

Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico Code of Ethics¹

MISSION OF THE MAXWELL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY: working toward greater understandings of the fullness of human experiences in the Southwest and the world.

VISION: The Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at UNM contributes to:
Reconciling injustices
Restoring voices
Realizing community

VALUES: The Staff at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at UNM embrace these values in all they do:
Uphold *integrity* through honesty and transparency
Act with *courage* and take informed risks
Lead with *humility* and own our mistakes
Embrace *inclusivity* with openness and sincerity
Embody *dynamism* and manifest meaningful change
Excite *curiosity* and the passion for learning

INTRODUCTION

The Maxwell Museum of Anthropology is a division of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of New Mexico (UNM). As an integral part of the University of New Mexico the Maxwell Museum adheres to the University of New Mexico mission and policies.

UNM MISSION: As the state's premier institution of higher learning and provider of health care, The University of New Mexico promotes discovery, generates intellectual and cultural contributions, honors academic values, and fosters an educated, healthy, and economically vigorous New Mexico.

Key UNM Policies:

- Respectful Campus: <http://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2240.html>
- Guiding Principles: <https://policy.unm.edu/regents-policies/section-2/2-18.html>
- Employee Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest: <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/3000/3720.html>

This Code of Ethics is based on the Maxwell Museum's core values and commitments. It

¹ Approved by Maxwell Museum Staff: June 20, 2019, updates approved April 16, 2026

Approved by Maxwell Museum Director, Carla M Sinopoli: June 20, 2019 Submitted to Museums Council for Review: September 3, 2019, updates approved April 16, 2026

Approved by Maxwell Museum Governing Authority: October 31, 2019 (Dean Mark Peceny), minor updates approved by Mark Peceny, August 3, 2020

recognizes the complex responsibilities of university museums as a public trust: to scholarship and knowledge production; to the stewardship and dissemination of museum resources; to public education, enjoyment and accessibility; and to all those who have interests in museum collections and activities, particularly source and descendent communities.

The principles outlined in this document apply to any individual or group—including the Maxwell Museum governing authority, staff, research associates, Hibben fellows and other student employees, interns, docents, volunteers, program partners (e.g., guest curators), and members of any Museum Advisory committees and friends groups—whose actions are, or may be construed as, representative of the Maxwell Museum (hereafter, ‘the Maxwell Museum community’). All members of the Maxwell Museum community are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and respect.

The Museum recognizes that this Code of Ethics is a living document and commits to reviewing and, where necessary, updating it at least every three years. To that end, an ad hoc committee will be established by the Director to oversee the Code of Ethics review. The committee will engage the entire Maxwell Museum staff and, where feasible, other members of the Maxwell Museum community, in the review process. An updated draft will be circulated among the staff for feedback and revision prior to approval by the Director and transmission to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

GOVERNANCE

The Museum’s collections are held in trust for the people of the State of New Mexico. As a unit of the University of New Mexico, the Museum’s ultimate governing authority is the University of New Mexico Board of Regents. The Board of Regents delegates authority to the University President who in turn delegates authority to the Provost, who assigns oversight of the Museum to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Responsibility for institutional management, from long-range planning to day-to-day operations, is delegated by the Dean to the Museum’s Director who collaborates with museum staff and advisory bodies and—as appropriate—other members of the Maxwell Museum community to develop, refine and implement the Maxwell Museum’s mission, priorities, and activities. The primary role of the Maxwell Museum’s governing authority—as delegated to the Museum Director²—is to oversee, protect, and enhance the Maxwell’s Museum’s collections, programs, and physical,

² The primary responsibility of the Maxwell Museum Director is the overall management of the Maxwell Museum. Responsibilities include but are not limited to: direct supervision of the Collections, Archives, Interpretation, and Administration divisions of the Museum; oversight of program and service center budgets; preparation and submission of contract and grant proposals and review of contract and grant proposals produced by Museum staff and the Office of Contract Archaeology; working with the College’s development officers to increase private giving to support the work of the Museum; ensuring that the Museum is in compliance with federal and state law and UNM policies, and that its operation is consistent with the institutional and professional standards of the American Alliance of Museums; encourage the acquisition and use of archaeological, ethnological, and related archival collections for student training; scientific, humanistic, and artistic research; and public outreach, while balancing such uses with the rights and concerns of Tribes and other descendant communities; communicating with private donors and representative of Tribes, federal and state agencies, foreign governments, and other depositors or concerned parties regarding the acquisition and use of collections; ensuring the proper documentation and care of collections; maintaining emergency and disaster recovery plans; overseeing the Collections Committee’s activities to ensure that collections care and use meet current best standards; encouraging and supporting staff efforts to teach classes, serve on graduate committees, and mentor students through on-the-job training; encouraging and supporting staff efforts to serve the general public through exhibits, the museum gift shop, adult public programs, the K-12 program, volunteer opportunities, the newsletter, and digital initiatives; and serving on UNM’s Museum Council and on committees established by the Museum, the College, UNM, and outside institutions.

human, and financial resources, ensuring that they support the Museum's mission. The Maxwell Museum Director is a member of the UNM Museum Council, a body constituted by the Board of Regents, and charged with responsibility for reviewing museum and collection policies and procedures to ensure compliance with specific standards of their respective academic disciplines.

The Maxwell Museum adheres to all [University of New Mexico Policies](#) (including but not limited to Policy 6410 Museums and Collections) and all applicable legal instruments governing ownership, title, import, care, and other issues critical to the acquisition and curation of cultural materials. These include, but are not limited to, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA), and the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (the 1970 UNESCO Convention). For all Federal Repository collections held at the Maxwell, the Museum follows the regulations on the Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections (36CFR 79). The Maxwell Museum also abides by the respective codes of ethics of the American Alliance for Museums (AAM), International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), and those of other appropriate professional organizations.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The governing authority, museum administrators, and managers shall create a respectful, supportive, and safe working environment that encourages productivity by all personnel.

Professionalism

The Museum's administrative and governing authority will respect the professional expertise of staff, who have been employed based on their particular skills and experience. Responsibility for final decisions will normally rest with the Museum Director; however, no staff member can be required to reverse, alter, or suppress her/his professional judgment to accord with leadership decisions. The governing body may never require Museum personnel to act in a way that could be considered to conflict with the provisions of this Code of Ethics or any national law or specialist code of ethics. Collectively, the professional staff is recognized to be the most familiar with the Museum's assets and constituency. As such, their input and perspectives will be sought by Museum leadership on matters affecting long-term directions of the Museum. To the extent that resources allow, opportunities for the continuing education and professional development of all Museum personnel will be made available to maintain an effective workforce.

Personnel practices and equal opportunity

All hiring, promotion, and transfer of staff employees shall be based on training, experience, and past performance, in accordance with the University's equal employment opportunity policy. The Maxwell Museum supports the University of New Mexico's commitment to achieving education programs and a workforce that reflects the rich and varied cultures of the peoples of New Mexico and beyond.

Volunteers and student employees:

Museum administration and paid staff will be supportive of volunteers and student employees, acknowledging them as fellow workers and providing appropriate training and opportunities for enrichment. As a university museum, the Maxwell acknowledges its special

commitment to providing educational opportunities to UNM students. Access to the Museum's inner activities is a privilege. Volunteers and student employees are required to adhere to the same standards that apply to all staff and are subject to requirements specified in this Code of Ethics.

Inter-institutional cooperation:

Recognizing the Maxwell Museum's commitment to responsible curation of anthropological collections, public engagement, and education, and to collaboration with Indigenous communities, the Maxwell Museum will, as appropriate, partner with other museum and community organizations on the UNM campus, in New Mexico, and beyond.

Fiscal responsibility and fund raising

The Maxwell Museum manages its funds prudently and responsibly by ensuring that spending practices are fair, reasonable, transparent, and appropriate to its mission. The Museum will draw from its donor funds consistent with donor intent and to support the fund's stated purpose, and will generate financial reports that are accurate, complete, and accessible.

The Maxwell Museum is truthful in its fund-raising solicitations. It handles information about donations with confidentiality to the extent provided by law and expends funds consistent with donor intent, and provides donors with appropriate acknowledgment and recognition.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Maxwell Museum may institute advisory committees that will provide advice to the Director and staff on the museum's mission, strategic direction, policies, finances, and operations. The Committee chairs ensure that members act for the benefit of the Museum and its public purpose with integrity and honesty.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Maxwell Museum is a publicly visible and respected institution. Members of the Maxwell Museum community should observe accepted standards and laws and uphold the dignity, honor, and ethical ideals and practices of their profession. Every opportunity should be used to inform and educate the public about the aims, purposes, and aspirations of the Museum and profession to develop a better public understanding of the contributions of the Museum to society.

All members of the Maxwell Museum community are expected to understand and support the mission of the museum and its public trust responsibilities and to be familiar with and adhere to this document and the above-cited codes and policies.

Working relations within the Maxwell Museum community are based in equity and mutual respect. As such, the Museum is committed to fostering a productive and collaborative working environment that respects and supports the contributions of all members of the Maxwell Museum community, as well as the larger University community and diverse publics with which we interact.

Conflicts of Interest

The Maxwell Museum holds a position of public trust. Members of the Maxwell Museum community are expected to act in the best interests of the Maxwell Museum and not for personal gain or to further the interests of a specific stakeholder. Members of the Maxwell Museum community are expected to refrain from acts or activities that may involve or be

perceived as a conflict of interest. Relevant University policy concerning conflicts of interest is presented in [Policy 3720](#) in the UNM Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual.

Critical areas for potential conflicts of interest in the Maxwell Museum include offers of gifts, favors, and discounts, personal collecting, loans of personal objects, dealing, outside employment, and consulting.

In all pertinent areas, Museum personnel should participate in and advocate for the creation of policies that define Museum expectations and standards of conduct. Written policies, which should be made available to all personnel, help the Museum establish and employ a consistent, even-handed approach in all situations that involve a potential conflict of interest. If such policies do not exist, Museum personnel should seek the advice and consent of their supervisor until a policy is adopted.

Disclosure

Even with well-developed written policies, the Museum recognizes that ethical decision making is rarely a matter of simply following preordained guidelines. Real-world situations are often complex, requiring a thorough process of study and consideration. Openness, transparency, and thoughtful review are effective means of avoiding conflicts of interest and are essential conditions for a decision-making process.

Museum personnel must disclose potential conflicts of interest to their immediate supervisors in writing or by following established Museum policy. Records of the disclosure and subsequent deliberations and decisions should be retained by the relevant Museum division/Archives.

Gifts, Favors, and Discounts

The Maxwell Museum is committed to the highest ethical principles in its relationships with donors, vendors, collectors, artists, and other types of contributors. The Museum recognizes that personal relationships with such individuals or organizations may lead to or cause the appearance of favoritism or undue influence and potentially have legal and ethical implications. Museum staff members should avoid even the appearance of misconduct or conflict of interest by refusing any gift, favor, or other dispensation of significant value (as defined by UNM Policy) that could be interpreted as influencing their professional performance. To preclude conflicts of interest, any gift that would be appropriate for addition to the museum collections should be redirected to the Museum or refused, even if of minimal value. Museum personnel may accept reimbursement for expenses and honoraria in compliance with University policy.

Occasionally professional courtesy may include the giving and receiving of gifts of significant value, but this should take place in the name of the University of New Mexico. Gifts to the University of New Mexico may be accepted by Museum personnel for the Museum. If there are questions about appropriateness, Museum personnel should discuss the circumstances with the Director before accepting the gift.

Personal Collecting

Museum personnel often make or influence important decisions about the content of their institution's collections and exhibitions. The public good, not individual gain, must be the primary concern of their decisions. Therefore, Maxwell Museum staff and governing authority shall not compete with the Museum in the acquisition of anthropological objects and collections or in any personal collecting activity. Nor shall any member of the Maxwell Museum community use their Museum affiliation to promote their own or any associate's personal collecting activities.

Collecting objects in an ethical manner can enhance professional knowledge and judgement. However, the acquisition of a personal collection by a Museum employee³ of objects similar to those collected by the Museum can raise ethical concerns. Collecting for personal use, such as items of Native American jewelry or other objects purchased in legitimate shops or directly from artists, normally does not raise concerns and need not be reported. Museum employees are encouraged to seek guidance from their supervisor, relevant staff, or the Museum Director if they have questions or concerns about collecting particular objects or kinds of objects.

No Museum employee shall acquire objects deaccessioned from the Museum's collections.

This policy is forward-looking and does not refer to personal collections acquired before employment at the Maxwell Museum began, or before this policy was implemented.

Loans

Loans of objects from the personal collections of members of the Maxwell Museum community for Maxwell Museum exhibitions must be approved by the Exhibitions Curator and Museum Director. If approved, loaned objects must be identified as loaned from an anonymous source or lender. Maxwell Museum community members may not profit from the exhibition of their objects, either financially or professionally.

Dealing

Personnel of the Maxwell Museum shall not participate directly or indirectly in dealing (buying or selling for profit) anthropological objects or collections. Maxwell staff shall not accept any gift, hospitality, or any form of reward from a dealer, auctioneer, or other person as an inducement to purchase or dispose of museum items, or to take or refrain from taking official action; nor should they recommend a particular dealer, auctioneer, or appraiser to a member of the public.

Outside employment and consulting

Concurrent non-UNM employment such as self-employment or paid consulting can be of benefit to both the Museum and the employee by stimulating personal and professional development. All non-UNM employment must be undertaken with the fundamental premises that the employee's primary responsibility is to the Maxwell Museum; that the outside activity will not impair her/his ability to fulfill Museum responsibilities; and that it will not compromise the professional integrity of the employee or the reputation of the Museum.

Maxwell Museum employees are often considered representatives of the Museum and University while engaged in outside activities or tasks similar to those they perform for the University. Even though their work may be totally independent, employees must disclose to the Director or appropriate officer the facts concerning any planned outside employment or consulting arrangements that are in any way related to the employee's Museum functions.

Staff transitions and continuity

The work that members of the Maxwell Museum community perform is essential and important and the Museum has ethical, practical, and legal obligations to thoroughly document and retain work products related to its collection, interpretation, business, and other activities. Upon departure from the Museum, members of the Maxwell Museum community must ensure that all work product materials are in good order and accessible to their successors. Documentation and records of Museum activities from completed projects

³ See Section 'Administration and Management', subsection 'Volunteers and student employees (p. 3, above): "Volunteers and student employees are required to adhere to the same standards that apply to all staff and are subject to requirements specified in this Code of Ethics"

should be deposited in the Maxwell archives to be available to future staff, researchers, and community members. The Museum Archivist should be consulted concerning archiving of electronic communications and other digital and paper records. If feasible, employees should provide status reports and priority lists addressing ongoing and future projects to their supervisor and the Director prior to their departure.

Confidentiality

Members of the Maxwell Museum community may have access to confidential and privileged information about the museum, its members, and other constituents. Individuals with access to such information must comply with University privacy and confidentiality policies and treat all information responsibly and appropriately.

All records created or maintained by the Museum, including records that contain information about collections, security, finances, research site(s) locations and sensitive cultural properties are subject to the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act, although some records may be exempt from disclosure.

Intellectual freedom

Scholarship and interpretation depend upon free and open exploration and interpretation of aspects of culture. The Maxwell Museum will:

- respect legal, ethical, and cultural standards regarding individual privacy, human-based research, and access to and use of sensitive cultural materials;
- respect the rights and authority of individuals and cultures that had no voice in the disposition of those collections related to them; and
- recognize the diversity and variety of interpretation and support open and thoughtful scholarly debates.

All members of the Maxwell Museum community deserve the professional respect and support necessary for professional growth and advancement. Such respect precludes unequal treatment based on any nonprofessional criteria. In particular, it precludes any harassment or discrimination that creates a hostile work environment and may threaten intellectual freedom.

Teaching, lecturing, writing and other creative activities

Scholarly research, publication, and teaching are integral parts of the Maxwell Museum's activities. Individual research sponsored by the Museum should conform to the Museum's mission and, when appropriate, acknowledge the Museum's financial and/or scholarly support.

COLLECTIONS

The Maxwell Museum is committed to the responsible and ethical stewardship of the collections entrusted to its care as a public trust for present and future generations. The ethical acquisition, care, display, research, interpretation, and dissemination of information on, and—where applicable—transfer or deaccessioning of, collections of the Maxwell Museum is a profound responsibility. All who are entrusted with the care, interpretation, and administration of the Museum's collections must maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity, professionalism, and respect.

The Maxwell Museum ensures that:

- collections in its custody support its mission and public trust responsibilities;
- collections in its custody are lawfully held, protected, secured, unencumbered, cared

- for and preserved;
- collections in its custody are accounted for and documented;
- access to the collections and related information is permitted and regulated;
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities are conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of cultural resources and discourages illicit trade in such materials;
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities conform to its mission and public trust responsibilities;
- disposal of collections through sale, trade or research activities is solely for the advancement of the Museum's mission. Proceeds from the sale of objects are used consistent with the established American Alliance of Museums' standards, and in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections;
- the unique and special nature of human remains and funerary and sacred objects is recognized as the basis of all decisions concerning such collections;
- collections-related activities promote the public good rather than individual financial gain; and
- competing claims of ownership that may be asserted in connection with objects in its custody will be handled openly, seriously, responsively and with respect for the dignity of all parties involved.

Further, the Museum acknowledges that its collections include items that are important to source and descendent communities and is committed to respectful collaborations with those communities in the care, display, and disposition of those items.

Acquisitions

Specific policies and procedures to be followed in the acquisition of collections are detailed in the Museum's Collections Management Policies and Procedures and collection priorities are summarized in the Maxwell Museum Collection Plan. The Museum only acquires collections that support its mission and goals. Any object or collection considered for acquisition must be accompanied by valid legal title and be unrestricted or have any restrictions clearly described in the instrument of conveyance. The Museum must be able to properly catalog, conserve, store, or exhibit the objects in its possession.

The Museum recognizes that, on occasion, circumstances may arise when it is appropriate to accept collections that do not fully conform to its collecting priorities. In such circumstances, the potential acquisition must be thoroughly reviewed by the Collections Committee and approved by the Director. Documentation of the reasons underlying the decisions to accept the collection will be recorded and retained in the Accession files.

The Maxwell Museum may at times serve as an intermediary for the repatriation or transfer of offered objects or collections known to have been illegally or unethically required to appropriate Tribal, State, Federal, or international authorities. The Museum will hold such items on temporary deposit in order to facilitate such transfers and care for them to the same standards as permanent collections, but will not knowingly accession those objects into its permanent collections.

Deaccession/Disposal of Collections

The Maxwell Museum holds its collections in trust for present and future generations. The removal of an object or specimen from the Museum's collections is a serious undertaking that must only be undertaken with a full understanding of the significance of the item, its character (whether renewable or non-renewable), its legal standing, and any loss of public

trust that might result from such action. The Maxwell Museum will follow the specific policies and procedures for deaccessioning/disposal of collections detailed in its Collection Management Policies and Procedures and/or, where applicable, its NAGPRA Policies and Procedures.

Any necessary disposal of Maxwell Museum collections will be conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of similar resources and discourages illicit trade in such materials. The Museum adheres to the AAM Code of Ethics, which affirms that any proceeds received from the sale of collections can only be used for the acquisition or direct care of collections.

Destructive analysis

After diligent review by the Museum Collections Committee, the Museum Director may approve requests for destructive analysis of objects (or portions thereof) in its Collections. Any such request must be submitted to the Committee using the "Request for Destructive Analysis" form and have prior approval from the relevant Curator and Collection Manager and be approved by the Collection Committee. Destructive analysis will not be approved for identified NAGPRA collections without Tribal consultation. Requests for destructive analysis will only be approved if the data to be generated by the analysis outweighs the loss of the object.

Appraisals/Authentication

Museum personnel who become involved in establishing the monetary value of objects or authenticating objects expose themselves and the Museum to conflicts of interest and legal risks. Therefore, Museum personnel must not prepare appraisals for any reason. Museum personnel should refer all interested parties directly to professional appraisers' societies or qualified appraisers. Furthermore, Museum personnel may not recommend a particular dealer and auctioneer; all referrals should be made without endorsement. Museum personnel may estimate insurance values for loans or other internal uses and should document the sources of these estimates. The Museum may allow curators to provide authentication under carefully controlled conditions.

Collections Care

The Maxwell Museum will establish and apply policies to ensure that its collections (both permanent and temporary) and associated information, properly recorded, are available for current use and will be passed on to future generations in good and safe a condition as practicable, given current knowledge and resources. Professional responsibilities for the care of collections will be assigned to persons with appropriate knowledge and skill or who are adequately supervised by such persons.

Museum collections should be documented according to accepted professional standards. Such documentation should include a full identification and description of each item, its associations, provenance, condition, treatment and present location. Data will be kept in a secure environment and be supported by retrieval systems that provide access to information by museum personnel and other legitimate users.

Preventive conservation is an important element of museum policy and collections care. It is the responsibility of members of the Maxwell Museums governing authority and members of the Maxwell Museum community to create and maintain a protective environment for the collections in their care, whether in collections storage, on display, or in transit.

The Museum will establish policies and procedures to monitor the condition of collections and establish priorities for conservation work, under the supervision of a qualified conservator. All conservation procedures should be documented and be as reversible as possible; with

records of all work attached to object records.

Collection Reproductions

Reproduction of objects or specimens in the collections will be used for educational purposes only. Revenues from the sale of reproductions will directly benefit collection care.

Field Study and Collecting

Archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork can generate important, well-documented, museum collections. All fieldwork undertaken under the auspices of the Maxwell Museum must be conducted in a legal and responsible manner with the highest professional standards and under official permit and/or in consultation with appropriate government authorities where required.

Where the Maxwell Museum is to be an intended recipient of collections to be generated from a field project conducted by a member of the Maxwell Museum community (whether through accessioning or via a repository agreement with a Federal, State, City, or Tribal government), the relevant curator, Museum Collections Committee and Director must be consulted to assess the Museum's ability to curate the collections for future generations. No member of the Maxwell Museum community may designate the Museum as the recipient of field-based collections without prior approval from the Collections Committee and Director.

Any field program must be conducted in such a way that all participants act legally and responsibly in acquiring objects and data and respect the needs and interests of local communities. All permits and associated documentation must be filed with the Museum (translated into English, as necessary) and all field notes and records must accompany the object collection. Results of field projects should be promptly reported to appropriate parties and results should be fully published in a timely manner.

EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS

Permanent and temporary exhibitions and programs of the Maxwell Museum, both physical and digital, will be in accordance with the stated mission, policy, and purpose of the museum. The display of objects either from the Maxwell Collection or borrowed for the purpose of exhibition will not compromise their quality or their proper care and conservation.

The Maxwell Museum will ensure that the information presented in displays, exhibitions, and public programs is well-founded and accurate by working in collaboration with represented groups, and gives appropriate deference to cultural knowledge, traditions, and beliefs.

Human remains and materials of sacred significance will be displayed in a manner consistent with professional standards and, where known, take into account the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic, or religious groups from whom the objects originated. If exhibited, they will be presented with tact and respect for the feelings of human dignity held by those represented in the exhibition. The Museum will not exhibit human remains or NAGPRA eligible objects without prior consultation with, and explicit written approval from, appropriate Tribal representatives. Requests from the originating community for removal from public display of such materials will be addressed expeditiously, with respect and sensitivity.

Requests for the return of such material will be addressed similarly, following the University of New Mexico/Maxwell Museum's NAGPRA framework.

The Maxwell Museum will avoid displaying or otherwise using any materials of questionable origin or lacking provenance. The museum is aware that such displays or usage can be seen to condone and contribute to the illicit trade in cultural property.

MUSEUM COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Museum collections reflect the cultural traditions of the communities from which they have been derived. As such, they have a character beyond that of ordinary property, which may include strong affinities with national, regional, local, ethnic, religious or political identities. It is therefore important that Museum policy is responsive to these situations.

RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES SERVED

Usage by the Museum of collections from contemporary communities requires respect for human dignity and the traditions and cultures that use such objects. These collections should be used to promote human well-being, social development, tolerance, and respect by advocating multi-social, multicultural, and multilingual expression.

DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

All UNM employees – except those designated as confidential by the appropriate UNM authorities in writing – are considered responsible employees under University Policies 2720 and 2740. All UNM employees must report alleged misconduct to [The Office of Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity](https://ceeo.unm.edu/reporting/index.html) (CEEO) within 24 hours, or as soon as reasonably possible. Failure to report may prompt an investigation which could result in disciplinary action. <https://ceeo.unm.edu/reporting/index.html>

UNM employees should report any discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct they see, hear, read a report about, or that is disclosed to them from another person. The information might be received as a rumor, as third-hand knowledge, or may otherwise be indirect—all of this should still be reported to CEEO, ***even if you believe that someone else has already reported the incident or misconduct.***

IMPLEMENTATION

This code will be distributed to all Maxwell Museum staff, student employees and interns, and volunteers when they join the Museum, and subsequently annually at the start of each academic year.

No ethics code can cover the nuances of every situation. Staff, students, and volunteers should discuss potential conflicts of interest or other ethical concerns with their supervisors.

Anyone with information about a potential ethics violation is encouraged to come forward in to their supervisor, the Museum Director, or, in the case of the Director, the Associate Dean of Research in the UNM College of Arts and Sciences. Employees will not be subject to any adverse employment action as a result of reporting in good faith a potential violation of this Code of Ethics. Reporters' confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. Reported potential violations will be promptly, thoroughly and fairly investigated to determine whether an actual violation has occurred. In each instance, evidence will be obtained, and a prompt and thorough investigation will be conducted.

Prompt remedial responses to ethics violations will be guided by this Code of Ethics, UNM policies, and union agreements.

This document was developed in 2018-2019 from preliminary drafts developed by Interim Director David Phillips, Archivist Diane Tyink, and Senior Collections Manager Meghan Truckey, with subsequent additions by Director Carla Sinopoli. The document was presented and discussed at Maxwell Museum Staff meetings on January 24, 2019, March 21, 2019 (personal collecting section), May 16, 2019 (personal collecting), and June 20, 2019. The document was provided to staff annually. In Fall 2025, the Director convened an ad hoc committee of Ash Boydston-Schmidt (NAGPRA Coordinator), Ashley Burch (Collection Manager, Osteology), Erica Davis (Curator of Education) to review and update the document, and was subsequently reviewed at all staff meeting in January 2026, with additional recommendations subsequently incorporated. The present document is the outcome of this work and was approved by staff on April 16, 2026

This Code of Ethics was compiled by drawing content and inspiration from Codes of Ethics of the following organizations: American Alliance of Museums, AAM's Curators Committee, American Association for State and Local History, International Council of Museums, American Institute for Conservation of Historic Artistic Works, UNM Policy 6410, American Anthropological Association, Archaeological Institute of America, American Cultural Resources Association, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology (University of Michigan), Museum of Natural and Cultural History (University of Oregon), Phoebe A Hearst Museum of Anthropology (University of California, Berkeley), and Museum of Anthropology (Wake Forest University).

APPENDIX A: RELEVANT UNM AND PROFESSIONAL POLICIES

UNM

- UNM Compliance Policies <https://ceeo.unm.edu/policies.html>
- UAP 2240 Respectful Campus, <https://unmpolicy.policystat.com/policy/17084708/latest/>
- UAP 3215: Performance Improvement, <https://unmpolicy.policystat.com/policy/17085002/latest/#autoid-kagqk>
- UAP 3720 Employee Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest, <https://unmpolicy.policystat.com/policy/17084797/latest/>
- Reporting requirements, <https://ceeo.unm.edu/reporting/index.html>

Professional Associations

- American Alliance of Museums, Code of Ethics for Museums (2000) <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>
- American Alliance of Museums, Core Documents Requirements <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-documents/>
- Association of Art Museum Directors, Professional Practices in Art Museums (2011) <https://aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/2011ProfessionalPracticesinArtMuseums.pdf>
- Association of Art Museum Directors, Code of Ethics (2011) <https://aamd.org/about/code-of-ethics>
- International Council on Museums, Professional Code of Ethics (2006) <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/>