

**BRYN MAWR COLLEGE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Adopted by the College Special Collections Committee, March 6, 2026

Approved by the Bryn Mawr College Board of Trustees,
April 25, 2026

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Purpose

This Collections Management Policy governs all procedures related to the development, management, preservation, and use of Bryn Mawr College's holdings of art works, cultural artifacts, rare books, and historical records, collections that are stewarded by Special Collections. The policy provides a framework of professional standards to be used to establish guidelines for managing the collections.

The Collection Management Policy is a comprehensive written statement that:

- Sets forth the mission of the Bryn Mawr College Special Collections;
- Explains how this mission is pursued through collection activity,
- Articulates Bryn Mawr's professional standards regarding objects in its care, and
- Serves as a guide to staff in carrying out their collection-related responsibilities.

B. Process of Establishing Policy

This policy is based upon the Collections Management Policy approved by the College Special Collections Committee in 1999. The policy was revised in 2011-2012 with the assistance of the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) as part of its Stewardship Program funded by the William Penn Foundation. The revision was approved by the College Special Collections Committee in 2013, and by the College's Board of Trustees in 2014. The 2014 Policy called for review every five years. This revised version is the result of that review.

C. Statement of Authority

The general oversight of Bryn Mawr College is vested in the Board of Trustees, with management and administration for the College delegated by the Board to the President and senior administrative staff. Special Collections is part of Library and Information Technology Services, led by the Vice President and Chief Information Officer and Constance A. Jones Director of Libraries. The day-to-day management of Special Collections is delegated by the VP to the Seymour Adelman Director of Special Collections, who bears the ultimate responsibility for implementation of this Collections Management Policy and entrusts the Special Collections staff with the authority to implement the policy.

D. College Special Collections Committee Charge

The College Special Collections Committee is responsible for setting the overall collection management policies of Special Collections, for monitoring acquisitions and approving major acquisitions to the collections, for approving deaccessions from the collections, and for approving major decisions about the collections.

E. Membership and Voting

The Committee is chaired by the Director of Special Collections and voting members are the chairs or the chairs' designees from the following academic programs: Anthropology, Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology, Geology, Greek, Latin, and Classical Studies, History of Art, History, Literatures in English, Museum Studies, and Africana Studies. Voting members of the Committee also includes the Director of Libraries, Dean of the Graduate School for Arts and Sciences, and representatives from Alumnae Relations and Development, the Friends of the Libraries, and the Board of Trustees. The Director of

Special Collections is a voting member of the Committee and Special Collections staff are non-voting members.

The Committee submits its changes to the Collections Management Policy to the following oversight group for final approval: the President, Provost, Vice President for Alumnae/i Relations and Development, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Vice President and Chief Information Officer and Director of Libraries. Final decisions on policy changes and major changes to Special Collections rest with this group.

As detailed below, Committee decisions regarding acquisitions ([section III.](#)), acceptance of restricted gifts ([section III.F.](#)), deaccessions ([section IV.](#)), and scientific testing of objects ([section XIII.](#)) must be approved by a majority of the Committee. Votes will either be conducted at in person meetings or through email.

F. Legal and Ethical Considerations

The Bryn Mawr College Special Collections Department understands and adheres to its legal and ethical responsibilities in acquiring and managing collections of artworks and cultural properties. Special Collections Department staff members are active in their professional associations and stay current with their fields' discussions and standards for ethical conduct and professional practice in the management, handling, and use of art and cultural collections.

Special Collections staff and College Special Collections Committee members are expected to uphold professional standards as they strive to carry out the Special Collections mission. Specifically, individuals may not use their positions for personal gain or for the benefit of another in contravention of the mission and values of the Bryn Mawr College community.

The College is particularly aware of the ethical and legal responsibilities involved in acquiring and managing cultural properties that come from a wide range of places, cultures, and time periods. The College acknowledges the ways in which our histories of colonialism and racism have shaped the formation and presentation of our collections of historical, cultural and artistic work, and strives to address these legacies through increased transparency about the collections, a TriCollege commitment to reparative language (see [TriCollege Libraries Reparative Language Statement](#)), and renewed efforts to acquire objects in a just manner that expand the range of voices preserved in our collections (see statement [Confronting the Legacies of Colonialism and Racism in Special Collections](#)).

The College follows the guidance of the Archaeological Institute of America and “refuse[s] to participate in the trade in undocumented antiquities and refrain[s] from activities that give sanction, directly or indirectly, to that trade, and to the valuation of such artifacts through authentication, acquisition, publication, or exhibition. Undocumented antiquities are those that are not documented as belonging to a public or private collection before December 30, 1970, when the AIA Council endorsed the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.”

Special Collections will not acquire an object if there is evidence that the object was illegally appropriated during the Nazi Era unless there is documentation of subsequent restitution or other satisfactory resolution of title.

Bryn Mawr College is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which was signed into law on November 16, 1990. The College has complied with NAGPRA's Summary and Inventory Provisions. The NAGPRA repatriation process is still ongoing and can be followed online: <https://www.brynmawr.edu/about-college/nagpra>.

Inquiries regarding any potential repatriation or restitution claims on objects in the collection will be directed immediately to the Director of Special Collections, who will refer it to the NAGPRA Committee or work to assemble an appropriate group of experts to thoroughly research and respond to each inquiry.

G. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed by Special Collections staff and the Committee every five years and updated as needed. Major changes concerning the collections and/or their management may necessitate more frequent revisions.

H. Public Disclosure

Once approved, copies of this Collection Management Policy are to be provided to all members of the Senior Staff and to other appropriate Bryn Mawr College staff members. The Collections Management Policy will be posted on the Special Collections website. Copies of the Policy will be provided to donors upon request.

II. MISSION AND COLLECTIONS OF BRYN MAWR COLLEGE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

A. Institutional Mission Statement

Special Collections manages the College's extensive holdings of rare books, manuscripts, art works, cultural artifacts, and the College's archives, within the framework of the overall College mission (<https://www.brynmawr.edu/about/mission>). Special Collections promotes teaching and learning with the collections through exhibitions, class visits, research project support, internships, and public programs. The department offers opportunities for the college community to engage actively and critically with primary resources and to conduct original research, thereby fostering inter-disciplinary materiality study, visual literacy, and the preservation and discovery of diverse, non-traditional narratives.

B. History of Special Collections

Understanding how Special Collections came together aids Special Collections staff and patrons in using collections. Material in Special Collections ranges widely by period and region and includes natural history objects, works of art, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, photographs, audio-visual materials, archival documents, books, manuscripts, scientific instruments, and more. The history of Special Collections is updated online: <https://www.brynmawr.edu/about-college/special-collections/about-special-collections/history>.

C. Purpose and Use of Special Collections

Special Collections is a closed-stack, non-circulating collection housed primarily in Mariam Coffin Canaday Library, with important parts of the collection in Old Library and the Park Science buildings. Collection items can also be seen throughout the campus environment where they are displayed under controlled circumstances. The Collections are an important resource for teaching and research in the Tri-Colleges, and they are regularly used by scholars worldwide. Items are frequently loaned to regional, national, and international exhibitions.

D. Scope of the Collections

Special Collections collects books, manuscripts, art works, artifacts, and other cultural objects that support teaching and research at the College and enhance an understanding of the College's past. Objects are acquired for Special Collections through donation and purchase. In addition, College Archives acquires historical records of the College through the transfer of records from administrative departments.

The collecting priorities of Special Collections are set in response to the teaching and research interests of students and faculty. As a consequence, the priorities for new acquisitions will inevitably change over time as people with new interests join the faculty, and as succeeding generations of students bring new interests and passions to the College. Acquisition decisions are made by curators based upon their evaluations of the importance of the object(s); the likelihood that they will be used in classes, research projects, or exhibitions; and the ability of the department to catalogue, store, and care for them.

A detailed list of priorities is in the **Acquisitions Policy for Rare Books, Manuscripts, Art and Artifacts**, a policy under the purview of the College Special Collections Committee. The Acquisitions Policy is periodically updated to reflect changes in collection emphasis.

III. ACQUISITIONS/ACCESSIONS

A. Methods of Accession

The term Acquisition refers to the acceptance into the custody of Bryn Mawr College an object or group of objects which may or may not be accessioned. Special Collections acquires objects only for the purpose of adding them to the collections so that they may be used for teaching and research. Large acquisitions may also include objects that are duplicates, reproductions, or items that are out of scope for the collections, and those may be sold or otherwise disposed of before being accessioned. Objects are not acquired by Special Collections for the sole purpose of selling them to raise funds.

Accessioning is the formal process by which historic, artistic and cultural objects are accepted into the holdings of Special Collections. Once accessioned, objects may not be sold or discarded without approval of the College Special Collections Committee, and it becomes the responsibility of Special Collections staff to catalogue and preserve them and maintain records on their history and acquisition.

Unaccessioned objects are given an art loan collection number when added to Special Collections.

Please see the [Glossary](#) for the types of accessions/acquisitions.

B. Authority

Professional staff members in Special Collections are responsible for initiating the acquisition process and making a recommendation to the Director of Special Collections. If approved by the Director of Special Collections, the object is either referred to the College Special Collections Committee for a final decision or is accessioned into Special Collections for objects that do not need Committee approval.

The Committee's approval is required for any acquisition that will involve significant cost, staff time, storage space, or policy implications. Because of the differing nature of the collections, the trigger for requiring approval varies with the type of material. Committee approval is required for the following:

- Art, Books, Cultural Artifacts, Digital Collections, Ephemera, and Manuscripts that require expansion or modification of existing physical or digital storage, additional staff resources to process, and/or does not add to long-term collection goals. The same threshold applies to archival collections not governed by the college's records management policy.
- For purchased items or collections, approval is required if the purchase price is greater than \$25,000.

Any Special Collections curator or staff can bring a potential acquisition to the Committee for a vote for any reason.

For potential acquisitions being considered by the College Special Collections Committee, Special Collections staff will submit a statement in advance of any such deliberation by the Committee which explains the importance of the acquisition and outlines the resources that will be needed to catalogue and store it.

A summary of significant new acquisitions will be provided to the committee annually.

C. Criteria for Collection Acquisition

Within the context of the Bryn Mawr College Special Collections, to "collect" means to acquire and accession new material in a manner that conforms to the following objectives:

- To collect within the bounds of the Collections Mission.
- To collect within the categories defined in the **Acquisitions Policy for Rare Books, Manuscripts, Art and Artifacts**.
- To collect only objects (both digital and analog) that can be properly conserved, secured, and stored.
- To collect only objects which are in a condition suitable for teaching and research. Objects in unsatisfactory condition are to be accessioned only if they are of intrinsic value to the instructional mission or history of the College, and therefore worthy of conservation.

D. Acquisition Terms and Restrictions

Bryn Mawr College accessions into Special Collections only those objects which are intended to be retained for the long term. No artifacts or documents are accepted into Special Collections for the sole purpose of being deaccessioned and sold for fundraising purposes.

Before any object is acquired by any means, the following criteria must be met:

1. Title

A sale or donation to Bryn Mawr College Special Collections must be a legal transfer from the seller or donor to the College. All acquisitions for Special Collections must be accompanied by a clear title that has been presented by the donor(s), seller(s), or their authorized agent. Title to an object is established by Deed of Gift, receipts, or other documentation. As part of the acquisition process, Special Collections will gather as much information about the provenance of the item(s) as is available.

2. Condition

The object must be in good condition and able to be handled. Items requiring conservation will not be accepted, unless approved by Director of Special Collections.

E. Legal and Ethical Considerations

Special Collections follows cultural property, burial, copyright, and other pertinent laws and policies when making acquisition decisions. In particular, Special Collections acquires objects in compliance with the legal policies and considerations mentioned previously in [section I.F.](#) of this Policy.

All gift agreements are reviewed by College Counsel and signed by the College's Vice President for Finance and Administration or the VP's designee.

Special Collections staff cannot purchase objects for Special Collections from members of the College Special Collections Committee or other staff members. Staff, Committee members, and consulting faculty may not take advantage of privileged information to compete with Special Collections for acquisitions. Should a conflict of interest develop between the needs of the individual and those of Bryn Mawr College, the needs of Bryn Mawr College will prevail.

Bryn Mawr College staff and members of the College Special Collections Committee may not give appraisals for any reason. Appraisals for gifts or bequests must be made by an independent person or agency, as required by the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. The donor is responsible for the cost of the appraisal and is expected to share the appraisal with the College.

Special Collections cannot hold any object for any length of time solely for the purpose of enabling donors to obtain tax exemption status for their gift.

F. Conditional Acquisitions

As a general rule, Bryn Mawr College only accepts unrestricted gifts. Acceptance of a restricted gift must have the approval of the College Special Collections Committee.

Bryn Mawr College does not accept collections donated with the condition that the entire collection be accessioned. Bryn Mawr College has the right to choose, within a proposed donation, which items it wishes to keep. Non-accessioned portions of the donation are to be returned to the donor or handled as agreed upon with the donor.

G. Documentation of Acquisitions and Accessions

Special Collections maintains records of each newly accessioned item, including information about the donor, correspondence, the item's physical dimensions, a description, and other documentation. Each item is given a unique identifying number. Object records may be in paper or digital form, and often will be in both.

H. Objects Found in Collection

“Found in Collection” refers to objects which have been found at the College and deposited into Special Collections without any identification, or to objects without any identification which have been found in storage with accessioned objects. An object found in Special Collections is accessioned and processed if:

1. It is clear that the object belongs with other objects in Special Collections or
2. It is surmised that the object was once part of or intended for Special Collections and
3. The object fits within the current parameters for accessioning.

If the object is not to be accessioned, it may undergo the process of disposal or it may be added to the general library collections or other unaccessioned collections belonging to the College.

Before a final decision is made regarding the accessioning or disposal of an object “Found in Collection,” Special Collections must make a serious, diligent, and documented effort to learn more about the object. This process may include:

1. Determining the status of the object, as far as possible.
2. Consulting institutional records such as accession records, old inventories, board minutes, old gift and loan agreements, correspondence, newsletters, etc. in an attempt to link the object to some documentation.
3. Recording all information that is known about the object, including, if applicable, its object number, where it was found on the Bryn Mawr College campus, and any reasonable indications that the object may be assumed to belong to Bryn Mawr College, even if anecdotal.

IV. DEACCESSIONS AND DISPOSAL

A. Authority

The College Special Collections Committee is responsible for determining which items will be deaccessioned from Bryn Mawr College Special Collections, following the recommendations of the appropriate Special Collections staff members. The Committee needs a majority vote in order for an object to be deaccessioned. Outside opinions may be solicited before reaching a decision. Items that are not accessioned, such as gift books that have never been catalogued or items designated for the Campus Art Lending Program and Heritage collections, do not need to be deaccessioned prior to disposal, and so do not require the Committee’s approval.

B. Criteria for Deaccession

Deaccessioning is the process by which accessioned Collections objects and materials are permanently removed from the ownership of Bryn Mawr College. The sole purpose of deaccessioning any object or material within Special Collections is to refine and strengthen the overall collection. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned items may only be used to acquire objects of better quality and significance or to repair or catalogue items in the collections. Deaccessioning may also be used to remove objects that are either out of scope for the College's collections or have little significance in order to increase or improve the available space for new and existing collections of lasting value.

Bryn Mawr College only acquires objects and materials with potential teaching and research value and does not collect objects or materials with the intention of disposing of them.

To be considered eligible for deaccessioning, an object or collection must:

1. Be free from donor-mandated restrictions.
2. Be fully and legally owned by Bryn Mawr College
3. Meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - a. The object or material is no longer relevant to the mission and scope of Special Collections.
 - b. Bryn Mawr College is no longer able to preserve or manage the object or material properly.
 - c. The object or material has deteriorated beyond usefulness, been extensively damaged, or presents a risk to other items in the Special Collections, or to the staff and researchers working therein, and cannot be restored without compromising its integrity. (In emergency situations voting may be bypassed to prioritize safety to staff and other collections. Any disposal will be reported to the Committee.)
 - d. The object or material has been found to be a fake, forgery, or reproduction, and is not useful for instructional purposes. Such items should be clearly and permanently marked and should not be disposed of by means of sale, except in cases where they can be clearly labelled as reproductions.
 - e. The object or material is a duplicate which has no value as part of a series or exceptional value differentiating it from the object it duplicates.
 - f. The object or material is intended for exchange with another object from another educational facility.
 - g. In the case of digital objects, it is found to be in violation of copyright, publicity rights, or privacy laws. In some cases, the item may be embargoed rather than deaccessioned.

An object may also be deaccessioned if it is found to be subject to a legitimate or ethical claim for repatriation. If the object is subject to NAGPRA, a decision will be made by the [College's NAGPRA Committee](#). NAGPRA only covers a specific subset of materials present in the collections of many US institutions. For other claims, an appropriate group of subject specialists will be assembled to make repatriation decisions. The Vice President for Finance and Administration or their designee is the signatory for all legal and physical transfers. Items being repatriated (whether through the National

NAGPRA process, or ethical repatriations) will not require a separate deaccession review by the College Special Collections Committee. The Committee will be informed of repatriation decisions.

The processing of large collections of archives, manuscripts, books, prints and other objects routinely includes the weeding out and disposing of duplicate and unwanted material. Material discarded as part of this normal process is not subject to the same rigorous deaccession procedures as accessioned Special Collections objects and materials, although weeding must follow the terms of the agreement with the donor.

C. Restrictions and Conditions of Deaccession

1. Bryn Mawr College follows ethical deaccessioning practices. Items from Special Collections may not be deaccessioned with the intent of giving the items as gifts to or otherwise placing them in the possession of employees, members of the College Special Collections Committee, trustees, students, or any representative or immediate family member of the aforementioned. These individuals are, however, eligible to purchase deaccessioned objects that are offered at public sales.
2. Special Collections staff must review the applicability of all international, federal, and state laws governing collections and certify that there are no restrictions on an object which preclude its deaccessioning.
3. The proceeds of all sales of deaccessioned items are to be deposited in a conservation/acquisition fund for the use of Special Collections
4. If an object has been received as a gift or bequest with conditions imposed, the restrictions must be honored or reasonable efforts made to notify the donor, or members of the donor's family, if necessary.
5. If an object was received by Bryn Mawr College as a gift intended specifically for the Special Collections and no tax deduction was taken, the College may seek to return the object to the original donor. If the donor did take a tax deduction for the gift, the object must not be returned.

D. Methods of Deaccession and Disposal

Special Collections may dispose of a deaccessioned object by donation to or exchange with a non-profit institution, by sale, or by destruction, when warranted.

Proceeds from sales are to be placed in a restricted account and used for the acquisition and care of Special Collections objects. Income from the sale of deaccessioned objects must not be used to defray ongoing operating expenses but to enhance Special Collections.

When deaccessioning is recommended, the method of disposal is determined on a case-by-case basis for each deaccessioned object. Deaccessioned objects can be disposed of by the following means, as directed by the College Special Collections Committee.

1. Sale. Objects may be offered for purchase by public sale, either through a public auction or by some other form of sale which is publicly advertised. Deaccessioned objects with an expected value of more than \$50,000 may be sold only after they have been evaluated by an independent appraiser. Deaccessioned objects may not be sold to an independent dealer or to a private collector unless such individuals have submitted the

highest bid at a public auction or as part of a sealed-bid invitation to a large group, or unless the object is valued at less than \$500 and has been refused by a public auction house. Because of the College's concern about the market in antiquities, archaeological objects will not be sold.

2. Gift. If the object or material has educational or historical value, Special Collections staff may arrange to donate it to another institution. Objects must be offered first to other educational institutions or non-profit institutions.
3. Exchange. Objects may be exchanged with other institutions for the purpose of enhancing the Special Collections.
4. Transfer. Books that have a value under \$500 and are outside of the Special Collections collecting scope may be transferred into the general library collections. Such transfers do not require the approval of the College Special Collections Committee. Books transferred to the general collections come under the [Bryn Mawr College Libraries General Gifts-in-Kind Policy](#), and may be deaccessioned at a later date.
5. Destruction or designation for scientific analysis. This option should be considered only after all other means of deaccessioning have been explored, and only after it has been determined that no entity will buy the object or accept it as a donation. Deaccessioned objects may also be destroyed if they have deteriorated to the point that they are no longer useful, and/or that they pose a hazard to staff, the public and/or other collection items. If the condition of an object is a criterion for deaccessioning, Bryn Mawr College will obtain the recommendation of a conservator in the relevant medium before making the final decision.
6. Disposal of Objects "Found in Collection." If an undocumented object is sold or donated, Bryn Mawr College may use a quitclaim deed, which transfers claim and rights to the object to the new owner, with no guarantee of title transfer. Any risk associated with holding the undocumented object is therefore transferred to the new owner. If an undocumented object is found to have or can be reasonably assumed to have very little monetary value, Bryn Mawr College may choose to donate the object to a nonprofit organization. The lack of title transfer must be transparently stated. If an undocumented object is deemed to have deteriorated beyond repair and if destruction is required to protect other objects in Special Collections, and/or the health and safety of Bryn Mawr staff or the public, immediate action may be taken.

E. Documentation of Deaccession and Disposal

Special Collections will document all deaccessioned items. Documentation may consist of Special Collections staff research findings, College Special Collections Committee recommendations, official receipts, correspondence, and records of the final disposition of the object. In addition, items other than books must be photographed. All documents are to be filed with the object's registration records and retained there permanently.

V. INCOMING LOANS

A. Types of Incoming Loans

Bryn Mawr College Special Collections may borrow items for the purpose of:

1. Temporary exhibitions lasting up to one year. Such loans are renewable but are not to exceed a total of six years.
2. Classroom use.

Inter-Library loans are not considered to be Special Collections incoming loans.

The Collections Manager is responsible for the processing and renewal of loans for artworks and artifacts and the Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts is responsible for the processing and renewal of loans for rare books and manuscripts. In their absence, another appropriate Special Collections staff member designated by the Director of Special Collections may handle the loan paperwork.

B. Terms and Conditions for Incoming Loans

Incoming loans are accepted from individuals or institutions for the purpose of exhibition, research, or teaching. Bryn Mawr College does not store or maintain items belonging to others that are not required for exhibition, teaching or ongoing research.

In its treatment of borrowed objects, Special Collections abides by the same regulations it imposes on the objects it lends to other institutions.

Special Collections does not perform any type of conservation, cleaning, reframing, repair, or other action that alters the physical condition of a borrowed object without written approval from the lender.

If an object loaned to Special Collections is damaged or lost, the lender, Bryn Mawr's insurer, and appropriate College administrative staff will be notified immediately and a full written and photographic report will follow. If damage occurred in transit, Special Collections must also notify the carrier and retain all packing materials for inspection.

The following criteria must be met for an incoming loan:

1. The lender and Bryn Mawr College must have a written agreement covering the terms of the loan. The agreement will cover the costs, transportation, security, storage, and environmental conditions for the loaned objects. In most cases, the terms outlined in the Special Collections Incoming Loan form will govern the terms of the loan.
2. Bryn Mawr College will normally cover all risk and wall-to-wall fine arts insurance on the items being borrowed at the value established by the lender and confirmed by the insurance company's recovery process unless the lender waives insurance requirements in writing. The amount payable by such insurance is the sole recovery available to the lender in the event of loss or damage. If the lender prefers to provide insurance for the object, the lender must have Bryn Mawr College listed as an additionally insured party on the policy or obtain for the College a waiver of subrogation.
3. Special Collections must be able to provide care and protection for the borrowed object that meets or exceeds the care and protection that it provides for its own collections.

Appropriate exhibition or storage space must be available for the duration of the loan term. Borrowed objects must only be handled under the supervision of professional staff in Special Collections

4. Special Collections staff must produce a basic condition report or photographic documentation upon receipt of a loaned object and prior to the object's return to the lender. Special Collections staff should not request or accept objects that cannot withstand the normal rigors of packing, transport, handling, and display.
5. The loan must have no unreasonable restrictions. Any restrictions or limitations requested by the lender are to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Loans with such clauses are accepted only if Special Collections is prepared to meet the restrictions the lender has placed on the object.
6. The loan must have satisfactory documentation of provenance and title. The lenders must declare in writing that they own the object. Special Collections does not borrow from third parties.
7. Special Collections may photograph incoming loan objects in accordance with the loan agreement with the lender.
8. If there is a change in the ownership of an object loaned to Special Collections, including a change in the lender's name or address or the dissolution of a lending institution, the lender must notify Special Collections promptly in writing. If legal ownership changes during the loan term, the new owners must, prior to the object's return, provide documentation of their legal right to receive the object.

C. Long-Term Loans and Objects Left on Deposit

Special Collections does not accept objects on permanent or indefinite term loan. A clear loan term, with definite beginning and ending dates, must be stated on all loan agreements. The maximum term for any incoming loan is one year. All loan agreements must be re-evaluated, with the possibility for renewal, after one year. Loans are not to exceed a total of six years.

Previously, objects have been left in the custody of Special Collections which are not covered by an incoming loan agreement or which lack a transfer of legal title. These objects may have been intended as donations or loans for which the appropriate paperwork was never completed. Such objects are monitored in the same manner as Special Collections objects while their provenance and status are investigated. Special Collections staff makes all possible efforts to contact the donors/lenders or their immediate heirs in order to resolve the deposit.

If the lender is known and the item is to remain in Special Collections as a loan, a loan form is to be processed and forwarded to the lender. Any prior agreements between Bryn Mawr College and the lender will be honored.

Unwanted objects on loan are to be disposed of by one of three methods:

1. If the owner is known, return to the owner or owner's heirs.
2. If the owner is known and the owner or heirs decline to have the object returned, it may be disposed of in an appropriate manner as described in [section IV](#) of this policy.
3. After failed attempts to find the owner, the object may be disposed of in an appropriate manner as described in [section IV](#) of this policy.

If the object was intended as a gift or bequest for Special Collections, and is consistent with the Special Collections mission and collecting criteria, it is to be processed in the same manner as an accession.

If the Special Collections staff is unable to locate and contact an object's original donor/lender, all efforts made to find and contact that donor/lender must be documented and all documentation retained in the object file.

If a donor/lender or the donor/lender's heirs claim ownership of a Found in Collection item and wishes for the item to be returned, the burden of proof of ownership is on the claimant. The claimant must produce an original loan certificate in order to reclaim the object. Heirs must produce proof that they are the legal heirs of the original donor.

VI. OUTGOING LOANS

A. Approval Process for Outgoing Loans

The Collections Manager, Curators, and/or Archivist are responsible for monitoring loans, which are subject to final approval by the Director of Special Collections. All outgoing loans must be reported annually to the College Special Collections Committee.

B. Criteria for Outgoing Loans

Loans are made to educational institutions or non-profit organizations after careful consideration of the physical stability of the object and the ability of the borrower to provide the proper care, environment and security for the object. When assured that proper care and protection will be provided, Special Collections may lend objects for the purpose of promoting public education through study and exhibition. Loans are made only for the purposes of study or exhibition. At all times, the preservation of Special Collections objects takes priority over other considerations.

Loans are not made to private individuals.

Requests for loans must be received at least three months in advance of the expected delivery date.

Note: For some objects the lead time may be much longer.

Before materials are lent the following criteria must be met:

1. The object must be loaned for educational, scholarly, or exhibition purposes.
2. The object must not be loaned for decorative purposes outside the College environment.
3. The object must be in good condition and able to withstand the ordinary strains of handling, packing, travel, and study or exhibition.
4. The object must be appropriately insured by the borrowing organization and/or by Bryn Mawr College.
5. The proposed loan must not bring discredit upon the College.
6. The object must not be on exhibit with objects that Special Collections has reason to believe were acquired illegally or unethically.
7. There must be no restrictions on the requested object that preclude making the loan.

8. The loan must not jeopardize Special Collections' own program or conflict with Tri-Co educational use.
9. The item must be owned by Bryn Mawr College and not on loan to it.
10. The condition of all items involved in the loan must be documented in writing and with photographs.
11. The borrower must sign a written agreement outlining the conditions established by Special Collections.

Loans from Special Collections will not, in general, exceed the duration of one year. If the borrower wishes to keep an object longer than one year, the loan agreement must be re-signed annually, with the possibility for renewal, on an item-by-item basis. Long term loans may occur as special exceptions, such as in the case of long-term loans to area museums. Long term loans must be approved by the College Special Collections Committee.

Special Collections has reciprocal loan agreements with Haverford and Swarthmore College's Special Collections Departments that can allow for simpler loan arrangements except in the case of high value items.

C. Requirements and Obligations for Borrowers

1. All loan requests must be made in writing by the borrowing institution, including Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges. Requests must outline the reason for the request (exhibition or otherwise), dates of the proposed loan and schedule of tour (when applicable), and proposed packing, travel, and insurance arrangements.
2. If a loaned object is to be placed on exhibit, the borrowing institution (excluding Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges) must complete a Standard Facility Report which indicates the environmental and other building-related conditions under which the object is to be displayed.
3. The borrowing institution must provide a certificate of insurance covering the loaned items at the value established by Bryn Mawr College for the duration of the loan, including transit to and from the borrowing institution and while on the institution's premises, unless the item is of minimal monetary value and the College has waived insurance.
4. Before an object leaves Special Collections, an outgoing condition report or photograph of the object must be produced. The borrowing institution must complete a written condition report upon receipt of any loaned object, with an additional condition report completed prior to return of the object to Special Collections.
5. The borrowing institution must not perform any conservation, cleaning, fumigation, treatment, reframing, marking, or other action that alters an object in any way without the written approval of Special Collections. In the event that an object is damaged while in transit or while at another institution, the borrower must report any damages to Special Collections immediately. The borrowing institution is required to pay all conservation costs necessary to repair the damage. Such conservation is to be performed by a conservator who has been approved by Special Collections staff.
6. The borrowing institution is expected to pay all costs for any special conservation work, glazing, or framing performed on requested objects. The borrowing institution is

normally required to assume responsibility for all shipping costs, including any special packing that might be required; insurance costs in transit and on location; and all courier fees. Bryn Mawr College must approve all arrangements, and a cost estimate for all charges is to be forwarded to the institution requesting the loan. Bryn Mawr College may assume the shipping and insurance costs for exhibitions in which it is a partner.

7. The borrower may photograph a loaned object for record keeping, educational, or publicity purposes. Any reproduction for sale may occur only with the written approval of Special Collections. Framed items may not be removed from their frames without written permission from Special Collections.

VII. CAMPUS DISPLAY OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Special Collections carries out the institution's ethical obligation to preserve its material culture for posterity. Display of collections involves inherent risk. Many artworks in the collection could be kept more chemically stable by placing them in a cold storage room in the dark—but this would keep the campus community from being able to study and enjoy them! Special Collections utilizes preventive conservation techniques to balance access and display of collections. These include designating some collections for display, while reserving others for teaching, research, and longer-term preservation.

Designated accessioned and unaccessioned artwork is organized into the following loan collections for a **Campus Art Lending Program** managed by the Curator for Art and Artifacts. This program is not intended to address Art in the Environment.

A. Artwork for Public and Semi-public Spaces (Public Art Loan Collections)

Accessioned and unaccessioned artwork in Special Collections may be available for display in public or semi-public campus spaces, such as hallways, conference rooms, common areas, and rooms that are available to reserve through the College's Conferences & Events EMS system. Any loaned artwork must be available for viewing by the College's faculty, students, and researchers.

Such internal loans are arranged by the Curator for Art and Artifacts, who reserves the right to refuse any loan request. Reasons for refusal may involve best practices for care of the object, as well as lack of buy-in from campus administration or local audiences. Artwork on loan from Special Collections may be removed from any area at any time by Special Collections staff or their designees.

Costs involved in framing or displaying selected artworks for public or semi-public spaces may be shared with Special Collections.

B. Artwork for Non-Public Spaces (Circulating Art Loan Collection)

Unaccessioned artwork assembled for a designated Campus Art Lending Program in Special Collections and managed by the Curator for Art and Artifacts may be available for loan to members of the College community for placement in College offices and other non-public spaces. Any costs involved in framing or installation of selected artworks are the responsibility of the department requesting the loan. Artwork on loan from Special Collections may be removed from any area at any time by Special Collections staff or their designees.

Procedures for requesting artwork from the Campus Art Lending Program are published on the Special Collections webpage.

C. Artwork for Student Dorms (SCAMP Collection – Special Collections Art at My Place Collection)

Special Collections Art at My Place (SCAMP) is a student art lending program consisting of no more than 100 designated works of art that Bryn Mawr students can borrow for their on-campus dorm rooms. The Collection will be formed and managed by the Curator for Art & Artifacts.

Cost of artworks and framing will be borne by designated gifts.

VIII. DOCUMENTATION

A. Collection Object Records

Special Collections creates and maintains up-to-date records on all objects entering Special Collections, including gifts, purchases, loans, and any other type of acquisition, even if temporary, and has a system to ensure that the critical records are backed-up against loss in the event of a disaster.

The systems and procedures used for maintaining collection descriptive records may change periodically to reflect improved processes and technology, and those changes do not require a change in the Collection Management Policy.

Collections records are managed using the following systems:

- Art and Artifact Collections: EmbARK Collections Manager
- Rare books: Alma ILS
- Archives and Manuscript Collections: ArchivesSpace
- Digital Collections: Islandora

B. Backup System for Records

Special Collections records are safeguarded from loss, destruction, and degradation through back-ups maintained either on campus or remotely.

C. Inventory

A base inventory of Special Collections has been completed. A verification inventory is to be conducted periodically for each collection.

D. Image Naming Standards

For digital images of objects in Special Collections, all filenames must follow a set convention. Specific procedural details can be found in the Bryn Mawr College Photography Documentation Guide and the Bryn Mawr College Special Collections Digitization Guide.

IX. COLLECTIONS CARE

Special Collections follows professional standards for the housing and care of its holdings to the best of its abilities. Most collections are kept in secure air-conditioned storage areas in which environmental conditions are continuously monitored. Objects are housed using museum-quality containers, boxes and folders, and digital collections are managed using appropriate technologies (see [Digital Preservation Policy](#)).

In addition to performing the types of care and management described in other sections of this policy, Special Collections also:

1. Ensures that objects are handled appropriately and receive adequate collection maintenance and care.
2. Maintains a budget line item for Special Collections care and conservation.
3. Carries out all legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities required to provide the necessary care for all objects acquired, borrowed, or placed in Special Collections.

X. INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

A. Insurance Policy

Although insurance is not a substitute for safety, security, or professional collections care, it does provide compensation in the event of unforeseen loss or damage. Bryn Mawr College provides insurance coverage for its Special Collections.

B. General Risk Management

Special Collections has an Emergency Preparedness and Response plan in place in order to prevent, minimize, react to, and recover from potential damage in the event of disasters and emergencies. The contents of the plan, particularly procedures, contact lists, and Special Collections priorities are reviewed and updated periodically, as needed.

Special Collections staff must conduct periodic reviews of potential risks to the collections including natural disasters, vandalism, theft, human error, mechanical or operational system failure, and deterioration. Special Collections staff maintains regular contact with local fire and police departments, in coordination with the Bryn Mawr College Campus Safety and Facilities staffs. Personnel from these agencies have been made aware of the historical value and significance of the Special Collections.

Special Collections staff have been trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers, proper fire drill procedures, evacuation procedures for members of the staff and the public and disaster response and recovery for Special Collections. Special Collections keeps a stock of supplies necessary for emergency response and salvage onsite.

C. Security

Special Collections storage spaces, including storage cabinets, are kept locked at all times when not attended by Special Collections staff. The main Special Collections storage areas are controlled by an

electronic security system. The security system is administered by the Director of Special Collections, and alarms are sent directly to the Bryn Mawr College Campus Safety office.

XI. ACCESS AND USE

A. Collections Access

To access items from this non-circulating collection, visitors and researchers request materials to view and use for research. Special Collections is open to all members of the public. Access to collections is mediated through Special Collections staff. Please see [Visit & Request](#) for information about open hours and how to make an appointment. Most objects can be handled under controlled circumstances within Special Collections. In supporting accessibility to Special Collections, Bryn Mawr College recognizes that a suitable balance must be struck between users' need for access and the preservation needs and concerns of the materials.

B. Terms and Conditions

Bryn Mawr College reserves the right to refuse access to certain objects in Special Collections if the objects are unprocessed, or deemed too fragile or unstable for use, or are restricted by the donor or office of origin. Special Collections staff may also limit the number of researchers using particular items at one time.

Objects from Special Collections must be used in the Special Collections Reading Room or designated area. Areas where researchers are using Special Collections objects are to be supervised by a member of the Special Collections staff at all times, and staff members are to instruct researchers in proper handling methods for collections. Users must comply with Bryn Mawr College's conditions regarding the examination, handling and photography of Special Collections materials, and the use or dissemination of Special Collections information.

To protect the confidentiality of donors and the security of Special Collections, access to certain information in the collection files may be restricted. Addresses and other personal information about donors are not provided without the permission of the donor. Insurance and appraised values of Special Collections objects are kept confidential. Bryn Mawr College reserves the right to deny access to other types of information contained in its Special Collections records, such as collections containing the personally identifiable information of current or former students or collections which are restricted by donor agreement.

Special Collections storage areas are not open to researchers for general browsing. Special Collections staff must retrieve material from storage.

XII. RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTIONS

Special Collections materials within the public domain may be used for any publication purpose.

For copyrighted materials to be published, the requester is solely responsible for clearing the copyright with the rights holder. Bryn Mawr College makes no warranties or representations and assumes no

responsibility whatsoever for any claims against the requester, the publisher, or any other party by artists, their agents, estates, or by any parties in connection with the reproduction of any work from the collections.

Users are asked to credit Bryn Mawr College Special Collections and, if known, the creator of the work.

Researchers may take digital photographs, without flash, of Special Collections items for their own research purposes as long as such photography is safe for the item and is not disruptive to the work of others. Many items in Special Collections have been photographed or digitized and researchers are advised to check with Special Collections staff to determine if an image of the desired object is already available.

Researchers may request Special Collections to provide images of collections objects, for which the department may charge fees to cover the cost of making the reproductions. In addition, Special Collections may require that objects be imaged only by Special Collections staff if the objects require special handling in order to remain safe. All photographs of Special Collections objects are the property of Bryn Mawr College. Special Collections does not charge permission fees for the use of its images.

Users of Special Collections images in publications or websites are asked to notify the department of the publication. Researchers who publish significant pieces on objects in the collection are asked to provide links to the articles or offprints.

XIII. SCIENTIFIC TESTING OF OBJECTS

The following policy and procedures for scientific testing are designed to address the interests of scientific research on accessioned objects in Special Collections.

In accordance with its mission to educate, the College encourages the use of its collections for research in all fields and the employment of a wide variety of research methods. Special Collections permits the testing of collection items using established scientific methods. All requests for testing, whether destructive or non-destructive, and scientific examination other than visual or using standard microscopy, are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Requests to perform scientific procedures on objects in Special Collections may be initiated by Bryn Mawr College professors or students, Special Collections staff members, or outside scholars or scientists. Permission for testing objects must be obtained in writing before any tests are undertaken. Special Collections staff review these requests to ensure the safety and preservation of the items and the proper documentation of the samples taken.

Current standard tests include, but are not limited to: radiography, CAT scans, PIXE (Particle Induced X-ray Emission), X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (XRF), gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy, Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), polarized light microscopy, fluorescence microscopy, seal impressions, and mold-making using latex or silicone rubber.

A. Criteria for Scientific Testing Requests

Objects to be sampled must not normally be damaged in ways that

- prevent additional sampling and destructive testing.
- prevent additional non-destructive study and analysis.

If procedures are planned that will damage an artifact such that one of the above conditions is not met, then the matter must be referred to the College Special Collections Committee for approval.

Documentation describing the laboratory procedures and the purpose and goal of the project must be sent to the Committee along with the request. The request must also be accompanied by documentation (journal reports, professional association reports, etc.) which shows that the proposed procedures are routinely used and considered appropriate by professionals working in the relevant discipline.

If the proposed procedures do not normally damage an object (as described above), then the request is handled by Special Collections staff. ~~and~~ A Bryn Mawr College professor in the department most closely associated with the collection may be consulted as needed.

B. Points of Consideration for Scientific Testing Requests

1. Objects must be handled according to standard museum protocols and to the standards set by analytical laboratories.
2. The analytical methods proposed should be appropriate to the questions addressed by the study, and must be the least intrusive analytical means of obtaining the answers to those questions. In all instances, non-destructive and minimally-invasive techniques are preferred over more destructive methods that require large portions of an artifact. The researcher must adequately justify their choice of method. Bryn Mawr College is more likely to grant permission if the researcher has already utilized minimally-destructive techniques and can illustrate that the more destructive techniques are absolutely required.
3. The proposed analyst must be qualified to perform the work.
4. The amount of sample and number of specimens requested must be limited to that which is necessary to obtain meaningful results.
5. Each specimen must be able to be safely sampled or cast without damage or defacement and without precluding future study or analysis, or decreasing the potential for future testing. Destructive testing is allowed for research purposes in the geological collections when the sample is not unique, rare, or a "major" sample in the collection. Some collections of archaeological samples may also contain objects that are of sufficiently low quality that destructive testing may take place during research and teaching (the Naukratis Collection, for example).
6. The degree to which any proposed destructive sampling affects the specimen must be minimal. Whenever possible, samples should be taken from obscured portions of the specimen.
7. The testing must not substantively affect the ability of the object to be displayed or used for instructional purposes
8. Samples must be returned to Special Collections to be retained for future use, unless otherwise approved by Special Collections.

Each specimen tested must be annotated either with a label or in the specimen record, indicating the material removed, the nature of the study, the researcher's name and institutional affiliation, and the date. Special Collections must be cited in any resulting publication, a copy of which should be sent to the Collections Manager.

GLOSSARY

Art in the Environment – The numerous examples of historical material culture in use in the campus environment from furniture and built-in decorative elements to public sculpture that are co-stewarded by Special Collections and Facilities Services.

Bequest – An item directly willed to Special Collections or Bryn Mawr College at large.

Campus Art Lending Program – The Campus Art Lending Program in Special Collections makes artwork from our various art loan collections available for display on campus, so that locations across campus can serve as galleries in a campus-wide museum. Relevant art loan collections are: Public Art Loan Collections, Circulating Art Loan Collection, SCAMP Collection.

Circulating Art Loan Collection – The Circulating Art Loan Collection consists of artworks that have been designated by Special Collections as more suitable for display than for teaching and research. These may be works that were previously accessioned into the permanent collection, but which since have been reevaluated because of condition, lack of use, or relevance to the liberal arts curriculum. They may be gifts that were never accessioned into the permanent collection, and they may be works that were donated or purchased with an expressed interest in having them displayed rather than stored.

<https://digitalprojects.brynmawr.edu/art-loan/>

Exchange – An object acquired in an exchange with another educational or cultural institution.

Found in Collection – An undocumented object or material historically stored with Special Collections but having little or no accession information and not believed to be an abandoned loan.

Gift – An object given by one or more individuals or an institution. Donors may be designated as “anonymous” if they would prefer that their names not be revealed to the public. An anonymous gift is not the same as “found in collection.”

Heritage – An object, historically belonging to the College, which documents its history or traditions.

Public Art Loan Collections – The Public Art Collections consist of artworks made available at the discretion of the Curator for Art & Artifacts for display in public and semi-public facing spaces. These may include accessioned works that benefit the campus public sufficiently to outweigh inherent risks of their display. These may be works that were purchased or donated with an expressed interest in having them displayed rather than stored, indeed they may be part of named art loan collections.

Purchase – An item purchased for Special Collections with College funds or gift funds.

SCAMP Collection – The Special Collections Art at My Place Collection or SCAMP Collection consists of (not more than) 100 works of art provided by designated gift funds. These artworks are available to Bryn Mawr students to borrow for their on-campus dorm rooms as part of the Campus Art Lending Program.

Transfer – An object transferred to Special Collections from an academic or administrative department within the College.