Student Records Management Practice

Results of the AACRAO January 2017 60-Second Survey

Contents

Introduction

The January 2017 AACRAO 60-Second Survey focused on student records management practices (Appendix A). Respondents were not required to answer all of the questions, nor were all questions proffered to each respondent. Consequently, the number of respondents varies by question.

Almost 1,300 individuals responded to this survey. However, more than one response was received from a couple hundred institutions. When more than one response per institution occurred, we chose the response that was the most complete and/or represented the response from the position most likely to be responsible for student records management, which we determined from the position title. We retained more than one response from some institutions where we could determine that the respondents represented separate colleges in the institution and thus possible separate practices. This data filtering resulted in a set of 1,045 responses collected from institutions representing several combinations of control, size and type (Appendix B) as well as several countries (Appendix C).

A related AACRAO [study](#) was completed in early 2016[1]. That study examined the impact of electronic management content (ECM) solutions on student records management. This month's survey contained similar content and provided a broader insight into institutional records management practices from a larger sample size than did the earlier study. The practice context for both was the same and can be summarized by the quote below from the 2016 ECM report.

> "Higher education is not exempt from the intensifying demands for effective records management. In fact, institutions that do not effectively manage their student records, regardless of format, face increased risks. The July 2014 edition of *Records Quarterly: A Newsletter of the University of Cincinnati Records Management Program* made note of these increased risks in their article 'Hoarders Records Edition' as an increased threat to the security of sensitive information and court sanctions for not following policies." Pg. 4

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[1] ttp://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/surveyresults/ecm-and-student-records-management-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2
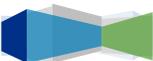
Key Findings

- Nearly all (94%) of the responding institutions have a student records management schedule and/or policy.

- Nearly all (97%) identify the transcript as a permanent document.

- Almost three quarters (73%) of institutions with a policy and/or schedule use AACRAO guidelines as a student records management practice resource.

- More than half (59%) have a single records management document that covers both policy and the retention schedule.

- Document retention periods vary considerably among institutions.

- The institution's SIS/ERP is identified as the official source of student records for fewer than half (46%) of respondents. Fifteen percent (15%) still identify paper as the official copy and 19% identify the scanned paper copy as the official record.

- More than 8 in 10 (84%) retain more than one copy of a student record for all or at least some current student records.

- Almost half (46%) do not purge any student records or only purge some records in accordance with the student records management policy and/or schedule.

- For most (71%) the office who "owns the record" is responsible for purging the records.

The institutions that do not have a student records retention management policy or schedule were asked an open-ended question about how they manage student records. Comments included: "Per department", "We keep all of them", "We follow the State Library Guidelines for records retention", "Follow AACRAO guidelines", and "Wing and a prayer and we NEED a policy." All of the applicable comments received are included in their entirety in Appendix D.

In this sample, the percentage of institutions that have identified the SIS/ERP as the official source of the student record is identical (46%) to the percentage reporting the same in the smaller sample from the AACRAO ECM ownership and impact on student records management report[2]. We believe this fact, combined with the more than 80 percent in this current sample who also reported keeping more than one version of current student records, warrants including the following recommendation from the ECM report.

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[2] http://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/surveyresults/ecm-and-student-records-management-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2

> "The vast majority of institutions run most of their primary student records business based on data that resides in the SIS/ERP, not in the other systems or on paper, including billing, student transcripts, degree progression, internal and external reporting, records audits, and financial aid calculations among others. If this sample is representative of the population of institutions overall, *we feel that those that do not identify the SIS/ERP as the official source of student records, but also rely on that data for any or all of the business functions above, must be able to ensure that data in the information source they have identified as official matches the data they are pulling the data for the business functions.* Not doing so could potentially increase the risk for audit findings and student record errors such as transcript errors and degree status errors." Pg. 21

Those who responded that their institution does not purge all records in accordance with the institution's policy and/or schedule were asked why not. Many of the replies can be grouped into one of the following explanations:

- Aa lack of staffing/time;
- Gaps in policy;
- The ability to identify document types in the document imaging system;
- Inability to purge electronic records;
- Fear of letting go of old documents "just in case";
- Belief that since the records are now electronic there is no need to purge;
- Difficulty in getting institution-wide buy-in to make it a priority (Appendix E).

Among those who responded "Yes" or "Some records are and others are not" to the question about whether the institution purges records in accordance with the policy and/or schedule, 13 percent indicated "Other" when asked to identify which unit/department is responsible for purging electronic records. When prompted for further explanation, a fair number indicated that the electronic version of the student records are not purged at all (Appendix F).

The following two respondent comments highlight why AACRAO continues to address student records management in our research, publications, and conference sessions.

> "The most difficult part of maintaining the records retention policy is that we maintain both paper and electronic versions of records in some cases and there are different retention schedules for paper vs electronic. For example, we scan and keep transfer transcripts permanently in our ERP system, but we will also keep the paper original for 5 years from graduation or withdrawal. It would be great if AACRAO offered recommendations on these situations and guidelines for electronic vs paper retention. Guidance on keeping student email correspondence would also be helpful."

> "This 'retention minimum' versus purge date is the new standard for archivists nationally. In the digital age, they do not push purging, only push a minimum retention timeframe. Our university

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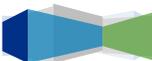
archivist is the person who handles this policy on our campus and it is broad- encompassing all documents from finance, payroll to student records."

The full content of additional comments can be found in Appendix G. Additionally, Appendix H contains a short list of AACRAO and related guidance resources for student records management. The results of this survey will be presented for discussion as part of a session at the AACRAO 207 annual conference and will also be taken into consideration in the next revision of *AACRAO's Student Records Management: Retention, Disposal and Archive of Student Records*[3].

The remainder of this report contains figures and tables summarizing the results. Questions regarding this or any other AACRAO research should be directed to Wendy Kilgore, AACRAO Director of Research, at wendyk@aacrao.org.

Figure 1: Source(s) of Guidance Used in the Development or Modification of the Student Records Management Policy and/or Schedule (n=981) (all that apply)

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[3] http://www4.aacrao.org/publications/catalog.php?item=0138#.WIkQ3RsrIaY
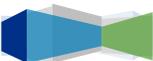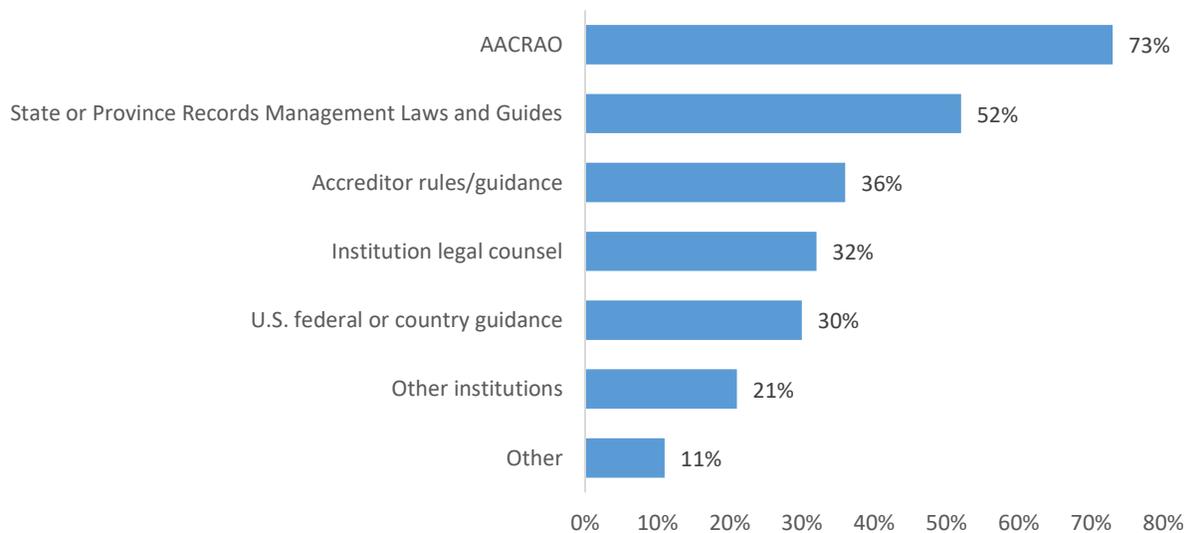
Figure 2: Student Records Management Policy and/or Schedule Existence and Integration (n=851)

- 59%
- 16%
- 12%
- 13%

- The student records retention policy and schedule are one.
- The policy is a separate document from the retention schedule.
- We only have a policy, no separate retention schedule.
- We only have a retention schedule, no separate policy.
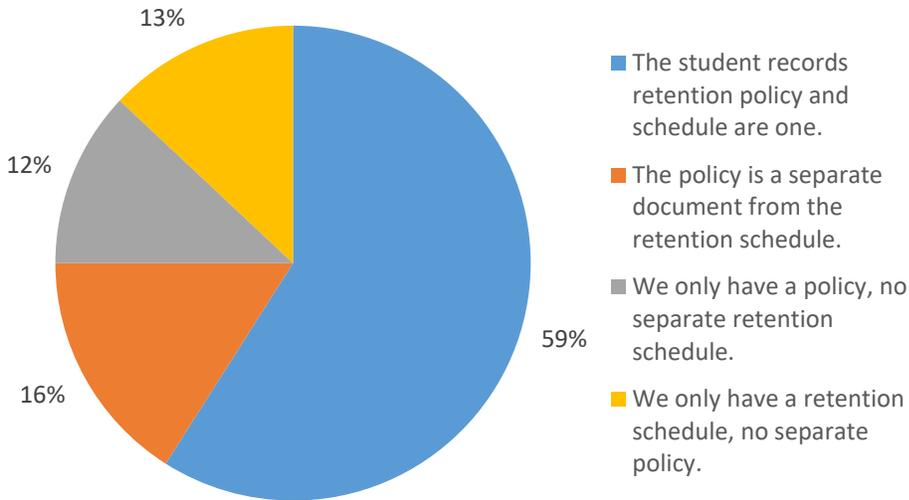
Figure 3: Student Records Addressed by the Policy and/or Schedule (n=853) (all that apply)

Category	Percentage
Registrar	98%
Admissions	76%
Financial Aid	53%
Academic Affairs	49%
Student Accounts	48%
Student Affairs	43%
Other	19%

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Figure 4: Length of Document Retention by Category after Student/Applicant is No Longer Active at the Institution

Admissions (n=592)
- Unknown: 8%
- More than 5 years: 21%
- 3-5 years: 38%
- 1-2 years: 21%
- Indefinitely: 11%

Registrar (n=785)
- Unknown: 2%
- More than 5 years: 40%
- 3-5 years: 33%
- 1-2 years: 4%
- Indefinitely: 21%

Financial Aid (n=398)
- Unknown: 17%
- More than 5 years: 38%
- 3-5 years: 32%
- 1-2 years: 3%
- Indefinitely: 10%

Student Accounts (n=362)
- Unknown: 24%
- More than 5 years: 39%
- 3-5 years: 26%
- 1-2 years: 3%
- Indefinitely: 8%

Student Affairs (n=324)
- Unknown: 22%
- More than 5 years: 31%
- 3-5 years: 31%
- 1-2 years: 6%
- Indefinitely: 10%

Academic Affairs (n=368)
- Unknown: 17%
- More than 5 years: 35%
- 3-5 years: 32%
- 1-2 years: 5%
- Indefinitely: 11%

Other (n=114)
- Unknown: 39%
- More than 5 years: 29%
- 3-5 years: 25%
- 1-2 years: 4%
- Indefinitely: 4%

Legend: ■ Unknown ■ More than 5 years ■ 3-5 years ■ 1-2 years ■ Indefinitely

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Figure 5: Agreement with Statements about the Institution's Student Records Management Policy and/or Schedule

All who manage student records understand the policy (n=786)
- Strongly agree: 8%
- Agree: 24%
- Somewhat agree: 25%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 14%
- Somewhat disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 10%
- Strongly disagree: 4%

The institution follows the policy (n=784)
- Strongly agree: 19%
- Agree: 37%
- Somewhat agree: 22%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 9%
- Somewhat disagree: 6%
- Disagree: 4%
- Strongly disagree: 3%

It is clear what student records should be retained permanently (n=787)
- Strongly agree: 30%
- Agree: 39%
- Somewhat agree: 16%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 4%
- Somewhat disagree: 5%
- Disagree: 3%
- Strongly disagree: 2%

Official Source for CURRENT student records is clearly identified (e.g., SIS, ECM, paper) (n=786)
- Strongly agree: 18%
- Agree: 37%
- Somewhat agree: 17%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 10%
- Somewhat disagree: 8%
- Disagree: 8%
- Strongly disagree: 3%

It is clear when student records should be purged (n=786)
- Strongly agree: 18%
- Agree: 43%
- Somewhat agree: 18%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 7%
- Somewhat disagree: 7%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly disagree: 3%

It is easy to understand and implement (n=787)
- Strongly agree: 15%
- Agree: 41%
- Somewhat agree: 21%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 8%
- Somewhat disagree: 8%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly disagree: 2%

The policy is up-to-date (n=787)
- Strongly agree: 16%
- Agree: 39%
- Somewhat agree: 18%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 8%
- Somewhat disagree: 10%
- Disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 3%

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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Figure 6: Official Source/repository of Current Student Records (n=558)*

Legend:
- ERP/SIS — 46%
- Scanned/ECM — 19%
- Paper — 15%
- LMS
- Data warehouse — 4%
- No single official source identified — 14%
- 2%

*No respondents selected the "LMS"

Figure 7: Retention of More than One Copy or Format of Current Student Records (n=781)

Legend:
- Yes — 26%
- For some items, yes — 58%
- No — 16%

Figure 8: Permanent Student Records as Identified in the Records Retention Policy and/or Schedule (n=770) (all that apply)


Figure 9: Percentage of Institutions Who Purge the Student Records in Accordance with the Student Records Management Policy and/or Schedule (n=765)
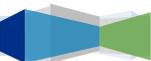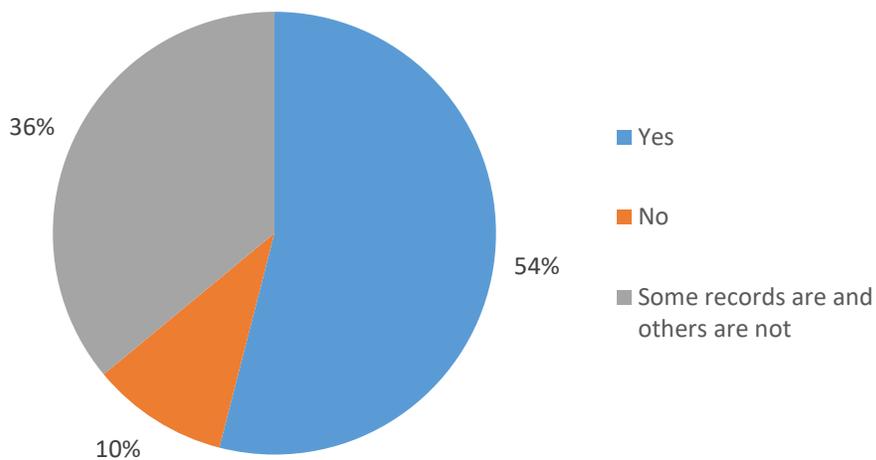
Figure 10: Unit/department Responsible for Purging Electronic Records (n=671)* **
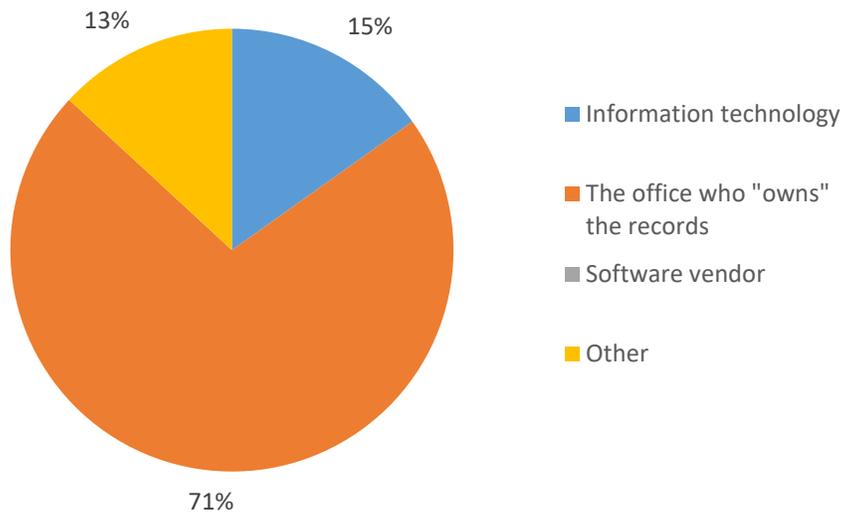
*No respondents selected "software vendor"
**This question was asked of those who selected "Yes" or "Some records are and others are not" to the question as to whether or not the institution purges student records in accordance with a policy and/or schedule.
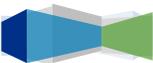
Appendix A: AACRAO January 2017 60-Second Survey: Student Records Management

Q1 Does your institution have a student records retention policy and/or schedule?

○ Yes

○ No

Q2 How does your institution manage student records?

Q3 What is/are the source(s) of guidance used in the development or modification of the student records retention policy and/or schedule? (Please check all that apply)

❑ AACRAO

❑ State or Province Records Management Laws and Guides

❑ Institution legal counsel

❑ Other institutions

❑ U.S. federal or country guidance

❑ Accreditor rules/guidance

❑ Other

Q4 Does the policy have an integrated retention schedule or are they two separate documents?

○ The student records retention policy and schedule are one.

○ The policy is a separate document from the retention schedule.

○ We only have a policy, no separate retention schedule.

○ We only have a retention schedule, no separate policy.

Q5 Which student records are addressed by the policy/schedule? Click on all that apply.

❑ Admissions

❑ Registrar

❑ Financial Aid

❑ Student Accounts

❑ Student Affairs

❑ Academic Affairs

❑ Other

Q9 For each records category below please indicate, in general, how long documents/data are retained after a student has left the institution. Exceptions include records which have been identified as "permanent" documents/data such as transcripts and catalogs.

Q6 Please indicate overall how much you agree with the following statements about your institution's student records management policy and/or schedule.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The policy is up-to-date	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to understand and implement	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is clear when student records should be purged	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The official source for CURRENT student records is clearly identified (e.g., SIS, ECM, paper)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is clear what student records should be retained permanently	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The institution follows the policy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
All who manage student records (faculty, administrators and staff) understand the policy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Display This Question:

If Please indicate overall how much you agree with the following statements about your institution's student records management policy and/or schedule. The official source for CURRENT student records is clearly identified (ERP, SIS, ECM, paper) - Somewhat agree Is Selected

Or Please indicate overall how much you agree with the following statements about your institution's student records management policy and/or schedule. The official source for CURRENT student records is clearly identified (ERP, SIS, ECM, paper) - Agree Is Selected

Or Please indicate overall how much you agree with the following statements about your institution's student records management policy and/or schedule. The official source for CURRENT student records is clearly identified (ERP, SIS, ECM, paper) - Strongly agree Is Selected

Q7 What is the OFFICIAL source/repository of CURRENT student records at your institution?
○ ERP/SIS
○ Scanned/ECM
○ Paper
○ LMS
○ Data warehouse
○ No single official source identified
○ Other
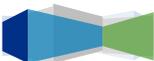
Q8 Does your institution retain more than one copy or format of current student records? For example, a student submits a change of major form and that form is processed in the SIS and scanned into a document management system.

- ○ Yes
- ○ For some items, yes
- ○ No

Q10 From the choices below, please indicate which, if any, have been identified as "permanent" records in your policy/schedule - regardless of format.

- ❑ Transcript
- ❑ Catalog
- ❑ Grade rosters
- ❑ Advising notes
- ❑ Disciplinary records
- ❑ Degree audit
- ❑ Other

Q11 Are student records purged in accordance with the policy and/or schedule?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Some records are and others are not

Display This Question:
    If Are student records purged in accordance with the policy and/or schedule? No Is Selected
    Or Are student records purged in accordance with the policy and/or schedule? Some records are and others are not Is Selected

Q12 Please share why student records are not purged in accordance with the policy and/or schedule.

Display This Question:
    If Are student records purged in accordance with the policy and/or schedule? Yes Is Selected
    Or Are student records purged in accordance with the policy and/or schedule? Some records are and others are not Is Selected

Q13 What unit/department is responsible for running the data/records purge program for electronic records?

- ○ Information technology
- ○ The office who "owns" the records
- ○ Software vendor
- ○ Other _____

Q14 Please add any additional comments you may have about the institution's student records management policy, schedule and/or practice here.

Q15 This is the end of the survey. Using the next arrow will submit your responses. Thank you.
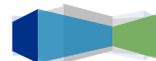
Appendix B: Respondent Count by Institution Type, Size and Control

Type	Count
Lower Division Only	187
Undergraduate	151
Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional	656
Graduate and/or professional	46
Other	5
Grand Total	**1045**

Control	Count
Public	498
Private, not-for-profit	505
Private, proprietary	42
Grand Total	**1045**

Size	Count
Under 1,000	205
1,000 - 2,499	231
2,500 - 4,999	172
5,000 - 9,999	177
10,000 - 19,999	152
20,000+	108
Grand Total	**1045**
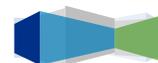
Appendix C: Respondent Country, State/Province

Country State/Province/Territory	Count
Armenia	**1**
Bolivia	**1**
Bulgaria	**1**
Canada	**38**
AB	7
BC	10
MB	3
NL	1
NS	1
ON	11
QC	2
SK	3
Costa Rica	**1**
France	**1**
Germany	**1**
Italy	**1**
Lebanon	**1**
Mexico	**2**
Netherlands Antilles	**1**
Oman	**1**
Qatar	**1**
Saudi Arabia	**1**
Singapore	**2**
United Arab Emirates	**2**
United States	**988**
AK	3
AL	17
AR	9
AZ	14
CA	76
CO	23
CT	10
DC	7
DE	2
FL	29
GA	20
HI	2
IA	20
ID	6
IL	54
IN	22
KS	21

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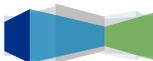
KY	12
LA	9
MA	42
MD	17
ME	7
MI	25
MN	33
MO	27
MP	1
MS	4
MT	7
NC	22
ND	6
NE	13
NH	5
NJ	13
NM	7
NV	8
NY	75
OH	35
OK	12
OR	21
PA	59
PR	7
RI	6
SC	11
SD	5
TN	17
TX	55
UT	8
VA	31
VT	8
WA	18
WI	16
WV	9
WY	2
Virgin Islands, British	**1**
Grand Total	**1045**
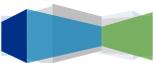
Appendix D: Comments on Managing Student Records at Institutions without a Records Retention Policy and/or Schedule

*Raw comments

Electronic SIS
Individual offices have their own policies
We are working on this and we keep a lot of files and information in a database.
Imaging.
Registrar's Office
Electronic document management system
Retains indefinitely
We currently keep all paper records. We hope to move to electronic records in the next 5 years or so. We plan to develop a records retention policy before then and implement that as we review paper records to decide what will be scanned and saved and what will be shredded.
Policy under development. Currently using AACRAO industry standards and local statutes.
Colleague and Ellucian - Recruiter
Currently stored on campus. However, with new system they are being transferred into the new system.
They are imaged and digitally stored. While we do not have a records retention policy or schedule, there are practices concerning what is initially imaged and what is not.
They save everything and everything is paper. We do not have a document imaging system.
We have institutional recommendations for departmental records retention, and our Registrar area follows AACRAO guidelines.
Hard and digital copy. In time, all records will be digitized and kept in a permanent archive.
Badly!
Via the Registrar's Office
We are currently working on creating a records retention policy/schedule. Currently we use the Oregon Records Retention Rules as determined by the Oregon Secretary of State: http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_100/oar_166/166_450.html
We keep everything in a file room. Many documents were kept in separate binders also--enrollment forms, grade changes, transcript requests. Based on AACRAO recommendations, we have purged many of the items that we do not need to keep indefinitely.
We are currently working on one. We are using established national standards
We keep all records - some are hard copy, some are digital. We do not dispose of any records, other than homework.
We have a digital repository to store them, but don't have a retention policy for records.
We scan paper into our electronic document management system that holds the student file. Some documents are inactivated once a student switches from admissions to records (e.g., letters of recommendation) and others are inactivated when a student graduates/separates (e.g., temporary correspondence). It is a manual process that we would like to automate but in the midst of reviewing document management systems an official records retention schedule has not been activated.
We are currently developing a policy since the previous registrar did not have one.
Per department
Ellucian
We do not have a formal written policy, but point to AACRAO as a guide. Our records are electronic and paper.
We keep all of them.
Grade rosters- forever Drop/adds- 5 years Name changes and Social Security number changes- forever Student withdrawals- forever

They keep everything!
Badly - we keep everything.
Manually through the Registrar's office. We're just beginning to look into scanning and keeping important documents and shredding the rest.
We follow the State Library Guidelines for records retention.
We follow the state policy.
I just started in August and I hope to help us adopt a policy consistent with AACRAO recommendations.
We have gone to electronic files/records for students so we are in the process of coming up with a records retention procedure.
We go by what the state mandates, but no one seems to keep up with state regulations until the file room becomes full and there is a desire to purge records.
Current working on developing a Records Retention Policy. Committee charged with completing the policy in this semester.
Follow AACRAO guidelines.
By department
Individual offices manage their own records.
The unwritten policy reconciles inactive (withdrawn or graduated) student files annually each summer.
Student academic records are created and maintained by the Office of the University Registrar using various state-of-the-art software packages.
One person in charge. Records stored on campus.
Wing and a prayer and we NEED a policy.
Currently we keep everything in a student file. We have yet to firm up what a current policy looks like and what guidelines we will use moving forward. It is something that is of paramount importance at this time.
It is done by individual departments

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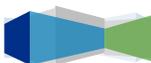
Appendix E: Reasons Records are Not Purged in Accordance with Policy and/or Schedule

*Raw comments

Limited staffing resources, staff turnover and not all new staff have been trained on records purging
Cost, staff time
With recent move to imagine software there are issues with identifying document types
Concern about deleting what we might later need or want
Thousands of historical records are stored offsite. Once they are shipped offsite it is cost-prohibitive in many ways to recall the boxes, purge the documents which are no longer required and then repackage and send back. Therefore they are in permanent storage unless there is a need to recall the file. At that time the file is scanned and uploaded and the original file is shredded.
We keep everything, electronic records are not purged, official paper records are sent to storage offsite.
Records are typically retained for students who did not complete their degrees, so we can assess their standing when they return to complete
Lack of resources to do the purge
The has been variability in purging of admissions references
We are currently working with our imaging system to follow the guidelines
Some registration and verification records are kept beyond the normal timeline.
We store student records off site and the facility burned 2 years ago. As a result some records were purged before they were scheduled and we have held records and not sent them to the storage facility until they were back up and running. For this reason we have not followed our schedule.
We just published the policy this month!
Lack of staffing
Because our policy does not address all record types, so we keep them.
Variety
Proper practice has not been established, Discussion over paper versus digital records is still coming up.
Time, staff resources, lack of enterprise level imaging system, cost, communication
Time limitations
I have declined to destroy documents until our retention policy is publicly posted.
Limited staffing for timely implementation.
We don't have a purge policy
Policy is unclear on what to do with non-permanent records; in other words, we have a large number of items that are not addressed in the policy and therefore kept indefinitely.
Some are imaged and we haven't been able to determine how to purge them based on date and type of record.
All records are electronic. IT hasn't set up the auto purge
Some are kept longer, since we now have the technology to do so.
No way to do this in the system
Unknown
Person with physical record is not aware of policy or does not agree with policy
Ownership of who keeps it updated and notifies campus keeps changing
Other departments
Not a priority with our current administration.
Some departments are slow to purge records and do not actively purge each year.
Records from decades ago that would have to be pulled apart (keep some/dispose of some)

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Electronic versions are retained as long as we have storage space, paper originals are purged according to schedules
Some issues with document management system
We are a small school and err on the side of caution. We do purge but usually on a less frequent cycle primarily due to space constrictions.
To be honest it's easier and less time consuming to keep everything electronically. It's also not against any rule. The rules are that you "can" purge" not that you "must" purge.
Paper records that are to be kept for "5 years" are often not purged every 5 years - sometimes it could 8-10 years
We have just implemented a new Imaging software so we are behind on the purge calendar
Requirements of Local Laws
Policy and Schedule are very new. I would say "yes" to the above question. But we haven't gotten there yet.
Fear. Many believe the system we have should hold every document received.
Sometimes records are kept longer than necessary
Responsibility for purging falls across many departments (ex. Adviser Notes). We have not audited for compliance.
All of this varies by school within the institution
Many stored electronically and in a format that is not easy to determine year of creation.
We are only just now beginning to purge records from our imaging system.
We err on the side of caution regarding hard copy records and retain them longer than the retention schedule indicates. Also, electronic records (imaged documents) are not purged at all at this time.
Admissions
Resources to stay consistent with the project; different policies for different offices.
Time and resources
Electronic records do not make it as necessary as physical space does not force the issue.
This practice has not been a priority in our resource-constrained situation.
Some systems are not currently set up to allow this to happen in mass
Multiple formats, time resource limitations
It is unclear and we have had staff turnover. Need to update our policy and schedule
We do not have staff to go through Archiving online and figure out which documents are old enough to be purged. Most of the Registrar records are kept indefinitely.
Most are scanned and attached to SIS and not an efficient way to batch destroy.
An example is the letter of recommendations. We are working with our imaging vendor to delete the LOR once the student has been fully accepted, but it is not an easy process.
Our policy does not have a purge date. It only has a retention minimum.
Not consistence
Culturally, there is a tendency to want to retain records "just in case". Also, pragmatically, our current system does not support automated purging of records.
Because the policy is not clear
No central "ownership"
Adherence is variable depending on the campus office.
Software issues
Lack of time
All records eligible for destruction are reviewed to determine if there are any additional business needs.
Inattention
Resources available to purge; sometimes delayed
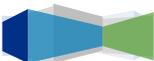
Lack of a process for purging scanned records
No mechanism for purging from imaging
Required by Federal statute to maintain permanent record of student academic performance; only records purged are admission records and those may be 'held' due to student administrative issues
We have not figured out exactly how to purge images from our imaging system.
Purging of records has not been considered a high priority by IT
We have had several different systems of managing information in the past 20 years that we have not effected an airtight means of enforcing our retention policy
We have not written the business rules to purge the electronic storage of documents (switched from microfilm/fiche in summer of 2010 to Nolij)
Since records are all scanned our institution keeps a full record since ECM implementation
Our SIS is not currently set up to purge (we're working on that functionality)
Staffing
Falls through the cracks, we forget, etc.
Electronic records are not purged due to lack of manpower for the project
Depends on the document
Academic Transcripts are permanent all other student records are purged according to the schedule
--not finding time to carry this out.
Lack of time (other priorities take precedence)
University offices don't follow the purge time frames even though the policy is outdated.
Too hard/labor intensive to tease them apart. Also, some thoughts that now that most are electronic and they no longer take up space, we should keep them because they might come in handy.
Data storage may not be an issue yet
Not a priority
How vigilant the record owners are depends on the area. Some areas don't see this as a high priority and central administration doesn't monitor this routinely.
As time allows As time allows
Insufficient available staff hours
Staffing shortages.
Lack of staff time
Labor limitations
Time factor
Electronic records
We are still working on a university-wide policy and schedule for scanned and digitally archived documents
No space issues
Last attendance due to graduation is different from last attendance due to a high tuition balance
Short-staffed, cannot prioritize this over other tasks.
Not enough staff.
Records are sent off to federal archives
Sometimes we are late and keeping records in the office for longer time
Policy is new and now being implemented. Waiting for new system capabilities as well to help enforce.
Scanned documents
Deletion of electronic records is inconsistent
Records in academic and faculty offices.
No one has taken the action to purge records that have been scanned.

Lack of knowledge
We are working towards this; particularly difficult to sift through old records to appropriately identify document type before destruction.
Some departments do not follow the schedule.
System currently does not have the capability to recognize when a student stops out.
We do not have a destruction schedule.
Records managed outside of the registrar's office are often not purged in accordance with existing schedules.
Lack of time and resources to dedicate to regular purging. In addition, our long term file document storage was set up in a way to make it impossible to identify individual types of documents within the electronic file, so purging old records would require opening individual pdfs and deleting pages, one by one. Moving toward a more appropriate solution that will allow for built-in retention automation scripts.
Recent changes based on a new document imaging system have not yet been fully implemented.
Currently, we maintain all records - even past the eligibility date for purging
If they are stored in other departments or units, we may not be aware of their destruction.
Sometimes we are a little late
Most
Electronic files in SIS need purged. Paper is purged from Registrar's Office per schedule.
Limited technology
Lack of oversight and diligence
Records are electronically stored for 99 years
Legacy systems, duplicates in paper or other formats. Time and effort, or items stored and secured in a manner where the routine purge work does not rank as a pressing priority.
Short of manpower
We are not always up to date on following our own policy due to time constraints
Need to be purged from onbase and administrators aren't sure how.
Not sure what the policy is for purging so we have kept everything
Staffing needs
Difficulty identifying certain financial aid records that are scanned because of different criteria for student loan borrowers.
There is no accountability for retention of records.
Different departments vary in their compliance
Nobody really knows the policy
As we move to electronic document storage, we need to be sure we are doing 'hard' purges according to the schedule.
Imaged documents add a new level of complication
We may keep records a term or two depending on staff availability to shred records.
Purge? What's a purge? We end up keeping just about everything around here!
We don't purge electronic records
Most records are, but we are working on purging electronic records such as email on a more timely basis. Our past practice had us retaining them longer than policy guidelines. I think they worked under the idea that retaining the records longer was the safe bet, without considering the potential issues that could be associated with retaining the information too long.
Data migration issues
Resources and time
Some records may be retained longer than stated in policy, due to limited personnel resources.
The Admission Office has an automatic purge system in place - other offices don't

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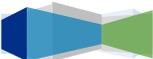
No time to purge
Time/Human Resources
Technical barriers
Time and resources
Some things that could be purged are not, so remain on file indefinitely.
Staff transition had led this to be overlooked in the last few years
Our document imaging system does not have automatic purging built in, and manual purging is difficult, so documents stored there are not purged nearly as often as they should be.
In transitioning to electronic storage of most student records, an efficient process for purging old documents has not yet been established.
The institution is still working through transition to imaged records
Inability to track properly and ensure departments are adhering to the regulations
Electronic records are currently kept indefinitely unlike paper records
Budget, time
We don't have the software for Banner to purge correctly. Additional funding not available
Intentionality within departments; not a priority except at the "central" level
Technologies are still being implemented to manage the purging process
Uncertainty.
In process of obtaining imaging system purge functionality by date
Purge processes have not been fully implemented for ERP records
New imaging system and currently working on the purge schedule
Once scanned in, we don't go back and delete.
Resources needed to write scripts to purge from official source
Electronic records in SIS are not purged
Electronic files are not purged. Paper files are purged.
Failure to set up the process that purges documents
Due to technical challenges, many records are retained beyond the retention schedule
Lack of time and resources
It is difficult to get everyone to remember to purge their electronic versions of records since everyone organizes them differently.
No timeline/structure in place for systematizing process
Some aspects may be purged but not all
We are still working through the purge process in our SIS.
Current records being sent to archives are purged prior to storage. Significantly older files have not been formally purged.
Difficult to parse out records that need to be retained only for a short time after the student has left the institution. (e.g. Purge 3 years after last attendance.)
Historically records were not purged and now we use our downtime to catch up on this process.
Much of the documents are imaged. Separating them out would be hard. Also, many departments do keep track of what should be purged.
Techn0logical issues
Student records that are imaged are not purged, even though the retention schedule may require keeping for a specified amount of time.
Inability to purge from imaging system
Electronic storage is relatively cheap so we don't take the time.

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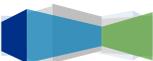
Need to develop and implement plan for purge of electronic records; some records are housed in decentralized academic units, where compliance varies
Digital image files are indexed in a manner that problematic to mass purge
Not found an efficient way to purge items from imaging system
Limited staff resources to review documents/online documentation for purging
In some instances, we keep records longer than the established policy because they have been historically useful.
Still working on an automated system for purging some records in Imaging
Some old records were not purged in those days and we are slowly catching up on those purges (and transfer of data into SIS).
There is not a well-defined segregation of duties.
Availability of space
Data space is cheap simply economical in terms of resources to purge
Currently on a ligation hold and nothing is being purged.
Our current schedule applies to only hard copies. We are still working out a purge schedule for electronic records.
Sometimes we're behind schedule.
Hard to identify exactly what files should be purged. I'm afraid that we'll need the information as soon as I purge it.
Many of our students come back after leaving 20-30 years ago. We are also relatively a new college <60 years, so we still have the ability to keep all records, at least electronically.
Not enough staff to accomplish all tasks
We have historically kept all records that are in the permanent file
Time and personnel
ineffective records imaging system
Human Resources lacking
Most are - some digital deletion events are missed due to lack of vigilance.
On hold throughout the District due to lawsuit-breach of security.
In a large university with hundreds of departments enforcement is difficult. Retention (unwillingness to purge) of paper records makes it difficult.
I do not know how student affairs and billing purge their records.
Some electronic comments on students
timing
We do good [sic] with paper records, but not as well with purging electronic records.
Some records are permanent
Historically the records have proven necessary when dealing with claims from students.
No one gets around to it
lack of clarity on purging electronic records vs. paper
Documents scanned into document imaging system and filed and it is difficult to delete selected files.
Lack of priority
Software limitations (Banner does not permit the purging of records without breaking things).
Legal documents
They are stored electronically and there is potential value in retaining them.
Lack of awareness of the policy among various offices due to staff turnover. The current policy lacks ownership so is out of date.
staff turnover, staff reduction,

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Time
Some offices/personnel simply don't shred or destroy in a timely manner.
Not all personnel understand the policy
Lack of staff time
We are still working on our systems to develop automated means of purging documentation based on a retention schedule.
Not enough human resources available to purge records as often as we would like.
department doesn't always have time to do this
Lack of resources to do yearly maintenance purging.
SIS and Scanning system not programmed to purge on a schedule.
We have been unable to find a way not scan pieces of the files that are deemed permanent and therefore more pieces have been retained that are designated in the policy
Cost. Complexity of sorting out material to be purged.
Electronic Records have yet to purge as we have not developed a systematic process for doing so and storage has not been an issue.
Technical difficulties
Most registration documents we image/scan as we receive them and become part of the student's permanent record.
Back log prevents from occurring on expected schedule
We now scan - so no records are purged.
We have no purge process in place.
Unsure
Archives are being transitioned from paper - they contain elements that are not considered eligible for permanent retention, "...but have always been kept, anyhow..."
It takes time and attention, and sometimes that time or attention is focused elsewhere and on other priorities. Changeover in personnel also impacts this.
Short of staff
Current system does not allow for the purging of records.
SIS and Nolij records often kept indefinitely, even if they don't need to be.
This is more of a timing issue. If anything records are kept longer than they should be depending on resources
We are currently working with our e-file company to facilitate an electronic purging process.
The policy needs to be updated for storage in the SIS.
Not a priority
Student data maintained in the SIS are not purged.
Not clear who is responsible for this
Paper files are hard to purge.
Internal decision to no purge
We arrange for Shredding thru an outside vendor.
lower priority among other activities and new initiatives
Lack of time
Office priorities
Workload of the office responsible.
We started scanning records, so are working current and back. So older records may be kept longer until they are reviewed for scanning.
Time/organization of purging

The purge schedule has not been fully implemented in the Documents Imaging program.
Records are stored in a document imaging system, and we have not developed a procedure to purge from this source.
Those scanned in that are not permanent per the schedule are not purged.
The policy is not clear about what needs to be purged. All documents are kept in the student file, and this file is required to be kept in perpetuity, so even if individual documents could be discarded they are not. I would like to see clear guidelines from AACRAO that we could present to the state, so the state can write guides that are up to date considering current technology.
We currently scan (to an image file) all student records. These are not purged according to a schedule. They are retained indefinitely, but a purging process will have to be developed and enforced.
They should be we are not at that point in maturation with purging records
Difficult to purge random data elements and documents from the SIS and document imaging system. When everything was on paper, it was easier to remove items from files at designated times. It's just easier to keep everything.
Time, resources, location of records
Lack of time and personnel, isn't scheduled
Fairly new to the document scanning process and are still in process of developing a document purging process.
Too busy to keep up with the purging
Time involved to review files; no process developed to purge the files
Other offices have their own schedule
Not specific reason - inconsistency of managers' preference over years
We have the policy but until we run out of storage, I don't think anyone will move forward. It is something out IT staff would have to do and it is never a top priority.
Records are in a document management system and hard to delete.
Electronic records are not purged since currently no way to do so
Some are scanned for permanent retention while others are kept in paper form indefinitely. Almost nothing is purged at this time.
The forgetful nature of document imaging.
Duty not specifically assigned
Application
We do not purge any materials for a matriculated student --- we always keep a digital file and their record in the SIS.
Time, access to records
Case by case basis
Not enough staff to devote to the purging process of older paper records
Imaged records are not purged - have not yet created a system to identify and do so.
We are in transition currently; paper records are purged according to schedule; electronic records are not currently purged.
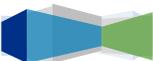
Appendix F: Other Units Responsible for Purging Records*

*raw data

Office of Admissions & Records
We don't purge from our electronic records.
There is no data purge
I believe we will program this with the vendor based on field
Retention schedule was recently updated. Need to meet with IT to create schedule
Registrar's Office
Information technology in partnership with Registrar
Purge program in development.
Electronic records are currently not being purged
Electronic records are not purged.
Registrar
Electronic records are never purged.
IT along with the office that owns the records
Electronic records are not purged (the first part of the question did not specify electronic records)
The office holding the record (paper).
Registrar and IT
Legal
We're not there yet
The electronic record is the permanent student record and is not purged.
Registrar
Currently electronic records are not purged. This policy will need to be updated as we have just added electronic documents in admissions,
I don't think we purge electronic data
Not purged
Depends on the documentation
University Registrar's Office
Do not purge electronic records
Electronic records are currently not purged.
However, we have not really addressed purging of electronic records now that we have imaging.
Institutional Research and Registrar
Registrar
No one at this time
The Registrar's Office
This is currently being reviewed university-wide
Registrar
That is being developed.
Combination of the office who "owns" the records and Information Technology.
No one has been identified
Combination of owner of records and IT.
IT and the unit that owns the records. IT purges SIS, but there are other records that belong to various departments.
Not sure
Office of the Registrar
Office of the University Registrar
We do not purge anything currently
There is currently no purge program for electronic records.
We do not have department responsible for purging electronic records.

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Registrar
We only SCAN permanent records so we do not purge any from our system. The only exception are courses and records kept in our Learning Management System. Those are electronically purged by IT annually
Electronic records are not purged at this time.
Student Information Systems
We do not currently have electronic records outside of the SIS and we so not have a purge process established for the SIS.
Both IT and the office that owns the records--it's a combination. IT is responsible for any automated purge.
There is no such purge for electronic information.
Legal/Compliance
Data in SIS is all permanent and is kept. Paper records that can be purged are purged by office "owners."
I do not believe that we purge electronic records
Registrar
Registrar's Office
For records kept within the Registrar's Office, the Registrar's Office. For records kept in other departments - i.e., departments, they are responsible for doing so.
Library
We do not purge electronic records.
We are trying to establish that now.
e-records aren't purged
None for electronic. We only purge paper with the exception of student accounts.
Unknown
We are not doing it yet. When started it will most likely be the Registrar's Office.
The office that owns the records in conjunction with Central IT
TEAM: Registrar and IT
Registrar
Registrar's Office
No one
Data is currently never purged
No electronic records are currently purged
Registrar
Registrar's Office
We don't purge Electronic records
Electronic Records are not purged.
No one currently is responsible for this
The office that has physical ownership
Not purging electronic records at this point.
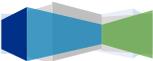
Appendix G: Additional Comments*

*raw data

Because we scan almost everything, we don't really purge much of anything.
We are relatively new to electronic records. We did not set up expiration policies on all of our documents, so there is risk that we will save electronically what could be purged in the future.
If the records are being purged and are included in the records retention policy we must notify the Head of the Records Retention task force of when and how we are purging the records.
We are in the process of updating our records retention policy to address inactive versus graduated files, and electronic records - both scanned documents and data housed in the ERP
Our retention schedule is based on the state library achieve schedule of educational records.
Complicated!
We recently updated our records retention schedule since we have moved to more electronic saving of information. We are in the process of purging some records and saving then purging some records.
We have found that now that we have scanned all student records there is really no reason to purge records. We are having that discussion and weighing the pros and cons of purging anything now.
The needs of my particular college within in the university are different from the rest of the institution as a whole and the retention policies do not take that into consideration.
We are working and making the retention policy known and used appropriately
We have recently updated our policy and have to deal with the fact our process has not been clear nor followed for some time so we have potentially 75,000 records to purge to meet our policy standards.
We are a large institution, the difficulty is in getting the message out to all departments on a regular basis.
I can only speak for the Registrar's office and academic records. I don't know if other offices have a policy and schedule, or if they follow it.
Purging is necessary because of physical space limitations, so it gets done!
The major impediment to a consistent process is limited staffing to perform the tasks on a schedule.
The policy was last revised two decades ago and is clearly out of date with the current types and sources of records administrative offices maintain.
At this time we are creating a schedule and policy for purging from our digital repository.
The student records are maintained and discarded according to standard policy/procedures. The questions were answered to the best of my ability and knowledge.
At our institution, record retention is a big black "hole."
We strictly follow state policy/procedure, we should create a campus specific policy.
We use a SIS for the student's core/permanent academic record as well as application data. We use an ECM for digital storage of related documents such as supplementary application documents, letters, forms, etc. These are integrated.
We still have academic paper files but are working towards Records Electronic Academic Records files "READFiles" where student records would be scanned and kept. There were not be any plans to delete portions of the records after 5 years.
Paper files are purged; electronic files are maintained forever.
My office retains the student's official record permanently, whether electronic or old hardcopy. The schools retain academic advising and degree certification records per their own policies, as well as any physical files on individual students. Disciplinary records are maintained by the Judicial Administrator per policies developed by that office together with legal counsel.
Our records are federal document so they're never purged. Although we have scanned and stored alumni student records in our SIS, by law we still have to store paper records in government repository. Admissions paper records of matriculated students are kept indefinitely.

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I work at a public university in Massachusetts, and the State's retention schedule regarding higher education records is very uninformed and clearly written and enacted by individuals who have never worked in higher education. I always defer to the AACRAO Records Management guide.
Our Registrar's Office shreds the student folder if the student has stopped attending for 7 years. We go 2 years beyond the 5 year limit to be on the safe side. Transcripts are permanently retained either in SIS or in Alchemy for older records.
Reduction in staff has made purging records less of a priority
Each separate office unit has their own policies and/or schedules. There is a desire by the college records historian to work the project to have a clear written policy/schedule so that all can access it, be clear about what it means, etc.
Our institution's student records management policy is very generic and basically charges each department to create and manage their won.
We keep records for 7 years.
Our electronic records are not purged, however if files still exist they are kept for approximately 7 years after the student has left the University.
We receive requests from our Academic Departments on what documents to purge and which to keep. We email them the policy and they don't understand it. Since we didn't write it, we do not feel like we can defend it or interpret it for their situation. It is a messy situation.
The state's retention policy is somewhat archaic on 'original documentation' versus digital. The registrar's in the state approached the state about some of their requirements and they were unwilling to listen, in fact got quite hostile about it.
We are in the process of digitizing all of our old paper student records. If they have graduated, basically we are scanning admissions app, transcripts and test scores. If they have not graduated, we are scanning additional academic assessments that may help us determine a degree audit or re-enrollment status.
This "retention minimum" versus purge date is the new standard for archivists nationally. In the digital age, they do not push purging, only push a minimum retention timeframe. Our university archivist is the person who handles this policy on our campus and it is broad- encompassing all documents from finance, payroll to student records.
We need a complete overhaul of this policy and how it is implement, carried out and the responsible office.
We are currently in the process of reviewing and updating our student record and data retention schedules.
Our policy includes a clause that "Institutional database records are retained indefinitely; the retention period...applies to paper records and ancillary files (including electronic documents on personal computers and other servers)."
We just implemented document management in 11/16 so we will have to revise our policy to include electronic file records.
We're working through the lack of a retention schedule before I got here. We're purging paper now. We'll address electronic records at a later point.
Policy is 20 pages long + very comprehensive.
Not having a 'sunset clause' on the schedule means once the student record is official, it becomes part of the permanent data base. Sort of nice to have a 'clear line', though it does generate a lot of records.
Policy and procedures are under review to update and revise retention schedule.
I feel there is a pressing need to review, update, consider our records retention policy but so many other burning fires seem to cut in line. I would really like to tighten up our practices to more closely align with our policies.
Managed at a statewide level - policy is in place operational not functional
Our office has been told that memory is inexpensive so we continue storing documents past their purge date. I have reminded administration that those records are subject to open record laws if subpoena or request is issued. Each administrative area (Admissions, Registrar, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, etc.) all have their own schedule/policy per our institution auditors.

In the question "For each records category below please indicate, in general, how long documents/data are retained after a student has left the institution - Indefinitely was used to refer to permanently.
We have in our Institution all the records of the academic and students related documents from the beginning of the University 50 years ago.
We follow a state set of detailed retention and purge policies. Each record type has a different set of rules so that I was not able to answer your question about how long Registrars records are kept..... Each document type is different. There is no universal length of time. These state regs are really OLD and have not kept up with modern records keeping. Because of changes in our state organization, we are now able to develop local, institutional policies/practices and will be re-working the old regs in the not too distant future to meet our needs. Having access to AACRAO best practice info will be great.
I would like to have a more comprehensive policy that includes other records besides academic records. We purge students' files upon graduation and then five years later. We decided to keep transcripts from other schools permanently, this applies to smaller schools.
The Retention of Records guide from AACRAO has been an invaluable resource for informing our decisions about our records retention policy.
Overall we have a good policy - a few small updates need to be made as we have implemented some new electronic record systems, but it's fairly good. We need to address backlogs of purging.
We follow the records retention policies of the State of NJ. We do not have a separate policy.
Records Management is the dept. that handles this and would be the authority here. I'm not up-to-date on how all this is set up.
http://www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/retention.asp
This is a new policy. Accountability for purging will likely be joint effort with owner AND IT.
Record retention and destruction policies assume that helpful, consistent naming practices have always been in place. I don't believe this to be the case at any institution. So, this is a particularly challenging project that usually falls low on the priority list especially in times of low staff/funding levels.
Since we image all academic and admissions records of enrolled students, none of them are deleted because of the system that we use. It makes it a lot easier - we just retain everything.
We routinely keep documents--through imaging technologies--but have not created a destruction schedule for those documents. Consequently, we keep all documents indefinitely. We have asked to develop a destruction schedule through our imaging solution but have not yet created a schedule or a process.
Several years ago, a campus wide retention policy was created by compiling policies from individual departments. This document has not been maintained and is out of date. My sense is that few offices have an active retention policy/schedule or if one exists, it is not followed.
Our process is out of date and was not campus-wide. I have been slowly working to have a campus-wide policy.
We are still implementing our policy and schedules.
In the process of writing/developing processes to delete electronic records according to retention schedules
Balancing best practices set by AACRAO with some outdated state laws/rules is a challenge.
We have an office records management policy in place and a campus wide records management department so it made it difficult to respond.
http://www.archives.mcgill.ca/recmanage/recsrch.htm
Our overall policy is created and maintained by the Office of the President of the University System, we maintain a separate retention schedule to adhere to that policy.
This is a topic reviewed annually due to regulatory changes.
I inherited a vague and incomplete records retention policy/schedule from my predecessor and am currently developing a more specific document that addresses each possible item in the academic record. I feel that an ambiguous policy is about as useful as no policy.
The AACRAO was the motivator for evaluating our policy and creating a new policy. We have it and working our way through the changes.
The current policy is that all academic records are kept permanently. The policy is about to go up for review. The plan is to research AACRAO standards and the practices of peer institutions.

Other records maintained permanently (regardless of medium) are: catalogs, class schedules, commencement list/program, some reports (budget, initial stats)
We have department-held records in addition to university-held (registrar's office) records, and the department records are subject to their own records retention policies. Some are followed, some aren't.
We are currently in the process of reviewing and updating our records retention policy and procedures.
We need to establish a university-wide policy and support it with budget and allotted staff time.
We are in the process of looking to develop a formal policy and the corresponding practice
We have two retention policies; USA and domestic non Canadian (5 years paper), and Canadian (50 years paper)
Still working with IT on the easiest way to purge electronic documents.
We also have veterans, international and athletic records in the retention schedule.
Need more time and people.
The owner of the records notifies IT when to run the purge process. The purge process was written by the office who owns the records.
The most difficult part of maintaining the records retention policy is that we maintain both paper and electronic versions of records in some cases and there are different retention schedules for paper vs electronic. For example, we scan and keep transfer transcripts permanently in our ERP system, but we will also keep the paper original for 5 years from graduation or withdrawal.   It would be great if AACRAO offered recommendations on these situations and guidelines for electronic vs paper retention. Guidance on keeping student email correspondence would also be helpful.
Because we are a medical school and are required to reconfirm attendance, graduation, etc. throughout the careers of our graduates for certification and recertification of medical licenses, we keep our records indefinitely. About two years after graduation, when we are finished actively using the student files, we purge any documents from each file that we don't intend to keep permanently before scanning and indexing the records into our ECM. The paper files are stored in our vault. I intend to keep these hard copy files indefinitely. After our vault fills, I intend that the oldest records are stored off-site in long-term document storage.
This is always something that seems to be a work in progress; and a task that falls to the bottom of the 'to do' list when things are busy.
Prior to imaging our records, we used to pull and purge records. Since we have been imaging documents since 2012, we have not found an efficient way to purge records no longer needed. I even asked this same question of a large university in town (the person I spoke with also helped write the 2012 AACRAO FERPA Guide) and that person also stated that their institution had not found a way to efficiently purge their imaging system of records that no longer needed to be kept.
It is not managed well at our institution. No scanning capabilities. Limit SIS technical support. Non-existent support staff to manage effort.
Most of the records are paper at this point. We do a purge twice a year, after the fall and spring semesters.
Records management is so very important, but also time consuming. I have had a difficult time implementing a repeating cycle while battling the influx of new incoming documents and records. I'd like to hear how other schools have implemented a hard copy and e-copy purge schedule.
We seem to always need old information. We just purged files that were over 20 years old and as soon as we did we have had some students surface with questions that were in the file. Luckily all the files were on microfilm so we could find the data.
Maricopa is working with state of AZ to currently update the record keeping.
Our office has evolved over the past 11 years and documents were kept on paper, are now kept electronically in an effort to become paperless. There are some documents that will be kept electronically and by paper.
The offices that "own" the records do not have database access to purge any of the electronic records so we have trust that the IT office is following the policy correctly.
XYZ's Registrar's Office has a policy/schedule that we established and had approved internally 13 years ago. This was written based on AACRAO's recommendations. This policy/schedule is specific to those records held within the Registrar's Office only. When asked by other areas/departments for our policy, we are happy to share it, telling them they are welcome to follow it (or not) - that is their decision within their areas. In addition,

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several years ago *XYZ*'s President's office created and signed off on an "institution wide" records retention policy that encompasses all/many records university wide.   The section on Registrar's records mirrors the *XYZ* Registrar's Records and Destruction policy.
We use the state retention schedule but, as with most colleges, different office and administrators have different practices. Often, I find that purging doesn't happen simply because people are busy and don't get to it in a timely manner rather than not sticking to policy or avoiding the process.
There isn't an "institutional" policy. Registrar and Academic Affairs follow the same schedule, but other departments have their own processes.
We are considering this issue.
We are very decentralized, so some departments/colleges may not follow the retention schedule precisely.
We have discussed the need to update our policy and review our records management procedures within the next 2-3 years.
Many of your questions are very broad and encompass a variety of documents that are retained for different time periods. Take grades for example - faculty grade books are retained for 5 years, grade reports (midterm) are retained until the end of the term, grade submissions are retained indefinitely, grade changes are retained indefinitely, and incomplete grade contracts are retained until 3 years after graduation or last date of attendance.
My answers are for the registrar's office only; there is no campus-wide policy. We keep paper files of graduates for 5 years after graduation. Non-graduates we keep for 10 years after last attendance.
For many years the whole institution followed a 7 year retention schedule. Just this past year the Office of the Registrar moved to a 5 year retention schedule while everyone else determined they would stay with 7 years.
Only the Registrar's Office has a records/retention policy/plan in place, originating in 2006. If other offices do - Admissions, Financial Aid, Billing - they follow the recommendations of their professional organizations. Currently all academic records (except enrollment verification requests, NSC reports and transcript requests are permanently retained) are retained permanently, either in paper for withdrawn students or microfilmed for students who graduated. Policy has been under review with the intent to be changed and modified using AACRAO recommendations. Are any significant changes planned?
Timing - varies within each policy based on specific records. Our list of policies is indexed at https://www.wlu.edu/general-counsel/code-of-policies/board-approved-policies/document-retention-and-disposition
I only responded to records retention for Registrar's department, not other departments on campus.
Electronic records are not purged.
The policies and schedule come from the state, yet there is no funding attached to the rules, so for many years very little has been done to comply with the policy.
There is an Archivist in our main library who oversees all records retention (the policy and schedule) for the University; student records are just a small subset of our records. The schedule needs to be reviewed and updated but that would be a huge task to do.
Being decentralized, it is challenging to consistently implement this policy by university, division, department
The State of Missouri is currently working on creating a template for Universities to use to create their own records retention schedule. This will be known as a General Retention Schedule. It is a starting point for schools who are looking to create or revise their records retention schedules.
The system is purged as needed randomly.
When you asked about length of storage, it was really asked at too high of a level. Within Student Records, for instance, we a range (depending upon the data and/or document) from 6 mos. to indefinitely. In Admissions, what we keep for matriculated students is different than denied or non-matriculated students. Thus, depending upon how the questions are interpreted, you may get a wide response that is not really valid.
Each school within the University has their own policy and procedure~
We really need to address the record retention policy at our institution this year.
This policy needs some work. We don't have the space to indefinitely store everything related to student records. People are in disagreement about which items should be retained.

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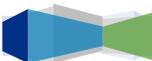
Each department has its own schedule regarding records management. The schedule is reviewed annually with the Records Retention department.
Our policy applies to paper records in the possession of the Registrar's Office
It needs to be updated.
We are transitioning towards a paperless records system; we will likely be reviewing our policy and practice as that transition progresses.
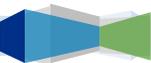
Appendix H: Records Management Guidance Resources:

AACRAO's Student Records Management: Retention, Disposal and Archive of Student Records
http://www4.aacrao.org/publications/catalog.php?item=0138#.WIDg2RsrIaY

AACRAO Report: The Impact of Electronic Content Management (ECM) system Ownership on Student Records Management Practice
http://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/surveyresults/ecm-and-student-records-management-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Records Quarterly Summer 2014: Hoarders Records Edition
http://www.libraries.uc.edu/content/dam/libraries/arb/docs/records-management/RQSummer2014.pdf

EDUCAUSE ECAR Research: Electronic Records Management – Today's High Stakes
https://library.educause.edu/resources/2010/4/electronic-records-management-todays-high-stakes

Laserfiche: Ultimate Guide to Records Management
http://ecm.laserfiche.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-records-management/

Ponemon Institute Research Report: 2016 Cost of Data Breach Study
http://www-03.ibm.com/security/data-breach/