We need to talk about donations: policies & strategies for small academic libraries
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 Policies & strategies for small academic libraries

**Policies**

*Guidelines*

- Gift policy statement or preamble
- Description of acceptable and unacceptable resources
- Limitations or costs to the library
- Monetary donations
- Transfer of ownership (right to determine access and disposal)
- Right to refuse
- Contact info of designated person with authority to solicit, accept, and decline offers
- Unsolicited gifts
- Screening process
- Packing and shipping
- Appraisals
- Tax receipts
- Donor acknowledgment

*Canadian Research on Donations*

A list of donations webpages for English university libraries with enrollment less than 10,000 is on my e-portfolio: https://sites.google.com/site/paulajcardozo/library/publications

**Questions for smaller libraries**

- Are you being offered in-kind gifts you don't need?
- Are these gifts becoming a burden?
- Is there a perception that because you're small you need everything?
- Is it harder to say no to someone in a smaller community when you're more likely to run into locally?

**Top Tips**

- **Communication**: Post your policy in an easy-to-find place. Be clear about your needs.
- **Currency**: Review on a regular basis with input from employees involved in the process.
- **Consistency**: Ensure all employees are on the same page, especially when communicating with the public.
- **Authority**: Appoint one experienced person to liaise with the public and coordinate the process in-house. Someone diplomatic yet firm.
- **Diversion**: Some people just don’t want to throw it out. Is there another local place that wants donations?

**Strategies**

*Do you know what to say?*

- "There’s no way for us to determine the ownership of these materials.
- "The law says you have to..."
- "When we accept this gift, we also accept the responsibility to market, maintain, and distribute it."
- "We may need to redescribe the gift."
- "We may need to redetermine the value for tax purposes."

*Is everyone on the same page?*

- Ensure key members within the library understand the policy and procedures.
- Review when major changes are made or if new employees are hired.
- Include employees in the process to ensure understanding of the policy and procedures.

*Unsolicited Donations*

- Some small libraries are receiving cash donations beyond their budget.
- This is a significant amount of money that puts pressure on the administration.

*My Research*

- Recent study on donations in academic libraries.
- Seeking to identify any policy trends specific to the role of collections management.

*What's going on in your library?*

- Do you update your donations policy on a regular basis?
- Do all employees who deal with donations have a chance to share their experience and insights?
- Do you have a sense of how much you’ve offered is useful?
- How well do donated resources circulate compared to purchased acquisitions?

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Interested in this topic? Email me!
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