

2019

# Student Activism Now Documented

Karen Walton Morse

*University of Rhode Island, [kwmorse@uri.edu](mailto:kwmorse@uri.edu)*

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Project STAND is a consortium of college and university archivists working on

1. surfacing archival collections about student activism,
2. actively collecting material that documents student activist activity, &
3. doing both ethically.

Cover image:  
Student takeover of the Univ. of Rhode Island Administration Building, 1971

## Project STAND: STudent Activism Now Documented

- Founded by Lae’l Hughes-Watkins (Univ. Archivist, Univ. of Maryland) in 2016
- Inspired by the resurgence of campus political activism (and her work as Univ. Archivist for Kent State University)
- Archives and Archivists from over 50 colleges and universities
  - *Connecticut College, Univ. of Connecticut, Univ. of Rhode Island* recently joined: *Brandeis University, Univ. of Maine*
- Informed by [Black Metropolis Research Consortium](#) model



**Lae’l Hughes-Watkins**  
(Univ. Archivist, Univ. of MD;  
Founder, Project STAND)

As quoted in “Project STAND Highlights Student Activism Archives” by Lisa Peet (*Library Journal*, May 24, 2018), Available: <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=project-stand-highlights-student-activism-archives>

“We are in the midst of such a polarizing moment in history—politically and socially—whether it’s stories of police brutality, violence against members of the transgender community, discrimination against immigrant populations, state violence on campuses...

“I feel Project STAND allows for setting a different tone and placing value on the very communities, the oppressed student populations, that have a long history of being silenced and are being impacted by the acts previously mentioned. STAND will help elevate their voices by bringing together archivists, technologists, historians, activists, and others willing to create a network of shared interest [in] doing social justice through archives.”

# Organization and Governance

## Board

- Lae'l Hughes-Watkins, University of Maryland College Park
- Tamar Chute, Ohio State University
- Helen Conger, Case Western Reserve University
- Jarrett M. Drake, PhD Student, Anthropology, Harvard
- Ken Grossi, Oberlin College
- Andrea Jackson, Black Metropolis Research Center
- Elizabeth Smith-Pryor, Kent State University
- Michelle Sweetser, Bowling Green State University
- Anna Trammell, Pacific Lutheran University

## Original committee structure:

- Communications
- Ethics
- Grant
- **Student Engagement**
- Web

## Committee updates (in development):

- **Archivist Activist Toolkit**
- Collections Features Review
- Communications
  - Podcast
  - Social Media
- Orientation
- Symposia Outcome



## ALPHABETIZED LIST OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN COLLECTIONS (FULL AND PARTIAL) ARCHIVES

- [#BBUM \(Being Black at the University of Michigan\) Twitter Archive, 2013-2015](#) (University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library)
- [1970 Student Demonstrations, 1970-1979](#) (The Ohio State University)
- [A Dream Deferred: The University of Virginia and Equal Opportunity, 1967-1970](#) (University of Virginia)
- [Academics for Affirmative Action and Social Justice Records, 1997-2000](#) (University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library)
- [Activist Student Organizations, 1965-1972](#) (University of Virginia)
- [Ad-Hoc Committee to Student Strike of 1970](#) (University of Virginia)
- [African-American and African Studies Dept. Records, 1960-1979](#) (The Ohio State University)
- [Afro-American Society Records, 1968-1998](#) (Case Western Reserve University Archives)
- [Allen Building Takeover Collection, 1969-2002](#) (Duke University Archives)
- [Alternative Press Collection, 1960's-2010's](#) (University of Connecticut)
- [Anti-Racism Protests/Activism Materials, 1960-1969, 2000-present](#) (Denison University)
- [Anti-War Material and Student Protest Tapes from Chancellorsville, 1969](#) (University of Virginia)
- [Archiving Student Activism at Princeton \(ASAP\) Collection, 2014-2016](#) (Princeton University)

Detail, Collections by Theme: African American page. Available: <https://standarchives.com/african-american/>

Previous slide image: URI student protest in response to Kent State, 1971

## Collections By Theme

*Student Activism (Project STAND Top Ten Themes)  
Based on Survey Results (As of 6/12/2018)  
Number = number of surveys with that theme*

Image: Courtesy of Northwestern University

**African American**



97

57

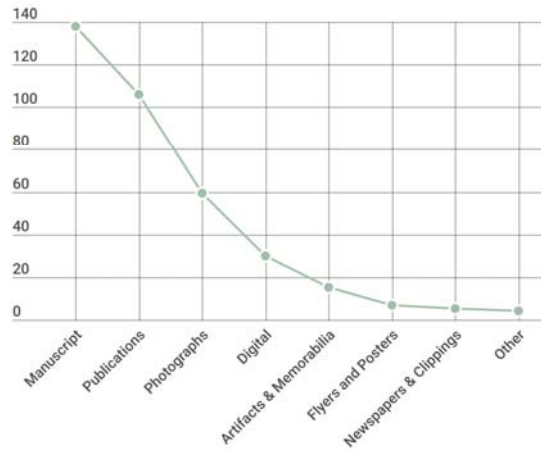
**Anti-War**

Image: Courtesy of University of Rhode Island

Infogram, available: [https://infogram.com/project\\_stand](https://infogram.com/project_stand)

## Format of Collection Series

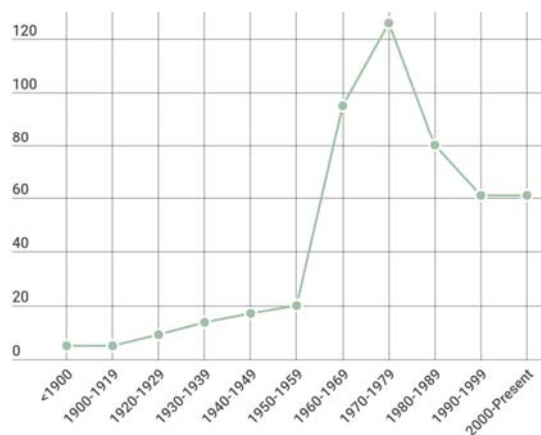
To date, manuscripts is the top format



Infogram, available: [https://infogram.com/project\\_stand](https://infogram.com/project_stand)

## Collections by Decade

To date 1970-1979 was the most active decade

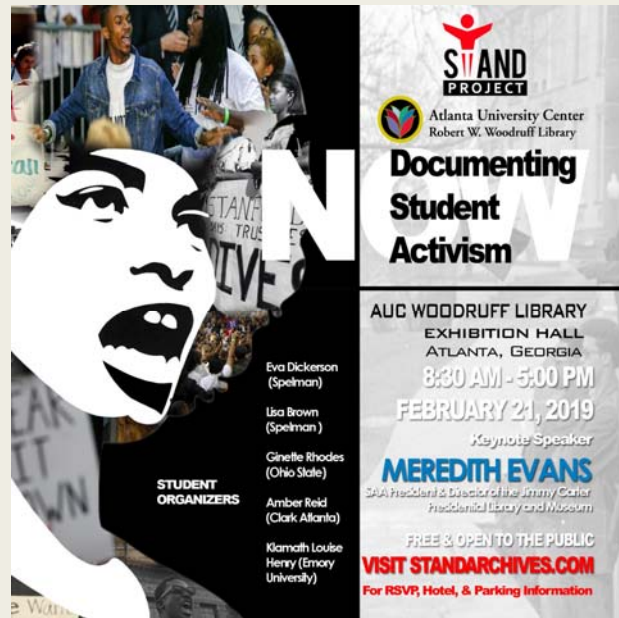


Infogram, available: [https://infogram.com/project\\_stand](https://infogram.com/project_stand)

## Project STAND Symposia

- Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library, February 21, 2019
- University of Rhode Island, June 3, 2019
- Chicago State University, September 19, 2019
- Arizona State University, TBA (circa February 2020)

Funded by IMLS National Leadership Grant for Libraries



## Symposium 1: Documenting Student Activism NOW

- Location: Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library
- Keynote: Dr. Meredith Evans (Director, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum; President, SAA)
- 3 panels
  - 6 student panelists
  - 3 practitioner panelists
- 2 professional papers

### Topics explored

- Labor, challenges, and role of documentation in student organizing
- Role of social media tools in student organizing and long term implications of their usage
- Ethical collection, use, and preservation of social media and other digital documentation

# Symposium 1: Takeaways

## Recurring themes

- The importance of context
  - *Social media is not the whole story*
- We need to protect our students
  - *In the now and in the future*
- Importance of engaging with the humans who are creating the data
  - *students need agency (as creators whose records are being collected)*
- Focus on equity & justice instead of diversity & inclusion
- Activating the archive
  - *“you never know the potential of your archives has to heal, to provide answers,...” (R. Johnson)*
- Students are archiving their own material (often using social media)

# Symposium 1: Takeaways

- Students are interested in archival work – we need to create the (paid) opportunities for them
- Creating brave spaces
- Social media is demobilizing
- Activists are theorists
- Importance of creating a pipeline to the profession by engaging undergraduate students



Image: GroupMe logo





**Meredith Evans**  
(Director, J. Carter Presidential  
Library & Museum; President, SAA)

“You have to challenge your training. [If ...] [...] what’s important [...] is] not having a one-sided story then you have to take some risks and do some things differently than you are used to doing and that’s ok. And if it means protecting your donor-particularly activist work, student work [...] -you need to] protect your people too. Not forever. [...]

“Our work is tricky and you have to be open to changes [and to] interpreting things differently. And when you go into [these negotiations] you can’t force yourself, you can guide and listen, [...] listen and let them guide you and then come up with the plan. It’ll make everyone happier in the end.”



**Ginette Rhodes**  
(Student, Ohio State Univ.)

### What are some of the challenges you face as a student activist?

“Being a student at an institution you are very vulnerable. Your degree is based off that university. Your means of providing for yourself via financial aid is based off that university. Your access to all these very important dimensions of wellness are through that university. [...] When you are standing for something that may go against the principles of the university or if you are exposing [something], you are putting yourself on the line. That’s a challenge within itself because there’s a lot of sacrifice [...], braveness, and integrity to become a face of something that goes against the very thing providing for you....”



**Klamath Louise Henry**  
(Student, Emory Univ.)

**Do you trust the institutions you are at to document your work?  
What should archivists be doing to strengthen that trust?**

“I don’t really trust anybody, so it’s not just an institutional thing. [...] Institutions hiring people who look like you and come from your identity is very important. [...]

“I just fear oftentimes that the reason I don’t have that trust is just because the institution has never done my people right. How can I trust you when it’s been years and years and years of terrible relationships? But, if you were to put a person into that place who looks like me, comes from a background like me, and understands when I say ‘these are the reasons I don’t trust them.’ ‘All right, I don’t trust them either.’ And then sort of working together to create a narrative and to create an archival resource would be great. [...]

“As well as incentivizing students to do it on their own [...] Encourage and also pay students to do this kind of work. [...] Caring enough to make those opportunities for us is important.”



**Ramon Johnson**  
(Alumn., Morehouse Univ.;  
Student, New York Univ.)

**What limitations do you see in social media?**

“I’ve noticed how social media has been weaponized against black bodies. For those of us who share different types of opinions or who are trying to organize around an issue. Certain folks would get [...] resources pulled out from under them simply for stating [something online]. It’s caused me to wonder how safe are we as organizers when we are trying to mobilize on social media. [...]

That’s something I’ve also been wrestling with - how the internet has been weaponized and when I think about how it’s an archive as well. [...] I think about Tumblr [...] A lot of the content we are trying to share can easily be taken down because we are not in control of the archives or these spaces. [...] How can we create, as marginalized groups, our own spaces that we’re in control of and not have to worry about us getting dragged or getting death threats or suffering various consequences just because we’re trying to mobilize online”



Ramon Johnson  
(Alumn., Morehouse Univ.;  
Student, New York Univ.)

### What limitations do you see in social media?

“I oftentimes wonder what does a [...] public Jstor look like for regular, negular folks in our hoods. Because we deserve to be cited as well. I’ve seen organizers share enlightening knowledge on Twitter and scholars in the academy would take that theory, put it in their words, and not give them the credit. I believe that has been weaponized as well. Because activists are theorists [...] we help drive social change.”



Holly Smith  
(College Archivist,  
Spelman College)

When you are going into the community -

“Show up with transparency. [...]”

“Shut up and listen. [...]”

“They don’t need your help. **What [they] need is a equitable and just collaborative relationship with agreed upon objectives, goals, and actionable items** that will benefit multiple communities– or not, it depends...”

## Symposium 2: Centering the Marginal: Toward Inclusivity in the Documentation of Student Struggle

- Planning in progress
- Location: University of Rhode Island
- Keynote: Dr. Adrienne Keene  
(Asst. Professor of American and  
Ethnic Studies, Brown University;  
Founder, Native Appropriations)
- 1 practitioner panel
- 1-2 student panels
- 2-4 papers
- Breakout sessions
- Unprogrammed time

## Please join us

### At the symposium:

- Theme: Centering the Marginal:  
Toward Inclusivity in the Documentation of Student Struggle
- June 3, 2019 at Univ. of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI)
- Registration now open
- Website: <https://standarchives.com/stand-symposium-university-of-rhode-island/>
- CFP deadline April 8, 2019
- Questions? Contact Karen Morse [kwmorse@uri.edu](mailto:kwmorse@uri.edu)

### As a Project STAND member:

- Inquiry form: <https://standarchives.com/contact-us/>

Student Activism Now Documented  
Karen Walton Morse, University of Rhode Island

Presented as part of *STANDING Together: Collaborating to Document Student Activism of Historically Marginalized Communities* at Together We Can: New England Archivists Spring 2019 Meeting, Burlington, VT, April 6, 2019

Opening Slide

Good morning, everyone. I'm Karen Walton Morse and as Rebecca mentioned, I'll be starting off the session with an overview of Project STAND (Student Activism Now Documented) and the work we, as a consortium, are doing.

Slide 2: Defining STAND

Project STAND is a consortium of college and university archivists working on surfacing archival collections about student activism, actively collecting material that documents student activist activity, and doing both ethically.

This isn't official Project STAND language, but the phraseology that I've been using to explain our work locally.

Slide 3: Background

A bit of background - Project STAND was founded by Lae'l Hughes-Watkins, Univ. Archivist at the Univ. of Maryland (and 2019 Library Journal Mover and Shaker), while she was Univ.

Archivist at Kent State Univ.

Archival reference questions about the absence of black students in documentation of the Kent State Shootings, coupled with the resurgence of campus political activism in recent years, fueled

a desire to work toward better documenting the activist activities and concerns of students, particularly those from historically marginalized groups –and-- highlighting existing documentation of the same in institutional archives.

It began as a group of Ohio archivists dedicated to meeting this need, but quickly grew as other college and university archivists learned about the project.

The group currently consists of archives and archivists from over 50 colleges and universities across the country. In the New England region, members include Connecticut College, University of CT, and Univ. of RI (hence our session composition), along with two of STAND's newest members - Brandeis University and the University of Maine.

The consortium's work on surfacing student activist material is informed by the Black Metropolis Research Center model. STAND partners complete Pre-Assessment Survey, which helps them to identify what available resources. And Collections Assessment Surveys, for each of their relevant collections in any format.

#### Slide 4: LHW quote

I want to share this quote from Project STAND's founder because I think it really encapsulates the purpose of the work we are trying to do -

“We are in the midst of such a polarizing moment in history—politically and socially—whether it's stories of police brutality, violence against members of the transgender community, discrimination against immigrant populations, state violence on campuses...

“I feel Project STAND allows for setting a different tone and placing value on the very communities, the oppressed student populations, that have a long history of being silenced and are being impacted by the acts previously mentioned. STAND will help elevate their voices by bringing together archivists, technologists, historians, activists,

and others willing to create a network of shared interest [in] doing social justice through archives.”

Slide 5: Organization and governance:

Board consisting of early STAND partners and advisors like Jarrett Drake and Andrea Jackson.

And a series of committees - communications, ethics, grant, web, and most importantly, student engagement – a foundational principle of STAND is that current student activists are not just subject without agency in our collection development. It is important that this work is done with and for students and is informed by their concerns.

The Student Engagement Committee which is charged with designing the goals and outcomes for engagement with student organizations/student activist communities as it relates to Project STAND and has served as a liaison to students involved in STAND projects.

As the group has grown and developed, the need for additional focused – has emerged.

**Collection Features Review** - Review collections highlighted in Project STAND and prepare features on select collections to be posted on website and used in social media

**Subcommittees of the Communications** committee to manage STAND’s social media presence and develop a podcast

**Orientation** – Welcoming and onboarding new members

**Symposia outcome** – more on this later –

**Archivist Activist Toolkit** – listening to the needs of our communities, we will create a toolkit for archivists wanting to engage with (and preserve record of) student activists and their work. This committee will be tasked with gathering information to inform that

work and liaising with various stakeholders.

Slide 6 [Kent State Protest image]

At the most basic level, Project STAND is an online clearinghouse where academic institutions can provide researchers a centralized access point to historical and archival documentation on the development and on-going occurrences of student dissent.

It focuses on digital and analog primary sources that document the activities of student groups that represent the concerns of historically marginalized communities, but will also highlight the work of others (such as faculty, staff, and administrators) who advocate for (or support the interests of) those communities.

Now what does that look like?

Slide 7: Collections page example

[link to full page, which begins with the map info graphic]

[talk about distribution of collections]

Links go to directly to the finding aids or digital collections at the home institution.

Slides 8-10: Data graphics

[review]

[for collections by THEME, link to full page for maximum impact]



### Slide 11: Project STAND Symposia

In late 2018, STAND received a National Leadership Grant for Libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services 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 of traditionally underrepresented student populations AND providing a platform for student organizers (both current students and alumni) to discuss their work and to dialog with archivists.

This slide features the flyer for the first symposium, which took place in Atlanta in February.

Two more symposia are scheduled for later this year, and a third in early 2020.

### Slide 12: AUC Symposium overview

- Location: Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library
- Keynote: Dr. Meredith Evans  
(Director, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum; President, SAA)
- 3 panels
  - 6 *student panelists*
  - 3 *practitioner panelists*
- 2 professional papers

Topics explored:

- Labor, challenges, and role of documentation in student organizing
- Role of social media tools in student organizing and long term implications of their usage
- Ethical collection, use, and preservation of social media and other digital documentation

### Slides 13-14: Takeaways

What did we learn from the symposium?

Now I have some quotations from symposium participants on the next few slides, which I'll share if I have time, but I wanted to outline some key points here:

## Recurring themes

- The importance of context
  - *Social media is not the whole story*
- We need to protect our students
  - *In the now and in the future*
- Importance of engaging with the humans who are creating the data
  - *students need agency (as creators whose records are being collected)*
- Focus on equity & justice  
instead of diversity & inclusion
- Activating the archive
  - *“you never know the potential of your archives has to heal, to provide answers,...” (R. Johnson)*
- Students are archiving their own material (often using social media)
- Students are interested in archival work – we need to create the (paid) opportunities for them
- Creating brave spaces
- Social media is demobilizing
- Activists are theorists
- Importance of creating a pipeline to the profession by engaging undergraduate students

There was also this – POINT TO GROUP-ME LOGO – How many of you know what this is?

[WAIT FOR RESPONSE] GroupMe App. None of the archivists in attendance knew what it was, but all the students said it was central to how they communicate with their peers, including and beyond their activist work.

### Slide 15: Quoting Meredith Evans (Director, J. Carter Pres. Library & Museum; President, SAA)

“You have to challenge your training. [If ...] [...] what’s important [... is] not having a one-sided story then you have to take some risks and do some things differently than you are used to doing and that’s ok. And if it means protecting your donor--particularly activist work, student work [... --you need to] protect your people too. Not forever. [...] “Our work is tricky and you have to be open to changes [and to] interpreting things differently. And when you go into [these negotiations] you can’t force yourself, you can guide and listen, [...] listen and let them guide you and then come up with the plan. It’ll make everyone happier in the end.”

Slide 16: Quoting Ginette Rhodes (Student, Ohio State Univ.)

**Q: What are some of the challenges you face as a student activist?**

“Being a student at an institution you are very vulnerable. Your degree is based off that university. Your means of providing for yourself via financial aid is based off that university. Your access to all these very important dimensions of wellness are through that university. [...] When you are standing for something that may go against the principles of the university or if you are exposing [something], you are putting yourself on the line. That’s a challenge within itself because there’s a lot of sacrifice [...], braveness, and integrity to become a face of something that goes against the very thing providing for you....”

Slide 17: Quoting Klamath Louise Henry (Student, Emory Univ.)

**Q: Do you trust the institutions you are at to document your work?**

**What should archivists be doing to strengthen that trust?**

“I don’t really trust anybody, so it’s not just an institutional thing. [...] Institutions hiring people who look like you and come from your identity is very important. [...]

“I just fear oftentimes that the reason I don’t have that trust is just because the institution has never done my people right. How can I trust you when it’s been years and years and years of terrible relationships? But, if you were to put a person into that place who looks like me, comes from a background like me, and understands when I say ‘these are the reasons I don’t trust them.’ ‘All right, I don’t trust them either.’ And then sort of working together to create a narrative and to create an archival resource would be great. [...]

“As well as incentivizing students to do it on their own [...] Encourage and also pay students to do this kind of work. [...] Caring enough to make those opportunities for us is important.”

Slides 18-19: Quoting Ramon Johnson (Alumn., Morehouse Univ.; Student, New York Univ.)

**Q: What limitations do you see in social media?**

“I’ve noticed how social media has been weaponized against black bodies. For those of us who share different types of opinions or who are trying to organize around an issue. Certain folks would get [...] resources pulled out from under them simply for stating [something online]. It’s caused me to wonder how safe are we as organizers when we are trying to mobilize on social media. [...]

“That’s something I’ve also been wrestling with - how the internet has been weaponized and when I think about how it’s an archive as well. [...] I think about Tumblr [...] A lot of the content we are trying to share can easily be taken down because we are not in control of the archives or these spaces. [...] How can we create, as marginalized groups, our own spaces that we’re in control of and not have to worry about us getting dragged or getting death threats or suffering various consequences just because we’re trying to mobilize online”

“I oftentimes wonder what does a [...] public Jstor look like for regular, negular folks in our hoods. Because we deserve to be cited as well. I’ve seen organizers share enlightening knowledge on Twitter and scholars in the academy would take that theory, put it in their words, and not give them the credit. I believe that has been weaponized as well. Because activists are theorists [...] we help drive social change.”

Slide 20: Quoting Holly Smith (College Archivist, Spelman College)

When you are going into the community -

“Show up with transparency. [...]

“Shut up and listen. [...]

“They don’t need your help. **What [they] need is a equitable and just collaborative relationship with agreed upon objectives, goals, and actionable items** that will benefit multiple communities– or not, it depends...”

Slide 20: Rhode Island Symposium Planning Overview

The second symposium will be taking place at the beginning of June at my place of work.

Issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion have historically been the most consistent area of student activism at the University of Rhode Island. That history will serve as the backdrop for the symposium.

Much of the schedule for the day is yet to be finalized because we wanted our planning of the second symposium to be informed by the experience of and feedback on the first symposium.

Our keynote has been finalized – our keynoter is Adrienne Keene -- and we have tentative agreements with both practitioners and student organizers of different Intersectionalities to participate in panels.

During the symposium examine student activism through the lens of difference as well as the role of student organizers in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at their colleges and universities. We hope the symposium will provide vital discourse on levels of engagement of student organizers, the impact of place and space first on the development of campus culture and later on student activism, and difference as it pertains to student activism. And, because this topic is evergreen, we will continue a thread from the first symposium investigating traditional archival praxis within the realm of social media and a discussing how to forge a more equitable relationship between the record creator and the repository.

Right now it looks like we'll have 1 practitioner panel and 1 (or possibly 2 student panels). Feedback from the first symposium indicated the desire for more space for breakout sessions or time for informal discussion and/or networking. There was also interest in having more paper presentations.

The Call For Papers is up now. We are specifically looking for presentations related to the ways information professionals can best engage with student activists from vulnerable communities to ethically document their experiences and activities.

Slide 21: Please join us

Please join us...

At the symposium:

- Theme: Centering the Marginal:  
Toward Inclusivity in the Documentation of Student Struggle
- June 3, 2019 at Univ. of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI)
- Registration now open
- Website: <https://standarchives.com/stand-symposium-university-of-rhode-island/>
- CFP deadline April 8, 2019
- Questions? Contact Karen Morse [kwmorse@uri.edu](mailto:kwmorse@uri.edu)

As a Project STAND member:

- Inquiry form: <https://standarchives.com/contact-us/>

Note: the deadline for paper proposals is this coming Monday, but there may be some wiggle room – come talk to me after the session or send me an email, I have a stack of my cards here on the table.