

Title: University Archives
Code: 4-630-001
Date: 11-1-98rev
Approved: WPL

Introduction

Records constitute historical evidence, and serve as original sources for the reconstruction of the past and the interpretation of current experiences. The University has a responsibility to preserve those records that document its own history and development, and that reflect the University's intellectual, social, and spiritual contributions to the community. Such records are required not only by University administrators and the institutional historian, but by other scholars who are interested in the impact of the University in the community and the history of higher education in general.

The University Archives was established in 1975 to assure the preservation of official files, records, documents, publications and other materials of Boston College that are deemed to have significant value in tracking the history of the origin, growth, and development of the University. The Archives is directed by the Head of Archives and Manuscripts in the John J. Burns Library. The purpose of this policy is to define the role and responsibilities of the University Archives in meeting Boston College's archival objectives. Further, the policy sets forth procedural guidelines for the orderly and timely flow of archival materials to the Archives.

It should be noted that the level of archival activity is by necessity limited. Budget and space restrictions require that a high degree of selectivity be exercised by the Head of Archives and Manuscripts in determining the type of records that will be maintained.

Policy

1. The University Archives is the official repository for noncurrent University records that have permanent historical, legal, fiscal, or administrative value. The primary mission of the Archives is to identify, collect, preserve, arrange, and describe records that document the history of University organizational units and the activities of Boston College officers, faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
2. In addition to preserving the University's inactive records, the University Archives serves as a repository for copies of current documents and publications issued by any unit of the University, or written by those associated with Boston College whenever such documents or publications are judged to have archival significance.
3. The Head of Archives and Manuscripts is responsible for identifying those records throughout the University that merit classification as archival materials, and for formally requesting that they be so classified.
4. The President has the final authority to classify or to declassify records of the University as "archival materials" once they are no longer required in the offices of origin.
5. Organizational unit heads may retain any records needed for the efficient operation of their units for as long as those records are deemed necessary. When records are no longer required, the Head of Archives and Manuscripts is to be notified of the availability of such records for transfer to the Archives. Any unit that transfers records to the University Archives has the right to consult or access those records.

6. Archival materials are the property of the University and are not to be removed from the University or destroyed without the approval of the office of origin and the Head of Archives and Manuscripts.

Archival Materials

No listing of "archival materials" can be all inclusive, but the categories of materials listed below are representative of those commonly retained by private colleges and universities that support an archives function.

- **Architectural Records:** specifications and drawings of buildings and physical plant;
- **Artifacts:** miscellaneous items associated with University events and activities;
- **Correspondence, Memoranda, and Other Files:** maintained to record the activities of officers and chief administrators;
- **Curriculum:** course offerings; materials that describe special programs or seminars;
- **Honors Papers, Theses, and Dissertations:** completed by undergraduate or graduate students as part of a degree requirement;
- **Minutes of Meetings:** governing bodies (e.g., Board of Trustees, Vice Presidents) and major committees;
- **Photographs, Slides, and Films:** that pertain to events, personnel, or physical plant;
- **Personal Papers:** of University officers, faculty, and administrators;
- **Personal Publications:** books and/or articles published by faculty or administrators (where reference is made to the University);
- **University Publications:** catalogs, bulletins, brochures, handbooks, news releases, promotional literature, news letters and papers; and related publications produced by administrative units, academic departments, and student organizations;
- **Reports:** annual operating, financial; of special committees;
- **Student Activities:** records of clubs and associations, including membership rosters, programs of events, and related materials;
- **Tape Recordings:** audio and/or video recordings of events or performances deemed to have historical significance.

Procedures

Evaluation and Transfer of Records

Although any member of the University community may recommend that certain records be maintained in the Archives, the formal process to evaluate records as archival material must be initiated by the Head of Archives and Manuscripts. This process is outlined below.

1. The Head of Archives and Manuscripts, in consultation with the responsible record keeper, is to conduct a records survey. Records Inventory Work Sheets ([EXHIBIT A](#)) are to be completed with the following information:
 - Control Information
Record group, record series, contact person, location, dates of file.

- Physical Description
Number and size of files, volume, annual growth, physical condition.
 - Content Description
Type of material, subjects, duplication, missing or purged material.
 - Use
Number of times retrieved; legal or auditing use.
 - Retention Recommendation
Length of time records are to be held in the office of origin; records to be sent to the Archives, records to be deposited elsewhere or destroyed, and dates this is to take place.
- 2.
 3. The Records Inventory Work Sheets and a Summary are to be sent to the organizational unit head for his or her concurrence. In cases of nonconcurrence, the documents are to be sent to the responsible vice president for approval.
 4. Once the necessary approvals are secured, the Head of Archives and Manuscripts is to meet with the responsible record keeper to establish procedures for maintaining and/or transferring records to the Archives.

Processing

Records transferred to the University Archives are to be arranged and described according to standard archival procedures and practice. Records are to be placed according to the body or unit to which they belong, and are to be housed in a climate-controlled, acid-free environment. Processing is to occur as time and resources permit. Duplicate and other extraneous material is to be weeded and removed. Inventories and other finding aids are to be produced to facilitate the quick retrieval of requested items. Organizational units may request copies of any inventories for their own use.

Use of Archival Materials

Records that are transferred to the Archives are arranged and maintained as part of the permanent history of the individual unit, committee, or other body or unit to which they belong. In certain cases, access to archival materials may be restricted by the depositor. Generally, however, the staff of the Archives is to make pertinent materials immediately available to authorized members of the University community or to qualified scholars who wish to consult archival records. Special clearance for access to restricted records must be arranged through the Head of Archives and Manuscripts.

Posted: January 22, 1999
