COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT
PHYSICS

Date: June 2005
Collection Development Librarian: Cynthia Holt

I. PURPOSE/PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Physics Department is located in the Columbian College of Arts & Sciences. Materials are acquired to support teaching at the undergraduate level, teaching and research for graduate study, and faculty research interests. The department supports study leading to a B.A., B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. in Physics, and a B.S. in Biophysics. Current research concentrations for graduate students include nuclear physics and condensed-matter physics, as well as interdisciplinary studies available in materials science, astrophysics, and biophysics. Undergraduates may also minor in physics. Students in a Ph.D. program must write a dissertation. Both thesis and non-thesis options are available in the M.A. in Physics program.

Current faculty research areas include experimental condensed matter physics, theoretical condensed matter physics, experimental nuclear physics, theoretical nuclear physics, theoretical particle physics, and cross-disciplinary areas including biophysics, coherent radiation phenomena, material applications, and astrophysics.

Faculty carry out multidisciplinary basic and applied research through the GW Center for Nuclear Studies (at the Virginia Campus), the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Newport News, Virginia, the Naval Research Laboratory, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

In September 2003, there were 18 full-time and 15 part-time faculty. In September 2004, there were 15 undergraduate students and 22 graduate students in Physics.

II. AREA RESOURCES

A. Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC)

The collections of the WRLC are available for use by students and faculty, either on-site or through the Consortium Loan Service. Catholic University and George Mason University offer Masters and Ph.D. programs in physics.
B. Other area resources

Faculty and graduate students have access and borrowing privileges at Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance (CIRLA) libraries. The University of Maryland has a strong physics collection.

III. GENERAL COLLECTION GUIDELINES

A. Language

The primary language of the collection is English. Multilingual publications are selected when works are not available only in English. English translations of works in other languages are acquired selectively.

B. Period of Coverage

Emphasis is on current scholarship.

C. Dates of Publication

Important retrospective works are acquired selectively.

D. Geographical

No areas are excluded, but the emphasis is on work done in industrialized countries, particularly the United States.

E. Treatment of Subject

Emphasis is on upper undergraduate, graduate, and research level material. Undergraduate level textbooks are ordinarily not purchased, although some recent texts may be accepted as gifts. Graduate level textbooks are acquired selectively. Accompanying instructors’ manuals and students’ solutions manuals are ordinarily not purchased. Non-GWU dissertations are not normally acquired. Popular treatments are not purchased. Biography and history of physics materials are acquired selectively. Collected works of major physicists are acquired selectively.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS AND FORMAT

Acquisitions include periodicals, reference books, monographs, and monographic series. Of primary importance are journals, other serials, and advanced level monographs. Proceedings and transactions of conferences and symposia are acquired selectively. Collections of previously published articles are not selected. Dissertations are not generally acquired.
The bulk of the collection is still print but periodicals are being increasingly purchased as online subscriptions. Materials in other formats are not normally acquired.

V. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because the undergraduate curriculum for physics requires few materials beyond basic textbooks, most material acquired is at the graduate or research level. Some materials acquired for physics also support graduate study and research in the fields of statistics, biology, mathematics, chemistry, computer science, finance, and engineering. Refer to those policy statements for details.

VI. DUPLICATION

In general, duplicate copies of a title are not purchased, the operating principle being to purchase more titles rather than extra copies of individual titles. However, if demand warrants, e.g. reserve readings, duplicate copies are bought on a case-by-case basis. Additional copies of titles may be accepted as gifts.

VII. SELECTION METHODS

A. Selection of new materials generally occurs through 5 sources:

1. The approval plan through Blackwell’s Book Services is monitored on a regular basis to ensure the profile meets our needs. Any changes in the curriculum, as indicated through library impact statements, are examined against possible changes in the approval profile.

2. Firm orders are initiated by the collection development librarian. Firm order requests from faculty and students are reviewed and approved by the collection development librarian.

3. Standing orders, memberships and serial requests are initiated by the collection development librarian.

4. Gifts are accepted under the same guidelines as other acquisitions. They must fit the criteria spelled out in this collection development policy.

5. The Library participates in the Federal Depository Library Program; collection development librarians review documents available through the U.S.G.P.O. for access or inclusion in the collection.

B. Deselection

The deselection process can be initiated by Gelman staff, by faculty, or by the collection development librarian. Final decisions on deselection are made by the collection development librarian. Items are checked for general condition,
Much of the material relevant to physics is in the Library of Congress classifications at QC (Physics) and QB (Astronomy). Some materials in cross-disciplinary areas may be classed under other call numbers such as QD 450-731 (Physical chemistry) and QH 505 (Biophysics).