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### Title

Statement on Inclusion and Equity in Special Collections, Archives, and Distinctive Collections in the University of California Libraries

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4mq1461d>

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### Publication Date

2021-01-05

## Statement on Inclusion and Equity in Special Collections, Archives, and Distinctive Collections in the University of California Libraries

As the representative leadership of special collections and archives for the University of California Libraries, we are committed to the enhancement and discovery of our world-class collections. At the local level, we understand our role in building trust in our communities, on our campuses, and the places in which we live and work.

We align our priorities and vision with the long-range goals of the University of California Libraries (<https://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/vision-and-priorities>), including:

**Enrich the systemwide library collection:** Print, digital, data, and archival collections of the University of California are fundamental building blocks for the University's teaching, research, patient care, and public service programs. Building and managing collections to provide access to a broad array of scholarly information resources in support of these programs remains one of the highest priorities for the UC libraries.

**Maximize discovery of and access to information resources:** Faculty and staff are adopting new techniques to identify, find, and use information resources. As user behaviors evolve, the UC libraries will implement systems to provide better, faster, and broader access and support.

The celebrated systemwide holdings of the University of California Libraries are enhanced by local expertise and contextualized approaches to the collection and discovery of the rare, archival, and distinctive collections of our campuses. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the care and management of special and distinctive collections, especially among our varied capacities and infrastructures, we recognize the primacy of our shared goals, values, and vision as one library.

At the same time, we recognize that current social, cultural, and economic circumstances require us to consider a fuller picture of the potential of collective work toward equitable access to rare and special collections in the University of California Libraries. We commit ourselves to a deeper understanding of and meaningful approaches to systemic, structural change in our work and our relationships with our users and partners.

We acknowledge historical absences in library collections, including those of the University of California Libraries. We will develop practices that counteract a paradigm of racist, sexist, and white-centered collecting, description, instruction, and access. Metadata, digital exhibits, and archival descriptions in particular have disadvantaged communities of color, limited points of subject-based access, and contributed to a culture of exclusivity and inequity. We commit to immediate and enduring work to elevate the narratives, perspectives, and expertise of the marginalized: those who identify as Black, Indigenous, persons of color, immigrants, women, disabled people, and those from the LGBTQ+ communities. We recognize that this work is iterative and ongoing, inherently risky, and messy, but entirely necessary.

As leaders and managers, we will focus on strategies across and within our campuses to reinforce the values of the University of California and the faculty, students, staff, and communities we serve. In the coming days, months, and years, we will pursue:

- Inclusive, ethical, and accessible description, metadata, and finding aids;
- Ethical stewardship, collection management, and preservation that builds trust and sustains community engagement;
- Critical review of collection development strategies that weigh historical strengths against intentional and proactive shifts;
- Commitment to digital discovery for a variety of users, including non-English language speakers;
- Sustained resources for regional, local, and user-driven acquisition of print-only and ephemeral materials documenting diasporic and at-risk histories;
- Resource commitments to digitize collections, breaking down barriers of access to collections for users around the world; and
- Commitment to the UC Systemwide diversity efforts to recruit, support, and retain personnel who reflect the population of California, especially those who have been systematically and historically underrepresented. (<https://www.ucop.edu/faculty-diversity/index.html>).

The continued success and further enrichment of the University of California Libraries depend upon continued transformation as well as a permanent commitment to equity and inclusion in our daily work.

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## **Resources**

SALALM Resolution: Collection Development in the Time of COVID-19

<https://salalm.org/salalm-resolution-collection-development-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

MELA Statement On Collection Development, Access, And Equity In The Time Of COVID-19

<https://www.mela.us/2020/06/22/mela-statement-on-collection-development-access-and-equity-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

SAA Council Statement on Black Lives and Archives

<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-council-statement-on-black-lives-and-archives>

Association of Research Libraries Condemns Racism and Violence against Black Communities, Supports Protests against Police Brutality <https://www.arl.org/news/association-of-research-libraries-condemns-racism-and-violence-against-black-communities-supports-protests-against-police-brutality/>

"Protocols for Native American Archival Materials": Information and Resources Page  
<https://www2.archivists.org/groups/native-american-archives-section/protocols-for-native-american-archival-materials-information-and-resources-page>

Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia: Anti-Racist Description Resources  
[https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr\\_final.pdf](https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf)

UNC Chapel Hill: Conscious Editing Initiative <https://library.unc.edu/idea/projects/conscious-editing-initiative/>

Temple SCRC Statement on Potentially Harmful Language in Archival Description and Cataloging  
<https://library.temple.edu/policies/scrc-statement-on-potentially-harmful-language-in-archival-description-and-cataloging>

SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics  
<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>

ACRL Code of Ethics for Special Collections Librarians  
[https://rbms.info/standards/code\\_of\\_ethics/](https://rbms.info/standards/code_of_ethics/)