



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

December 17, 2021

Mr. Lee D. Lambert  
Chancellor  
Pima Community College  
4905 E. Broadway Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85709-1010  
[chancellor@pima.edu](mailto:chancellor@pima.edu)

Dear Chancellor Lambert:

Thank you for your response to our letter of December 3 regarding Pima County Community College's (PCCC) Field Archaeology Certificate program (the program).

While we are sensitive to the economic realities that are confronting all institutions of higher learning, and recognize that all college programs must operate in a cost-effective manner, we would like to follow up with three points:

First, we respectfully disagree with your assertion that there are few if any job openings for archaeological technicians, particularly in or near Pima County. A cursory search of two popular job sites, [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) and [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com), found 12 to 14 open jobs in Arizona, with four near Pima County alone. A similar search discovered nearly 175 openings throughout the United States. Even more such jobs were listed on archaeology-specific job sites. [Shovelbums.com](https://www.shovelbums.com), for example, listed dozens of open positions in Arizona going back to the previous summer. With the passage of the recent federal infrastructure legislation, and the increase in highway, broadband, airport, railway, and waterway construction that will occur as a result, we anticipate that the demand for trained archaeologists will only increase.

Second, given the above reality, it is imperative that we have a sufficient number of archaeologists to carry out the research and preservation of our historic resources. Without enough trained experts, the conservation and interpretation of our irreplaceable archaeological record, and our knowledge of the peoples who lived here in the past, will be greatly diminished. As of today, there are fewer than 1,500 archaeologists in the entire federal government. In fact, there are only 171 more federal archaeologists now than there were in 2004, despite a huge increase in the scope of their responsibilities. In addition, a recent study indicates that we are already seeing a deficit of more than 450 archaeologists in private-sector cultural resources management. If these trends continue, we will not have the capacity to perform historic and cultural resources work in this nation in an effective manner.

Finally, PCCC's estimates of the number of students enrolled in and graduating from the program might be inaccurate. It is our understanding that the tracking methods used by the various departments make it difficult to estimate the total number of students enrolled in the program. For example, because students can apparently receive only one degree or certificate at a time, there may be pupils listed as pursuing different degrees or certificates who are also working to receive a Field Archaeology Certificate, but are not being counted as enrolled in that program.

PCCC and its archaeological certificate program play a key role in training individuals who support archaeological research, and who go on to become archaeologists in their own right. While we recognize that the discipline of archaeology must do more to attract additional people to the science, there must also be educational institutions at which they can pursue their training. We request that PCCC maintain its Field Archaeology Certificate program.

Sincerely,

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

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