I. Introduction

This document is a supplement to The University of Akron University Libraries Collection Policy. Archival Services, including University Archives, Special Collections, and Records Management play an integral role within the University Libraries and aims to support the operational needs and teaching and research mission of The University of Akron, including undergraduate and graduate curricula. The collection development policy was written to offer guidance to Archival Services faculty selectors in making decisions about whether or not material is appropriate for the collection. It is based on professional library and archival standards, including the Society of American Archivists “Guidelines for College and University Archives” (2005) and the Association of College and Research Libraries “Guidelines on the
Selection and Transfer of Materials from General Collections to Special Collections” (Third Edition).

II. Mission

The University Libraries provides state-of-the-art access to broad and diverse scholarly resources and innovative technologies to empower users to evaluate their information needs, identify and access reliable sources, and successfully transform information into knowledge.

Archival Services, a division of University Libraries, collects, preserves, and provides access to primary and secondary source materials that document the history of The University of Akron and the region, as well as select materials requiring special care and handling. Materials are collected in order to support the operational needs of the institution and the teaching and research activities at the university and in the wider intellectual community.

III. Subject Scope

A. Collecting Focus Overview

Archival Services includes University Archives, Special Collections, and Records Management. University Archives serves as the official memory of The University of Akron and its predecessor institutions from its founding in 1870 to the present. University Archives includes the official records of the university that have lasting historical value (also known as archival value) and unofficial records, papers, and publications having historical value that pertain to The University of Akron by affiliated individuals and organizations (See Appendix A for collecting guidelines for University Archives). Records Management assists the University Archives in identifying those official university records that have archival value and transferring them to University Archives for permanent retention and preservation.

Special Collections serves as a collecting repository that documents the history of the region and preserves rare and valuable materials from University Libraries. Special Collections consists of manuscripts, rare books, and local government records. Manuscript collections include personal and professional papers of local individuals eminent in various fields and organizational records of important local businesses and civic, religious, and cultural organizations. The collections focus on materials that document the history of the rubber and polymer industry and the related industry of lighter-than-air flight, particularly in the Akron/Summit County area. (See Appendix B for collecting guidelines for Special Collections.) Special Collections is also home to the University Libraries Rare Book Collection, including the
Muehlstein Collection with notable examples of early printed books and important printings of the works of Shakespeare, Dickens, and others. (See Appendix C for collecting guidelines for rare books and other printed matter.) As a member of the Ohio Network of American History Research Centers (ONAHRCC) and as part of the State of Ohio’s Local Government Records Program (LGRP) administered by the Ohio History Connection (formerly the Ohio Historical Society), Special Collections also serves as a repository of local government records for a nine-county region in northeastern Ohio. Local government records include the official records from local governments such as courts, schools, cities and townships that have lasting historical value. (See Appendix D for collecting guidelines for local government records.)

B. Primary Collecting Focus

Archival Services collects primarily in the following areas:

1. University of Akron history
2. Local history (Akron and Summit County)
3. History of the rubber and polymer industry
4. History of lighter-than-air flight (airships, balloons, blimps, and dirigibles)

C. Secondary Collecting Focus

In addition to the subjects listed above, Archival Services collects secondarily in the following areas:

1. Ohio Canals, particularly local canals including the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal
2. Regional history (see Geographical Coverage below)
3. Rare Books
4. Local Government Records (see Geographical Coverage below)
5. B-26 Marauder and Ninth Air Force materials (see guidelines for collecting in Appendix E)

C. Geographical Coverage

Local history, especially The University of Akron, the City of Akron, and Summit County, is the principle collecting area of Archival Services. As a
member of ONAHRC, Archival Services is the official repository for local
government records from a nine-county region in northeast Ohio. Local
government records holdings include Summit, Ashland, Holmes, Coshocton,
Portage, Richland, Stark, Tuscarawas, and Wayne counties. In addition to
local government records, Archival Services also collects manuscripts from
this nine-county region. Priority in local government records and manuscripts
will be given to materials relating to Summit County history with a second
priority given to the contiguous counties of Portage, Stark, and Wayne. The
book collection covers several continents, but is strongest in American and
European literature and history. The collecting focus of nearby institutions is
considered when evaluating materials for transfer, deposit, donation, or
purchase, especially in relation to local history.

D. Language

The primary language represented in the collection is overwhelmingly
English. However the rare book holdings include books in Latin, Greek, and
several Western European languages including, French, German, Spanish,
Portuguese, and Italian. Lighter-than-air collections include books and
archival materials in German, French, and Russian.

E. Period Coverage

Archival Services houses books spanning more than 500 years, from
incunabula (books printed before 1501 CE) to recently published monographs
on local history, current faculty publications, and works from The University
of Akron Press. Manuscript and archival collections date to the Civil War and
the founding of Buchtel College (The University of Akron’s predecessor
institution), respectively. Local Government Records date back to the early
1800s.

IV. Curriculum and Users Served

Archival Services primarily supports the curricular and research needs of the students,
faculty, staff, alumni, and community of The University of Akron. The collection is
also open to the general public including regional, national, and international scholars
and researchers. Materials are made available in accordance with the “ALA/SAA
Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections
Libraries.” Researchers must adhere to Archival Services Reading Room Policy.

V. Acquisition of Materials

University Libraries Archival Services faculty will evaluate and identify university
archives, manuscripts, books, and other archival materials for inclusion in Archival
Services. Archives and Special Collections materials are usually acquired in the following manner:

**A. Donation**

Donation of materials is both an active process of soliciting for particular materials and a passive process of accepting materials that are brought into the Archives. The Archives both encourages donation of materials to the Archives and actively solicits for particular materials. It is policy to encourage donation of materials that are in keeping with the subject scope of Archival Services’ collection. The faculty of Archival Services may accept gifts of materials with mixed historical value if we have the right to discard or otherwise remove unwanted items.

All donations must be represented on a Legal Donor Form, which includes a description of the materials; name and signature of donor; date of donation; description of any restrictions on the use of the donation; and signature of the Dean of University Libraries, Senior Vice President and Provost, and a representative from the Office of General Counsel.

Donations that carry stringent donor restrictions may not be accepted. The Head of Archival Services will determine that the donor has, in fact, the right to make the donation, and that the donation is not encumbered by ethical and legal problems such as authenticity.

**B. Transfer of Custody**

Custodial transfer is the means by which Archival Services acquires most official university records. Custodial transfer applies only to public records in which legal custody has transferred from one office to another. In addition, transferred books, periodicals, and audio/visual materials may be acquired from the University Libraries’ circulating or reference collections after review and selection by Archival Services faculty for inclusion in either University Archives or Special Collections.

**C. Purchase**

Purchase of manuscript and archival materials is normally discouraged. If a significant collection becomes available only through purchase, such an acquisition must be considered on its own merits. It is important to note that purchase of such materials tends to discourage donations by other potential donors. If more than one institution is involved in bidding for materials, the needs of the patrons may be subverted. For these reasons, purchase of materials is generally limited to commercially published materials only.
D. Deposit

Donations in the form of an outright gift are strongly encouraged and are greatly preferred over deposits. New incoming materials on deposit in Archival Services are generally discouraged and will only be initiated under special circumstances. All deposits must be covered in a contractual agreement between The University of Akron Archival Services and the depositing agency. Collections may be deposited in Archival Services only if a contractual deposit agreement has been established and approved by the Head of Archival Services. Any such collections must be useful to the University and region within the Archival Services collection scope. Except in extraordinary circumstances, deposited materials will be made available for use by the general public.

VI. Appraisal

Appraisal is the basis for selecting records and papers that are to be retained within Archival Services. Archival appraisal is the process of evaluating actual or potential acquisitions to determine if they have sufficient long-term research value to warrant the expense of processing and preserving the collection by the archival repository. Careful appraisal of potential collections is of primary importance in eliminating unwanted materials and ensuring unnecessary growth. Before materials are accepted into Archival Services, the designated Archival Services faculty will conduct a careful appraisal of the materials as a whole. Preliminary and subsequent weeding of a record or manuscript group occurs as the materials are being processed. Processing involves further appraisal/weeding, arrangement, description, storage and conservation.

VII. Materials Generally Not Accepted by Archival Services

This is only a general and not an exhaustive list. More specific lists per collecting area are further defined in the appendices, which are available in Archival Services. Unsuitable materials may be discussed with donors, depositors, or transferring offices at the time of donation, deposit, or transfer.

1. Archival Services usually only collects original materials. Photocopies and facsimiles of materials will not be accepted except under special circumstances (i.e. the original materials are no longer in existence or are damaged beyond repair). Archival Services will not consider or accept copies of materials that are held at another collecting institution.

2. Portions of manuscript groups where the majority of materials have been donated to another institution will typically not be accepted. Archival Services will strongly encourage the donor to donate their material to that institution in order to maintain the integrity of the records and for the convenience of the researcher.
3. Archival Services does not typically collect non-documentary materials such as artifacts and memorabilia with the exception of University Archives, especially if the artifacts are particularly large and unmanageable. Smaller artifacts may be considered if they have historical value and are part of a larger collection of records or papers.

4. All materials donated, transferred, or deposited with Archival Services must be inactive (also known as noncurrent) as Archival Services does not collect active records. Inactive or noncurrent records are defined by the Society of American Archivists as records that are no longer used in the day-to-day course of business.

5. Plaques, awards, and trophies are usually not accepted. A list of awards and honors will suffice or should be documented in the organizational history or on the individual’s resume or curriculum vitae.

6. Duplicate copies (more than two) of any material will typically either not be accepted or will be weeded at the time of appraisal, re-appraisal, or processing.

7. Most financial records including cancelled checks, receipts, and bank statements (annual financial reports are typically the only financial records of historical value).

8. Donations that carry stringent donor restrictions may not be accepted.

9. Materials that are damaged beyond repair or exhibit mold growth or insect/rodent infestation will not be accepted.

10. Acquisition decisions may be limited by space restrictions or because of the state of the collection. Materials with marginal historical value that are completely disorganized or are too large may not be accepted.

11. Items without historical value, which is determined by Archival Services faculty, will not be accepted. Examples include junk mail; telephone messages; blank forms, letter head, and envelopes; and routine correspondence, especially non-personally addressed mail and routine letters of transmittal and acknowledgment.

VIII. Collecting Guidelines Overview

Guidelines for various collections are covered in the appendices to this document, which are available in Archival Services. The Collection Guidelines only provide general guidelines for selection criteria, with the ultimate collection decisions being made by one of the designated faculty selectors from Archival Services. Acquisitions decisions will be based on professional appraisal standards. Acquired materials will be made open and available to the public, except in extraordinary circumstances. Every effort will be made to provide basic description of materials that have been donated or transferred to Archival Services. Arrangement and further description of these materials will be completed on a priority basis as set by Archival Services faculty.