2CUL TSI Receiving Working Group Report

2CUL TSI Monograph Receiving Working Group

Summarize staffing and expertise at Columbia and Cornell, including a comparison of current job assignments.

Investigation: Members of the Working Group shared respective inventories of receiving staff and expertise and discussed details of staffing, expertise and job assignments in phone conversations.

Columbia has 11 FTE who receive material in the Monographs Processing Services (MPS) division. Eight of the staff members are responsible for the day-to-day receiving of material in the Monographs Acquisitions Services (MAS) department which is divided into two units: the Book in Hand unit (BIH) receives approvals, Collection Direct Accessions (CDAs), and gifts, and the Order & Receiving Unit (OAR) receives firm ordered material. One FTE in the OAR unit is assigned 35% cataloging duties. The three remaining staff members are copy catalogers who are located in Monographs Processing Services-Cataloging and assist with receiving firm order material whenever necessary. Cornell has 12 FTE that are cross-trained to receive, input and fastcast approval and firm order material, and are dispersed throughout Library Technical Services. Both Columbia and Cornell's receiving staff have diverse language skills and expertise which allow them to process a wide range of approval material for review, receive firm orders, and fastcat upon receipt. Cornell includes the processing of Chinese-Japanese-Korean-Tibetan (CJKT) material within their main technical services division, whereas Columbia's CJKT material is processed separately at C.V. Starr East Asian Library.

Summarize reporting and decision-making structures at Columbia and Cornell.

Investigation: Members of the Working Group shared respective organizational charts and discussed details of reporting and decision-making structures during phone conversations.

Monographs Processing Services (MPS) has a Divisional Director that includes a copy cataloging department which consists of three individual units, and a monographs acquisitions department (MAS) with two individual units. Decisions affecting policy and procedure within MAS are discussed between the department Head and the Order Unit Librarian and brought to the larger division as information sharing. Policy and procedural decisions affecting the MPS Division are discussed and agreed up in consultation with the Division Director and all unit Librarians. Changes to policy and procedure that affect other acquisitions and cataloging divisions are discussed at the Print & Electronic Resources Coordination (PERC) committee. Fiscal and budgetary issues and possible policy and procedural changes affecting acquisitions and Collection Development are discussed at Materials Budget Group (MBG) meetings. Issues regarding selection, collection, and budgets with regards to selectors are discussed at the Selectors Discussion Group (SDG) meetings.

Acquisitions and Automated Technical Services (AATS) is directed by Boaz Nadav-Manes, and consists of Copy Cataloging/Inputting, Ordering and Gifts, Receiving and Documents, and Batch Processing and Metadata Management. Procedural decisions are made by the administrative supervisor or coordinator of that unit in consultation with the director of AATS. Policy decisions are made by the director of AATS who consults with one or all of the appropriate unit supervisors or coordinators as needed.

Columbia and Cornell appear to have similar reporting and decision-making structures. At Columbia, MAS is a department with two individual units (BIH and OAR), an OAR Unit Librarian, and a department head, whereas Cornell’s AATS is divided into individual Units with supervisors or coordinators.

Summarize significant similarities and differences between policies, practices, and workflows in the Receiving departments at Columbia and Cornell.

Investigation: Members of the Working Group shared and posted respective documentation on policies, practices and workflows on Basecamp and the 2CUL wiki, and discussed details during phone conversations.

Please see “Inventory of All Policies, Practices and Workflows” and “Significant Similarities and Differences.”

Many of the policies, practices and workflows are mirrored at the two institutions. Both Columbia and Cornell receive firm order and approval material; prepare approval material for selector review; utilize vendor records for approval material; utilize EDI for ordering and invoicing; create and enter invoices into Voyager for payment; return defective or incorrectly invoiced approval and firm order material to vendors; and handle special items. While discussing the Inventory of All Policies, Practices and Workflows, it became apparent to the working group members that a considerable amount of work and hands-on supervision is required in both receiving departments.

Even though the two institutions do similar kinds of work in comparable fashion, there are significant differences in receiving workflows that are unique to each University. A comparison of current job assignments indicates similar tasks and responsibilities at both institutions with two main differences: Cornell’s cross-training of staff to fastcat and input upon receipt and Columbia’s use of shelf-ready for domestic approval material. There are also differences in what type of material each receiving department handles. Columbia receives a significant number of DVDs and serial back issues, whereas Cornell handles government documents and receives and checks-in current serials. Librarians in MAS approve invoices in Voyager before routing on for processing in the acquisitions accounting department, whereas Cornell’s units route pending invoices to their respective accounting department for approval in Voyager. Another significant difference is the lack of a union at Cornell whereas Columbia’s support staff are unionized.

Summarize dependencies and limitations inherent in working with other functional units at Columbia and Cornell.

Investigation: Members of the Working Group shared and posted respective documentation on dependencies on Basecamp and the 2CUL wiki and discussed details during phone conversations.

Please see “Dependencies and Limitations.”

Columbia and Cornell’s receiving departments experience the same types of dependencies and limitations in day-to-day operations. Both departments are dependent on selectors for the timely review and selection of approval books to facilitate invoice payment and cataloging of
material. Both receiving departments are also reliant on other units to establish EDI connections with vendors. The loading of bibliographic records for approval material at Columbia also occurs in LITO and the Book in Hand unit must wait until the records load before it can prepare material for review. Cornell is reliant on their accounting department to approve pending invoices in Voyager. The processing of invoices for approval material is limited by internal accounting constraints at Columbia.

Summarize available baseline productivity numbers in the receiving departments at Columbia and Cornell.

Investigation: Members of the Working Group retrieved and posted available baseline productivity numbers on the 2CUL wiki and discussed details during phone conversations.

Please see spreadsheets reflecting approval and firm order receipts at Columbia, Cornell, and C.V. Starr East Asian Library for fiscal years 2010 through 2012.

The productivity numbers derived for Columbia, Cornell and Starr East Asian at Columbia require background information. Cornell’s numbers include CJKT material and since the processing of Columbia’s CJKT material occurs in the technical services department at Starr East Asian, a separate category for this material is labeled as “Starr East Asian.” It is also necessary to point out that Cornell’s numbers include government document receipts and Columbia’s include serial back issues, but do not include DVD receipts as per the agreed upon parameters of this study.

Reviewing the productivity numbers for both institutions revealed two noticeable trends: a sizable gap in the area of approval receipts and a decline in the number of firm order receipts for Columbia without CJKT and Cornell. On average, Columbia outpaced Cornell’s approval acquisitions at a rate of 2 to 1 for fiscal years 2010 to 2012. Approval receipts for both institutions grew modestly during these years with Columbia experiencing a spike in 2012 which may have resulted from the switch to shelf ready for approvals from its main domestic vendor. Firm order receipts for Columbia without CJKT and Cornell declined over the same three year span with a noticeable reduction of approximately 3,000 titles between 2011 and 2012 for both receiving departments; Starr’s firm order receipts have stayed relatively the same during the same period. The combined (approvals + firm orders) comparisons with and without Starr’s CJKT numbers reflect the same general tendency of higher receipts at Columbia than at Cornell.

Recommendations regarding a work plan and critical issues to explore in Phase 2 of the group’s assignment.

- Meet and discuss findings with the other relevant working groups (Ordering, Copy Cataloging, Batch Processing).
- Explore points of “harmony” and “discord” revealed in Phase 1.
- Critical issues to explore:
  - Shelf ready
  - Cataloging upon receipt
  - University accounting restrictions