

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign – University Library

Project STAND Symposium:
Documenting Student Activism of Marginalized Communities Across Academic Institutions

Project STAND (Student Activism Now Documented) is a first-of-its-kind collaborative effort among archival repositories within academic institutions across the country to create an online portal featuring analog and digital collections that document the student activism related to historically marginalized communities (e.g., African American, Chicano/a, LGBTQ, religious minorities, disabled, etc.). The project, initially conceived by university archivists Lae'l Hughes-Watkins at Kent State and Tamar Chute at Ohio State University, is a consortium of nearly thirty colleges and universities requesting \$100,000 to build additional partnerships through a series of national symposia that will solidify the goals, objectives and status of Project STAND, while providing a forum for discussion of best practices, challenges, and successes in documenting student activism. University of Illinois, in cooperation with the Project STAND partners, is respectfully requesting support from the IMLS National Leadership National Forum Grant in the Curating Collections category for \$100,000 to support this initiative and carry it into the next phase.

National Need

Many U.S. colleges and universities in the last five years have seen an uptick in student activism. Sit-ins, protests, and hunger strikes have ignited a critical discourse on issues of race, immigration, gender rights, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, and labor rights. According to a 2015 article in *The Atlantic* magazine titled “The Renaissance of Student Activism,” “there’s a renaissance of political activism going on, and it exists on every major campus.” The article reported that approximately 160 student protests occurred in the U.S. over the course of the 2014 fall semester alone. Student dissent has taken inspiration from the Black Lives Matter movement, which emerged in 2013 and became a rallying cry for acts of social injustice against communities of color on and off college campuses around the country. As these movements capture the nation’s attention like the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 70s, it is imperative to ask whether repositories at academic institutions are documenting, preserving and providing access to records in digital or analog format underscoring these narratives. We must also turn our attention to the transience of the student population; the ephemeral, at-risk, and distributed nature of records documenting student activism that is created today also creates the urgency to connect and document current as well as past acts of student dissent at our academic institutions.

Project Design

The STAND forums, Documenting Student Activism and Marginalized Communities Across Academic Institutions, will be an 18-month project, beginning from October 1, 2018 to April 2020 and will launch four symposia, scheduled for December 2018 in Atlanta, Georgia; April 2019 in Rhode Island; August 2019 in Chicago, Illinois; and December 2019 in Tempe, Arizona.

Co-organizers will consist of STAND advisory board/members: Helen Conger, Archivist, Case Western Reserve University; Jarrett M. Drake, PhD candidate, Anthropology, Harvard; Ken Grossi, Archivist, Oberlin College; Elizabeth Smith Pryor, Associate Professor, History Department, Kent State University; Michelle Sweetser, Head Librarian and University Archivist, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University; Trevor Watkins, STAND web developer, and STEM Librarian, Kent State University; Andrea Jackson, Director Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC); and Eira Tansey, Digital Archivist, University of Cincinnati. Co-organizational support will stem from AUC Woodruff Library, Black Metropolis Research Consortium, Chicago State University, University of Rhode Island, and Arizona State University. The STAND advisory board will identify guest panelists and topics. Potential speakers include scholars across a variety of disciplines, professional archivists, student leaders and activists. Invited keynotes and guests may include Dr. Ibram Kendi, 2016 National Book Award Winner and author of the book, *The Black Campus Movement: The*

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Reconstitution of Higher Education; Dr. Martha Biondi, Associate Professor, African American Studies at Northwestern University; and Frank Dawson and Abby Ginzberg, directors of the film *Agents of Change*.

Hosting four different symposia will allow discussion on the goals of Project STAND, engage in substantive dialogue on the successes and challenges in building community with student activists/organizations, and the ethical dilemmas of archiving student activism (specifically of disenfranchised student populations). The existing STAND website (<https://standarchives.wordpress.com/>) will expand to include a Call for Proposals form inviting members of the archival profession and various intersecting disciplines to participate. STAND will follow the Rhizome and DocNow microgrant model where participants will receive funding for travel and lodging.

Performance Goals and Outcomes

- Create a network of information professionals, historians, scholars, activists and others from diverse fields who will actively engage in shaping discourse on best practices for archiving the social movements of students on and off campus.
- Build STAND membership to 50-70 institutions by the conclusion of the forums by inviting potential partners and request their participation, livestream symposia to nearly 2,000 viewers.
- Develop and distribute a detailed report of collection assessment surveys gathered from STAND partners, create and share an archivist toolkit of best-practices (with an added emphasis on digital curation and preservation) for engaging and documenting historically underrepresented and marginalized communities.
- Share content via STAND website, social media platforms, and through participating partners communication channels.

National Impact

The project's objectives are national in scope and include engaging current student activists, encouraging student organizations to preserve and donate their records to archival repositories, strengthen discourse within academic institutions on the importance of recording student movements past and present (digital and analog), developing curriculum/lesson plans, and providing documentation on best archival practices for the collection development of disenfranchised student populations (aimed at professionals as well as student organizations and activists).

Core Project Team

- Tamar Chute (STAND Co-founder and co-chair), University Archivist, The Ohio State University
- Helen Conger (STAND advisory board), Archivist, Case Western Reserve University
- Lae'l Hughes-Watkins, Project Director, (STAND founder), University Archivist, Kent State University,
- Anna Trammell (STAND advisory board), Archival Reference and Operations Specialist, University of Illinois.

Estimated Budget

Project STAND requests \$100,000 for four symposia. Funding from IMLS will support travel, lodging and fees for speakers (19%), travel and lodging for funded participants (19%), livestream (12%), website and marketing costs (13%), publication costs (6%) Facilities and Administrative Cost (31.9%). Total cost will be \$100,000.