

Axe Library Guideline 23(Rev. 1988)

AXE LIBRARY GUIDELINES
Position on Challenged Materials

The Leonard H. Axe Library of Pittsburg State University endorses the philosophy of the American Library Association's "Freedom to Read Statement" and the "Library Bill of Rights." These statements indicate that materials should not be "excluded because of the race, nationality or the social, political or religious views of the author". Any controversial material purchased by the Library will meet the criteria of the established book selection policy. If there are requests for reconsideration of any materials the request will be handled through a written complaint form available at the circulation desk following the procedures outlined in the Office of Academic Affairs Memorandum 82-2 as revised.

(Attachments: OAA Guideline 82-2: "Guidelines and Procedures for Responding to Challenged Materials," "Library Bill of Rights," "Freedom to Read Statement," and "Request for reconsideration of Library Material.")

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO CHALLENGED MATERIALS*

Date: September 7, 1988

Number: 82-2 (REV.)

Introduction

The University is committed to the free flow of information and ideas. It has as a primary mission the search for knowledge, truth, and the commitment to follow wherever that search leads. This commitment is nowhere more apparent than in the library, where instructional, reference, and research materials should be provided, as far as is practicable, that present all points of view on current and historical issues, as well as represent all national, ethnic, social, political, and religious views of their authors.

Guidelines

1. Library materials shall not be excluded solely on the basis of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Library materials nor reference to them shall not be removed from the collection of the library because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. The Leonard H. Axe Library will challenge censorship of the materials in its collection on any grounds.
4. The right to individuals to use the Leonard H. Axe Library shall not be denied or abridged because of national, ethnic, social, political, or religious views.
5. Librarians and library staff shall not be required to endorse the principles, ideas, opinions, views, etc. of the library materials they provide.
6. No library materials in the collection of the Leonard H. Axe Library will carry any type of label speaking to the potential impact of that material on the reader.
7. All materials acquired by the library will meet the established acquisitions policy.
8. Any challenged materials in the Leonard H. Axe Library will be processed utilizing the procedures as set forth in this Office of Academic Affairs Memorandum.

*This OAA Memorandum is based upon the American Library Association's Statement on "Freedom to Read" and the "Library Bill of Rights," adopted by the Leonard H. Axe Library faculty Spring, 1982.

Procedures

An individual wishing to challenge library material will complete a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" which may be obtained from the Circulation Desk, completed, and returned to the Office of the Dean of Learning Resources. Within five class days of receipt of the completed request for reconsideration, the Dean of Learning Resources will request the Collection development Librarian to re-evaluate the purchase or acceptance of the material and to respond in writing to the request for reconsideration. The Collection Development Librarian shall submit such responses to the Dean of Learning Resources within five class days of the Dean's request for a response.

The Dean of Learning Resources, within five class days of receipt of the Collection Development Librarian's written response, will meet with the individual requesting reconsideration. The subject of this meeting will be the request of the individual and the response of the Collection Development Librarian.

If the problem is not resolved by these procedures, the Dean of Learning Resources will write a report of the actions taken to this point and, with all materials, submit within five class days of the conference, the request for reconsideration and the Dean's report to the Chairperson of the Library Committee of the Faculty Senate.

At its next meeting, which shall be held not later than ten class days after the receipt of the Dean's report, the Library Committee will consider all the data submitted and meet with all parties it deems relevant in an attempt to resolve the request for reconsideration.

On the fifth class day after its meeting, if the Library Committee has not resolved the issue, the Dean's report and all associated documents shall be forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs whose decision shall be final.

Robert K. Ratzlaff
Vice President for Academic Affairs

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

1. The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.
2. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
3. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
4. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
5. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
6. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
7. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1962, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council.

THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: That the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio, and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Please complete this form and submit to the Office of the Division of Learning Resources.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

AUTHOR: _____

TITLE: _____

PUBLISHER, DATE: _____

REQUEST INITIATED BY: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

COMPLAINANT REPRESENTS: _____

(Himself, organization, or group)

1. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific; i.e., cit pages)
2. What do you feel might be the result of viewing/reading this material?
3. Is there anything good about this material?
4. Did you read/view the entire material? What parts?
5. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by literary critics?
6. What do you believe is the theme of this material?
7. In its place, what material of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?
8. If this material is retained, what publication(s) would you recommend which presents a counterbalancing point of view?

Signature of Complainant _____

Date: _____