

# **CODE OF ETHICS**

## **Kelsey Museum of Archaeology**

### I. Introduction

The mission of museums in the modern world includes the stewardship of the world's cultural heritage through the collection, preservation and research of its material remains. Grounded in the tradition of public service, museums should act as resources for humankind and foster an informed appreciation of the rich and diverse world in which we live.

To maintain their integrity and to warrant public confidence, museums must act not only legally but ethically in matters concerning governance, collections, personnel and programs. The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan subscribes to the Code of Ethics detailed in this document, and assumes responsibility for the actions of members of its community in the performance of museum-related duties. This Code, therefore, pertains to all members of the Kelsey Museum community, including its governing authority, employees, volunteers and persons holding research affiliation.

### II. Collections

#### A. Collections Management

It is the paramount obligation of the Museum to preserve, research, and use its collections in accordance with its Mission. Our goal is to share in the stewardship of the world's cultural heritage, and to transfer to our successors the material record of human culture represented by the Kelsey collections and their associated records.

Each object is an integral part of a cultural or scientific context. That context also includes a body of information about the object which establishes its proper place and importance and without which the historical, cultural, and scientific value of the object is diminished. The maintenance of this information in orderly and retrievable form is critical to the collection and is a central obligation of the museum.

Museum governance and management will make every effort to ensure that the collections in its custody are protected, unencumbered, and preserved. Access to the collections and related information will be permitted but regulated in keeping with our Mission.

#### B. Collection Acquisition and Disposal

Specific policies and procedures to be followed in the acquisition and disposal of objects are specified in the Museum's documents on Acquisitions and Deaccession/Disposal. In general, materials collected by the Museum shall further the Museum's mission, be accompanied by valid legal title, and be unrestricted or have any limitations clearly described in an instrument of conveyance. The Museum must be able to properly catalog, conserve and store or exhibit the objects in its possession. The Kelsey Museum may improve its collections through selective disposal and acquisition and may intentionally sacrifice specimens for well-considered

analytical, educational or other purposes. In general, objects will be kept as long as they retain their physical integrity and compatibility with the Museum's purposes.

Disposal of an object requires due consideration of the needs of the Kelsey Museum and of the museum community in general. Sales or exchanges between institutions, especially Michigan institutions supported by public funds, will be given priority over disposal by public sale. The Museum will consider the full range of factors affecting the public interest as well as potential financial return from disposals.

Proceeds from the sale of collection materials may be used only for the acquisition of collections.

The Board of Regents of the University bears final responsibility for the collection, including both the acquisition and disposal process. The curatorial and administrative staff together with their technical associates, however, are best qualified to assess the pertinence of an object to the collection or the Museum's program.

### C. Appraisals

The staff of the Kelsey Museum will not appraise objects or artifacts in terms of monetary value. However, members of the staff are encouraged to share their professional knowledge and expertise with both professional colleagues and the general public. Scholarly or professional evaluations are considered part of the responsibilities of the Kelsey Museum as a publicly supported institution. Any authentications or identifications must represent an honest and objective judgment. Written authentications or identifications shall clearly state that such identifications are matters of opinion and may change as new information becomes available. For the legal protection of the person rendering the opinion as well as of the Kelsey Museum, written statements should be accompanied by a disclaimer from the Office of the University Attorney.

Members of the Museum staff should not identify or otherwise authenticate objects where they have reason to believe or suspect that these have been illegally or illicitly acquired, transferred, imported or exported. In authenticating materials for other institutions or museums, the Kelsey staff will assume that those institutions have maintained professional ethical standards in acquiring the material to be authenticated.

### D. Commercial Use

In arranging for the manufacture and sale of replicas, reproductions or other commercial items adapted from an object in the Museum's collection, all aspects of the commercial venture must be carried out in a manner that will not discredit either the integrity of the Museum or the intrinsic value of the original object. Such objects will be permanently identified as what they are. The material and scale of replicas or reproductions will not be identical with those of the original object.

### E. Accessibility of Collections

The Museum's primary responsibility to safeguard its collections requires regulating access to them. Parts of the collections may be set aside for active scholarly pursuits for a limited period of time only. The Museum recognizes that the public must have reasonable access to the

collections and will endeavor to provide such reasonable access for the public through exhibitions and other programs.

If a staff member who is involved in scholarly research on the collections moves to another institution, the Museum may give special consideration to the need s/he may have to continued access to objects or materials in the collections.

Use of the collections will be guided by the judgment and recommendation of professional staff members who will base their recommendations on two primary objectives: the continued physical integrity and safety of the object(s), and scholarly or educational purposes.

#### F. Truth in Presentation

Every member of the staff is obligated to be intellectually honest and objective in the presentation of Museum materials. For example, the attribution of a work must reflect the thorough and honest investigation of the Curator, but if new information becomes available, the attribution must be changed promptly. Exhibits will not perpetuate falsehoods or stereotypes but will seek to provide a meaningful view of the subject. Social, artistic, and scientific issues should be approached objectively, without prejudice, but with tact and candor.

The research and preparation for an exhibition will often lead the researcher to develop a point of view or interpretive sense of the material. S/he or she must clearly understand the point where sound professional judgment ends and personal bias begins; s/he should strive to ensure that the resultant presentation is the product of objective judgment.

#### G. Human Remains and Sacred Objects

The unique and special nature of both human remains and funerary and sacred objects is recognized as the basis of all decisions concerning these materials. The study of skeletal material and sacred objects will be carried out with dignity. Research on such objects as well as storage and care must be carried out in a manner that is acceptable to persons of various beliefs as well as to fellow professionals. If skeletal and/or other sensitive material is used in interpretive exhibits, it will be done with tact and respect for the human dignity of all peoples.

### III. Staff

#### A. General Department

Employees of The University of Michigan are expected to abide by the general policies and procedures in The University of Michigan Standard Practice Guide sections 201.1-201.90, 303.1-303.3, 601.1-601.7, and 603.1-605.2, as applicable. Employees with split appointments are also subject to procedural guides issued by their departments. Further guidance may be sought from the Office of the Dean of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, the Office for Affirmative Action, the Office of Staff Relations and Compensation, and the Personnel Office for Schools, Colleges, Institutions and Libraries.

Kelsey Museum employees are never wholly separable from the institution, despite disclaimers which may be offered. Due to the public visibility of the Museum, any related action by an individual may reflect on the institution or be attributed to it. Employees must be cognizant of how their actions might be construed by the outside observer as well as by personal motivations and interests.

## B. Conflict of Interest

Loyalty to the mission of the Museum and to the public it serves is the essence of association with the Museum. No person may use his/her position in the Museum for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the Museum, its mission, its reputation, and the society it serves. In general, Museum staff are expected to refrain from acts or activities which may involve a conflict of interest. Relevant University policy is given in the Standard Practice Guide, section 201.65. If the conditions of employment permit outside activity, affected staff members should ensure that such outside interests do not interfere with their official duties and responsibilities or create a conflict of interest.

## C. The Collections and Other Museum Property

Museum employees may not acquire objects from the Kelsey Museum collections under any circumstances in accordance with the Deaccession and Disposal Policy. No staff member may use, in his/her home or for any non-official or non-professional purpose, any object from the Museum's collections or archives or which is under the guardianship of the Museum.

Use of Museum supplies and equipment is permitted and regulated under the policy and procedures outlined in the Standard Practice Guide Section 518.2. (Faculty and staff members who hold regular appointments, and students who have class requirements, are permitted to use University equipment at off-campus locations whenever it will benefit the teaching, research, public service, or administrative activities of the University.)

If circumstances require clarification or possible exceptions to these principles, the circumstances are to be discussed with the Director of the Museum.

Information about the administrative and non-scholarly activities of the institution that an employee may acquire in the course of his/her duties, and that is not generally known or available to the public, must be treated as information proprietary to the Museum. Such information may not be used for personal advantage or for the exploitation of the institution.

Staff is expected to exercise caution in referring members of the public to outside suppliers of services, such as appraisers or conservators. Whenever possible, several qualified referrals should be provided to avoid the appearance of personal favoritism.

## D. Personal Collecting

Collecting objects is not in itself unethical and can enhance professional knowledge and judgment. However, the acquisition of a personal collection by a Museum employee of objects similar to those collected by the Museum can raise ethical concerns. Employees who collect material similar to the collections of the Museum are subject to disclosure in order to avoid a conflict of interest situation.

[As used herein, the term employee includes paid employees of the Kelsey Museum; persons with Museum appointments, paid or unpaid; volunteers and docents who serve in the Museum or its programs; University students who are remunerated for participating in Museum programs; officers of the Associates of the Kelsey; and the Kelsey Museum Executive Committee. [Similar to the collections of the Museum" refers to objects from the Greater Mediterranean region which date from the ancient and medieval periods.]

Employees may not compete with the Kelsey Museum in their personal collecting activities. If an employee encounters an object that may be of interest to the Museum, the employee must disclose to the Director (or his/her designee) the availability of the object for purchase. Disclosure may be in either oral or written form to the Director/designee who must respond in a timely manner as to whether the Museum is interested in acquiring the object. If prior disclosure is not reasonably possible, the Museum has the right to acquire any object purchased or collected by staff members within 90 days of the employee's disclosure of the purchase at the price paid by the employee.

The right of the Kelsey Museum to acquire objects collected personally by employees does not extend to objects that were collected prior to the staff member's employment by the Museum, except by special agreement. Objects that are bequests or genuine personal gifts are also exempt from the Museum's right of such acquisition.

Museum employees may not use their Museum affiliation to promote their own or any associate's personal collecting activities. No employee may participate in any dealing (buying and selling for profit as distinguished from occasional sale or exchange from a personal collection) in objects similar or related to the objects collected by the Museum. Dealing by employees in objects that are collected by other museums may appear unprofessional and is discouraged.

#### E. Outside Employment and Consulting

Concurrent non-University employment such as self-employment and paid consulting can be of benefit to both the institution and the employee by stimulating personal professional development. Remuneration may be monetary or non-monetary, direct or indirect. Where Kelsey Museum employees work or consult outside the Museum but within the University, the appropriate Standard Practice Guide policies are to be followed; exceptional cases or circumstances are to be referred to the Museum Director.

All non-University employment activity must be undertaken within the fundamental premise that the employee's primary responsibility is to the institution; that the outside activity will not interfere with his/her ability to discharge Museum responsibilities; and that it will not compromise the professional integrity of the employee or the reputation of the Museum.

Kelsey Museum employees are often considered representatives of the University, the Museum and their academic departments while engaged in outside activities or duties similar to those they perform for the University. Even though their work may be wholly independent, employees must disclose to the Director or other appropriate officer the facts concerning any planned outside employment or consulting arrangements that are in any way related to the employee's museum functions. Disclosure is suggested but not required for small businesses or similar activities that are entirely unrelated to the work the individual carries out for the Museum.

Questions on identification and authentication of objects which do not fall under Section I.C. Appraisals, above, are to be referred to the Director of the Museum.

In deference to Museum employees' constitutional rights of freedom of speech and association, disclosure is not required for activities on behalf of voluntary community groups or other public service organizations, except for those organizations such as other museums where the staff member may appear to be acting in his/her official capacity. In any outside activities, reference to the employee's association with the Kelsey Museum should be minimal and respectful.

#### F. Gifts, Favors, Discounts and Dispensations

Museum employees, and others in close relationship to them, must not accept gifts, favors, loans, other dispensations or things of value that are available to them because of their association with the institution. Gifts include discounts on personal purchases from suppliers who sell items or furnish services to the Museum, except where such discounts are regularly offered to the general public or to University employees as a body. Gifts also can include offers of outside employment or other advantageous arrangements for the Museum employee or another person or entity. Salaries and related benefits should be considered complete remuneration for all Museum-related activities.

Employees may be permitted to retain gifts of trifling value when acceptance would not appear to impair their judgment or otherwise influence decisions. Meals, accommodations and travel services while on official business may be accepted if clearly in the interest of the Museum.

Museum employees have the right to accept and retain gifts that originate from purely personal or family relationships. It must be recognized that genuine personal gifts may originate from individuals who have a potentially beneficial relationship with the Museum. Disclosure of such circumstances will protect both the employee and the Museum.

#### G. Teaching, Lecturing, Writing and Other Creative Activities

Scholarly research, writing, and teaching are an integral part of Museum responsibilities. Individual research sponsored by the Museum should conform to the Museum's Mission and, when appropriate, give the Museum credit for financial or scholarly support. A guiding ethical principle is effective and timely dissemination of results derived from research on Museum collections or excavations.

Specific University policies regarding research are contained in the Standard Practice Guide, Sections 303.1, 303.3, and 507.2, and further information is available from the Office of the Vice-President for Research. Internal issues concerning teaching or academic matters should be referred to the Museum Director and Chair of the appropriate academic department.

Non-University activity that directly relates to the employee's regular duties for the institution require an agreement between the employee and the institution concerning all aspects of that activity. Employees should obtain the approval of the Museum or academic department for any significant amount of non-University teaching, lecturing, writing, or editing. Any contemplated uses of the Museum's research facilities, staff assistance, and property such as copying machines, slides, or objects from the collections should be discussed and approved by the Director.

The proprietary interest of both the University and the individual in copyrights, royalties, and intellectual properties is defined on the preliminary application for employment at The University of Michigan and in the Standard Practice Guide, Sections 501.1 and 601.3. Questions about other related matters should be addressed to the Office of the University Counsel.

Museum employees who are creative artists or pursue similar outside interests must avoid compromising their status with the institution or the reputation of the institution. The exhibition of objects in a museum can enhance their value, and the Kelsey Museum will display materials created by staff members only when objectivity in their selection can be clearly demonstrated.

## H. Field Study and Collecting

Field exploration, collecting, and excavating by Museum employees present ethical problems that are both complex and critical. Such efforts, especially in other countries, present situations with the potential to produce difficult interpersonal and international problems.

Any field program must be: preceded by investigation, disclosure, and communication sufficient to ascertain that the activity is legal; is pursued with the full knowledge, approval, and when applicable the collaboration of all parties to whom the activity is appropriately of concern; and is conducted in accordance with the Museum's mission for scholarly or educational purposes. A general if not specific statement of the nature of the objects to be collected, the purposes that they are intended to serve, and their final disposition must be prepared and should be fully understood by all affected parties.

Any field program must be executed in such a way that all participants act legally and responsibly in acquiring artifacts and data; that they discourage by all practical means unethical, illegal, and destructive practices associated with acquiring, transporting, and importing objects; and that they avoid, insofar as possible, even the appearance of engaging in clandestine activity, be it Museum-related or not. Normally no material will be acquired or excavated that cannot be properly cared for and used. The field program will collect only for the University of Michigan or the host country and its institutions or another scholarly institution, society, or organization.

In both act and appearance, participants must honor the beliefs and customs of host individuals and societies. General deportment must be such that future field work at the site or in the area will not be jeopardized.

On completion of field work, full and prompt reporting of the activity should be made to all appropriate parties and results should be published in a timely and professional manner. All agreements must be fulfilled, and investigators must comply with the permit stipulations of the foreign country in which the field work is carried out; any extenuating circumstances that result in failure to do so must be fully explained. All material and data collected must be made available to the scholarly community as soon as possible. Materials and records incorporated into permanent collections will be preserved as are the other permanent collections.

## IV. Museum Management

Museum governance is part of a public trust responsible for the institution's service to society. The governing authority protects and enhances the museum's collections and programs and its physical, human and financial resources, ensuring that these resources support the museum's mission, respond to the pluralism of society, and respect the diversity of the natural and cultural common wealth.

### A. Professionalism

The Museum's administrative and governing entities will respect the professional expertise of the staff, each having been engaged because of his/her special knowledge or ability. The members of the Executive Committee are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the staff and physical plant of the Museum. Museum governance will incorporate the opinions and professional judgments of relevant members of the Museum staff in professional matters. Responsibility for final decisions will normally rest with the Museum administration and all employees are expected to support these decisions; however, no staff member can be required to reverse, alter, or suppress his/her professional judgment in order to conform to a management decision. Collectively, the staff professionals are the most familiar with the Museum, its assets and its constituency. As such they will be heard by Museum management and governance on matters affecting the general long-term direction of the institution.

### B. Personnel Practices and Equal Opportunity

Staffing practices will be guided by the relevant factor of ability in the relevant discipline. In the matters of staffing, management practices, volunteer opportunity, collection usage, and relationship with the public at large, decisions shall not be made on the basis of discriminatory factors such as race, creed, sex, age, handicap, personal orientation, or family relationships. Specific policies governing nondiscrimination may be found in the Standard Practice Guide, Sections 201.11, 201.23, 201.35, 201.82, 201.84, and 601.6. The Museum will encourage affirmative action employment and the accessibility of the institution as a resource to all people.

### C. Volunteers

The paid staff is expected to be supportive of volunteers, receive them as fellow workers, and willingly provide appropriate training and opportunity for their intellectual enrichment. Access to the Museum's inner activities is a privilege, and the lack of material compensation for effort expended on behalf of the Museum in no way frees volunteers from adherence to the standards that apply to paid staff. Volunteers are subject to all requirements in this Code of Ethics and should be sensitive to any conflicts of interest.

Volunteers are expected to clearly understand and support the policies and programs adopted by the Director and Executive Committee.

### D. Interpersonal relationships

All members of the Kelsey Museum community are expected to understand and support the mission of the museum and its public trust responsibilities. Working relationships among



Executive Committee members, employees and volunteers are to be based in equity and mutual respect.

Museum employees must be dedicated to the high standards and discipline of their profession. They are employees of The University of Michigan, however, as well as independent experts. While they must strive for professional excellence in their own specialty, they must simultaneously relate productively to their colleagues, associates and fellow employees. The wisdom and experience of a professional can be lost to the institution if s/he does not act constructively within the total context of the institution.

#### E. Inter-Institutional Cooperation

In line with its mission to preserve our cultural heritage and contribute to the increase of knowledge, the Kelsey Museum will cooperate with other museums even if the short term advantages are few and will not significantly increase the Kelsey collections or enhance its image.

#### IV. Programs

Museums serve society by advancing an understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural common wealth through exhibitions, research, scholarship, publications, and educational activities. These programs further the museum's mission and are responsive to the concerns, interests, and needs of society. Thus the museum ensures that programs support its mission and public trust responsibilities while respecting pluralistic values, traditions and concerns; that these programs are founded on scholarship and marked by intellectual integrity; and that the programs are accessible and encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with the museum's mission and resources.

Revenue-producing activities and activities that involve relationships with external entities should be compatible with the museum's mission and support its public trust responsibilities, promoting the public good rather than individual financial gain.

Note: Portions of this document are derived from Museum Ethics: A Report to the American Association of Museums by its Committee on Ethics, 1978; the American Association of Museums Code of Ethics, adopted May 1991; and the code of ethics of the Royal Ontario Museum. Extracted sections have been modified to conform to the specifics of the Kelsey Museum, the views of its staff and Executive Committee, and the Standard Practices Guide, of The University of Michigan.

Approved by Executive Committee  
January 2007