



Queens College Special Collections and Archives Strategic Plan

Written by Annie Tummino (Head of Special Collections and Archives) with input from Kristin Hart (Chief Librarian). This strategic plan was crafted over the 2018–2019 academic year and guides the work of the unit through spring 2023 (five years).

BACKGROUND

In 2017, Kristin Hart became Chief Librarian of the Queens College Libraries, integrating Special Collections and Archives (SCA) as a central part of her vision for the libraries. In August 2018, Annie Tummino was appointed as Head of Special Collections and Archives, with a mandate of building a dynamic department that serves the larger pedagogical, community, and research needs of the college.

SCA possesses all of the ingredients to become a thriving repository that supports scholarship, teaching, activism, alumni engagement, and more. The college's celebrated history—particularly in the areas of civil rights, social justice, politics, and music—along with the SCA's strong collections and promising donor engagements, as well as the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (GSLIS) program provide a strong foundation on which to grow. The five-year plan represents a set of achievable goals to guide efforts and keep SCA on track.



I. Mission and Structure

Goal: Implement a sustainable and dynamic vision for the department based on community input, professional best practices, and contributions of all team members

INITIATIVES:

- Craft mission statement aligned with the mission of library and college
- Implement professional ethics, best practices, and standards in projects and guidelines
 - See Appendix A
- Facilitate growth and contributions of all team members
 - Because SCA has only one full-time staff member, students and part-time workers are relied upon to further its mission. In line with the library's strategic plan, SCA is committed to providing mentorship, professional development, and networking opportunities to all team members, and compensating for all work performed in the archives (no unpaid internships)
- Advocate for appointment of an additional full-time staff member within five years and decrease reliance on adjunct labor for core operations

II. Collections Management

Goal: Understand what we have in order to prioritize processing and preservation activities; utilize standards, documentation, and technology to improve management practices; and create a coherent collection development policy to guide future acquisitions and reappraise existing holdings

INITIATIVES:

- Create a collection development policy to guide future acquisitions and reappraise existing holdings
- Update the master collections list using existing documentation and surveying collections as needed
- Move materials from scattered locations (sixth floor, second floor, Rathaus basement, etc.) into areas controlled by SCA

- Implement ArchivesSpace software and explore its management capabilities.
- Use extensible processing strategies to reduce backlog of inaccessible materials.
- Create guidelines for accessioning, processing, and finding aid creation.
- Update deed of gift to include Creative Commons licenses.
- Create workflow for regular accessions of college records and publications of enduring historic value and/or designated for permanent retention.
- Create workflow for preservation of digital assets

III. Reference and Access

Goal: Expand services, reduce barriers to access and use, and update workflows

INITIATIVES:

- **Expand services**
Utilize NTA position to provide evening hours for research appointments
- **Reduce barriers to access and use**
Make policies and forms simpler and more welcoming
- **Update workflows**
Move from paper to digital; align with library's use of SpringShare products
- **Assess Services**
Use data collected to assess staffing needs, prioritize collections processing, and consider implementation of public-facing reading room hours





IV. Online Discovery

Goal: Streamline, upgrade, and integrate systems for discovery of archival materials

INITIATIVES:

- Work with Digital Services, Cataloger, and Digital Scholarship and Emerging Technology Librarians to improve and better integrate SCA into the library's digital infrastructure
 - Migrate SCA website from Sharepoint to Wordpress and revamp content
 - Implement ArchivesSpace for access to finding aids
 - Phase out existing Omeka sites (civil rights, college archives, and print history) and replace with unified, sustainable digital collections platform
 - Ensure that collection-level records are harvested by OneSearch and ArchiveGrid
 - Curate our digital presence with an eye towards exposing relationships within and among our collections materials

V. Outreach and Collaboration

Goal: Increase visibility and deepen connections through new spaces, better marketing, and targeted outreach

INITIATIVES:

- Work with Communications and Outreach Librarian to:
 - contribute to the library's programming, promotion, and social media efforts
 - create signage and literature advertising archival spaces and services

- Identify and work to remedy "archival silences" and gaps within our collections to ensure representation of diverse communities and events
- Foster interdisciplinary work within and outside of the library, including creative, research, and/or digital scholarship projects that use primary sources
- Re-establish role and visibility in Queens Memory Project, a joint project with the Queens Library to document life in Queens through oral histories, images, and other evidence
- Conduct outreach and build relationships with administration, faculty, alumni, and students to preserve the college's history
- Establish schedule for production of high-quality exhibits
- Work with GSLIS to establish memory and processing labs for campus and community engagement

VI. Training the Next Generation of Archivists

Goal: Serve as a learning lab for GSLIS students focusing on archives

INITIATIVES:

- Work with GSLIS Coordinator of Archival Studies to initiate hands-on learning opportunities that complement the archival studies curriculum, including:
 - Develop an Archival Fellowships program that fulfills internship requirements, with a stable source of funding for stipends and professional development.
 - Develop practicums, workshops, and/or courses that benefit students and SCA.

VII. Primary Source Instruction and Archival Literacy

Goal: Integrate archival resources into the college curriculum

INITIATIVES:

- Develop services, templates, and curricula for primary source, oral history, and archival literacy instruction
 - Start with individual requests and use as a foundation to scale up
 - Create assessment tool to evaluate effectiveness of instruction
- Work to identify faculty interested in incorporating primary source instruction into their curricula
- Create LibGuide to advertise services and compile resources

VIII. Preservation

Goal: Create new storage area that meets standards for archival preservation, remediate the rare book collection, and create an independent preservation plan

INITIATIVES:

- Work with Chief Librarian, Campus Designer, and Facilities to create new storage area with climate controls (temperature, humidity, and air purity) and appropriate shelving.
- Remediate the rare book collection and enclose fragile volumes
- Create preservation plan
 - Create an independent five-year plan that addresses all preservation issues (digital preservation, environmental monitoring, disaster planning, etc).



IX. Development and Grants

Goal: Identify and cultivate sources of institutional and external revenue that facilitate responsible stewardship of archival records, special collections, and rare books in order to better serve SCA's stakeholders.

INITIATIVES:

- Work with the Chief Librarian to ensure proper institutional support for SCA
- Work with Chief Librarian on proposal and implementation of a major grant from the Pine Tree Foundation for new Charles J. Tanenbaum Special Collections and Archives Wing on the third floor of the library (storage, exhibit, and memory/processing lab spaces)
- Work with the Office of Institutional Advancement to cultivate the support of alumni, faculty, and other donors invested in maintenance and growth of SCA, with an emphasis on the Graduate Fellowships program
- Apply for grants to support SCA activities, such as:
 - Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation (for fellowships program/memory lab)
 - National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)—for processing the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Papers
 - National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)—for preservation of the rare book collection

Appendix A: Standards and Best Practices

Standards and best practices consulted will include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS), including the new DACS Principles
- Standardized Statistical Measures and Metrics for Public Services in Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries
- Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy
- Guidelines for Developing and Supporting Grant-Funded Positions in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums
- *Managing Congressional Collections* by Cynthia Pease Miller
- Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) preservation leaflets