

Union College Institutional Archives Policy

I. Purpose

Archives document the history, development, and progress of an institution. They are useful to the institution itself when historical precedent or development is called on for current planning and policy making. Archival records can also be used by the institution to enhance a sense of pride and loyalty among alumni and current students which can be turned into tangible support for the college. Opening appropriate records to outside researchers also increases the institution's visibility and enhances its reputation.

Policies and procedures for institutional archives have an important purpose. They:

- Ensure the preservation of documents with historical importance in the appropriate place.
- Assist employees in making decisions about which documents to retain, send to the designated repository, or destroy.
- Guide archival staff in providing or limiting access to documents.
- Strengthen the college's standing for continued accreditation.
- Provide legal defense if a subpoenaed paper was destroyed according to established policy.

Furthermore, the *Working Policy* of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists requires records management and retention programs of denominational institutions. Records management involves the process of evaluating "legal, financial, and cultural worth of various types of files and records produced in all offices." According the *Working Policy*, the retention program should designate a center where records are protected "from fire, deterioration and unauthorized access." The records program should include a retention schedule, and records should be clearly labeled.¹

A. Mission

The Union College Institutional Archives serve the Union College community by collecting, preserving, maintaining, and making available institutional records of administrative, legal and fiscal importance, and other items of historical value.

B. Goals & Objectives

- Preserve institutional documents and artifacts of lasting value to Union College.
 - Appraise potential collection objects in order to determine appropriateness for acquisition and evaluate their condition.
 - Provide adequate storage space with room for collection growth.

¹ North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy 2007-2008*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2007, p. 90-91.

- Maintain a safe environment which reduces physical hazards such as extreme temperatures, light, humidity, chemical and biological threats, and mishandling by humans.
- Create digital use copies of popular collection items in order to protect the original documents.
- Organize documents and artifacts according to standard archival practices which retain the integrity of the collection.
 - Maintain accession records which record the provenance of collection objects.
 - Provide descriptions which include inventories and the historical significance of collection objects.
 - Label containers (and objects as appropriate) in order to facilitate retrieval for research.
- Facilitate use of the archives by researchers.
 - Publicize open collections through the college website and library networks.
 - Assist researchers during site visits or by mail, email, and phone.
- Offer educational opportunities to create a better understanding of institutional archives on campus.
 - Train faculty and staff in records management.
 - Teach students protocol for use of historical documents in repositories.

II. Administration

A. Facility

The Lora McMahon King Heritage Room in the Ella Johnson Crandall Memorial Library is the official repository for unpublished, non-current College administrative records of historical, fiscal, legal, or administrative value (the Archives).

B. Scope & Access

Records held in the Archives date from the beginning of the College in 1891 and are composed of three categories.

1. Records (unpublished closed documents)
2. Archives (unpublished open documents)
3. Heritage collections (personal papers of staff/faculty and published documents which are open)

The records and archives collections consist of institutional documents such as faculty and administrative committee meeting minutes, minutes of the board of trustees, correspondence of the presidents and other officers, reports, policies, constituting documents, financial statements, course syllabi, and other documents of a similar nature. Union College publications intended for the public may be found in either the archives or heritage collections.

All records are open to their office of origination. Access to these records by other individuals will be governed under the usage guidelines in Section III of this document.

C. Budget

An allocation for the Heritage Room is included in the library's annual budget.

D. Division of Responsibility

1. The college archivist is a member of the library staff. The archivist's responsibilities include:
 - a. Receiving records from departments, offices, and committees on campus.
 - b. Processing records as they are sent to the repository.
 - c. Facilitating access to the records under the guidelines published in Section VI of this document.
 - d. Liaising with departmental records coordinators.
 - e. Chairing the UC Archives committee.
2. Each department or office will appoint a records coordinator. The records coordinator will:
 - a. Coordinate with the college archivist to establish record groups and series.
 - b. Collect and prepare files and other items for transfer to the Archive (see Institutional Archives Procedures).
 - c. Ensure that all members of their departments are contributing the appropriate documents to the archives program.
3. Committee chairs or secretaries (depending on who is responsible for the minutes) should ensure the committee minutes and reports are sent to the Archive.

III. Access

In order to monitor the usage and inventory of the archives, all individuals requesting access to documents in the Archive will be required to complete the *Retrieval Request Form*.

1. Employees from the office of origination may view records at any time mutually convenient to the college archivist and the individual requesting access. Making an appointment is recommended.
2. Professional and academic researchers including Union College students and faculty researchers from departments other than the office of origination must obtain permission from the office of origination in order to access records. It is advisable that they first consult with the college archivist to determine whether adequate information is available in the Heritage Room or open archival collections.

3. Genealogists seeking biographical information should consult with the college archivist in order to verify the existence of the information sought. Information about Union College students, faculty, and staff published in directories, periodicals, bulletins, and yearbooks is readily available in the Heritage Room collection. For further information, genealogists may choose to contact Academic Records and/or the Alumni Office. In the rare instance that the information sought is determined to be in closed records, genealogists will need to obtain permission for access from the office of origination by using the *Retrieval Request Form*.

4. Open archives are any documents in the Archive which have not been restricted by this policy or the office of origination. However, Union College reserves the right to review documents requested by researchers and may choose to restrict access if its use could prove harmful to the College or any individuals involved.

5. Restricted documents include, but may not be limited to,

- a. Serious ethical mistakes of individuals such as mismanagement of funds, dishonesty, marital infidelity, indecency, and so on.
- b. Other problems or comments which would bring serious embarrassment to Union College or the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- c. Political comments regarding national or international circumstances that criticize governments or suggest disloyalty which could affect the mission activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a country or region.

6. Researchers assume responsibility for the ethical and legal use of copyrighted documents they use from the Archives.

7. Researchers are responsible for conforming with privacy law. Union College does not necessarily agree with researchers' views and opinions and will not be responsible for any charges of libel.

VII. Approval and Policy Review

President's Council approved October 8, 2009.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Union College Archives Committee. Minor changes may be made by the committee. Substantive changes should be recommended to President's Council.