

**President's Partners Grant
Application by B. Sunday Eiselt
Department of Anthropology
SMU-in-Taos Fort Burgwin**

This letter serves as a request for a President's Partners Grant to purchase essential field equipment for SMU-in-Taos Fort Burgwin fieldwork projects. Specifically, I am requesting support for the purchase of three digital cameras, a digital camcorder, one digital voice recorder, and two Global Positioning System receivers (GPS). This equipment is essential to ongoing field projects in archaeology, biology, geology, the physical sciences and the arts, and facilitates multiple, cross-cutting goals including research, education, and public outreach at the Fort. As such, this equipment meets the University's strategic initiatives on many levels. The equipment will be maintained at the Fort and will be available to numerous researchers and faculty, as well as the SMU students served at Taos.

Fort Burgwin

For more than 30 years SMU-in-Taos Fort Burgwin programs have provided college students and alumni with unique educational experiences in the arts and sciences. At the heart of this education is the concept of a classroom without walls, where students and faculty alike directly experience the landscapes and histories of the Northern Rio Grande. Hands-on field work and experiential learning lie at the foundation of nearly all of the courses offered at the Fort, which serves over three hundred students, faculty, and alumni every year. This number is growing rapidly along with the technologies required to enhance student and adult learning. The Wendorf Information Commons and Fort Burgwin library is just one example of the unique juxtaposition between high-tech learning and rustic living that instills unique values to the experience of learning among SMU affiliates.

A New Vision of Field Research at the Fort

I have recently been hired to teach several summer classes at the Fort, including the SMU-in-Taos archaeology field school program (of which I am the director) and also two

Cultural Institute courses (The Breath of Clay: Exploring the World of Traditional Pottery and Ancestral Images: Petroglyphs of the Northern Rio Grande). Archaeology programming at the fort is currently being reshaped to stay ahead of recent advances in the discipline, including new technologies to enhance educational research and a focus on the value and meaning of archaeology to descendant communities and the larger public. The ethics of doing archaeology and its relevance to the public is central to this major transformation within our discipline. The new mission and vision of archaeology at the Fort places these ethics at the forefront of education and research.

Most archaeological field schools immerse students in the practice and methods of archaeology including the systematic collection of scientific data for the purposes of interpreting the past (the practice of the discipline). Fieldwork is typically done in remote locations where students are isolated from the public and the process of accountability in the production of the past. This includes the effects of research and publication on descendant communities. In contrast, our program at the Fort places students in the middle of a living, traditional community for the purposes of research and education. We have successfully worked with Hispanic community and church leaders at the Ranchos de Taos Plaza and Saint Francis Parish in Taos to establish a long-term archaeological project that will benefit the Parish and SMU students alike. This project includes archaeological excavation, pedestrian survey, and rock art recording. The Ranchos de Taos Plaza includes the Saint Francis de Asis Church, one of the oldest and most photographed adobe churches in the country.

Students not only excavate in the shadow of this austere beauty, but also in the homes and backyards of the villagers, most of whom are directly descended from the people who are the focus of archaeological research. Students interact with community members on a daily basis, who provide feedback on archaeological discoveries, and they assist in traditional communal activities including the annual mudding of the church and fiesta preparations. Students also are involved in mentorship activities with the K-12 children of the plaza, who take part in archaeological activities on select days. This includes (among other things) pairing up children and college students in excavation units

or in the accomplishment of other short tasks like rock art recording or laboratory analysis. These activities ensure that our students understand the scientific and social value archaeology and their unique role as ambassadors for SMU. Graduate students and undergraduate honors students are involved at higher levels through the design and implementation of research and community outreach projects including oral histories, heritage management and planning with the community, and the dissemination of results through peer review publications, public brochures, and project web design.

Program Needs

This project is exciting. It is in its infancy but has a very promising future, especially if we are able to obtain some of the equipment that is necessary for ongoing research and education. This includes digital cameras, camcorders, and voice recorders; and hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers. Currently, the Fort does not own any of this equipment, which is essential to any archaeological or field-based project. These needs are especially critical for us given our focus on broad educational goals that include the incorporation of descendant viewpoints and opinions of our work. We need equipment that will service multiple and cross-cutting objectives including education, research, and public outreach. The requested equipment meets these needs and will help us to integrate our dynamic vision of field research and education at the Fort.

The following items will meet our strategic needs.

Item	Cost (Each)	Count	Total Cost
Olympus SP-550 UZ Digital Camera	\$467.99	3	\$1,404.0
Hitachi DZ-GX3300A Digital Camcorder	\$497.00	1	\$497.0
Sony ICD U60 512 MB Portable Digital Voice Recorder	\$99.00	1	\$99.0
Garmin Vista Etrex (GPS Receiver)	\$209.00	2	\$418.0
<i>Total Cost</i>			<i>\$2,418.0</i>

Use of Digital Recording Equipment (cameras, camcorders, voice recorders)

Documentation is fundamental to archaeological research, education, and outreach. Digital cameras and camcorders will be used to document archaeological findings and other project activities including education and work with community members.

Resulting images are subsequently incorporated into databases and tied to archaeological findings for analysis, interpretation, and long-term storage of information. Video and still life images also will be used to convey the results of our investigations to the Ranchos community and the larger public through professional and popular venues including the internet. Digital voice recorders likewise are essential for the long-term curation of oral history data and ethnographic surveys that are essential to archaeological research and education.

Use of Global Positioning System Receivers

The GPS is a satellite-based navigation system that allows us to pin-point the locations of archaeological materials within several meters. Precise locational data are essential to our work. GPS allows us to evaluate the spatial relationships of archaeological features and objects on the ground, which in turn allows us to interpret the nature of past human activities (including those of the Plaza) and place them in a regional context. GPS receivers will be used to locate and map such things as *acequias* (canals), roads, settlements, rock art panels, architecture, and sacred sites and shrines that are important to the Ranchos community. This information will allow us to build an accurate picture of community infrastructure and how it changed through time, which can be related to changing patterns of political and social integration, landscape use and management, and religious practice. GPS data complement other forms of archaeological documentation including excavations and laboratory analysis.

Meeting University Strategic Initiatives at SMU-in-Taos Fort Burgwin

Digital and GPS equipment is not only fundamental to archaeology, but also many other field-based courses and projects at the Fort including biology, geology, the physical sciences, and the arts, and it serves multiple educational, research, and outreach goals. Digital and high-tech equipment will enable us to provide students with hands-on training with technologies that are common in archaeology and across other disciplines and it enables us to disseminate results in an efficient and timely manner through professional and popular venues. The equipment will be maintained at the Fort so that it can be

available to other faculty and projects, reaching as many students as possible to meet the University's strategic initiatives in SMU-in-Taos.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

B. Sunday Eiselt

Visiting Assistant Professor
Southern Methodist University, Department of Anthropology
3225 Daniel, Room 419
Dallas, TX 75205-1437
(480) 755-7825 (cell)
(214) 768-2915 (office)
email: seiselt@smu.edu
web site: seiselt.googlepages.com