Asian American Studies: Collection Development Policy

Objectives of the Policy Statement

The Asian American Studies Collection Development Policy Statement and its selection criteria are intended to articulate guidelines needed to build and maintain a relevant collection of consistent quality and usefulness, to clarify responsibility for building and maintaining the collection, set parameters for the scope of the collection, and to provide rationales for selection and retention decisions. This document is used by the Ethnic Studies & Diversity (ES&D) subject librarian as a planning and working tool to ensure consistent and balanced growth and maintenance of the Library's Asian American collection, and to aid in communicating these guidelines to the students, faculty, and staff of the Iowa State University community.

I. General Purpose

The Asian American Studies Collection of Parks Library is designed to support study, instruction, and research in the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies. Asian American Studies materials are defined as those materials dealing with the experiences of Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, South and Southeast Asian Americans, and all other of the many Asian American groups living in the United States. Collection emphasis is on the social sciences and the humanities; scholarly and authoritative informational works, appropriate for use at undergraduate, graduate, and research levels, are selected. Popular treatment occasionally may be selected to serve patron needs. Primary clientele of this collection are students and faculty in the Asian American Studies Program, students enrolled in classes meeting the University's diversity requirement, and all others interested in Asian American perspectives and contributions. Since patrons represent a wide variety of demands, resources not specifically related to the curriculum are provided.

II. History

In Fall 1998, an LAS Ad Hoc Steering Committee was formed to initiate a formal and interdisciplinary undergraduate program in Asian American Studies at ISU. The formation of the Asian American Studies Program was announced in Spring 1999. Before the establishment of the Asian American Studies Program, ISU Library holdings relevant to the Asian American experience in the U.S. were collected by the Ethnic Studies & Diversity subject librarian with funds designated for General Diversity acquisitions. At its inception in FY 2000, the Asian American Studies Program consisted of one faculty position. Prof. Gene Matibag, from the World Languages & Cultures department, served as the program's first director, succeeded circa 2005 by Prof. Jane Dusselier, from the Anthropology department.

Before the establishment of the Asian American Studies Program, ISU Library holdings relevant to Asian American experiences in the U.S. were limited. Since that time, the collection has grown significantly in terms of number of monographs, serial titles, DVDs and videos, as well as in the diversity of Asian American experiences and cultures now reflected in the collections. Serial titles have actually decreased, however, due to a number of unfortunate cessations of publication of...
important Asian American journals and magazines already under subscription. Unfortunately, new Asian American serial titles have not yet emerged, nor does any online article index dedicated solely to Asian American studies exist.

In 2005, ISU created the Center for American Intercultural Studies (CAIS) as a means to pull together the various racial and ethnic studies (African American Studies, American Indian Studies, Latino Studies, and the nascent Asian American Studies) programs into one entity. Prof. Eugenio Matibag was named director of CAIS, and Prof. Jane Dusselier served as director of the Asian American Studies Program.

In 2005, collection responsibilities for this subject area were assigned to a dedicated Asian American Studies librarian, while all other ethnic studies and diversity collection responsibilities remained with the ES&D librarian. In 2010, the ISU Library took on a team-based approach to collection development, in part due to materials acquisition technology changes. The previously separate collection development funds in African American Studies, American Indian Studies, Asian American Studies, Latino Studies, Women's and Gender Studies Program (formerly, Women’s Studies Program) were pooled to create the “Diversity and Cultural Studies” (DCS) fund. At the same time, the various World Languages & Cultures funds (Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Russian, Arabic) were pooled and folded with DCS into the new Languages & Cultural Studies (LCS) collection development team. The DCS collection development team was comprised of three librarians and functioned by consensus in acquisition decisions for materials supporting these various subject areas, and collaborating as LCS with the WLC librarian to make group decisions relevant to the broader subject area. In FY13, the Library reverted back to its previous model of individual subject librarians making selection decisions in their specific areas, and the Asian American Studies librarian. In FY 2017, the Ethnic Studies & Diversity subject librarian resumed primary responsibilities for collecting in Asian American Studies as well as all other areas in ethnic studies & diversity.

Circa FY15, ISU discontinued its support for the CAIS, and it was disbanded. The individual ethnic studies programs were distributed among various departments in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. The Asian American Studies Program was housed in the History Department, where Prof. Jane Dusselier continued as director of the Asian American Studies program.

III. Programs Supported: Asian American Studies Program; the ISU Undergraduate Diversity Requirement

Since its establishment in 2000, the Asian American Studies program has remained the smallest of the ethnic studies programs with few faculty and courses. Curriculum in the interdisciplinary Asian American Studies Program is still under development. However, Asian Americans comprise one of the fastest growing racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States and in the state of Iowa.

The Undergraduate Diversity Requirement was initiated in the Fall of 1997, and requires that every undergraduate student take at least three credit hours each of approved U.S. diversity-related and international-related course work. Courses in the Asian American Studies Program make important contributions to that requirement.

IV. Subject Boundaries

In general, classification schemes do not fit the interdisciplinary nature of Asian American Studies. It is the primary responsibility of the ES&D subject librarian to select Asian American materials for the
Library in all relevant formats and for all relevant locations in Parks Library, with collaboration and consultation with subject librarians in other discipline areas and in Reference, as necessary. It is the responsibility of the subject librarian to make any final decisions concerning replacement, transfers, and withdrawals of Asian American Studies materials in the Library. The subject librarian also may make bindery or repair recommendations, as warranted.

V. General Collection Guidelines

a. Linguistic: The Asian American Studies collection is primarily in English, or bilingual. However, there are no language restrictions and the emphasis is on appropriate material in any language.

b. Geographical areas: Selection of materials is not geographically based, in that all materials judged to be topically relevant to Asian American Studies are considered for inclusion in the collection regardless of place or country of publication.

c. Types of materials collected: All types of materials are considered for selection, taking into consideration issues such as potential use, budgetary concerns, and other relevant issues, as necessary. In general, all types of materials treating Asian American experiences will be considered for acquisition. Currently, collection intensity centers on monographs, videos, and digital texts.

d. Format of materials collected: All formats are considered for selection, taking into consideration issues such as budgetary concerns, accessibility of format (especially when a resource exists in multiple formats), and other relevant issues, as necessary. In general, all formats treating Asian American experiences will be considered for acquisition.

e. Chronological: In general, both current and retrospective materials are selected for the collection, with the aim being to acquire and retain authoritative works and those of historical interest and research value. Superseded or out-of-date editions may be transferred to a storage facility or withdrawn. In terms of material content or chronological periods covered, all periods of history relevant to Asian American Studies are considered.

VI a. Specific Collection Guidelines

Collection intensity will be focused on the following core areas in the humanities and social sciences, based particularly on the curriculum of the Asian American Studies program and US Diversity Requirement needs, with the aim being to achieve research level collections in these areas:

- History of Asian Americans in the United States
- Literature and poetic works by Asian American authors; literary criticism of Asian American literature, and related works
- Sociology and sociological treatment of Asian American Studies topics, cultures, and issues
- Women's & gender studies materials and issues relevant to Asian Americans

Supplemental materials will be selected in other areas of the humanities, social sciences, and current events with the aim being to achieve basic resource level collections in areas such as the following:

- Art and visual creative works by or about Asian Americans
- Leisure reading materials relevant to or presenting Asian American perspectives
- Music and ethnomusicology by or about Asian Americans
Materials in other disciplines may be selected in consultation and collaboration with other subject librarians, with the aim being collectively to achieve from basic resource level to research level collections in areas such as the following:

- Education materials and issues relevant to Asian Americans
- Legal materials and issues relevant to Asian Americans
- Music and ethnomusicology by or about Asian Americans
- Political science and policy issues relevant to Asian Americans in the United States
- Professional issues relevant to Asian Americans

VI b. Out of scope subjects, or, materials not collected

Juvenile materials:
Primary juvenile materials (meaning materials intended for a preschool, elementary, middle school or young adult level audience) are not generally collected, except in the case of occasional children's works by prominent literary authors or poets. Secondary materials, such as bibliographies, finding tools, and original scholarly research on the topic of children's materials as relevant to Asian American populations in the United States, may be collected in consultation with other subject librarians, as necessary.

Asian materials:
Materials with an exclusive focus on Asia or individual Asian nations, issues, and other concerns are selectively acquired by the ES&D subject librarian when deemed specifically relevant to the curriculum. Requests for Asian materials may also be referred to other subject librarians.

Multicultural anthologies or collected works:
These consist of anthologies or readers that collect a number of essays on different topics within a given unifying theme. If the majority of chapters or essays focus on non-Asian American topics or concerns, the item is out of scope for Asian American Studies and may best be referred to another subject librarian.

VII. Detailed Subject Areas
See sections VI a and b above.

VIII. Other Resources Available
There are approximately 38 programs in Asian American Studies at the university level in the U.S. Important Asian American Studies collections are available predominantly at research institutions in states at great physical distance from Iowa. These include, notably, the University of California, Berkeley, NYU, and Cornell. Asian American Studies programs also exist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Within the state of Iowa, Iowa State University may have the strongest and most diverse Asian American library collections and services. It appears to be the only one of the three Regents Institutions currently with specifically an Asian American Studies program of any kind.

IX. Cross-references to other related Collection Policies
African & African American Studies
American Indian Studies
General Diversity Studies
US Latino/a Studies
X. Subject Librarian

Susan A. Vega García is the Ethnic Studies & Diversity subject librarian at Iowa State University, and is responsible for building and maintaining the Library's Asian American Studies collection.

Statement on Intellectual Freedom

The Iowa State University Library supports the American Library Association's position on intellectual freedom, as set forth in the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read policy, and other ALA policies, procedures, resolutions and guidelines resisting censorship and protecting the freedom to read. Selection decisions for library materials are made in accordance with the Library Bill of Rights, which specifies that no materials should be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of its creators, that materials selected should reflect differing points of view on current and historical issues, that materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval, and that libraries shall challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

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