University of South Florida

From the SelectedWorks of Matthew Knight

Spring 2017

"From Gay Surfers to Old Lesbians Organizing for Change: Developing an LGBT Initiative at a State University in Florida"

Matthew Knight

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/matt_knight/18/

"From Gay Surfers to Old Lesbians Organizing for Change: Developing an LGBT Initiative at a State University in Florida"

In late 2012, the University of South Florida Libraries firmly committed to developing an LGBT initiative[1], with the bulk of the materials to be housed in the special collections department;[2] the goal was to expand our collections of historically significant lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender materials in monographic, audio-visual, ephemeral, and archival formats. Initially, we intended to concentrate on collecting materials that documented LGBT history, culture, politics, community relations, and public health in the Tampa Bay region; that said, while Tampa Bay remained an important focus, we were also tasked with ensuring our collections generated national and international interest. All this sounded wonderful; however, the realities of starting a collection virtually from scratch with such ambitious goals proved to be a valuable learning experience. This chapter will document some of the highlights and the lowlights encountered during this process, and will outline future strategies that we plan to implement to achieve our goals. Some aspects that will be covered in this chapter are the necessities of community engagement; the pitfalls—and triumphs—of working with potential donors and development officers; the frustrations of managing a dwindling budget; the challenges of promoting the materials to faculty, students, and community researchers; the problems associated with placing age restrictions on materials; the difficulties in choosing the right public programming for the right price; and the pleasures of establishing powerful relationships and partnerships with outside organizations. On May 10, 2015, a short survey [see

[1] At the USF Library, the LGBT initiative is distinguished from a general collection in a number of ways. First, the library administration and the institution at large are in full support of the venture; this benefits budget allocations for collection development, fund-raising efforts, faculty outreach and helps garner community support. The initiative also hosts [and plans to host] lectures, symposia, and 'show and tell' events, featuring local activists, scholars, and community members. Also a part of the initiative is an oral history project that has already gained tractions and momentum moving forward. Lastly, the initiative includes physical collections, both archival and monographic.

[2] USF Libraries Special Collections is open to all visitors and researchers; there are no access restrictions.

Appendix] was sent out to select institutions with LGBT collections, and to the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Round Table Listserv [glbtrt-l] of the American Library Association, and comments from that survey are included *passim*.

History

While 2012 marked the firm commitment to an LGBT initiative at the USF library, there were, in fact, earlier attempts to implement such a program. In 2005, USF professors David Johnson and Sara Crawley were instrumental in acquiring collections and generating support for what was at the time intended to be both a GLBT and a Florida Women's History Initiative. In February 2006, Dr. Crawley made arrangements with Edie Daly for the first materials to be donated to the library's Special Collections department.[3] Edie, who calls herself an Old Lesbian Feminist, returned to Florida in 1981 and quickly became a force of nature in both the women's and LGBT movements. She opened a women's bookstore on Madeira Beach in 1981, and the next year co-founded a lesbian feminist organization called Women's Energy Bank [WEB], which held monthly "salons" for more than 24 years. At these gatherings WEB hosted speakers, held concerts, and organized bowling outings. WEB also published a monthly journal called *Womyn's Words* for more than 30 years. Two boxes of archival materials from WEB and a full run of *Womyn's Words* constituted this first donation to the USF library. According to Edie, "Lesbian voices have been silenced for too long in the past and this university's willingness to make these original materials available marks a milestone in documenting our history and

[3] A deed of gift transferring legal ownership rights for the materials to the University accompanies all collections. Donations may be considered charitable gifts, to the extent provided by law. Collection appraisals for charitable gift purposes are the responsibility of the donor. The Special and Digital Collections Department welcomes donations to its LGBT collection from private or institutional entities. Prospective donations are assessed by the Department according to collection area guidelines, Library and University strategic goals, evidence of research value, collection condition, and available resources to house, preserve and provide access to those items. Reasons for refusal include: content outside the scope of the collection, poor physical condition, or unnecessary duplication of material in the collection.

recording our contributions to our communities." In that spirit, in 2006 Edie called for the GLBT Initiative to be named LGBT in honor of those women who marched on Washington, D.C. in 1997 and also struggled against male-dominated pride march committees. "We insisted", said Edie, "that our own struggle as women be acknowledged; that our differences and uniquenesses as lesbians be acknowledged and the men acquiesced…and put Lesbian "L" first in the acronym which has now become LGBTQ." As a result, the USF Library changed the name, and, on April 18, 2006, the inaugural collection was celebrated at an event co-sponsored by the Florida Women's History Initiative and the Florida LGBT Initiative.

At the same time as Dr. Crawley was facilitating the donation from Edie Daly, Professor David Johnson was working to secure an invaluable collection of photographs from Tampa Bay photographer Rex Maniscalco. Rex was attempting to document the history of the Tampa Bay LGBT community in what he termed the "Rainbow in Sunshine Project." While accumulating images for this project, Rex acquired a series of nearly 500 photographs taken by Bobby Smith from the 1940s to the '70s. Bobby worked for *Southern Photo and News* from 1948-1989, and she and her partner Kay were a butch/femme couple who founded the inter-denominational Metropolitan Community Church in Tampa in the 1960s. Many of Bobby's photos in Rex's possession were taken at a gay bar on Madeira Beach called Jack's Place; a nudist camp called the Sunshine Beach Club in Lutz, Florida; and Jimmy White's Tavern and the Knotty Pine, gay bars in downtown Tampa. Rex also had numerous boxes of his own photographs documenting the LGBT community beginning in the 1980s. Dr. Johnson managed to acquire permission from Rex to donate both the Bobby Smith photographs and his own photos before Rex passed away in April 2009.

The Edie Daly and Rex Maniscalco collections proved to be a wonderful start to the LGBT initiative, and other small, but notable, collections followed. Edie Daly helped secure a collection from feminist and lesbian activist Lee Ann "Oak" Wojkowski and David Johnson

acquired 11 boxes of material from Donald L. Bentz in 2007 that documented many LGBT organizations and events in the Tampa Bay area from the 1990s to the early 2000s. As important as these collections were, however, the initiative began to lose steam after 2009. Despite having more than $60,000 earmarked for the LGBT initiative, for example, the money was never spent, and eventually was moved to other projects. Two lone highlights occurred in 2011, when graduate student Cyrana Wyker selected many of the Bobby Smith photographs for digitization, thereby beginning an online presence for the LGBT Initiative, and the records of Equality Florida[4] and the National Center for Lesbian Rights[5] in St. Petersburg were donated to USF. Without a firm commitment to the initiative from the special collections department, however, these records sat unprocessed in storage. By this time, the Dean of the USF Library, William Garrison, was beginning to lose patience with the lack of progress, and realized that the initiative needed to be revitalized..

In late 2012, Dean Garrison generously donated more than 400 books—predominantly novels--to the USF special collections department, thereby launching the Queer Literature Collection. With this donation came a clear need to establish a policy for what the USF Libraries LGBT initiative would collect, as well as to set a plan of action in motion with clear, achievable goals. It was suggested internally that the USF Library's LGBT initiative should first and foremost expand its collections with particular acquisitions that document the history of LGBT life in Florida, particularly the Tampa Bay area. Items with a national and international focus,

---

[4] The Equality Florida collection at USF is comprised of many items, including correspondence, budgets, ephemera, program logs, annual reports, director reports, news articles, research materials on a wide variety of topics and some audio/visual materials. Also included within the collection are files dedicated to many projects that Equality Florida has worked on in the past, like the St. Petersburg Human Rights Ordinance and the Tampa Human Rights Ordinance, the Safe Schools Summit, and even meetings between members of clergy of different denominations in the Equal Partners in Faith conferences.

[5] Stemming from an original parent organization within Equality Florida, the NCLR became its own stand-alone organization supported by the National Office in 2000. This donated collection contains corporate documents that include annual reports, major gift campaigns, and grant materials of the organization. Additionally, there are documents regarding the aforementioned projects, both those done solely by NCLR as well as those done in cooperation with Equality Florida.

however, would also be collected when they provide more complete coverage of LGBT history and concerns for USF students, faculty and staff, as well as the community at large. Next, a three-pronged approach was preferred in terms of what to collect: monographs, archival materials, and oral histories. Lastly, in order to best promote the reinvigorated USF Libraries LGBT Initiative, lectures, symposia, and online and physical exhibits were deemed a necessary step in the development of the initiative. As for an action plan, the initial goal in early 2013 was to double the overall LGBT holdings by the end of the year; process all previously donated materials and have their EADs accessible online; increase the collection of LGBT oral histories; begin to actively promote the LGBT collections through exhibits, presentations, and outreach; engage with the faculty, staff, and students of the USF Tampa Library in regards to the LGBT collection to encourage research and development of the collection as an academic resource; and, since Edie Daly and other early supporters had become disillusioned with the promise of progress in the initiative by this time, and had fallen out of contact with the library, bridges needed to be repaired in the community.

And yet, notwithstanding intentions and strategic approaches, often it is a serendipitous meeting or two that works to move events forward; and, at the Tampa International Airport one afternoon in early 2013, Dean Garrison was approached by an anonymous collector who mentioned that he had two large research collections that he felt might bolster our newly revitalized LGBT initiative: a Gay Surfer Collection[6] and an Asian Male Nude Collection.[7] These two projects were the result of more than 15 years of research, and consisted of roughly 45 linear

[6] This collection contains numerous magazines, news clippings, and other ephemera relating to the gay surfer image in printed form. Beginning in 1936, the collection documents the increasingly visible appearance of surfers and its connection with gay men and women through nude photographs, all male physique magazines, and eventually to overtly gay lifestyle publications and advertisements.

[7] Containing magazines, news clippings, photographs, ephemera, and audio/visual materials, this collection documents the historical rarity of the Asian male nude and the transition to the more common proliferation of materials found in later years. The collection illustrates the historical reality of this racial stereotype and the rarity of the nude Asian male in gay imagery in art as well as Western pornography.

feet of material. Dean Garrison met with Professors Johnson and Crawley to discuss the potential acquisition, and the decision was made to accept the material in its entirety. However, by not first examining the collection, the library put itself in the awkward position of promising to house materials that no representative had properly examined and evaluated. Thus, whereas this acquisition marked a major step toward reaching the goal of expanding our collections by 100%, it also marked a distinct period in our evolution: the USF Libraries LGBT Initiative officially accepted pornography[8]. At almost the same time in 2013, former graduate student Cyrana Wyker, now a Ph.D. candidate at Middle Tennessee State University, agreed to have the oral histories she would be collecting for her doctoral residency, the "Tampa Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Oral History Project," donated to the USF Library's Oral History collections. These narratives planned to touch on "drag culture, bar culture, local and state activism, 'coming out', gay businesses, and politics from the 1950s to the present"[9] in Tampa Bay, and would, when completed, more than double the existing oral histories available online at the time.

Both of these opportune meetings have borne great fruit for the LGBT initiative. Our anonymous benefactor has, since his initial gift, donated more than 400 books on the history of the nude, male photography, gay fiction, and assorted LGBT issues. Further, he began—and continues—to donate materials that supplement our LGBT Ephemera collection, and has recently contributed research collections on gay bathhouses and sex in advertising in 2015. Perhaps most importantly, he remains a vocal advocate for our initiative in the community, and continues to increase awareness of our importance to LGBT issues locally and beyond. For her part, Cyrana Wyker has removed from obscurity and fully processed the 11 boxes of Rex Maniscalco photographs donated back in 2009, so that an online finding aid can now be used to

[8] Materials in the Gay Surfer Archive and the Asian Male Nude Collection have been marked and catalogued as "Age Restricted" at the donor's request. No patron under 18 years of age may view these materials.

[9] See https://cyranabwyker.wordpress.com/projects/residency/

isolate particular themes, events, and individuals from the Tampa Bay LGBT community over the last three decades. In addition, she has transcribed, edited, and deposited 14 oral histories into the USF Oral History collections online.

Cyrana is not the only graduate student who has been essential to the success of the revived LGBT initiative, however. Once it was determined in 2013 what goals we wanted to achieve, USF library school Master's student Kevin Arms joined the department and was tasked with numerous labor-intensive, but crucial assignments. First, he fully processed the Equality Florida and National Center for Lesbian Rights collections and published finding aids online. Next, he completed processing and publishing the Gay Surfer and the Asian Male Nude Collections, while also starting the LGBT Ephemeral collection out of random donations to the initiative. When St. Pete Pride and the USF Pride Alliance donated their materials, Kevin fully processed those collections as well. Further, he created a physical exhibit of materials which we placed in our lobby display case for LGBT History Month in October 2013, and selected materials for a "show and tell" event for USF faculty, students and the community held that same month. Library school student Todd Ciardiello took over the mantle when Kevin graduated, and has processed and catalogued hundreds of books, periodicals, and ephemeral materials for the initiative. Given budget shortfalls for faculty and staff at the USF Library, having student workers like Cyrana, Todd, and Kevin who are sensitive to LGBT issues and professional in their duties has been a rare, but privileged opportunity for USF Libraries special collections to advance this initiative.

By the end of 2013, nearly all the previous year's goals had been achieved: the LGBT collections—monographs, archives and oral histories--more than trebled; events were well-attended and word was getting out; and all previously unprocessed LGBT materials were completed with published EADs online. However, two initial goals were not yet met: faculty and student research in the collections was still minimal, and some key figures in the community

had not yet been successfully engaged or, in the case of Edie Daly and others, re-engaged. The latter issue was addressed in December 2013 as Edie visited the department and listened to our renewed commitment to the LGBT initiative. Within weeks, we had the complete WEB library in our possession, as well as a collection of papers from Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (22 Hollinger boxes worth of material), and Edie and her partner Jackie[10] generously purchased a high-end scanner for the department to facilitate the digitization of LGBT items for our online collections. Connections to numerous other potential donors also arose through Edie's networks. One of these individuals, Eunice Fisher, donated invaluable archival items related to the Human Rights Task Force and the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Tampa Bay as well as her book, *Christian and Lesbian: A Life in Progress,* which explores her lesbian activism and deep Christian faith. This type of community goodwill has continued to the present day, and hundreds of monographs and numerous archival and ephemeral collections have been donated. Further, librarian Joe Floyd has continued to purchase books, e-books, and databases for the circulating collections to complement the LGBT materials assembled in USF Library's Special Collections. Yet, despite more than doubling our collections in 2013, thanks to generous donations and aggressive outreach, and increasing acquisitions by another 50% in 2014, usage remains lower than we would like. Hopefully, there are stories that can be told so that other institutions who choose to establish similar initiatives can learn from some of our experiences.

Difficulties, Drawbacks, and Lessons Learned

What's in a name? This first issue may seem like a given, but it is imperative to establish consensus among all key players as to what materials will be collected, and what the overarching goal of any initiative is. Difficulties usually arise when a name is sought for the initiative or

[10] Edie and Jackie Mirkin, together for 18 years, were married in California in 2008. Their stories are included in *Without Apology*: the second collection of life stories based on interview transcripts in the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project edited by Arden Eversmeyer and Margaret Purcell, 2012.

specific collection, and complications may continue as time goes by. For example, what began as the "Florida Women's History Initiative and the Florida LGBT Initiative" in the USF Libraries special collections has now become a much more expansive "USF Libraries LGBT Initiative," and this has made a tremendous difference to the quantity, quality, and overall use of our collections. That said, the monographs are still cataloged as part of the "Queer Literature Collection," while archival collections are listed by the name of the donor. Thus, a researcher may not immediately know that the "Eunice Fisher Collection" is part of the overarching term "USF Libraries LGBT Initiative," and there is no comprehensive and sophisticated web presence to bring every LGBT-related collection together. We do have a separate "LGBT Initiative" webpage that describes all of the relevant materials in special collections, but this is not a top-level page on the library's website, and is not easily discoverable. Moreover, with many databases and e-books being purchased to complement the LGBT initiative in special collections, to say nothing of the occasional physical book being added to the circulating collection, a patron could be forgiven for becoming confused as to where and what this LGBT Initiative is. This is an ongoing issue that is mainly solved through outreach and education; however, these difficulties can be anticipated when LGBT collections are not housed in one single location under one title. Therefore, if you are just starting out, do try to think of the patrons' or users' needs first. At USF, we are working on revamping our web presence to facilitate patrons' experiences, and hope that many issues can be resolved in the coming months.

What do you collect? What don't you collect? Back in 2006, faculty, students and especially community members were unsure what materials would be accepted into the LGBT collections; in fact, there are records from 2006-2011 detailing significantly impactful donations that were refused because they did not relate directly to Tampa Bay.[11] We have since determined

[11] Efforts have been made to try to re-engage those potential donors to gauge their interest in donating to the revitalized initiative, but often the materials—or individuals--are long gone.

that while it is vital to "think and act locally", each location in America is merely part of a larger whole, and issues and concerns of the wider LGBT community should have a place in our collections for researchers to access, and denying patrons access to important research material based on lack of geographical significance is a flawed approach. In order to avoid past mistakes, therefore, it was determined that all materials chosen for the LGBT initiative will be assessed according to the following criteria: utility in teaching, learning, or research; scholarly value; uniqueness/rarity of the item[s]; potential for digitization and exhibition; and, in the case of archival collections, the historical and ephemeral value of the collection as a whole. This is a similar approach taken by other successful LGBT initiatives, Emory University's MARBL LGBT collection being a perfect example. That being said, it has been our experience that community members often underestimate the research value of their materials, especially ephemera, and therefore we do encourage all potential donors to pay us a visit so a proper evaluation can be made by special collections librarians. For example, a significant collection of nearly 100 lesbian books from the '60s, '70s, and '80s was saved after a chance meeting at an antiquarian book sale: "You are interested in this kind of junk?" asked the woman after witnessing a purchase, "well I am about to throw out my life's collection." On the other hand, when donations are accepted *in toto* with the agreement that no materials may be deaccessioned or discarded, institutions may inadvertently get themselves in the business of collecting hardcore pornography , which often does not adequately fulfil the assessment criteria listed above. There are exceptions to every rule, however, and each collection, book, or ephemeral item is judged accordingly. If materials fall outside of the scope of the collecting policy listed above, they are returned to the donor or discarded per the terms of the donation agreement.

What about access to the materials? This is a particularly thorny issue. Since the USF Libraries LGBT Initiative has most of its collections located in special collections, there are added barriers to access for researchers: materials are only accessible Monday to Friday,

9:00am-5:00pm; patrons need to be buzzed into the reading room, create an account with us, and then request the material; some collections have been declared age-restricted by their donor, so no one under 18 may access these items; and, finally, many community members are not aware that USF Libraries Special Collections is open to all researchers and not restricted to students and faculty. Further, given that the Queer Literature collection began with a donation of novels, many patrons have asked why they were placed into special collections and not made more readily available in the circulating collection. Adding this extra barrier to patrons might be seen as hindering those who may be questioning or desirous of more private and less intrusive transactions than those in a special collections reading room under security cameras. We at USF are comfortable answering these questions, but are simultaneously aware of the validity of the concerns put forward—especially as they relate to ease of access. This may be an issue that each individual institution will need to work out for itself; do the wishes of a donor trump the access problems for the LGBT community and interested researchers, for example?

Are the L, G, B, and T treated equally? This is likely the most crucial aspect to consider when trying to build a balanced LGBT initiative from the ground up. Limited budgets require intense advocacy in the local community to encourage donations, which can unintentionally lead to an imbalance in collections. For example, an evaluation was done in early 2013 which determined that the LGBT materials in special collections were composed of 80% gay male literature and materials, 10% lesbian literature and materials, 5% bisexual literature and materials and 5% transgender literature and materials. This was not entirely shocking; after all, the Queer Literature collection began with mainly gay male literature, and the Gay Surfer Archive and Asian Male Nude Collection alone accounted for close to 90 Hollinger boxes. Yet, as Cyrana Wyker, who has collected many LGBT oral histories around Tampa Bay, noted when discussing her work:

> It is easy to convince prominent community members, particularly wealthy ones, that their voices are important, that their experience matters, and that being immortalized in the archive is worthwhile. The many other individuals, that often get overlooked or perhaps don't understand the significance of the archive, are a lot more difficult to convince to participate. What happens then, in my opinion, is that the experience of gay white men becomes the narrative for all LGBT(Q) experience... The records of formal organizations and wealthy community members are most certainly invaluable to an archive but so are those of the working class, ethnic minorities, and sexual subcultures (consensual, of course) such as BDSM, those of which who have had a different historical experience than middle to upper class white men.

Graduate student Kevin Arms also came to the same conclusion in March of 2013, encouraging special collections faculty to strive to increase the balance between communities: "We have a preponderance of materials related to the 'G' in LGBT...Collection development areas could include more Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered (sic) items, books and collections so that the overall initiative is more representative of the community it serves. There are only a handful of instances and one collection that expressly deal with Lesbians, and we have very little, if anything, for bisexual and transgendered study outside of the materials presented in Equality Florida's records." As a respondent to our survey noted: "Make certain that the community has the buy-in for the institution and what we are trying to accomplish and that we are doing due diligence to make sure that we are collecting a wide scope of the community's history and not just the 'easy' to get records." In that regard, we knew we needed to add much more depth to the initiative to be true to our mission and to the local, national, and international LGBT community.

We have been extremely successful in some areas since early 2013: our lesbian collections have grown exponentially, thanks to donors and supporters like Edie Daly and to aggressive collection development and strategic purchases. We now have one of the largest collections of *Lesbian Connection,* for example, and a large collection of many other lesbian periodicals from the '60s to the present courtesy of the WEB library. But the bisexual and transgender materials have been harder to come by; as a respondent to a survey we conducted

with other like-minded institutions said, "it is important to allow time for Bi and Trans history because it is difficult to locate but necessary for a robust collection. Ask for help often and from the folks who want to help!" This advice has borne fruit, as a chance encounter by one of our donors at an LGBT event led to us acquiring the papers and autobiographies of a local activist and transgender female, Janice Josephine Carney. This same donor aggressively pursues potential donors at high-profile LGBT events, and has sent many wonderful collections our way. We still have a long way to go for a perfect balance, certainly, but the USF Libraries LGBT Initiative is committed to making it happen.

Does anyone come to use these collections? The good news is that usage of USF Libraries LGBT materials in special collections increased by more than 100-fold between 2013 and 2014; the bad news is that this amounted to less than 120 LGBT items being paged over the course of the year.[12] Additionally, when items are used in display cases or events, they are "checked out," leaving the number of physical patron requests lacking, at least in terms of our ambitious goals. There are many issues at play here: the relatively low number of courses offered at USF that have an LGBT component; the lack of awareness on campus and in the community about our initiative; and a lack of knowledge about what we have in our collections. According to our survey, other institutions have similar issues in the latter regard: said one respondent, "We have a dynamic Women's and Gender Studies program. My only wish is that they would suggest that students see us first when considering research topics, instead of deciding on a topic and come hoping we can provide adequate archival resources." This could easily have been said by library faculty and staff here at USF. While we have labored to facilitate engagement with faculty, staff, students, and the community about our LGBT materials, it is clear we need to work harder to encourage research and exploration of our resources for the academic and community

[12] USF Special Collections uses Aeon as its registration and request manager; this system allows simple calculations of collection use and patron type.

researchers. We do hold a yearly lecture during LGBT History Month in October, and while past events have gone over extremely well--with both the USF and wider Tampa Bay community in attendance--perhaps we need to consider expanding our event agenda. The curator of special collections also co-presented "Getting In the Stacks: Using Archival Sources to Better Understand LGBTQ+ Histories and Intersectional Identities" with Ph.D. candidate Keegan Shepherd at the 2015 Florida Collegiate Pride Coalition, which was well-regarded and showcased many of our LGBT materials to attendees from across Florida. An online exhibition has also just been launched by librarian Andy Huse, which documents the 'witch hunt' against suspected communists and homosexuals at USF by the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee [perhaps better known as the Johns Committee] in the early 1960's.[13] Additionally, the special collections department has networked with faculty and staff in the departments of the Arts, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Health and Medicine, and Political Science to promote the LGBT collection, but one meeting or phone call is not enough. Faculty and students need to be reminded again and again what materials we have, and this outreach needs to be expanded. Our goal is to double the use of our collections from January 2014 to December 2015, and the outlook is promising thus far.

Do you have the support of administration and colleagues? Since arriving in 2008, the Dean of USF Libraries William Garrison has been committed to building the LGBT Initiative. As mentioned above, he earmarked more than $60,000 for the cause, but the Director at the time chose not to spend the money and it was eventually distributed elsewhere—proving that it is all the more crucial to achieve unanimous buy-in from all major players when establishing this type of initiative. Looking beyond this lack of action in the past, there are still frequent cases of faculty and staff expressing their strong opinions about having certain LGBT materials in the

[13] http://exhibits.lib.usf.edu/exhibits/show/witchhunt/

library. “If we have all this gay porn, does that mean we can collect straight porn too?” is one frequent comment, and incredulity about the “filth” and “useless materials” is not uncommon. But this is certainly not unique to USF; one respondent to the survey from a public library with an LGBT collection was told by a branch manager that "for each LGBT program/topic we have, she reserves the right to have one Christian program/topic." Another comment said, “there seems to be a level of discomfort in straight collection development staff--not knowing what LGBTQ books are ‘good,’ wondering if they will be judged for buying LGBTQ titles, etc.” The minor complaints are simple to dodge, however, and education of straight staff is ongoing and, speaking personally, extremely rewarding; yet it is the backing at the highest level that is the most crucial, and USF Libraries is lucky and proud to have that support. That said, widespread support across campus and the community is an ongoing struggle, and must be constantly sought out with diligence and strategic approaches.

What is your budget? Technically, as a state university, we have a set budget for collections each fiscal year. Faculty are able to request what they need, or wish for, but often we are unable to honor these requests. Of course, with electronic resources taking up so much of the budget total—if not all of it—physical collections are difficult to build. In that case, we need to rely heavily on donations and foundation funds. The former is handled by special collections for the most part, but the latter depends in large upon the library’s development officer. At the USF Library, we have found this to be a blessing and a curse; it is truly a blessing when the development officer brings in a check for an LGBT fund, but it can be an unmitigated disaster when potential donors of materials are preyed upon for money at the expense of donating their materials, or collections are accepted without an eye to their value in order to advance a financial agenda. It is a delicate dance, surely, and one that we recommend be joined by at least one librarian to ensure that the mission of the initiative or program is upheld above all. Despite a few pitfalls, however, development, the Dean, and special collections have successfully worked

together to set up an LGBT Undergraduate Research Award, establish an LGBT endowment, and have reached out to numerous entities and individuals in the community with positive results of gifts in kind and financial contributions.

What about community outreach? This is an area that we feel needs improvement. Since 2013, we have been involved in a roughly systematic attempt to engage the community, but have likely missed some potential supporters. Our initial plan was to reach out to prominent members of the LGBT community and utilize their networks to spread the word about our initiative. This, coupled with attendance at meetings and events, has been our main focus, but we clearly need to be more vocal and visible in the community. Other institutions have similar approaches, and one in particular developed an ingenious strategy for supplying metadata: "We have been using old grassroots style outreach to date. Creating connections with older community members and allowing them to help us expand our networks. We have also engaged the community to help us identify photos, and documents in order for them to feel like they are a part of the process. So far it's been amazingly successful." This method of engagement with the materials and the personal history of community members is a strategy we plan to employ in the fall of 2015 in order to increase knowledge of our initiative and expand the knowledge base we can tap to further our mission.

Do you collaborate with outside organizations? Collaborations with the Tampa International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Metro Wellness and Community Centers, Equality Florida, St. Pete Pride, *Watermark*, National Center for Lesbian Rights, PNC Bank, USF's Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, USF Pride Alliance, and others have paid significant dividends and increased both awareness and goodwill toward the initiative. These connections to the community are vital not only for the mutual benefit they provide, but can help to build a more balanced collection as well. As Cyrana Wyker mentioned, getting to

know as much about local LGBT issues as possible can drive discussions about the myriad subjectivities, behaviors, identities, sexual practices, and the like that fall under the umbrella of LGBT. That said, there is still much to be done at the organizational level in the Tampa Bay area, and much more indeed that could have been done better.

Conclusion

Since its revival in 2012, the USF Libraries LGBT Initiative has remained committed to its mission, and we have had our share of minor and major triumphs as outlined above. Our initiative is really the only one of its kind in Florida: the Stonewall Archive in Fort Lauderdale, Fl (city) is less research-focused, although a distinct treasure, and the GLBT museum in Orlando is smaller and more geared toward digitizing physical objects--so we take our role as repository for the community very seriously. Our story is a young one, but an interesting one, we hope, and if there are any details which emerged in the foregoing that may help a similar institution in their commitment to LGBT issues then this can be counted a successful excursion. For USF, our task is just beginning: we need to increase our physical collections; continue to engage the community; bolster our online LGBT materials and exhibitions; and offer more events to strengthen the initiative and the LGBT community. For now, however, we continue to learn from our mistakes and follow up on our successes—never sitting back, but always moving forward and enjoying the ride.

Appendix A: Survey for LGBT Institutions

The following survey was sent out to selected institutions known to have LGBT initiatives and/or collections, and was posted to the GLBT listserv. There were 10 responses.

1. How long has your institution had an LGBT initiative and/or solid commitment to collection development in LGBT areas?

2. What is your official title, and are you in charge of LGBT collection development? Part of a team?

3. What do you call your collection? Do you have separate names for monographic collections vs. archives? Was there any debate about what to call the collection[s]?

4. Do you work with Development when soliciting donations/support for collections?

5. If you answered yes to the above, could you describe your experience with Development officers? Have they helped or hindered in your efforts to build LGBT collections? Please be honest--all responses are anonymous!

6. What is the most important thing, in your opinion, to building a quality LGBT collection at your institution?

7. Do you feel you have full support from administration for your efforts? Feel free to expand.

8. What types of materials--if any--will you decline to add to an LGBT collection. Why? Conversely, what are the most important items you wish to add?

9. How do you reach out to community members for support? Has it been successful?

10. What other resources do you utilize to build your LGBT collections?

11. Please describe your budget situation, and strategies you use to successfully build collections if money is tight.

12. What advice would you give to a librarian who has been tasked with building an LGBT collection basically from scratch?

13. Are your collections primarily circulating? In a special collections/archives area? Both? Has this caused issues?

14. Can you share some of your spectacular successes; and, if you've had them, your failures building collections?

15. Do you feel that faculty have adequately supported your efforts? Explain.

16. What glaring omission does this survey make that you would like to discuss. Please feel free to talk about any issues that you feel important in the discussion of building LGBT collections. Thank you!