



Goshen College Archives Access Policy

Approved By, Date	President's Cabinet, 01/16/2024
Effective Date	01/16/2024
Revision Date/s	
Review Date	01/16/34
Policy Owner	Ann Vendrely, VPAA
Authored By	Joe Springer, MHL Curator

Policy Statement

Requests for access to Goshen College's institutional archives are increasingly frequent. This speaks to the value of the archive to both researchers and the GC constituency. There is currently no archives access policy on file, however, to guide the Mennonite Historical Library Curator and GC administrative staff in fielding requests and providing equitable, judicious, and transparent access to the archives. This policy provides interim guidelines useful until the institution more fully addresses existing gaps in its records retention practices and management of retroactive digital records.

The Policy

The Goshen College Archives documents and preserves the history and records of Goshen College. Materials within this institutional archive were created by or for Goshen College, specifically those relating to the institution's operations and history. The collection is a combination of official institutional records and correspondence, student and alumni organizational records and ephemera, and institutional publications. Selected other records that serve to document the mission, history and activities of Goshen College, e.g. faculty/employee papers, may also fall within the scope of this archive.

Access policy:

- Materials that were public at the time they were created (e.g., brochures, publications, etc.) are available to internal and external researchers without restriction.
- Campus offices/departments will always have access to the files that they have transferred to the archives.

Unless specified in the policy, exceptions to the policies in this guide must be approved by the policy owner. It is important to note that the policies in this guide can be changed from time to time. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure understanding of the policies and procedures as well as any revisions.

- Employees responsible for archives management must have access to records stored in the archives in order to perform expected duties.
- With the exceptions noted above, permission to view and research institutional records created within the past 25 years and not otherwise explicitly opened for research access is subject to authorization. Researchers may request access through the MHL Director or Curator who in turn will seek authorization from the Vice President with current oversight of the relevant office, department, or activity or from the GC President. (Per Board action, permission to access minutes of the GC Board of Directors within this time frame must be granted by the GC President.)
- 25 years after the date of creation, all processed materials are available to internal and external researchers, unless those materials are covered by FERPA, HIPAA or a similar privacy law or specific local decision. Unprocessed materials shall not be provided to researchers without prior review by archives staff to avoid inadvertent access to materials with longer periods of restriction.
- Among types of records likely to be restricted: records of individual living employees or living students/alumni, certain financial records (annual financial reports are generally public).
- The GC Archives generally is not able at this time to provide research access to any materials created digitally.

Procedures

Requesting access to materials in the GC Archives:

- Most regularly-published GC publications (e.g., Record, GC Bulletin, Maple Leaf, college catalogs, Faculty-Staff Bulletin, Campus Communicator) can be consulted at the Mennonite Historical Library during its regularly-scheduled open hours without advance notice.
- Individuals interested in records pertaining to themselves as students or employees of the institution should contact the Registrar's Office or Human Resources rather than the MHL.
- Searching the Mennonite Archival Information Database may help to identify specific unpublished material of interest. (Only a small percentage of the GC Archives is represented there.)
- Contact the MHL (email: mhl@goshen.edu, 574-535-7418) well in advance of desired use describing the topic/materials of interest. MHL staff will respond with information about whether and when the requested material may be available.
- Expected period of time between response to request and access (for available/unrestricted materials):
- GC & AMBS students/GC employees: two full business days after response to request
- Other: 1 full week after response to request.
- Internal considerations may prevent providing access within these target time frames. For example, staff review of unprocessed material, awaiting approval for researchers to view restricted materials, or staff absences may require additional time.

- See MHL fee chart to see what, if any, fees may be associated with your research. Note that opportunities for accessing/researching GC archival material remotely are very limited in scope.
- Restricted material: If the material a researcher wishes to access is restricted, MHL staff will convey the researcher's request to the appropriate college administrator for consideration.
- Unprocessed material: If the material a researcher wishes to access is not fully processed, MHL staff must first review the material to ascertain whether it includes restricted content. Only a small percentage of the archival collections is fully processed. Time required for review will vary according to the type of material and level of existing organization.