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# RECORDS CONTROL MANUAL

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University Archives and Historical Collections  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



# **RECORDS CONTROL MANUAL**

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## Introduction

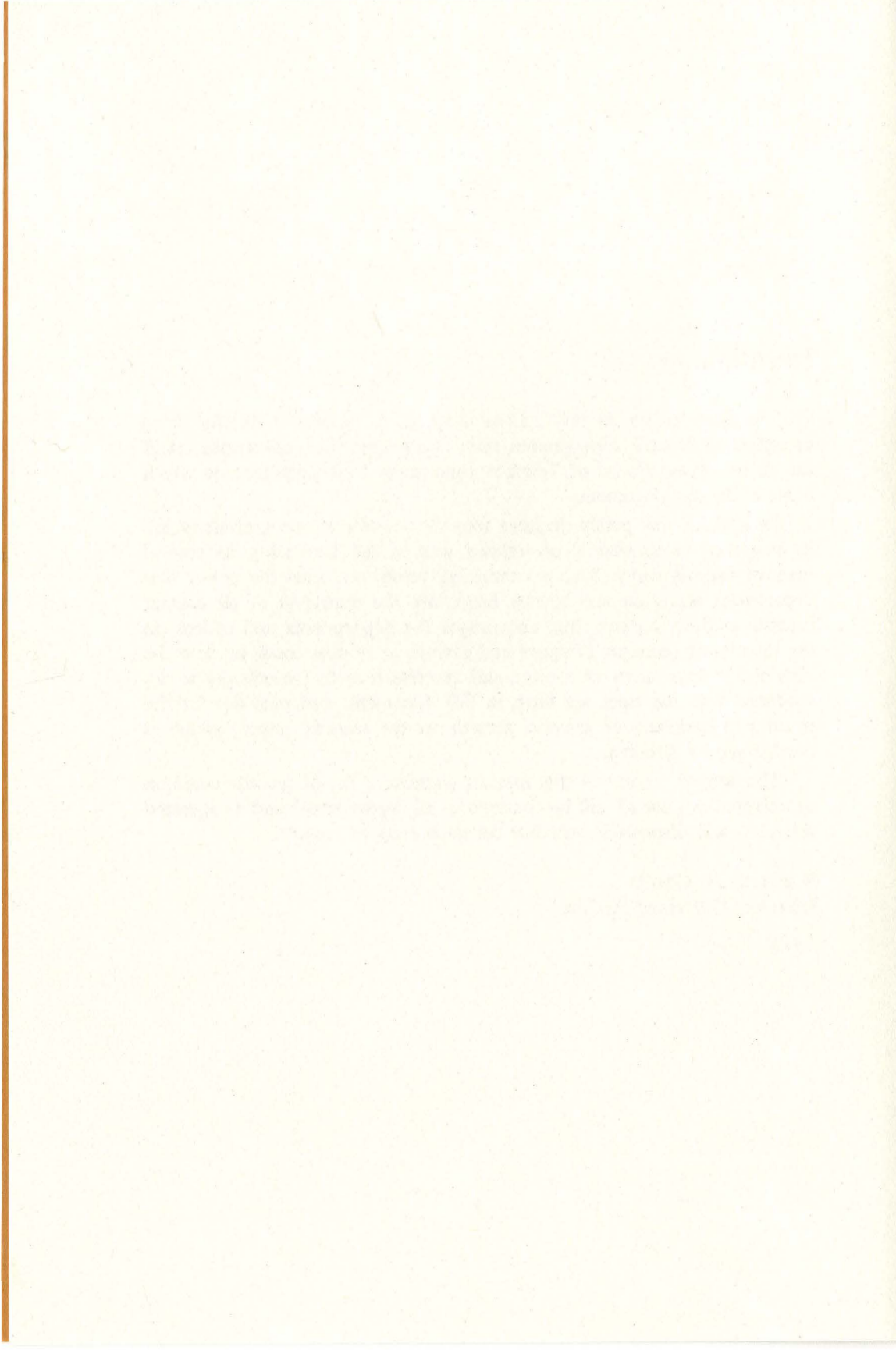
The first section of this manual undertakes to explain briefly those principles of records management which bear upon the implementation of the policy of the Board of Trustees concerning University records which is stated in this document.

In general, this policy declares that the records of the University are its property; establishes a centralized unit in the University to control inactive records which have a continuing value; reaffirms the policy that department chairmen and agency heads are the managers of all current records in their departments; encourages the departments and offices, in the interest of economy of space and savings in storage costs, to clear the files and storage areas of routine and inactive records periodically in accordance with the rules set forth in this document, and provides for the transfer periodically of inactive records to the records center, which is the University Archives.

The second section of this manual contains a list of records common to universities (not all will be common to all departments) and a suggested retention and disposition schedule for each class of records.

WILLIAM H. COMBS  
Director, University Archives

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# I. General Principles of Records Management

## Purpose and Establishment of the Records Program

In accordance with the legal requirements governing the management of public records and recognizing that records management is principally an arm of administration, the Board of Trustees on November 21, 1969, created the University Archives by this resolution:

The records of the official activities of the University officers and offices are the property of Michigan State University.

Such property is not to be destroyed without the approval of (a) the officers in charge of the department where the papers are produced or accumulated, and (b) the Director of Archives.

Restrictions may be placed on the use of confidential records and papers entrusted to the Archives by the Board of Trustees, administrative officials and other donors.

A University Archives shall be established under the direction of an archivist who shall be responsible to the Executive Vice President and Secretary to the Board and the Provost of the University.

The Archives shall be the depository for University records which are no longer administratively useful in the several departments, but which have historical or other value. The Archives may also receive personal papers of officials, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others.

Thus the resolution envisages the Archives as a repository to ensure the preservation of the accumulated inactive and/or non-current records of the University and the papers of its faculty and staff which have continuing value. The Archives, therefore, becomes the corporate memory of the University, preserving for the future the contributions of many individuals to its growth.

The resolution provides also for another aspect of records management, which is to set forth a proper scheme for the disposal of those records which cease to have permanent value. Thus the need for expensive storage equipment is minimized and prime space can be used to a better advantage.

In order to implement this resolution these guidelines have been established.

## Definition of Records

As defined by law, the records of a public agency include files of letters sent and received, files of any printed matter for official uses, books, photographs, maps, drawings, tapes, or other documents or any copies thereof that have been made by that agency or received by it in connection with the transaction of its business.



Of the total mass of records and papers which accumulates in a public institution or its subdivisions the law requires that those should be retained which:

1. are necessary to the continued effective operation of the office,
2. constitute an adequate and proper recording of the activities of the office,
3. protect the legal rights of the office, and
4. are useful for long-range administrative and research purposes.

### **Responsibility for Management of Records**

As indicated by the Trustees' resolution, the responsibility for the management of all current records lies with the administrative officers of the several agencies in the University (President, Provost, Vice Presidents, deans, directors, chairmen of departments, and committees, etc.) subject to the principles set forth in the Trustees' resolution establishing the Archives.

The management of those records deemed to be in non-current use but which have a continuing value and which are required by law to be preserved will be the responsibility of the Director of Archives when he and the agency head have arranged the transfer to the Archives.

### **Disposition of Routine Records**

As a general rule, current records, correspondence, and related papers, including financial papers, concerning routine matters only as described in the schedule should be destroyed at the discretion of the head of the agency. (See B. *Non-Essential Papers*, page 10 of this Manual, and the *Manual of Business Procedures*, University Business Office, for details.)

### **Procedure for Transfer**

When the files of the retained records, that is, those not in the routine class, become crowded, or after the required period of retention has elapsed, the head of the agency responsible for the records should contact the archivist for the purpose of deciding which records should be destroyed and which preserved and transferred to the Archives to be preserved temporarily or permanently. Eventually, transfer schedules will be worked out for each department or agency.

When making a transfer, care should be taken to pack the materials which are to be transferred in the order in which they were arranged in the file of origin so that they may be classified and stored in the Archives accordingly. This will enable the archivist to retrieve materials more efficiently should the office of origin need them.

Ordinarily duplicate and non-archival materials should be winnowed from the files before transfer. If staff time does not permit this, the



materials may be sent to the Archives as they are, and its staff will perform this service. In any case, if assistance is needed in packing and arranging the materials for transfer, or if advice is desired, please call the Archives.

### **Administering the Records in the Archives**

Records transferred to the Archives are classified, a call number is assigned, and the number is reported to the depositing office. Accommodations will be made in the Archives for representatives of the depositing office to work with the records deposited, or the records may be withdrawn temporarily for use in the depositing office. Thus they may continue to be useful to the agency of origin, or others, even though located in a central storage area.

The archivist will preserve the original order and provenance, or departmental origin, of the records in his custody. This makes for an orderly arrangement and facilitates the retrieval of records. Since many papers have significance only in relation to others, the orderly arrangement will make them more meaningful.

The procedures, safeguards and controls under which the Archives operate provide adequate protection and security for the records.

*To summarize:* the records and papers stored in the Archives will be generally available to departments and to qualified researchers. Since some of the records may contain personal and confidential materials, they will not be open to the public without prior clearance from the appropriate officials. Records deposited in the Archives will not be destroyed without authorization from the office from which they came.

### **Personal Papers of University Personnel**

The Board of Trustees has provided that the faculty and others connected with the University who wish to give their personal papers on a voluntary basis may have them preserved in the Archives. These papers often document and give fuller meaning to the official records of the University. By their research, faculty members contribute to the formation of American intellectual life; by serving as counselors and on committees many contribute to the internal life of the University; and by their knowledge of subject matter areas they can provide the materials to write objective histories of academic disciplines. Such materials may be given to the Archives upon retirement or at any convenient interval.

Of the personal papers of the alumni, the Archives is concerned with records of their student years as well as those relating to their later life.

### **Historical Collections Section**

The Historical Collections Section and the Land Grant Research Center, which were joined administratively with the University Archives

Section by Trustees' action (September 17, 1970), serve as the repository for the personal collections of individual and organizational donors not connected with the University. Such collections include business records, diaries, letters, manuscript materials, memoranda, public addresses, newspaper clippings, programs of activities, etc. These kinds of materials provide rewarding information for researchers in fields of business and in the economic, political and social life of the state.

### **Restrictions on the Use of Materials in the Archives and Historical Collections**

The resolution of the Board of Trustees provides that restrictions may be placed on future use of personal and public records entrusted to the Archives.

In the case of University public records, restrictions are made in accordance with the law and the regulations of the Board of Trustees.

Records and papers given by University officers, staff, faculty, alumni and others as private citizens may be classified under one of the following restrictions as specified by the donor:

1. *Open* — access controlled only by the physical condition of the records;
2. *Restricted* — restricted materials should be accompanied by a statement specifying (1) the persons or administrators allowed to use the records, and (2) the length of time the records should be treated as confidential. In the event materials are not accompanied by such a statement, access to restricted materials will be at the discretion of the Director of the Archives or his authorized representative;
3. *Closed* — cataloging permitted, but examination, citation, and quoting for publication to be permitted only to those who have the written permission of the donor. In the event of the death of the donor, permission to use the materials may be given by the University unless they have been otherwise restricted;
4. *Sealed* — completely unavailable even for processing. (Usually for a specified number of years.)

### **Use of Materials**

Materials in the Archives are largely of the manuscript variety and do not circulate except to the departments contributing them. Descriptions are made of all catalogued records in the Archives and Historical Collections to aid the researchers in the location of desired materials. Microfilm and Xerox copies of unrestricted items may be furnished at cost upon request. The Archives will be open 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.



## **II. The Schedule: Records Common to the University with Suggested Retention Periods**

The recommended schedule for the retention and disposition of each category of records is based upon legal requirements, experience, and the best information available. However, the schedule is not mandatory. Officials in charge of the departmental records may find that some of them may be needed for current use in the departments for longer periods of time, or that some may become inactive in less time than that suggested in the schedule. If questions or problems arise on these points, or if offices are in possession of materials not covered in this general schedule, please consult the Director of Archives.

### **Admissions Records**

The Director of the Office of Admissions and Records has the responsibility for these records. See the section on Student Academic Records on page 14.

### **Alumni Association**

Reports concerning significant involvement of members, donated personal files of individual members (newsclippings, photographs, albums, scrapbooks) should be kept permanently.

Transfer to the Archives every five years, or when no longer useful to the Alumni Office.

### **Annual Reports of the University Departments, Colleges, and Other Agencies**

Send a typed copy of each report to the Archives.

### **Catalogs, Directories, Handbooks, Brochures, Newsletters, Schedules of Classes, Staff Directories, Calendars of Special Events and Other Printed Materials**

One copy of each should be sent to the Archives.

### **Contracts and Grants**

Keep permanently.

Transfer to Archives after completion or termination, or when no longer currently in use in the department.

### **Correspondence, Records, Reports and Papers**

#### **A. *Permanent***

Correspondence received and sent; the agenda and minutes of meetings including supporting data; typed, mimeographed or printed reports and



other materials of continuing legal, administrative or historical value pertaining to the policy, procedure or function of the agency should be retained. This policy applies to the records of all units in the University: Board of Trustees, Central Administrative Offices, Administrative Group, Academic Senate and Council, college and department offices, offices of non-academic agencies, standing and *ad hoc* committees of students, faculty and the administration.

Such materials, when they become inactive in the several agencies, should be transferred to the Archives, usually within a period of five years.

#### **B. Non-Essential Papers**

Routine correspondence and related papers which concern matters non-essential to either the administration or policy of the office, such as: (1) letters and memoranda of transmittal that do nothing more than forward an enclosure and add nothing to the content of the item transmitted, (2) acknowledgments, (3) requests for information and publications after the information or publication has been received and sent, (4) reservations and confirmations, (5) itineraries, (6) requests to be added to mailing lists after the addition has been made, (7) invitations to, and announcements of, meetings should be regarded as routine in character.

Such routine materials should be destroyed by the head of the agency when inactive or within one year from date of their production or reception.

### **Federal and State Records Requirements**

University offices receiving federal or state funds for programs or projects should retain all records relating thereto in accordance with federal and state requirements. The records retained under the federal and state schedules should later be reviewed by the agency head and archivist to determine whether they should be kept permanently by the University.

### **Financial Records**

Because of the specific requirements of the law and the regulations of the Board of Trustees relating to many financial records, it is important that the schedule for them be described more precisely than for other records. The University Business Office, therefore, has prepared a section in detail on the retention and disposal of these records for publication in the *Manual of Business Procedures*. In the interest of brevity, these detailed schedules are not repeated here. Please consult the Manual and this schedule when disposing of these records.

The Archives will be the final center of deposit for the following financial records whether they come from the departments or the University Business Office, and the transfer of such records should be made to the Archives when they are no longer in current use, usually within a period of five years.

Included are such materials as annual financial reports, audit reports, bond and stock records, certified financial statements, federal contracts, payroll register, property deeds, equipment inventory, workmen's compensation claims, yearly budget requests for legislative appropriations, the yearly budget authorized, etc.

### **Gift and Contribution Records**

Records relating to the receipt, disbursement, and investment of gifts and contributions for all purposes should be kept permanently and transferred to the Archives when no longer needed for administrative purposes.

### **Health Center Records**

Records, including X-rays relating to the treatment of illnesses requiring major hospitalization or prolonged treatment, which fall within the category of privileged information should be retained at the discretion of the Director of the Health Service and stored in suitable and secure storage areas in the Health Center.

Records relating to the treatment of minor illnesses should be kept five years and then destroyed.

Records involving policy matters relating to the organization and management of the Health Center should be retained and reviewed with the Archivist every five years to determine whether they should be retained or destroyed. If retained, they should be sent to the Archives.

Any other records should be handled in accordance with the schedule adopted by the Health Center, a copy of which will be on file in the Archives.

### **Information Services**

Records such as reports, photographs, photographic negatives, etc., which are needed for the ongoing activities of the department particularly in the dissemination of information about the University and its various activities, shall be retained in the office of the Director and stored in suitable and secure storage areas.

Other records involving policy and management of the Department which have become inactive should be transferred to the Archives.

### **Machine Readable Records**

Machine readable records, punched cards, magnetic tapes, etc., originating in any unit of the University should be treated in the same manner for archival purposes as record material.

If all conceivable use of the cards, etc., has been exhausted in processing, the final tabulations and/or the original data will satisfy the archival



requirements. Decisions on the disposition of conventional materials and work papers, tapes which may be classified as non-record materials, and media used exclusively in processing data should be left to the data processing staff and the unit originating the material. In processing the data, information that is added or rejected should be preserved, if it has an enduring or continuing value.

If questions arise on the above points or on transfer of materials to the Archives, consult the Director of Archives.

### **Patents**

All documents, records and supporting data which show specifically any discovery or invention resulting from research carried on under the rules of the Board of Trustees which are eligible for the granting of a patent shall be retained permanently.

When such records shall no longer have current value to the Office of Research Development, they will be transferred to the Archives.

### **Personnel Records**

#### **A. *Academic***

Faculty appointment forms, individual salary and promotion records held in the departments may be discarded five years after separation or retirement of the faculty member, provided appropriate records are kept in the Office of the President and Provost.

Academic personnel retirement forms may be discarded after one year following date of retirement, provided a permanent file is kept in the Office of the Provost or the President.

#### **B. *Non-Academic***

1. The application, together with other information required for consideration for employment, is kept as a part of the employee's file if employed.
2. Such papers for those applicants not employed may be destroyed six months following the last date of contact by the applicant.
3. The W-4 tax forms and oath cards, for academic and non-academic personnel, are transmitted to the Payroll Division, University Business Office.
4. One year following termination of employment such papers as notices of employment, attendance cards, progress report, change of status, layoffs, leaves of absence and personnel record jackets should be destroyed.



5. The application, alphabetical information card, and termination form are microfilmed after which the originals are destroyed. Microfilm copies are to be kept permanently.
6. The "Record of Position Cards" are maintained primarily for retrieval purposes.

#### **Physical Plant: Construction and Maintenance Records**

Retain all pertinent construction contracts, building plans, building specifications, and all essential related correspondence. Review with the archivist when inactive to determine whether they should be destroyed or transferred to the Archives.

Retain all pertinent maintenance and operations files, equipment records and cost records. Review with the archivist every five years, or when inactive, to determine whether they should be destroyed or transferred to the Archives.

#### **Placement Records**

All Annual Reports and Follow-Up Reports will be retained on a permanent basis.

All credentials, including recommendations, will be kept for a period of five years unless reactivated by the alumni concerned. Reactivated records will be maintained for an additional five years from the date of reactivation.

All records of visiting employers, job listings, interviewing schedules, annual reports and follow-up reports, statistics, etc., will be kept for a period of three years and then destroyed.

Records pertaining to personnel, budget and general office operations will be kept three years and then destroyed, with the exception of pertinent personnel records, i.e., Board of Trustees' actions, salary information, work evaluations, which will be retained permanently.

All other materials will be destroyed after one year.

#### **Professional Organizations**

University memberships and all pertinent correspondence relating to policy, procedure or function should be retained permanently by the campus head of the organization and transferred to the Archives when inactive or every five years.

#### **Public Safety Records**

Investigative reports relating to the work of Public Safety officers in police, fire, and occupational activities will be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the ordinance of the Board of Trustees, the laws of the State of Michigan, and the United States Government.

### **Research Projects**

Records and documents containing basic policy relating to: (1) research, (2) gifts, grants, and subsidies for research purposes, (3) proposals for security grants, (4) the grants awarded, (5) supplements and amendments to the above, (6) amount of money involved, (7) results of the research, and (8) the other records about each project are the overall responsibility of the Vice President for Research Development and the Office of Research Contracts, University Business Office. For those research projects relating to patents see Patents, page 12 of this Manual.

Such records shall be kept permanently and be transferred to the Archives when they no longer have current value for the two above named offices.

### **Space and Space Utilization Records**

Records of research or other records relating to data on space in all University buildings, and space usage should be retained permanently.

These records will include an annual copy of the University space inventory and assignments; the report, *Academic Space Utilization*; correspondence relating to relocation and/or reassignment of space on the campus; and records relating to authorized alterations to academic spaces such as letters, drawings, estimates, sources of funding, etc.

Other records on space, generally non-public in character which relate to University business, should be retained.

All such records and materials should be transferred to the Archives when they are no longer in current use.

### **Statistical Information**

Statistics and reports created by the department, school, or agency dealing with either staff or students in that department or unit should be retained permanently and transferred to the Archives when non-current or after five years.

### **Student Academic Records: Office of the Registrar**

Student academic records, including admissions records and all essential supporting documents, are to be retained permanently in the Office of the Registrar.

All working papers will be destroyed when they become inactive at the discretion of the Registrar and in accordance with the schedule developed for the office, a copy of which will be on file in the Office of the Registrar and the Archives.

### **Student Organization Files and Reports**

Review every three years, keeping and transferring to University Archives records of continuing value. Others should be destroyed.



### **Student Records: Counseling Center**

Records of the Counseling Center which involve individual and group counseling, counseling on education-vocational planning, personal-social adjustment and testing should be retained at the discretion of the Director of the Counseling Center.

Records which pertain to the organization and administration of the Center should be reviewed every five years and those having continuing value which are no longer in current use should be sent to the Archives.

### **Student Records in Departmental Offices**

These records should be reviewed five years after the degree has been awarded or enrollment terminated and then destroyed, if the information which they contain is to be found elsewhere in the University.

In disposing of these records, care should be taken to see that no privileged information (grades, etc.) is divulged without the student's permission.

### **Student Records: Office of Vice President for Student Affairs**

Records involving the administrative aspects of all student personnel matters are the responsibility of the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the heads of the services operating under this office.

Practices governing the collection, recording and releasing of information on students as approved by the Board of Trustees are set forth in the *Student Handbook*.

Records involving student personnel matters and the policies which pertain to the operation of the offices shall be reviewed periodically by the agency head and archivist to determine which shall be kept permanently and transferred to the Archives.

### **Tapes: Audio and Video**

It is generally the policy to erase or destroy audio and video tapes when they have served their intended purpose. Those which have historical or long-range administrative value should be brought to the attention of the Director of the Archives before they are erased or destroyed. The decision to preserve these kinds of materials will be made by him and the office which created or produced the tapes.

### **Travel Authorizations and Trip Reports**

Reports on out-of-state trips should be retained five years and then destroyed after review by the Provost and the archivist.



### **University Legal Counsel**

Records of the Office of Legal Counsel for the University, including legal documents and those required for purposes of litigation and/or Court proceedings, should be reviewed by the University Attorney and the archivist when they become inactive and either be destroyed or deposited in the Archives.



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