

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL

12 October 2011

Dear Governor Scott:

We, the undersigned chairs and representatives of Anthropology departments across the state of Florida, feel the need to address your recent public statements about the value and contribution of anthropology to the state. We share your commitment to building a stronger Florida and recognize the need for sustainable economic growth. We differ though from your view in seeing anthropology as part of the solution, not part of the problem. We bring to your attention these specific points in the hope of demonstrating that the profession of anthropology has much to offer in working together toward a vision of a new Florida.

The employment prospects for anthropologists are good. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (2010-11), the “[o]verall employment of anthropologists and archaeologists, geographers, and historians is expected to grow by 22 percent from 2008 to 2018, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. Anthropologists and archaeologists, the largest specialty, 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.”

Anthropology is a STEM field. Anthropologists collaborate on integrative research with many colleagues across the STEM fields. Engineers, chemists, biologists, medical researchers, and others recognize the value-added provided by anthropologists in building in the human dimension to complex design issues in engineering and technology. The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds anthropological research and supports innovative projects between anthropology and other STEM disciplines.

Degree level effects employment outcome. The M.A. is the entry level degree for becoming a professional anthropologist, as is the case for most professions and with the STEM fields. The Ph.D. is the research degree and is the source of knowledge production and innovation. The B.A. degree provides a solid foundation in critical thinking, communication, and reasoning skills, plus solid training in methods of research. These are the very skills and qualities sought out by employers in many different fields to meet the needs of the workplace. Although the undergraduate and graduate degrees serve distinct purposes and respond to different student demands, all have a vital role to play in a knowledge-based economy and are worthy of continued support.

The challenges now facing Florida are complex and demand complex solutions.

Anthropology, we argue, is a human science uniquely positioned to apply knowledge of human social organization to interrelated social and economic problems that are impacting the lives of all Floridians. Anthropologists have the expertise to contribute positively to governmental responses to these problems. Anthropologically trained researchers also speak to issues globally, with specialists in cultures of North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. Anthropology provides Floridians with important international linkages and opportunities, of ever increasing importance in our rapidly globalizing economy.

Governor Scott, the many students now seeking anthropology degrees in our departments statewide want to be included in the vision to build a brighter future, and not be excluded from contributing to that cause. It is our sincere desire that you reconsider your views on anthropology and recognize the many benefits that this field brings to the citizens of our state.

Sincerely,

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