

Georgia Southern University Museum
Collection Policy

1. Statement of Purpose and Policy

The Georgia Southern University Museum is dedicated to preserving both natural and cultural history and to serving the university and the region of South Georgia. The museum's purpose in holding collections is to collect, preserve, interpret, and maintain objects of significant historical, scientific, technological, or educational importance, especially those preserving the natural and cultural history of the coastal plain; to encourage scholarly study of its collections; and to maintain the highest ethical standards in using and interpreting its collections. The collections are held in trust for the university faculty, staff, and students, as well as for the general public. The museum will seek to make significant material accessible to qualified researchers.

2. Types of Collections

The Museum shall possess two types of collections: museum and teaching. The Museum Director, in consultation with the relevant curator(s) and any existing collections manager, will designate the collection category to which material is assigned at the time of acquisition and has the authority to change the assigned category as collections and policies of the Museum evolve.

a. Museum Collection

Museum Collection items shall have significance of an aesthetic, historical, scientific, technological, or educational nature. Items in the Museum Collection shall relate directly to the mission, vision and purposes of the Museum and shall be used solely for exhibitions, research, publications, and exhibition loans. The Museum Collection will be accessioned. For purposes of storage, research and stewardship, items in the collection will be designated as part of either the "Cultural History Collection," or the "Natural History Collection."

b. Teaching Collection

The Museum will collect these items in the form of donations or bequests or will purchase them specifically for exhibition or educational purposes. The teaching collection may be loaned to other museums and educational institutions for temporary exhibitions or research projects. This material will not be accessioned, although records of its receipt and disposition will be maintained.

3. Methods of Acquisition and Ethical Guidelines

The Museum shall acquire its collections through purchase, gift, bequest, exchange, field collection, or any other transaction by which title to objects is transferred to the Museum. The Museum shall acquire objects unencumbered by conditions imposed by the owner, donor,

consignee, or by the nature of the material itself, unless otherwise approved by the Museum Director and the Provost. Only items for which the Museum can give proper care throughout an indefinite period of time will be acquired.

Items of questionable provenance or obtained through illicit trade shall not be acquired. Only when the Museum has determined to the best of its ability that material has been collected, exported, or imported in compliance with the laws and regulations of the country of origin, of the federal government of the United States, and of individual states within the United States, shall the material be acquired. The Museum will also conduct its collecting activities with a reasonable certainty that its approach is consistent with the spirit and intent of these laws and programs.

If it is determined that an object offered to the Museum for acquisition is stolen property or has entered the United States illegally, the Director will report all pertinent facts, in writing, to the Georgia Southern University Office of Public Safety and Office of Legal Affairs at the earliest opportunity.

Proper records on collected material, whether permanent or on loan, shall be maintained by the Museum. Contracts setting forth descriptions of the material and conditions of receipt will accompany all material received or lent by the Museum. In the case of Museum purchases, conditional gifts, and loans, contracts will be signed by the donor/seller/borrower and by an authorized representative of Georgia Southern University.

The Museum will accept and initiate loans only from or to institutions, organizations, or foundations whose aims and goals are consistent with those of the Museum. Such loans will be approved only to enhance the purposes of the Museum. Loans from individuals will only be accepted when used for exhibition or research purposes. The Museum shall not accept loans for purposes of storage. The Museum maintains the right to deaccession items from the collections. Only material which is no longer considered relevant or useful to the purpose and activities of the Museum will be considered for deaccessioning.

The Provost shall approve any deviation from these policies for acquiring and deaccessioning of collections.

a. Donations

The Director shall review all donations to the Museum Collection or Teaching Collection. If a donation is of significant value (\$5000 or more) or is encumbered in any manner, the donation must be approved by the Provost. All encumbrances shall be clearly stated in an instrument of conveyance, and shall be made part of the Museum's permanent record.

In the absence of indication to the contrary, the Museum shall assume that all donors are sole owners and shall have no responsibility for confirming ownership. In addition, if the donor or vendor possesses copyright to material, he or she shall be encouraged to assign

the Museum all rights, title, and interest in the copyright and shall transfer the exclusive rights of reproduction, adaptation, and distribution to the Museum. If this is not agreed upon, the material shall be treated as an encumbered donation.

b. Bequests

The Museum reserves the right to accept or refuse any bequest of collection material or any part thereof made to it.

c. Purchases

Artifacts of value greater than \$4,999.00 considered for purchase for the Museum Collection shall first be reviewed by the Provost. It is the responsibility of the Director to make every reasonable effort to receive items as a donation. In all cases, copyright and the transfer of exclusive rights of reproduction, adaptation, and distribution will be sought from the previous owner; if such is not granted, the purchase shall be treated as an encumbered acquisition.

d. Exchange

In order to enhance the collections of the Museum, the Director, with approval by the Provost, may exchange items in the collection for material of equivalent or superior value. In such cases, deaccessioning procedures shall be followed.

e. Field Collections

The Director may accept material collected in the field by researchers who document collections according to professional standards.

f. Other Transactions

Any other transaction by which title to material is transferred to the Museum shall be approved by the Director.

g. Appraisals

The Museum staff shall not provide appraisals, either of donations, of privately owned materials, or otherwise, although they may assist donors in securing appraisals in cases where the Museum may benefit from such appraisals.

4. Deaccessioning

Deaccession is the term that defines the process by which an object is legally and permanently removed from the collections. The deaccession process will be cautious, deliberate, and scrupulous. Deaccessioning will not be regarded as a means to provide extra funding for the museum. Public trust obligates the Georgia Southern University Museum to act in accordance with the highest ethical standards, as defined by the policies and procedures of the Board of Regents, the Code of Ethics of Georgia Southern University, the laws of the State of Georgia, and the standards of the American Association of Museums.

There are a number of reasons why objects in the collections may be considered for deaccessioning. Several factors to consider when contemplating

deaccessioning include the on-going process of refining/defining the collections as set forth in the museum's mission/collecting statement; the financial, administrative, and storage requirements necessary to maintain objects in the collection; the removal of objects that are damaged or actively deteriorating and for which the cost of restoration or conservation exceeds their historic, scientific, or fair market value.

Objects with insufficient documentation to permit determination of the means by which they came into the museum's possession (those works that came to the collection prior to the adoption of current standards of record-keeping) will be considered for deaccessioning using the same standards listed below and, in addition, advice will be sought from the Georgia Southern University Office of Legal Affairs regarding their status.

Criteria

Objects to be considered for deaccessioning must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The object does not match the collection goals and objectives as defined in the museum's mission statement.
- The work lacks authenticity.
- The work is a duplicate.
- The object cannot be properly cared for or stored.
- The object is actively deteriorating, and the cost of restoration exceeds its historic, scientific, or fair market value.
- The object could be exchanged for one that more closely conforms to the museum's collections.
- The object must be repatriated or removed from the collection in order to meet current legislation or government regulations such as NAGPRA.
- The object is of insufficient quality or lacks scholarly interest.

Authority and Responsibility

A recommendation to deaccession an object will be made by the Director of the Museum to the Provost. The Provost must formally approve all recommendations to deaccession any object from the collection. In the case of the unintentional destruction of an object, which results in a de facto deaccession status for the object, the above procedures will not apply. It will be sufficient for the Director to inform the Provost of all particulars regarding the circumstances of the object's destruction.

Methods of Disposition

As state property, disposition may be accomplished through public internet auction or in the case of works through means in compliance with O.C.G.A. sec. 20-3-60 (c) and all other relevant local, state, federal and, when applicable, international laws.

Objects may be sold for cash to the highest responsible bidder. Such sales should be suitably publicized so that the museum obtains the best selling price from a pool of appropriate buyers. If the value of the object is too insignificant for sale at auction, the object may be offered for public sale by dealers.

Some objects have intrinsic or accreted value to public collections, and therefore the Director and Provost should strongly consider that such objects remain in the public domain by

selling or transferring them to another entity of the state of Georgia or to another unit of the University of Georgia.

Exchanges may be made with suitable institutions that maintain collections held in public trust. Exchanges will not be made with private persons. Exchanges will only be considered for objects of equal value or importance.

Proceeds from the sale of objects from the collections will be reserved in a designated account to be used solely for new acquisitions or the conservation of collections. In the event that an object is destroyed or must be destroyed because of biohazard, deterioration beyond retrieval, or because it has been deemed a fake by the Director, the method of destruction must comply with local, state and federal codes. The destruction must be witnessed by a museum staff member and a representative of Georgia Southern University's Office of Property Control. A written record of the destruction of the object will be maintained in the object's permanent file.

The above notwithstanding, when an object has been granted or conveyed for a specified use, its disposition must conform with any use or trust declared in the grant or conveyance.

No persons who are employees, administrators and other advisory bodies associated with Georgia Southern University or the Georgia Southern University Museum may benefit from the deaccession of any object in the collection.

Documentation

It is the responsibility of the museum's Director to maintain accurate and permanent records of all activity concerning the permanent collections. Such records will be maintained in each object's permanent file.

When objects are physically removed from the collections, the museum's identification number will be removed from the object, except in transfer to a research institution where retaining the number is appropriate for research/historical purposes.

Non-accessioned Objects

Non-accessioned objects will be considered for disposal following the same policies stated above, except for the following:

- Proceeds from the sale of non-accessioned objects need not be used only for new acquisitions but also may be used for any purpose to benefit the Georgia Museum of Art.

5. Loans to the Museum

Loans to the Museum shall only be approved which are consistent with its programs and activities. All loans shall be for specific periods of time. Loans over one year duration are considered long-term loans and must be reviewed by the Provost and upon recommendation, accepted by the Director. Loans under one year duration usually are for temporary exhibits or research projects and may be executed by the Director.

Complete records of all loan transactions shall be kept by the Museum. Loans arranged by Curators for their research activities are the responsibility of the Curators. However, Curators should provide the Museum Director with inventories of tall items currently on loan and should withdraw inventories upon the completion of loans. Items on loan to the Museum shall be

treated with the same care and consideration as the Museum's permanent collection items and shall be handled and maintained accordingly. Items borrowed by the museum will be insured under the policy provided by Georgia Southern University. However, insurance may be carried by the lender as long as arrangements, in contractual format, are agreed upon by both parties at the time the loan is made.

If the loan has any encumbrances, it shall be reviewed by the Director and the Provost prior to acceptance or rejection.

If upon the termination date of a loan, the lender or authorized agent cannot be contacted, the Museum will assume custody of the material thirty days after it determines that the lender or authorized agent cannot be found. The Museum shall only return loaned material to the original lender or authorized agents. In case of change of legal ownership during the period of the loan, the new owner must present legal proof of ownership before the Museum will release the material.

Each lender will receive a copy of the above regulations in contractual form. Upon receipt of a form signed by the lender or authorized agent, the Museum will assume responsibility for the loaned material. Should the lender not return a signed form, the Museum will apply the above regulations. The Museum will care for material left in its custody in the same manner it cares for its own collections. Evidence of damage to objects at the time of receipt or while in the Museum's custody will be reported immediately to the lender. The lender certifies that objects lent in good condition will withstand ordinary strains of packing and transportation and exhibition.

Costs of transportation and packing and arrangements for payment thereof will be determined in advance and agreed upon in writing by the Museum Director and the lender.

6. Loans from the Museum

All loans from the Museum's Collections or Teaching Collections must be approved by the Museum Director. All loans shall be subject to periodic checks by the professional staff and may be recallable by giving thirty days notice to the borrower, provided such recall is part of the agreement.

Insurance for material lent from the Museum with a value in excess of \$500.00 will be carried by the borrower who will provide the Museum with a Certificate of Insurance or another legally binding official document. Any exceptions must be made in advance in a contractual form. All regulations governing the loan must be agreed to by the borrower and the Museum prior to releasing material to the borrower. It is the borrower's responsibility to provide proper care and security of all objects. Any damage to or loss of material will be replaced or compensated in full by the borrower.

Institutions which borrow objects from the Georgia Southern University Museum will meet minimum standards for professional operations. Each object will be given due care to insure it against damage or deterioration. The borrower shall maintain adequate protection against hazards of fire, insects, light, humidity, and mishandling by unauthorized persons. It is understood that objects covered by this loan agreement shall remain in the condition in which they were received. They shall not be cleaned, repaired, retouched, altered, or reproduced in any way without written permission from the Georgia Southern University Museum.

Costs of transportation and packing and arrangements for payment thereof will be determined in advance and agreed upon in writing by the Museum Director and the borrower.

Materials included in loans to institutions shall be packed for shipment by a competent packer. The object shall be repacked in the lender's crate or packing materials unless mutually agreed upon by the lender and borrower. Damages in transit or on the borrower's premises shall be reported immediately to the Georgia Southern University Museum. All crates and packing materials must be returned.

Permission is granted for the photographic reproduction of the borrowed works in publications and for publicity connected with the exhibition.

Loaned items must be returned at the end of the loan period unless the Director of the Georgia Southern University Museum approves an extension.

7. Prohibition of Personal Influence or Gain

No member of the staff nor other university employee nor volunteer with the museum shall personally receive directly or indirectly any favor, promise, or thing of value which could appear to induce, discourage or influence a staff recommendation, decision or action affecting the Museum's accessions, deaccessions, exhibitions or activities.

8. Care of Collections

Recognizing that the development and preservation of the Permanent Collection are cardinal responsibilities of the Museum, the following guidelines are established to provide for the proper care, management, and security of objects held by the Museum in the public trust.

Inventory

The purpose of inventory is to update storage locations, identify conservation and storage needs, aid in collections development, and provide accurate records in the event of disaster or theft, and identify missing or lost objects, or those objects documented incompletely or not at all.

The Director and the Curator of Paleontology with the help of student collections assistants shall conduct a comprehensive inventory of the collection every five years. In the intervening years, section inventories may be completed as necessary. Inventory shall include the permanent collection, loans to the museum, and loans from the museum.

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In the event an object is found in the collection without any identification, the Director and curatorial staff shall attempt to determine the origin and status of the object through written and computerized documentation. The Museum shall not dispose of any object found in collections without possessing clear title to the object. If the documentation proves the Museum has clear title to the object, an identification number shall be applied immediately. If there is proof that the object has been in the Museum's possession for seven years or longer, but the Museum does not have clear title to the object, the Museum may pursue acquisition of title in accordance with the Abandoned Properties Act.

Database Management and Backup

The collections databases shall be well maintained and monitored by the Director and Curator of Paleontology with proper security/access to preclude unauthorized changes to stored data.

The Museum shall be diligent in backing up data on a regular basis and shall store a copy of database records off site with the Office of the Provost.

Security

Security refers to the protection of objects from theft, damage, and deterioration. The Museum operates under the principle that all staff in cooperation with Georgia Southern University's Office of Public Safety and the Department of Environmental Safety share in the responsibility of maintaining the security of the Permanent Collection.

The Museum's exhibit area is open to the university community and the general public on a regular schedule and is therefore subject to few restrictions on access. The Museum reserves the right to deny access to anyone behaving in an unruly or menacing manner or whose actions threaten the security of the objects on exhibit.

The Museum's responsibility to maintain its collections and records in a secure, orderly manner decrees that Collections Storage Areas should not be open to the public. However, the Museum also recognizes that individuals who are not members of its staff can have a legitimate need for access to its stored collections and records, and the Museum will consent to requests for proper and appropriate uses of its resources. Proper and appropriate uses are deemed to be those that serve research and educational projects. The ultimate responsibility and authority for determining whether any specific request represents proper and appropriate use rests with the Director of the Museum. Generally, access to Collections areas is limited to the Director and Curator of Paleontology.

Conservation

The Curator of Paleontology, with the approval of the Director, recommends and effects conservation procedures on appropriate paleontological collections. The Director is responsible for the same on appropriate cultural collections. Both oversee ongoing condition reporting for objects; conservation assessments and treatments by independent conservators; preventative conservation through proper object handling; and monitoring of environmental controls in their respective collections.

Pest Management

As part of the Pest Management Program, pests are monitored by observing activity on sticky traps placed select collections areas, by maintaining a clean and orderly area, and through regular inspection. To aid in reducing the risk of pest infestations, the Museum shall adhere to the following procedures:

1. Preclude the entry of pests through facility evaluation and maintenance.
2. Detect pests through routine visual inspections and the application of sticky traps.
3. Maintain high standards in sanitation and good housekeeping practices including the prohibition of food and drink in all collections related areas.
4. Work in cooperation with the University's pest control firm to ensure proper preventive measures and proper chemical control of the building outside collections.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

As a Museum holding Native American materials and which has received funding, direct and indirect from the federal government, willingly recognizes its responsibility to comply with Public Law 101-601, The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

As of the approval of this policy, the Museum holds no Native American material that appears to be covered by NAGPRA. However, should the Museum be the recipient of a gift of a protected object in the future, it shall comply with all requirements of disclosure, consultation with Native American groups, and if necessary, repatriation.

9.Forms

Attached forms:

- Assignment of Gift
- Outgoing Loan Agreement
- Incoming Loan Agreement
- Deaccession Form