefit rare book purchases. Fund raising programs for rare books, as reported in the survey, usually have been undertaken within the context of a larger library or institutional campaign, especially in academic settings. In the majority of these cases, an institutional development office has been responsible for conducting the campaign. In a small number of cases, the library itself has conducted the effort, through its own development office and/or by using other library staff. Only eight respondents stated that fund-raising benefitting rare book acquisitions has not directly involved special collections personnel. Conversely, in a handful of instances, the special collections staff was responsible for the entire fund-raising effort.

A sizable majority of respondents, just over 75 percent, stated that they are reasonably optimistic about their libraries' ability to purchase rare books in the future. This overall feeling of optimism was not only reported from libraries with large budgets and active programs but also from smaller institutions with more modest goals. It should be noted as well that respondents from several well-established and wealthy rare book collections were not particularly optimistic about their future ability to purchase rare books. All told, however, it would appear that despite difficult times characterized by small budgets, competing interests within the library, and unstable growth patterns, most of those members of the library profession who nurture and build rare book collections are gamely looking ahead toward better days.

Are Libraries Purchasing Rare Books?

Although virtually all rare book collections in American libraries rely heavily upon gifts for their growth, the overwhelming majority of respondents to this survey stated that their libraries routinely buy rare books. Only seven libraries, two of which are members of ARL, reported that they buy no rare books or do so only rarely. Sixty-five respondents also reported that it is the responsibility of the special collections unit of their libraries to expend funds for virtually all purchases of rare books,

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although almost half of the sixty-five indicated that other library staff participate on an *occasional* advisory or consultative basis. Forty respondents stated that the special collections staff *routinely* share the duty and cost of purchasing rare books for their libraries special collections unit with language specialists and/or subject bibliographers. The question did not apply to nine libraries because of their nature and organization. Table 1 shows the annual range of total expenditure for rare books as reported by 136 respondents. Based on these figures, there are almost twice as many libraries that spend under \$50,000 per year for rare books as spend more than that amount. The surveys point to the fact that no single range of expenditures is dominated by any particular type of library. All ranges contain large and small publicly and privately supported academic libraries, public libraries (with the exception of ranges 4 and 5) and independent libraries. Further, each range includes both urban and rural libraries and libraries in every geographical region of the country. Seventy-six of the libraries represented in the table are members of ARL; of that number, forty-three are included in the lower three ranges while thirty-three are included in the higher three ranges.

TABLE 1
EXPENDITURE RANGES FOR RARE BOOK ACQUISITIONS

Range Expended on Rare Books Annually	Number of Survey Responses
Range 1. Under \$10,000	39
Range 2. \$10,000-\$24,999	26
Range 3. \$25,000-\$49,999	17
Range 4. \$50,000-\$74,999	6
Range 5. \$75,000-\$99,999	9
Range 6. Over \$100,000	27
TOTAL	124*

*Seven responding libraries do not purchase rare books and five libraries did not specify an expenditure range.

It is frequently assumed that libraries with greater financial resources purchase rare books to a greater extent than do poorer libraries and, in the main, the survey bears out this assumption. For example, a comparison of data gathered by the survey with the most recently published ARL statistics (1984/85) for materials budgets (not including binding) shows that of the twenty-seven ARL academic libraries expending over \$50,000 per year for rare books, twenty-one (78 percent) were ranked in the upper half of the materials budget statistics. Of the forty-two academic ARL libraries expending under \$50,000 per year for rare books, twenty-six (62 percent) were ranked in the lower half of the ARL materials budget statistics.

The same comparison of survey data to ARL materials budget statistics also shows that in a considerable number of instances there is no clear relationship between the amount expended for rare books and the size of the parent library's overall materials budget. This is demonstrated by the fact that sixteen academic ARL libraries that expend under \$50,000 per year for rare books (38 percent of forty-two) were ranked in the upper half of the ARL materials budget statistics. Four of these libraries boasted a 1984/85 materials budget in excess of \$4 million.

In a related question, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether their libraries allocate less than 5 percent, more than 5 percent, or more than 10 percent of the total library acquisition budget to rare books. Eighty-five respondents answered that rare books receive under 5 percent of the acquisitions budget, fourteen answered that they receive over 5 percent, and nineteen answered that they receive over 10 percent. The latter figure includes five libraries virtually all of whose materials purchases are rare books. Overall, approximately 75 percent of those libraries expending over 5 percent or over 10 percent of their acquisitions budget on rare books are in academic institutions, both public and private. The remaining 25 percent are independent libraries.

Of the forty-two libraries that spend upward of \$50,000 per year on rare books, fifteen receive less than 5 percent of their library's total materials allocation (thirteen of these are ARL academic libraries); eleven receive more than 5 percent of their library's total materials allocation (nine of these are ARL academic libraries); and fourteen receive more than 10 percent of their library's total materials allocation (four of these are ARL academic libraries). Of the eighty libraries that spend less than \$50,000 per year on rare books, seventy-two receive less than 5 percent of their library's total materials allocation (forty-three of these are ARL academic libraries); three receive more than 5 percent of their library's total materials allocation (none are ARL academic libraries); and five spend more than 10 percent of their library's materials allocation for rare books due to the fact, as noted earlier, that they are primarily rare book libraries (none are ARL academic libraries).

Equally as enlightening as the statistical information provided by the survey were the respondent's comments which elaborated upon the questionnaire. In expounding upon issues discussed earlier statistically, several respondents commented that despite vicissitudes in funding, their libraries actively purchase rare books. One correspondent stated that he hoped that even though

the pattern varies from year to year, I have in my response...given more optimistic replies than the present grim financial picture [in my

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library] might seem to support. The reality is that there are lean years and good years and that it is hard to predict the combination of circumstances that will make it possible for the Library to devote a larger percentage of its resources to non-current acquisitions.

Several writers from academic libraries pointed out that their rare book purchases were made with a close eye to the instructional and research goals of their parent institutions. One respondent wrote that "our rare book collection complements our primary purpose of supporting an undergraduate curriculum....Beyond that we occasionally purchase a rare book when it would fit one of our existing special collections...or when we can be certain that it will be used to enrich the undergraduate educational experience." Another wrote that:

The success of our program relates directly to the fact that it is *integrated* with larger library collection development efforts. We don't buy "rare books;" we acquire materials for research and scholarship. The difference in perspective is important. I calculate that (my library) probably buys between 3500-5000 titles annually which happen to fall into the category of "rare."

One respondent whose institution has only recently begun purchasing rare books stated that: "Four years ago, 'rare' books were acquired solely by gift. Consequently, the collection has grown in a very haphazard manner. Over the past four years, areas of modest strength have been identified and efforts are being made to enhance those areas of the collection through purchase and the judicious acceptance of gifts."

Though they were in the minority, other respondents wrote of difficult times for the purchase of rare books in their libraries, with one describing the situation as "bleak." Several stated that their libraries had priorities other than rare books either as a matter of policy or because of overall funding shortages. One respondent wrote that

the acquisition of rare books in our library will be at a minimal level and without significant new directions until a substantial endowment or restricted fund is established solely for the purpose. The amount of funds available from the library general materials budget is very low, but, even so, represents a rather severe wound in certain subject areas that badly need that money for current purchases. It is difficult to justify the purchase of rare books from a general materials fund that is severely strapped as it is.

Answering in a similar vein, a second respondent whose library is supported primarily by public funds declared that a "funding cut for all acquisitions is about to be imposed and I expect rare book funds to be cut disproportionately." Several of the libraries that purchase relatively few rare books as a matter of policy were characterized as having traditionally relied on gifts rather than purchase. Only one respondent wrote

that library policy has been altered to diminish the number of rare books purchased. In this instance, the library has purchased microform or facsimile editions of early printed works and thus "has eliminated much of our library's interest in acquiring by purchase original editions that are duplicated in those sets. Exceptions to this observation are rare books that are of special interest for their graphic arts values, for which our researchers consider microform or reprint editions to be inadequate substitutes."

What Are the Sources of Rare Book Acquisitions Funds?

Survey tabulations suggest that the majority of responding libraries which purchase rare books do so using some combination of endowed funds, annual appropriation, unbudgeted administrative discretionary funds, and funds supplied by such support groups as Friends organizations. Of 127 responses, 103 use endowment income (81 percent of 127), 92 use annual appropriations (72 percent of 127), 63 use discretionary funds (50 percent of 127), and 79 use funds supplied by support groups (62 percent of 127). Only nineteen libraries rely on only one source of funding; seven libraries, all of them academic, except for one public library, rely on endowment income exclusively and only nine (six academic, two independent, and one federal library) exclusively rely on annual appropriations. Two libraries of the total number, both academic, depend exclusively on discretionary funds and one academic on funds from a Friends group.

Approximately the same number of libraries use income from restricted endowments (forty-two) and from a combination of restricted and unrestricted endowments (forty-five); a third category, consisting of eleven libraries, possess unrestricted endowments only. Academic and independent libraries are found in all three categories with public libraries primarily reporting *restricted* endowments; exceptions are one public library and one federal library that use both restricted and unrestricted endowments.

The largest group of responding institutions, thirty-one predominately academic libraries, employ all of the means of funding rare book purchases described earlier. Fifteen libraries (nine academic, two public, three independent, and one federal library) rely on a combination of endowment income and annual appropriation only. A second group of fifteen libraries (ten academic, one public, and four independent) depend exclusively on endowments and funds furnished by support groups. A slightly smaller group of thirteen libraries (eleven academic, one public, and one independent) combine endowments, annual appropriations and funds from support groups. Eight libraries (five academic

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and three independent) utilize endowments, discretionary funds, and support group funds but do not use annual appropriations. Five libraries or fewer depend on either annual appropriations and discretionary funds (three academic and one federal library), annual appropriations and support funds (five academic) or a combination of the two (four academic). Only two libraries rely on endowments combined with discretionary funds.

The relationship of spending patterns to sources of rare book acquisitions funds can be summarized as follows:

1. The twenty-seven libraries which spend over \$100,000 per year on rare books tend to receive their funding either primarily from endowments (six), from a combination of endowments and annual appropriations (eleven), or from a combination of endowments, annual appropriations, discretionary funds, and support group funds (nine). Only one library in this category reported that its chief source of rare book acquisitions income consists exclusively of an annual appropriation.
2. The fifteen libraries spending between \$50,000 and \$99,999 derive their funds for the most part from endowments (three), annual appropriations (five), or a combination of the two (six). No libraries spending in this range use discretionary funds or support group funds except for one library that reported using both in combination with endowments and annual appropriations.
3. Of the forty-three libraries spending between \$10,000 and \$49,999, there is a similarity in the number of those relying exclusively on endowments (fourteen), on a combination of endowments and annual appropriations (thirteen), or on a combination of endowments, annual appropriations, discretionary funds, and support group funds (ten). Fewer (six) depend on annual appropriations exclusively and none depend on either discretionary or support group funds exclusively.
4. At the lower end of the scale, the thirty-seven libraries which spend under \$10,000 per year on rare books employ the broadest range of funding sources; seven rely on endowments exclusively, nine on annual appropriations exclusively, and twelve on a combination of the two. Only in this spending range do libraries exclusively depend on discretionary funds (one) or on support group funds (two). Six libraries spending under \$10,000 per year use a combination of endowments, annual appropriations, discretionary funds, and support group funds, albeit in quite small amounts.

Several libraries reported sources of acquisition income other than those described, but none of these sources are sufficiently common to

measurably alter the pattern outlined in the preceding paragraph. Among the more common of these occasional sources of income are donations of money for specific, one-time purchases, memorial gifts, university funds, university foundation funds, and bequests. One academic library reported that it receives money from its alumni association and one public library reported that it has received federal funds via the Library Services and Construction Act. Five libraries, all academic, stated that they generate funds through deaccession of out-of-scope or duplicate materials.

In commenting on the sources of rare book acquisitions funds, several respondents described their libraries' situation in terms of a combination of sources. One respondent wrote that "funding rare book purchases takes place in the context of overall library acquisitions funding. The Rare Book Collection receives an annual allocation (modest) from the appropriated funds....In addition we have some dedicated funds and endowments for the purchase of rare books." A second respondent wrote that "I have a small fund (\$5,000) to make routine small purchases, this from the library general budget. Beyond that considerable funds are available from restricted and discretionary funds in the Director's office—and beyond that the central University administration regards it as their business/responsibility to find funds for acquisitions of major collections/items." A third respondent whose library receives considerable funding from a support group stated that: "Because of the strength of support from our friends organization (and individuals who support our programs) we have been able to respond to many opportunities for acquisitions. The result is that we do not rely exclusively on the actual budget...[which] includes both state and endowed funds (as does that of our parent institutional library)."

Several respondents noted difficulties with their sources of rare book acquisitions funds. One respondent commented that "acquisition of rare books in the future will increase only if deacquisition funds increase and if endowments are expanded; living on mandated state monies is a precarious position for rare books." A second respondent from a publicly supported library wrote that as "endowment funds...are acquired [as well as] other special contributions for the purchase of rare books, we are concerned that the regular funding not be decreased accordingly." Citing a problem of lack of flexibility, a respondent from an independent library stated that "I would feel more comfortable with the establishment of a fund specifically for the purpose of special collections purchases. The present system here of taking money from the general book funds does not help in my effort to plan ahead."

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Reflecting upon lack of administrative support, one respondent in a privately supported academic library wrote that although

we have a detailed collections development policy...we are pretty much out on our own (i.e. not directly tied to curriculum support) so we are treated marginally when it comes to allocation of funds from the operating "hard" money or the gift, "soft" money fund. I am convinced that I could convince "the public" and alumni to support the purchase of rare books much more easily than I can convince the *library* administration. It's a real struggle.

Is Funding for Purchasing Rare Books Adequate?

Of 127 responding libraries, 78 (61 percent) stated, often very emphatically, that funding for the purchase of rare books was insufficient. Forty-four libraries (35 percent) stated that funding for rare book acquisition was satisfactory but only 5—all but one academic libraries—stated that funding was ample. Two of the libraries reporting ample funding spend over \$100,000 per year on rare books, one spends between \$75,000-\$100,000, one spends between \$50,000-\$74,999, and one, which does not routinely acquire rare books, spends under \$10,000.

Libraries stating that their funding for rare book acquisitions is satisfactory consist of forty-one academic libraries (twenty-five ARL members), one independent library, and two federal libraries. Their spending patterns are shown in table 2 (two libraries did not indicate a spending range). Libraries in the lower spending ranges of the group reporting that their rare book acquisitions funds are satisfactory are predominately smaller academic libraries, while those in the higher ranges tend to be larger university libraries. There are, however, four ARL academic libraries which reported that they are satisfied to spend under \$10,000 per year on rare books.

Libraries stating that their funding for rare books acquisitions is insufficient consist of sixty-six academic libraries (fifty-five ARL members), eight independent libraries, and four public libraries. Their spending patterns are shown in table 3 (four libraries did not indicate spending range). Throughout the ranges in table 3, libraries stating that acquisitions funding for rare books was insufficient were predominately academic, most of them larger university libraries. This was especially true in the lower ranges, but it was also true in the higher ranges. For example, of those libraries which find funding in excess of \$100,000 per year to be inadequate, ten are academic libraries, two are independent libraries, and one is a public library.

TABLE 2
SPENDING RANGES OF LIBRARIES REPORTING SATISFACTORY LEVELS
OF FUNDING FOR RARE BOOK ACQUISITIONS

<i>Range</i>	<i>Number of Libraries</i>
Range 1. Under \$10,000	13
Range 2. \$10,000-\$24,999	5
Range 3. \$25,000-\$49,999	7
Range 4. \$50,000-\$74,999	2
Range 5. \$75,000-\$99,999	6
Range 6. Over \$100,000	9
TOTAL	42*

*Two libraries did not indicate a spending range.

TABLE 3
SPENDING RANGES OF LIBRARIES REPORTING INSUFFICIENT LEVELS
OF FUNDING FOR RARE BOOK ACQUISITIONS

<i>Range</i>	<i>Number of Libraries</i>
Range 1. Under \$10,000	24
Range 2. \$10,000-\$24,999	21
Range 3. \$25,000-\$49,999	10
Range 4. \$50,000-\$74,999	4
Range 5. \$75,000-\$99,999	2
Range 6. Over \$100,000	13
TOTAL	74*

*Four libraries did not indicate a spending range.

In answer to whether rare book acquisition funding has increased every year since 1980, 44 percent (fifty-one respondents) answered yes and 56 percent (sixty-six respondents) answered no. The positive responses consist of forty-one academic libraries (thirty-one ARL members), seven independent libraries, and three public libraries. Fifteen of the forty-one academic libraries (37 percent) are in *public* institutions. Nine of the fifteen (22 percent of forty-one) spend over \$50,000 per year on rare books. Ten *private* academic libraries (24 percent of forty-one) whose rare book funding has increased steadily since 1980 spend over \$50,000 per year, leaving five public academic (12 percent of forty-one) and fifteen private academic libraries (37 percent of forty-one) in the category that spend under \$50,000 per year (two libraries did not report a spending range). Four independent libraries that spend over \$50,000 per year saw continued growth in their rare book acquisitions funding between 1980 and the present, while three that spend under

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\$50,000 saw steady growth. All three public libraries experiencing continued growth during this period spent under \$50,000.

Of the sixty-six negative responses regarding continued growth in rare book acquisitions funding since 1980, fifty-five (83 percent) were from academic libraries (forty-one ARL members), six (9 percent) were from independent libraries and two (3 percent) were from public libraries; all three responding federal libraries are included in this group as well. Thirty-seven of the fifty-five negative responses (67 percent) from academic libraries were from *public* institutions, eight (22 percent) of which spend over \$50,000 per year on rare books with the remaining twenty-nine (78 percent) spending less; three private academic libraries whose rare book funding has not increased steadily since 1980 spend over \$50,000 per year while fifteen private academic libraries spend less than \$50,000. Three independent libraries whose rare book acquisitions budgets have not risen steadily since 1980 spend over \$50,000 per year while three spend less. One public library spending over \$50,000 and one spending less have not seen steady growth in their rare book acquisitions funding.

Responding to a similar question that asked whether the ability to purchase books is equal today to what it was in 1980, sixty-seven (58 percent of 115) libraries answered in the affirmative and forty-eight (42 percent of 115) in the negative. The affirmative responses consist of fifty-seven academic libraries (forty-two ARL members), eight independent libraries, one public, and one federal library. Twenty-nine of the fifty-seven academic libraries (51 percent) are in public institutions. The negative responses consist of thirty-eight academic libraries (twenty-nine ARL members), four independent libraries, four public libraries and two federal libraries. Twenty-one of the thirty-eight academic libraries responding negatively (55 percent) are in public institutions. Slightly over half of the libraries responding that their ability to purchase rare books today is equal to or greater than it was in 1980 also answered that their rare book acquisitions funding has increased every year since 1980. Of the remainder, several respondents noted that while growth in acquisitions funding has been unsteady, their ability to purchase in 1986 is clearly improved over what it was in 1980. Only twelve of the forty-eight libraries reporting that their ability to purchase rare books is not equal to what it was in 1980 indicated that despite that fact there had been a steady increase in acquisitions funding during that period; of the twelve, four qualified their response by stating that growth in their ability to purchase, while steady, had been "slight," "modest," or "minute."

Just over one-third of the sixty-seven libraries reporting that their ability to purchase rare books today is equal to or greater than it was in 1980 spend over \$50,000 per year on rare books. This group of libraries consists of twelve private academic libraries, seven public academic libraries, five independent libraries, and one federal library. In contrast, 25 percent of the forty-eight libraries which cannot purchase rare books at the level they could in 1980 spend over \$50,000. Those libraries spending under \$50,000 per year and whose ability to buy rare books is greater than in 1980 consist of fourteen private academic libraries, twenty-one public academic libraries, four independent libraries, and one public library. Those libraries spending under \$50,000 per year and whose ability to purchase rare books is not equal to what it was in 1980 consist of fourteen private academic libraries, eleven public academic libraries, two independent libraries, four public libraries, and one federal library.

It is important to consider the relationship between sources of funding and patterns of growth in the purchasing of rare books by libraries in the period 1980-86. Table 4 shows that in terms of consistency of growth between 1980 and 1986, those libraries relying primarily on endowment income or a combination of endowment income and annual appropriations generally have fared better than those libraries relying primarily on annual appropriations alone. However, the table also shows that insofar as actual ability to purchase rare books in 1986 relative to 1980 is concerned, those libraries that utilize a combination of endowments and annual appropriations do considerably better than those libraries that rely primarily on endowments or that rely on annual appropriations alone.

Libraries whose ability to purchase rare books is not equal today to what it was in 1980 most commonly cited inflation, the price of rare books, and static acquisitions funding as causative factors. Thirty-four of fifty-four responding libraries (63 percent), among them a representative mixture of academic, independent, and public libraries, stated that inflation in library materials generally has adversely affected their ability to buy rare books. Thirty-five libraries (65 percent) stated that a primary negative factor is that the price of rare books has increased at a rate greater than library materials in general. Twenty-six libraries (48 percent) answered that both inflation and the price of rare books have had a negative impact on purchasing ability, which indicates that many respondents are of the opinion that rare book prices have exceeded inflation.

Twenty-five respondents (46 percent) stated that their libraries' ability to buy rare books has been hampered by a static acquisitions

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TABLE 4
GROWTH PATTERNS IN RARE BOOK PURCHASING BY
LIBRARIES, 1980-86

<i>Source of Income</i>	<i>Consistent Growth 1980-86</i>	<i>Lack of Growth/ Inconsistent Growth 1980-86</i>	<i>Ability to Pur- chase Equal to or Greater in 1986 than 1980</i>	<i>Ability to Purchase in 1986 Less than 1980</i>
Endowment	47%	53%	36%	64%
Annual Approp- riations	32%	68%	44%	56%
Combination of Endowment and Annual Approp- riations	46%	54%	69%	31%

budget while eleven respondents (26 percent) cited an actual cut in acquisitions funds for rare books. Libraries whose rare book acquisitions funding has been limited by a static budget consist of nineteen academic libraries (seventeen ARL members), two independent libraries, and three public libraries. Libraries whose rare book acquisitions funding has been limited by a cut in funding include nine academic libraries (eight ARL members), one independent library, and one federal library.

A relatively small number of respondents cited other priorities within Special Collections as a factor leading to less funding for rare book purchases in 1986 than in 1980. Among these priorities is the diversion of rare book acquisitions funds to other kinds of acquisition, e.g., manuscripts or reference works (thirteen), to staff salaries (three), for equipment and supplies (one), or for such support services as online catalog costs (two).

Respondent comments varied widely on whether rare book acquisitions funding is insufficient, satisfactory, or ample. Many indicated insufficient income due to fluctuating endowment income, the unreliability of state funding, or on other library priorities. A typical response stated that "some of the collections by necessity suffer from benign neglect" though others were considerably more pointed, for example, those who cited lack of support from their library's administration. One respondent went so far as to say that there "seems to be an increasing number of Library Directors who are illiterate—or at best, unfamiliar

with books, documents, and original scholarship. Their educational process is taxing." A more sanguine respondent wrote that:

Only twice in 10 years have we not been able (late in a fiscal year) to purchase rare book materials for our priority collecting area. From this perspective, funding may be termed "ample." On the other hand, given a finite amount of money, the realization that building collections takes time, and a sense that we should make the best (responsible) use of what is allocated, the funds for other collecting areas are "satisfactory." I have little doubt that I could spend (and spend responsibly) several times the amount allocated.

In answering questions related to rare book purchasing ability over the past five years, many respondents indicated that while growth had not necessarily been steady, their libraries' ability to purchase in 1986 was at least as good as it was in 1980, and in many cases better. As one respondent noted.

The Library's "Materials Budget" was cut 10% in FY 81/82 and is only now beginning to have similar purchasing power. More recently, non-state funds (grant overhead monies) have been withdrawn from the Library and this [had] represented major discretionary funds for rare book purchases. Nonetheless, I would characterize the overall decline to represent not more than 10-15% over the purchasing power in 1980.

A second respondent whose library has undertaken an aggressive program of developing Special Collections in recent years wrote that his library's ability to purchase rare books was considerably greater in 1986 than in 1980. He wrote that

the buying of rare books here has increased because of effective lobbying efforts on the part of Special Collections staff, backed by faculty support. In addition to increased allocations from library book funds, the Friends group has also been more generous in response to lobbying efforts. Both sources have increased allocations nine-fold since 1980.

Are Efforts Being Made to Increase Rare Book Acquisitions Funding?

Although most libraries continue to purchase rare books, the majority are not undertaking fund-raising efforts to increase rare book acquisitions. During the past five years, only 47 of 127 responding libraries (36 percent of the total) have undertaken a fund-raising effort specifically for, or including, increased rare book acquisitions funding. An additional ten libraries reported that they are planning acquisitions

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fund-raising efforts for rare books. Twenty-nine of the forty-seven (62 percent) libraries that have undertaken a campaign in the past five years have done so within the context of a larger library or institutional campaign as will three of the ten libraries anticipating a campaign. Of the fifty-seven libraries that have either undertaken a campaign to increase rare book acquisitions funding in the past five years or are about to undertake such an effort, forty-seven (83 percent) are academic libraries, twenty-nine publicly supported, and nineteen privately supported; forty-one are members of ARL. The remainder consists of eight independent libraries and two public libraries.

The responsibility for conducting fund-raising efforts for rare book acquisitions funds, as reported in the survey, usually involves the institutional development office working in conjunction with library staff. This is especially true of academic libraries and larger independent libraries. Twenty-six (twenty-three academic and three independent) of forty-four responding libraries stated that fund-raising efforts for rare book acquisition funds had been undertaken by the institutional development office. Eighteen libraries reported that their fund-raising efforts were undertaken without the direction of an institutional development office. Ten of these library campaigns, nine academic and one public, were undertaken either as part of a wider library fund-raising program or as an effort targeted by the library administration specifically for rare book acquisitions funds. Three of the ten libraries, all academic, stated their fund-raising effort was undertaken by their library development office though in each case the program was conducted in cooperation with a larger institutional development office.

No matter under whose aegis fund-raising for rare book acquisition was conducted, most respondents indicated that Special Collections personnel were involved directly. Only five libraries (all academic) of the twenty-six whose fund-raising was undertaken by an institutional development office failed to respond or stated that special collections had not been involved. Three (two academic and one public) of the ten libraries whose fund-raising was conducted without benefit of an institutional development office indicated that special collections personnel had not been involved. Six libraries, two of which spend over \$100,000 per year for rare books, reported that the entire fund-raising effort for rare book acquisitions funds was conducted by special collections personnel. Five of these libraries are academic (four public and one private) and the sixth is a public library. Two independent libraries whose acquisitions consist primarily of rare materials stated that fund-raising efforts for rare book acquisitions had not benefited from the presence of

a development office and had involved virtually the entire library staff. As one respondent characterized the situation: "We did it all!"

Regardless of whether or not there have been fund-raising efforts for rare book acquisitions funding in the past five years, 86 percent of responding libraries (seventy-nine of ninety-two) stated that support groups such as a Friends of the Library organization contribute in some measure to the purchasing of rare books. However 90 percent of the respondents reporting that they receive funds from support groups stated that less than half their acquisitions funds for rare books are derived from that source. Six libraries stated that such support was virtually nonexistent or was only an "occasional" or "ad hoc" source of funds for rare book purchases. The 10 percent of those libraries which receive more than half their rare book acquisitions funds from support groups are all academic libraries with the exception of one independent library. Only one library in the entire survey stated that its entire source of rare book acquisitions funds is derived from a support group. Three of the six libraries which reported that over half their rare book acquisitions funds are provided by a support group spend over \$50,000 per year on rare books. The single library which relies exclusively on support group funds spends under \$10,000 per year on rare books.

Even though most of the libraries surveyed have not undertaken a fund-raising effort benefiting rare book acquisitions during the past five years, several of the respondents who have been involved in such an effort, or are planning one, provided interesting commentary. One respondent wrote that a "campaign will soon be undertaken to raise funds for rare books and special collections. This will be a part of a larger campaign and benefit all parts of the library. Although the fund raising effort will be guided by the University Development Office, Special Collections staff and other library personnel will be involved."

Another respondent from an academic library wrote that a fund-raising effort for rare books had been undertaken within an institutional context rather than a library context. He stated that: "The Development Office requested proposals for new fund raising efforts. Our proposal was one of a few selected. The Head Special Collections Librarian wrote the description and rationale for the project." A third respondent from an academic library reported that his library is currently engaged in a campaign, conducted jointly by the library and the university development office, to raise \$3 million for new endowments for library acquisitions. The campaign, begun with a \$750,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, will add new endowments not only for the general collections but for rare books and special collections as well.

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Other respondents wrote that grants served as the basis for new rare book acquisitions funding and several noted the role of deaccession as well. One respondent in a public library wrote that because of other library priorities, fund-raising for rare book acquisitions had been left entirely to special collections staff; one method that had been successfully employed was an auction "in which duplicates of material in Special Collections were sold and the monies earned became an endowment for the use, only, of the Special Collections Division." The director of an independent library enclosed a recently developed policy regarding rare book acquisitions. It reads in part: "Monies for the acquisition of collection materials will be drawn from an Acquisitions Account, which will be set up as a part of the [library's] "capital fund" (as distinct from the "operating fund"). Proceeds from the deaccession of collection item(s) will be credited to the acquisition account, as will all cash gifts made specifically for collection purchases."

Despite the high number of libraries that receive less than half their rare book acquisitions funding from support groups, a sizable number of respondents seem to be relying on such groups for increased funding, in some cases quite successfully. One respondent noted that "our very active Friends group has an annual book sale that netted \$40,000 last year; much of this is available for rare book purchases." A second respondent noting that support group funding is of considerable value but is not a panacea, wrote that "current FY support [Friends] represented about 20% of monies spent by Special Collections or about 10% of the overall Library expenditure in this area." The same respondent added that the "Friends of the Library, which began in 1977, has only had significant effect on rare book purchases during the past 5 years, however, with contributions of over \$10,000 towards purchases made during the 85/86 FY."

In raising additional funds for rare book acquisitions, numerous respondents emphasized the importance of general administrative support to the efforts' success or lack of success. Perhaps the most persuasive statement was made by one of the few survey respondents who is also the library director:

Interest and support by members of the Board of Trustees, the President and other persons of stature is paramount to successful fund raising for book acquisitions. Often this is a result of the personal relationship which is cultivated and nurtured by members of the library administration with these individuals. [In such efforts] no task should be considered too small or too lowly by the library administrator.

What of the Future?

The final question of the survey asked respondents to state whether they are optimistic about the future growth of their rare book collections based on the present state of their library's ability to purchase rare books. Of 122 responses, 68 were positive (56 percent), 27 of 122 responses were positive with qualifications (22 percent), and 27 were negative (22 percent). All three groups contain large and small, public and private academic libraries, public libraries and independent libraries, and all three national libraries gave positive responses. Not surprisingly, twenty-three of the libraries giving negative responses spend under \$50,000 per year on rare books; of the twenty-three, thirteen spend under \$10,000, seven spend between \$10,000 and \$24,999, and two spend between \$25,000 and \$49,999 (one library did not specify a spending range). Only four libraries, all academic, spending over \$50,000 per year gave negative responses; one of these spends over \$100,000 per year on rare books. Again not surprisingly, of the ninety-five libraries giving either positive responses or positive responses with qualifications, thirty-eight spend over \$50,000 per year for rare books; this figure constitutes 88 percent of the total number of libraries that spend over \$50,000 per year in rare books. However 55 percent of those respondents optimistic or optimistic with qualifications about the future (fifty-two of ninety-five) were reporting from libraries that spend under \$50,000 per year on rare books; five libraries in this group did not specify a spending range. Fourteen of the fifty-two libraries spend between \$25,000 and \$49,999 per year on rare books, sixteen spend between \$10,000 and \$24,999, and twenty-two spend under \$10,000 per year.

Most of the respondents who reported that they are not optimistic about the future growth of rare book acquisitions by purchase cited as their reasons a static budget or a declining budget in the face of other library or institutional priorities. In particular, there is concern that library and/or institutional administrators are unenthusiastic about, or are opposed to, new efforts at fund-raising for rare book acquisitions. As one respondent noted: "I can derive some sense of satisfaction at the progress I have made here considering the conditions and attitudes prevailing at the time of my arrival. But, I have an abiding frustration because of the College administration's seemingly intractable position with regard to Library development in general." Another, somewhat more optimistic, respondent wrote that "if there is a library *and* University commitment to strong Special Collections, very positive steps can be taken. Right now, there is library support—and Foundation

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support—but not much enlightenment within the University administration....As our Academic Vice President said to the library—‘As long as I can find *Chemical Abstracts*, I don’t need you.’”

Other respondents who were either pessimistic or only guardedly optimistic cited competing priorities within special collections as their cause for concern. One respondent stated that “issues of cataloguing, space, and preservation threaten to muddle, overwhelm, and terminate attempts to improve and enrich historical collections in this country.” Writing to the same point but in more detail, a second respondent commented that

what most keeps me within...bounds [in purchasing rare books] is the library’s perennial short-staffing, such that Special Collections and Rare Books has one professional librarian—me—and one high-level classified staff assistant. The result is that I have a limited amount of time to review rare-book catalogs and select materials. Part of the limitation is that...I have to catalog them, too....As it is, I have not yet learned how to select and acquire no more items than I can catalog—and so the backlog grows....In short, I am confident that as available funding now stands, I could spend a good deal more time than I do for acquisitions, but I see no point in simply accelerating the rate at which the backlog increases.

On a more optimistic note, several respondents described an increase in their ability to buy rare books, usually in terms of new initiatives to expand acquisitions funding. One noted that “in general, the situation for rare books at [my institution] has improved dramatically over the past five years. The one area in which we are deficient is in endowed funds. This is not due to lack of interest on the part of the Library, but rather a general neglect of the Library by campus development. This will be changing, however, with the hiring of a new Vice Chancellor for University Relations.” In an even more enthusiastic response, one respondent wrote that:

I am particularly encouraged on two fronts. In recent years, Special Collections (which includes rare books) has been given 5% of the library’s total acquisitions budget which is comprised of both endowments and annual appropriations. Even with the fluctuations of inflation, knowing that we have a base budget for acquisitions means that we are able, really for the first time, to build our collections systematically. In addition, Special Collections is one of the beneficiaries of a multi-million dollar library campaign that has as its sole purpose the establishment of new endowments for acquisitions. With luck, we will have in excess of \$200,000 per year to spend on Special Collections materials in a couple of years. This compares with about \$25,000 per year just 5 or 6 years ago.

Appendix A

Survey of Special Libraries

1. Does your library currently purchase rare books? _____
 - A. Does the Special Collections unit of your library purchase rare books?

 - B. Do language and/or subject specialists purchase rare books which are placed in Special Collections? _____

2. If the answer to 1A is yes, is the total spent annually for the purchase of rare books, under \$10,000 _____? \$10,000-24,999 _____? \$25,000-49,999 _____? \$50,000-74,999 _____? \$75,000-99,999 _____? over \$100,000 _____?

3. From what sources are rare book acquisitions funds in your library derived? Check as many as apply.
 - A. Endowments _____
 1. restricted _____
 2. unrestricted _____
 - B. A portion of the library's annual appropriation _____
 - C. Special appropriations from the library's discretionary funds _____
 - D. Funds provided by support groups, e.g. Friends of the Library _____
 - E. Other _____ . Please specify.

4. Has the rare book acquisitions budget in your library increased every year since 1980? _____

5. Is the total rare book acquisitions budget in your library less than 5% of the total library acquisitions budget? _____ Greater than 5%? _____ Greater than 10%? _____ .

6. Is the rare book acquisitions budget of your library insufficient? _____ satisfactory? _____ ample? _____

7. Is your library's ability to purchase rare books equal to what it was in 1980? _____

8. If not, is this because of any of the following factors? Check as many as apply.
 - A. Inflation in prices for library materials in general _____
 - B. The price of rare books has increased at a rate greater than library materials in general _____
 - C. A rare book acquisitions budget that has remained static _____
 - D. A rare book budget that has been cut _____
 - E. Diversion of rare book acquisition funds to other priorities within Special Collections

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1. Acquisition of other research materials for Special Collections, e.g. manuscripts, reference works _____
 2. Staff salaries _____
 3. Equipment budget _____
 4. Supply budget _____
 5. Support services, e.g. automated cataloging charges, online catalog costs etc. _____
 6. Other. Please specify. _____

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9. Has your institution undertaken a fund-raising effort to increase acquisitions funds for rare books in the past 5 years?
 10. Has a fund raising effort to increase your library's rare book acquisitions budget been undertaken in the context of a larger library or institution campaign?
 11. Was the effort undertaken by your institution's Development Office? _____ If so, was the Special Collections staff involved in the effort? _____
 12. Was the effort undertaken by the library not in concert with the institution's Development Office? _____ If so, was it conducted by the library Development Office? _____ By Special Collections staff? _____ Other library staff? (specify) _____
 13. Does a support group, e.g., the Friends of the Library, provide your library's entire rare book acquisitions budget? _____ More than half? _____ Less than half? _____
 14. Given the present state of your library's ability to acquire rare books by purchase, are you optimistic about the future growth of your rare books collection? _____
 15. Include below any other comments or observations you wish to make regarding the acquisition of rare books in your library.

Appendix B

Libraries Responding to Survey*

Allegheny College	Lehigh University
American Antiquarian Society	Library Company of Philadelphia
Amherst State University	Library of Congress
Antioch University	Linda Hall Library
Arizona State University	Louisiana State University
Boston Athenaeum	Marquette University
Boston Public Library	Massachusetts Historical Society
Boston University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Bowdoin College	Miami University (Ohio)
Brigham Young University	Middlebury College
Brown University	Mills College
Bucknell University	Milwaukee Public Library
Case Western Reserve University	National Library of Medicine
Catholic University of America	New York Academy of Medicine
Chapin Library	New York Public Library
Chicago Public Library	New York University
Cleveland Public Library	Newberry Library
Colby College	North Carolina State University
College of William and Mary	Northwestern University
Colorado State University	Oberlin College
Columbia University	Ohio State University
Connecticut Historical Society	Pennsylvania State University
Dartmouth College	Princeton University
Dickinson College	Rice University
Duke University	Rosenbach Museum and Library
Emory University	San Francisco Public Library
Florida State University	Smith College
Francis Bacon Library	Smithsonian Institution
Franklin and Marshall College	Southern Illinois University
Free Library of Philadelphia	Southern Methodist University
George Washington University	Bridwell Library
Georgia Institute of Technology	Southern Methodist University- De Golyer Library
Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities	Stanford University
Harvard University	State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Haverford College	State University of New York at Buffalo
Hollins College	State University of New York at Stony Brook
Huntington Library	Syracuse University
Indiana University	Texas A and M University
Iowa State University	Trinity College
John Carter Brown Library	
Johns Hopkins University	
Kent State University	

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Tufts University	University of Mississippi
Tulane University	University of Missouri
University of Arizona	University of Nebraska
University of California, Berkeley	University of New Mexico
University of California, Davis	University of North Carolina
University of California, Irvine	University of Notre Dame
University of California, Los Angeles-William Andrews Clark Memorial Library	University of Oklahoma- History of Science Collections
University of California, Irvine	University of Oregon
University of California, San Diego	University of Pennsylvania
University of California, Santa Barbara	University of Pittsburgh
University of Chicago	University of Rochester
University of Cincinnati	University of San Francisco
University of Colorado	University of Tennessee
University of Connecticut	University of Toledo
University of Delaware	University of Tulsa
University of Florida	University of Vermont
University of Georgia	University of Virginia
University of Houston	University of Washington
University of Illinois	University of Wisconsin
University of Iowa	Vassar College
University of Kansas	Virginia Polytechnic Institute
University of Kentucky	Washington and Lee University
University of Maryland	Washington State University
University of Massachusetts	Washington University in St. Louis
University of Miami	Wayne State University
University of Michigan	Wellesley College
	Williams College
	Yale University
	Two Anonymous Libraries

*In most instances surveys were completed by the library staff member administratively responsible for rare books. In a few cases, the library director completed the survey. In complex library systems with more than one rare book collection, the principal rare book collection was surveyed.

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