

# Donation Guidelines – University Archives – Student Organization Records

The records of student organizations are valuable sources for historical research. They document the experience of students at Iowa State University and the impact of student interests, decisions, and actions on campus and beyond. Student organization records are essential to the university's historical record and enrich this record with students' unique perspectives. To support academic and institutional research, Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) collects, preserves, and provides access to these records. SCUA especially welcomes the records of student organizations whose mission supports and/or whose membership primarily comprises students of historically underrepresented and marginalized communities.

## Preparing and Donating Student Organization Records

1. Clearly label analog and physical materials, including names, events, and dates. Whenever possible, please place both analog and physical files in labeled folders and physical materials in labeled record cartons (bankers boxes).
2. Create an inventory including Box, Folder, Description/Title, Dates, and Format to assist in the donation and processing of the materials. **Email a copy of the inventory to the Student Life Archivist** and place a printed copy inside each box.
3. Contact Rebecca Wells, Student Life Archivist, by email at [rwells@iastate.edu](mailto:rwells@iastate.edu) or by phone at 515-294-6676 for guidance, any questions, and to arrange the delivery of the materials.

Student organization records should ideally be donated to SCUA every semester or annually to avoid loss of records during officers' transitions and members' graduation. This responsibility is best assigned to an officer in your organization. Inactive records—meaning those not currently in use—can be donated from any year, all the way back to your organization's founding.

Student organization records are the property of the organization that created them and are donated by an organizational representative—typically an officer of the organization—to Iowa State University by a signed Deed of Gift agreement which legally transfers ownership and rights. The Student Life Archivist will work with your organization's representative to determine what rights and restrictions are appropriate for your organization's records.

## What We Collect (in all formats, physical and digital)

- **Governance records:** Constitutions, charters, by-laws, annual reports, articles of incorporation, mission statements, policies, and procedures
- **Organizational histories**
- **Administrative files:** agendas, minutes, member lists, and registers
- **Incoming and outgoing communications**
- **Financial records:** summary statements and reports
- **Publications:** newsletters, journals, websites/socials, and announcements
- **Promotional materials:** flyers, posters, brochures, and event programs
- **Photographic materials:** digital images, prints, negatives, and slides of the group, members/alumni, meetings, spaces, and events/activities
- **Audiovisual materials:** recordings of activities, events, and meetings
- **Scrapbooks and photo albums**

## What We Do Not Collect

- **Active records**
- **Confidential or personally identifiable information:** FERPA, HIPPA, and PII
- **Routine communications:** meeting notices, dues reminders, etc.
- **Detailed financial records:** bank statements, receipts, canceled checks, etc.
- **Blank forms**
- **Multiple copies**

These lists can help you identify physical and digital materials appropriate for donation to SCUA. Please consult with the Student Life Archivist for materials not listed here and for possible exceptions. For further explanation about what SCUA collects and why, please see our Collection Development Policy at <https://specialcollections.lib.iastate.edu/collections-policy>.

## Artifacts/Three-Dimensional Objects

SCUA may be interested in **memorabilia created by or related to your organization**, such as pins, t-shirts, buttons, banners, and commemorative items. However, as an archival repository and not a museum, we do not prioritize the collection of artifacts. Those that we do collect must document an important aspect of the student experience or the university's history. They must also have unique physical characteristics, hold high research value, and/or have the potential for use in exhibitions, other outreach activities, or instruction. Plaques and trophies rarely meet these characteristics.

The Student Life Archivist is a resource for you whether or not you donate your records to SCUA. She can help you develop better recordkeeping practices, including organizing and storing your records to preserve your legacy at Iowa State University.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, PLEASE DO NOT THROW IT OUT! CONTACT THE STUDENT LIFE ARCHIVIST!**