

SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE ARCHIVES
ACCESS POLICY
(APPROVED BY SENIOR STAFF SPRING 2009)

The Sarah Lawrence College Archives assembles, preserves, and makes accessible the official records of Sarah Lawrence College. The Archives maintains historically significant non-current official records and publications of the College's administrative offices, academic departments and student groups. College archival records encompass those records stored in the Archives that were generated or received by the various administrative departments or offices of the College during the conduct of their business. The purpose of collecting such records is to provide documentation of the development and growth of the College, particularly of its primary function of teaching, its role in the community at large, the activities of its student body and alumnae/i, and the development of its campus.

The Sarah Lawrence College Archives is committed to providing researchers with the material they need. However, due to the confidential nature of certain records, access to some materials may be limited. Restrictions are placed on the use of records in order to protect the rights to privacy of individuals and the institution.

Access restrictions to records in the Archives are divided into three categories:

General Distribution:

Records in this category are open to researchers without restriction. Records in general distribution are the publications issued to the general public at the time of their creation, such as announcements, official college publications, calendars, brochures, and committee reports. This also includes the College charter, history and description of the College, building and grounds, visiting speakers, endowed chairs and professorships, College events and commencements, degrees, honors, awards and prizes, public relations, conferences, academic programs, and graduate programs. After processing, records of this type are open immediately without restriction.

Examples: Sarah Lawrence College Magazine, The Phoenix, Annual Report of the President, General Committee meeting minutes, photographs.

Files Containing Personal Information:

Records that contain personal and confidential information about an individual or individuals are closed for 75 years from date of creation or until the death of the individual mentioned in the records, whichever is longer. These records may include education records of living current or former students and records of living current or former faculty members, administrators, or other staff members, and donor records. Then, subject to review by the college archivist, the records are open without restriction. During the restricted period, access may be granted if the named individual gives permission in writing. Information that is part of the public record about an individual is available for research.

Examples: Appointment/reappointment letters, course evaluations, resumes, Advisory Committee on Appointments records, Committee on Student Work records.

General College Records:

General College Records are records of the administration of the College, its policies and programs that do not fall into either of the two previous categories. After processing, records of the administration of the College are restricted to use by the office/department of origin for 20 years from the date of creation. Officers of the College or administrators of departments may waive this time period at their discretion.

Examples: Correspondence among administrators on grading policy, annual reports, documentation on strategic planning among faculty and staff, International Programs proposals.

Exceptions to the 20-year restriction policy include:

- *Records of a sitting administration are closed.*
- *Board of Trustee meeting minutes are closed for 50 years from the date of creation.*
- *Board of Trustee biographical and correspondence files are closed for 75 years from the date of creation or until the death of the individual mentioned in the records, whichever is longer. Information that is part of the public record or published about an individual is available for research immediately.*
- *Selected documents in a series may have additional restrictions placed upon them if they constitute an invasion of privacy or expose the College to legal liability.*
- *Records may be restricted by Deed of Gift.*

Additional Conditions:

Records access policies and retention schedules for individual office's records are developed by the College Archivist in conjunction with the office of origin.

All records are reviewed for material that contains sensitive or private information. As a result, individual collections, or portions of them, may have restrictions placed on them that differ from the general restrictions listed above. The standard closure period of 20 years may be reduced or extended with the consent of the President or the office of origin.

A researcher may submit a written request for access to restricted records. This request will be sent for approval to the appropriate office, with the recommendation of the college archivist. In many cases, the archivist has authority to grant access to restricted materials.

Unprocessed records in any category are open only to the records creator.

Permission to examine does not imply the right to publish any part of a document.

The College Archives is subject to College-wide policy for protecting privacy and complies with both the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).