

CODE OF ETHICS

Adopted 1997; Reviewed 2006; (Revised 2007)

MISSION

The Star of the Republic Museum was created by the Texas Legislature and is administered by Blinn College as a cultural and educational institution. Its purpose is to collect and preserve the material culture of the Texas Republic (1836-1846) and to interpret the history, cultures, diversity, and values of early Texans. The Museum strives to inspire interest, understanding and appreciation of Texas heritage for students, teachers, scholars, and the general public through exhibits, tours, programs, web activities, and outreach.

Adopted by the Blinn College Board of Trustees, 2007

I. INTRODUCTION

Administered by Blinn College, a Texas state community college, the Star of the Republic Museum endorses and upholds the highest ideals and concepts of ethical and professional practices. To promote public trust, high standards of operation and behavior are necessary at all levels of the Museum. Those personal and professional standards and commitments are defined in the Blinn College Ethics and Personnel Policy.

This Museum Code of Ethics is in addition to those of the College and addresses primarily issues and responsibilities unique to the operations of a museum. It is intended to serve as a guide for the institution and all associated faculty, staff, students, trustees, associations, volunteers, and the museum community. Maintaining these standards is a collective and individual effort.

A. Scope

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

B. Authority

This Code of Ethics is superseded by all the laws, regulations, and international agreements of the United States and the State of Texas. Within this framework, this Code of Ethics also is superseded by the general policies and regulations of Blinn College and the specific regulations applicable to certain individuals, such as students and faculty.

C. Endorsements

This Code of Ethics endorses in principle the guidelines proposed by the International Council of Museums and the American Association of Museums. Within this framework, this Code of Ethics also endorses in principle the guidelines established by The American Association for State and Local History. In situations where differences may occur, the policies of the College and the Museum will take precedence over the guidelines endorsed in principle.

D. Implementation

This Code of Ethics serves as the umbrella for the mission and policies of the Museum. The policies, established by the Museum and approved by the Board of Trustees, are carried out under the guidance and supervision of the Museum Director. The development of associated procedures is the responsibility of the Director and designated staff.

E. Periodic Review

The Director and his supervisor will periodically review this policy and address any recommended changes of this document and resolve any issues raised about its interpretation.

II. GOVERNANCE

A. Administration

The governing body of the Star of the Republic Museum is the Board of Trustees of Blinn College, through the President and Executive Committee, with the Executive Vice President having direct responsibility. The Director has authority for the day-to-day operations of the Museum and consults with the Executive Vice President regularly. While the Museum has the responsibility of serving these parties, it must also ensure that all activities are in agreement with the federal, state, and college regulations, as well as the mission and policies established for the Museum.

B. Agreements and Contracts

Agreements and contracts must be approved by the College Administration. The Director will not obligate the Museum to projects or programs that do not serve Museum interests, or to situations that compromise the resources needed for ongoing activities related to the Museum's primary functions.

C. Fiscal Matters

The Director 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 Museum maintains full documentation and accountability for resource expenditures, and adheres to Blinn College fiscal policies.

D. Fund Raising

All fund raising activities must be approved by the College, and 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.

E. Personnel

Blinn College recognizes that 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 ongoing services. For this reason, the College, acting through the 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 annual performance reviews and evaluations, and developing work environments that are in agreement with federal, state, and College regulations that address health, safety, and personnel issues.

F. Collections

Blinn College recognizes that the collections are the foundation of the Museum's programs and functions. The College recognizes that the possession of these collections incurs legal, social, and ethical obligations to provide proper storage, management, and care for the collections and associated documentation. For these reasons, the College, acting through the Museum 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 ongoing needs of each collection.

G. Audiences

Blinn College 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 1) establishes programs and activities that serve its broad constituency; 2) is a facility that provides a responsive, safe, and comfortable environment; and, 3) is a resource for accurate information based upon scholarship and research. The Museum is particularly sensitive to properly dealing with cultural, social, and legal issues, such as due respect for human remains, animal rights, handicap access, and religious cultural diversity.

III. COLLECTIONS

A. Scope

Collections and other historical resources are developed, managed, and conserved for use in research, exhibits, education programs, electronic media, and research for public and academic audiences. To ensure that these collections will be available for use in the future, utilization and access is governed by institutional policies, applicable rights of privacy, ownership, and intellectual freedom, and with current preservation philosophies and practices, especially those involving preventive conservation.

B. Acquisitions

The growth and development of collections adheres to the Mission Statement 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/specimen integrity, and maximum associated information.

C. Management, Care, and Use

The management, care, and use of these collections follow the collections policies of the Museum, such as those for security, loans, specimen utilization, pest control, emergency preparedness, and preventive conservation. Implementation of policies is based on written procedures that 1) meet disciplinary standards for the respective collections; 2) include specifications for providing proper care with respect to environment, storage, and handling; and 3) incorporate all parts of the collection, including objects/specimens, associated data, collection records, reference material, and specialized collections.

D. Disposal

The disposal of accessioned collection items follows the Deaccession Policy of the Museum and written procedures for policy implementation. All deaccessioned material is fully documented, clearly justified, disposed of appropriately, and free from problems of ownership, conflict of interest, and legal issues. No personal gain resulting from deaccessioned material is to be realized by any individual having affiliations with the Museum or Blinn College. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned items will be used for artifact acquisition or the direct care of the collections.

IV. CONDUCT OF INDIVIDUALS

A. Scope

This Code of Ethics pertains to all staff members, students, and support and/or associated groups of the Star of the Republic Museum. This Code of Ethics is in addition to and superseded by the Code of Ethics and Personnel Policies for all employees of Blinn College.

B. Responsibility to the Museum

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. All resources of the Museum, including personnel, salaried-time, facilities, collections, 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 immediately conveyed to the appropriate Museum or College 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 solely serve 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 in which 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.

C. Responsibility to the Collections

1. 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 accuracy and completeness.

2. The Museum's ability to perform its functions are dependent on the quality of object/specimen preservation and conservation. Individuals affiliated with the Museum will demonstrate respect for the object/specimen by following professional Museum preservation procedures, providing protection from agents of deterioration, providing proper storage, and exercising safe handling.

3. Individuals affiliated with the Museum collections will be knowledgeable about their respective collection(s), disciplinary standards related to their collection(s), and changes in philosophies and practices for properly managing and caring for the collection(s).

D. Responsibility to Others

1. Individuals affiliated with the Museum will be responsive to the Museum's public and academic audiences, and treat each individual with professional courtesy.
2. Individuals affiliated with the Museum will be responsive and cooperative with professional associates outside of the Museum organization.
3. Individuals affiliated with the Museum 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.
4. Supervisors and faculty are responsible for the actions of the individuals under their direction. To promote the mission, functions, services, programs, and image of the Museum, supervisors and faculty will take an active role in providing direction, instruction, communication, and group cooperation.