Acquisition Guidelines
Longyear Museum of Anthropology and Picker Art Gallery (Colgate University Museums)

1. Objects proposed for acquisition to the collection must be consistent with and relevant to the stated purposes of the Colgate University Museums (University Museums) and further the educational goals of Colgate University. The University Museums will make every effort to ensure that their collections not duplicate one another or other campus collections. The acquisition of an object(s) needs to be in line with the Picker Art Gallery and Longyear Museum of Anthropology missions and collections management policies (forthcoming). Colgate University Museums follows guidelines established by AAM (The American Alliance of Museums), AAMD (Association of Art Museum Directors), Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), and ICOM (International Council of Museums) when acquiring objects.

2. All objects considered for the collection should be in, or capable of being returned to, an acceptable state of preservation, unless the deteriorated physical condition is integral to the educational value or significance of the object.

3. The University Museums must be able to house and care for all proposed acquisitions according to generally accepted museum practice. Primary consideration will be given to the University Museums’ ability to provide proper care and storage for any object. No item(s) will be considered for acquisition if anticipated future care and preservation needs exceed the University Museums’ resources.

4. Objects that represent an unacceptable hazard to personnel or to other collections will not be considered.

5. University Museums’ acquisitions must comply with all local, state, and federal United States laws, including treaties and international conventions of which the United States is a party, including but not limited to: the National Stolen Property Act, the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, sanctions enforced by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Certain materials cannot be accepted as outlined in national and international laws.

For all acquisitions, the University Museums acknowledges and follows guidelines set forth in the following:
• Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums, International Council of Museums (ICOM), 2002
• Standards Regarding Archaeological Material and Ancient Art, American Alliance of Museums (AAM), 2008
• Standards Regarding the Unlawful Appropriation of Objects during the Nazi Era, AAM, 1999, amended 2001
• Art Museums and the Identification of Works Stolen by the Nazis, AAMD, 2007
• AIA Code of Ethics, AIA, 2017
If one of the University Museums discovers that it has acquired item(s) in violation of the above statement, the Museum shall seek to return the item(s) to the legal owner or shall seek to determine the proper means of disposition through recognized authorities.

6. For all proposed donations, donors should provide verifiable record of authenticity and associated documentation (provenance records, photographs, field notes, diaries, etc.) related to their original collection, though exceptions may be made for objects meeting specific teaching or research needs, for all proposed donations. Only works for which clear title can be established will be considered for acquisition. The Museums will not knowingly acquire objects that have been illegally exported or unethically collected and removed from their country or society of origin. The provenance of acquired items shall be a matter of public record.

7. The University Museums will not generally acquire an object in the absence of provenance research substantiating that the work was outside its country of modern discovery before November 17, 1970 (UNESCO Convention) or legally exported from its country of modern discovery after November 17, 1970; if, after extensive research, an object’s documented ownership history back to November 17, 1970 remains incomplete, the University Museums may acquire the work based on substantial evidence that the work was outside its probable country of modern discovery before November 17, 1970 or legally exported from its probable country of modern discovery after November 17, 1970.

8. The University Museums follow the AAM guidelines concerning the unlawful appropriation of objects during the Nazi era (Standards Regarding the Unlawful Appropriation of Objects during the Nazi Era, AAM, 1999, amended 2001). The museums will take all reasonable steps to resolve the Nazi-era provenance status of objects before acquiring works for their collections and may request that donors, sellers, or estate executors provide as much provenance information as they have available, with particular regard to the Nazi era. Where the Nazi-era provenance is incomplete or uncertain for a proposed acquisition, the museum will consider what additional research would be prudent or necessary to resolve the Nazi-era provenance status of the object before taking custody of or acquiring it. In the absence of evidence of unlawful appropriation without subsequent restitution, the museums may proceed with the acquisition. If credible evidence of unlawful appropriation without subsequent restitution is discovered, the museums will notify the donor, seller or estate executor of the nature of the evidence and will not proceed with acquisition of the object until taking further action to resolve these issues. Under certain circumstances, acquisition of objects with uncertain provenance may reveal further information about the object and may facilitate the possible resolution of its status. In such circumstances, the museums may choose to proceed with the acquisition after determining that it would be lawful, appropriate and prudent and provided that currently available object and provenance information is made public as soon as practicable after the acquisition.

9. All works considered for acquisition/donation are reviewed by the director, curators, and collections manager. This process includes evaluating the importance of the proposed acquisition in terms of teaching, research and curricular needs, as well as a review of the following, as relevant: authenticity, attribution, appropriateness to the collections, and legal issues such as, but not limited to, questions of ownership, provenance, and copyright. Given the extensive research involved, an examination period up to six months prior to making a final decision may be required.
10. Generally, the University Museums only accept acquisitions that are outright and unconditional. The University Museums cannot guarantee that objects donated will be placed on exhibition, that they will be exhibited or stored intact as a single collection, or that they will be perpetually retained.

11. All donations to the University Museums’ collections are irrevocable upon the formal and physical transfer to the University Museums.

12. All legal instruments of conveyance and warranty of title, signed by the donor/seller/agent setting forth an adequate description of the items involved and the precise conditions of the transfer shall accompany all acquisitions.

13. All acquisitions by gift or bequest to the University Museums will remain in the collections of the Museums unless they meet the museum’s established criteria for deaccessioning.

14. The University Museums will seek representations and warranties when buying objects that the seller has good title and that the object is free from any liens, claims and encumbrances. The Museums will seek indemnification for a full refund for the object in the event of any material breach of warranty.

15. The University Museums comply with all applicable U.S. and foreign laws regarding copyright. The museums will seek to obtain all rights of reproduction and, where applicable, nonexclusive copyright licenses from the copyright holder at the time of acquisition.

16. The University Museums may enter into a deferred (to be given in the future) or partial (to be given over a period of time) gift agreement with a donor. Objects will be subject to the same criteria as gifts and purchases. The specific details of each gift of this type shall be negotiated, and bound with a Commitment of a Deferred Gift agreement.

17. The University Museums are not obligated to accept bequests and may choose to accept all, part, or none of the objects in a bequest. Bequests shall be subject to the same considerations as gifts from living donors or purchases.

18. Donors are responsible for appraisals of value that may be required for tax purposes. Federal law prevents the University Museums from providing identification services or appraisal values for donated items.