The We Need Diverse Books campaign started as a Twitter hashtag in 2014 (#WeNeedDiverseBooks) by Ellen Oh and Malinda Lo. While this campaign specifically focuses on children’s literature, the principles of seeing oneself in books, media, and other resources resonates through all categories of materials.

Not only does it allow all patrons of a library to be visible and represented in the collections, but it also helps white people fully realize the diverse nature of the world around them.

Personal finance covers managing one’s own money through saving and investing. Because it is often focused on meeting several self-identified financial goals, it is inherently individualized and therefore vital that material available reflects our patrons, their lives, and cultures.

Expanding on the We Need Diverse Books campaign, the Gast Business Library at Michigan State University is now curating its personal finance collection with emphasis on author and audience diversity.

Why Collection Diversity? The Gast Business Library was already updating the personal finance collection semi-regularly to include new content that was both timely and that covered new trends.

In the Fall 2017 semester, an audit of the collection revealed the limited scope in diversity of authors and perspectives.

The primary motivator for the collection audit was the Gast Business Library’s participation in a campus-wide Money Smart Week event.

Money Smart Week concludes with a financial literacy resource fair. A librarian staffs a resource booth and provides information about the research resources available to students. A selection of personal finance books are available to check out directly from the booth.

New books were needed to address emerging trends and discussions within personal finance. Additionally, the library’s personal finance collection also needed to grow to reflect the students, faculty, and staff that we serve.

Rethinking Standard Methods of Acquisition

Library staff examined the current methods of purchasing personal finance books for the Gast Business Library and one librarian was given permission to update the collection regularly using revised methods.

Prior to the 2017-2018 academic year personal finance books were purchased or collected through one of three methods.

1. Individual purchase slips sent to librarians via GOBI. GOBI often did not include a lot of personal finance or “popular” book recommendations, a categorization that personal finance books often fall under.

2. Recommendations from bestseller or “Best-of” lists. These lists are often curated by financial professionals or publishing industry professionals, both industries that are dominated by white employees.

3. Student, faculty, staff suggestions or requests. These suggestions are often limited in scope or meant to address a specific assignment.


21% Minority Representation in Management Roles

45% Female Representation in Management Roles

The Lee and Low Books Diversity Baseline Survey noted that the publishing industry is 79% white.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSU Student Body • Fall 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates Were Students Of Color: 21.4% (8,426 of 39,423)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering Class Were Students Of Color: 24.1% (2,032 of 8,442)</td>
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New Considerations

In rethinking how the Gast Business Library acquired personal finance books, librarians made a conscious effort to collect with a focus toward diverse authors and audiences, identifying relevant financial topics and new or previously underrepresented voices.

When looking for personal finance books to acquire, the librarian considered and used in addition to prior methods:

- Personal finance blogs
- Personal finance-focused Twitter accounts
- Self-published books and resources that were born digital and not considered for new acquisitions. These sources go through additional scrutiny.

Impact on Collection Efforts

- New personal finance books that specifically focused on gender and race of authors were added to the circulating collection and have been used in two Money Smart Week Resource Fairs (2018 & 2019).
- Since Fall 2017, 16 new personal finance books were added using personal finance blogs and other “non-conventional” methods of collection development. Other personal finance material was added through the standard methods of appraisal plans and GOBI book slips.
- The breakdown of authors of these 16 personal finance books:

  - Nine female white persons
  - Five female persons of color
  - One male person of color
  - One male white person

This change in collection development approach was somewhat successful. We were able to add 14 books by women authors to the collection, but our numbers still skew toward white authors. And, we added only one book by a male person of color when looking for materials through financial literacy blogs and tweets.

Changes to Acquisitions Methods

- New Books Since Fall 2018

  - 16

Moving Toward A New Collection Method

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Revising Acquisitions Methods

Library staff examined the current methods of purchasing personal finance books for the Gast Business Library and one librarian was given permission to update the collection regularly using revised methods.

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Moving Forward

- Personal finance books will continue to be added to the Gast Business Library’s Popular Business Collection using these updated methods of identifying potential acquisitions.

- The addition of these books has proven popular at the Money Smart Week Resource Fair with students either stopping at the table to browse or thumb through the pages or check out material from the fair.

- Efforts to expand the use of these amended collection efforts to the larger collection are underway. The curatorial methods have been piloted for other parts of the Gast Business Library’s collection.

- Book displays themed around Black History Month in February and Women’s History Month in March were created and a notable amount of diverse content was discovered when pulling books for display.