



## Archives Public Accessibility Policy

The Frances Lewis Stevenson Archives collects and preserves artifacts and documents of the rich history of Delta Gamma. In accordance with the best practices and core values, as set by the American Alliance of Museums and the Society of American Archivists, the artifacts and records of the Frances Lewis Stevenson Archives will be made publicly accessible on the archives digital database when all the following criteria is met:

1. Private information is not present or is fully redacted.
2. Doing so does not pose risk to the physical safety of the artifact/document.
3. There are no cultural concerns present with the document/artifact being publicly available.
4. There are no legal issues present with the document/artifact being publicly available.
5. It is not ritual material.
6. In cases where there is a question of if an artifact should or should not be publicly available the archivist/historian will make a recommendation to Council who will make the final decision.

**Private Information:** While accessibility and transparency are key values for museums and archives, it must be balanced with respect for the privacy of individuals. Private information includes but is not limited to social security numbers, medical records, driver's license number, passport number, banking information etc. Such information will not be made publicly available and will always be considered restricted information.

All records will be reviewed by the Digital Archive Review Committee. Those identified as containing potentially private information will be reviewed by the archivist/historian who will determine how much, if any, of the record can

be made public. If a document or artifact is already publicly available and is found to contain private information, it will be removed from public access immediately.

Personal contact information including mailing addresses, phone numbers and email addresses will not be made public on the digital archive for a minimum of 50 years from the date of the document on which they appear.

**Sensitive Information:** Distinct from private information, sensitive information is any information that has the potential to cause embarrassment, regret or discomfort to an individual, group or organization. In most cases sensitive information itself is not a valid reason to remove artifacts or documents from public access. In most cases where artifacts or documents contain sensitive information, but no private information, physical risk, cultural concerns, legal issues or any other relevant issues are present, it shall be made publicly available.

**Physical Risk:** Some artifacts and documents held in the archive may be in such a delicate or fragile state that handling them to be digitalized could pose a risk of causing damage. The determination of if the physical risk is too great for digitization and public view is at the discretion of the archivist/historian.

**Cultural Respect:** There may be cases where artifacts or documents should not be on public view for religious, spiritual or cultural reasons. Delta Gamma is committed to handling such cases with respect and will take all reasonable steps to ensure cultural, spiritual and religious beliefs are respected.

**Legal Issues:** A variety of legal issues and questions can emerge from an archival collection. When such a question arises the archivist/historian will consult Delta Gamma's General Counsel. In some cases, the archivist/historian will bring such cases to Council's attention.

**Ritual Material:** Delta Gamma's ritual material may only be viewed by initiated members of Delta Gamma. As such, it will never be made publicly available.

**Other Issues:** In very limited cases there may be cause not listed here to restrict an artifact or document from public access. In such cases the archivist/historian will present a recommendation to Council will make the final decision on if it should or should not be restricted from public view.

### **Negotiation at time of Donation**

When donating items to the archive donors or their representatives may negotiate for some or all the material to not be made publicly available immediately. Such negotiations may only be made with the donor(s) or their representative(s). At no time will the archives accept a donation with the stipulation that it never be made public. Negotiations could include a specific number of years until the material is made public or the material not being made public until the death of specific individuals. Such agreements must be made in writing with the approval of the archivist/historian.

### **Requests for Removal**

If a request for an artifact or document to be removed from public view is made either by a member or by third party the archivist/historian will evaluate if the request. If it does not fall within any of the categories laid out above the request will be denied.

In some cases, when appropriate, the archivist/historian will consult relevant parties regarding such requests and may bring the request to Council for final decision.