



Hill College
Texas Heritage Museum
Code of Ethics Policy

Reviewed and Approved By:

 

Dr. Pam Boehm, President of Hill College

Date

 

John Versluis, Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum

Date

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Texas Heritage Museum Code of Ethics

MISSION

Texas Heritage Museum's mission is to explore Texas and Texans during wartime and how those experiences affect us today.

I. INTRODUCTION

Administered by Hill College, a Texas state community college, the Texas Heritage Museum (THM) 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 THM. Those personal and professional standards and commitments are defined in the Hill College ethics and personnel policy.

The THM's code of ethics is in addition to those of Hill 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 THM.

B. Endorsements

This code of ethics endorses in principle the guidelines proposed by the American Alliance of Museums. In situations where differences may occur, the policies of Hill College and the THM will take precedence over the guidelines endorsed in principle.

C. Implementation

This code of ethics serves as the umbrella for the mission and policies of the THM. The policies, established by the Dean of the THM and approved by the President of Hill College, are carried out under the guidance and supervision of the THM Dean.

D. Periodic Review

The Dean of THM and the President of Hill College 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 THM at Hill College operates under the remote governance system. The THM Dean has authority for the day-to-day operations of the THM and reports to the Hill College President regularly. Under the remote governance system, the President is the governing authority. The President or Dean will report to the Hill College Board of Regents on THM operations when necessary. While the THM 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 THM.

B. Agreements and Contracts

Agreements and contracts must be approved by the Dean of THM and the President of Hill College. The Dean will not obligate the THM to projects or programs that do not serve the THM interests, or to situations that compromise the resources needed for ongoing activities related to the THM primary functions.

C. Fiscal Matters

The Dean of THM and the President of Hill College is responsible for using budgeted funds and resources to serve the interests of the THM and its mission, in a manner that provides an appropriate balance of allocations for staff, collections, facilities, equipment, programs, services, and functions. In all fiscal matters, Hill College administration maintains full documentation and accountability for resource expenditures.

D. Fundraising

All fundraising activities must be approved by the Dean of THM and the President of Hill College, and will be compatible with the mission and programs of the THM. The THM 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 THM are balanced with those of the donor. In all matters involving sales of goods or services, the THM will maintain reasonable rates of exchange.

E. Conflict of Interest

Employees must refrain from any activity in conflict with the mission of the THM. The staff must disclose any connections to vendors that might influence (or create the appearance of influence regarding) purchasing decisions. Staff members with a disclosed conflict of interest must not make purchasing decisions about that or competing vendors. In all purchasing decision, staff shall abide by Hill College policies. At no time shall any staff member knowingly misrepresent the mission, policies, objectives, proceedings, or motives of the THM.

F. Personnel

Hill College recognizes that the greatest asset of the THM is its staff, and that the quality of the staff is directly related to the THM'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, Hill College, acting through the Dean of THM, 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 Hill College regulations that address health, safety, and personnel issues.

G. Collections

Hill College recognizes that the collections are the foundation of the THM 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 Hill College, acting through the Dean of the THM, is responsible for assuring that the scope of each collection agrees with the THM 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.

H. Audiences

Hill College recognizes the importance of serving both public and academic audiences, and that these audiences help justify the support the THM receives from federal, state, local, and private sources. For this reason, the THM 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 THM 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 THM, particularly to legal and ethical acquisition, clear ownership, provenance, condition, value, need, and ability to provide proper long-term care. The THM 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 THM, such as those for security, loans, 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, associated data, collection records, reference material, and specialized collections.

D. Appraisals

No staff member shall perform appraisals of collections or potential acquisitions. If a staff member provides information about third-party appraisers, the staff member should be sure to provide the information of multiple third-party appraisers to avoid the appearance of favoritism.

E. Disposal

The disposal of accessioned collection items follows the deaccession policy of the THM 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 THM or Hill College. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned items will be used for artifact acquisition or the direct care of the collections.

IV. MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

A. Scope

The THM ensures the source, quality, authenticity, and educational value of all the items sold in the gift shop. No artifacts deaccessioned from the collection shall be sold in the gift shop, nor shall artifacts be sold that might be perceived by the public as having once been in the museum collections.

V. CONDUCT OF INDIVIDUALS

A. Scope

This code of ethics pertains to all staff members, students, volunteers, and support and/or associated groups of the THM. This code of ethics is in addition to and superseded by the code of ethics and personnel policies for all employees of Hill College.

B. Responsibility to the Museum

Individuals having an affiliation with the THM are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the code of ethics, policies, and procedures adopted by the THM.

Individuals having an affiliation with the THM are expected to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of their designated position and written job description, in a timely and professional manner.

Individuals affiliated with the THM have unique responsibilities related to maintaining the THM image, trust, and credibility to its public and academic audiences. For this reason, affiliated individuals must 1) properly represent the THM and their position when interacting with others; 2) exercise professional discretion about activities and concerns of the THM; and 3) hold in confidence relevant information concerning matters such as collections, personnel, and security.

C. Responsibility to the Collections

The THM'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 THM will maintain information integrity with accuracy and completeness.

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

Individuals affiliated with the THM 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

Individuals affiliated with the THM will be responsive to the THM customer service policy by treating each individual and group with professional courtesy.

E. Personal Collecting

Whether on duty or off, paid staff members represent the THM to the public and their conduct in the marketplace and in pursuit of their avocations must not reflect poorly on the THM.

Employees may not use their THM affiliation to promote personal collecting objectives.

F. Gifts and Gratuities

Staff members and volunteers must not accept valuable personal gifts, entertainment, or favors from vendors, visitors, or members of the community. Gifts with a value in excess of \$100 should be approved by the Dean of the THM. All gifts and gratuities must be received in accordance with college policies.

G. Ownership of Scholarly Materials

The THM is a department of Hill College, and staff members engaged in scholarly activities should engage in such activities in accordance with the ethical expectations of his or her field. Administrative work products (such as research and technical reports, photographs, and exhibition content) are considered work for hire and are the property of the museum. Individual scholarship (such as book chapters, submissions to scholarly journals, syllabi, and presentations to learned societies) remain the property of the individual scholar. When appropriate, the individual should mention his or her museum affiliation when engaging in personal scholarship. Staff members are allowed to accept honorariums for presentations, as long as they do so in accordance with Hill College policies.

Appendix I

Texas Heritage Museum Customer Service Commitment

The Texas Heritage Museum Mission

Texas Heritage Museum's mission is to explore Texas and Texans during wartime and how those experiences affect us today.

Texas Heritage Museum Customers

The Texas Heritage Museum (THM) serves a broad spectrum of American society, as well as researchers worldwide:

- Texas Heritage Museum Members
- Hill College Students
- Students and Educators (K–12)
- Genealogists and family Historians
- Veterans and their Families
- Academic, Business, Occupational, and Historical Researchers
- State and Local Government Personnel
- Professional Organizations and their Members
- Donors of Historical Materials
- General Public

Hill College Core Values

- Integrity
- Educational Excellence
- Student Success
- Respect
- Enthusiasm
- Collaboration

The Texas Heritage Museum Customer Service Commitment

The Texas Heritage Museum goal is to provide services according to these customer service standards:

If you visit or contact the Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College in Hillsboro TX...

You will find THM staff or volunteers available to promptly and courteously assist you during our business hours. Our facilities will be clean, accessible, and properly illuminated. Our public access hours will be

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prominently posted and noted in our regulations, brochures, and other information sources. There will be signs and maps to help you navigate throughout the museum and inform you of available programs, features, services. You will find the Texas Heritage Museum experience accessible and informative, with exhibits that are engaging, thoughtful, informative, factually accurate, and fairly presented.

If You Arrive To Conduct Research In The Historical Research Center. . .

We will provide the support and information you need to learn how to search and request records. You will receive the records you request for use in our archival research rooms within one hour of your request. If a delay is encountered, you will be notified of the problem and given an indication of when the records will be available.

The records you requested in advance of your scheduled visit will be waiting for you at the appointed time.

If You Submit A Mail In Research Request To The Historical Research Center. . .

You will be sent a response to your written request within six weeks after we have received your letter, fax, or e-mail. If we cannot provide a full response within that time, we will let you know how long we expect it will take before we can provide a full reply.

If You Attend One of The Texas Heritage Museum Public Programs . . .

You will find our lecture, film, performance, tour, or special event to be professional, timely, engaging, and informative. It will meet your expectations to better understand Texas military history. It will be executed with a level of professionalism that matches or exceeds the quality of the best museums in the region.

Program brochures and associated material will be both informative and attractive. Speakers will be well prepared for the audience, and attention will be paid to ensuring properly operating microphones and A/V equipment, appropriate introductions, and excellent stage organization. The process for making reservations will be easy and reliable, and information about the content and logistics of programs will be in easily located and easy to understand.

If You Attend One of The Texas Heritage Museum Programs for Students and Educators . . .

You will find the presentation to be lively, informative, and professional. The content and presentation will match the educational level of the student attendees.

If You are Unsatisfied With The Texas Heritage Museum Customer Service. . .

You can contact us. If our service has not matched our values and standards for customer service, please let us know so we can improve. If we cannot solve your problem immediately, you can expect a follow-up response within seven working days.

Here are two ways to share your concerns:

- Discuss the problem with the person who served you.
- Speak or write to the Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum.

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