The Survey of Academic Library Subject Specialists: Political Science & Public/International Affairs

Description: This report examines academic library purchasing policies in public affairs and political science/government with data based on a sample of 60 academic libraries in the United States and abroad. Comprehensive data details the budgetary allocations for political science and related departments over the past two years as well as projected budgets for the coming year, including itemized spending on print books, ebooks, databases, and scholarly journals and special allocations from endowments and grants. The report investigates the library's relationship with its patrons and how patrons affect decision-making concerning acquisitions and library technologies. What impact have ebooks and digital repositories had on collections and collection strategies? What are the most popular databases in political science utilized by college libraries today? What areas of knowledge, authors, or publishers have become "must-haves" over the years, and how are collection needs and deficits assessed? The 78-page report answers these questions and more, with benchmarking data broken out by enrollment size, type of institution, and budgetary allocation.

The study looks closely at the priorities and purchasing plans of academic librarians that specialize in political science and public and international affairs, examining their use of books, journals, databases and much more, such as the number of inquiries received from patrons for specific works, and the role of the library liaison for political science and international/government affairs.

Just a few of the report's many findings were that:

- 79.41% of libraries in this survey have a specific budgetary allocation for political science and/or related subjects including government and public affairs.
- More than 27% of libraries in the sample have an endowment, grant or other special allocation that falls outside of the normal library budget that supplements purchases in political science.
- Librarians surveyed believe that the price of print books in political science and related subject areas for libraries in the sample has increased by a mean of 8.98% over the last year.
- Research universities will spend a mean of $16,953 on political science books, while MA and PHD granting institutions will spend a mean of just $2,550.
- Libraries in the sample had a mean of 50.56 distinct subscriptions to journals that charge a subscription fee in 2010 and a mean of 53 subscriptions in 2011, some with as few as 6, others with as many as 170. The number of journal subscriptions of this kind is expected to fall to a mean of 42.56 in 2012.
- Nearly 30% of the libraries surveyed have plans to decrease spending for comparative politics, including 75% of MA and PHD granting institutions and 33.33% of community and 4-year colleges.
- Among libraries in the sample, open access journals account for about 12.46% of total journal use in political science.

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