



Dear CSUB Community,

The California State University and all of its campuses, including our own, are deeply engaged in work to address decades of injustice visited upon Native American tribes, Alaskan Native tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations.

Campuses throughout the CSU are in possession of cultural collections, sacred objects and ancestral remains that rightfully belong to lineal descendants and culturally affiliated tribes. Federal law and state law – as well as our own moral and ethical code – require us to repatriate these sacred artifacts and ancestral remains.

I'd like to share an update on CSUB's efforts as well as important information on a change to CSU policy regarding campus field schools, programs that allow faculty and students to conduct off-campus research. This experiential opportunity is a pillar of a CSU education, which emphasizes the importance of hands-on learning as part of a well-rounded education.

Despite the benefits, field research also has resulted in the inadvertent discovery and collection of ancestral remains and cultural items over decades. It is imperative that members of the CSUB community approach field research with cultural sensitivity for our tribal neighbors and full knowledge and compliance with the updated CSU direction on field schools.

The policy emphasizes the requirement of campuses to engage in meaningful consultation with culturally affiliated or potentially culturally affiliated Indian tribes and California Indian tribes without federal recognition prior to initiating field schools or conducting any ground-disturbing activities that involve tribal ancestral territories, cultural resources, or areas of potential tribal significance.

The full CSU policy governing field schools is available here. CSUB NAGPRA/CalNAGPRA Repatriation Coordinator David Silva and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Deborah Thien are happy to answer questions and work with our faculty, students and staff to navigate the new policy on field schools. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

CSUB has made meaningful strides in building relationships with our tribal neighbors. Over the summer, in consultation with our tribal partners, we commenced the transfer of collections to a secure, monitored campus location to comply with federal curation standards for repository storage.

In December, the university sent consultation letters to all culturally affiliated tribes within the counties of collections under university legal control so that consultation on repatriation can begin in earnest. We look forward to the next step in that process and will keep this community updated.

Our tribal neighbors deserve our thanks and respect for their continued partnership and patience. They have waited far too long for the repatriation of their ancestors and cultural artifacts, and we are grateful for the opportunity to see this process through to its conclusion.

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Vernon B. Harper, Jr., Ph.D.
President

