

ACADEMIC ARCHAEOLOGY IS PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

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We feel confident speaking about the state of academic archaeology today because we teach public archaeology. The University of South Florida (USF) was the first in the nation, in the 1970s, to offer a graduate degree, the M.A. in Public Archaeology, a term originally understood to mean cultural resources management and contract archaeology as part of applied anthropology but also including public education, historic preservation, and museology. We have trained many students who ended up in academia, but many more CRM professionals who work for (and have founded) private firms and public agencies in Florida and throughout the U.S. Our graduates dominate professional archaeology in the state, making up a large proportion of the Florida Archaeological Council, including the present and several past presidents. We hope we are filling important needs and passing on the message that there is no big difference between “research” archaeology and “contract” or “CRM archaeology”; there may be different emphases and different kinds of reports or budget and time limitations, but all archaeology must be done to professional standards, and *all archaeology today is public archaeology*. A similar view was expressed last June at the World Archaeological Congress (<http://wwhw.american.edu/wac5/>) when Brian Fagan said that *all archaeology is cultural resources management*.

Public Archaeology at USF

Our graduate program at USF has grown and evolved over the years (Weisman and White 2000; White 2000a, 2000b; White and Williams 1994). We have a specific course in Public Archaeology/Cultural Resources Management (Hester Davis mentioned back in the late 1980s that she had read through the American Anthropological Association’s hefty guide to anthropology departments and found our course to be the only one of this kind at that time). We require courses in methods, theory, and several electives, from area courses to historic and urban archaeology to museum methods. Other required courses are statistics, an elective outside the department (usually in geography or geology), biological anthropology, and a two-semester proseminar that links the four-field anthropological approach to understanding current hot issues and public policy.

Somewhere in all these courses, students study federal and state preservation laws; do state site forms and National Register nomination forms; read case studies of World Heritage sites (Weisman 2002); make maps; design surveys and excavations; do historic background research; give public presentations (especially to schoolkids); hold an archaeology day program for residents of a research area; design interpretive displays; write both research and contract proposals; read, write, and critique contract reports, journal articles, and other publications; learn curation procedures and collections management; and discuss professional issues from taxes to job applications. They must demonstrate an understanding of current archaeological theory and controversial topics, as well as the many ways that anthropology is applied in the practical world, from heritage tourism to website design. We often use methods

manuals stressing the role of CRM (e.g., the *AltaMira Archaeologist's Toolkit* series; MacManamon and Hatton 1999). Ethics and awareness of the social contexts of archaeology are paramount in nearly all courses. Many students work on both university projects and fieldwork with local companies while they are taking mostly night courses. After finishing coursework, students must have an internship, often with an outside agency, for which a final product of some sort is completed, often a CRM report. This is separate from the M.A. thesis, which is original research usually (but not always) related to the internship. Students have had internships with federal and state agencies, archaeology companies, museums, and faculty projects. We do a few small local contracts for developers or counties, or larger ones for state agencies. We try to give students the experience of running a whole project, from initial fieldwork design to producing the finished report on time. Before graduating, the student must give a presentation on the internship/thesis project at our annual graduate colloquium.

We have recently begun our Ph.D. program in archaeology, in which 30 percent of our 43 grad students this year are enrolled; our Ray Williams scholarship for a minority student honors a founder of the program.

We try to emphasize professional development, so it is gratifying to see that our program and others are getting applicants who have worked in the industry and want to improve their knowledge. And there are lately more professional training programs, such as the one at the University of Nevada–Reno for those who cannot take traditional graduate classes such as ours. Firms and government agencies are beginning to give their valued employees time off to take classes to update skills, even in some cases paying for such classes or encouraging them with other benefits such as raises.

Training Public Archaeologists in an Academic Setting

Training in archaeology must be current. Whether we have more or less government or more or less private sector, the CRM professional today needs to be competent in both. The country is increasingly dealing with privatization. We are fighting a war overseas, and the federal, state, and local governments are trying to manage our country's and our planet's historical and archaeological sites and monuments, trying to preserve some of our human heritage on the landscape. Private companies will be, especially if the current political climate continues, ever more important in guarding, investigating, and safeguarding the evidence. We must train our students for these situations, to make a difference in the world by learning about and conserving some part of the human heritage.

Academics should be turning out archaeologists with the most up-to-date field and laboratory skills, but it often works the other way around. We provide the students with the knowledge of how things should work, and they graduate and actually get to do them in firms with better equipment budgets than ours. The good news is that, with lousy university budgets, our students know how to get free bags and boxes and vials for the laboratory, economize in the field with industrial-sized jars of peanut butter, and keep repairing the same old equipment year after year. We do not yet have a total station but the same 30-year-old standard transit, so they learn basic principles of geometry and mapping. Before we acquired GIS capability, we were able to utilize Geography Department courses for our students. We are good at training them to maximize output while minimizing spending. We do now have extensive labs and capabilities for microscopy of lithic, ceramic, and metallic artifacts, provenience studies, bone chemistry, and other special scientific analyses. We also emphasize meeting deadlines and have what is probably the Florida record for a survey completed in under 24 hours from the time of the client's first phone call to the delivered report (it was a 25-acre borrow pit three counties distant).



Figure 1: Urban archaeology with public interaction during Brent Weisman's 2002 USF field school in Tampa's old historic neighborhoods.

Further training in academia that we feel is important includes stressing good writing and avoidance of academic (as well as CRM) jargon. We also try to point out exactly how all archaeology can become public—how the most private client or company can end up with media attention and various public interest groups lobbying for various reasons. Finally we try to promote practical applications of archaeological work, not only in achieving compliance with government regulations but also in addressing real social problems such as environmental deterioration or even garbage research, which some of our students have done in Florida (Layman et al. 1991).

We train students about the role of archaeology in society—who it is affecting and by whom. Informants and collectors are interviewed for every project, and the many interested communities are identified. Politics, sexism, racism, and opposing views in interpreting the archaeological record are discussed. We show the range of attitudes of clients from very negative toward archaeology and regulatory activity in general to enthusiastic about the prehistoric past and interested in using it for advertising or other public relations purposes. Public outreach and archaeology education programs are often part of our fieldwork, as is the local-to-global perspective (e.g., Fash et al. 2003). International developmental agencies are increasingly held responsible for protecting cultural heritage, so there is a growing demand worldwide to train and aid indigenous peoples to help preserve their past.

A New Vision for Academia

Any good academic program should try to do these things, but it is not easy or readily accepted by colleagues elsewhere. It will be a struggle to redesign the ivory tower (Fagan 2002), but things are looking up (Wells 2001). Many departments are becoming aware of the professional workplace. The SAA is recognizing the problems we will have if training does not change by sponsoring the MATRIX project (Making Archaeological Teaching Relevant in the XXIst Century; <http://www.indiana.edu/~arch/saa/matrix/>), which is rewriting undergraduate archaeology courses to include aspects of public archaeology, from CRM to social relevance. Certainly there are pockets of resistance in academia from both old-timers and new professors who see CRM and contract archaeology as outside pure research, something they can ignore or that won't get them tenure. But there is of course no such thing as pure research. All archaeology, whether counted in work hours or dollars, is done with some kind of public money and/or has many other public aspects. The new SAA president comes from a CRM background. It is clear that most of the money for archaeology is in CRM, as well as most of the jobs. So, resistance is futile.

The anthropological view, from the bottom up, from the inside out, means we in academia also must learn from the private- and public-sector archaeological workplace and ask what is lacking in fresh archaeology graduates who are just hired. The dialog should also include what we think is important to bring to the workplace (Wells 1999); it is easier to see why students should learn how to use a GPS or do a GIS project than it is to see why they should know every new species of australopithecine. Should they know all those species? Perhaps reciting all the names is not so important. But does an understanding of con-



Figure 2: The same excavation unit with the trash feature cleaned up a nice bottle dump probably just behind or underneath a house.

cepts of speciation, human genetic diversity and connectedness, biological race, ethnicity, and culture (not to mention the politics of all this) help them? It certainly would have in the case of the Kennewick skeleton.

A crucial issue in training the next generation is that academics need to recognize that they are *not* just training replacements for themselves. Ian Hodder and others (e.g., Berggren and Hodder 2003) have pointed out how, in most archaeology, it is the least-trained, least-experienced, lowest-paid members of the group who are the ones recovering the primary data that everything is based upon. This has enormous political and ethical implications. There is also a responsibility to prepare professionals for the kinds of jobs that are really out there instead of for the few—and increasingly fewer—academic positions. The M.A. in archaeology is now recognized as the professional degree in the U.S. (though the Ph.D. of course confers other advantages). While this may be something that makes some university Ph.D.s a bit insecure, it should instead motivate them to produce better-prepared professionals, especially since these graduates may go on to earn far more in the private sector than their professors do at the university and be the ones to shape the profession of the future! 📷



Figure 3: USF field students directed by Ray Williams excavating endangered site in the early 1970s in Tampa's old Ybor City district.

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