

# Records Management at Illinois Wesleyan University

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## Introduction to Records Management

This policy is designed to help you make records management a part of your office routine. Every record, whether print or electronic, has a life cycle, and by understanding the final disposition of your records, you can manage what should and should not remain in your office more easily. The University Archivist is available for consultation on records inventories and the organization of files and schedules.

If you have any questions or comments about the information in this policy, please feel free to call the University Archives at x1538 or [archives@titan.iwu.edu](mailto:archives@titan.iwu.edu).

### Easy Rules for Good Records Management

#### **1. Follow the Records Retention Schedule (below) and destroy appropriate routine materials.**

Certain classes of records can and should be destroyed routinely three years after their creation. These include (but are not limited to) copies of requisitions, receipts, and travel expense reports; most printed material received from outside the University; and duplicates of memos and reports generated by your office. These types of records can safely be destroyed without consulting the Archivist about possible historical value. Please see the procedures below for information on confidential destruction.

#### **2. Identify materials that become inactive.**

Most other paper records in an office--reports, correspondence, minutes, background material--become inactive after 5 to 7 years. Inactive merely means that the material is rarely referred to and hence could conveniently be moved out of your office. This is most easily done if you break your files at regularly scheduled intervals (e.g. annually or every five years). By doing so, not only do folders not become overcrowded, but it is extremely easy to purge inactive material on a regular basis.

#### **3. Transfer appropriate materials to the Archives.**

Once you have consulted the Retention Schedule and identified materials that should be destroyed and materials that should be kept but should no longer be stored in your office, you're ready to call the Archives. If you are still uncertain, please call the Archives and we will survey the files to determine which files warrant permanent preservation. Electronic records will be transferred to the Digital Commons, IWU's institutional repository for digital material. Contact the Archives for details. Prior to transfer, prepare paper material as follows:

- A. Pitch out the clutter that is more than 3 years old: requisitions, receipts, travel vouchers, expense reports, peripheral printed material from outside the University and any duplicates of memos and reports generated by your office.
  - B. Put the contents into chronological order and break the folders at a predetermined date.
  - C. Label the old folders with inclusive dates before boxing them.
  - D. Fill the boxes. Please fill the boxes in the same order that the folders exist in the file cabinets.
  - E. Number the boxes (1 of 3; 2 of 3; 3 of 3).
  - F. Prepare a typed list of folder titles (including beginning and ending dates) contained in each box; email the list to the archives as an attachment.
  - G. Finally, put in a work order with Physical Plant to get the boxes moved to Tate Archives & Special Collections, 4th floor, in the Ames Library.
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## **Illinois Wesleyan University Records Policy**

1. For the purpose of this policy, Archives shall be understood to mean Tate Archives & Special Collections. The Archives is responsible for collecting, preserving and making available records pertaining to the history and progress of Illinois Wesleyan University.
2. For the purpose of this policy, records shall be defined as all material on which information is recorded or preserved, regardless of format, which is created or maintained by any agency, officer, or employee of Illinois Wesleyan University in the transaction of its business. This definition refers to all forms of recorded information or other material bearing upon the activities and functions of Illinois Wesleyan University, any of its officers, and employees. This definition also includes but is not limited to handwritten, typed, or printed material; publications; photographs; moving images; sound recordings; drawings; and computer or other machine readable data. Not included in the definition of records as used in this policy are: faculty research or lecture notes; library materials; and materials not published by the institution.
3. Records produced or received by any office or employee of Illinois Wesleyan University in the transaction of University business are the property of the institution and subject to institutional policy for retention, disposal, access, and publication, including records produced or received by individuals in administrative and committee service capacities. Records retention schedules serve as the formal institutional policy for disposition of all types of records.
4. No University records shall be discarded, destroyed or transferred from the custody of the home institution or otherwise disposed of except upon the prior approval of the Archivist. The decision to select and preserve records of historical value is the

responsibility of the Archivist. The Archivist shall withhold the approval for the destruction of records until satisfied that the records involved need not be retained for legal or accounting reasons, as determined by appropriate officers. Approval either to transfer inactive institutional records to the Archives or to destroy them after an agreed upon period may take the form of written records disposition schedules or other written agreements between the Archivists and the administrative officers, department heads, or committee chairs responsible for the custody of these records during their active life.

5. The University Archives, under the direction of the University Archivist, is the repository for non-current institutional records having enduring and significant historical or research value. Two copies of every publication issued by the University or by any of its agencies should be forwarded to the archives. The Archives also solicits and accepts donations of records of student organizations, significant supporting material that documents the process of campus governing bodies, and other relevant material.

6. Access restrictions (of a defined period of time) to records transferred to the Archives may be negotiated by the department or office of transmittal prior to transferring custody.

7. Offices and departments which transfer records to the Archives may request the return of records to the transmitting office if and when subsequent administrative need reveals their transfer to have been premature.

8. Reference service provided by the Archives may include searching records to locate specific pieces of information, making copies of particular documents, or making records available for consultation in the Archives.

Tate Archives & Special Collections, The Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University  
January 30, 2008

Approved by President's Cabinet May 21, 2008

## **Records Retention Schedule** *[Contents for this section pending campus survey]*

Definitions:

Official copy holder = office with responsibility for following the retention schedule

Other offices = places which may have duplicates of the official copy for convenience in day-to-day operations.

PERMANENT = official copy will not be destroyed; suggest transfer to the Archives after no more than 10 years in the official copy holder's office

Active = retain only as long as frequent reference is made to the document

Current = retain only for the current fiscal or academic year

Record Type	Who is the official copy holder?	How long is the official copy retained by holder?	How long do other offices retain copies?
<i>Contents for this section pending campus survey</i>			

## **Non-record Materials**

The following specific types of materials are designated as non-record materials and may be disposed of by offices as soon as they have served their intended purpose.

1. Extra copies of documents retained only for convenience of reference, such as "information" or "follow up" copies of correspondence; extra copies of materials of which official copies have been retained within the agency for purpose of record. Duplicates need to be weeded annually.
2. Supplies of superseded, outdated, or otherwise valueless publications, forms and printed documents. (Two copies of each publication should be filed with the Archives at the first issue.)
3. Preliminary drafts of letters, memoranda, reports, worksheets and internal notes which do not represent significant basic steps in the preparation of record documents.
4. Letters of transmittal which do not add any information to the transmitted material and other types of routine correspondence that do not show any significant activity of the administrative unit or department.
5. Shorthand notes, rough notes, and mechanical recordings that have been transcribed into typewritten or printed form.
6. Miscellaneous notices or memoranda which do not relate to the functional responsibility of the office; i.e., notices of community affairs, employee meetings, holidays, etc.

## **Policy for Access to and Use of Records in this Retention Policy**

### *Overview*

The University Archives are operated year round. Public research hours are posted on the website and in the library. Other times are available by appointment.

### *General Rules*

1. Patrons using the collections in the archives must observe all instructions [*insert link to form*] for the use of archival material.
2. Access to restricted records will be limited to authorized individuals only.
3. For the protection of its collections, the Archives reserves the right to restrict the use of materials which are not processed, materials of exceptional value, and fragile materials.
4. Failure to observe the rules will result in forfeiture of the privilege of using the Archives.

### *External Access*

Non-Illinois Wesleyan University users will have the same access to materials with the exception of University records that have been closed to the public. Access to these materials may be granted with the written permission of the head of the unit governing the records.

### *Internal Access*

Records that are protected by law are only accessible to the originating department or by special permission of the President. These include all forms of personnel records.

Generally, the records of the University are available to any staff member who needs access in the course of their official duties. Widely distributed documents, such as Faculty Meeting minutes are easily accessible without question. However, in the event a staff person were asking for something that did not fit his or her role in the institution, and it was a document that had confidential content, contact would be made with the originating department.

The only records staff can borrow are the ones their office created. Any department may call for records they created. These records can either be duplicated for their continued use, or the original file can be temporarily borrowed or permanently de-accessioned and returned to the department. However, any department needing access to project files they did not create can only view them in person. Original files will not be lent out for use to non-originating departments.

## **Illinois Wesleyan University Confidential Destruction Policy**

Confidential materials that have reached the end of their use to the University (according to the records retention schedule listed above) shall be transferred to the archives for destruction. If your records need to be destroyed according to the retention schedule:

- Make an inventory including the destruction cycle (i.e. the records are held for 7 years and then destroyed). Please specify the types of records and why they are eligible for destruction.
- Materials may include staples or paper clips, but no binder clips
- Contact the Archives at x1538.
- Contact PHYSICAL PLANT to have the records sent to the archives.

Records will be staged in a secure location at the archives and then sent to Iron Mountain Secure Shredding in Bloomington for confidential destruction at regular intervals.

The decision to destroy or retain University records requires the approval of the University Archivist. The Archivist shall withhold the approval for the destruction of records until satisfied that the records involved need not be retained for legal or accounting reasons, as determined by appropriate officers.

Approval either to transfer inactive institutional records to the Archives or to destroy them after an agreed upon period may take the form of written records disposition schedules or other written agreements between the Archivist and the administrative officers, department heads, or committee chairs responsible for the custody of these records during their active life.