



# Library Special Collections and College Archives' Deaccession

Policy AA014

Volume 1, Academic Affairs and Faculty

Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Library

Issued: July 2017

Updated: February 2024

## Policy Statement

The Gladys Marcus Library's unit of Special Collections and College Archives ("SPARC") may, under certain circumstances and carefully controlled conditions, deaccession material from its holdings. This policy applies only to the deaccessioning of materials accessioned and held by the Library's SPARC unit.

## Reason for the Policy

Per guidelines from the Society of American Archivists (SAA), deaccessioning can serve as a viable option for managing collections for several reasons. These include instances where a previous collecting mission resulted in the indiscriminate acquisition of materials, limitations in storage space, or the recognition that certain materials could be better preserved or appropriately housed at another repository. When faced with such challenges, reevaluating the collection's suitability for ongoing retention becomes crucial.

Adhering to best practices in the special collections community underscores the ethical responsibility to refrain from accepting materials that cannot be adequately cared for. Strategic collection development requires careful consideration.

This policy provides principles to align the unit's collection with a thoughtful strategy, promoting ethical stewardship and responsible management of archival material.

## Who is Responsible for this Policy

- Director, FIT Library
- Head, SPARC, FIT Library

## Who is Affected by this Policy

- FIT Library Staff, especially those in Special Collections and Acquisitions and Metadata Services
- FIT Library Faculty, especially those in Library Administration, SPARC, and Acquisitions and Metadata Services
- FIT Foundation personnel

## Definitions

- **Accession:** materials physically and legally transferred to a repository as a unit at a single time; an acquisition; to take legal and physical custody of a group of records or other materials and to formally document their receipt; to document the transfer of records or materials in a register, database, or other log of the repository's holdings.
- **Deaccession:** the process by which an archive, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings.

## Principles

- **Deaccessioning**  
SPARC acquires, preserves, and provides access to a wide range of primary research materials in their original formats and across many languages and geographical spectra. All acquisitions support one or more curricula offered at FIT. SPARC also acquires, preserves, and provides access to college records permanently scheduled for retention or deemed to have enduring, historical value created or received in the course of college business. Archival records can be created or received by administrators, staff, faculty, and students.

In keeping with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Society of American Archivists (SAA), and other leading institutions and authorities, SPARC may selectively deaccession material to achieve a greater refinement of the collection and better match its collecting mission. No material that holds value in significant measure (whether it be informational usefulness, historical significance, and/or monetary worth) will be deaccessioned. Following federal law, no object shall be deaccessioned within three years of its acquisition.

To be considered for deaccession, an object must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The object no longer supports the mission of the Library or fits within the scope of the collections;
- The object's condition renders it useless to the Library;
- The object unnecessarily duplicates other material in the collection;
- The object is a poor-quality example of its type; or
- The object is proved to be a fake or forgery.

Deaccessioning allows SPARC to deal with out-of-scope materials that have been determined to be unworthy of continued retention through reappraisal. Deaccession may not be undertaken solely as a means of raising funds.

## Responsibilities

- **Head, Special Collections and College Archives (SPARC), FIT Library:**
  - Leads the review conducted by the Library SPARC Deaccession Committee (LSDC);
  - Determines the method of disposition when appropriate and makes the recommendation to the Director of the FIT Library; and
  - Facilitates the deaccession and disposition process upon approval from the Director of the FIT Library.
- **Director, FIT Library**
  - Approves the deaccession and disposition of the proposed materials.

## Procedures

- **Deaccessioning**

- The Library SPARC Deaccession Committee (LSDC) aims to meet once a semester, or more frequently if necessary. The frequency of meetings is based on physical materials and may occur less frequently if it has been determined there is no current business need.
- SPARC personnel shall present to the Head of SPARC recommendations for deaccession, including written rationale. SPARC shall not contact original donors regarding deaccession unless the material in question was acquired with pertinent restrictions or conditions that were documented in writing at the time of the gift or transfer.
  - A review, led by the Head of SPARC, is conducted by the Library SPARC Deaccession Committee (LSDC) composed of employees from Acquisitions and Metadata Services; Special Collections and College Archives; and Library Administration before seeking final approval.
  - Final approval for deaccession must be granted by the College Administration SPARC Deaccession Committee (CASDC), a senior-level committee designated by the President. The CADC will meet proportionately in response to the LSDC meetings.
  - The Head of SPARC submits a report to the CASDC and the President once each semester highlighting all deaccession activity. The report is created and submitted only in response to deaccession activity; if none has occurred, no report is generated.
  - Records of all deaccessioned material are maintained and all documents are placed in the unit's Accession File. A completed disposal form is also archived.

- **Disposition of Deaccessioned Material**

Deaccessioned material is processed in one of the following methods, provided there is no donor restriction:

- **Sale**
  - Material may be sold at public auction.
  - Material may not be sold solely for the purpose of generating income. Proceeds from any sale are for the purchase of other pertinent items for the collection or the preservation/conservation of existing assets.
  - Neither Trustees of the college or its auxiliaries nor college or auxiliary employees and their immediate family members may purchase or benefit from the sale of deaccessioned materials.
- **Transfer**

Material may be transferred to another FIT Library unit. The FIT Library has the right of first refusal.
- **Donation or Exchange**

Material may be donated to another non-profit institution or exchanged for items of equivalent value (historical/research; evidentiary; informational; intrinsic).
- **Witnessed Destruction**
  - Material that has deteriorated beyond repair, poses a health hazard, or has little to no intrinsic or monetary value may be destroyed.
  - Destruction shall be witnessed by a minimum of two Library employees.

- **Proceeds from the Sale of Deaccessioned Material**  
In accordance with accepted standards of professional ethics in libraries, museums and other cultural repositories, funds realized through deaccession are used to acquire and preserve Special Collections Library holdings. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned material are deposited in a SPARC unrestricted FIT Foundation Account.

## Violations

N/A

## Related Policies

- No related policies

## Related Documents

- [Association of College and Research Libraries' Guidelines on the Selection and Transfer of Materials](#)
- SPARC Deed of Gift
- [Society of American Archivists' Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning](#)

## Contacts

- **Director**  
Gladys Marcus Library  
Goodman Resource Center, 5th Floor  
(212) 217-4370
- **Head, Special Collections & College Archives**  
Gladys Marcus Library  
Goodman Resource Center, 4th Floor  
(212) 217-4385
- **Head, Acquisitions and Metadata Services**  
Gladys Marcus Library  
Goodman Resource Center, 6th Floor  
(212) 217-4350