Rare Books Materials Transfer Policy

This policy governs how and which books are moved from Morris Library’s general collections into the rare book collection of the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC).

I. Background and purpose:

This policy exists to direct the evaluation of materials for transfer from Morris Library’s general collections into the collections of the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC). In general, materials unrelated to the collecting areas specified in the SCRC Collection Development Policy will not be considered for transfer, unless the item under review has particular preservation or security needs that can be best addressed by the SCRC.

One of the roles of an academic library is the preservation of scarce, unique, and/or valuable research materials. As a member of the Association of Research Libraries and an institution with a strong history of retrospective collecting, Morris Library is in a position of stewardship for many such materials. The SCRC has closed stacks and a focus on preservation and security, so it is in a unique position within the library to house and care for SIUC’s most valuable printed materials. Items that are identified for transfer will be placed under the curatorial authority of SCRC staff, who will make every attempt to preserve them in perpetuity for the benefit of future researchers at SIUC and elsewhere.

There are a number of reasons for which an individual item presently held in the general collections might more appropriately reside in special collections. These will typically involve the “artifactual value” of the item, that is, those elements that render the individual physical item significant. Elements comprising artifactual value might include age, monetary value, provenance or associative significance, susceptibility to theft or mutilation, rarity, and fragility, but frequently involve several of these factors simultaneously. Guidelines to assess these factors follow.

II. Guidelines for Assessment of Potential Transfers:

The guidelines below, which describe general conditions under which an item is likely to be suitable for transfer from the stacks into Special Collections, will be applied to each item under consideration on a case by case basis. Sometimes, a single criterion will carry weight sufficient to result in a recommendation that an item be transferred. More typically, however, a combination of these factors might provide the foundation for such a recommendation. In every case, the assessment of materials will result in a summary recommendation detailing its suitability or unsuitability for transfer.
Age:
Materials published abroad before 1800, or published before 1820 in the area now forming the United States.

Monetary value:
Materials worth more than $500 (as determined through consultation of booksellers' catalogs and websites, or *American Book Prices Current*, or other sources detailing prices realized at auction). The monetary value of some materials might derive more from their illustrations than from their text.

Provenance or associative significance:
Specific copies of materials having potential value to SCRC researchers due to their previous ownership, markings made by the author or other historically significant figures, or other aspects of their individual history.

Susceptibility to theft or mutilation:
Materials susceptible to theft in their entirety, or for such specific elements as illustrations (e.g., engraved plates, maps) or supplementary materials (e.g., digital disks).

The risk of theft to monetarily valuable materials is evident, but materials might also be at risk of theft or mutilation for the potentially controversial nature of their content. Such materials might be particularly appropriate for removal to SCRC's McCoy collection of materials pertaining to the freedom of the press. Expensive replacements for materials that have been stolen or mutilated previously might also more appropriately be placed in special collections.

Rarity:
Materials held uniquely by Morris Library within the state of Illinois, or by no more than 10 libraries worldwide (as determined by a search of the OCLC WorldCat).

Materials that are valuable to the research mission of SCRC but cannot be located through the used book trade.

Fragility:
Materials whose continued presence in the general collection is likely to result in their destruction.

This criterion will typically apply in tandem with rarity. But some materials that cannot be readily replaced through the used book market might more appropriately
be housed in a special collections environment in order to extend their usefulness to researchers, even when the numbers of available copies exceeds those expressed in the guidelines above.

III. Additional reasons for potential transfer:

Second or greater copies of materials in the general collections that are especially relevant to the research function of SCRC might also be appropriate for transfer.

Underutilized single copies of materials in the general collections that are especially relevant to the research function of SCRC might also be appropriate for transfer.

The manner in which an item is treated by other research institutions might offer guidance regarding its suitability for transfer into a special collections environment.

Other reasons for transfer are likely to be identified in individual cases.

IV. Types of materials to be transferred:

This policy focuses on published books. However, this policy might appropriately apply to materials in other formats as well, such as serials (either individual issues or bound volumes), reels of microfilm, sound or video recordings, or materials (such as portfolios or kits) that include component elements susceptible to theft.

V. Identification of materials for transfer:

Prospective materials for transfer might be identified by patrons; staff in Circulation, Interlibrary Loan, Preservation, Reference, or other library units; or by SCRC staff.

This policy does not mandate that Morris Library's collections be systematically surveyed to locate materials for transfer from the general collections to Special Collections.

VI. Alternatives to transfer:

Because the evaluation of an item for transfer to Special Collections will generally include a determination of the availability and price of an analogous copy on the used book market, where copies of an item can be purchased readily from SCRC collection development funds, the copy present in the general collection is unlikely to be transferred.

Where materials are not selected for transfer to Special Collections, alternatives to transfer might include extra-marking of valuable materials (e.g., application of ownership stamps to plates of illustrations or maps, hidden markings), the application of additional electronic security, or the restriction of access to materials.
VII. Transfer procedures:

Once a book is identified as a potential candidate for transfer, it should be promptly evaluated by the Rare Book Librarian (RBL). The RBL will determine whether the book meets the above criteria and make the final decision as to whether it should be added to the SCRC collections.

If the book is not selected for transfer, it will be returned to the main collection in a timely manner. The book will also be marked, in pencil, “Not for transfer to SCRC. [RBL’s initials][date].” This mark will be written on the top inner corner of the back free endpaper verso, unless this space is for some reason unavailable (for example, if the endpaper is dark or decorated). If such is the case, the mark will be written on the verso of the last appropriate leaf.

If the item is selected for transfer, the location code in the item record will be changed immediately. The book will then be sent to the Special Collections Cataloger to determine whether any changes need to be made to the catalog record.

If a Morris Library staff member identifies a book for potential transfer to the SCRC, that person should first check to see if it has been marked as “not for transfer.” However, as the scarcity and value of books changes over time, the book can be reviewed for transfer again after a period of 10 years.

VIII. Emendation of this policy:

This policy is a living document. It may be updated when its practical application reveals flaws in the policy, or to reflect changes in professional best practices.

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 4 2016 - 7:19am):
http://www.lib.siu.edu/scrc-transfers