

## Pride+:

### *Utilizing Collections to Improve LGBTQIA+ Representation and Services*

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Historically, LGBTQIA+ individuals have been excluded from mainstream society and thus library collections. At this time in particular, collections reflecting LGBTQIA+ experiences are under attack. This article will provide a case study for how one undergraduate academic library is seeking to mitigate this damage. By analyzing the systemic problems in supporting LGBTQIA+ collections, a variety of difficulties are revealed. One solution to overcome them is to create a stand-alone collection of LGBTQIA+ materials which is what Vairo Library at Penn State Brandywine decided to do. Through restorative collection practices that consider access and preservation of LGBTQIA+ works, new opportunities for engagement also become available and are discussed.

## Introduction

Libraries have an ethical duty to serve all patrons through collections and services. Historically, LGBTQIA+ individuals have been excluded from mainstream society and fought for inclusion and visibility both legally and socially. The exclusion that this population has faced has been similarly mirrored in library collections in terms of both number of LGBTQIA+ titles purchased and accessibility and visibility of these titles. In order to mitigate this damage, libraries need to pursue restorative practices as they consider access and preservation of LGBTQIA+ works. One undergraduate library is seeking to do this through the establishment of a new collection called Pride+. This article will review LGBTQIA+ related issues in libraries with an emphasis on academic libraries and then provide insight into the start of the Pride+ collection. Early analysis of the collection's current holdings will be presented. Next steps and future plans will also be discussed.

## Literature Review

LGBTQIA is described by the linked vocabulary Homosaurus (2019) as "Acronym used to describe lesbians, gay people, bisexuals, transgender people, queer people, intersex people, and asexual people as a group." As a population, people identifying as LGBTQIA+ represent a minority group when it comes to their sexual or gender

identity (or both). When a plus is added it indicates additional non-mainstream genders or sexualities may be covered by the acronym. Throughout this article other acronyms are used as they are related from various sources; usually a shortening or rearrangement of the acronym. Some other acronyms have seen increased usage such as TGNC for transgender and gender nonconforming people. Additionally, Queer is used throughout as a largely reclaimed word and bucket descriptor for both sexual orientation and gender identities that do not match heteronormative and binary cisgender identities.

In order to understand LGBTQIA+ issues in libraries, one must first understand the status of LGBTQIA+ individuals in society. Recent polls show that the LGBTQIA+ population seems to be rising. In 2022, a Gallup poll found 7.1% of Americans identify as LGBTQIA with 20.8% of Generation Z identifying as LGBTQIA (Jones, 2022). While there is some discussion about the accuracy of telephone polls, these numbers do seem to be consistent with recent Household Pulse Surveys from the US Census also finding a similar number: 7.69% identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender in the US and 8.58% identifying as such in Pennsylvania (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Legal protections on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity have increased in recent decades, but in 2021 the Williams Institute, an independent research group on sexual orientation and gender identity law and policy, ranked Pennsylvania as the 24<sup>th</sup> state in the nation in terms of legal protections for this population. This legal landscape likely contributes to increase stigma and discrimination in the state and this is linked to “negative effects on individuals, businesses, and the economy.” (Mallory, Vasquez, & O’Neill, 2021)

In the Household Pulse Surveys, the U.S. Census also found some alarming trends for LGBT individuals, “Nearly half (47.9%) of LGBT respondents reported experiencing anxiety for more than half of the days in a week compared to 23.5% of non-LGBT respondents. A larger share (38.2%) of LGBT respondents than non-LGBT respondents (16.1%) experienced depression for more than half of the days in a week” (Anderson, File, Marshall, McElrath, & Scherer, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic many students lost contact with supportive campus environments with almost half reporting that their families either did not know about their LGBT identity or did not support them in their identity which understandably was associated with high levels of distress (Gonzales et al., 2020). The Human Rights Campaign notes that “College is often the first place many LGBTQ+ people find they are able to speak their truth and live openly” (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). However, other research has shown that LGBTQ people experience bullying, harassment, or assault at higher levels than non-LGBTQ students. (Conron, O’Neill, Goldberg, & Guardado, 2022) Therefore, it is imperative that academic libraries seek to support these populations and consider how their collections reflect LGBTQIA+ issues.

Now that there is an understanding of the current state of LGBTQIA+ populations, their intersections with libraries can be more fully explored. Libraries have been concerned with LGBTQIA+ issues for many years. The American Library Association (ALA) was the first professional organization to have a group focused on gay and lesbian issues with the founding of its Task Force on Gay Liberation in 1970 (Adler, 2013). Over the years, this taskforce has evolved into the Rainbow Round Table which oversees one of the longest running book awards for LGBTQIA+ issues: The Stonewall Book Awards (ALA, n.d.). More recently the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) started a special interest group on LGBTQ users and their mission statement says, “By creating access to collections, safe spaces and services, we support LGBTQ+ community members as they question, construct and affirm who they are and who they wish to be” (IFLA, n.d.). Overall, a combination of nondiscrimination policies for both services and collection development allows libraries to be a supportive place for the LGBTQIA+ population (Stewart & Kendrick, 2019).

Although professional support has been strong compared to some other fields, some question how much libraries have done to support LGBTQIA+ individuals. Rothbauer (2007) cautions against libraries focusing on being seen “as a safe, anonymous, and private place, a place of solace” as it “reinscribes the values of the homosexual closet” (p. 106). “The closet is a term used to describe the denial, concealment, erasure, or ignorance of lesbians and gay men”

(Brown, 2000, p. 1). While concealment can provide some sense of safety, it can force individuals to deny their true selves and have ongoing fear and anxiety of their identity being revealed. In order to provide protection, the closeting of individuals gets reinforced again and again throughout our society. See, for example, TikTok admitting to “concealing video content from disabled, fat, and queer” folks in an effort to combat bullying (St. Pierre, 2022, p. 83). This mode of protection can seem noble, but rather can force those that have stepped out of the closet back in. Rothbauer further finds that a focus on privacy can render the Queer population invisible in library spaces. In a survey of librarians, Chapman (2014) found that “Less than half of the questionnaire respondents (46.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that public libraries should put on displays of picture books or YA novels with LGBT content” (p. 5). While having specific displays can also be seen as othering, a lack of any visibility makes it impossible for Queer individuals to know they can take up space in the library. Through multiple means, much of the work completed by libraries for LGBTQIA+ individuals can be seen as upholding the status quo and therefore the closet which does not allow queer individuals to our spaces. Wagner and Crowley (2020) state, “Further, we will suggest that this failure has a marked impact on queer individuals, and more directly transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals, in this very failure to take a stance that is not proactively oppositional” (p. 161).

Rather than improving in LGBTQIA+ advocacy since 2014, school and public librarians may have rising concerns about supporting LGBTQIA+ patrons due to increased book banning and censorship. Across many states, the banning of books has been focused on several subjects, but none more closely than LGBTQIA+ issues, characters, and authors, which represent 41% of the materials banned from July 2021 to June 2022. The state of Pennsylvania has one of the highest banning rates with 251-500 bans occurring during this period (Friedman & Johnson, 2022). In the coming months, additional books may be pulled from shelves with LGBTQIA+ related propositions making their way through at least ten state governments (Jensen, 2023). Of particular concern for the profession is the number of libraries that may be self-censoring or ceasing displays of content to avoid controversy, a phenomenon known as soft censorship (Jensen, 2022). As McEachreon notes, “Attempting to avoid controversy by disengaging is a fear response, which is understandable, but it is also a shirking of stated professional responsibilities” (2016, p. 193).

Essentially, if libraries are not taking a pro-LGBTQIA+ stance today, “then we tacitly represent the status quo, which has been harmful to sexual and gender minorities throughout history” (De la Cruz, Winfrey, & Solomon, 2022, p. 293). If neither LGBTQIA+ people nor collections are visible in library spaces, then it may be assumed they do not exist and this will continue to perpetuate the lack of representation. When this is all university students have experienced at their school and public libraries, they may assume academic libraries similarly don’t have anything that represents or serves them.

Academic libraries have additional struggles for supporting LGBTQIA+ patrons due to classification problems. Within United States academic libraries, the most commonly used classification system is Library of Congress Classification (LCC) along with the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). This combination of systems is noted for its inability to accurately provide access to LGBTQIA+ writings. Most egregiously, “Both LCC and LCSH exhibit “othering” tendencies– that is, presenting historically marginalized people as fundamentally different from heterosexual men” (Howard & Knowlton, 2018, p. 77). This note regarding classification is not a new observation, with scholars as early as 1971 noting: “the LC list can only ‘satisfy’ parochial jingoistic Europeans and North Americans, white-hued, at least nominally Christian (and preferably Protestant) in faith, comfortably situated in the middle and higher-income brackets largely domiciled in suburbia, fundamentally loyal to the Established Order, and heavily imbued with the transcendent incomparable glory of Western civilization” (Berman, 1971, pp. ix). While there have been many changes since 1971, much of the remaining structure still remains and continues to ostracize members of this community (Knowlton, 2005). The first significant change for LGBTQIA+ issues was the change of the HQ class schedule from Sexual Perversion to Sexual Deviation in 1972, which is credited to members of ALA’s Task Force on Gay Liberation (Adler, 2013). While this was a step in the right direction, it doesn’t provide much assistance with seeing the full depth of writing in this area nor is it a particularly positive phrase as it still others LGBTQIA+ identities. Overall,

“The order, structure, and hierarchy presented in the HQ class schedule has changed very little since its creation in 1910” (Henry, Kauffman, & Chiu, 2022, p. 2).

In their analysis of the schedule, Henry, Kauffman, and Chiu (2022), find that “HQ manifests its sex negativity and anti-queerness through five major mechanisms: granularity or spacing issues, scope note issues, harmful topical correlations due to proximity, issues with labels, and high stagnancy over time” (p. 4). Sex negativity and anti-queerness both serve to other LGBTQIA+ identities by making heterosexual marriage the only form of sexuality or gender expression that is valid. The granularity and spacing issues seem to be a deliberate denial as computer science, a field not readily established in 1910, is provided much more granularity in its section of LCC. Additionally, the system collapses understanding of the difference between gender and sexuality by having gender minorities redirect to the section on sexual minorities (Henry, Kauffman, & Chiu, 2022). Of particular concern is the proximity issue for sexualities and genders which largely occur within HQ70s. Bestiality is placed at HQ71 just before a browser will come across many LGBTQIA+ titles (Graziano, 2016). Additionally, the placement of transgender and nonbinary identities is troubling as they are co-located with works on prostitution and pedophilia. Wagner and Crowley (2020) state that “the proximity of the transgender work to ‘vice’ more generally signals it as an inherently wrong thing and in need of regulation” (p. 174).

These issues are magnified when intersectionality comes into play. Intersectionality was first defined by Crenshaw (1991) as the doubling which occurs between sexism and racism for Black women. Similarly, non-white LGBTQIA+ individuals are multiply marginalized by LCC where their race and gender or sexuality are treated as other and co-located with problems in society. In combination with other issues in the academy and libraries in general this makes LGBTQIA+ people of color “particularly susceptible to being overlooked in academic libraries” (De la Cruz, Winfrey, & Solomon, 2022, p. 278).

In addition to the issues found within the HQs of LCC, LGBTQIA+ studies are also complicated by the interdisciplinarity of the field. Analysis has found that students and scholars in these areas pursue diverse research topics (Adler, 2010; Clarke, 2010; Graziano, 2016; Matheson, Tait, & Reynolds, 2019; Stewart and Kendrick, 2019). Moreover, information about LGBTQIA+ individuals, events, movements, etc. are spread throughout LCC based on other headings; for example, Queer authors and LGBTQIA+ fiction are classified in the Ps and AIDS activism group ACT UP is classified in the R’s with other works on medical topics (Howard & Knowlton, 2018). This scattering of LGBTQIA+ topics across LCC makes acquisitions and analysis of collections more complex for LGBTQIA+ works than many other subjects. Many academic libraries continue to manage acquisition responsibilities across subject specific selectors that mirror programs at the institution. In this situation, a library may find that “it had not been anyone’s job to keep up with these topics” (Scoggins, 2018, p. 114). Proctor (2018) notes “Academic library collections are not organized in ways that document the intersectionality of the content collected— a lived experience based on multiple identities cannot be easily captured or documented with Library of Congress (LoC) subject headings or call numbers” (p. 226). To tackle this problem, Proctor (2018) used a combination of subject term searching to analyze the holdings of [Institution] Libraries in relation to other top libraries in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and holdings compared to the Lambda Literary and Stonewall Winner and Honor lists. No matter the complexity of the subject, LCC only allows an item to be classed in one way (Jahnke, Tanaka, & Palazzolo, 2022).

Given the opacity of the LCC system for these topics, students have “struggled, especially initially, with finding sources” (Page, 2018, p. 29). Indeed, unless one is already familiar with authors or subjects related to Queer theory, Transgender studies, etc. there is no clear way forward using traditional academic library catalogs to cast a wide net. Some have sought to engage their community with tackling some of these interdisciplinarity issues such as having class projects to create Queer bibliographies for use by future students (Page, Sylvia, 2018). “This shows how, with what few LGBT titles libraries do collect, they have done their best to cast them amidst the rest of their collection,

aiming to show off the fairness and neutrality of their organization, for the benefit of the known item searcher, but to the detriment of the browser and the explorer" (Robinson, 2018, p. 33).

For patrons seeking to use these systems the negative associations found while browsing or the inability to locate specific topics may frustrate or alienate them (Howard & Knowlton, 2018; Rothbauer, 2007). One method of getting around the limitations of LCC and LCSH is to create new systems in order to provide better access to collections through browsing or search. The LGBTQ Center of Durham has created an in-house classification system by committee to represent their collection of approximately 2000 items (Ewing & LGBTQ Center of Durham, 2019). Given a team of dedicated stakeholders, this provides one way forward for libraries struggling to accurately represent their collections and community. However, it is unclear how much growth potential the in-house system would support. Further, without a dedicated team getting such a project going may prove difficult.

Another option to augment findability of LGBTQIA+ titles is to further subject access with an additional vocabulary like that provided by Homosaurus. While this does not change the physical location of an item organized by LCC, it can help users find that these titles exist through use of the online catalog. Homosaurus is an "international linked data vocabulary of LGBTQ terms that supports improved access to LGBTQ resources within cultural institutions" (Homosaurus, n.d.). Most significantly, using the Homosaurus vocabulary can help solve some of the granularity problem because it provides a lot more details into the range of sexualities and genders that exist. However, implementing this system can be a large workload depending on the size of the collection. Similarly, catalogers have options to include other details in various fields of MARC records. Hobart (2022) notes the availability for including gender identity in the MARC field 386, but quickly goes down the ethical rabbit hole of managing the author's right to disclose noting, "While it may be potentially useful to patrons seeking works by trans authors, catalogers need to weigh that benefit against the violation to the privacy and autonomy of creators" (p. 54). Unfortunately, the delicate nature of issues around gender and sexuality and the complexity of changing nomenclature make it difficult for catalogers to fully represent LGBTQIA+ collections. Overall, classification does have a purpose as "the creation of discernible categories is productive for institutional access," but this goes directly against the idea of what it means to be Queer (Keilty, 2009, p. 241).

Outside of classification and subject analysis, academic libraries have several other considerations when it comes to collecting LGBTQIA+ materials. As with other minoritized groups, libraries need to "counter some of the systemic marginalization people within these populations face" (McEachreon, 2016, p. 187). As a group, LGBTQIA+ issues have not historically had significant enough representation in academic publishing so long standing perspectives on academic collection development can further damage representation. Further, what needs there are for LGBTQIA+ students may not be purely academic. "In fact, it seems that academic libraries encourage an all too rigid separation between that which is part of the classroom and that which is not; a separation which may not accurately portray the reality for the users that are served" (Todorinova & Ortiz-Myers, 2019, p. 80). In a survey of LGBT+ students, Stewart and Kendrick (2019) had students seeking materials that could tell them their sexuality was okay. Another participant noted, "I needed to know how successful openly gay people were in those careers," an information need perhaps related to their studies but also deeply personal (608). In another survey, Adler (2010) found that 88% seek LGBTQIA+ materials for personal reasons (191). The stark distinction between academic and personal use of academic library collections can cause particular complications for marginalized students who may want to complete some self-discovery while diving deeply on a research topic. For those who self-identify as LGBTQIA+ but see themselves represented only as subject matter rather than as actors in an academic library, they may feel they do not have a place in the university writ large. Indeed, others have found that this exclusion of LGBT people as an identity goes beyond the library and is pervasive across the academy (LaSala et al., 2008).

One method of countering some of the issues that impact academic library collections is to actively cultivate a stand-alone LGBTQIA+ collection. As early as 1999, evidence showed that LGB patrons appreciated access to a

separate affinity collection. Then and since, folks have been concerned about people not wanting to be seen using these collections or that moving books on this topic out of the main collection may lead to “ghettoization” of LGBT materials, but overwhelmingly patrons have not reported that (Norman, 1999). Still, separate LGBTQIA+ collections have not proliferated at academic libraries. In 2019, Stewart and Kendrick found that “students mentioned there was “no identifiable section in the library” or that “the library does not have an LGBT section”” (pp. 607-608). Students continue to look to libraries for these materials, but at least partially due to the way LCC splits up the materials they are unable to find them. Having this sort of section may alleviate some of this difficulty. Further, a dedicated collection may help with some of the selection issues wherein there is no one subject specialist for these issues in a more traditional approach to acquisitions. When there is a separate collection for LGBTQIA+ titles, it may remain hidden for various reasons. Thoughtful and intentional outreach regarding the collection can both increase suggestions for acquisitions and show more engagement through regular circulation (Pavenick, 2022). Engagement may also assist in reducing the costs and workloads for obtaining these materials which in the past have been found to be difficult due to materials not being available from the largest vendors, as deeper engagement can open avenues to previously unknown publishers, donations, grants, and more. (Adler, 2010).

Throughout the literature, outreach and deeper engagement with the community is shown to be an important element in supporting LGBTQIA+ patrons. One method is to amplify resources, events, etc. that exist on campus or in the larger community. Even though promotion of campus events is a relatively quick way to show support for the LGBTQIA+ population as only half of survey participants “agreed or strongly agreed that their college library recognized LGBTQ+ oriented events and activities” (Stewart & Kendrick, 2019, p. 609). Another method is to simply promote campus collections and electronic materials, but again Stewart and Kendrick (2019) found that the low number of 35% “observed LGBTQ+ specific marketing and outreach library materials” (p. 609). Engagement efforts are furthered by having more meaningful collaboration and communication with the community. Delmonaco, Denda, & Wagner (2021) provide a good example of an academic library creating programming to better understand the LGBTQIA+ community and making space for a “a safe community for conversations and reflection” through their speaker series on LGBTQIA+ health issues.

Ultimately, “If LGBT youth perceive the library as a safe space, have positive relationships with the librarians and staff, and are able to locate materials that reflect their own experience there, it is highly likely that they will choose the library as a hangout spot, sanctuary, preferred spot for studying,” (Wexelbaum, 2018, p. 44) but a question remains on how we achieve this. An understanding of the difficulties LGBTQIA+ folks have historically faced and face today and the systems within librarianship and the academy, it is clear that academic libraries are forced to act to avoid being “complicit in systems of oppression, whether through deliberate actions or passive ignorance” (Wagner & Crowley, 2020, p. 177). While a variety of restorative work to build relationships and repair harms has begun in both academic libraries and libraries at large, ongoing threats still exist and active labor needs to be completed to counter them. Restorative practices stem from restorative justice established initially to provide better outcomes in the criminal justice system. These practices have been increasingly adopted by the education system “not only as a response to conflict, but also as a preventive approach” to rebuild trust and prevent future harms. (Lodi, Perrella, Lepri, Scarpa, & Patrizi, 2021). Similar to the education system, libraries can further adopt restorative practices to improve the environment for their communities.

## Pride+ Collection

Penn State Brandywine is a small undergraduate campus of a land-grant university. As is common for a campus of its size, there is no dedicated LGBTQIA+ center. Additionally, the LGBT+ student club ceased to exist from 2020 until Fall 2022 which left a substantial gap for students seeking to network with their affinity group. There is a

centralized resource in Penn State's Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity which does provide some programming remotely, but it provides minimal networking or community building to students not on the University Park campus.

The Vairo Library serves as the only library on campus providing access to a print collection of approximately 40,000 volumes, technology, and both collaborative and quiet study spaces. In addition to the volumes housed on campus, community members may request items from any of the other 36 Penn State University Libraries located in 22 locations across the state as well as access a wealth of online materials through the University Libraries. Like many other academic libraries, Vairo Library has seen a decline in print circulation over the past ten years with less than 20% of the stacks having a check out in the decade. Meanwhile, use of smaller print collections have seen increased interest and use. Most notably, the Graphic Novel collection, which has seen 223% growth in the last five years, has had 60% of the collection used in those five years with 24% seeing 3 or more circulations.

University Libraries across Penn State are centralized, so collections are freely shared between all campuses and use one catalog system. The largest location has subject specialists who do both collection management and instruction for particular academic programs. However, the LGBTQIA+ collection management currently is one of many subject areas managed by the Head of Humanities and Social Sciences rather than a subject specialist. Due to its small size, Penn State Brandywine has the Head Librarian handle selection for most subject areas. Additionally, students, faculty, and staff are reliant on items collected by the other libraries to round out the physical collection on campus. One exception to collection sharing are affiliate locations, which are not a part of the University Libraries organization, but have collections listed in the catalog. One such affiliate is the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity. This collection sometimes contained the only copy of a title, but the collection is non-circulating for in-house use only making it unavailable to students at Penn State Brandywine without an over three-hour drive. Additionally, as noted by Wexelbaum (2018) as a common problem, it has never sought to be particularly comprehensive, nor do they seem to do annual acquisitions to keep the collection up to date.

Given the nature of the campus and an understanding that little emphasis had been put on LGBTQIA+ collections, the Head Librarian began to conceptualize how they may better serve both campus and University Libraries at large by establishing a local LGBTQIA+ collection. While no student organization or specific academic programs existed, one may have argued that there was no need for campus to have such a collection. However, this collection serves as an answer to a question Todorinova & Ortiz-Myers (2019) ask: "are there instances where libraries can, instead, set a precedent in terms of student support services" (p. 81)? By having a more visible place on campus, this may show that there was a supportive network where no other structures exist. Additionally, given the many barriers to access for LGBTQIA+ materials that exist, the Head Librarian wondered what barriers could be removed. By having a stand-alone collection with very visible signage, flags, displays of new books, and more they sought to "see queer individuals not as a thing that is at a deficit, but as people who have always and already been in abundance" (Wagner & Crowley, 2020, p. 163). This is a form of restorative work which seeks to further communication with the larger community about LGBTQIA+ issues. Through this visibility and availability of the collection, we hope to strengthen relationships and build new ones as it relates to these issues. The library also expects that year-round visibility will increase the social capital for the LGBTQIA+ campus community. The hope with this collection was to invite people to explore LGBTQIA+ topics, to find fiction that speaks directly to Queer experiences, and to make an intentional choice to read more diversely.

Initially, the largest barrier in starting the collection were the basic decisions of how to name and label these materials. Given a desire to go beyond LGBT in items collected, it was quickly decided that any collection name should not use any version of the acronym as it would likely be shortened for ease of labeling and convenience of speech. As QIA+ identities are so marginalized in LCC as to have no specific schedules, a further reinforcement of that status through the collection's name was particularly undesirable. In order to signal a relationship with LGBTQIA+

populations without subsequently excluding them the name Pride+ was established for the collection. To celebrate and make visible this dedication to LGBTQIA+ representation a decision was made to label materials with a rainbow heart.

Plans for the collection began in 2020, but most work was put on hold until 2022 due to management of the global pandemic. In summer 2022, the collection location was established and in August 2022 the collection was announced to the campus and all of Penn State libraries through email. The collection location in the system allows users to browse all titles at once in the catalog and the standard sorting places new acquisitions at the top of results. This link to the collection was additionally added to the LGBTQIA+ Resources for Penn State Brandywine libguide and the libguide was also linked on the library's home page. At the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester the collection totaled 487 titles. The collection at this time was formed from titles pulled from other sections of the library and donations of new titles. Donations constituted 87 items in the collection (18%), so the bulk of the materials were books already available in the library prior to summer 2022. The collection was conceived to have a combination of both fiction and non-fiction to provide both research material and a representation of the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people.

Collections that already existed in the library were pulled from two locations: the stacks and the browsing collection. The stacks constitute what may be known as traditional ranges for academic libraries. Most helpful in the process of selecting materials from the stacks was the work of Howard and Knowlton (2018) who provide a detailed appendix providing insight into the vast ranges of LGBTQIA+ related materials beyond the limited HQs. However, the HQ range still provided the majority of these materials with 262 titles (54%) falling between HQ18.5 (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) and HQ1236.5 (Women and the State By Region or Country A-Z). This final title, *Seeking rights from the left: gender, sexuality, and the Latin American pink tide*, demonstrates one of the earlier discussed issues with the classification system wherein this title which is examining gender and sexuality in Latin America's pink tide is simply placed under 'women's issues' rather than providing insight into the richness the title has to offer. If not for being pulled into the Pride+ collection it could have easily been missed by someone investigating LGBT Rights in Latin America both in browsing and catalog searching as even in the catalog the subject entries only include gay rights, not LGBT or Transgender which chapters of the book do more deeply explore. Once all items were pulled from the stacks, staff relabeled the item, changed the location in the catalog, and shelved it in the new Pride+ area. Moving forward, research titles purchased for Penn State Brandywine on LGBTQIA+ subjects would be directly added to the Pride+ collection.

In addition to the traditional ranges of research materials in the library, several smaller collections exist and provided potential fodder for this new collection. The Browsing or Leisure Reading collection is largely made up of approximately one thousand more recent titles that may be of general or personal interest to the campus community. This collection is regularly weeded with some titles coming as lease (and thus returned to the vendor) and others moving to the stacks. At the time of Pride+'s formation, Browsing was being shifted into a new set of shelving and Vairo Library's staff and librarians took the opportunity to individually select LGBTQIA+ titles to move to Pride+. Unlike the traditional ranges, however, acquisitions for this collection are not changed and some Queer materials have been and will continue to be added to Browsing. For example, *Love that Story: Observations from a Gorgeously Queer Life* by popular figure Jonathan Van Ness has its home location in Browsing. When *Love that Story* and other similar items are ready to be removed from Browsing they will find a new home within Pride+'s shelves. A third book collection exists in Vairo Library: Graphic Novels. It was determined that items would not be pulled from this collection to be added to Pride+ because many patrons specifically seek to browse what is available in this collection. However, some items that contain LGBTQIA+ materials did receive the rainbow heart label to show that there is still LGBTQIA+ representation within this collection.

Since August 2022, library staff have been actively selecting new items for the Pride+ collection. These new additions have been in the form of both leased collections and permanent acquisitions. As of February 2023 the collection has grown to 600 titles with 26 additional titles soon to be added. These 26 titles are items that are all new



donations that do not currently exist in the [Institution] system and 8 are items that also do not appear in OCLC and need unique cataloging. 190 of the 600 titles are unique titles (not duplicated) in the Penn State University Libraries system. 125 of these unique titles are newer publications (2020 to present) representing the collection's focus on providing more up to date materials for the community. Twenty-five unique titles are from 2000 or earlier, with the earliest from 1960: *A Minority : a report on the life of the male homosexual in Great Britain* by Gordon Westwood. Older unique titles represent the happenstance of long term collecting. With no previous emphasis placed on covering these topic areas on campus, these books were lucky to be found in the collection and that they were never removed or lost through the decades. Indeed, *A Minority* very well could have ended up on a weeding list as the item was last circulated in 1990. An additional 5 items are unique to the circulating collection with their only availability at Penn State in the non-circulating collection at the University Park LGBT Center.

Analysis of the 125 newer unique titles demonstrate the collection's dual emphasis on intersectionality and going beyond the T in LGBTQIA+. Some examples from the non-fiction section of the collection show an understanding of how race and gender and/or sexuality intersect such as the 2022 titles of *Racism and gay men of color : living and coping with discrimination* by Sulaimon Giwa and *Supporting trans people of colour : how to make your practice inclusive* by Sabah Choudrey. Long term plans include ensuring other aspects of intersectionality are highlighted in the collection such as the intersection of disability and queer studies in titles such as 2021's *Forget burial : HIV kinship, disability, and queer/trans narratives of care* by Marty Fink. Memoirs are also featured in this collection and provide context for lived experiences such as in the Intersex memoir *XOXY* by Kimberly M. Zieselman. Fiction similarly highlights the richness of intersectionality through titles like the Queer Indigenous debut novel by Billy-Ray Belcourt: *A minor chorus : a novel*. An area that has seen some publishing growth in recent years is that of asexuality, and acquisitions such as the Asexual Black romance novel *The Romantic Agenda* by Claire Kann helps further its visibility on the college campus.

While the collection was the main focus of work prior to Fall 2022, from the beginning the hope for this collection was also to reshape the way the library's space was used. In this way, the Pride+ collection could serve as an anchor that various campus entities could connect to. In both libraries and in the greater world, "Activism frequently goes hand-in-hand with the social, community-building, and celebratory activities of LGBTQIA+ people." (McEachreon, 2016, p. 190) The first opportunity pursued for community building was for Coming Out Day 2022. National Coming Out Day is annually celebrated on October 11th and encourages and celebrates LGBTQIA+ people in the process of telling who they are to friends, family, colleagues, or acquaintances. The library partnered with the LGBTQIA+ student club on campus and national non-profit Free Mom Hugs to host the community oriented event. Free Mom Hugs helped increase visibility through signage and provided information and giveaways like various pride flag stickers and keychains. The student club had newly reformed following a several year lapse, so they took the opportunity to promote themselves and for the current members to deepen connections. The library provided access to its button maker and button making supplies for people to make flag buttons, pronoun buttons, or other creations. In addition to the crafting, students had a chance to have various conversations. The various pride flags provided some opportunities for learning where students explained to each other asexuality, pansexuality, genderqueer, and others. The success of this event has led to plans for future events including additional button making events and an exhibition of research entitled "On our own terms: The (in)visibilities of queer x chinese x woman" that is scheduled to open in April 2023. The library further hopes to partner with other campus groups such as the Center for Social Impact to host discussion groups and/or sharing circles in order to further our restorative justice goals.

## Considerations for Future Discussion

Academic libraries and libraries at large have done a lot of work seeking to understand, represent, and support LGBTQIA+ populations. As a marginalized community, active, restorative work needs to be done in order to

pursue equity. Creating stand-alone LGBTQIA+ collections is one way to do this kind of reparative work, but cannot serve as the end of the journey.

The Pride+ collection at Penn State Brandywine is in its infancy and there is significant work ahead to ensure its long-term health. Most importantly, various collection analyses will need to be completed. Quantitative analysis of details like growth rates, budget expenditures, and circulation statistics will help provide understanding of the shape and priorities of the collection. Additionally, various qualitative analyses should be pursued such as list checking, collection mapping, and user opinion surveys. Anecdotally, some LGBTQIA+ students are choosing to spend time in the library enough this academic year that the student club asked to have signage in the space, but more formal assessment would allow the library to continuously improve.

Additional defining of the collections' scope will also be critical. As this collection does not seek to be a special collection that seeks to keep all items in perpetuity, long term growth management needs to be considered. What should be the maximum collection size to ensure representation while continuing browsability? Also, a collection of this nature raises the question of what is the Queer canon. Are there titles that *should* be kept in perpetuity to always provide access for the future? When do new items get added to this canon as more elements of LGBTQIA+ existence is explored? Finally, for the long-term health of the collection a permanent funding source will need to be identified to prevent collection wilt when staffing changes, budget restructuring, or other threats occur.

Fundamentally, the Pride+ collection has already changed the landscape of the Vairo Library. Prominent placement and visible display allow the library to celebrate and feature LGBTQIA+ year round. Deeper connections can be made to the rich electronic collections available through Penn State University Libraries. Through increased promotion and additional development the LGBTQIA+ libguide could provide more support for patrons seeking to learn about the community. The collection also serves as a jumping off point for deepening connections with the community. Hopefully, through more engagement activities it will inspire new conversations and opportunities.

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