



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

December 3, 2021

Mr. Lee D. Lambert
Chancellor
Pima Community College
4905 E. Broadway Blvd.
Tucson, AZ 85709-1010
chancellor@pima.edu

Dear Chancellor Lambert:

It is the understanding of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) that the leadership of Pima Community College (PCC) is considering the elimination of the College's archaeology program. The SAA strongly urges you and the Governing Board to maintain this program, as it plays a key role in educating many of the archaeologists who protect our shared knowledge of the past. These archaeologists support small businesses throughout Arizona (more details below) and work every day to ensure that residents of Pima County and southern Arizona are able to learn about their storied and unique history.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With nearly 7,000 members, SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at Tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector.

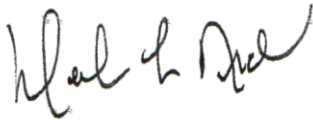
Archaeology is the study of the human past through the material remains left behind by those who came before us. The goal is to understand human cultures through their histories and lifeways. By doing so, we are better prepared for our present and future. Arizona is home to 22 federally-recognized tribes. Over the past centuries, groups like the O'odham and Yaqui have made their home in this county, and more recently Mexicans and Anglos have all shared these lands. Archaeologists trained at the Pima Community College program have contributed to our ability to share with future generations what we have learned about these groups. Within consulting firms in Tucson, approximately 20 percent of the permanent staff received their training in part in PCC's archaeological program and employees in these firms have supported the program over the years through teaching, guest lecturing, recruiting finishing students, and more recently, being part of the program's industry advisory committee.

Most of the archaeological work done in America today is completed as a result of highly-effective cultural resource protection statutes. These laws require review and then mitigation of heritage sites and finds. PCC's field and laboratory archaeology program has a long history of meeting a key need in training individuals whose focus is on local archaeology. These graduates help support the numerous cultural resource management firms in Pima County and beyond who work every day to facilitate project delivery while also making sure we are saving irreplaceable cultural heritage. These firms need highly-trained archaeologists such as those whose education begins at PCC to carry out mitigation and preservation.

There are also many economic benefits to archaeology, for both practitioner and locality alike, that often go unnoticed. For example the trade association (American Cultural Resource Association) lists 46 firms that are active in Arizona. This represents a basement number, as numerous groups do not join the voluntary society. These firms employ archaeologists, but also support local landlords, IT and payroll specialists. In addition to instructing students in the science of archaeology, the PCC's program prepares them for real and beneficial careers in private sector cultural resources management, a dynamic and growing industry whose work not only ensures that our shared cultural past is preserved for future generations, but also provides substantial economic benefits for their communities. The PCC's program plays an important role in training archaeologists who work in the small-business cultural resource management sector of southern Arizona's economy and in Tribal, state, and federal agencies.

The SAA requests in the strongest possible terms that you and the Board of Governors maintain the PCC archaeology program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah L. Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah L. Nichols, Ph.D., RPA
President