

Dear Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends of Martin Luther College:

For nearly 10 years, people committed to preserving the history of Dr. Martin Luther College and Martin Luther College for the benefit of future generations have worked in various ways to establish and promote the Martin Luther College Archives.

Over this time more than 20 volunteers have worked for thousands of hours to identify people in old photographs and to organize the many documents and other items that had been saved in boxes but not otherwise preserved or classified.

In 2014 an Archives Committee was formed to lay out a formal structure to the MLC Archives. Guidelines for the Archives and its work were part of this committee's focus, but it also spearheaded projects for additional preservation and dissemination of the college's history, including establishing a Records Retention Policy and getting certain historical records online and readily available to constituents of MLC.

The MLC Alumni Association provided funding in 2016 for MLC's first paid Archives staff member. At five hours per week, this temporary project manager was envisioned to continue structuring the Archives and making more materials publicly available on a temporary basis of up to 60 weeks, at which time the hiring of a permanent archivist was planned. A few projects that the temporary project manager has completed in the first 30 weeks are these:

- wrote and spearheaded the completion and approval of a Records Retention Schedule,
- developed procedures for the procurement of documents to the Archives,
- made DMLC & NWC history books available online,
- began the process of interviewing retiring faculty and making those interviews public, and
- began to make DMLHS, MLA, NWC, DMLC, and MLC graduate photos available on the MLC website.

As it has become clear that a permanent archivist is not included in staffing or budget plans in the foreseeable future, the Archives Committee has determined that halting Archives work is the only viable solution. The committee's focus was to "get the ball rolling" on Archives work, and it feels it has made a good start. Without funding for Archives, however, its work cannot be continued.

The MLC Archives Committee and the temporary archives project manager are making plans for completing their existing projects and getting the Archives to a status of hibernation by December 15, 2017. Once the Archives are in hibernation, the information held therein will not be available for research purposes, as there will not be staff available to do the work of locating, organizing, and monitoring the documents. No new articles, features, or other projects using archival information will be added to the MLC website.

Basic mechanisms for gathering information will still be in place. Faculty, staff, student organizations, and friends who wish to donate documents to the MLC Archives may do so by bringing archival documents to the MLC Library to be placed in boxes for storage, or by copying digital items to a designated "Archives Inbox." Though members of the Archives Committee hope that faculty and staff will regularly submit archival documents as outlined in the Records Retention Policy initiated by the Archives committee, they are realistic in knowing that not all will do so without prompting. This unfortunate loss of history will be a byproduct of not having Archives staff available.

The MLC Archives Committee thanks all those who have submitted archival material in the past and regrets that archival work on the MLC campus will stop until such a time as funding is procured for an archivist.

Any questions may be addressed to Steve Balza, Lois Bode, Kelly Diersen, or Linda Kramer.