

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
July 26, 2023
Hybrid Meeting – Washington, DC**

**Standards Committee: Recommendation to Approve the Revised
College and University Archives
(Prepared by: Kira Dietz, Co-chair)**

BACKGROUND

The College and University Archives Section has recently completed a revision of the 1999 Guidelines for College and University Archives, following a request to begin the project in 2020. The approval of that request led to the creation of a working group under the section to revise the document. The Standards Committee has received and reviewed the revised guidelines, as well as the submission packet. The committee agreed that the submission packet and information shared met the requirements and we were happy to see the document revised after such a long time.

Relevant links:

- Submission to Standards Committee [[Standards folder](#)] (this includes the complete pdf as well as the pdf separated into intro/revised guidelines/supporting documentation by Standards for ease of review)
- Existing version of Guidelines for College and University Archives [[website](#)]

DISCUSSION

The introduction to the revised Guidelines for College and University Archives provides concise overview of the additions and general updates: “The purpose of the revision of this standard is to update all topics to reflect current college and university archives practices that have evolved over the past twenty plus years since the creation of the original standard. Of special importance is the inclusion of guidance related to legislation such as Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), general ethical and copyright considerations, and new developments in electronic records. Also included is expanded guidance on the intersection of records management and university archives. No sections were removed.”

The Standards Committee was happy to see the revision of this document after working with the section in 2020 to tweak their original plan (which included a one-year plan to revise the document). We acknowledge the value of having up-to-date guidance for college and university archives, which can often have unique responsibilities. The revision was also designed with advocacy in mind and can be used as a resource for college and university archivists looking to form and maintain relationships with related administrative units and entities.

We also appreciate that an effort was made to make the document less prescriptive (acknowledging that archives will have different strengths, weaknesses, and methods of operation) and that the bibliography was significantly expanded.

In the introduction to the revision, the revisors stated that “We recommend that the section reform the Standards Subcommittee every three years, for a period of one year to manage small revisions and updates as ongoing maintenance. This standard was left in place too long without update and was extremely labor intensive to revise.” The Standards Committee agrees that too much time passed between revisions at this time but would recommend that the College and University Archives Section consider revising on a 5-year cycle, like most standards, not on a continuous review cycle. Since the revision process can take two or more years to complete, it may be a burden on the section to form a new review committee in the year immediately following a revision.

Overall, the Standards Committee feels that the working group met the requirements for the revision, solicited appropriate feedback, and sufficiently documented their process in the submission packet. While the Standards Committee is now having larger discussions about how to include diversity concerns and recommendations into revised standards, the working group had begun their revision before those discussions began. We hope that a future revision might also address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as they relate to college and university archives, either directly or through additions to Appendix 2.

The Standards Committee recommends the revised Guidelines for College and University Archives be approved by SAA Council.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SAA Council endorses the revised College and University Archives in its entirety to supersede the guidelines last approved in 1999.

Support Statement:

Endorsement of the revised College and University Guidelines will allow the new guidelines to be posted on the Standards Portal, shared via social media, and be freely accessible to professionals who need them, while providing much needed, updated information to college and university archivists and other staff.

Impact on Strategic Priorities:

Endorsement of the revised College and University Archives Guidelines supports Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth and Goal 4: Meeting Members’ Needs, by providing updated information for an outdated standard. In particular, the revision provides updated information on new topics (since the 1999 edition) related to legislation such as Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), general ethical and copyright considerations, and new developments in electronic records. Also included is expanded guidance on the intersection of records management and university archives.

Fiscal Impact:

No known fiscal impact.