This paper considers how new approaches to teaching and learning in heritage studies can contribute to the goal of heritage protection and preservation.

A recently completed initiative, originally titled “archaeologists and the pedagogy of heritage,” has been published in two edited volumes in the University Press of Florida’s heritage studies series (Bender and Messenger 2019; Messenger and Bender 2019a). A number of the authors and the projects they describe are relevant to this session’s discussion of heritage protection and heritage values. For example, new opportunities for knowledge sharing about heritage protection, laws, and enforcement emerge through interdisciplinary teaching and learning; critical thinking skills lead to more complicated and inclusive understandings of community heritage; and collaboration among archaeologists and descendent communities leads to more authentic engagement related to the study and preservation of heritage. Students and early career professionals are putting these learnings into practice. In turn, their understanding of heritage protection issues influences their interactions with community and descendant stakeholders, as well as with law enforcement and land management professionals.

If conceptions of heritage are based on a community’s shared values, then it should follow that protection of heritage assets would also be built on those shared values. However, we live in an imperfect world of diverse, often competing, stakeholders who assign different values to heritage. Nevertheless, archaeologists and other heritage professionals are developing new interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning about heritage in respectful, inclusive, and socially engaged ways that can contribute to greater understanding of the importance of heritage protection, both for themselves and for their constituents.

The forum entitled “New Perspectives on Heritage Protection” presented at the 2018 Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meeting identified several potential ways to better
achieve the important goal of heritage protection. I list them here, followed by my initial comments indicating the perspectives I am presenting this paper.

1. “First, archaeologists need to communicate more effectively with the public, land managers, law enforcement officers and prosecutors about the importance and relevance of heritage protection.” This effective communication across a range of settings and with multiple constituents and stakeholders requires a complex set of skills and experiences. I will argue that a number of programs that are teaching young professionals in archaeology and heritage fields with an interdisciplinary approach are helping to develop early career professionals who are well-positioned to communicate effectively. This is not to say that such training has been unavailable in the past, and there are many fine archaeologists who train their students in this way. However the programs that I will profile are seeking to intentionally infuse their curricula with the values that are needed for effective communication and collaboration. And I argue that grounding heritage protection in the value of heritage itself as determined collaboratively with communities, not just as an “archaeological resource” perceived by some to be the territory of professional archaeologists alone, is a required component of our work together.

2. “Second, all archaeologists should cooperate fully with law enforcement officers and prosecutors in protecting these resources, even when this is not their primary professional interest.” Professional training that helps archaeologists see their work in a broader heritage context should help them understand the importance of heritage stewardship, which includes protecting archaeological resources, objects and places of heritage. I will argue that it is possible to move from the ideal world in which this cooperation takes place through the good will of archaeologists and their colleagues to a world in which basic archaeological training includes the values that lead to this cooperation and is normative behavior.

3. “Third, innovative legal strategies to protect heritage resources, beyond the use of standard approaches such as prosecution under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, should be considered.” If heritage resources are studied and managed in collaboration with local and descendent communities, it stands to reason that new and creative solutions might be found to protect those resources. For example, there might be legal protections available through local or state laws, or through tribal regulations.

4. “Finally, the SAA and other professional organizations with an ethical commitment to the protection of heritage resources and their members should be actively engaged in the protection of these resources.” As the ethical commitment to the protection of heritage resources becomes increasingly the normative value for archaeologists as they are trained and begin their practice, it will be the normative value for SAA and other professional organizations to be vigilantly engaged in resource protection strategies in collaboration
with multiple partners including Indigenous and descendant communities, environmental organizations, outdoor retailers, local heritage organizations, and governmental agencies at all levels. This is not to deny the work that SAA is already doing in many ways on these issues including providing ways for members to weigh in on resource protection issues.

In taking the approach that archaeology is a component of heritage, it is useful to consider some of the ways that heritage is defined. The University of Massachusetts–Amherst’s Center for Heritage & Society offers this definition: “Heritage is the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture” (2011). Barbara Little and Paul Shackel frame cultural heritage as “whatever matters to people today that proves some connection between past and present” (2014: 39). Kate Clark says that heritage practice is both a technical and a social discipline (K. Clark 2019: 151).

In the decades since adoption of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, there has been a growing body of literature about heritage studies, with archaeology as one of several component fields. Some scholars discuss the phenomenon of heritage itself, contributing to definitions of heritage and how it is used (for example, Carman 2000, 2002; Fairclough et al. 2008; Messenger and Smith 2010). Others discuss the various methods used to investigate heritage and the ethics and values issues related to heritage (for example, Clark 2006; Little and Shackel 2014; Smith 2006; Smith et al. 2010; Sørensen and Carman 2009). Harrison addresses heritage as an interdisciplinary social phenomenon that needs to take into account relationships with other social, political, and environmental issues. “Thinking of heritage not as a set of tangible ‘things’, nor as intangible expressions and practices, but instead as relational and emergent in the dialogue between people, objects, places and practices also has implications for how we think about and manage heritage in the future,” Harrison argues (2013: 226).

A number of authors investigate the positions of stakeholders, the role of human rights and civic engagement, and the importance of values considerations in critical approaches to heritage studies (for example, Chilton and Mason 2010; Hamilakis 2004; Little and Shackel 2014; Logan 2012; Meskell 1998; Pyburn and Smith 2015; Rubertone 2008; Schofield 2014; Yu et al. 2018). Case studies in Schofield (2014) explore the importance of developing practices that involve sharing expertise, listening to community voices, and understanding the depth of feelings that often accompany issues related to heritage. Little and Shackel argue that heritage, civic engagement, and social justice are intertwined and that archaeologists can contribute to new narratives toward those ends (2014: 46–52).

Logan draws connections between cultural heritage and human rights–based cultural practice. “As heritage teachers, we need to reconsider what new knowledge and skills are needed by practitioners in their education if they are to adopt a human rights approach to
their work” (Logan 2012: 242). Little argues for archaeologists as scholars “to take seriously both citizenship and the privilege of their positions in order to contribute in a positive way to our society” (Little 2010: 155).

A number of archaeologists write and teach about practices that encourage development of shared heritage values, which also contributes to stewardship of objects of heritage. Pei-Lin Yu and colleagues have developed the “Toronto Declaration on the Relevance and Application of Heritage in Contemporary Society,” and promote it, while presenting a diverse set of approaches to heritage protection, community involvement, and strategic utilization of expertise (Yu et al. 2018).

With that altogether too brief (and probably unsatisfying) introduction to the relationship of archaeology to heritage, I will turn to some of the examples and case studies from the aforementioned project.

Paul Shackel states that, “While Cultural Resource Management (CRM) and the federal archaeology program have played a major role in creating a direction for American archaeology over the past several decades, there has been a slow acceptance to developing long-term community heritage projects,” and the potential of CRM for contributing to public benefit has not been reached (2019:9). He and other authors (e.g. Hamilakis 2004) argue that a critical approach in archaeology and heritage education programs is needed, yet increasingly there tends to be a push in the CRM community for skills-based education. He outlines the importance of developing civically responsible engagement programs as part of contemporary CRM training. This includes an emphasis on critical pedagogy, inclusion, and diversity that promotes social justice present and future (Shackel 2019). He cites projects such as the African Burial Ground Project, the Cypress Free Replacement Project, and the Lakeland Community Heritage Project that make clear and explicit connections between a neighborhoods’ past and its present. In discussing the Center for Heritage Resource Studies at the University of Maryland, he argues that, “Incorporating community values into the CRM process is transforming the way we practice archaeology and negotiate the maintenance and/or transformation of tangible and intangible heritage in communities” (2019:11). Early career professionals who have participated in these or similar projects, or who have studied them, are well positioned to understand the value of heritage and also value heritage protection policies.

Like Shackel, both Bonnie Clark (2019) and Eleanor King (2019) describe complex field programs with diverse sets of stakeholders having potentially conflicting interests and goals. In each case, acknowledging and valuing these differences, and negotiating how they fit into the heritage stories being created as a result of these projects, are critical to reaching mutually acceptable outcomes. Clark describes the University of Denver archaeological field school held biennially at Amache, a site where over 10,000 Americans
of Japanese ancestry unwillingly spent much of World War II. She highlights the importance of pre-field groundwork in bringing multiple communities to the table and understanding that they have ownership of their stories and need to give permission to work at the site and on their histories. Also important is an intergenerational and diverse crew, which can lead group conversations and public programs, providing opportunities for talking about what happened there or could have happened there. She emphasizes that social network theory is not just about analysis of past communities, but also describes the web of relationships that is built over time in doing heritage work. “People with a different outlook, especially those not inculcated by years of archaeological training, provide tools for new ways of thinking about artifacts, sites, even the nature of the past itself. Thus collaborators can be thought of as bringing to the table different ‘cognitive and epistemic resources,’ that is tools for knowing the world” (Clark 2019:172, referencing Wylie 2015: 206).

King’s project involving Native American and African-American students in place-based study of their own cultural heritage offers several insights. First, “having community members participate in the investigation of their own heritage ensures a more balanced representation of the past,” she states (King 2019: 62). It can rally the community and affirm its collective identity. By incorporating a diverse range of viewpoints into our narratives, we reach a more complex and nuanced historical understanding, King argues. This leads to community members having a greater stake in preservation issues. King also addresses the lack of diversity in heritage-related positions in federal agencies, as well as in professional archaeological organizations. She points to colleges and universities as being largely responsible for improving those statistics in the future.

Several authors in the heritage studies volume, including Shackel (2019), Hayes et al. (2019), and MacDonald (2019), discuss theoretical and structural shifts taking place as programs transition from public archaeology or disciplinary studies to heritage studies. MacDonald discusses how a graduate program in public issues anthropology prepares future practitioners to “articulate with the expanding international field of transdisciplinary studies,” focusing on complex contemporary issues (2019: 157). Both the Canadian program that MacDonald describes at the University of Waterloo and the U.S. program detailed by Hayes and colleagues at the University of Minnesota rely on broad collaboration across academic disciplines and beyond the academy to prepare heritage professionals for work in settings that represent the diversity of the communities in which they will work.

The Heritage Studies and Public History graduate program at the University of Minnesota seeks to attract a diverse cohort of students and prepare them more broadly than the traditional approach to methods, that is the methods of how to excavate a site or complete
documentation of a historic structure or how to use archives. Rather, “method should consist of a number of components, including: how to communicate with various stakeholders about the importance of the past; how to navigate between competing or conflicting claims; how to accommodate multiple epistemologies; how to understand and apply approaches to sustainability, conservation, and preservation; and how to measure the real effects of heritage preservation projects on communities” (Hayes et al. 2019: 144).

In these programs, the archaeologists and their colleagues address the theme of perspective in the context of critical archaeology and heritage. Some call it decentering the authority of archaeologists; others discuss the role of multiple stakeholders, who have varied interests and motivations, valid perspectives and points of view, and rich and multifaceted sources of knowledge. Watkins (2019), Sievert et al. (2019), and MacDonald (2019) all discuss Indigenous archaeology and the complex discourse, consultation, and collaboration that must take place around heritage.

Ethical practices and ethics education are key components of heritage education, and are integrated into the training of archaeologists in a number of ways, including role-playing and case studies (McGill 2019; Sievert et al. 2019). April Sievert and colleagues discuss the teaching and learning of ethical practices as a critical objective for pedagogy in higher education, especially as they relate to Indigenous and human rights regarding repatriation. In an initiative begun in 2014 at Indiana University called the “Learning NAGPRA” project, they set out to study how repatriation is taught and learned, and to work toward interventions to improve the resources available. Toward this end, they recognized the need “to identify and understand the challenges to preparing professionals for work related to NAGPRA and repatriation by comparing approaches to ethics at research universities with those at tribal-serving institutions” (Sievert et al. 2019: 94). By convening a diverse group of scholars and practitioners, they sought to look beyond traditional Euro-American pedagogy, toward methods that speak to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Larry Zimmerman presents an aspirational framework for archaeologists that points toward the development of a critical pedagogy of heritage, in which the validity of specific belief claims (including those of archaeologists) are considered to be parts of belief systems and action related to the power structures in society and who benefits from them. He urges archaeologists to recognize the political nature of archaeology and use it to challenge colonial and class struggle legacies, and “work with communities to develop meaningful representations of their pasts” (Zimmerman 2019: 223). He suggests that a fruitful approach to teaching about archaeology would be a pedagogy that shows how archaeology can help communities identify elements of their heritage about which they have questions that might be addressed by material culture study. Among other possible benefits would be
the ability to challenge deeply rooted, and not always accurate, narratives about their heritage. The key, says Zimmerman, is to recognize that moving in a continuum—from cultural resource management to public archaeology to critical archaeology to critical heritage—is hard work that requires intentional collaboration with partners and stakeholders in communities.

In conclusion, this paper has offered several perspectives on the relationship between archaeology and heritage. It has briefly discussed examples of interdisciplinary archaeology and heritage studies programs, as well as initiatives that focus on ethical issues. These examples are pertinent to the key points raised by this forum: the need for greater communication, cooperation, and innovation related to heritage protection, as well as a stronger commitment by professional organizations. The examples suggest ways that higher education strategies for archaeologists and heritage professionals will help us address these issues more directly as a diverse cohort of early career scholars and practitioners, drawn for many communities, begin their work in the field of heritage studies and preservation.

These are not short-term fixes, nor are they quick and easy. However, taken as a whole they suggest that archaeologists and colleagues in the field will find new ways to collaborate and new paths to long-term relationship building that will support the goal of protecting cultural heritage, no matter whose it is. Aspirational? Of course! Doable? Let us hope so! We will observe the career paths of professionals newly trained in these programs. They will need our support and some guidance, but most important, the deserve our trust and the space to do the hard community-based work that lies ahead. “Critical heritage not only allows people to work on projects they helped design, but also helps them learn to craft meaningful public policies that move beyond preservation or repatriation to a place where archaeology matters in people’s lives” (Messenger and Bender 2019b: 6).

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