

The Farrington Library serves the students of the MIT-WHOI Joint Program by maintaining a small collection of books solely for use by JP students. This collection development policy provides criteria to guide decisions on the acquisition of new materials. It is intended to help librarians deal with the question of whether a book “belongs” in the collection by laying out the purpose and scope of the Farrington library.

The Farrington Library was established with a gift from John W. Farrington, Dean Emeritus of WHOI academic programs. The Academic Programs Office has budgeted money for acquisitions since then, but there is no consistent source of funding for the library. The collection is limited in size by the budget, and also by shelf space. A second long shelf will soon be added (hopefully by fall of 2015).

The Farrington collection covers topics including general oceanography, earth and environmental sciences, general interest science, popular science and science-related fiction, career advice, and scientific writing. The depth of coverage is generally around conspectus level 3 for science reference (study or instructional support) and level 1 for non-reference (minimal information level). The collection is not intended to be comprehensive on any subject. The collection is cataloged and searchable through the MBL/WHOI library although it is administered by and only available to JP students. The library provides textbooks and reference material relevant to coursework and research of JP students. Materials are available for loan to JP students unless designated as course reserve. Holdings are periodically reviewed and weeded by the librarian. Acquisitions are driven entirely by suggestions from JP students, and students are encouraged to suggest titles to the librarian at any time. The librarian makes purchasing decisions based on the budget, personal judgement, and the guidelines laid out in this policy.

The Farrington Library does NOT purchase or keep:

- Very specific books related to a single student’s area of research: this is outside the scope of the collection.
- Old and outdated texts: the collection is not in any way archival, there is simply not enough space.
- Books that are expected to become outdated quickly (eg. programming manuals, software manuals, editions of works that are frequently and substantially updated): the collection cannot afford to buy and discard titles on a short-term basis.
- Electronic resources: the Farrington Library holds only print materials.
- Materials in languages other than English: this is outside the scope of the collection.

In deciding whether to acquire a new book, consider:

- Will this book be useful to several students in the program? Books should be of use to >1 student, preferably >>1.

- Will the contents of this book become obsolete in the near future? Are the contents of this book already obsolete? (The latter question is particularly relevant regarding gifts of books from scientists cleaning out their offices.)
- How does this book add to the collection? Are other books on the subject already available? Will this book replace/supersede materials in the collection?
- Does the MBL/WHOI library have a copy of this book?
- How much does the book cost?

In deciding whether to remove a book from the collection, consider:

- Is the material still relevant and useful? Has scientific understanding of the material advanced significantly since the book was written?
- Circulation records and usage in the recent past.
- Are other (newer) resources on the same topic available in the collection?

The librarian is responsible for implementing this policy and revising it as they see fit. JP students are also welcome to read and suggest revisions to this policy.

Written by Hannah Mark (JP librarian)  
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