

Harper College Archives Mission Statement and Collection Policy

Revised October 13, 2025

Mission Statement

The mission of the Harper College Archives is to identify, acquire, and maintain materials of enduring value that document the development, growth and operation of Harper College and the diverse college community. The Archives serve as a resource to students, faculty, staff, and members of the community by making available records of historical, official, fiscal, and administrative value regardless of format. Through the promotion and preservation of these primary source materials, the Archives connects people with the knowledge and understanding of the origins, aims, programs, and goals of Harper College.

Collection Development Policy

The Harper College Archives collects materials (paper, visual, electronic, objects) primarily for their historical value used by students, staff, faculty, alumni and the community. Materials accessioned will document the history of the college as a scholarly community, the institution's development over time, and the interactions of students, faculty and staff within the college and community.

In accordance with the [State of Illinois Local Records Act of 1962](#), any records that are mandated to be retained permanently will be transferred to the College Archives for preservation.

Definition of Terms

Archival Records- College records that are no longer active or in use. These records have enduring historical value and should be retained and preserved indefinitely.

Accession- The transfer of physical and legal custody of materials to an archival institution, i.e. the College Archives.

Electronic Records- Electronic records are created and stored in a variety of formats, including, but not limited to email, data, web pages and other "born digital" records. "Born digital" records are College Records created and maintained in a digital format for the entirety of their life span.

Retention Schedule- The time that must elapse before College Records are destroyed or transferred to the College Archives. Records retention schedules are governed by the [State of Illinois Local Records Act of 1962](#).

Records Management- The program in which College Records are created, maintained, and used, during their life span. After a record has not been used for 5 years, it will be evaluated for disposal by either destruction or transfer to the archives.

Records with enduring value document the college's organization, function, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, other activities, or informational value. Materials that fall under the collection scope of the Archives include:

- College administrative records, include but are not limited to: correspondence, memoranda, minutes, financial records, policy documents, curriculum, reports, published materials, photographs, blueprints, and other material generated or received by the administrative and academic offices of the college in the course of business.
- College community materials including student organizations and activities, alumni organizations, organizations of faculty and administration, and other college related groups.
- Records of individual faculty or students as well as records of other organizations and individuals which contribute uniquely to the understanding of the college's history will be considered on a case by case basis for inclusion in the Archives.
- Materials collected, include but are not limited to: student publications, administration publications, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, documents, photographs, manuals, sound recordings, videotapes, films, scrapbooks, oral histories, books, artifacts, ephemera, and born digital records.

The Harper College Archives seeks transfers of records from college departments and donations that fit within the scope of this policy. Records older than 5 years with institutional, official, and historical value will be transferred to the Archives.

To transfer records to the Archives, please complete a [Transfer of Records](#) form and send to the Archivist at archives@harpercollege.edu.

Donations of records to the Archives are welcome as well, provided they fit into the criteria listed above. To donate your collection, please fill out an [Archival Donations Form](#) and the Archivist will contact you to discuss your donation. Acceptable Donors will be asked to fill out a [Deed of Gift](#) agreement that transfers ownership of the records to the Archives and provides information about the materials. Please note that we are unable to provide monetary appraisals for donations.

The Archives reserves the right to determine the usefulness of materials offered to or received for the collection and discard those materials that are deemed non-archival at the time of accession and in the future.

Access

The materials in the Harper College Archives are available to administrators, faculty, students, staff, alumni and members of the community during the regular hours of the archives and by appointment. The Archives is a non-circulating, closed-stack research collection. Archival materials are only available for on-site research in the Archives reading room. The Archivist reserves the right to restrict access to records. Limited archival materials are available digitally and may be accessed online.

Reading Room Policies

No food and drink are allowed in the Reading Room. Please use care in handling all materials; the Archivist will provide specific handling instructions based on the material requested.

Materials are arranged and described to preserve the original order of their creators. Do not rearrange materials in folders or boxes. Only use pencils when taking notes, as ink in pens can damage the materials.

Photocopies or scans or archival material may be requested and will be performed by the Archives staff at no cost. Archives staff reserves the right to limit the number of scans based on physical condition of the material and availability of staff resources. Photography of non-restricted materials in the collection is allowed for research purposes only. Any unauthorized publication, reproduction, or distribution of these materials is not permitted. Harper College does not hold the copyright for all materials within our collections. Access to these collections does not constitute permission to publish those materials. All users assume sole responsibility for receiving permission from the appropriate copyright holder for any materials they wish to publish.

Laptops and personal devices are allowed in the Reading Room. Wireless internet access is available. The Reading Room also has two computers available for research use. Other technology available includes: a microfilm reader, a DVD and VHS player, USB CD-ROM and floppy disc readers, and lightboard for film viewing.

Citing Archival Materials

For any Harper College Archives materials used in publication (print/electronic/digital/website), a credit line must be included that reads: Harper College Archives, Palatine, IL.

Citations for physical collections in the William Rainey Harper College Archives will follow this format:

Description or Title of Item. Date, MM DD, YYYY. Collection Number, Box Number.
Collection Title; William Rainey Harper College Archives. William Rainey Harper College
Library. Palatine, IL

Example:

Photograph of students at pool tables. May 1975. SC011NEG, Box 21. Photo Negatives
Collection; William Rainey Harper College Archives. William Rainey Harper College Library.
Palatine, IL