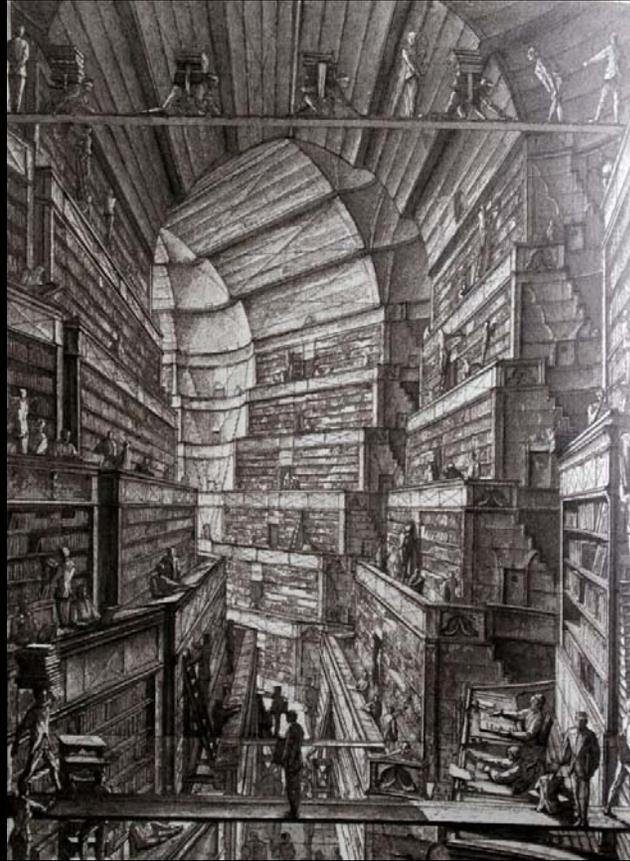


# Selection bias in collection development.



Un-leveling the playing field and making matters worse

Wil Weston



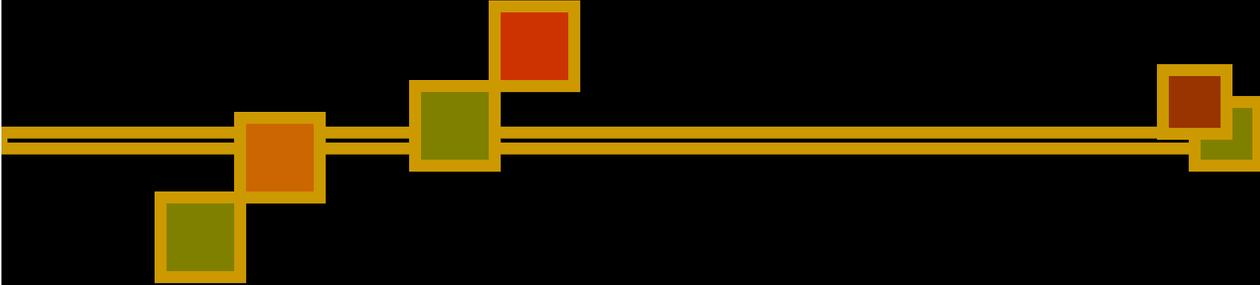
Libraries exercise considerable influence through the choices they make in fulfilling their primary missions of **collecting, preserving, and providing access to information.**

Previous papers on selection bias in an academic library's collection have focused on **specific collection development subject decisions** made by librarian selectors (Quinn, 2012; Antell, Strothmann, & Downey, J., 2013; Sadler & Bourg, 2015; Graziano, 2016).

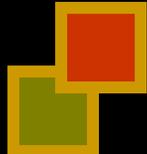


“Research libraries in particular have always **reflected the inequalities, biases, ethnocentrism, and power imbalances that exist throughout the academic enterprise** through collection policies and hiring practices that reflect the biases of those in power at a given institution.”

-Sadler & Bourg, 2015



# Outline of Collection Bias

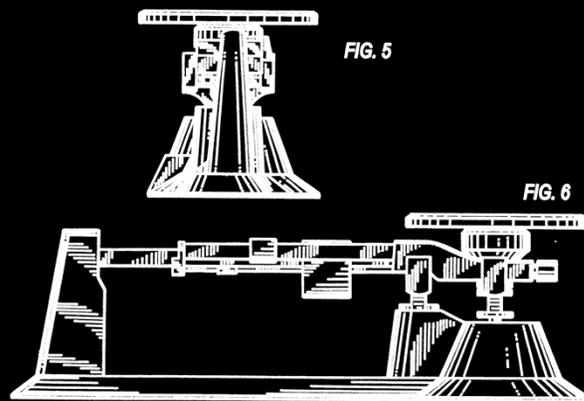
- **Background**
    - Imbalances due to Culture.
    - Imbalances due to Structure & Organization.
    - Imbalances due to the Tools and Resources we use for making selection decisions.
  - **Imbalances due to reduced funding.**
    - SDSU's Monographic Budget (How things got worse -- or at least harder to try to keep in balance.)
  - **Moving forward and finding solutions.**
    - Funding allocations
    - Getting back to the basics of building a Collection.
- 

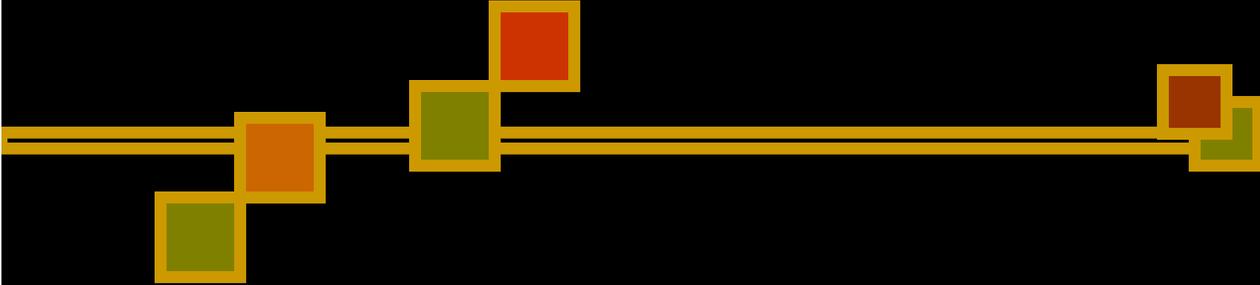
# Cultural Imbalance.

The "dominant culture of an institution [of higher education] is usually a reflection of traditional, primarily White, upper- and middle-class values and perspectives" (p.531)

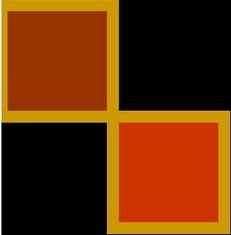
-Smart, 2006

Kuh and Love in their 2000 study proposed that the level of incongruence between students' precollege cultures and dominant campus culture is inversely related to persistence, and students for whom there exists a high level of distance between those cultures **must either acclimate to the dominant campus culture** or become immersed in one or more enclaves or subcultures to successfully find membership in and persist through college.





Cultural Imbalance is reflected in our collection. (\* and staff, faculty, art, and spaces in the library).



“All collections are **biased by the value preferences** of selectors”

-Quinn, 2012

“**Everyone** has a belief system, biases, and a set of values. All of these may color our choices, **but most are not always at the forefront of our cognitive behaviors**”

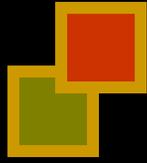
-Evans & Saponaro, 2012

“**Libraries should not try to be neutral.**”

-Sadler & Bourg, 2015

“Every collection is biased in one way or another. **The ideal of the value-neutral collection is a myth.** All collections are biased by the value preferences of selectors”

-Quinn, 2012



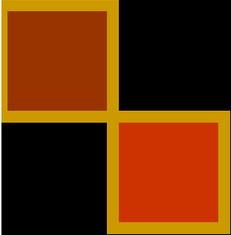
We can play a critical role in supporting the causes of **inclusion, plurality, participation and transparency.**

-Sadler & Bourg, 2015



# Imbalances due to Structure & Organization.

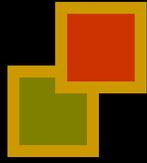
Bias within our controlled vocabulary.



There is a presumption of there being universality of perspective.  
And in many cases, simply an archaic world view.

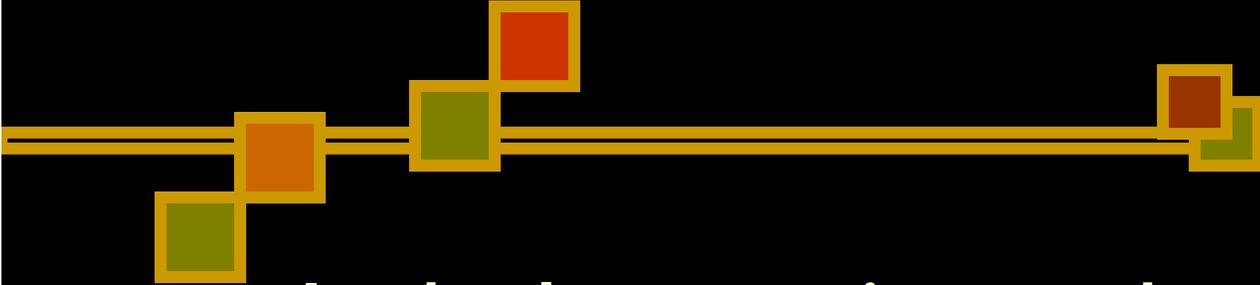
In Olsen's 2001 study, she noted that **entries for "Women" and "Men" and their accompanying structures** in the *Library of Congress Classification (LCC)* there are far more references to **narrower terms** under "Women" than under "Men" and that many of these terms draw attention to women as **exceptions to a male norm**. For example, **"gifted women"** are exceptions to the masculine norm of the gifted, for there is **no heading for "gifted men"**.

Thomas Yeh (1971) noted, in relation to **Native North American history in the LCC**, the word **"massacre"** is often replaced with the word **"incident"**, observing that the major **difference** between the two seemed to be **who perpetrated it on whom**.



Library of Congress (LC) announced on March 22, 2016 that it would **remove the term "Illegal alien"** from the LC Subject Heading (LCSH) system, replacing it with **"Noncitizen"** and, to describe the act of residing without authorization, **"Unauthorized immigration."**

"Libraries and the socially handicapped" is still LCSH subject heading.

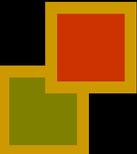


# Imbalances in to the Tools and Resources.

**The tools we use are imperfect.** Ordering everything through Yankee Book Peddler's (YBP) Gobi3 interface is not possible. Alternative Presses, some smaller press, many foreign presses are not available through Gobi3.

An **approval plan** will simply not capture some the desired literature and publications for Chicana/Chicano Studies, Africana Studies, LGBTQ, Gender Studies, Latin American History or Literature. **Those publishers are simply not represented.**

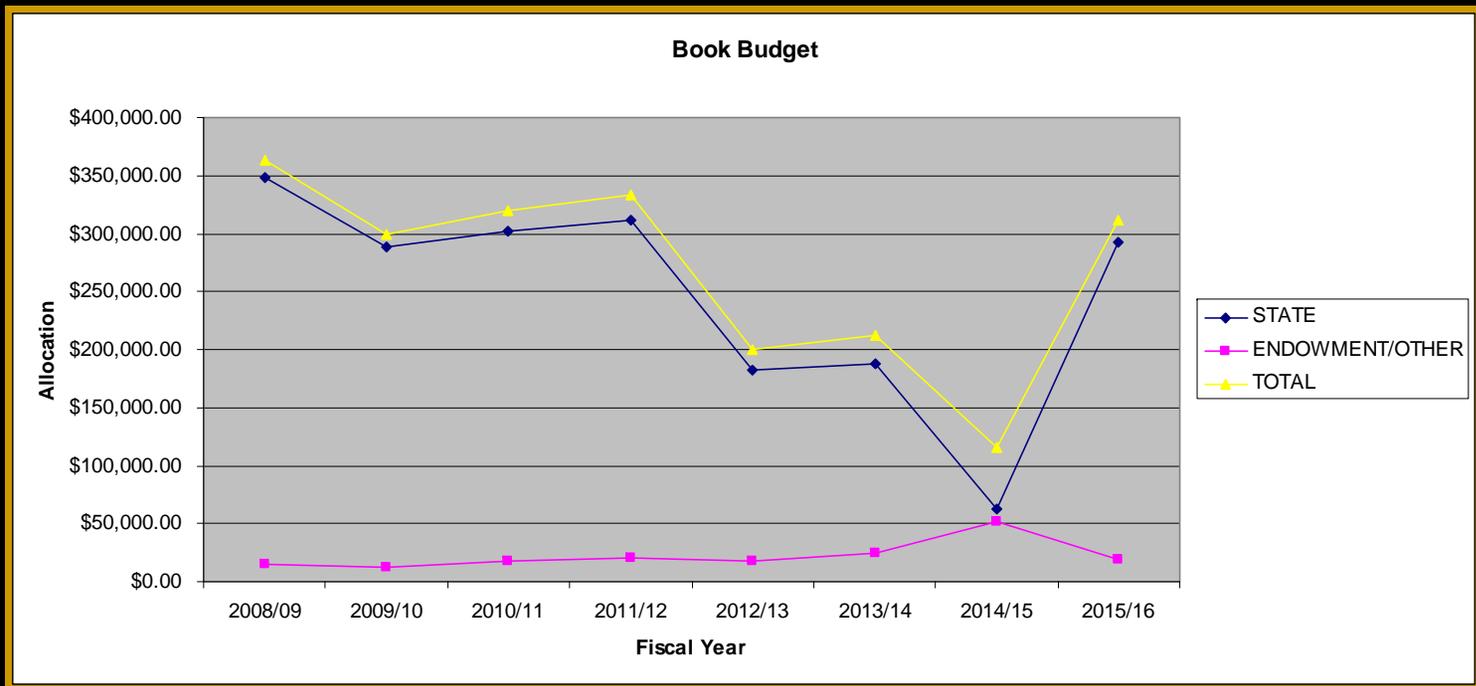
LIMITED



IMMERSED IN THE LITERATURE

Traditional Collection Development Selection Tools: Choice, Book Reviews, RCL, Vendor Catalogs, Inventory Lists, online "Best of" lists, are **simply inadequate and fall short** for many of these interdisciplinary and emerging areas of research.

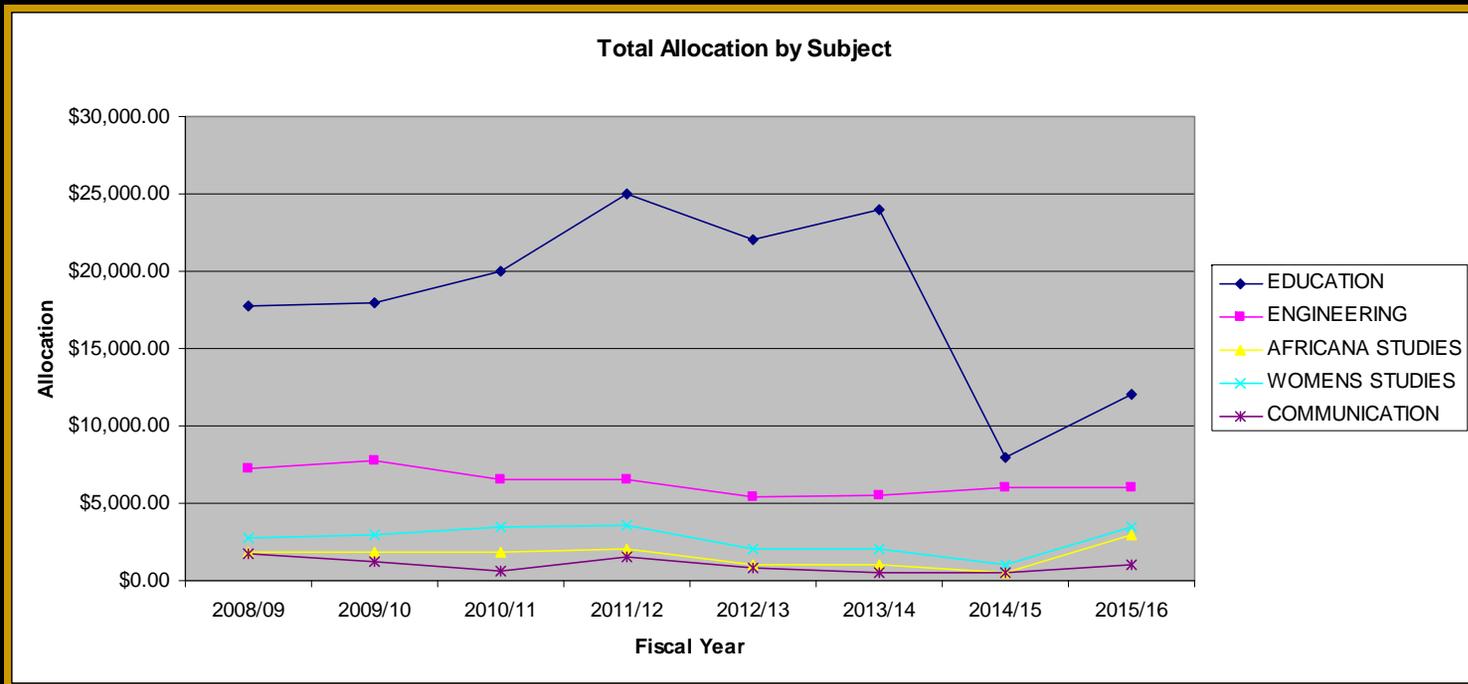
# Imbalances due to reduced in funding: How things got worse.



# Impact of Reduced funds.

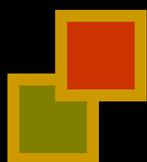


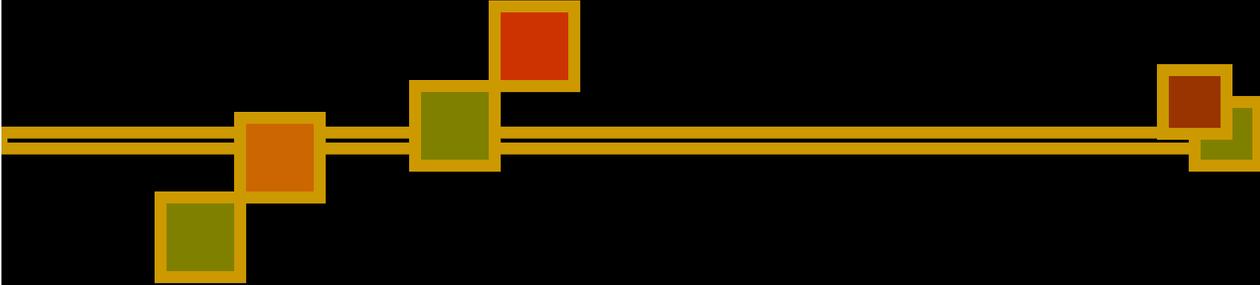
# Impact of Endowments & Outside Funding. HAVE'S & HAVE NOT'S



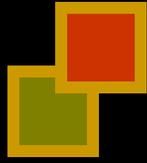


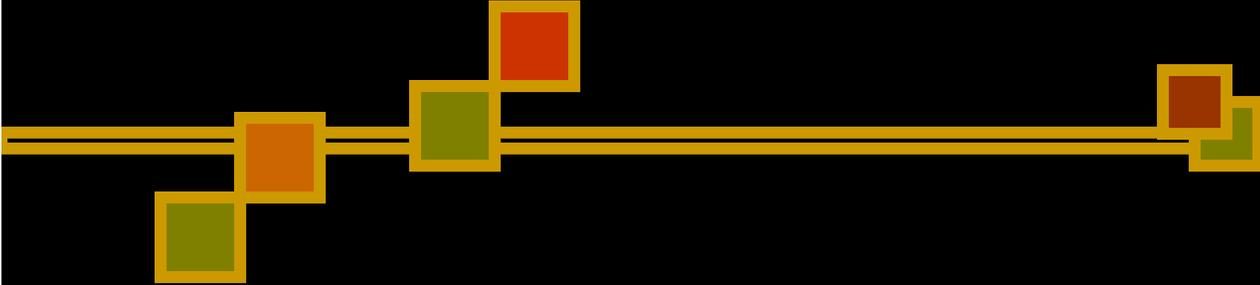
# What are the consequences?

- Shape of the Collection changes. We have an **ENGINEERING, EDUCATION, BUSINESS, NURSING** collection. OTHER Subjects – without endowed funds, or departmental funding to support their collections **DO NOT GET COLLECTED** – less current, smaller, out of balance with rest of collection.
  - **RESEARCH** becomes more difficult. Humanities and Social Sciences, which are heavily monograph dependent, become increasingly more **dependent on ILL**.
  - Programs like Women's Studies, LGBTQ Studies, African Studies suffer from lack of institutional support.
- 

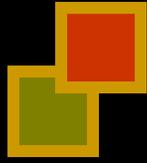


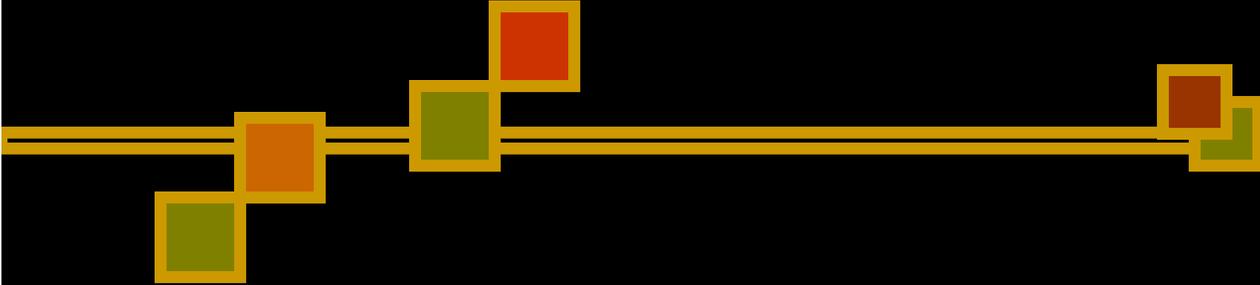
## What did we do? (to make it a little better)

- 2012/13 We began working with other departments and units (like the Pride Center, Music Dept, & Center for Women's Studies) **soliciting for donations to the collection.**
  - Actively working to build long term/sustainable funding for the **HUMANITIES** like we already have for **APPLIED SCIENCES.**
  - In 2013/14 we **established a separate fund code for LGBTQ Studies** (Previously Women's Studies and LGBTQ shared the same allocation.) To highlight its importance as an area the SDSU Library wanted to develop a strong collection it needed its own allocation.
  - 2012/13 we also began actively campaigning in concert with the College of Arts and Letters for an improved Collection Budget for monographs. This year, **2015/16, we have had an additional \$250,000 added** to the collections budget **solely for Humanities & Social Science Collections** (monographs, media, & digital archives)
- 

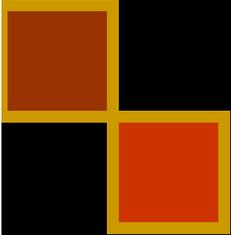


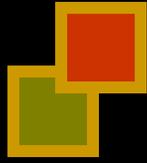
# Summary

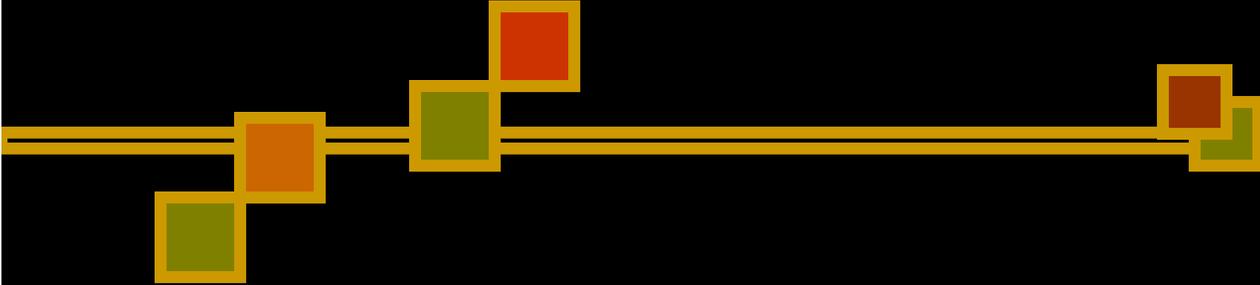
- There **IS** a cultural bias within our institutions, simply because our institutions are a reflection of the dominant culture. **We must continue to fight for diversity in our academic institutions (not just the library).** Our library collection will always be reflection of the institution's culture. (Start with working to become aware of your own unconscious biases.)
  - How we organize our collection is also a reflection of this cultural bias.
  - **Our collection tools are also limited and biased.** Less established publishers, alternative presses, new areas of study, non-western publications are not discoverable through large book dealer, publisher, or aggregator tools; nor are they purchasable through an automated means of acquisition. (e.g. approval plans and PDA/DDA) The resources these disciplines need **MUST be sought out.**
  - **FINALLY**, if your endowments and outside funding only support a limited range of subject areas; that is **NOT** a sustainable funding model. The **shape of the collection will change** and become less supportive of smaller, poorer funded programs.
  - **FIGHT for your monograph collection – IT IS the Laboratory for the Humanities and the Social Sciences.**
- 



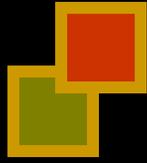
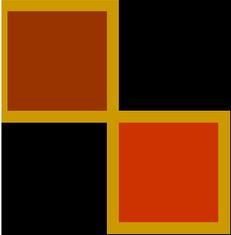
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