

Challenging Library Resources

American International College

James J. Shea, Sr. Library

Statement of Philosophy

The function of the academic library is to support the curriculum and provide the resources that will offer students and faculty the opportunity to explore topics in depth. Occasionally, objections to some library resources will be made despite the quality of the selection process. Because we believe that all patrons should have the opportunity to express their concerns about materials that they may consider offensive, a procedure has been instituted to address these challenges.

In providing service to our patrons, our library holds to the principles incorporated in the United States Constitution and in particular the First Amendment. This specifically states that, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to the petition, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”.

The American Library Association’s “Bill of Rights”, which addresses these principles in the context of library activity, accompanies the Collection Development policy. Shea Library subscribes to the ALA’s “Bill of Rights”.

Procedure for the Reconsideration of Materials

The Library Committee has established the following procedures for challenges that patrons may bring to the retention of items in the collection.

- 1) One or more patrons (Complainants) may ask that an item or items be removed from the collection due to the nature or treatment of a subject.
- 2) Such a challenge may be informally resolved by discussion with the Library Director.
- 3) When informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the complainant must fill out a written complaint form. (See Reconsideration of Materials form.)
- 4) The Library Committee will review the complaint and review the materials in question.
- 5) The Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs (EVPAA) will be notified of the Library Committee's decision.
- 6) The EVPAA may choose to review the matter.
- 7) The complainant will be informed of the decision of the Library Committee and, if necessary, the EVPAA.

Removing Challenged Materials from the Collection

No duly selected materials whose appropriateness is challenged shall be removed from the library collection except upon the recommendation of the Library Committee with the concurrence of the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Detailed Procedures to be Observed

- All complaints to library staff shall be reported to the Library Director.
- The Library Director shall contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it informally.
- If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be provided with a copy of the Collection Development Policy, the policy for challenging materials in the library collection, and a Reconsideration of Materials form.
- If the Director of the Library has not received the formal request for consideration within two (2) weeks, the matter shall be considered closed.
- In accordance with the Statement of Philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the library pending a final decision.
- Upon completion and submission of the Reconsideration of Materials form by the complainant, the Library Director shall ask the Chairman of the Library Committee to call the members together to discuss the materials in question. This review should be conducted within two weeks of the submission of the form.
- The committee shall meet to discuss the materials challenged, following the guidelines set forth in Instructions for Reviewing Reconsideration of Materials.
- The Director of the library shall notify the complainant of the decision and send a formal report and recommendation to the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs (EVPAA). In answering the complainant, the Director shall explain the material selection system, give the guidelines used for selection, and cite the authorities used reaching the decisions. If the Committee decides to keep the work that has caused the complaint, the complainant shall be given an explanation. If the complaint is upheld, the director shall acknowledge it and make recommended changes.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, he or she may ask the EVPAA to present an appeal to the President and Board of Trustees, which shall make a final determination of the issue. The President and Board of Trustees may seek assistance from outside organizations such as the American Library Association and legal counsel in making its decision.

Instructions for Reviewing Reconsidered Material

- Bear in mind the principles of academic freedom, the United States Constitution, and the American Library Association's "Bill of Rights", and base your decision on these guidelines when reviewing the matter. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy. The Bill of Rights can be found at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>.
- Study thoroughly all materials referred to you and read all available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids.
- Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed together and the opinions of the material based on the materials as a whole.
- The Library Director will present your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions to the complainant at the conclusion of your discussion of the questioned material.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources
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The Board of Trustees of American International College has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the Library Committee. The committee oversees the process through its agent, the Director of the Library. The Library Committee has established reconsideration procedures to address any concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in this process. If you wish to request reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to: Director of the Library, American International College, 1000 State Street, Springfield, MA 01109.

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

City/Town: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Date:** _____

Do you represent yourself? ___ Yes ___ No

If no, what organization do you represent? _____

Check the format of the resource:

___ Book ___ Textbook ___ Video ___ Display

___ Magazine ___ Library Program ___ Audio Recording ___ Newspaper

___ Electronic Information/ Network (Please specify) _____

___ Other _____

Title of Resource being challenged: _____

Author/Producer: _____

What brought this resource to your attention?

Have you examined the entire source? ___ Yes ___ No

What concerns you about the resource (Please use other side if necessary)

Are there resource(s) that you can suggest that will provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on the topic?
