

University of Nebraska State Museum Code of Ethics

Approved 10/28/2022 Museum Personnel

Revised and approved by Museum personnel in response to AAM staff 7/20/2023

Approved 7/21/2023 Vice Chancellor Bob Wilhelm

Introduction

Founded in 1871, the University of Nebraska State Museum (UNSM) is a museum of natural science and world cultures comprised of four locations: Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park (Royal, Nebraska); Trailside Museum of Natural History (Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford, Nebraska); Morrill Hall including the Mueller Planetarium, and the Research Collections, both located on the University of Nebraska campus (Lincoln, Nebraska). The Museum reports to the Vice Chancellor, Office of Research and Economic Development, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

UNSM promotes discovery of our natural world and world cultures. We accomplish our mission through innovative research, scientific collections, learner-centered education, and public exhibitions. Our vision is to recruit and mentor the next generation of researchers and educators. We stimulate curiosity about Earth's biodiversity and our heritage of diverse cultures.

The Museum holds its collections in trust for Nebraskans, the scientific and scholarly communities, federal and state agencies, and the public. UNSM is committed to maintaining standards of professional and ethical excellence. Safeguarding and serving the public interest is paramount to our work. The Museum recognizes its responsibility to ensure planned and coherent growth, development, care, and use of our resources and research collections.

Guiding Principles and Ethical Duties

The purpose of this document is to outline a code of ethics by which the decision making, and actions are governed within the Museum. While not all eventualities can be foreseen, this document addresses those mostly likely to arise within the museum environment. Additionally, the intent is not merely to avoid illegal activity, but to ensure that trust in the institution and research is maintained, and that Museum personnel act in a manner demonstrating their commitment to professionalism and integrity.

To fulfill the mission of the Museum, decisions are taken in line with our core values. Our core values include:

- Science discovery - We foster new scientific understanding by interpreting Earth's past, present and future through our collections, by preserving organisms, fossils, and artifacts.
- Scientific literacy - We encourage learner-centered discovery of the Earth and its place in the Universe through educational programs. We have a responsibility to reach all Nebraskan citizens as the State Museum.

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- Sustainability - We inspire Nebraskans and others to appreciate and become stewards of the natural world and world cultures.
- Community connections - We create opportunities for Nebraskans to connect with the research that impacts their lives. We help researchers further develop their communication skills and engage in public dialogue.
- Diversity and inclusion - We encourage multiple perspectives and work that values every person.

Furthermore, UNSM strives to build relationships with Indigenous groups and individuals rooted in respect, communication, collaboration, reciprocity, transparency, and open dialogue. As part of a university campus located on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Omaha, Dakota, Lakota, Kaw, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples, as well as those of the relocated Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox, and Iowa peoples, the UNSM recognizes the colonial legacy of which it is a part. This includes the colonial context of collecting practices of both cultural artifacts and natural specimens. Although the Museum is a steward of the natural and cultural history of Nebraska, we recognize that Indigenous peoples are stewards of knowledge and the natural world in a way that museums are not.

The Museum is engaged in a critical reexamination of how we represent non-Western cultures and is dedicated to learning how best to incorporate multiple voices and perspectives in research, exhibitions, and public programming. As part of this mission, the Museum will strive to respect the rights and protocols of the cultures represented in the collection; foster ethical museum practices in all aspects of our work; collaborate, when possible, with the living and dynamic cultures represented in the Museum's collections and be welcoming of diverse communities and divergent perspectives.

Governance

The governing authority for the museum is the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. UNSM personnel must abide by the applicable bylaws, policies, and procedures as established by the Board of Regents. As part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, UNSM falls under the authority of the Vice Chancellor of the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED). The University holds ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the museum and for nurturing its assets.

The Director, in conjunction with appropriate support, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the museum. Reporting to the Vice Chancellor of ORED, the Director identifies and implements policies to address financial, operational, and human resource issues. The Director is also responsible for promotion of the museum, including its research, educational, and exhibit activities.

The code of ethics established in this document applies to all museum personnel, volunteers, and affiliates (includes Friends of the State Museum and the Nebraska Academy of Sciences).

The code applies to the museum's governing authority to the extent allowed for under the bylaws, policies, and procedures of the Board of Regents.

Conflict of Interest

Actual or perceived conflicts of interest have the potential to detrimentally impact the museum or cause irreparable damage to its reputation. All UNSM personnel, volunteers, and affiliates are required to act in the best interest of the museum, rather than in furtherance of personal interest or financial gain. Any perceived or actual conflicts of interest must be disclosed immediately to the person's immediate supervisor and the Museum Director. Volunteers must disclose conflicts to the Museum's Volunteer Coordinator and Museum Director. Conflicts will be handled in line with established policies and practices.

Museum personnel must abide by the bylaws of the Board of Regents. A sample of these policies and their application within the museum are listed below. In addition to museum personnel, these requirements apply to all volunteers and affiliates, unless otherwise noted.

Associates of the museum, or their immediate family members, shall not accept discounts on personal purchases from potential Museum suppliers except where such regularly are offered to the public or to members of professional groups. Gifts, favors, discounts and dispensations should accrue to the benefit of the Museum and not to the individual employee.

Employing, or purchasing from, a family member is prohibited. Should the necessity arise to do so, employment is only allowable with the approval of the Chancellor. Purchasing from a family member is only allowable with prior approval from the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance.

Museum associates shall not have a financial interest in or receive any compensation from the sale of books, pamphlets, or other educational material, or supplies used by students at the University, except royalties on books or other educational material from publishing houses of standing, when copyright has been secured or when otherwise provided by agreement with the University for University-sponsored materials.

Museum personnel (volunteers exempt) may participate in outside employment and activities; however, to protect against a conflict which may result in a perceived bias, it is necessary to complete the "Interest and Outside Activity Form" through *NUgrant*. The form will be routed through the approval process and is valid for one year. Reporting should include:

- Professional Activity/Employment even if no payment or remuneration is received.
- Professional Activity/Employment that takes place during the summer, even for faculty on an academic year or 9-month appointment.

Reporting does not need to include:

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- Activities for a professional organization or service to the profession, which would be considered as part of an employee's FTE, provided no financial benefit accrues to the employee.
- Museum personnel (volunteers exempt) shall not provide appraisals or endorse an appraisal for a donation to the UNSM.

Exceptions may be made when requests are received from scientific, educational, or law enforcement agencies with approval of the Director.

Museum personnel and volunteers are permitted to participate in the full political life of the United States, the State of Nebraska, and the relevant political subdivisions in which they reside. To preserve the welfare of the Museum, it is essential that each employee (volunteers exempt) perform their duties without the interference of outside activities. Museum personnel wishing to run for public office should refer to University bylaws for more information.

Museum personnel, volunteers, and affiliates are prohibited from active acquisition of objects or specimens to enhance a personal research collection. A personal collection maintained for the purposes of teaching may be maintained. Personal collections acquired prior to joining the Museum may be retained following written agreement of the Director accompanied by a detailed inventory of items.

Museum personnel, volunteers, or affiliates must not purchase objects/specimens deaccessioned from the museum, nor may they trade objects/specimens from their own personal collections for objects from their Museum's collection. Neither relatives nor representatives shall engage in a transaction on behalf of the curator or employee that is not in compliance with the above-stated principles.

Museum personnel, volunteers, or affiliates must not act as a dealer, be employed by a dealer, or retain an interest in a dealership.

Volunteers shall not present themselves or their ideas as official Museum representations, nor shall they use official letterhead without permission. They should strive to present their association with the Museum in a positive light.

In fulfillment of its mission, the museum develops and engages in a number of exhibitions, educational, and public programs. UNSM conducts these activities in accordance with best practice and ensures that all programs are carried out to the highest level of accuracy and intellectual truth.

Collections

The collections are maintained as a public trust, curated, and preserved in an appropriate division of UNSM, and shared with the scientific community through research, loans, exhibits,

educational programming, and publications. Original scientific research, based in part upon the collections, is conducted by Curators and members of the Museum staff, by faculty members of the University of Nebraska, by visiting scholars working at the Museum, and by scholars throughout the world. These scholars are considered bona fide members of the scientific community. Collections are available for study under routine Museum security procedures. Data based on the collections is considered proprietary and the release of these data to all persons, organizations, and institutions may require a Collections Data Release agreement. Contract or commercial users may be charged a fee. Generated income will be used to benefit the research collections through payment of salaries, materials needed, or for collection maintenance.

The Museum provides research and other access to its collections, including:

- Responding to written or verbal research inquiries.
- Allowing short-term lending of materials to individuals affiliated with museums, academic institutions, or similar research organizations for research, educational, or exhibit purposes as outlined in the Collection Management Policy (CMP: H. Loans and Borrowes).
 - With rare exception, at the discretion of the curator, loans may be made to private individuals by the Division of Entomology and Division of Parasitology. This policy is consistent with the community of practice within their scientific disciplines. These non-affiliated expert taxonomists have appropriate vetting and established relationships with the Division. They visit often, publish papers, and donate large numbers of specimens to the collection.
- Providing physical access to collections areas and items as outlined in the CMP (G. Access).
- Access to electronic collection databases and digitized specimens via the web in accordance with the CMP (D. Collections Information Management and Digitization); and,
- Responding to public inquiries and providing public access to selected collection specimens and objects in virtual galleries.

Physical access to the collections is restricted to Museum employees and others as authorized by the Director and/or the appropriate Curator. Additional information is available in the UNSM Collections Management Policy.

The Museum may acquire research objects and specimens by contract, purchase, gift, bequest, exchange, field collection, or abandonment of collections by other museums. The Museum acquires objects that support its mission and align with its research divisions. Because of its responsibility to maintain and preserve research objects in perpetuity for the public trust, the Museum will accept and acquire only those items for which it can provide proper care, conservation, and storage. The Museum may also acquire objects for education or exhibit purposes, typically by purchase or donation. Some objects or specimens without

data may be used in consumable activities such as hands-on educational activities. Teaching collections – for University students or the public – will be maintained by the appropriate department or division.

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that items considered for acquisition have been collected and/or imported in full compliance with the laws and regulations of the United States, of the individual states, and of foreign countries. Specimens of endangered species collected before endangered status was designated can and will be accepted in accord with federal guidelines. The Museum may accept objects that have been confiscated and offered to the Museum by government authorities. The Museum adheres to local, state, federal, and international laws regarding the collection of objects or specimens, including the CITES convention for endangered species, the UNESCO convention on cultural property (14 November 1970), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), and the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA) for fossil vertebrates.

All proceeds realized from the sales of objects (deaccessioned) removed from the collections shall be received by the Museum central budget and will be allocated by the Director in consultation with senior personnel to support collection maintenance or acquisition. Preference in such disposition of proceeds shall be given to the Division involved in the disposition. If a deaccessioned item that has been sold was a gift from an identified donor, a subsequent purchase for the collection using the proceeds from the sale will be considered and identified as a gift from that donor.

Museum personnel who conduct job-related field exploration, collecting or excavating always do so in the name of and on behalf of the Museum. Employees may participate in field exploration, collecting or excavating under the auspices of another scholarly or educational institution with the approval of the Director. In such cases, the specimens and/or data collected shall remain the property of a public institution (not private individual or individuals) with access policies compatible with professional standards. When working in a community, in both act and appearance, participants must respect the beliefs and customs of host individuals and societies. General deportment must be professional so that future field work at the site or in the area will not be jeopardized.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

The State Museum as a unit of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) complies with the campus policy as revised February 12, 1998, for Native American human remains and cultural objects subject to NAGPRA and related state statutes (see CMP).

State law imposes a legal obligation upon the person who discovers human skeletal remains or funerary objects associated with an unmarked human burial in or on the ground to immediately cease any activity which may cause further disturbance of the unmarked human burial site and to report the presence and location of such remains or funerary objects to a local law enforcement officer in the county in which the remains or goods were found within

48 hours of their discovery. This procedure applies to members of the general public. See Neb. Rev. Stat. § 12-1205 (1).

Human remains or funerary objects associated with unmarked human burials that are inadvertently discovered on federal or tribal lands must be reported to the local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the land where the discovery was made. This may require contacting a federal or tribal law enforcement officer instead of a state, county, or municipal law enforcement officer. A person who discovers Native American human remains or cultural items must make written notice of the discovery to the federal agency and Indian tribe with jurisdiction over the land. 25 U. S. C. § 3002 (d).

Museum Management Practices

UNSM engages in revenue generating activities, including working with the University of Nebraska Foundation, the Friends of the State Museum, and others to conduct fundraising activities. These activities adhere to professional standards and best practices to support the mission of the museum, while avoiding perceived or actual conflicts of interest. Receipt of gifts should not be accepted with the promise of opportunities not offered to all donors. Donations will not be sought or accepted from any donor where such a donation would compromise the integrity, image, or mission of the Museum. No donation shall be accepted in which acceptance would restrict the ability of UNSM to present information in a truthful and honest manner.

Board of Regents policy requires all employees of the University, including faculty, staff, and University paid students, disclose and assign every invention or discovery resulting from the performance of duties within the scope of University employment, or from the use of University resources, to the University. Materials created by volunteers while working with the Museum, or with Museum resources, will remain property of the Museum.

Museum Workplace and Code of Conduct

Our Commitment: The Museum is dedicated to fostering and actively promoting diversity and inclusion in all policies, procedures, and operational activities. UNSM is enriched and its effectiveness enhanced when our team and stakeholders have varied backgrounds, experiences, and points of view. We are committed to ensuring an open and welcoming environment to all. The Museum has a responsibility to teach and train personnel on diversity goals and issues. We commit to developing promotional materials, programs, and environments with these goals in mind.

Museum personnel, volunteers, and affiliates have a duty to uphold the public trust. As such, it is essential that a high standard of professional conduct and integrity be always maintained. Behavior and conduct must bring credit to self, the Museum, and the University. All personnel must adhere to general University of Nebraska-Lincoln policies and procedures, Board of Regent's bylaws, and Museum policies. Any information posted in the

public domain should be professional and appropriate, avoiding casting the Museum or University in a negative light.

UNSM promotes a working environment that promotes respect, fairness, and integrity. It is expected that all Museum personnel, volunteers, and affiliates treat colleagues, the public, and others with whom we interact with respect, civility, and dignity. Appropriate, positive behavior towards others acknowledges and values who they are and what they are doing, and this reflects on one's own character, integrity, and values.

Expected Personal Behaviors: All personnel working in the Museum, in any of its activities in any capacity, will:

- Treat everyone with respect and consideration, with sensitivity to personal and cultural concerns and differences.
- Always maintain respectful dialogue to promote constructive discourse.
- Evaluate the work of colleagues fairly and objectively.
- Recognize past and present contributors to science and accomplishments of others.
- Support the professional growth and success of others, especially when in a formal or informal mentoring role.

Prohibited Personal Behaviors:

- Harassment and intimidation, including verbal, written, or physical conduct that demeans, denigrates, threatens, or coerces another person.
- Discrimination or exclusion based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, political perspective, national origin or culture.
- Physical, emotional, or verbal abuse of any person.
- Assuming credit for the accomplishments of others.

Reporting: If you see or experience prohibited or disrespectful behavior or language (unacceptable personal conduct), or if you witness unacceptable scientific conduct, if you feel that you are in the position to do so, please speak directly to the offender. You should also notify as appropriate either your direct supervisor, museum assistant director, museum director or ORED HR representative Ember Welsch.

If you feel uncomfortable with a situation or behaviors/language of others, and would prefer not to report to one of the people listed above, please contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (<https://www.unl.edu/equity/>) or call 402-472-3417 as soon as possible after the situation occurs. You may submit your concerns to the Office of IEC using the online form (<https://www.unl.edu/equity/Fillable%20Intake%20215.pdf>). If the issue is more serious, you may submit an anonymous report to the University of Nebraska Police at <https://www.unl.edu/tips-incident-reporting-system>. For critical emergencies – call 911 or 402-472-2222 (2-2222 from a campus phone).

Violations of the expected behaviors described above will necessitate meeting with the museum director, HR, and potentially other University administrators as warranted by the specifics of the case. A corrective action plan will be developed that will be enforced and time bound. Egregious violations of policies, repeat offenses, or failure to conform to corrective action plans will lead to additional consequences, including dismissal and exclusion from the Museum's premises.

Compliance with Laws

All UNSM activities must be conducted in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and conventions. Museum personnel, volunteers, and affiliates must comply with all applicable Board of Regents bylaws, University policies and procedures, and any Museum specific directives. Failure to do so may result in separation of employment, or termination of the volunteer/affiliate relationship with the Museum.

Implementation

All Museum personnel, courtesy appointments including emeriti, volunteers, and affiliates will be provided a copy of this Code of Ethics and must agree to comply with its contents prior to engaging in a relationship with the Museum. Existing associates will be provided with a copy of the document upon any update or amendment. All are required to review and agree to abide by the Code of Ethics document annually.

This document is to be reviewed annually by Museum Leadership, minimally by the Director, Assistant Director, and Museum leadership team. It may be amended following consultation with review of NU legal counsel, and with approval of the Vice Chancellor of ORED.

Agreement

I agree to abide by the UNSM Code of Ethics set out in this document. I acknowledge that failure to abide by these guidelines may result in disciplinary action in line with my relationship to the University of Nebraska State Museum.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Job Title (employees) or Affiliation (volunteers, affiliates) _____

