

Records Management

Handbook for Faculty, Staff and Administration

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What is a Records Management Program?

College records are preserved because they are necessary in providing a desirable continuity in the ongoing operations of the College and also because they are indispensable sources for understanding the history and character of the College. An effective records management program ensures that college records of enduring legal, fiscal, administrative and historical value will be preserved and made accessible to the public, and all unnecessary records will be systematically destroyed by following an established schedule.

<u>Administrative/ Operational Value</u> -	These are records which support the mission of your office or department. They retain administrative value as long as they assist your unit in performing its duties. Departmental policies and procedures, memos describing actions or decisions, and reports containing information on the current status of a project illustrate this type of record.
<u>Fiscal Value</u> -	Records of fiscal value are those that provide financial information useful to the office or department's operation such as budgets, payroll and revenue/expense. Records that help departments maintain an accurate financial picture over an extended period of time should be retained for management purposes.
<u>Legal Value</u> -	Records have legal value if they contain evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations of the College and its faculty, staff and students, or serve to fulfill legal requirements.

Historical/
Research Value -

Records of historical value help in current decision making and in future planning by describing Gettysburg College's past and how it has influenced prior decision making.

Some questions that may help determine the historical/research value of a record include:

What are the Benefits of Having a Records Program?

1. Identifies and preserves vital records. Vital records contain information necessary to establish or continue the operation of the college in the event of a disaster.
2. Identifies records series that have historic or permanent value and makes provisions for transferring these records to the College Archives at the end of their in-office life.
3. Identifies for destruction records that are no longer useful to the office/department/division or the College.
4. Helps insure efficient use of storage space within the office/department/division.

What are the Liabilities of Not Having a Records Program?

1. Litigation. All records created by the college are potential documentation in lawsuits.
2. Excessive storage costs from keeping records beyond their useful lifespan.
3. Inability to retrieve important documents when needed.

What is a Records Retention & Disposition Schedule?

A Records Retention and Disposition Schedule is the primary tool to help gain intellectual control over an office's, department's or division's records. This schedule identifies all records series created and maintained in an office/department/division, and indicates how long files are to be retained, if and when they are to be transferred to the College Archives, or destroyed by the creating unit. However, the current schedule was created in 1989 and is slightly antiquated, so will need updating. Gettysburg College's Special Collections staff can help your office or department appraise your records and create an appropriate retention, transfer and disposition schedule. By following the Schedule, you can significantly increase the efficiency of your operation, while still maintaining control of and access to your records.

The following is a *non*-inclusive list of materials that have archival significance in documenting the administrative, legal, fiscal and historical activities of Gettysburg College. In addition to taking these guidelines into consideration, the creating unit must also consider whether a record is "active" or "inactive." **Active Records** are records needed to carry on the daily activities of an

office or department and which are referred to at least once a year. **Inactive Records** are records necessary to protect the integrity of an organization, but usually referred to less than once a year.

1. Annual reports
2. Minutes of departments or committee meetings
3. Policy statements and related documents
4. Materials documenting name changes, organizational or structural changes of the office or department
5. Major planning documents
6. Histories of the department or activity
7. Curriculum related material such as syllabi, records of innovative programs, or Major changes in programs
8. Major reports produced by the department or committee
9. Departmental publications
10. Final grant reports
11. Letters of praise
12. Procedures (until superseded)
13. Inventories (of books or equipment, until superseded)
14. Unique photographs or memorabilia
15. Some administrative correspondence

The following materials **are not** to be sent to the College Archives. They have no value after they have served their initial purpose. They should not end up in your administrative files.

1. Supplies
2. Large quantities of duplicate materials
3. Reproduction materials such as stencils
4. Routing slips or telephone message slips
5. Catalogues, journals, and other printed materials from non-college agencies which have no administrative use and are for information purposes only
6. Routine letters of transmittal and "For your information" notes
7. Notices or memoranda that give only timely information such as a change in the time and date of a meeting
8. Procedures, once updated
9. Notes or working papers, once a document or project is completed, unless they include a more complete form of the information
10. Scraps

How do I prepare my office/department records for transfer to Special Collections?

1. Remove all paperclips, ring binders, rubber bands, etc.
2. Replace hanging file folders with regular file folders.
3. Label and date all files. Even approximate dates (ex. "c.1980-1985") are more helpful than no dates.
4. Pack records in the order in which they were kept by your office.

5. Identify each box with office/department name, contact person and box sequence (1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.)
6. Prepare a list of the folder titles for each box and place copy in each box.
7. Place the completed container list in box 1.
8. Complete **Records Transfer Form**