

Leisure Reading in the Academic Library

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What

The Edwin H. and Wendy L. Allen Endowed Leisure Reading Collection at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) was dedicated in April 2009, and currently contains nearly 750 print volumes. The collection contains popular works, including fiction, cookbooks, biographies, and popular nonfiction.

Although there were additions to the collection, a comprehensive weeding project had not been conducted. I recently took on and completed a full review of the collection: about 50% was either moved to our regular stacks or sent to off-site storage. Additionally, I purchased more than 250 new volumes to refresh and update the collection. These new purchases were designed to add high demand titles and create a collection that better reflects UCR's diverse undergraduate population. Additions included:

- Fiction by and about people of color
- Novels and series that were adapted to movies and television shows
- Popular nonfiction representing a broader variety of subjects and cultures
- Best sellers, editor's picks, and works by popular authors
- Additional formats such as graphic novels and younger YA

Where

The collection is located near the main entrance of UCR's Rivera Library. The Rivera Library is the larger of two campus libraries and is located at the center of the UCR campus, making it an excellent location to house a leisure reading collection. In addition to shelving units, there is a small lounge area that makes up the leisure reading space, which was also provided for by endowment funding.

How

The Leisure Reading Collection is funded through an endowment from UCR Alumni Edwin Allen, who remembered fondly the times when he would enjoy a quiet moment reading in the Rivera Library. He wanted to share that experience with UCR students and provide a welcoming space for them to relax, read, and escape the hectic life of the typical college student. While the collection is geared towards undergraduate students, it is open to all UCR patrons, and the physical space is open to the public.

Why

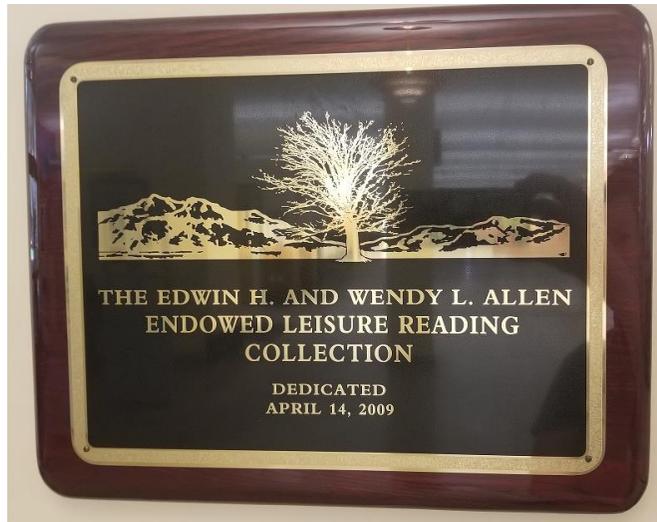
Supporting our students' emotional well-being is important, and it is something our librarians often think about, but do not always have the time or resources to do so. The Leisure Reading Collection is a simple way to give our students a convenient way to pick up leisure reading material and enjoy a bit of relaxation while on campus.

However, before the comprehensive review, there was a lack of diversity and representation: the collection did not resemble the diversity and interests of UCR's students. As I was selecting new titles, I wanted to make sure that any student who came in to browse the collection could find something they would enjoy reading, and they would find themselves reflected in the materials available.

How YOU Can Start a Leisure Reading Collection

While the Allens' generous donation to the UCR Library funded our collection, it can be relatively inexpensive and easy to set up a leisure collection in your own library. Here are some considerations for you to think about if you'd like to create your own collection:

- Cost: Popular works are far less expensive than academic texts, so you can get more bang for your buck with even a small funding amount
- Selection: Check best seller lists and invite library staff to recommend books. Or, check out the full list of the UCR Library's collection here: <https://bit.ly/2yGpttl>
- Processing time: we retain the dust jackets and add a mylar cover for leisure books, to create a more attractive and browse-able collection. This can take more time but adds to the appeal of our leisure reading area.
- E-Books: Services like Overdrive offer popular titles
- Lease services: Don't have time for any of the above? Providers like Brodart and Baker & Taylor have lease programs, where popular titles are selected automatically and arrive shelf-ready.
- Have fun with it: patron suggestion box, featured staff picks, and themed displays are easy ways to bring attention to the collection



Leisure reading lounge and shelving.

Note: photos were taken after our campus closure; additional lounge furniture was moved for cleaning.



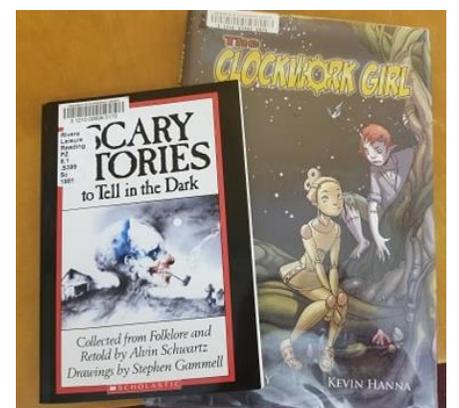
One shelf is dedicated to new and featured books

Questions? Contact:
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Many thanks to the Allen Family for the generous donation to make the Leisure Reading Collection possible.



Additional lounge space near the collection



The collection includes graphic novels and younger YA, for all English reading levels