



## **UNIVERSITY RECORDS POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Define university records;
2. Define the Digital Collections and Archives' authority over university records; and the responsibilities of the DCA, departments, and employees for university records
3. Provide best practices for managing university records.

Tufts University creates, manages, and uses a wide variety of university records to conduct its affairs and support its educational mission. Tufts employees who create, manage, and use records are responsible for the proper management and disposition of their records. This policy applies to all university records regardless of format and includes electronic records.

### **SCOPE**

Tufts University: Faculty, staff, and administrators who manage university records.

### **APPROVED**

Jamshed Bharucha, Provost and Senior Vice President

Steve Manos, Executive Vice President

### **APPROVAL DATE**

February 22, 2007

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

February 22, 2007

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Digital Collections and Archives

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **UNIVERSITY RECORDS DEFINITION**

Records are information fixed on any media. University records are those that Tufts employees create or receive in any format in the course of university business. University records are the property of Tufts University. University records exist in a variety of forms, including but not limited to, paper and electronic documents, microforms, audio and video recordings, databases, and electronic mail messages. University records include but are not limited to minutes; correspondence; memoranda; financial records, such as invoices, journals, ledgers, purchase orders, grant documentation, and other information pertaining to fiscal matters; published materials, including reports and newsletters; moving images and photographs; sound recordings; drawings and maps; and computer data or other machine readable electronic records, including electronic mail. Typically, but not necessarily, university records fall into the following categories: personnel (staff and faculty), student, alumni, financial, research administration, health and safety, physical plant, and general administration and management records.

### **Exceptions**

The following records and documents are *not* university records.

- Faculty records. These are faculty members' records that they create or receive in the conduct of their teaching, research, or professional activities. However, records held by faculty that they create or receive in the conduct of student advising, committee work, research administration, or program, department, or school administration, are university records.
- Extra copies of publications kept for distribution.
- Staff members' records that they create or receive in the conduct of their non-Tufts professional activities.
- Personal or private documents neither created nor received in the course of university business.
- Reference objects such as library, museum, and specimen material made or acquired solely for reference, research, or exhibition activities.

### **Electronic Records**

Many university records are in electronic form. Although electronic records have certain characteristics that are very different from paper or microform records, they are still covered by this policy.

## **AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Digital Collections and Archives Authority**

The Digital Collections and Archives (DCA) is the steward of university records of enduring value, in any form, that are entrusted to its care. As the archival repository for all university records, it has the duty and authority to collect, appraise, describe, preserve, and make available university records of enduring value in compliance with appropriate laws and regulations and university records schedules. The DCA has the duty and authority to advise faculty, staff, and administrators on the proper management and disposition of their departments' university records.

The DCA selects university records for preservation, in consultation with the staff or faculty in charge of the department responsible for the records, in accordance with the appropriate records schedule developed by the DCA. Departments are responsible for transferring selected university records to the DCA according to DCA guidelines. The DCA becomes the custodian of these records, responsible for



their preservation and managed access. Departments may consult university records they transfer to the DCA, as needed, even if the records are closed to other researchers.

For more information on the DCA and previous authorizations of the University Archives, see Appendix A.

### **Responsibilities**

#### *Digital Collections and Archives*

The DCA is responsible for preserving university records of enduring value that are entrusted to its care. The DCA must meaningfully preserve these records, ensuring their authenticity and understandability into the future.

The DCA is responsible for managing access to the university records entrusted to its care. The DCA shall consult with appropriate staff or faculty regarding any special conditions of access that it may need to place on any records. In the absence of specific restrictions, the DCA shall open all university records under its stewardship to researchers on a non-discriminatory basis, according to its general policy on access to archival collections and archival ethical standards.

The DCA is responsible for determining the appropriate disposition for university records in consultation with the necessary faculty, staff, and administrators. The DCA has the responsibility of articulating these disposition decisions in records retention schedules.

#### *Department*

All departments and offices are responsible for properly managing their university records. The staff or faculty member in charge of department records, or the staff or faculty member in charge of the records of official committees, is responsible for consulting with the DCA to determine the proper disposition of their university records in compliance with appropriate laws and regulations and records schedules. Departments shall destroy university records scheduled for destruction in accordance with the appropriate records schedules and DCA procedures. Departments shall transfer university records scheduled for transfer to the DCA in compliance with DCA procedures to ensure the safety and security of the records while in transit. Although departments and offices may contract with commercial vendors for records storage, imaging, and destruction services, they remain ultimately responsible for the proper management of their records.

#### *Employees*

Employees of Tufts University are responsible for being aware of this University Records Policy and properly managing the university records in their care. Staff may seek guidance from their supervisors or from the DCA.

### **SUMMARY OF BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING RECORDS**

Departments and offices must manage their university records in a trustworthy manner that ensures their authenticity. In order to do this, departments and offices must:

- Create records that accurately document their core activities.
- Manage and store their records in a manner that facilitates timely and accurate retrieval.
- Ensure that they store their records in secure locations and safe, stable environments.
- Allow only those with the proper authority to have access to their records.
- Know and carry out the proper disposition of their records, that is, know what to do with their records when they no longer actively use them.
- Know and comply with the Tufts policies and the external laws, regulations, standards, and professional ethics that affect the management of their records.



For further information on best practices for managing records see the Guidelines for Managing University Records.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Organization**

The DCA is comprised of three components, the university-wide Records Management Program, the University Archives and Manuscript Collections, and the Tufts Digital Repository and Library. The Records Management Program provides services to all offices of the University by helping them efficiently manage their university records. It helps departments ensure that their records are retrievable, reliable, secure, and trustworthy. The DCA, in conjunction with Academic Technology, administers and develops the Tufts Digital Repository, based on the Fedora repository architecture. The Tufts Digital Repository service provides secure, long-term management of digital assets created at Tufts, as well as serving as the foundation for the Tufts Digital Library. The DCA also offers an array of consultation and digitization services to members of the Tufts community. The DCA's University Archives and Manuscripts Collections oversees the acquisition, arrangement, description, and use of the university's collections of enduring value.

### **Authorization History**

The Board of Trustees established the Tufts University Archives in 1964 by adopting a Policy on University Archives in recognition of the need to preserve official university records of permanent value. In May 1982 the Board of Trustees approved an updated Policy on University Archives. In February 2001 the Board of Trustees approved a Records Authority Statement that further clarified the authority and responsibility of the University Archives. In July 2001 the University Archives became a component of the Digital Collections and Archives, a central administration office. This University Records Policy supersedes the 1964 and 1982 Policy on University Archives and the 2001 Records Authority Statement.