“We’re Going to Make You Popular:” Popular Collections in the Modern Academic Law Library

Jordan Gilbertson

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“We’re Going to Make You Popular”: Popular Collections in the Modern Academic Law Library

Jordan A. Gilbertson

Submitted to
Professor Penny A. Hazelton
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For 30 years I have tried to impress on our students that their law work should consume every moment of the time they are in Law School. For this reason I do not want any attractive books to lead them astray 'from the beaten path.' For this reason I think attractive reading books should not be placed in the Law Library.¹

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic law libraries have been an essential part of legal education for centuries. However the first law libraries were not located in the hallowed halls of a law schools but were the private collections of the learned colonists that practiced law.² As the practice of law evolved from a self taught profession to one requiring formal education and training, law libraries evolved as well.³ Law libraries provided a place to study and learn as well as a repository for legal knowledge that was inseparable from the law school as a whole. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century academic law libraries are facing challenges unlike they have experienced before. With the proliferation of legal information on the internet law libraries must face the question “…why do we need law libraries in this new digital world?”⁴

The role of law libraries in the age of the internet is a monumental question, one that law librarians must struggle with and ultimately answer. This question requires a serious, in depth look at the profession, administration and staff roles, the space we occupy and our collections. But academic law libraries are far from obsolete; books are still being printed, students still use our space to study, and faculty, students and community members continue to use our staff for research guidance. While the profession, as a whole, determines its fate and sets its course for the future, individual law libraries can carve out niches for themselves, making the library collection and space invaluable to the students and faculty. One such niche is the creation of a “popular collection.”

This paper proposes that the creation of a popular collection can be valuable to the law school, students, and library. Popular collections allow for much needed recreation in the students’ lives and present law librarians with the

¹ Letter from the Dean Ira P. Hildebrand, to Donald Coney, librarian, in response to popular reading titles sent to the University of Texas law school (Nov. 5, 1937). Quoted in Roy Mersky, The Law in Popular Culture Collection, 81 (3) TEXAS LIBR. J. 106 (2005); Letter quoted in its entirety in Marlyn Robinson & Rhonda Hankins, Mysteries in a Law Library: The Law in Popular 143-44 (2005).
² Christine A. Brock, Law Libraries and Librarians: A Revisionist History; or More than you Ever Wanted to Know, 67 LAW. LIBR. J. 325, 326 (1974).
³ See id. at 341 (stating that “[l]aw schools—and law school libraries—evolved slowly over the 18th, 19th, and 20th century.”).
opportunity to provide a service that most never get the opportunity to provide—reader’s advisory. The idea of a popular collection, whether law related or not, is not new and a number of academic law libraries across the county have some sort popular collection.\(^5\) The creation of popular collections of reading materials, videos and DVDs or both, has been championed by general academic libraries to promote reading and attract patrons.\(^6\) Additionally, popular culture is being used in the classroom to teach legal concepts\(^7\) and law in popular culture and law in literature electives are being taught in law schools across the country.\(^8\) Students are saturated by popular culture everyday.\(^9\) Creating a popular collection is one way in which academic law libraries can present themselves as viable and important to the students and the law school as a whole.

In this paper I will first look at the unique role of the academic law library in library culture as well as the idea of the law library as a “third place.” Next I will discuss the recent push by college and university librarians for recreational reading collections in general academic libraries. Then I will evaluate the current status of popular or recreational reading/viewing collections in academic law libraries, focusing on the wording of available collection development policies and responses to eight interview questions posed to interested law librarians and directors. Finally, I will make suggestions on how the creation or expansion of a popular collection can enhance the visibility and status of the law library amongst students, faculty and administrators in an environment in which academic law libraries are in flux.

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\(^5\) See infra section IV and Appendix A.


\(^7\) See Amy Flick, *Pick a Quick Flick: How to Use Video Clips to Keep Your Legal Research Students Awake*, AALL SPECTRUM, Apr. 2011, at 18; Victoria S. Salzmann, *Here’s Hulu: How Popular Culture Helps Teach the New Generation of Lawyers*, 42 McGeorge L. Rev. 297 (2011); Additionally, Deborah Schander, Reference and Student Services Librarian at Georgia State University College of Law Library has started a wiki which “collects examples of legal research concepts found in movies, TV shows, songs and print. Entries give detailed information about where to find the example, which research concept it demonstrates, how it can be used in class and more.” See Press Release, American Association of Law Libraries Academic Law Libraries Special Interest Section, New Wiki Collecting Legal Research/Pop Culture Examples for Use in Class (Mar. 8, 2011) (on file with author).


\(^9\) Salzmann, *supra* note 7, at 297.
II. THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC LAW LIBRARY

A. A Separate Entity:

Many academic law libraries like to see themselves as separate and distinct from other types of academic libraries, whether they are part of a parent institution or not. This is because, according to Ruth Levor, academic law libraries have a different “content, organization and use than other types of academic libraries,” therefore “law librarians must possess highly specialized knowledge, expertise and experience in providing services that affect the property, lives and liberty of their ultimate end users. To many law librarians their jobs involve more than having “subject matter expertise and familiarity with specialized resources” required of general academic librarians.

What do law libraries and librarians do that makes them so unique? First, law libraries act as the “laboratory” of the law school. In order to prepare future lawyers to protect and defend the various interests of their clients, the law school must develop within each and every student that capacity to use law library resources with skill and competence. The law school environment, like a medical school, is different from other types of educational environments because the issues that confront the students and the library reference staff are real and have an effect on people’s lives.

Additionally, “highly skilled and specialized law library professionals provide law faculty with... customized research support for their teaching and scholarship, a level of research support that is [commonly] unavailable in general academic libraries.” In today’s academic climate law librarians must be “skilled in evaluating, selecting and delivering resource materials needed for both legal and interdisciplinary scholarship.”

11 Id.
12 Id.
13 Id.
14 Id.
15 See id.
16 Id.
Finally, law librarians “actively engage[] in formal and informal instruction on many levels.”¹⁸ In many law schools law librarians teach formal legal research courses and workshops. Additionally, law librarians teach informal legal and interdisciplinary research by instructing students, faculty and patrons on how to formulate search queries and how to “select the most reliable, cost-effective and efficient research strategies and sources.”¹⁹ All of these functions of academic law libraries and librarians contribute to the conception that academic law libraries are truly different from and independent of other academic libraries.

B. The Third Place:

When presented with the question of the continuing viability of law libraries, three preeminent law library directors, Richard Danner of Duke, S. Blair Kauffman of Yale, and John G. Palfrey of Harvard, articulated the many ways in which academic law libraries are and will remain a viable part of the law school experience.²⁰ Of those mentioned were expanded faculty support,²¹ teaching and instructional support for students inside and outside the library,²² and providing space for study and research.²³ These are all traditional functions of an academic law library but in the emerging digital world these duties must take on a new digital focus.

Of primary concern to law librarians is making the library more than just a place that students use as a “quiet place to study and a fertile place for socializing.”²⁴ Despite the proliferation of digital media and online resources, students still utilize the law library because libraries are considered a “third place.”²⁵ However, just because students use the library does not automatically make it a “third place.”²⁶ To be considered a “third place” a location must exhibit certain characteristics, including:

1. They form neutral gathering places where all people are made to feel included.
2. They provide a leveling environment for human contact and conversation.
3. They must be accessible while also providing opportunities for reflection, relaxation, and interaction. And

¹⁸ Levor, supra note 10.
¹⁹ Id.
²⁰ See Danner et al., supra note 4, at 143.
²¹ Id. at 147.
²² See id. at 146-47.
²³ Id. at 145.
²⁵ Danner et al., supra note 4, at 144. The first and second place in a person’s life is often their home and their workplace.
²⁶ Stephen Young, Looking Beyond the Stacks: The Law Library as Place, AALL SPECTRUM, July 2010, at 18.
4. They are inhabited by “regulars” who feel at home in the environment.\textsuperscript{27}

Though libraries were not traditionally considered a “third place” many law libraries meet and exceed the above criteria and the concept of academic law library as the law students’ “third place” has taken hold for a variety of reasons. Law libraries not only provide access to information and “offer human contact in a comfortable, safe setting,”\textsuperscript{28} libraries also provide a safe haven for students where they can be assured that the general adversarial nature of law school will not intrude on their study time or relaxation.\textsuperscript{29} In considering the library as a “third place” Blair Kauffman states, [d]uring this digital era, where you can go online and learn…the library is what holds the students to the law school. They spend more time in the libraries than they do in the classrooms.\textsuperscript{30} Stephen Young suggests that the increase in student patronage despite the availability of more library collections online can be attributed to “the role the library plays as a place in the lives of law students, as a special environment that serves multiple purposes for the student.”\textsuperscript{31}

Richard Danner, Rufty Research Professor of law and Senior Associate Dean for Information Services at Duke University School of Law, foresees a time when the library is no longer the only or primary study space in the law school. “Law schools must have great spaces for student to study in, do their work and have access to technology. However all of these things…don’t have to be in library….”\textsuperscript{32} Despite the debate about emerging technologies on library space it is clear that for the time being students still utilize the library as a study because “even students accustomed to studying with a laptop and a latte occasionally need a space to spread out and an atmosphere that encourages concentration…. Comfortable study space will always be in demand.”\textsuperscript{33}

C. Space, Separateness and a Niche Collection:

The unique role of the law library in the law school and the space it requires are two aspects that make the law library a perfect candidate for a niche collection such as a popular reading/viewing collection. Law libraries serve the academic mission of the law school, while also serving the interests of its students, faculty and the legal community.

\textsuperscript{27} Id. at 17 (quoting RAY OLDENBURG, GREAT GOOD PLACE THE GREAT GOOD PLACE : CAFÉS, COFFEE SHOPS, COMMUNITY CENTERS, BEAUTY PARLORS, GENERAL STORES, BARS, HANGOUTS, AND HOW THEY GET YOU THROUGH THE DAY (1989)).

\textsuperscript{28} Young, supra note 26, at 17.

\textsuperscript{29} See id.

\textsuperscript{30} Danner et al., supra note 4, at 145.

\textsuperscript{31} Young, supra note 26, at 17.

\textsuperscript{32} Danner et al., supra note 4, at 145.

\textsuperscript{33} Daly, supra note 24, at 460.
Most law librarians will claim that the pedagogical goals of many law schools can not be achieved if students do not understand legal research. While true, those goals can also be stymied by the stress and anxiety caused by the law school culture and the law library can play a large role in that stress. Law libraries are often associated with endless hours of studying, exams and demanding written assignments. Collections of popular reading or viewing materials, whether legally related or steeped in popular culture, can provide periods of relief and respite for the students (and possibly faculty).

Additionally, as space becomes a premium commodity and law libraries continue to lose student patrons to coffee shops and study commons, creating a popular collection is a way to promote student use of the library and may alter the students’ perception of the library as a space.34 By creating an environment within the library that fosters relaxation and leisure, libraries can combat the perception that it is a stressful place.35 A popular reading/viewing collection can serve multiple purposes as a niche collection that brings students into the library, promoting their use of the facility and services, as well as bolstering a connection between themselves and the library as a place. Stephen Young states that in addition to its services and collections the “essence of a good library is reflected in the role it plays as a place with the lives of the students who use it-the greater the role, the greater the library.”36 A popular collection provides the law library with the chance to increase its “role” in the law students’ life.

III. THE PUSH FOR RECREATIONAL READING IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

As evidenced above, academic law libraries play a unique role within its law school and parent institution. What could a basically autonomous academic law library learn from the other academic libraries on campus? Despite differences in funding, staffing, resource allocation, and other factors that often require disparate administrative treatment of the law library over other campus libraries, “academic libraries of all types share many common characteristics and operational requirements.”37 Fundamentally, despite its autonomous nature, an academic law library is still a library charged with providing access and information to the campus community.38

36 Young, supra note 26, at 21.
37 See Levor, supra note 10.
38 Id.
At the beginning 21st century academic libraries began to publically call for the addition of popular reading collections to their libraries. However, this recent surge in advocacy by academic librarians to create recreational reading collections has its roots in the missions of academic libraries of the past. Early in the 20th century “the promotion of reading was considered one of the important functions of the college librarian” and university libraries began included reading rooms and browsing collections of popular works in their libraries. By mid-century, the popularity of recreation reading collections waned within academic libraries for a variety of reasons; students were no longer using the materials, faculty did not expect students to utilize the library for leisure purposes, decrease in library budgets, an increase in staff responsibility due to staffing cuts, changing technologies, and a need for more space to accommodate not just library materials but students as well. The trend in academic libraries was to move away from leisure and recreational collections and “as the century

40 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 35.  
41 Id. at 35 (citing Janelle M. Zauha, Recreational Reading in Academic Browsing Rooms, 12 COLLECTION BUILDING, 57 (1993)).  
42 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 35 (citing Rathe & Blankenship, supra note 39, at 76).  
43 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 35.  
44 Id. (citing Patricia Knapp, Dissertation, The Role of the Library of Given College in Implementing the Course and Non-Course Objectives of that College, at 197 (University of Chicago, 1957)).  
45 Dewan, supra note 6, at 45 (2010); Smith & Young, supra note 6, at 521.  
46 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 35 (2007); Smith & Young, supra note 6, at 521-20.  
47 Id.  
progressed, popular reading collections in academic libraries simply fell out of favor.”  

The 21st century has seen a rejuvenated interest by academic librarians in creating leisure/recreational collections in academic libraries across the county. A survey conducted in 2007 found that “slightly more than 70 [percent] of college libraries surveyed in the U.S. contain recreational reading collections.” However, “in academic libraries with collections built to support the research and teaching mission of a university faculty, popular reading can be an afterthought or left to public libraries to provide.” Pauline Dewan has identified three “recent trends” that have prompted the popular collection resurgence amongst academic librarians; the trend toward more user-centric libraries, the renewed interest in library as a “place,” and promotion of reading and literacy. Each of these trends will be discussed in more detail below.

A. Trends in Modern Academic Libraries

1. Toward a User-Focused Library

In recent years there has been a move from the traditional library model to a more user focused library environment. Pauline Dewan believes that “[a]dapting to the needs of the contemporary user is one of the biggest challenges that face academic libraries today.” To support her assertion, Dewan relies heavily on a 2006 report by OCLC that studied how college students perceive libraries and information resources. In this study OCLC reported that college students (both undergraduate and graduate) have “somewhat outdated views of libraries, are very satisfied with information from the internet, use libraries in inverse proportion to their increased use of the Web, and believe that libraries lack relevance in their lives.” Ultimately the 2006 OCLC report concluded that “libraries lack relevancy in the lives of younger respondents.”

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49 Dewan, supra note 6, at 45.
50 Dewan, supra note 6, at 45 (citing Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 37). However, Elliott’s survey only indicated that slightly more than 70 percent of libraries surveyed had a browsing collection. Although the question of what types of materials were contained within that collection, popular fiction and nonfiction, fiction or non fiction only, or academic materials only, the contents of the browsing collections of these libraries was not disclosed. Id. at 42-43.
51 Mark Sanders, POPULAR READING COLLECTIONS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: A SURVEY OF THREE SOUTHEASTERN STATES, 5 PUB. SERVICES Q. 174 (2009).
52 Dewan, supra note 6, at 45-51.
53 A prime example of this trend is the shift from traditional online public access catalogs to the more “Google like” discovery platforms being utilized by many public and academic libraries today.
54 Dewan, supra note 6, at 46.
55 Id. (citing OCLC, College Students Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership 2006 (on file with author)).
56 Id.
57 Id. (quoting OCLC, College Students Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership 2006 (on file with author)).
In 2010 OCLC issued a study of a variety of users’ perspectives about libraries in times of recession. This report indicated that the views of college age students regarding the role of libraries in their scholastic and recreational endeavors have shifted slightly since the 2006 report. In general, 81 percent of “economically impacted have library cards…and perceive increased value in the library for themselves and their communities.” One-third of college students reported that the library has increased in value for them during the recession, while a quarter of respondents ages 18-45 indicated an increase in personal value. Not surprisingly college students reported that the most important service that libraries provide is access to books, music, and media, followed by providing a place to study. When asked to provide feedback on how libraries could improve their services to the demographic students responded by suggesting libraries update and add to their collections. Library usage by college students tended to be down across the board since a similar study in 2005, however “borrowing print books and leisure reading stayed relatively stable.” The opinions and trends presented in the OCLC report suggests that in order to maintain and increase college student use of libraries, librarians must be attentive to their needs as users; thus creating a more user focused environment for the college student patron. As one economically impacted graduate student stated “since checking out books from the library is free it is a great value when money is tight. Free entertainment can’t be beat.”

Many academic librarians advocate that taking a more user focused view of the role of academic libraries will ultimately benefit their libraries in times of budget crisis and staff shortages. In fact, it is argued that “the very survival of the academic library…is dependent on understanding and responding to the needs and preferences of its patrons.” Despite the fact that popular materials are often avoided by many academic libraries because they do not fit into the libraries’ traditional collection development and service policies, these collections are often the most utilized. Providing these materials makes the student feel more at ease, improves library circulation statistics, and evidences the library’s commitment to satisfying the students’ requests.

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59 Id.
60 Id.
61 Id.
62 Id.
63 Id.
64 Id.
65 Dewan, supra note 6, at 46 (2010) (citing J. WOODWARD, CREATING A CUSTOMER DRIVEN ACADEMIC LIBRARY (American Library Association 2009)).
66 See Id. (citing J. WOODWARD, CREATING A CUSTOMER DRIVEN ACADEMIC LIBRARY 90-91(American Library Association 2009)).
67 Id.
68 Dewan, supra note 6, at 47.
2. Taking Back the Library as Place.

In 2010 OCLC reported that 83 percent of college students begin their research with an online search engine. For many students there is “high expectation that all information is available online.” If the information they are seeking can not be easily found and accessed on the Internet then it simply does not exist. With the increased migration and creation of information in digital formats students can access much of information they need from almost anywhere and many of them do so outside of the walls of a library. Additionally, many online resources that academic libraries subscribe to are accessible to students both on and off campus. In order to draw users back into the physical library space many librarians are reconsidering the identity of the library as one of place and advocating for the idea that the library “is not redundant in an age of electronic information.”

In her article Dewan presents the position that “a recreational reading collection can serve as a ‘hook’ to get patrons in the building.” Such collections, it has been argued, enhance a library’s perception amongst users and make the library “indispensible to [the] community.” It is important that academic libraries play a two fold role within the overall institution. The library must play the “traditional role of supporting the university’s teaching and research,” while also exhibiting the library as a place to foster learning, interaction and building relationships amongst students and faculty. To reclaim the library as place, college and university libraries need to act as a “community center” for the campus.

3. Promotion of Reading and Literacy

The most dominant trend in support of the creation of recreational reading programs in academic libraries is the “promotion of literacy and lifelong

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69 Perceptions of Libraries 2010, Context and Communities, supra note 58, at 54. This figure is down from 89 percent in a 2005 OCLC report.
70 Dewan, supra note 6, at 47.
71 However, OCLC reports that 71 percent of college students visit their college or university library annually, see Perceptions of Libraries 2010, Context and Communities, supra note 58, at 60. This may be due to a variety of factors, such as proximity to resources available in the library, use of printing and computer terminals or because students on some campuses are captive audiences and must utilize the library during their college careers for class assignments.
72 Dewan, supra note 6, at 47 (quoting G.J. Leckie et al, The Public Place of Central Libraries: Findings from Toronto and Vancouver, 72 LIBR. Q. 326, 359 (2002)).
73 Dewan, supra note 6, at 47 (citing Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 41).
74 SOPHIE BROOKOVER & ELIZABETH BURNS, POP GOES THE LIBRARY: USING POP CULTURE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR WHOLE COMMUNITY 7 (Information Today, 2008).
75 Paperbacks and a Percolator, supra note 39, at 5.
77 Paperbacks and a Percolator, supra note 39, at 5.
reading.”

The collection development policies of most academic libraries focus on supporting “the research and teaching mission of a university[’s] faculty.”

Because popular reading and viewing materials are not traditionally believed to be part of a university’s core curriculum, the promotion of recreational reading is often dismissed as a duty of public libraries.

However, many academic librarians believe that “[t]he practice of pleasure reading develops skills that support academic learning.”

A number of studies have been conducted over the past decade which suggest that our national literacy and interest in reading for pleasure has declined.

Librarians of all types have taken this national decline as a call to arms to promote literacy and lifelong reading amongst the populace. Academic librarians are attempting to bridge the gap between recreational reading and supporting the scholastic mission of their parent institutions. In this regard many academic librarians argue that promoting reading for pleasure is an important part of the academic librarian’s job because it fosters the parental institutions “pedagogical aims and moves beyond them.”

In 2005 the National Center for Education Statistics conducted a survey and found a decline in “prose literacy” of between 11-13 percent among people with bachelors and graduate degrees. Prose literacy is defined as “[t]he knowledge and skills needed to perform prose tasks (i.e. to search, comprehend and use information from continuous texts).” Additionally, the survey found that less than 50 percent of people with post secondary degrees were considered “proficient” in reading prose.

Proficiency required that a “person could ‘compare viewpoints in two editorials.” Statistics such as these should cause concern among college and university administrators. Nationally, if less than 50

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78 Dewan, supra note 6, at 47.
79 A Survey of Three Southeastern States, supra note 39, at 174; See also, Dewan, supra note 6, at 47; Rathe & Blankenship, supra note 39, at 73-74.
80 Mahaffy, supra note 39, at 163. See also A Survey of Three Southeastern States, supra note 39, at 174.
81 Mahaffy, supra note 39, at 164.
83 Smith & Young, supra note 6, at 521.
84 Barriers, supra note 39, at 341 (citing First Look, supra note 82).
85 Id. (citing First Look supra note 82, at 4).
86 Id. (citing First Look, supra note 82, at 15).
87 Id. (citing First Look, supra note 82, at 3).
percent of post secondary students are graduating without successful literacy skills they will be less employable and our success as a nation is at risk.

Additionally, a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) 2004 report indicated a large decline in the reading habits of “young adults” between the ages of 18-24.88 This decline was attributed to this demographics’ “increased participation in a variety of electronic media, including the Internet, video games, and portable digital devices.”89 However, the NEA’s most recent report indicates that “[t]he percentage of 18-24-year-olds who read literature has grown by nearly 9 points,”90 an increase which is “greater than for any other age group and three times the growth rate of all adult readers.”91

Academic librarians are interested in studies and surveys such as these because recreational reading provides many advantages which can benefit a student. Dewan cites a number of studies which “demonstrate[] a relationship between reading, cognitive development, verbal skills and academic achievement.”92 For college students recreational reading helps to develop the skills they will need in order to achieve academic success such as “comprehension, critical thinking and [the ability to] navigat[e] through large amount of text.”93 In its 2007 study the NEA stated outright that “reading for pleasure correlates strongly with academic achievement.”94

In discussing the educational merit of recreational reading collections in academic libraries it would be impermissible to fail to mention the scholarly benefit conferred by popular media. Students today view their social interactions and educational pursuits through a lens of popular culture and as such many of these digital natives do not see “a clear distinction between scholarly and popular works.”95 Because of their students’ popular culture tinged world view many academic institutions are utilizing popular culture materials, such as popular DVDs, in their offered courses.96 To maintain its active support for the research and teaching mission of its institutions many academic libraries are collecting these materials. Students and faculty may often borrow heavily from popular DVD collections to support their scholarly and recreational endeavors.97 By providing access to such materials academic libraries are nurturing the next

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89 Id.
91 Id.
92 Dewan, supra note 6, at 48.
93 Mahaffy, supra note 39, at 165.
95 Dimmock, supra note 6, at 143.
96 Id. at 144. According to Dimmock, such materials are utilized in cultural studies courses as well as a variety of other interdisciplinary programs. Id.
97 Id. at 148.
generation of scholars and remaining “relevant to the creation of new knowledge.”98

Ultimately, all academic libraries, specialized and general, and their patrons benefit from the creation of a recreational reading/viewing collection because such collections serve “as a general stimulus for the intellectual life of students and faculty.”99

B. Barriers to Popular Collections in Academic Libraries

Academic libraries exist to support the teaching and research goals of a college or university. Recreation reading programs are often seen to be at odds with that goal. Despite the support among academic librarians for the addition of leisure collections, there are administrative barriers that must be overcome. These barriers include; budget constraints, staffing issues, elitism, and patron interest.

The first and primary impediment to adding popular collections to academic libraries is budget.100 Budgets in libraries of all types have been dramatically slashed due to the recession. Adding to the strain, the library is one of many university programs competing for increasingly scarce funds.101 On top of budget cuts, the costs of materials have increased and students expect academic libraries to have both print and digital resources.102 The money required to maintain the fundamental collection of an academic library is stretched beyond the breaking point and many administrators believe that they would be remiss to spend the library’s meager funds on “materials that are available at the public library.”103

Another barrier to the creation of popular collections is staffing issues.104 These issues are two fold, lack of staff and/or lack of interest in the collection from staff.105 With budget cuts come staffing cuts many libraries must attempt to continue providing services with a reduced staff. Lack of staff usually leads to a decrease in services offered,106 not the creation of new services. An additional consideration is the views of the library staff and administration. Lack of interest in or disdain for the collection can stop the creation of the collection before it has

98 Id. at 149.
99 Janelle M. Zauha, Recreational Reading in Academic Browsing Rooms, 12 COLLECTION BUILDING, 57, 60 (1993).
100 Dewan, supra note 6, at 54; Barriers, supra note 39, at 341; Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 34.
101 Dewan, supra note 6, at 54.
102 Id.
103 Barriers, supra note 39, at 341 (quoting from a survey respondent. On file with source author).
104 Dewan, supra note 6, at 54; Barriers, supra note 84, at 341; Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 39.
105 Barriers, supra note 39, at 341
106 Id. (quoting from a survey respondent. On file with source author).
a chance to begin. Some academic librarians believe that recreational reading collections “might detract from the image of the librarian as information specialist and might ally academic librarians too closely with their public library counterparts.”107 Administrators note that focusing on such collections would divert the librarians’ attention from the library’s services for the faculty and staff.108 Elitism by some academic librarians is a large impediment to the creation of popular collections in academic institutions.

The final barrier to recreational reading in academic libraries is lack of demand for and use of the materials.109 Many of these collections begin due to demand from students and/or faculty.110 However, with the everyday demands of resources, services and new technologies unless there is a demand for recreational reading materials, these materials will not become a priority.111 An additional concern surrounds the creation of these types of collections; will anyone use them?112 Just because a popular collection is created based on the requests received from students, there is no guarantee that students will utilize the materials provided. Spending time and money to create a collection that no one will use is a waste of a libraries’ already precious time and resources.

C. Application to Law Libraries

The previous sections are dedicated to the push by academic librarians for popular collections in their college and university libraries. With the unique role law libraries play in law schools, including its inherent autonomy from other campus libraries, why should the battle cries of general academic librarians matter to an academic law librarian? Academic law libraries face all of the same challenges as their counterparts; budget and staffing cuts, space constraints, the proliferation of information in electronic format, and the need to maintain relevance in an increasing digital world. These obstacles manifest themselves in decreased patronage and funding. General academic libraries see popular collections as a way to stay relevant and entice users to their libraries; the same may be true for academic law libraries.

Academic law libraries may learn from the ideas presented by their general academic counterparts. The goals of the recreational reading collections have implications for libraries of all types, including law libraries. The trend toward a user focused library is not exclusive to public or general academic libraries. If law students no longer feel the library adds value to their scholastic

107 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 39. Various administrators share this view reasoning that an “academic library is to support the curriculum. Popular reading is for public libraries Barriers, supra note 84, at 341 (quoting from a survey respondent. On file with source author).
109 Barriers, supra note 39, at 342; Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 40.
110 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 38.
111 Id. (quoting from a survey respondent. On file with source author).
112 Barriers, supra note 39, at 342.
lives, maybe it adds value to their personal lives by providing entertainment and recreation. Listening to users and focusing on their needs, whether those needs are articulated or not, could prompt students to trust the law library and utilize other services they may not have previously. Providing popular materials can make the students feel like the library understands the stress and plight of law school and make them more inclined to make the law library a fundamental part of their legal education experience.

Providing a space in the law library dedicated to popular culture (law related or not) adds to the law library’s “third place” status. Students often associate the law library with assignments, papers, exams and marathon study sessions. In today’s world of Google and online access to electronic databases, there may never be a need for a student to step into the library during their time in law school (unless forced by a legal research instructor). Maintaining a collection of popular reading/viewing materials in its own space creates an area where students can remove the rigors of legal education and relax. Providing this space for students will encourage use of the collection as well as use of the facility in general. Creating a place where students can find peace and distraction from the daily law school grind may bolster the law library’s popularity among students and encourage even the most devoted digital native to peruse the stacks or engage a reference librarian.

Finally, all law schools are concerned with rankings and status because lower ranked schools have to fight harder for students, prestige and funds. Additionally, all law schools want to graduate top caliber students who can pass the bar and impress, judges and senior partners. The concern shown by academic librarians over the decrease in reading and literacy among college students should not be ignored by law schools or law librarians. Law students are traditionally among the top tier students in their undergraduate institutions, but if literacy levels are falling across the board, then even the best students aren’t as good as the best that came before them. Studies have demonstrated that recreational reading can aid a student’s ability to learn and enhance their critical thinking, comprehension, and verbal and written communication skills. Such skills are indispensible to law students and lawyers. Law librarians can not expect every student who comes to law school with those skills to maintain them throughout the three or four years they attend. Reading is a skill that takes practice and although law students read hundreds and thousands of pages in law school, recreational reading provides building blocks that sustain and encourage cognitive development.

Academic law libraries face their own unique problems, however academic law librarians can not discount the arguments made by their general academic colleagues for creating popular collections in their libraries. A popular reading collection serves many purposes in an academic law library. It encourages reading as a gratifying activity which benefits the academic prowess of the students. Such collections also enhance a library’s standing as a place for students
to both study and relax, which can promote the use of libraries in a time when many students find themselves turning to Google instead of reference librarians. Finally, popular reading collections give students in many universities a voice in the creation of the library’s collection; this provides a feeling that their needs are being met by their institutions.

IV. POPULAR COLLECTIONS IN ACADEMIC LAW LIBRARIES

Popular collections in academic law libraries are not a new concept. The first “popular collection” was created in the late 1980s at the Tarlton Law Library at the University of Texas Austin School of Law, under the direction of Roy Mersky.113 At the beginning, this collection consisted primarily of materials already present in the “popular reading room” and the “mystery collection.”114 Law librarian Marlyn Robinson seized upon the opportunity to create the “popular collection” in a former computer lab, making the same arguments that librarians today use; such a collection would “provide national exposure, give [the] students a sense that [the library] cared about them, and it would be inexpensive to maintain.”115 Currently, the popular reading room and popular collection contain over 7,000 books and 1,000 videos and DVDs.116

Like its general academic counterparts, the primary goal of academic law libraries across the country is to support and serve the curricular, teaching and research goals of the law school. Law libraries often have incidental functions that become part of their mission, such as providing access to legal materials for the surrounding legal community or supporting the legal self education of secondary patrons. It is because of these primary and secondary goals of the law libraries that many do not see a need for a collection of popular materials.117 However,

113 Marlyn Robinson & Rhonda Hankins, Mysteries in a Law Library: The Law in Popular Culture Collection at the University of Texas School of Law, 29 (3/4) COLLECTION MGMT 143, 148 (2005).
114 Id. at 147-48. The law library had been collecting materials for the popular reading room since 1937.
115 Id. at 148.
116 Email Interview with Jane O’Connell, Associate director for patron services, instruction and research (Feb. 21, 2011).
117 An additional factor that may play a role in a law library’s decision whether to collect popular materials is the American Bar Association’s accreditation standards. Chapter 6 of the Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools specifically deals with the law library and information resources. Standard 606(a) requires law libraries to collect “a core collection of essential materials” such as reported federal and state decisions, federal and state statutes, and secondary sources “necessary to support the programs of the law school.” 2010-2011 Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools, Chapter 6: Libraries and Information Resources (and Interpretations), available at http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/legaled/standards/2010-2011_standards/2010-2011tabastandards_pdf_files/chapter6.authcheckdam.pdf. However, in addition to the required “core collection,” rule 606(b) states that the library collection shall also include materials that, (1) meets the research needs of the law school’s students, satisfies the demands of the law school curriculum, and facilitates the education of its students; (2) supports the teaching, scholarship, research, and service interests of the faculty; and (3) serves the law school’s special teaching, scholarship, research, and service objectives. Id. A popular collection
there has been an increase in the interest in lawyers in popular culture over the years, and many law schools often offer elective courses dealing with such material. Utilizing popular culture in law school classrooms is a hot topic among professors, because they understand that this generation of law students are “heavily dependent on media and popular culture…[it] is the lens through which they view their interactions with others and construct new knowledge.” It only makes sense, given the variety of learning styles of students today, that professors would attempt to tailor their teaching to this digital generation. The addition of popular materials in the law library for learning and recreation would support the pedagogical aims of many law professors.

After reading a variety of materials about the push for popular collections in general academic libraries and bearing witness to the creation of a small collection at my law school, I became interested in learning what law libraries had these types of collections and if law libraries saw these collections as adding value to the institution. I was surprised to find the law library community almost wholly silent on the issue of popular collections. In this section I will describe my attempt to gauge how law librarians feel about popular collections.

A. Methodology

While a thorough empirical study of the law libraries of all 200 accredited and provisionally accredited law schools in the country would be ideal, accomplishing the task was simply not possible. However, such a study would be beneficial as law librarians should understand what their colleagues are doing to improve their services, facilities and standing in their patrons’ eyes.

In order to better understand the popular collections of academic law libraries I utilized a two-fold research methodology. First, I conducted interviews with law library directors and library staff whose institutions currently have some form of popular reading/viewing collection. Second, I reviewed accessible collection development policies for language relating to the development and maintenance of popular reading/viewing collections. The goal of these efforts was to take the data obtained from both the interviews and collection development policies and create models of the current structure of these types of collections in comports with this requirement in many law schools for a variety of reasons. As evidenced in the text above recreational reading has an impact on the educational prowess of students and popular culture is of interest to many law students and faculty; therefore popular collections meet the stated purposes of a law library collection as described in that section.

118 For example, The National Jurist recently ranked its 25 Best and Worst Legal TV Shows. This list spanned the last 50 years. THE NATIONAL JURIST, January 2011.
120 See e.g., Amy Flick, Pick a Quick Flick: How to Use Video Clips to Keep Your Legal Research Students Awake, AALL SPECTRUM, Apr. 2011, at 18; Victoria S. Salzmann, Here’s Hulu: How Popular Culture Helps Teach the New Generation of Lawyers, 42 MCGEORGE L. REV. 297 (2011).
121 Dimmock, supra note 6, at 143.
academic law libraries. As will be demonstrated below, there are a variety of models that academic law libraries follow in the creation and maintenance of these types of collections.

B. Interview Questions

In an effort to gain a more personal understanding of popular collections in academic law libraries I began my research by asking for participation in email or phone interviews to discuss the creation, maintenance, and promotion of these collections. In early January 2011 a request was placed via the AALL law library director listserv seeking the participation of any institution with a popular reading/viewing collection.122 I received a total of 14 responses indicating the willingness to discuss the topic or providing information about their collection without further prompting. Of those 14 responses, I requested and received additional information about their collections from 10 institutions. The law libraries that responded to my request for information ranged in size and type from large public academic law libraries to small private institutions.123

During the interview process I asked a series of eight questions seeking to understand more about the creation, budget, marketing/promotion, contents and goals of these popular collections.

1. How did the popular collection get started?

Answers to this question were very particular to each institution and ranged from personal projects to financial endowment. Some institutions had more than one type of popular collection (including recreational reading rooms, media centers and popular film collections). Each collection within the larger context of “popular collection” had particular circumstances; some were started in honor of a student or faculty member others were created because of an abundance of a certain type of material in the library’s general collection.

2. What were the initial goals for the collection and have they changed during its creation/maintenance?

Not surprisingly the goals of the collections were just as varied and individualized as the reasons for creating the popular collections themselves. What was interesting was that many of the stated goals comported with the trends presented in the academic library literature. The goals of the responding law libraries included support of curriculum, complying with patron/faculty requests,

122 Prior to placing this request I also spoke to 2 law librarians about collections that they helped create at their respective institutions.
123 In total I received useable data from 12 schools; Four large public academic law libraries, two medium public academic law libraries, three medium private law school libraries, and three small private law school libraries.
providing relaxation and rejuvenation for the students and faculty, and the need to fulfill the requirements of an endowment.

3. Where in your library is your collection located?

Placement of the collections depended on the space and layout of the particular library; some collections have their own dedicated spaces while others have particularized shelf placement and catalog designation. Interestingly, many of the collections were housed separately from the libraries’ primary legal collection in its own browsing/reading room, reading “nook” or housed with the reserve collection. A few of the collections were cataloged as separate collections but shelved with the main or special collections.

4. Is your collection marketed/advertised?

A majority of the libraries responded that these collections were marketed or promoted using signs, blog posts, web announcements, and brochures about the collections themselves. Other libraries let the collections market themselves and simply gave the materials prominent shelf locations in high traffic areas.

5. Describe the contents of your collection? Books? Media? Legal and/or non-legal? How many items?

The answers in this section ranged from all books to all media (video/DVD). The number of titles also ranged from between 20 to thousands of titles. The results of this question are discussed further in part D of this section.

6. What was the initial budget for the collection? Has it changed?

As expected the answers in this section were as varied as the answers provided for the creation and goals section. The money spent on these materials depended on how the collection began and the library’s interest in maintaining the collection. Responses indicated that funds for these collections come from gift accounts, the library’s annual operating budget (usually out of the expenditures for monographs) or special budgets created specifically for these collections (ranging from $100 a year to thousands of dollars per year). Some libraries indicated that they do not actively collect for these collections and accept materials by donation or gift.
7. Is the popular collection(s) part of your library’s collection development policy?124

The responses to this question depended on the collection, not necessarily the institutions. In libraries where the collection existed but was not actively maintained, the collection was not part of the overall collection development policy. However, the majority of response indicated that there was some affirmative language in the collection development policies. Where there are multiple collections that are “popular” in nature some of the individual collections may not be included or have been absorbed into the policies for other collections/acquisitions. For example, if the budget for the materials comes from the monograph budget the policy for popular fiction is considered part of the development policy for monographs.

8. Is there ongoing maintenance of the collection/addition of materials?

Generally many of the libraries maintained and added new titles to their collection, as per their collection development policies and budgets. However, where there were budget cuts, popular collection funds were often among the first cut. In one instance the library had an “honor system” swap policy in which a patron could take a book, as long as they brought that or others back in its place.

Overall the responses to the questions presented depended on the particulars of each institution. However, the responses provided a variety of viewpoints on how to develop, maintain, promote, and house popular collections.

C. Collection Development Policies

To supplement the information about popular collections I gathered using personal interviews I decided to review collection development policies compiled by the American Association of Law Libraries Academic Law Libraries Special Interest Section (ALL-SIS). It was my goal to analyze the language used in the accessible collection development policies to determine if the law library 1) had a collection of popular materials and 2) actively collected and maintained that collection. Each policy was searched for references to “popular,” “recreation/recreational,” “leisure,” “literature,” “DVD,” “film,” and “motion/motion picture” to determine if the law library has a written policy on the collection of popular materials. Additionally, I searched the description of the collection levels of each policy, when provided, to determine how important such materials were to the collection. I then determined whether the language present

124 Ten of the twelve responding law libraries also had their collection development policies available for review on the ALL-SIS website. Seven responding libraries had affirmative language regarding the collection in their collection development policies. Three law libraries had negative language regarding the collection in their collection development policies. The analysis of the available collection development policies is discussed in greater detail in section C of this part.
in the collection development policy was 1) negative, 2) ambiguous, 3) affirmative or 4) dealt specifically with popular newspapers and/or magazines (periodical).125

The ALL-SIS website listed 107 collection development policies from academic law libraries of all sizes and tiers. Of those, there were 75 policies in which some mention of popular collections materials was made. That number was much higher than I anticipated as it comprised approximately 70 percent of the available collection development policies. There was some overlap of language within the policies themselves, which provided for instances where the institution’s collection development policy contained a combination of negative, ambiguous, affirmative or periodical language. Because of this overlap approximately 25 percent of the law schools were placed in more than 1 category and therefore the overall total of libraries with language about popular collections materials does not match the number of policies represented in the chart below.

The following table and chart list the results of my research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF LIBRARIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodical</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

125 Appendix A presents the individual law school libraries according to the language used in their collection development policies. Negative language includes affirmative statements that materials of this nature are not actively collected, minimal collection support is provided, or purchased only upon faculty request; Ambiguous language means the language used in these policies makes it difficult to determine whether there is a comprehensive collection development policy for popular materials. This also includes language indicating collection level for course purposes; Affirmative language means that there is language indicating that the library collects and popular materials for reading, viewing or listening in support of curriculum or for recreational purposes. Materials may or may not be legally related and may be donated as gifts or purchased through budgetary funds; Periodical- Popular Newspaper and/or Magazines indicates that the library purchases local, national and legal newspapers and/or popular magazines for recreational reading, current awareness or educational purposes.
As the figures above indicates almost 50 percent of academic law libraries had some sort of affirmative collection development policy for purchasing and maintaining popular reading or viewing materials. Additionally, many of those libraries are also represented in the Periodical column; most of the libraries with affirmative or ambiguous policies also purchased and provided popular newspapers and/or magazines for recreation or current awareness.126 There was less overlap between libraries with negative policies as only 3 of the 15 schools purchased popular periodical materials. Approximately 28 percent of the available collection development policies had either negative or ambiguous language. These numbers are lower than I predicted.

The results were surprising in two ways. First I was not anticipating so many academic law libraries to have language regarding popular materials in their collection development policies, given there has been very little written on the subject. Second, I was not expecting so many law libraries to have affirmative language regarding the collection of popular materials, whether in book or audiovisual format. After accounting for overlap, approximately 76 percent or 57 of the 75 listed law libraries with language regarding popular collections had affirmative policies dealing with the purchase and collection of popular materials, including periodicals. These numbers show that many law libraries do take into consideration popular materials when creating their collection development policies.

126 Note, not all of the libraries that had affirmative policies are represented in the Periodical column. Many schools only provided for the purchase of popular newspapers and/or magazines. See Appendix A for further details.
D. Models of Popular Collections

Utilizing the responses I received from the email interviews and my analysis of the available collection development policies I have determined that there are seven primary types of popular collections in modern academic law libraries.

According to my analysis of the collection development policies, there are 41 law libraries with affirmative language regarding the collection of popular reading/viewing materials. Additionally, there are 26 law libraries that include affirmative collection language about periodical materials such as popular magazines and newspaper. Of those 26 law libraries, only 6 exclusively collect popular periodical materials. The other 20 libraries have additional affirmative language about collecting other types of materials for popular collections. It is also important to note that of the 12 interview responses I received, 7 libraries were already represented in the affirmative language totals, 3 libraries were represented in the negative language totals, and I was not able to analyze the collection development policies of the other 2 libraries. In total, the following models are based on interviews and the collection development policies of 49 academic law libraries.

1. Law Related Monographs Only

Popular collections of this type consist solely of monographs relating to the law. The materials in these collections can range from the latest John Grisham release to non-fiction accounts of trials and biographies of Supreme Court Justices. This was one of the least prevalent models for popular collections as only 5 libraries with popular collections fall into this category.

2. Law Related Media (Video/DVD) Only

Like the law related monographs, these collections only contain legally related DVDs or VHS tapes, although VHS has fallen out of favor and many libraries are updating their collections by purchasing DVDs. Most the materials in these collections are films that portray lawyers as characters, or focus on trials and legal themes. Some collections also contain television shows that focus on lawyers, judges or the legal system. This was by far the most common model with 16 libraries indicating they collect this type of material. Such collections also appear to be popular among students with five of the institutions who participated in email interviews indicating that these collections are often the most widely advertised and circulated. The primary goal of law related media popular collections is to provide students with recreation and leisure materials as well as to support the instructional goals of the faculty and law school.

3. Mixed Genre or Non-Legal Monographs
Collections in this category contain books of all genres or books that are not specifically related to the law. Interview answers indicated that these collections have their own dedicated space and are vigorously promoted. An interesting facet to this type of collection is the goal or motivation mentioned by some of the institutions, primarily these collections are provided as an “escape” for students. Seven institutions have collections that fall into this category.

4. Mixed Genre or Non-Legal Media

This model for popular collections in law libraries was the least common, with only two collection development policies and no interview responses indicating they provide such collections. Mixed genre or non-legal media collections contain popular films that are not related law. These materials are purchased for the casual use of students and faculty.

5. Law Related Mixed Media

These collections contain books, films and television shows and that are related to the legal system or have law students, lawyers, or judges as main characters. The materials collected for this type of collection are a combination of collection types 1 and 2, as described above. Eleven collections fit into this category and interview responses indicated that these collections have the largest number of volumes/titles.

6. Mixed Media-Mixed Genre

This is the broadest category of materials because it encompasses all of the other collections. These collections contain books, videos, DVDs, audio books as well as graphic novels/comic books from all genres- from fiction to nonfiction, romance to biographies. Only 1 interview response indicated that their institution collected popular materials at this level. However, a review of the collection development policies presented 9 additional law libraries that collect such a wide range of popular materials. The goal of this type of collection is often to provide students and faculty with a respite from the rigors of legal study.

7. Popular Periodicals Only

A review of collection development policies indicates that 26 law libraries collect popular newspapers and magazines for the enjoyment of students and faculty. Interestingly, none of the law libraries that were interviewed noted that they collected these types of materials. Many libraries collect legal newspapers in addition to popular periodicals such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and popular news and entertainment magazines. Of the 26 libraries that collect these materials 20 collect popular materials in one of the other categories; only 6 law libraries listed popular periodicals as the only popular materials collected.
E. Conclusion

Based on the above data it is clear that there is no one way to create and maintain a popular reading/viewing collection in an academic law library. Collections are as individual as the institutions and librarians that create and house them. However, the responses and collection development data indicate that popular collections do have a place in the modern academic law library and are widely utilized by both students and faculty.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR DRAFTING A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND CREATING A POPULAR COLLECTION

In spite of the lack of literature discussing popular reading/viewing collections in it appears that such collections may be more prevalent in academic law libraries than previously thought. Many libraries have seen the benefit that these types of collection can bring to an academic library, most importantly increased patron use and enjoyment of the facility and materials. Although some academic law libraries do collect popular materials, not all of them have separate collections dedicated to these types of works. The following are considerations and suggestions that can be utilized in both the creation of a collection development policy regarding popular materials and creating and maintaining these physical popular collections.

A. Collection Development Policy

A thorough collection development policy requires a variety of elements. At the very least the following aspects of the collection and library should be considered and included in the policy: 1) scope of the collection, 2) budget, 3) format of the materials, 4) access and loan rules for the materials, 5) location, advertising and marketing of the collection, and 6) cataloging the collection.

1. Scope

As evidenced above (in part D of Section III), there is no one way to create a popular collection. The type of collection that a law library chooses to create is determined by a variety of factors. In order to create and maintain the type of collection envisioned by the law library it is very important to establish the scope of the collection at the outset. The scope of popular collections in law libraries is varied and can range from collecting only law related monographs to collecting a variety of materials in different mediums and genres. Without setting the scope and goal for this type of collection, it can be impossible to adequately collect materials for a cohesive popular collection. Language in the collection development policy should indicate both the kind of materials that will be
collected as well as why these materials have been chosen and the purpose of the collection. By including this information in a collection development policy selection decisions can be made with greater ease and efficiency. A great example of this type of language can be found in Duke University’s law library collection development policy (emphasis added):

Cox Legal Fiction- In 1987, Brainerd Currie Professor of Law James D. Cox donated funds he received as recipient of the Duke Bar Association Distinguished Teaching Award to purchase novels and other fiction involving lawyers or legal themes. Professor Cox has continued to contribute funds annually for this collection. The collection is designed to highlight law in popular culture and in the hope that a fiction collection with some connection to the law may well spark students and others to enjoy a pleasant diversion while rationalizing it as field work. The library also selects popular films with lawyers as characters or law related themes in DVD format for this collection.  

2. Budget

The scope of the collection is closely related to the budget for the collection. Many collections of this type are created by gifts or donations to the law library and as such have predetermined operating budgets. Even if the popular collection is being created out of general library operating funds it benefits the library to include the annual operating budget for a collection such as this in the language of a collection development policy. Including the budget acts as a type of insurance ensuring the selector has knowledge of the budgetary constraints of the collection.

3. Format of the Materials

Another aspect that is closely related to both the scope and budget of a collection is the format of the materials a library wishes to provide. Format used to be a relatively simple decision- hardcover or paperback? Microfiche or microfilm? Today the decision of what format to invest in is made more

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128 See e.g. Regent University School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy, 2001. The collection development policy for the D. The Mary Elizabeth Menefee Collection of Law and Film [Menefee Collection] includes the following language.
2. Funding
a) Funds transferred by the ‘Donors’ (as defined in the agreement) for the development of this collection become part of the annual Law Library budget, and shall be fully expended within the fiscal year of the donation.
b) Funds donated by others for the development of this collection are placed in a separate account which has no time limitation.
complicated by the emergence of new technologies. Many popular collections contain physical books and media (such as DVDs or CDs). However, today’s students ingest their media in various formats, from eBooks to watching movies and television on a variety of electronic devices. Libraries, especially law libraries are expected to facilitate students’ use of technology, which requires, at the very least, a discussion about what types of technology the library is ready to provide and promote to users.\textsuperscript{129} Even if a library is not ready to provide new media to its users, the creation of a popular collection acts as a platform to discuss these issues.

4. Access and Loan Rules

All libraries have rules pertaining to who has access to the library and who may use and remove materials from the physical space. While these rules are often well established, the creation of a popular collection collection development policy allows for the opportunity to revisit these rules. Clearly defined and stated policies for access and loans are important for the maintenance of such collections, especially where the materials are valuable (such as DVDs). For example, if an academic law library is open to the public, are all collections and areas of the library open to the public as well? If so, can public patrons check out materials and are the loan periods different than those for students or faculty? However, if promotion and use of the collection is important to the library, it may be better to consider a liberal loan policy or allow for a “swap” program where the borrower does not have to officially check out the book, but they do have to bring it (or another) back. These questions and issues are important and should be addressed where specialized collections, such as popular collections, are being considered.

5. Location, Advertising and Marketing of the Collection

Law libraries that have popular collections have a variety of options of where to locate them. These collections can be separately cataloged but intershelved among the general collection or these collections can be given their own space or entire room. Space is often at a premium in law libraries and without a clear plan as to where a collection is going to be housed, new collections will suffer. Location of the collection will also affect the overall size of the collection. If the size of the collection has not been discussed and decided upon, it is important to make sure that this factor is considered when determining where the collection will be located. Depending on the institution, popular collections can range from a few dozen books to thousands of books and DVDs. Whether the collection is going to remain in the regular stacks or have its own dedicated space

\textsuperscript{129} Possible topics to address in the context of popular collections include providing eBooks and eReaders to users (including loan rules), Netflix subscriptions instead of physical media, digital music and audio book stations or devices, and the collection and cataloging of online computer games.
it is important to include that information in the collection development policy so that all departments are aware of its location.

An additional consideration is how the popular collection will be marketed and advertised. This is an important consideration because there is no point in expending the time and effort in creating a new collection including selecting, cataloging, and shelving materials, if none of the users knows it is there. Advertising and marketing a popular collection does not have to be time consuming or expensive; many libraries find that paper signs, book jacket displays, blog posts and announcements on the law library’s home page suffice. However, a law library chooses to market their collection is dependent on the time, energy and resources of the staff dedicated to the collection. It may be helpful to include the mechanics of advertising and marketing popular collections in the collection development policy for institutional knowledge and to allow for future assessment of the collection and marketing efforts.

6. Cataloging and Other Departmental Considerations

The creation of a new collection requires the consideration of the collection’s effect on every department in the library. Of primary importance is how these materials will be cataloged and accessed via the OPAC. This consideration takes into account a variety of aspects already discussed, such as access and loan rules and location. Additionally, it is important to think about the additional time that will be spent cataloging (or re-cataloging), processing and shelving these materials. Currently, very few collection development policies dedicate any space to the technical services and circulation aspects of their specialized and general collections. It is important to discuss the cataloging issues that present themselves and document any decisions in a collection development policy in order to provide quality control and have a record of the different departmental policies affected by the new collection.

There are a variety of aspects that must be considered and documented before a new collection can be created. Whether a law library chooses to include the above elements in a written collection development policy is a matter of institutional decision making. However, whether included in a collection development policy or not, it is important to discuss each element and have a clear understanding of the scope, budget, formatting, access, location, advertising, and cataloging aspects of the newly created popular collection.

B. Suggestions for Creating the Physical Collection

After the particulars of creating a popular collection are discussed, determined and memorialized, it is time to create the physical collection. The academic library literature provides a few suggestions for creating and maintaining popular collections that can be utilized in a law library setting.
First, these collections do not have to be expensive. Many academic libraries have titles in their general collection that can be sorted into a variety of popular genres. The same is basically true for law libraries. There are often titles in a law library’s collection that serves the dual purpose of being entertaining as well as supporting the curriculum. Starting a popular reading collection with materials the library already owns is an effective way to gauge interest in the collection and to promote titles that might languish on the shelves.

An additional cost effective measure includes soliciting donations of books and/or DVDs from faculty, librarians and students. Asking the members of the law school community to contribute to the creation of a popular collection may bolster the sense of place that they feel toward the law library. Another option is to make an effort to find a donor to provide the initial investment to create the popular collection. Law firms, former students, deans or professors may be willing to invest in a popular collection for business or personal reasons. Without being pushy or demanding, seeking donations for new collections can offset the costs of the collection, while providing an opportunity to bring the donor closer to the law library and law school. The creation of a new popular collection does not need to be a large and expensive endeavor. A collection can be created from the materials already in the law library’s collection, donations by the law school community or a donor. There are a variety of creative options for starting such collections.

Next, location is important to survival. In academic libraries “… browsing areas [is a] common method for promoting extracurricular reading.” The same is true for academic law libraries. Even in these times when space is becoming an issue, creating a separate space for the popular collection, whether it is in a high traffic area or a corner of the library, gives the collection the feeling that it is special and promotes its use. Many of the libraries that responded to my survey indicated that their popular collections are located separately from the rest of the collection. Even if a great deal of space can not be dedicated to a popular collection, leaving the book jacket on some of the more interesting titles and displaying them throughout the library could promote circulation.

Finally, for these collections visibility is the key to success. Even if the law library can not spare room in a high traffic area for the collection, creating displays, blogging about the collection or hanging signs promoting new or interesting titles can increase circulation. Libraries have also promoted recreational reading collections and new titles through Twitter, LibraryThing.

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130 Smith & Young, supra note 6, at 522.
131 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 38; For more on this topic see Mary Whisner, Practicing Reference: “Good Reads” in the Law Library, 93 LAW LIBR. J. 517 (2001).
132 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 37.
133 Dewan, supra note 6, at 59.
134 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 38.
135 Dewan, supra note 6, at 59.
and booklists. Additionally, creating personal attachment to the materials may entice interest amongst patrons. Personal notes from librarians, faculty and other students recommending certain titles could peak a patron’s interest.

Utilizing the above techniques can boost the circulation of an academic law library’s collection. Many of the barriers to creating these collections, such as budget cuts and lack of patron demand can be directly countered by starting the collection using materials currently found in the law library and promoting it properly. Additionally, law librarians who rarely get the opportunity to recommend a good book, movie or TV show may relish the opportunity to create a reading culture within their institution. If these collections are successful, students and faculty will utilize the library more frequently and demand more popular materials, which may lead to an increase in budget, a reallocation of space, or at the very least an increase in the standing of the law library in the minds and hearts of the institution.

VI. CONCLUSION

Law librarians are struggling with their changing roles in this increasing digital world where law libraries have to struggle for space and to maintain relevance in the lives of law students. The creation of popular collections in academic law libraries is a viable way of reinventing a law library’s image in the minds of the law school community. Though there are barriers to creating such collections, such as shrinking budgets and staff, there are also benefits that can be achieved from adding popular materials to a law library. These benefits include providing a space for relaxation within the law school and rejuvenating the law library’s place with the law students educational and recreational lives. Many law libraries have already invested time, funds and effort into the creation of popular collections for just these reasons.

136 Extracurricular Reading Promotion, supra note 39, at 38
137 Whisner, supra note 128, at 523.
APPENDIX A: POPULAR CULTURE COLLECTIONS IN ACADEMIC LAW
LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Using the collection development policies compiled by the American
Association of Law Libraries Academic Law Libraries Interest Section, this
appendix attempts to catalog the attitudes toward popular collections in modern
academic law libraries. Each policy was searched for references to “popular,”
“recreation/recreational,” “leisure,” “literature,” “DVD,” “film,” and “motion/
motion picture” to determine if the law library has a written policy on the
collection of popular materials. The policies listed below are available on the
ALL- SIS collection development policies website available at

NEGATIVE LANGUAGE:
Includes affirmative statements that materials of this nature are not
actively collected, minimal collection support is provided, or purchased only upon
faculty request.

1. American University, Washington College of Law, Pence Law Library
Collection Development Policy, 2009.
2. California Western School of Law, Law Library Collection Development
Plan, Nov. 2006.
3. Cornell University Law School, CLL Collection Development Policy,
Sept. 2007.
4. CUNY School of Law, Law School Library Collection Development
Policies.
5. Florida International University Law Library Collection Development
Policy, Fall 2007.
6. The George Washington University Law School, Jacob Burns Law
Library, June 2007.
7. Georgia State University College of Law, Law Library Collection
Development Policy, 2005.
8. Hamline University School of Law, Hamline Law Library Information
Resources Collection Development Policy, April 2011.
2009.
10. St. John University School of Law, Law Library Collection Development
Policy, July 2009.
11. Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Library Collection Development Policy,
12. University of South Carolina School of Law, Law Library Collection
13. University of Utah, SJ Quinney College of Law, Law Library Collection

**AMBIGUOUS LANGUAGE:**
Language used in these policies makes it difficult to determine whether there is a comprehensive collection development policy for popular materials. Includes language indicating collection level for course purposes.

5. Oklahoma City University School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy, Nov. 2006.
AFFIRMATIVE LANGUAGE:
Library collects and catalogs popular materials for reading, viewing or listening in support of curriculum or for recreational purposes. Materials may or may not be legally related and may be donated as gifts or purchased through budgetary funds.

1. Ava Maria School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy, May 2010.
7. Earle Mack School of Law at Drexel University, Legal Research Center Collection Development Policy, Aug. 2009.
16. Mississippi College School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy.
17. Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center, Law Library & Technology Center Collection Development Policy, May 2010.
33. University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy.
36. University of Texas at Austin School of Law, Tarlton Law Library/The Jamail Center for Legal Research Collection Development Policy, Fall 2004.
38. University of Virginia School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy.
40. Washington and Lee University School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy.
PERIODICAL- POPULAR NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES:
Purchases local, national and legal newspapers and/or popular magazines for recreational reading, current awareness or educational purposes.

25. University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Law Library Collection Development Policy.
26. University of Texas at Austin School of Law, Tarlton Law Library/The Jamail Center for Legal Research Collection Development Policy, Fall 2004.