



MUSEUM OF TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy

M/OP 2.3: Code of Ethics

Date: circa 1998; revised 2005 (reviewed June 2013)

Purpose: The Code of Ethics establishes the values and principles shared by the Museum of Texas Tech University with the public and the profession. An institutional code of ethics is a requirement for accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums.

Review: This document shall be reviewed at least every five years and amended as needed.

POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

In recognition of its public responsibility, the Museum of Texas Tech University endorses and upholds the highest ideals and concepts of ethical and professional practices. Those standards and commitments are defined in this Code of Ethics. It is intended to serve as a guide for the institution and all associated faculty, staff, students, trustees, and volunteers.

Premise

The Museum of Texas Tech University is a public and academic educational institution that collects, documents, preserves, and interprets objects, and disseminates the knowledge gained from them to serve society. To promote public trust, high standards of operation and behavior are necessary at all levels of the Museum, including individual members of governing bodies, subdivisions and associations, volunteers, and staff. Maintaining these standards is a collective and individual effort.

As an institution actively involved with the training of museum professionals, the Museum of Texas Tech University has an added responsibility to students and the museum community, to follow the recognized standards of the profession. For this reason, principles expressed in the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), American Alliance of Museums (AAM), and those of specific disciplines and professions, are endorsed and adapted as part of the Code of Ethics of the Museum of Texas Tech University. This code of ethics is applicable to all parties and individuals associated with the Museum of Texas Tech University.

Statement Of Position

Scope: This Code of Ethics pertains to all governing bodies, faculty and staff members, students, volunteers, and support and/or associated groups of the Museum.

Authority Recognition: This Code of Ethics is superseded by all laws, regulations, and international agreements of the United States and the State of Texas. Within this framework, this Code of Ethics also is superseded by the general policies and regulations of Texas Tech University and specific regulations applicable to certain individuals, such as students and faculty.

Endorsements in Principle: This Code of Ethics endorses in principle the guidelines of the International Council of Museums and the American Alliance of Museums. Within this framework, this Code of Ethics also endorses in principle the guidelines established by those disciplines and/or professions that are recognized as having affiliations with museums in the United States. In situations where differences may occur, the interests of the Museum will take precedence over the guidelines endorsed in principle.

Implementation: This Code of Ethics serves as the umbrella for the mission and policies of the Museum. The policies, established by the governing body of the Museum, are carried out under the guidance and supervision of its designated representative, the Executive Director of the Museum (hereafter referred to as Executive Director). The development of associated procedures is generally the responsibility of the Executive Director and designated staff.

Periodic Review and Interpretation: An Ethics Committee, appointed by the Executive Director, addresses any recommended changes of this document and resolves any issues raised about its interpretation. This Code of Ethics is reviewed at least every five years, and amended as needed.

II. GOVERNANCE

General Responsibility

Administration: The Board of Regents and their designated line of authority is the governing body of the Museum of Texas Tech University. The governing body serves all parts of the Museum as well as the faculty, staff, students, visitors, and support and/or associated groups of the Museum. While the governing body has the responsibility of serving these parties, it must also insure that all activities are in agreement with federal, state, and University regulations, as well as the mission and policies established for the Museum.

Agreements and Contracts: The governing body, through its designated representative, the Executive Director, reserves the right to negotiate and involve the Museum with corporations, agencies, or other outside parties in projects and programs that have mutual interest. The governing body will not obligate the Museum to projects or programs that do not serve Museum interests, or to situations that compromise the resources needed for on-going activities related to the Museum's primary functions.

Fiscal Matters: The governing body is responsible for using budgeted funds and resources to serve the interests of the Museum and its mission, in a manner that provides an appropriate balance of allocations for staff, collections, facilities, equipment, programs, services, and museum functions. In all fiscal matters, the governing body, through its agents, maintains full documentation and accountability for resource expenditures.

Fund Raising: All fund raising activities will be compatible with the mission and programs of the Museum. The Museum will be ethical and open about its intentions related to such activities. All donations will be handled so that the needs and wishes of the Museum are balanced with those of the donor. In all matters involving sales of goods or services, the Museum will maintain reasonable rates of exchange. The governing body may raise funds to establish endowments for the Museum through the Texas Tech University Foundation and corporate investment in Museum activities.

Personnel

The governing body recognizes the greatest asset of the Museum is its staff, and that the quality of the staff is directly related to the Museum's ability to build and maintain collections, conduct research, develop exhibit and education programs for public and academic audiences, and perform on-going services. For this reason, the governing body, acting through the Executive Director, is responsible for providing job descriptions, hiring qualified staff, providing training and career enhancement opportunities, supporting adherence to the Code of Ethics, providing resources to perform jobs, conducting periodic performance reviews and evaluations, and developing work environments that are in agreement with federal, state, and University regulations that address health, safety, and personnel issues.

Collections

The governing body recognizes that the collections are the foundation of the Museum's programs and functions. The governing body recognizes that the possession of these collections incurs legal and ethical obligations to provide proper housing, management, and care for the collections and associated documentation. For these reasons, the governing body, acting through the Executive Director, is responsible for assuring that the scope of each collection agrees with the Museum's mission, that collection growth is balanced with available resources, and that appropriate allocation is made of personnel, facilities, equipment, services, and support to address the on-going needs of each collection.

Audiences

The governing body recognizes the importance of serving both public and academic audiences, and that these audiences help justify the support the Museum receives from federal, state, local, and private sources. For this reason, the Museum establishes programs and activities that serve its broad constituency; is a facility that provides a responsive, safe, and comfortable environment; and, is a resource for accurate information. The Museum is particularly sensitive to dealing properly with cultural, social, and legal issues, such as due respect for human remains, animal care and use regulations, handicap access, and religious and cultural diversity.

III. COLLECTIONS

Statement

Collections are developed, managed, and conserved for use in research, exhibits, and/or education programs for public and academic audiences. To ensure these collections will be available for use in the future, utilization is balanced with current preservation standards and practices.

Acquisition

The growth and development of collections adheres to the Mission Statement, Scope of Collections, and Acquisition Policy of the Museum, particularly to legal and ethical acquisition, clear ownership, provenance, condition, value, need, and ability to provide proper long-term care. The Museum is committed to continued growth and development of collections, in a manner that reflects quality and relevance over quantity. New acquisitions will emphasize collection integrity, object integrity, and maximum associated information.

Management, Care, And Use

The management, care, and use of these collections follow the Collections Management Policy of the Museum, such as for security, loans, object utilization, integrated pest management, emergency preparedness, and preventive conservation. Implementation of the Collection Management Policy is based on written procedures that 1) meet museum and academic standards for the respective collections; 2) include specifications for providing proper care with respect to environment, housing, and handling; and, 3) incorporate all parts of the collection, including objects, associated data, collection records, reference material, and specialized collections.

Disposal

The disposal of accessioned collection objects follows the Deaccession section of the Collections Management Policy of the Museum and written procedures for policy implementation. All deaccessioned material is documented fully, clearly justified, disposed of appropriately, and free from problems of ownership, conflict of interest, and ethical and legal issues. No personal gain resulting from deaccessioned material is to be realized by any individual having affiliations with the Museum or the University.

IV. CONDUCT OF INDIVIDUALS

Statement

This Code of Ethics pertains to all governing bodies, faculty and staff members, students, volunteers, and support and/or associated groups of the Museum of Texas Tech University.

Responsibility To Museum

Code of Ethics, Policies, and Procedures: Individuals having an affiliation with the Museum are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the Code of Ethics, Policies, and Procedures adopted by the Museum.

Duties and Responsibilities: Individuals having an affiliation with the Museum are expected to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of their designated position and written job description, in a timely and professional manner.

Use of Resources: All resources of the Museum, including personnel, salaried-time, facilities, collections, images, equipment, supplies, and funds are to be used only to serve the interests and purposes of the Museum. Unauthorized use of these resources by any individual, strictly for personal benefit, is ethically irresponsible and may be regarded as a conflict of interest, fraud, or theft.

Discretion and Confidentiality: Individuals affiliated with the Museum have unique responsibilities related to maintaining the Museum's image, trust, and credibility to its public and academic audiences. For this reason, affiliated individuals must 1) properly represent the Museum and their position when interacting with others; 2) exercise professional discretion about activities and concerns of the Museum; and 3) hold in confidence relevant information concerning matters such as collections, personnel, and security.

Conflict of Interest: Individuals having an affiliation with the Museum must avoid situations that may be construed as a conflict of interest. Concerns about potential conflicts of interest will be conveyed immediately to the appropriate Museum authority. The purpose of this concern is to prevent the actual or perceived conflict between personal collecting and the objectives of the Museum. Potential conflicts of interest include: 1) personal collecting within the curatorial collection areas of the Museum; 2) using Museum affiliation, Museum resources, or the influence of one's position in unauthorized ways solely for personal benefit, or to serve solely the interests of persons outside the museum; 3) placing the Museum in a situation that compromises its mission, policies, functions, practices, or philosophies; 4) placing the Museum in a situation that it unduly competes with outside parties; and 5) participating in other employment that compromises one's capability to perform in a timely and professional manner.

Responsibility to the Collections

Integrity of Information: The Museum's ability to serve its public and academic audiences is dependent on the quality and accuracy of available information. Such information includes object and collection documentation, personal communications, formal presentation, written correspondence, publication, exhibits, and educational programs. For this reason, individuals affiliated with the Museum will maintain information integrity with respect to accuracy and completeness.

Integrity of Preservation: The Museum's ability to perform its functions is dependent on the quality of object preservation and conservation. Individuals affiliated with the Museum will

demonstrate respect for the object by following professional museum preservation procedures, providing protection from agents of deterioration, providing proper housing, and exercising safe handling.

Integrity of Operations: Individuals affiliated with the Museum collections will be knowledgeable about their respective collection(s), museum and academic standards related to their collection(s), and changes in philosophies and practices for properly managing and caring for the collection(s).

Responsibility To Other Individuals

Public and Academic Audiences: Individuals affiliated with the Museum will be responsive to the Museum's public and academic audiences, and treat each individual with professional courtesy.

Professional Associates: Individuals affiliated with the Museum will be responsive and cooperative with professional associates outside of the Museum organization.

Museum Affiliates: Individuals affiliated with the Museum (e.g., volunteers, students, administration) will respect the property and rights of one another. Individuals will acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of each other, and will cooperate as needed to promote the mission, functions, services, programs, and image of the Museum. Supervisors and faculty are responsible for the actions of the individuals under their direction and will take an active role in providing direction, instruction, communication, and group cooperation.

Adherence to the Code of Ethics

Adherence to the Code of Ethics by individuals affiliated with the Museum is addressed in the General Policies (formerly OP10.11, vol. 1) of the Museum.