

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

1550 Harbor Blvd, ST.# 100, West Sacramento, CA 95691

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October 6, 2025

Hon. Mildred Garcia
Chancellor
California State University
Office of the Chancellor
Submitted via Electronic and USPS Mail

Re: Review of California State University Interim Systemwide NAGPRA Policy

Dear Chancellor Garcia,

The Native American Heritage Commission (Commission) appreciates the California State University's (CSU) acceptance of the Commission's June 30th recommendation to issue the Systemwide NAGPRA Policy (Policy) as interim and engage in additional tribal consultation prior to finalizing the Policy. The Policy has benefited from the continued transparent dialogue between the CSU, tribes, and the Commission, and we urge the CSU to integrate the following additional comments into the Policy before it is finalized.

Campus Field Schools, Inadvertent Discoveries, and Cultural Resources Management Activity

The policy currently states that consulting tribes may reject or approve a campus's proposed field school. The language should be modified to state that the Office of Tribal Relations will defer to consulting tribe's recommendations in its decision to approve or reject applications for field schools. This modification insulates tribal stakeholders from negative consequences of their recommendation while still ensuring their input is followed. Additionally, the CSU needs to commit to avoid creating new collections and address the legacy of harm cultural resource management has at the CSU. As such, this section should clearly state that no new collections or teaching materials can be derived from field school activity. Further, the subsections discussing campus field schools and cultural resources management activity should contain a cross reference to the duty of care requirement under NAGPRA. Lastly, as a general note, if a section refers to or relies upon a different section in the Policy, that section should provide a citation or link to the section it relies upon.



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Reporting

Additional language should be added to ensure that the Systemwide Repatriation and Oversight Committee is incorporated into all reporting structures and processes. Providing repatriation progress reports to the Systemwide NAGPRA Committee will inform and empower its strategic policies and goals.

Campus NAGPRA Committees

The Policy requires that Campus NAGPRA Committees must meet no less than three times per academic year. Language should be added to require more frequent meetings. Repatriation compliance is a year-round legal obligation. Staff holidays and vacations should not serve as an obstacle to repatriation progress and meeting schedules should reflect the needs identified by a committee to ensure repatriation occurs. This will ensure repatriation continues in a timely manner through frequent campus committee involvement.

Split Collections

While the Policy states that the CSU will work with other institutions on "split collections", this term is not defined. The CSU should omit this phrase and adhere to the terms and definitions set forth in NAGPRA. However, the Policy needs to provide further guidance on the step-by-step process of reunifying and repatriating collections that are from the same site but housed at different campuses.

The Commission offers these substantive comments to ensure respectful and expedient repatriation of Native American human remains and cultural items held by the CSU. Continued collaboration and tribal consultation are integral in ensuring a robust and successful Systemwide Policy.

Sincerely,



Reginald Pagaling,
Chairman Native American Heritage Commission