

SUNY Cortland
Archives and Special Collections
Collection Policy

1. Scope of Policy

This policy provides guidelines to help maintain the SUNY Cortland Archives & Special Collections. Additionally, it serves as a guide for outside researchers (users), Cortland affiliates (students/faculty/offices etc.), and internal library staff.

2. Reasons for this Policy

Collecting, preserving, and making materials available are three main practices conducted by archival institutions. The policy outlines specific elements within those broader terms such as, acquisitions (the process of acquiring new materials), deselection (the process of discontinuing existing materials), preservation (the process of physical and digital care to ensure the items/collection longevity within their life cycle), loans (process of accepting or loaning materials), and access (creating modes of availability and usage either physically or digitally for the institutions stakeholders and broader community). These policies adhere to the archives & special collections mission.

Furthermore, this policy seeks to distinguish two main collecting areas. The College Archives preserves records on the institutional history of SUNY Cortland, which is different from the collecting procedures and materials for special collections. These are two different collections that require specific guidelines. However, information on acquisitions, preservation standards, and access are equally applied to both collections.

3. Policy Statement

This policy addresses key concerns within archives and special collections and adheres to the general guidelines provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the Society of American Archivists (SAA), as well as Information Resources (IR) at SUNY Cortland. The intention is to clearly outline specific guidance on maintaining collecting practices within the archives & special collections.

4. Acquisitions

Materials must fit within criteria lists below for both the College Archives, and the Special Collections. The archives & special collections cannot guarantee or promise precise processing schedules and or digitization of records accepted. Materials may be appraised before and after acceptance to determine the capability of preservation based on scope, preservation, staff, or access. Accepted materials are the property of SUNY Cortland who reserves the right to retain and or dispose of materials as they see fit based preservation, access, provenance, scope, and nationally recognized standards.

a) Donations

The archives & special collections welcome potential donations. Materials must adhere to the suggested criteria. All donations will be considered by the Archivist & Instructional Services

Librarian and or Library Director's Office. Archives reserves the right to refuse potential donations.

b) Purchases

Archives & Special Collections do not purchase materials.

c) Transfers

Internal

Materials may be transferred from Memorial Library's general collection to the archives or special collections. However, these materials will go through an appraisal process first to determine their archival value. Materials must fit within the scope of the collections, meet the selection criteria, and will be coordinated through the Archivist & Instructional Services Librarian who will make the final determination on being admitted or denied. Internal transfers will not be automatically admitted into any archival collection without going through the process mentioned above.

External

Transferred materials from departments, offices, or schools, etc. within SUNY Cortland are welcomed as long as they meet the scope of records, selection criteria, and are consulted with the Archivist & Instructional Services Librarian and or the Library Director's Office. The same principles outlined above may apply.

d) Tax deductions

You or your organization should speak with its tax accountant or attorney about the possibility of a tax deduction for the donation of material to an archival repository. Archivists cannot give tax advice, nor are they permitted to appraise the monetary value of a collection being considered for their own repository. If requested, an acknowledgement letter is sent to the donor.

e) College Archives

Mission

The mission of SUNY Cortland College Archives is to support the College community by collecting, preserving, organizing, and providing research and educational opportunities regarding the materials documenting the history of SUNY Cortland.

History

The SUNY Cortland College Archives was formed in 1965, though has collected materials dating back to the institutions founding in 1868. The College Archives serves as the repository for SUNY Cortland and its predecessors. It includes one fulltime Archivist & Instructional Services Librarian and is overseen by the Director of Libraries. In the fall of 2017, the College Archives Steering Committee was formed to assist the library in its strategic efforts.

Scope of Records

The SUNY Cortland College Archives is committed to preserving the official records of the Cortland campus since its founding as a Normal School. The materials mostly consist of original print-based records from students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. These materials provide rare or unique insight into the history of SUNY Cortland.

In many cases, these detail the normal course of day-to-day operations and expand upon the evolutionary process of the campus. These records may be considered to have *evidentiary value* and or *associational value*. These may include minutes, correspondence, official programs, reports, and more (for more details see below). These types of records were created by the College, for the College.

The College Archives additionally strives to preserve informal records that provide a broader context to the college community. Some of these informal records may include personal collections of alumni, scrapbooks, oral histories, ephemera items, personal reflections, or other materials compiled over a period of time. College Archives seeks to continuously preserve these materials and make them available either online or in physical format.

Selection Criteria

Materials generally accepted

- Official publications/records of SUNY Cortland or its predecessors
 - Publicity
 - Programs
 - Reports
 - Directories
 - Handbooks
 - Etc.
- Administrative or departmental records
 - Reports
 - Policies
 - Etc.
- Personal Stories/narratives
 - Scrapbooks
 - Diaries
 - Journals
 - Oral Histories
- Correspondences/Memorandums
 - Handwritten letters
 - Official department memos
- Collections of (notable)alumni
- Committee, clubs, or campus governing information
 - Minutes
 - Membership
 - Reports
 - Agendas
 - Resolutions
 - Etc.
- Photographs relating to the institution
 - Faculty/staff/administrators/committees
 - Students/alumni
 - Buildings/structures
 - Campus life/special events
 - Athletics/student-groups/clubs

- Other records or scenarios are assessed on a case-by-case basis

Materials generally not accepted

- Curriculum Information
 - Notes
 - Lesson plans
 - Class rosters
 - Course Teacher Evaluations
- Personal identification, private, or confidential materials
 - Privacy information on students/faculty/staff
 - Information with Social Security Numbers
 - Bank Records or financial information
 - Student transcripts
 - Etc.
- Materials bound by SUNY's retention policy for departments/offices/administration required to currently retain for day-to-day routine operations•
- Duplicates or photocopies of originals (when the original is available or has intrinsic value)
- Printed mass emails from day-today operations
- Damaged or dangerous materials
 - Materials consisting of mold or infestation
 - Materials beyond preservation
- Materials deemed insufficient for archival support
 - This may be materials that require additional time, space, or resources to care for.
Ex: An object that is too large to fit inside the College Archives, like a sculpture.
 - Multi-media materials that are inaccessible
 - Materials with unreasonable restrictions
 - Materials of questionable provenance or copyright
 - Partial collections of unknown origin or purpose
- Materials better served elsewhere or are on loan
- Clothing
 - Cap/gowns
 - Letterman jackets
- Partial collections of unknown origin
- Faculty publications
 - Books or journal entries (mass produced materials that are not rare)
 - Drafts of publications
 - Unrelated personal research
- Other records or scenarios are assessed on a case-by-case basis

f) Special Collections

Mission

The purpose of Special Collections at SUNY Cortland is to support the College and local community by collecting, preserving, and providing access to a diverse set of original materials. These meaningful and whole collections should include unique, or intrinsic value that may foster creative, educational, or scholarly inquiry.

History

The Delta Collection once served as the name for Cortland's special collections. The Delta Collection was created in the 1960's. It appears the initial scope for the Delta collection was very broad including some titles that were rare, deteriorating, provocative, of personal interest, or expensive. Overtime Delta accumulated unrelated non-historical materials. The library received many of these materials through donations or internal transfers.

It is believed that the title of "Delta" was chosen due to the distinctive Greek symbol stamped on the book tags. During the days of card catalogs, the Greek triangle was stamped on the cards before the call number insinuating the location of the item, thus Delta was born.

In 2021, the Delta Collection name was retired and is now referred to as special collections. These collections still contain various rare and unique items. However, Delta was considered one large collection involving multiple research areas and subjects. Today, special collections are organized by clear collection subjects as mentioned in the scope. This collection development policy serves to help organize Cortland's special collections in a unified manner moving forward.

Scope of Collections

Special Collections of SUNY Cortland is committed to fostering whole and original collections that may have an impact on the College or local community or may promote educational or scholarly opportunities. Collections are not exclusive to rare print-based books only, though these formats currently shape the majority of the existing collection. One example is the Eta Sigma Gamma collection which documents the history of the national organization (including minutes, reports, and publicity). These are not just books, but unique materials shaping the history of that society. Materials should be original editions or formats that have unique, rare, intrinsic, or associational value relating to the scope of the individual collection.

Some Existing Historical Collections

- Eta Sigma Gamma Collection
- Thesis/Dissertations
- Rare book collections
 - Children's Literature Collection
 - Elbert Hubbard Collection
 - New York State History Collection

Selection Criteria

Materials Generally Accepted

- Must contain intrinsic, rare, or unique value
- Has educational/scholarly value
- Materials that directly relate and support an existing collection

Materials Generally not accepted

- Materials are in poor or hazardous conditions
- Partial or inconsistent materials that do not relate to existing collections
- Faculty publications or mass market materials
- Freely available online

- Materials better served elsewhere or are on loan
- Materials with restrictions
- Materials owned by other organizations/persons
- Materials of questionable provenance
- Unidentifiable or outdated media formats

5. Deselection and Reappraisal

Archives & Special Collections do not routinely withdrawal materials. However, on occasion, it may be necessary to reappraise materials and collections. Considerations for materials to be withdrawn may include:

- Value: does the item, materials, or collection have intrinsic, evidentiary, informational, associational value, and what purpose does it serve?
- Scope: does the item/materials fit within the scope of the collection(s)?
- Format: Is the format obsolete?
- Availability: Does the item or materials already exist online and are widely available?
- Usage: How often does the item/materials requested or accessed?
- Condition: Is the physical condition of item or materials hazardous to other collections?

6. Preservation

Materials acquired by archives & special collections receive care abiding by archival standards and practices. Materials are preserved, arranged, and described to the level justified to the collection. This includes rehousing and securing materials into archival boxes, folders, sleeves etc. None of the materials circulate and are securely stored within the appropriate location. Records are kept on the location of materials, donations and donors, inventory lists, and collection level bibliographies (such as finding aids) are created. Digitization efforts help stabilize the informational value of materials. Preservation and usage are factors when creating digitization priority lists. The archives do not act as a digitization service for records outside of its holdings.

Researchers accessing the physical collection abide by preservation standards to ensure the longevity and security of the materials. This may involve having clean hands, wearing gloves, using pencils, no food or drink, and placement for bags, signing-in, or maintaining a reference record etc. For items in critical condition, the archivist may assist the user when accessing or refer to another format if one already exists.

7. Access

Archives & special collections aim to provide various modes of access and discoverability to the collections.

a) Contact

Researchers may contact the archives through various methods such as email, online form, or calling the Archivist & Instructional Services Librarian. When conducting research, a reference interview will take place where the archivist will help support any research needs by answering questions and equally conducting preliminary research as well.

Library.Archives@cortland.edu

b) Physical Location

The archives and special collections are located on the third floor of Memorial Library. Visits are scheduled through appointment only. There is a reading room available. Visits may be conducted by individuals or groups. Researchers will access the materials within the reading room itself. They should not attempt to reshelv or pull any materials. Materials do not circulate.

c) Classroom Engagement

The archives collaborate with various classes/faculty on campus for students to learn more about institutional history, preservation, or special research projects. Classes may be supported physically within the archives and remotely through an online platform. The archives support interns working on various projects.

e) Digitization

Online access and digitization is a priority in order to make materials more discoverable to meet distant researchers, alumni, as well as our campus community. Digital Commons have been the main platform making records available. Aside from digitizing materials, it is important to ensure their discoverability. Archival finding aids help provide researchers with information on the collections. Furthermore, the digital collection is integrated with ONESearch to improve access and reference services to the general campus community.

f) Duplication of Materials

The reading room is equipped with scanners that may be accessed by users to scan various material types. The scanners are available for staff, researchers, and classes. Outside materials are not scanned as a service to the community. Digital duplication is available, while physical copies are not. Personal photographs taken on behalf of the researcher are not encouraged. Duplication should be for research and educational value. If materials researched are intended for formal publications, the archives & special collections should be made aware. The responsibility of proper citation and credit falls upon the duty of the researcher.

8. Loans

Materials within the archives & special collections do not circulate. This applies to interlibrary loan or through use of exhibits.

9. Definitions

Appraisal and Reappraisal

- In an archival context, appraisal is the process of determining whether records and other materials have permanent (archival) value.
- Reappraisal is the process of identifying materials that no longer merit inclusion in an archive and that are candidates for deaccessioning.

Associational Value

- The usefulness or significance of materials based on its relationship to an individual, family, organization, place, or event.

Delta

- "Delta" is referenced as the original term used to describe special collections. Many of the original tags included a stamped triangle (Delta within the Greek alphabet). This term is no longer used as the primary term but may be referenced historically.

Digital Commons @ Cortland

- Digital Commons@Cortland is an institutional repository with the intent to publicize and make available various collections created by SUNY Cortland faculty, staff, and students. This initiative was established by Memorial Library. The College archives have made their online collections available through this platform.

Evidentiary Value

- The usefulness of records that provides information about the origins, functions, and activities of their creators.

Informational Value

- The usefulness or significance of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value.

Intrinsic Value

- The usefulness or significance of a record derived from its physical or associational qualities, inherent in its original form and generally independent of its content, that are integral to its material nature and would be lost in reproduction.

ONESearch

- ONESearch (using Primo VE) is the library's discovery service that has been adopted SUNY-wide.

Selection and Deselection

- Selection is the process of identifying which records to retain.
- Deselection (deaccession or withdrawal) is the process of removing archival materials from intellectual and physical custody. This occurs after reappraisal.

10. Contact for Clarification of this Policy

For specific information or clarification, please contact the Director of Libraries or the College Archives directly.

- jennifer.kronenbitter@cortland.edu
- Library.Archives@cortland.edu