

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 11 & 13, 2026
Online Meeting**

**Standards Committee: Approval of Proposal to Revise the
College and University Archives Guidelines by the College and
University Archives Section**

(Prepared by: Jen Gathings, College and University Archives Section Steering Committee member and Standard Committee member)

Executive Summary

SAA's College and University Archives Section have responsibility for maintenance of the *College and University Archives Guidelines*, which provide guidance for college and university archives regarding the administrative relationships, records management, core archival functions, facilities and equipment, and supporting services involved. The *Guidelines* are used by individuals of all backgrounds who are responsible for serving as the custodian of college and university archives collections.

The primary aim of the *Guidelines* is to be used as an advocacy document when creating or updating archival programs. The *Guidelines* provide a framework for understanding the fluid intersections of records management and archives within colleges and universities and defines responsible stewardship of college and university archives collections, especially for institutions that have limited resources.

The College and University Archives Section revision proposal was approved by the Standards Committee on April 9, 2026.

Contextual Information

This standard was last revised in 2023 with major updates including: current college and university archives practice, considerations for electronic records, ethics, and copyright. In 2026, following the recently established three-year revision cycle, the College and University Archives Section submitted a proposal to revise these *Guidelines* to keep them up to date.

The College and University Archives Section would like revise the following elements of the *Guidelines*:

- Add language for a broader application of these guidelines to cover special collections with holdings of organizational, institutional, and/or corporate/business records.
- Ensure existing SAA standards are referenced and linked, and broken links fixed.
- Clarify information about accessioning practices, separate from processing practices.
- Clarify “Acquiring Archives” section regarding physical versus born-digital acquisitions and related practices, as well as addressing archives with limited resources for managing records management programs and born-digital formats.

The College and University Archives Section does not anticipate that the format and scope of the *Guidelines* will change with this revision. The purpose of the revision is primarily to help clarify use and application of the *Guidelines*, ensuring that the *Guidelines* remain relevant to current archival workers.

The College and University Archives Section is committed to consulting with the following groups in the process of revision:

- SAA Accessibility and Disability Section
- SAA Archives Management Section
- SAA Accessioning, Acquisitions, & Appraisal Section
- SAA Archivists and Archives of Color Section
- SAA College and University Archives Section
- SAA Collection Management Section
- SAA Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section
- SAA Electronic Records Section
- SAA Native American Archives Section
- SAA Preservation Section
- SAA Records Management Section
- SAA Privacy and Confidentiality Section
- SAA Reference, Access and Outreach Section
- SAA Students and New Archives Professionals Section
- SAA Diversity Committee
- All SAA members via the SAA Announcements listserv
- International Council on Archives (ICA) Section on University and Research Institution Archives (SUV)

The proposed timetable for this revision is as follows:

- June 2026 - July 2026: Share call for feedback on existing standard by soliciting feedback from organizations/individuals on existing standard. Promote during the Section’s Annual Meeting.

- August 2026 - September 2026: Analyze and incorporate feedback into the final draft of the standard. Create a schedule for soliciting a second round of feedback.
- October 2026 - November 2026: Solicit general and specific feedback on the final draft.
- December 2026: Analyze feedback and update final draft where necessary. Submit Proposal to Standards Committee.
- January 2027: Submit Proposal to Council. Announce adoption at 2027 Annual Meeting.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

SAA Council's approval of the *College and University Archives Guidelines* is consistent with Strategic Priorities 2.2 and 3.1:

- 2.2 Provide content, via education and publications, that reflects the latest thinking and best practices in the field.
- 3.1. Identify the need for new standards, guidelines, and best practices and lead or participate in their development.

Fiscal Impact

None

Potential Benefits

Revision of the *College and University Archives Guidelines* will update the standard and ensure that the content of the standard is not outdated or incorrect. This will allow the College and University Archives Section to continue stewarding the *Guidelines* for use by archival workers in line with recent directions in archival practice and theory.

Potential Drawbacks

None

Recommendation

That the SAA Council approves the proposal from the College and University Archives Section to revise the *College and University Archives Guidelines*.