

# CODE OF ETHICS 2016

## MISSION

The Sternberg Museum of Natural History advances an appreciation and understanding of Earth's natural history and the evolutionary forces that impact it. With an emphasis on the Great Plains, our goals are accomplished through research, publications, collections, interpretive exhibits, and educational programs created by our staff, colleagues, and community.

## 1. BASICS

### 1.1 Museum

The Sternberg Museum of Natural History (FHSM) preserves, interprets, and displays objects pertaining to the geology, paleontology and biology of the Great Plains in an effort to add to the educational and cultural values of our state and community. The Museum plays an important role in helping to understand past and present life on the earth, and disseminate new ideas and discoveries, and support creativity and imagination. The Museum is a functional administrative unit of Fort Hays State University, and enjoys close ties with the Department of Geosciences and Department of Biological Sciences. Similarly, the Museum partners with the City of Hays and Ellis County. The Museum Director, staff, and partners share our mission and contribute to its fulfillment.

### 1.2 Governing Authority

The governing authority of the Sternberg Museum of Natural History is the administration of Fort Hays State University, which, in turn, is responsible to the State Board of Regents.

### 1.3 Director

The Director of the museum is charged with the responsibility to adhere to and implement the Museum mission and all directives listed in this Code.

### 1.4 Staff

Staff is defined for the purposes of this document as:

Administrative personnel	Art and exhibit fabrication personnel
Education personnel	Maintenance & custodial personnel
Curatorial personnel including Chief Curator, Associate Curators, Emeritus Curators, and Student Curatorial Assistants	Support personnel such as volunteers and interns
Research Scientist	Public service personnel, including public relations and gift shop staff

### **1.5 Adjunct Curators**

Adjunct Curators are people appointed to actively collect and curate collections at the Museum but who are not paid Museum or University employees. These people have privileges similar to Curators and may use their affiliation with the Museum in publishing their research. With this affiliation, Adjunct Curators are also held to these ethical standards, as well as the ethical standards of professional societies with which they are associated. There are several aspects of this Code that do not apply to Adjunct Curators as they are not employed by the Museum or University. These special exceptions are noted in the appropriate sections.

### **1.6 Research Associates**

Research Associates are people who actively use the Museum collections for scientific research and/or collaborate with Museum staff on publications, proposals, etc. They are not paid by the Museum and may or may not be University employees. With this affiliation, research associates are also held to these ethical standards, as well as the ethical standards of professional societies with which they are associated. There are several aspects of this Code that do not apply to Research Associates, as they are not employed by the Museum or University. These special exceptions are noted in the appropriate sections.

### **1.7 Collections**

Sternberg research collections are housed at the main museum facility in Hays. Satellite educational collections may also be housed at the Kansas Wetlands Educational Center or on the main campus of Fort Hays State University in the Departments of Biological Sciences and Geosciences.

The collections are maintained as a public trust, housed in perpetuity, curated and preserved in an appropriate section of the Museum and shared with the scientific community and general public through research, publications, loans, interpretive displays, and educational programming. A copy of the Collection Policies can be found on the Museum's website.

### **1.8 Code of Ethics**

Every staff member must receive a copy of the Code of Ethics. Acceptance of these ethical standards is a requirement for employment or appointment as a staff member at this Museum. All staff members are required to know, understand, and adhere to these standards. Prospective staff members are to read these standards in advance of acceptance of a position/appointment and sign an acceptance form that they understand that acceptance is a condition of employment. The Sternberg Museum of Natural History subscribes to professional guidelines set forth by the American Alliance of Museums, the International Council for Museums, and the Museum Store Association code of ethics.

The Code of Ethics addresses two functional areas: Collections and Staff. Additional guidelines and information directing museum function are embodied in the professional code of conduct published by Fort Hays State University; and the collections policy and curation guidelines of the Museum. Members of the

Museum community are also subject to and guided by specific procedures, such as the volunteer code of conduct, and all applicable federal and state laws.

## 2. COLLECTIONS

### 2.1 Management, Maintenance, and Conservation

The primary ethical duty of the Museum is to maintain its collections in perpetuity. The Museum must be in control of its collections and know the location and condition of the objects that it holds. FHSM maintains a collections policy governing the status, use, and care of collections. Trained collections staff and curators must adhere to and maintain this policy.

### 2.2 Curators

A Curator (including Associate, Adjunct, and Emeritus curators) is a specialist in a field related to the collection in his or her care, and is responsible for all aspects of that collection. A Curator is a representative of the Museum and is required to uphold the highest ethical and professional standards. They work with collections staff to determine and uphold the proper treatment and care of collections objects. This applies also to Adjunct Curators.

### 2.3 Acquisition

Curators will work to obtain objects and collections in their area of care. No material should be acquired for which the Museum cannot guarantee proper and permanent care. Curators must be cognizant of and must obey all laws (international, national, state, and local) affecting the acquisition of objects. Objects reposited for government or other agencies must fall within the scope of collections and pass the qualifications outlined in the FHSM Collections Policy. Curators and collections staff will collaborate closely to ensure new acquisitions fulfill the Museum mission in general and meet the standards of acceptance in particular.

Curators must document the source of donated material to be accessioned in order to determine that it was legally acquired by the donor and that the Museum may legally accept the donation. Current permits must be maintained by curators who engage in field collections. Copies of permits must be kept in perpetuity with the collection and on file in the Curator's and/or Collections Manager's Office.

### 2.4 Deaccessioning

Deaccessions may only be initiated by the Curator of that collection. They must be approved by the Museum Director unless the value of an item or specimen is more than \$1,000 00. At that time, the Director must consult with the Curators and the Vice President of Administration and Finance. The Director also might consult with the University legal counsel. Deaccessioning guidelines are contained in the collections policy.

All possibilities of transfer or trade must be exhausted before the option of sale is considered. Objects in condition beyond repair must be destroyed in an approved manner. Deaccessioned material may never be sold in the Excavations Gift Shop. In no event shall proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned materials be used for anything other than acquisition for the collection from which it was removed as approved by the Director. Museum staff must never acquire or purchase, even at public auction, objects deaccessioned from the Museum's collections.

## **2.5 Appraisal and Restoration Services**

Museum staff are not allowed to conduct appraisals or authentications in any capacity, either when representing the Museum or as an independent activity. Donors requesting appraisals should be referred to other sources. The related area of identifying specimens presented by the public is the duty of the collections staff and must not be pursued for personal profit, nor may monetary values be assigned. Adjunct Curators and Research Associates may offer appraisals, though not as an agent of the Museum. Museum staff and Adjunct Curators are prohibited from buying, selling, and trading for profit objects like those within the Museum's collections.

## **2.6 Commercial Use**

The Director and Curators should carefully evaluate proposals to replicate collection objects for commercial use. The safety of the original object must not be threatened, and inaccurate copies and inappropriate uses must be forbidden. To the extent possible, an object should be marked as a copy in a permanent manner.

## **2.7 Availability of Collections**

A balance exists between object preservation and object access. The Curators should determine the needs and allowable access for each object.

Legitimate requests for information and/or the examination for research purposes of objects from the collection will be honored according to procedures outlined in the "Access to Collections" portion of the Collections Policies. Curators must not restrict access to collections for legitimate research purposes. Objects may be used for educational purposes at the discretion of the curators.

Access to the collections shall include loans to responsible institutions and use within the Museum with proper attention to any restrictions established by repository agreements or gift contracts.

## **2.8 Truth of Presentation**

All Museum representatives are responsible for the accuracy of their research and public interpretation and for the content of written descriptions and

documentation of the collections under their jurisdiction, whether prepared by themselves or by others.

Exhibits and programs will provide factual and meaningful views based on scientific research and will not perpetuate myths, stereotypes, or religious beliefs. All educational information and materials should be approved by the appropriate Curator. Replicas and reproductions will be identified as such.

Plagiarism of unpublished ideas, data, or research pertaining to the Museum's collections will not be tolerated. Published research and the contributions of collaborators must be properly cited.

## **2.9 Ownership of Field Notes and Materials Related to Museum Collections**

Collection staff (including Student Curatorial Assistants) and education staff hired to research and interpret the collections in their care and/or conduct field work must leave all notes and associated materials that result from their work with the Museum. Copies of such documentation will be made available to the authors on their request should they leave the Museum's employment. All original artwork (including photographs) created in the course of Museum research or exhibit construction, remains the property of the Museum. This section does not apply to Associate Researchers, Adjunct Curators, or Associate Curators that are employed by FHSU departments of Biological Sciences or Geosciences rather than by the FHSM.

## **2.10 Institutional Animal Care and Use**

The Animal Welfare Act requires that minimum standards of care and treatment must be provided for certain animals used for research, teaching, or exhibition purposes. All activities and procedures that use vertebrate animals at Fort Hays State University must comply with public laws, policies and guidelines, and be reviewed and approved by the FHSU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure that such activities are in compliance with all federal, state and FHSU regulations, policies and standards to ensure proper animal care and use. The IACUC is also responsible for conducting inspections of all areas where animals are housed and used, reviews the institutional program for animal use and reports its findings. The Zoological Collections Manager at FHSM sits on this committee and has drafted protocols that have been approved for the use of wildlife for such activities at both FHSM and the Kansas Wetlands Education Center (KWEC). Separate protocols exist for the collection of museum research specimens and the capture and use of animals for live animal exhibits and educational programming. All individuals associated with a FHSU institution that actively participate in the collection or care of specimens for these purposes must conform to the principles and guidelines outlined in the appropriate protocol. This includes but is not limited to capture, handling, housing, and euthanasia. It is the responsibility of each individual to be familiar with and follow the guidelines of the appropriate protocols and each is required to be listed as an agent under the official proposal located in the Graduate School Office. If an individual is not listed as an agent or is found not to be in

compliance with the guidelines, their affiliation with FHSM and/or KWEC will be terminated.

## 3 . S T A F F

### 3.1 General Department

Employment by or association with the Museum involves a public trust of great responsibility. In all activities, Museum staff must act with integrity and in accordance with most stringent ethical principles as well as the highest standards of objectivity.

The Museum enjoys high public visibility and its staff a generous measure of public esteem. To the public, the Museum's staff is never wholly separable from the institution. The reputation and name of the Museum are valuable assets and should not be exploited either for personal advantage or the advantage of any other person or entity.

Personnel should take pride in their personal appearance. Punctuality, willingness to be of service, good taste, and courtesy must be observed at all times.

Personnel must keep confidential Museum business out of social conversation. Such affairs of the Museum are not proper subjects for out of Museum discussions. Violation of this policy by any staff member will result in termination of contract or volunteer status.

### 3.2 Conflict of Interest

Personal activities should not conflict with Museum duties or be conducted on Museum time. Museum staff must be prepared to accept as conditions of employment or association the restrictions that are necessary to maintain public confidence in museums and in the museum profession. Museum employees are also subject Fort Hays State University's conflict of interest policy. Intellectual activities such as book writing, that take place outside of Museum time are permitted, and even encouraged as they promote the Museum and its reputation.

Museum staff will not compete with the Museum in any personal collecting activity. Staff must refrain from amassing or adding to personal collections that overlap in scope with any area of the Museum.

Adjunct Curators, Research Associates, and Volunteers are exempted from this policy, as they are not employees and thus have no official museum time for personal activities to conflict. These parties cannot use their Museum affiliation to promote personal collecting activities. Additionally, these parties, as well as the Governing Authority, must not have a conflict of interest – real or perceived – with the Museum's collections and collecting activities.

### **3.3 Use of Collections**

Staff members will not use their private homes to store any object or item which is part of the Museum's collections or is loaned to the Museum. Staff members are not permitted to store personal collections amassed prior to Museum employment in the Museum.

All acquisitions made by participants in Museum-sponsored field excursions are the property of the Museum. Curators may allow, after inspection, specimens to be kept by non-curatorial staff, volunteers, or Museum patrons. Approval of the Director is required for outside projects involving personal scholarly activity of Museum employees, done exclusively on personal time, and not within the scope of assigned Museum responsibility.

As Adjunct Curators may not live within close proximity of Hays, it may be appropriate for Adjunct Curators to have loaned material within their home for study, but they must adhere to any loan requirements. Collections that have not been accessioned into the Museum collections may be kept in their homes for preparation. Adjunct Curators cannot keep personal collections at the Museum. Scholarly activity of Adjunct Curators does not require Director approval.

### **3.4 Gifts, Favors, Discounts, or Dispensations**

Museum employees and others in a close relationship to them must not accept gifts, favors, loans, or other dispensation or things of considerable value available to them in connection with their duties for the Museum. Gifts include discounts on personal purchases from suppliers who sell items or furnish services to the Museum, except where such discounts are also offered to the general public. Gifts can also include offers of outside employment or other advantages for the Museum employee. Salaries or wages are considered complete remuneration for all Museum-related activities.

Staff members are permitted to retain gifts of minimal 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. Gifts, favors, and dispensations in excess of \$40.00 must be reported in writing to the Director within one month of receipt.

### **3.5 Supervision**

Employees of the Museum will supervise volunteers, student interns, and other unpaid help. All concepts for products created by or resulting from work performed as a volunteer of the Museum, including artworks, and all rights pertaining thereto, remain the property of the Museum unless specifically released. Volunteers must not present themselves or their ideas as official Museum representations.

### **3.6 Program Accountability**

Employees will ensure that all programs presented by the Museum are founded on scholarship, intellectual integrity, and support the mission of the Museum. Programs operated by staff are to encourage participation and accessibility to as wide an audience as possible and be consistent with the Museum mission and resources. Revenue producing activities and activities with external entities must be compatible with the Museum mission and support the Museum's public trust.

### **3.7 Excavations Gift Shop**

Excavations Gift Shop must be a member of the AAM Museum Store Association and must adopt the Museum Store Association Code of Ethics.

Excavations Gift Shop will not sell vertebrate paleontological specimens, and only those invertebrate paleontological specimens without restriction under federal or state laws. The gift shop will not sell replicas misrepresented as original material. Replicas must be clearly and indelibly marked as such. The gift shop will not sell craft items of misleading or dubious origin.

In cases where potential items for resale raise questions of ethical nature in some staff person's mind, appropriate Curators or the Director should be consulted, with the final decision resting with the Director.

## **4. GOVERNANCE**

### **4.1 Responsibility**

The governing authority protects, maintains, and develops the physical, human, and financial resources of the Museum. The governing authority understands and fulfills its trusteeship, and understands the Museum mission and public trust responsibilities.

### **4.2 Practices**

The governing authority ensures that professional standards and practices guide Museum operations and mutual respect guides relationships among administration, employees, and volunteers.

The governing authority oversees that the Museum is responsive to the interests of its communities while maintaining and protecting the intellectual integrity of its staff.



## **SIGNATURES**

The undersigned, as authorized representatives of their respective governing bodies, agree to and ratify this document for use by the Sternberg Museum of Natural History:

### *Sternberg Museum of Natural History Code of Ethics 2016*

**Dr. Reese Barrick**  
**Director of Sternberg Museum of Natural History**  
**Date**

**Mr. Mike Barnett**  
**Vice President for Administration and Finance**  
**Date**

**Dr. Greg Farley**  
**Dean of the College of Science, Technology, and Mathematics**  
**Date**

**Dr. Graham Glynn**  
**Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs**  
**Date**