Exchange/Barter Program
April 2014

Overview
Definition: An agreement between libraries and partners to send books, journals, and reports to each other, either free of charge, or purchased specifically to send to the partner organization. Purchasing commercial materials for exchange partners is called barter exchange and adds to both the cost and complexity of operating an exchange program. Ideally, the value of materials received and materials sent out are in balance over the long run.

Exchange program at Berkeley:
• Began in 1884 by University Librarian Joseph Rowell1
• 4,847 Partners codes, of which 1,340 are active (January 2014)
  o Slavic/Eastern European
  o CJK-EAL related partners
  o Western Europe
  o South Asia, Africa, Middle East
  o USA
• About one third Russian and other Slavic languages, one third East Asian languages, and one third from other areas of the world, including the USA
• 100 partners send 50% of material received
• 30% of materials are gifts

The overarching goals for the exchange program are to
• receive materials of high value to our collection
• rationalize the processes for receiving and sending so they are efficient, reliable, and can be carried out by our current levels of staffing.

Materials received on exchange are often thought of as free but, of course, there are costs for both materials and staff. Any exchange and barter program has to be evaluated regularly for its continued utility to our collections, currency of receipts, and staff and materials costs.

Current State of Exchange/Barter at Berkeley
Significant political and societal changes have affected exchange agreements — the fall of the Soviet Union, changes in publication models, the availability of books and journals commercially, the rise of digital technologies, the increasing costs of purchasing and sending materials around the world, and the decreasing staff available in libraries to ensure smooth running of these programs.

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In Fall 2013, Liladhar Pendse and Jim Gordon began a preliminary review of all Library exchange and barter partnerships and found little consistency as to how they were handled. Some frequently occurring problems with our Exchanges are:

- Many exchanges have lapsed (material is no longer received)
- Unsolicited materials are received under the guise of exchange and may be of dubious value
- Materials seem to be sent to us for the prestige of having them visible in UC Berkeley’s catalog
- Price/cost information is missing for many materials so unable to reconcile receipts with costs of barter materials
- Old and/or duplicate materials are received that aren’t wanted
- There is no documentation for most agreements, and many arrangements were apparently made by people long gone and for purposes that are now obscure
- The access database that has been used for exchange partners for the past 7 or 8 years hasn’t been kept up to date though it remains the sole source of some kinds of information, in particular, the addresses to which materials are sent. It’s lacking information about what has been received and when, as well as cost information. It’s also difficult to navigate.

For all these reasons, Liladhar and Jim recommend that all exchanges be reviewed to determine their status and benefit. Liladhar has begun looking at the Russian and Slavic partners and is finishing a plan for all titles to be reviewed.

**Possible outcomes of the review:**
- cancel exchange/barter arrangements and ask selectors to purchase these materials through commercial vendors. (Note: There may be some funds to transfer to selectors for such purchases.)
- Selectors will need to evaluate these titles just as they evaluate their other purchased titles and continue exchange/barter agreements for titles deemed high value to our collection that are unavailable via commercial vendors.
- New procedures for claiming

Stop ordering material from outside the United States to send to barter partners.

**Suggested guidelines for canceling exchange programs:**

1. Cancel exchanges if materials haven’t been received for more than 2 years
2. Cancel exchanges if materials sent are frequently old or duplicates
3. Cancel exchanges that have turned into gifts
4. Cancel exchanges that have such low value you would be unwilling to pay for them
5. Cancel or revise exchanges where the materials sent cost much more than materials received
6. Cancel exchanges where materials are have become open access