

ANTHROPOLOGY IN FLORIDA'S STATE UNIVERSITIES?

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Florida Governor Rick Scott has recently been in the news for proposing that some liberal arts programs should not be supported at state universities because of the need to focus on jobs related to programs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). He has used Anthropology as an example of one of these programs that should no longer be offered within the State University System. As a career professional with three degrees in Anthropology, and as executive director of the Florida Public Archaeology Network, I am greatly concerned by this proposal.

Archaeology is in fact one of the major sub-disciplines of Anthropology. Scientifically trained archaeologists are employed in universities, museums, cultural resource management firms, and governmental agencies to manage historic places, educate our children, engage tourists and residents, work with land managers and developers, and carry out new and original interdisciplinary research about our collective heritage. FPAN's eight Regional Centers are staffed with Anthropologists who work to engage and educate Florida's residents, visitors, and school-aged children about our archaeological heritage. We work with local governments to find creative ways to preserve archaeological sites and to develop local archaeological heritage into tourist destinations.

Florida universities have a long history of conducting significant and far-reaching studies into the state's prehistoric and historic past. Archaeology tells us everything that we know of the history of the people of Florida during 10,000+ years of prehistory, and has helped tell and retell the story of Florida after the Spanish came ashore almost 500 years ago. These studies have not only written Florida history, they provide authentic content to a very important and sustainable heritage tourism and historic preservation industry that brings in over \$4 billion per year to Florida's economy (<http://www.flheritage.com/preservation/economic-impact.cfm>).

In addition to training future generations of professional archaeologists, Florida universities train Anthropology students with career tracks in the health sciences, in forensics, and in many other areas that touch our daily lives (see <http://prezi.com/vmvomt3sj3fd/this-is-anthropology>). In addition, many students choose the BA in Anthropology, or coursework in Anthropology, not as a career track but as the basis for careers in fields such as Medicine, Law, Political Science, International Relations, and Business.

Florida universities have a very long and distinguished legacy of excellence in the field of Anthropology. Archaeology faculty in Florida universities have been and continue to be leaders in the archaeological profession nationally and internationally, and students trained in archaeology programs in Florida are consistently considered to be among the best prepared in the nation. The quality of these programs, and the demand for trained archaeologists, has caused increased enrollments in Florida Anthropology programs in recent years. Departments of Anthropology in Florida attract not only residents interested in careers in archaeology but also some of the best students from other states and nations.

Anthropology at Florida universities is a sustained success story because it is relevant to the needs of today's college students. If you would like Governor Rick Scott to know your opinion on the teaching of Anthropology in state supported universities in Florida, you may contact him via email:

<http://www.flgov.com/contact-gov-scott/email-the-governor>

...or you may send a letter to Governor Rick Scott, Office of Governor Rick Scott, The Capitol, 400 S. Monroe St., Tallahassee, FL 32399. **Your opinion matters!**