COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT

SCIENCE FICTION

Date: October 16, 2008
Collection Development Librarian: Steven Mandeville-Gamble

I. PURPOSE/PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Science Fiction collection supports a number of courses spread throughout at least four different programs: Computer Science, Undergraduate Writing, American Studies, and the School of Media and Public Affairs. The course “CSci 110: Technology and Society” requires students to read a science fiction work to examine how technology is portrayed to the public through fiction. Similarly, “AmSt 167.85: Uses of the Future: American Science Fiction as Cultural History” examines how readers use popular fiction to represent and critique existing social relations. “SMPA 801.10 Political and Social Commentary in Science Fiction” examines the evolution of the science fiction genre from a historical perspective focusing on the ways significant authors, screenwriters and producers have employed the conventions of science fiction to comment on political and social life.

II. AREA RESOURCES

A. Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC)

George Mason has a fairly strong collection of science fiction titles. American University also has a number of science fiction titles, though to a lesser degree than George Mason.

B. Other area resources

Faculty and graduate students have access and borrowing privileges at the Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance (CIRLA) libraries. The Library of Congress has an extensive collection of science fiction works. Howard University and the University of Maryland also have relatively strong collections.

III. GENERAL COLLECTION GUIDELINES

A. Language

English is the primary language for collecting in this area. However, materials in other
languages will be purchased as requested by faculty.

B. Period of Coverage

The primary period of coverage is the 19th century to the present.

C. Dates of Publication

The dates of publication of materials acquired will range from the 1890s through the present.

D. Geographical

There are no geographic restrictions in terms of locations described. Due to the focus of the courses which this collection supports, there will be an emphasis on acquiring materials published in the United States and the United Kingdom.

E. Treatment of Subject

The collection will focus on “hard” science fiction, i.e. fiction based on real or possible technologies and scenarios including, but not limited to, space exploration, bioengineering, biotechnology, biomimetics, computer technology, artificial intelligence, technological utopias, technological dystopias, terraforming, and evolution. The collection will also include appropriate secondary sources and reference tools. There will be a strong emphasis on collecting the works of key authors in the genre including, but not limited to, classical science fiction authors such as Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, and Frederick Pohl as well as more recent authors such as Kim Stanley Robinson, David Brin, Greg Bear, and Alastair Reynolds. The collection will not include works primarily identified as fantasy.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS AND FORMAT

The collection will consist primarily of print monographs and, as appropriate, electronic books. The collection will also include appropriate reference works, both in monographic and electronic format. As requested by faculty, key science fiction move titles will be acquired on DVD or other equally stable digital formats.

V. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This collecting area overlaps with the English collecting area and relates to the Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Biomedical Engineering, Biomimetics and Bioinspired Engineering, Chemistry, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Science, Electronic and Computer Engineering, Environmental Studies, Genetics, High Performance Computing, Human Evolution, Information Systems and Technology, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and Systems Biology collection development areas.

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 will occur through two processes:

1. 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.

2. Gifts are accepted under the same guidelines as other acquisitions. They must fit the criteria spelled out in this collection development policy. It is anticipated that this gift process may well be the primary means of acquisition of new titles for this collecting area.

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, availability of newer or replacement editions and the continuing value of the content.

VIII. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

Science Fiction

American

- Collections PS648.S3
- Drama PS627.S39
- Poetry PS595.S35
- Literary History PS374.S35

British

- Collections PR1309.S3
- Literary History PR830.S35