



# Collection Development Policy: GW University Archives

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Collection Development Librarian: University Archivist (Christie Peterson)

## Purpose of the Collection

The purposes of the George Washington University Archives are:

- to provide historical information and research services that support the mission and ongoing operations of the university
- to support the university's planning, policy development and decision making
- to serve faculty, student, alumni and non-affiliate research interests related to the institution's past
- to support the university's educational mission
- to support exhibits, commemoration, the use of historical materials in university communications, and other examples of public history

## Collecting Scope

The University Archives document the major functions of the university: conferring credentials, conveying knowledge, fostering socialization, conducting research, sustaining the institution, providing public service and promoting culture (Samuels, 1992).

## Subject Coverage

The primary subjects to be documented in the GW University Archives are:

- The goals, activities, decisions and policies of GW governing bodies, administrative divisions and academic units, including major committees, task forces and other working groups
- The acquisition and development of GW campuses and associated infrastructure
- The achievements of GW's academic and research missions

- Campus life, which is broadly defined to include the individual and collective experiences of students, faculty, staff and other affiliates in their interactions with GW and its environs
- The areas defined above for schools incorporated into or acquired by GW, including Mount Vernon Seminary and College, National University, Benjamin Franklin University and the Corcoran College of the Arts and Design

## Materials and Formats

The GW University Archives will focus its collecting on the following types of materials:

- Inactive records identified for permanent retention in the [university record schedule](#)
- Other inactive records identified by the archives as having long-term historical value
- Official university publications, communications and printed materials
- Records and publications of official and unofficial student and other affiliate groups
- Personal papers of faculty, students, administrators and alumni that illuminate an aspect of GW history not otherwise well-documented in the archives' collections
- Theses and dissertations produced as a degree requirement in a GW academic unit

The collecting scope is not limited by format; the GW university archives actively collects materials in all textual, non-textual and digital formats.

When a publication is circulated in both a printed and a digital form, the archives will attempt to collect both versions, especially when significant differences in content or layout exist.

## Language

The collecting scope is not limited by language, although the primary language of the collection is English.

## Dates of coverage

The collecting scope is not limited by date, although the primary dates of the collection are 1821-present.

## Geographical coverage

The collecting scope is not limited by geographical region.

## Record genres

The GW university archives is dedicated to preserving critical historical information, and as such does not absolutely accept or reject records based on their type. However, experience has shown that the following types of records are most likely to contain important historical information that should be preserved in the archives:

- Publications and printed materials such as programs; newsletters and newspapers; leaflets, brochures, and booklets; catalogs and bulletins; posters; press releases and other promotional material
- Reports -- annual, quarterly, working group, committee and similar reports that summarize, draw conclusions or make recommendations
- Architectural plans
- Meeting agendas, minutes and associated material from ad hoc, standing, departmental, and task force committees, as well as from governance bodies such as the Faculty Senate
- Correspondence of a substantive nature, e.g., emails, letters and memos discussing or communicating information to a limited number of individuals

Similarly, there are genres of records that are not likely to warrant permanent retention in the archives. These include:

- Working files and drafts for publications or reports when final versions are available
- Accounting and financial records for routine transactions
- Data entry forms and worksheets
- Correspondence of a routine nature, e.g., form letters and standard cover memos
- Files that contain only copies of forms that are permanently maintained by another office, e.g., departmental student files that contain only copies of forms permanently maintained by the registrar

## Exclusions

- The GW university archives will not accept university records of short-term or transitory value, specifically records that are both [scheduled for destruction](#) and that have not been identified by the archives as having long-term historical value.
- The GW university archives generally does not collect student, faculty and alumni papers that are unrelated to the individual's experiences at or interactions with the university and its associated communities. The archives will work with individuals in possession of such papers to find a more appropriate repository for their deposit.
- The GW university archives will generally not collect student, faculty and alumni papers with significant permanent restrictions on access or use of the bulk of the materials.
- Artifacts are collected only very selectively; the vast majority of mass-produced GW branded products are not comprehensively collected.
- A maximum of 2-3 copies of each publication or printed item will be acquired or retained.

## Access and Use

It is the goal of the GW University Archives to provide open and equitable access to as much of the collection as possible while protecting confidential, restricted and regulated information that may be present in it. The University Archives complies with GW's [information security policy](#) and all applicable laws, including [FERPA](#) and [HIPAA](#).

For information that is confidential or restricted but not regulated, the archives will negotiate appropriate, finite periods of restriction with the originating offices.

Use of university archives materials must comply with GW policies and procedures related to commercial use of the university's federally trademarked names and identifying marks, which is managed by the [licensing and trademark program](#).