



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

October 13, 2011

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

As president of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), I write in response to certain statements you made pertaining to education in the science of anthropology during a recent interview with the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. Contrary to the beliefs apparently held by some, anthropology is a key discipline in the modern university curriculum, and provides exceptional benefits to students in both real world applications and more abstract ways.

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 archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world.

Anthropology is the study of the entire human experience—the evolution of our biology and cultures, the development of relationships between cultures, and the effect of human civilizations on the natural environment. Archaeology is a key part of anthropology, helping us understanding the history of peoples over time and space. Together, they represent one of the few avenues of higher education that provides students with cross-disciplinary training and experience in areas such as biology and history, geology and languages. It enables students to discover how and why there is such enormous diversity in humankind. As instantaneous communications and global economics draw the world ever-closer together, anthropological training is increasingly important.

As with much university research and training, the investigations undertaken in anthropology and archaeology have profound real-world benefits, and make a substantial economic impact. For example, anthropologists and archaeologists assist authorities in investigating physical evidence of crimes, such as mass graves in Bosnia and Iraq. You should also be aware that most archaeologists in the U.S. today work for private-sector cultural resource management (CRM) firms. CRM is a billion dollar a year industry employing many thousands of people trained in anthropology. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook for 2011, employment for anthropologists and archaeologists "is expected to grow by 28 percent, driven by growth in the management, scientific, and technical consulting services industry. Anthropologists who work as consultants will be needed to apply their analytical skills and knowledge to problems ranging from economic development to forensics." Anthropologists and archaeologists, in addition to helping preserve and protect our shared cultural heritage, are in the forefront of the growing heritage tourism business, one of the few bright spots in these troubled economic times, and an important contributor to Florida's tourism sector.

SAA understands the fiscal realities that the states, and the nation, are facing. We agree on the importance of ensuring that all tax dollars, including those supporting higher education, are spent efficiently and effectively. It is vital, however, that our public officials base their decisions on as much factual information as possible.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter, and stand ready to assist you in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William F. Limp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "W".

William F. Limp, Ph.D.
President