Collection Policy

Collecting Mission
The mission of Xavier University Archives and Special Collections is to document the function of Xavier University of Louisiana throughout its existence by preserving, arranging, describing, and providing appropriate access to the university’s records of permanent historical, legal, or administrative value by acquiring, preserving, and providing access to a wide range of primary research material, including books (Rare Books), manuscripts, archives, audio-visual and other born-digital materials, objects, regalia, and other items in support of the educational and research activities of faculty, students, and all researchers. Additionally,

Our mission to acquire and preserve materials is coupled with a commitment to outreach and access. We will describe, arrange, and digitize our collections for all who seek what they contain and we will acquire and preserve artifacts and information essential to our college and the world at large. Materials are described according to national standards established by the American Library Association and the Society of American Archivists. Xavier Archives and Special Collections creates regular exhibitions both in the Library and online. We are committed to digitizing collection materials and making them freely available. We regularly host group visits for tours and classroom instruction sessions. Whenever possible we seek to collaborate with faculty and students to incorporate Archives and Special Collection materials into the undergraduate curriculum.

Collecting activities will focus on content that can be freely shared. In some cases Xavier Archives and Special Collections may need to restrict access to records, but it is our purpose to provide collections to as wide an audience as possible.

Scope
Xavier Archives and Special Collections serves as a repository for rare, irreplaceable, unique, or otherwise valuable items in various formats which warrant special handling of care to assure their long-term availability and supports research by a wide range of patrons, including undergraduates, faculty, and other scholars and researchers whose work relies on primary materials, including rare books, manuscripts, media, and archival records. Archives and Special Collections primary collecting responsibility is to produce, gather, organize, maintain, disseminate, promote, and preserve digital content of the University’s records that are useful to the curriculum, in need of preservation, and unique to the University and of use to the larger scholarly community. Additionally, given the University’s historic place as the only majority
black and majority Catholic university in the United States, the collection also focuses on documenting blacks, Catholics, and black Catholics, primarily of New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf region. Archives and Special Collections also collects primary materials created by faculty of Xavier University. Additionally, Archives and Special Collections collects materials of authors whose writings relate to blacks or Catholics, primarily of New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf region.

The focus of Xavier University Archives and Special Collections Digital Collections is unique or rare content from collections owned by the Library or the University at large, as well as open access scholarly content created by Xavier University faculty. Unique and rare content may be created through digitization of selected analog materials or through accession of born-digital content. Open access scholarly articles are accepted in support of the faculty of Xavier University, and the digital collections may also include other types of open access scholarly materials (for example, data sets, creative works, etc.) as the need arises. While the department will digitize non-unique images for teaching based on faculty demand, those materials are not in the scope of this document. This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated.

**University Archives**

Materials may be acquired through purchase, transfer, or gift, but selection for placement in the University Archives lies with the Archives and Special Collections staff and the approval of the Head Librarian.

The following types of records are maintained in the Xavier University Archives:

Organization documents (e. g.) charters, constitutions, policy statements, and reports, minutes, substantive memoranda, correspondence, and subject files for the University’s:

- President’s office
- Executive Vice-President’s office
- Academic and administrative offices, units, and committees
- Louisiana Corporation Records of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament

Reports of:

- Self-studies and accreditation visits
- Annual budgets and audits
- Academic and administrative offices and units

Records of:

- Departmental operation, e. g., minutes, reports, syllabi, faculty vitae, correspondence
- Retired, resigned, or deceased personnel employed by Xavier
- Academic, honorary, service, and social organizations of students, faculty, administrators, and staff activity connected with the university.
• Publications, newsletters, posters, and booklets about or distributed by the university, e.g., books, posters, magazines, catalogs, special bulletins, yearbooks, student newspapers, university directories and faculty/staff rosters, alumni magazines, lecture series, and ephemeral materials.

Special formats materials documenting the operation and development of the university, such as:
• Still photographs, digital images, slides, negatives, motion picture film, audio, audiovisual cassettes and multi-media productions
• Maps and plans of the campus and its buildings
• Master’s and Honor’s thesis, dissertations, and portfolios
• Artifacts related to Xavier University

As an institutional archive, records maintained are created by the university and they come to the Archives through departmental transfer rather than by donation from outside sources (see below for donations to Special Collections). Personal research and papers of faculty, students, and alumni which are not related to the official operation of the university are considered to be the private property of the individuals who produced them, and as such, it is at the discretion of the producer of those records, in consultation with Archives staff, whether they are deposited into the Archives and Special Collections, or instead donated to whichever archival repository the creator chooses.

Special Collections
Special Collections acquires or provides access to a variety of print materials, unpublished manuscripts, and archival holdings. Specific selection criteria for acquisitions applicable to Archives and Special Collections include, but are not limited to:
• Quality of material
• Circumstances of creation
• Authoritativeness
• Enduring value: evidential, informational, and intrinsic
• Cost of Retention: processing, storage, preservation, technical support
• Format appropriateness
• Copyright

Acquisition Guidelines
Deed of Gift: Donations must be accompanied by a legal transfer of title, a deed of gift or deposit, or other official acknowledgement. For gifts of archival collections, personal papers, or manuscripts materials, please contact the Archives and Special Collections staff at (504) 520-7655. A Deed of Gift Agreement must be completed and signed by both the donor and a representative of Xavier Archives and Special Collections.

Collection Management
The Archives and Special Collections staff, in consultation with Technical Services support staff and Xavier Library’s System’s Librarian, will conduct ongoing assessments of the content of Archives Special Collections to ensure adequate and appropriate resources to support the mission of the department.
**Preservation**

Materials in Archives and Special Collections receive conservation/preservation treatment at the point of acquisition and are reviewed after each use for preservation concerns that may arise over time and as resources allow.

**Loans and Deposits:**

Due to the high costs of storing, preserving, and making collection available for researchers, materials on loan or deposit are only accepted for extraordinary reasons, and usually with the understanding that the materials are to be donated outright at a later date.

**Closed Collections:**

Collections closed to public access in perpetuity will not be accepted.

**Appraisals:**

Due to legal considerations, no appraisal of donations will be made by the Archives and Special Collections staff. Donors desiring an appraisal will be provided that names of qualified appraisers, and, when appropriate, will work with the donor to obtain an appraisal and to obtain information on the tax benefits of gifts.

**Deaccessioning**

Archives and Special Collections does not typically deaccession collections. However, any materials within the collection, which are deemed to no longer meet the criteria of the collection mission, may be deaccessioned. Should Archives and Special Collections determine the necessity of re-appraising a collection, or portion thereof, the following criteria for current collection guidelines will be used to evaluate materials to be deaccessioned:

- **Collection level:** How vital is the item to research?
- **Intrinsic value:** Is the item a seminal work in its field?
- **Format:** Is the format obsolete?
- **Duplication:** Is demand sufficient for multiple copies of the item?
- **Physical Condition:** Is an item damaged in such a way that prohibits its use? Should it be reformatted?
- **Research value:** Are materials still valuable for research interests?
- **Uniqueness:** Is the item irreplaceable, unique, or otherwise valuable?
- **Usage:** How often has the item/collection been retrieved for use? Can we anticipate future use?

**Archival Cooperation**

In the interest of cooperation among archival repositories, materials offered to Xavier Archives and Special Collections that fall outside the collection purview of the Archives and Special Collections will be referred to an appropriate archival repository.
Digitization
When possible, new collections will be considered for digitization, in whole or in part, for inclusion in the Xavier Digital Archives. To read more, please see the Digital Collection Plan.