

From: David Coontz <david.coontz@nara.gov> <david.coontz@nara.gov>
Sent time: 01/22/2020 12:28:56 PM
To: William Bosanko <william.bosanko@nara.gov>
Cc: Naylor, Chris <chris.naylor@nara.gov>
Subject: Re: Special Request for Tuesday
Attachments: Code of Ethics for Archivists.docx

Please see attached. My research in the ethics for Archivists/Librarians from different institutions and associations.

It is interesting to note that a search for "ethics NARA" did not return any hits.

Also, here is a link to the SAA statement on the Women's March exhibit.

<https://www2.archivists.org/news/2020/saa-statement-nara-exhibit-on-2017-womens-march-in-washington-dc>

If you have questions or need more information, please let me know.

I am reviewing Centers 1300, Libraries 1401, and Archives 1400.

On Tue, Jan 21, 2020 at 5:09 PM William Bosanko <william.bosanko@nara.gov> wrote:

Thanks. Next phase (tomorrow is fine) - find the code of ethics for SAA and AAM....and see what you can find out about whether or not UK/Canada/AUS, etc. archives have codes of ethics, etc.

Thanks!

Jay

On Tue, Jan 21, 2020 at 4:59 PM David Coontz <david.coontz@nara.gov> wrote:

Please see attached. The Executive Summary on pages 1-4 contains what we believe to be information most pertinent to your request. Pages 5-15 reflect all NARA policies that address exhibits. This section includes either a summary description of the policy if not pertinent to the role, responsibility and process for approving, reviewing and managing exhibits; or detailed citations where the policy appears to reflect on roles and responsibilities for approving, reviewing, or managing exhibits.

If you have questions or require additional information, please let us know.

Thanks

On Sun, Jan 19, 2020 at 10:49 AM William Bosanko <william.bosanko@nara.gov> wrote:

I would like the two of you to find all of the policies and regulations that touch upon exhibit development, etc.

Thanks,

Jay

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David Coontz II, CICA
Office of the Chief Operating Officer

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David Coontz II, CICA

Code of Ethics for Archivists

The information provided below is a summary. In some cases it has been edited and in other cases entire sections from the source material have been excluded, in an effort to condense content and focus on those passages most applicable to the present situation. Access to the complete source material can be found using the links provided below.

Code of Ethics for Archivists, Society of American Archivists (January 2012)

<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>

Professional Relationships. Archivists cooperate and collaborate with other archivists, and respect them and their institutions' missions and collecting policies.

Judgement. Archivists exercise professional judgment in appraising, acquiring, and processing materials to ensure the preservation, authenticity, diversity, and lasting cultural and historical value of their collections. Archivists should carefully document their collections-related decisions and activities to make their role in the selection, retention, or creation of the historical record transparent to their institutions, donors, and users. Archivists are encouraged to consult with colleagues, relevant professionals, and communities of interest to ensure that diverse perspectives inform their actions and decisions.

Authenticity. Archivists ensure the authenticity and continuing usability of records in their care. They document and protect the unique archival characteristics of records and strive to protect the records' intellectual and physical integrity from tampering or corruption. Archivists may not willfully alter, manipulate, or destroy data or records to conceal facts or distort evidence. They thoroughly document any actions that may cause changes to the records in their care or raise questions about the records' authenticity.

Security and Protection. Archivists protect all documentary materials for which they are responsible. They take steps to minimize the natural physical deterioration of records; guard against damage, theft, and vandalism; have plans to respond to disasters; and cooperate with colleagues and law enforcement agencies to apprehend and prosecute vandals and thieves.

Access and Use. Recognizing that use is the fundamental reason for keeping archives, archivists actively promote open and equitable access to the records in their care within the context of their institutions' missions and their intended user groups. They minimize restrictions and maximize ease of access. When repositories require restrictions to protect confidential and proprietary information, such restrictions should be implemented in an impartial manner. In all questions of access, archivists seek practical solutions that balance competing principles and interests.

Privacy. Archivists recognize that privacy is sanctioned by law. They establish procedures and policies to protect the interests of the donors, individuals, groups, and institutions whose public and private lives and activities are recorded in their holdings. As appropriate, archivists place access restrictions on collections to ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained,

particularly for individuals and groups who have no voice or role in collections' creation, retention, or public use.

Trust. Archivists should not take unfair advantage of their privileged access to and control of historical records and documentary materials. They execute their work knowing that they must ensure proper custody for the documents and records entrusted to them. **Archivists should demonstrate professional integrity and avoid potential conflicts of interest. They strive to balance the sometimes-competing interests of all stakeholders.**

The SAA statement on the Exhibit can be found here <https://www2.archivists.org/news/2020/saa-statement-nara-exhibit-on-2017-womens-march-in-washington-dc>

Code of Ethics, International Council on Archives (Sept 1996)
<https://www.ica.org/en/ica-code-ethics>

A code of ethics for archivists should establish high standards of conduct for the archival profession. It should introduce new members of the profession to those standards, remind experienced archivists of their professional responsibilities and inspire public confidence in the profession.

This code is intended to provide an ethical framework for guidance of members of the profession, and not to provide specific solutions to particular problems.

Archivists should protect the integrity of archival material and thus guarantee that it continues to be reliable evidence of the past.

The primary duty of archivists is to maintain the integrity of the records in their care and custody. **In the accomplishment of this duty they must have regard to the legitimate, but sometimes conflicting, rights and interests of employers, owners, data subjects and users, past, present and future.** The objectivity and impartiality of archivists is the measure of their professionalism. **They should resist pressure from any source to manipulate evidence so as to conceal or distort facts.**

Archivists should protect the authenticity of documents during archival processing, preservation and use.

Code of Ethics, Archives and Records Association, UK and Ireland (May 2018)
https://www.archives.org.uk/images/ARA_Documents/ARA_Code_Of_Ethics.pdf

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The primary duty of members is to preserve and protect the integrity of documents in records and archives in the public interest, in order to ensure that they continue to provide reliable evidence of past actions.

Members should ensure open and equitable access to records and archives as far as they can, compatible with respect for other concerns such as the privacy of information subjects and their institutional context.

IMPARTIALITY, FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

Members should be aware of potential threats to their impartiality, including

- inappropriate pressure from employers, managers, depositors, users or other stakeholders;
- their own personal interests, e.g. research interests;
- their personal feelings about the individuals or groups represented in the archive;
- personal prejudice and implicit bias;
- the relative ease of obtaining documents from particular sources.

Members should have regard to the extent to which their collection is representative of the communities documented by the records.

ACCURACY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Members should ensure that users of the records in their remit are able to contextualize the information contained in the records adequately for its interpretation, for example via inclusion of additional descriptive information.

Members should have regard to the possible role the documents in their remit have in holding individuals or groups to account, where those individuals or groups have a public role. **Members should not dispose (or alter? My comment) of documents because those documents are, or could be, embarrassing to individuals or institutions.**

THE RIGHTS OF STAKEHOLDERS

Members must respect the privacy of individuals and corporate bodies who created or are the subjects of records, especially those who had no voice in the use or disposition of the documents.

Members should take account of people's reasonable concerns about how they are represented.

Members should be aware of the power of records to impact on individuals and groups and take reasonable steps to identify any documents in their holdings which might be distressing to employees and or users of the service, and should put in place measures to mitigate any harm arising from contact with such documents, for example:

- clearly labelling potentially distressing items;
- actively warning those who are likely to come into contact with such items;
- putting in place measures to safeguard the wellbeing of those who are likely to be working with such items over a long period of time.

Code of Ethics, Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (Aug 2006)

<https://www.aranz.org.nz/about-us/code-of-ethics/>

Members are required to maintain the integrity of the records in their care balancing the rights and interests of employers, owners, subjects and users, both in the present and in the future.

Code of Values and Ethics, Library and Archives Canada

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/about-us/Pages/code-conduct-value-ethics.aspx>

All I could find is ethics and values pertains to employee code of conduct. Nothing that relates to the issue facing NARA. **It is interesting to note that LOC's code of ethics/conduct are much more austere than NARA's; and there are a lot of articles criticizing the code for "muzzling" the role of LAC Archivists and Librarians in sharing information, warts and all.**

Code of Ethics, American Alliance of Museums

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>

It is the obligation of all members to strive for truth in presentation. The design of museum exhibitions involves communication of ideas and concepts to the public and accuracy in presentation should be the goal of all museum professionals.