

## Review

# Bending the Trajectory of Field School Teaching and Learning through Active and Advocacy Archaeology

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**Abstract:** Many individuals practicing field-based research are subjected to sexual harassment and assault. This fact holds true for people engaged in archaeological field research and may be true for students who are just learning field methods while enrolled in an archaeological field school. We review some of our current research on the means of reducing and preventing sexual harassment and assault at archaeological field schools, as well as ways to create safer, more inclusive learning spaces. Additionally, we suggest that for the discipline to advance field school teaching and learning, we, as field directors, must situate ourselves as active and advocacy anthropologists: an approach that puts our students as a central focus when developing field-based pedagogy. As the authors of this work, we review our identities and positionality in conducting this research and in making meaning from the data we have collected.

**Keywords:** sexual harassment and assault; means of prevention; archaeological field schools; active anthropology; advocacy anthropology



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## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, with an applied archaeological approach, emerging archaeological scholars and practitioners must participate in a field school to successfully complete their undergraduate program [1–6]. These introductory field schools are spaces where students not only learn basic field methodologies, but they also serve as critical moments when students decide whether archaeology is a career worth pursuing—a career where they belong. In this spirit, it could be said that field-based learning is the heart of archaeological practice and anthropological scholarship.

The development and teaching of field schools are an art and a science, but also deeply human. Although we suggest that much of the pedagogy of field-based learning has remained relatively static, the field school itself is a complex network of learning ecosystems and social relations. With each passing field school cohort, these networks dramatically change, which creates a new, dynamic nature to each community of field school learners [7]. Negative experiences during this critical period have led some aspiring archaeologists to make the decision to no longer practice archaeology [8]. We speculate that many of these aspiring archaeologists who left the discipline had the potential to progress our field forward. A detailed knowledge of student and field director perspectives before, during, and after field schools is thus necessary to develop more welcoming spaces where students with diverse backgrounds and identities are engaged, listened to, advocated for, and supported. In doing so, this will not only profoundly benefit a more diverse student body but will also have lasting positive impacts in archaeology. We suggest that field directors must advocate and take action for a different type of field school education that implements best practices in learning equity.

In this article, we first discuss our recent research regarding field schools held in the United States. This research focuses on identifying and evaluating recommendations that make field schools safer and more inclusive learning environments [7,9]. Then, we review a framework for active and advocacy anthropology, defined and jointly used as a means to discuss a more equitable atmosphere for everyone who participates in field-based learning. Finally, we reflect on our own experiences as archaeologists and how being involved in this research has shaped the ways we think about our approaches to archaeological pedagogy and field school operation. We find that the more we become active advocates for students by understanding *their* values, *their* ideas, and *their* sentiments and experiences, the more we celebrate the inclusion of multiple perspectives in our daily and academic lives. Rather than being the gatekeepers to archaeology, we hope to help bring about a flood of new archaeological practitioners, new collaborations, and the creation of new archaeological knowledge.

## **2. Recent Harassment and Assault during Field-Based Research in the Southeastern United States**

While fieldwork represents one of the most integral elements of applied anthropology e.g., [10], scholars have rarely investigated how anthropologists and archaeologists teach students field methods, although this has been a subject of study among other field-based disciplines [11–18]. The lack of research directed towards archaeological field teaching is problematic. It is within the context of field research that students are more likely to be exposed to harassing and harmful behaviors that may dissuade them from future pursuits in archaeology [8,19–23]. In archaeology specifically, a recent study has documented high rates of sexual harassment and assault among those conducting field research [8]. Of respondents to a survey administered to archaeologists conducting research in the southeastern United States, 66% reported sexual harassment and 13% reported sexual assault [8]. Although not exclusive to field school students, these numbers suggest that instances of sexual harassment and assault are common and that student trainees are frequently subjected to such treatment [19,24]. Aspiring archaeologists may experience their first occurrence of sexual harassment, assault, and violence as students participating in a field school. Scholars should investigate ways to reduce and prevent sexual harassment and assault in archaeology broadly and at field schools in particular [7,25].

With this information, and funding from the National Science Foundation, we developed a research program to investigate best practices and recommendations to reduce and eliminate harassment and assault in field schools. In 2020, we published actionable steps that field school directors can implement to reduce and prevent sexual harassment and assault [9] based on the research-informed recommendations of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) and other scholars [19,21,26–30]. These steps are included in Table 1.

With this study, we noted that other academic disciplines have identified and implemented practices that can reduce sexual harassment and assault. Further, scholars from these fields have investigated the effectiveness of these practices. We have suggested that field directors can implement evidence-based strategies to help foster field learning environments that are safe, inclusive, and supportive for participants, student supervisors, and early career professionals. We have further suggested that archaeologists must come to terms with the broad history of sexual harassment and assault within our discipline, as well as the systems of power that perpetuate harassment. As we work within the systems of academia and form our own to organize field schools, we must continuously ask ourselves: how do these systems shape our field; who is allowed to practice archaeology; and how do we make meaning from the results of our field schools to form interpretations of the past?

**Table 1.** The five factors found among archaeological field schools, adapted from [9] (Table 2) (Reprinted/adapted with permission from Ref. [9]. 2020, Society of American Archaeology).

Recommendations and Summary of Explanations
Listening and valuing student perspectives and concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Show students they are valuable contributors of archaeological knowledge</i></li> <li>• <i>Respect that students are aspiring researchers</i></li> <li>• <i>Celebrate student individuality within a field school community of practice</i></li> <li>• <i>Allow them to be active advocates to create more supportive and inclusive field schools.</i></li> </ul>
Create a climate and culture that fosters a respectful working and learning environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Communicate intention to build a respectful, positive, and civil working environment among all field school contexts</i></li> <li>• <i>Communicate accessible and consistent policies about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide an example of a positive, civil research and living environment and highlight others with these attributes</i></li> <li>• <i>Lead by example by not making or participating in inappropriate gender, sexual, or racial stories, comments, and/or jokes, and immediately stop those behaviors when they occur</i></li> <li>• <i>Include a diverse group of teaching assistants</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement weekly, formative assessment of climate and culture</i></li> <li>• <i>Hold weekly critical reflection sessions facilitated by staff and students</i></li> </ul>
Diffuse supervisory hierarchies and other organizational structures that concentrate power in a single individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Create multiple mechanisms, not solely through the field director, for students and staff to report inappropriate behavior, including providing contact information of field director's supervisors (chair, dean, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide contact information for faculty network as a means for students to report inappropriate behavior</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop respectful and egalitarian forms of leadership by conveying value of all participants</i></li> <li>• <i>Share all research and living tasks equally</i></li> <li>• <i>Facilitate accommodations so all can learn and participate in learning activities</i></li> </ul>
Create clear and transparent reporting mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Report cases of inappropriate behavior to appropriate offices fairly and in a timely manner</i></li> <li>• <i>Inform all participants how sexual harassment and assault will be handled, and follow procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Be transparent with students and staff regarding past cases of sexual harassment and assault and how they were handled</i></li> </ul>
Provide supports for those who experience or witness sexual harassment and assault
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Report cases of inappropriate behavior to appropriate offices fairly and in a timely manner</i></li> <li>• <i>Inform all participants how sexual harassment and assault will be handled, and follow procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Be transparent with students and staff regarding past cases of sexual harassment and assault and how they were handled</i></li> </ul>

In 2021, we expanded our research on supporting safer and more inclusive field schools [7] and studied 24 sets of field school syllabi documents. We analyzed these documents to understand how field school policies, procedures, and language may impact students' perceptions of their expected behaviors, logistics and means of reporting, and stated policies surrounding sexual harassment and assault.

As documented in field school syllabi, our findings indicate that directors are taking steps to advocate for students at their field schools and home institutions. Further, they are taking research-based steps to reduce, and potentially prevent, sexual harassment and

assault. Many field directors also include statements and descriptions of practices in their syllabi that have the potential to create field schools that support equitable learning and participation. However, we identified some common practices and policies that could be improved. We have suggested adjustments and improvements in the ways field directors structure the policies and language in syllabi. These adjustments and improvements include (1) field school organization and behavior, (2) logistics of the course recommendations, (3) explicit policies on sexual harassment and assault, and (4) recommended policy and language changes. Some of the selected policy and language changes include flattening hierarchies, equitable professional standards for subjective grading criteria, equitable punitive measures, non-jargoned text to describe sexual harassment, and gender-neutral descriptions of appropriate and safe field clothing (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Exemplar text for selected policy and language changes, adapted from [7].

Suggested Changes to Create more Supportive and Inclusive Field Schools
<p>Flattened hierarchies <sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Fieldwork is a collaborative process, and all decisions involve shared decision making. Decisions will be reviewed, discussed, and agreed upon by those individuals involved. At times, an individual team member may lead aspects of the fieldwork, but this individual will work with the team to engage in and understand the decision-making process.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Equitable Professional Standards for Subjective Grading Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students will be assessed on their ability to complete assigned tasks that contribute to their learning to the best of their ability. Students should collaboratively and actively contribute to archaeological research.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Equitable Punitive Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>All policy violations will result in an investigation. Administrators and agencies may be brought in to assist with the investigation, depending on the alleged violation.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Non-Jargoned Text to Describe Sexual Harassment <sup>2</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and objectively offensive. Harassment denies or limits a reasonable person's ability to participate in or benefit from field school participation. Sexual harassment is a type of harassment consisting of unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to, sexual comments or inappropriate references to gender; sexually explicit comments, jokes, statements, or anecdotes; displayed materials or images that are sexual in nature; inquiries and comments about sexual experiences, activities, or orientation; unwanted touching, hugging, brushing against a person's body, or staring; and threats, direct or implied, that sexual advances must be accepted to maintain or advance in employment, work status, promotion, grades, or letters of recommendation.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Gender-neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students should wear clothing that protects them from the elements (sun, insects, bugs, etc.) and that is also comfortable for performing work outdoors.</i></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Flattened hierarchies text derived from [31]. <sup>2</sup> Exemplar texts for non-jargoned description of sexual harassment are modified from those created by the Mississippi State University Office of Civil Rights Compliance.

When students do not feel protected or included in field school settings, they may not feel safe to inform a field director, teaching assistant, fellow student, or anyone of these issues of harassment. Further, when students do not feel safe, they may struggle to achieve their full potential as learners [32], and thus, they may never reach their goal of becoming an archaeologist. Through this research we suggest that archaeologists must take action to acknowledge and identify just how pervasive harassment and assault has been in our discipline. Further, we collectively must choose to dismantle the systems we have established that normalize sexual harassment within archaeological practice.

The perpetuation and indifference to change will continue to shape our discipline and students of archaeology. Much of our research emphasizes and incorporates the voices of students and field directors who want to disrupt the inertia of indifference, implement best practices, and be advocates and change agents. We believe that the path to move forward in archaeology is not through exclusion and othering, but to actively promote multiple and diverse perspectives that contribute to interpretations of the past, not just a discipline consisting of the few remaining “survivors.”

### 3. Becoming Active Advocates in Archaeological Practice

Eric Wolf [33] (p. 88) is known for his position that anthropology is a “bridging” discipline between the sciences and the humanities. Anthropological archaeology has made great strides in interpreting materials of the past and incorporating participation-based research to bridge the past with the present, especially regarding the decolonization of archaeological practice and collaboration with descendent communities and the public [34–38]. In this new wave of epistemology of inclusiveness, field school directors may forget that the students we teach, who are participants in field-based learning, play an active role in the production of archaeological knowledge. We argue that if archaeology has a role to play in “a rational dialogue about the nature of humanity” [39] (p. 547), we must give greater attention to the humanity of our students who want to be included in the archaeological process, have their perspectives valued, and have a safe place to learn and grow to become archeologists. Field directors should also be attentive to their own humanity and reflect on personal past field experiences. A director’s past field experience may be a heavy influence on how they approach field school pedagogy and structure learning at their field schools. By combining our field-based research with our personal experiences in the field, we found ourselves naturally encouraged and persuaded to become active advocates for our students, which has profoundly reshaped the ways we now develop field-based coursework and the ways we see and value our students.

#### 3.1. What Is Advocacy in Anthropology?

Discussions of advocacy in anthropology are not new developments in anthropological practice [40–42]. Advocacy anthropologists use perspectives gained through their research to help alleviate and highlight the causes of the people with whom they work and observe, particularly around issues that they feel they cannot ignore [43–45]. The stimulus for advocacy in anthropology is rooted in the understanding of the social lives of people and attempts to respond to social and political problems “about the moral equality of all human beings” [46] (p. 6). Anthropological advocates can situate themselves as a facilitator to bring about conversations between the communities with whom they work and agencies and institutions whose policies and practices may impact those people. Anthropological advocates may work with groups of people to help promote solutions to community-identified problems or deter actions that could negatively impact the community, while supporting more equitable practices leading to positive change. However, being advocates of change does not necessarily lead to change. Further, being an advocate may cause one to reposition their research objectives and create the need to foster dynamic relationships among multiple groups, parties, and agencies [47,48]. By realigning our research priorities with those of the communities in which we work, anthropologists can develop more intentionality in their research and practice and consider actions that may accomplish substantial change.

#### 3.2. What Is Active Anthropology?

In the 1970s, anthropologists noticed that traditional methodologies of studying the “other” detached themselves from many of the pressing global issues of modern societies [49]. Anthropologists began to re-examine the foundation of their intellectual heritage that was influenced by the rapid disappearance of Indigenous communities [49]. One of action anthropology’s primary concepts is the notion of diverse lifeways and that their



inclusion in anthropological research enriches the materials available to anthropologists in the creation of knowledge and the promotion of social and political change [50]. First, anthropologists need to be aware that social problems are a worldwide syndrome, and secondly, it is the “responsibility of the anthropologist to help people convert their awareness of social need into social action” [49] (p. 36). For active anthropologists, this is conducted primarily in the field when observing other cultures. For the benefit of this research, we argue that archaeologists should be activists of social change during fieldwork, but the focus of change needs to be on (1) the external institutional forces that prioritize policy compliance over the needs and concerns of students and (2) the internal social dynamics of archaeological field work, field schools, and our positionality as field directors. In both contexts, we should strive to be advocates for students and to be the creators of safe and inclusive learning environments.

### Activism in Archaeology

A circle of public archaeologists who have observed issues within archaeological practice have embraced their work as activism. Archaeologists, such as Zimmerman et al. [51] have outlined an interesting amplification of activist scholarship in their landmark research on homelessness, which led to significant policy changes that ultimately humanized people who were experiencing homelessness. They present their research as “consciously activist” archaeology to “make a difference in people’s lives and support a more inclusive society for humanity” [51] (pp. 443–445). Similar to our research on sexual harassment and assault in field schools, they propose a definition of activism that emphasizes *ethical obligations beyond scholarly research*, lamenting that archaeologists are without “a real sense of obligation or understanding that their work might actually be valuable beyond just the human interest to be derived from providing perspective on cultural adaptations over time” [51] (pp. 443–444). In this sense, they advocate for an archaeological world where people work together to transform their discipline into pragmatic best practice applications to benefit students, and underrepresented communities [52]. This is an activism that seeks to solve real-world problems identified during collaborative research.

A seminal contribution to activism in archaeology is Stottman’s [53] edited volume, *Archaeologists as Activists: Can Archaeologists Change the World?* This book ambitiously looks beyond traditional intellectual products of archaeological research (e.g., material culture research in site reports, books, journals, etc.) and explores different ways to reshape our diverse collective humanity. The volume points to many unintended consequences of conducting archaeology within the discipline and with past and contemporary communities. They champion archaeology scholarship that “advocates for a consciously affect contemporary communities” [54] (p. 3). Activism is more about intentionality and advocacy but needs to be grounded in real world applications. Atalay [55] refers to this kind of activism as “action-based” when studying community engagement and heritage at Catalhoyuk, Turkey. Thus, archaeologists as activists need to intentionally use their skills and research to advocate for the “communities in which they conduct research” and advocate within and between different institutions to create more inclusive student environments [54] (pp. 8–9). This vision of activism, which is a vision shared and informed by our research, is based on collaboration, action research, and an expectation that archaeological practice and knowledge can be used as agents of change [56].

### 3.3. Active Advocates in the Field

Because archaeologists primarily focus on the study of past societies, we suggest that practitioners of our discipline tend to develop research-oriented tunnel vision in which they become detached from the people with whom they work and teach. As a result, it is difficult to adopt action-based approaches to solve internal problems of harassment and assault that have been normalized. How can we begin to change this? This combined framework argues for anthropologists to be more engaged with the people around them, and perhaps we need to begin with those students with whom we often work closely. We as anthropologists

need to live in a world where we feel a sense of obligation toward the inhabitants of that world, including our research environment and, of course, our students [46]. Thus, we need to focus on collaboration and on pedagogies for a more engaged field-based learning environment for our students, who we often take for granted [52]. Campbell and Lassiter [57] developed a similar framework and championed collaborative undergraduate field training that moved beyond teaching conventional anthropological methodologies. They argue that more active and engaged anthropological field-based learning can no longer be spaces where harsh hierarchical barriers are constructed that create academic dichotomies between the field director and the students. Instead, they advocate for projects that bring in a multiple perspectives model that values the views among field directors, students, and targeted communities that together encourage local collective activism.

Archaeology, being a discipline dependent on fieldwork, provides an exceptionally creative venue to have a more engaged and active practicing scholarship. With our current research, we are becoming increasingly aware that being advocates for students who take archaeology-related field schools should be essential practice that not only creates supportive and inclusive environments but transforms the ways in which we teach and develop field-based curriculum. For example, Agbe-Davies [58,59], a historical archaeologist with research interests in colonial plantation societies, refers to a more engaged and active archaeology as “accountable archaeology,” which is a framework determined to build trust and inclusivity among stakeholders. Important here is the word stakeholders. Archaeologists often use the word stakeholders in the context of collaborative archaeology where a key individual or community participates in the creation of archaeological knowledge. Agbe-Davies goes further to argue that our students also should be viewed as vital stakeholders in the creation of archaeological knowledge. Undergraduate and graduate students who take field schools are not often seen as stakeholders, but almost as lumps of clay that field directors can mold into the next generation of archaeologists. With this perspective, field directors may choose to position information and communication within field schools as unidirectional and hierarchical. This reconceptualization of what a stakeholder is parallels well with an engaged and advocational archaeology practice. Valuing students in this way advocates for a more supportive and inclusive fieldwork environment, pushes beyond the narrowest definition of stakeholder status, helps to move towards the deconstruction of institutionalized hierarchies, and embraces new ways of teaching and learning.

#### **4. Undoing Traditional Fieldwork—How Our Experiences Reshaped our Archaeological Practice**

As young aspiring archaeologists, we began with the notion that the field was a community of like-minded individuals (e.g., students, supervisors, and field directors) equitably working and communicating together to discover those data that can lead to interpretations of past peoples. As we entered the world of archaeological fieldwork during our undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate studies, we realized that the notion of equitable field practices contradicted many of the basic tenets that formed the foundation of field archaeology. We are just now trying to conceive a restructuring of field learning and supervision and implementing these new concepts into our field school organization and instructional practices today [31,60,61].

We also witnessed that there was an illusion of separation between the goals of the field where the data are gathered to understand the past and the experiences and perspectives of the students who were the ones that gathered and analyzed the data. Through our research, we realized that this social and hierarchical dichotomy can become the most suitable spaces where harassment and assault flourish. Nevertheless, even though many archaeologists have experienced and witnessed harassment and assault over multiple generations, the field still functions as an ideological concept which builds hierarchical boundaries that either consciously or subconsciously create an atmosphere where students do not feel safe or empowered to approach field directors when they witness or experience

forms of harassment and assault. It is on this basis that archaeologists who want to be advocates and agents of change question the utility of traditional field-based learning. From our research, we believe this questioning grows out of a process familiar to many of us—individual research and personal experiences in the field and their profound influence on our anthropological worldviews. To explore this further, we briefly discuss some of these experiences to illustrate how our experiences influenced our collaborative research of understanding how to develop supportive and inclusive field schools for students.

Experiences students have during fieldwork endure long after they return from the field. Our early field experiences and being members of minority communities in the field of archaeology (e.g., women and the LGBTQ+ community) heavily influenced who we are as archaeologists today and gave us the momentum to not only be advocates, but agents of change. Our experiences pushed us to ensure that a diverse student body, one that included students of color, women, and students who are LGBTQ+, were allowed to feel safe to enter the field knowing that diverse backgrounds are supported in the field fueled the decision to begin this research.

#### *4.1. Archaeologist Formed through Harassment*

All this research into harassment and assault in field-based learning environments represent the way in which undergraduate field schools are key in (re)shaping aspiring archaeologists' personal and academic identities and the ways in which they develop an attachment or detachment to archaeological practice. The normalization of harassment in archaeological field-based learning has undoubtedly influenced and shaped how participants perceive their archaeological identities. Even though we are making new strides in the development of safer and more accessible field schools, archaeology has maintained a community in which students and field directors do not always have a clear understanding of what to do when/if an issue of harassment arises. We posit that this uncertainty of action has shaped and formed young and professional perceptions of archaeological practice and, as a result, has developed an unsafe and unsupportive sense of place for our students. How can we create a new sense of place within archaeological field schools that can help combat decades of normalizing harassment and assault?

We suggest that within more traditional field school settings, students and field school directors draw on and are somewhat bound by the opportunities and constraints of their physical setting. This is because we may not feel comfortable or supported to go beyond basic Title IX training and protocols to ensure the safety of students and do not perceive field schools as dynamic, socially constructed landscapes. By drawing upon advocacy and active anthropology, we emphasize the need for a more inclusive conceptual understanding that archaeology field schools are dynamic and fluid senses of place in which identities and communities are constructed. We view field schools as communities that bind students, supervisors, field directors, local communities, and descendant groups to a particular locale, a new sense of place that can be unfamiliar to undergraduate students who are taking their first field school. Within these new places, they provide students and every participant a new set of parameters, a shared discourse, rules, boundaries, hierarchies, and new possibilities. Understanding and being aware that each field school is a dynamic community can thus provide us a mechanism by which field school participants are safely able to culturally (re)reproduce their identities and garner a stronger sense of belonging to archaeology.

#### *4.2. Being a "Woman" in the Field*

When I (Carol Colaninno) began my studies in archaeology, I never thought about the challenges I may one day face being a female/woman in archaeology. As a white, cis-gender woman in archaeology, I bring multiple identities, insecurities, confidences, strengths, and weaknesses, in how I view and interact with my archaeological research, education, pedagogy, and employment. To this day, I struggle to articulate all the experiences that led me to become the researcher, scientist, and archaeologist I currently am.



I grew up in a rural, southern community with an undiagnosed learning disability. With my learning disability, and lack of diagnosis, I never did well in school. I fell behind in several subjects and grew to just really dislike school. To me, the notion that I would ever be accepted into college was inconceivable. I had no idea what I wanted to do for a job or career because I was not very good at much of anything, apart from music. When I was accepted into the local community college with an offer of a music scholarship, I took it. I never wanted to actually be a musician or have a job where I used my musical skills, but again, I never knew what I wanted to do for a career. In my mind, I was never supposed to be in college in the first place.

After my first semester as a music major, I changed majors. I was actually doing well in my courses. I was taking STEM courses as my electives (i.e., general chemistry, physics, calculus), because I liked those, and was making great grades. My STEM professors and the group of friends I studied with saw my frustration with my music major and encouraged me to consider a STEM major. I loved my calculus courses, so based on some enthusiastic encouragement from those around me, I changed to an engineering major.

Here the same story starts over again. I did not enjoy my engineering courses and the same doubts I had as a music major reappeared. I really never wanted to be an engineer. I was just doing something that my professors and peers encouraged. I was never supposed to be in college. How in the world was I supposed to be successful as an engineering major—one of the hardest majors to take on? I found myself in a pickle. I was in college, doing fairly well in my classes, but could not find a major that seemed to stick—a major where I felt as though I belonged and in which the self-doubt did not creep back into my mind. I took some time to reflect on what I really enjoyed. I loved being outdoors. I loved that sense of the unknown and exploration that came with the outdoors. I also held in my mind a memory from when I was six years old. My Dad took me to an archaeological site with active excavations (he was a forester for the U.S. government). The archaeologist let me hold a small piece of charcoal that was likely a few hundred years old. I was amazed by that experience, by holding something that was a few hundred years old. That memory stayed with me for years. So, I decided to take some courses in anthropology.

I loved the anthropology courses I took. The discipline combined my love for the sciences—biology, ecology, geology—with my passion for the creativity I found in the arts and thinking critically about the many ways humans can live on Earth. I quickly volunteered to help a graduate student with their field work to gain more experience. I was lucky that a graduate student let me volunteer. This graduate student helped me learn field methods, helped me understand the ins and outs of the discipline, and even gave me a few tips on how to apply for graduate school (I had no idea what graduate school was at the time). The two of us also had a few conversations about identifying as a woman and being an archaeologist. When we had those conversations, I never thought it would be an issue being a woman in archaeology. I had overcome an undiagnosed learning disability and found success in college—a place where I never belonged. Why would being a woman be a challenge?

Well, it turns out that being a woman was and has been a challenge. I would not say there has been one event that exemplifies that challenge. There have been multiple, compounding events that continue to make me ask myself if I am good enough to be an archaeologist, if I have what it takes to do archaeology. From colleagues questioning the amount of field work I've had ("She really doesn't have field experience" despite several summers of leading field excavations and as much field experience as my male peers, although that point is not brought up about their qualifications), or the legitimacy of the grants I have received as a PI ("Well, those aren't really research grants, so ... " after receiving three highly competitive National Science Foundation awards). I still feel as though I have to prove myself as an archaeologist over and over again. When I hear these comments, I always wonder if this is because I am a woman; is this because I chose a career in a field historically dominated by men? Does my physique, my body too sharply contradict the sense of physicality and masculinity that comes with archaeological

fieldwork? Whatever it is, I continue to question my authenticity and capability as an archaeologist to this day some 20 years after I learned to hold a trowel. As a woman in archaeology, I know I am not alone in this feeling. There are many of us out there conducting research and doing our jobs (and doing our jobs well), who replay the dismissive tone we have heard from our colleagues. Each day we question the legitimacy we have as experts and the value we add to the field.

I decided to research means of preventing and reducing sexual harassment and assault in archaeology, specifically in the context of field schools, in the hopes that we, as a discipline, can make archaeology a more welcoming, inclusive field. I believe we can become a field that pushes back against the way in which questioning the authenticity, ability, and credibility of non-male, non-white, non-heterosexual, non-cis-gender, non-stereotypical archaeologists has been normalized. Our discipline, and the meanings we make of the past have been primarily constructed by those who conform to the physical and masculine idealization of a male, white archaeologist for far too long. We must begin to see the ways we can make a discipline that welcomes and supports a diversity of theorists and practitioners. I believe that taking actions to reduce and prevent sexual harassment and assault in archaeological field work is but the first step we must take to support a discipline that generates a rich array of archaeological interpretations that reflect the many ways people lived in the past and live in the present.

#### *4.3. Being the “Gay Archaeologist” in the Field*

For me (Shawn Lambert), being a gay cis-gendered male in the rural south was not easy growing up, and I can imagine that many others can relate. Others constantly reminded me that my identity was something to either look down upon, change, or be eradicated in favor of more heterosexual norms. I began my undergraduate life majoring in criminal justice and during my second year at the institution where I received my undergraduate degree, I just so happened to take an introductory archaeology course that satisfied a required elective. Two weeks into the class, to my parents’ chagrin, I changed my major to anthropology with a focus in southeastern archaeology. I was hooked! I realized this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Anthropology, characterized by our introductory textbooks, described a holistic perspective that celebrated LGBTQ+ identities and all things culturally diverse. In a way, it validated my identity and made me feel supported and included within an otherwise harsh political and social environment. Anthropology really did save my life and helped me to celebrate who I am.

As I focused more on learning field-based methodologies, I began enrolling in academic field schools and working for contract archaeology during my undergraduate years. I soon realized that I did not feel safe to “reveal” my sexuality to field directors and fellow field colleagues. Even though there were always just as many women (sometimes more) in the field as men, the social atmosphere always oozed a highly patriarchal and masculine ambiance. Sensing this, I automatically did not feel as supported and included and thought that my supervisory colleagues would see me as less of an asset and more of a nuisance in the field—as though, somehow the moment they knew I was gay, I would lose my superhuman archaeology powers of making straight (pun unintended) profile walls, level units, and mapmaking skills. These feelings were exacerbated by “harmless” gay jokes and sexual innuendos at which I passively aggressively laughed—you know, to “be one of the guys.” This was an almost constant occurrence during my undergraduate field-based learning experiences.

I did not realize then just how much that affected the ways in which I saw myself as an archaeologist, researcher, and teacher. Not speaking out that I was a proud gay archaeologist, was I normalizing this behavior and thus, in some way, was this normalization partly my fault? Knowing what I know, through our research, I know this is not the case. Yet, talking to my supervisors and field directors about these issues was like climbing the longest hierarchical ladder. An impossible feat that left me feeling powerless. These harsh hierarchical and overly masculine boundaries created a field environment where I did not

think that these issues would be heard or taken seriously enough for my supervisors to act. It was always “work out these issues amongst yourselves and do not bother us” type of rhetoric. During my field school experiences, I was never trained in Title IX or what constituted sexual harassment and assault. Therefore, I did not know anything about the Title IX process, what are mandatory reporters, or to whom to report these issues.

Now I am in a position as a professor to be more engaged and active to ensure that my students do not experience what I did in the field. I want each cohort to feel accepted, supported, heard, and valued. I no longer want to stay quiet. I want to give students the resources and encouragement that empower them to reach out to someone if an issue arises. That is why our research on determining the best ways in which to develop a more supportive field school is so important to me. We need to question the roles we play with respect to how we develop field-based learning curriculum as well as our students who are affected by our actions (or in many cases, our inaction) as archaeologists. For field schools to be truly meaningful, as it can be in this era of decolonization and inclusivity, the holistic perspective should be extended to connect our roles in our own work to everyone with whom we work, especially our students.

## 5. Conclusions

Changing the fabric of field-based learning in archaeology is a daunting task. For many of us, we have developed our field school instruction based on the tradition of how we were taught, rather than on research-based, best pedagogical practices. Few of us feel comfortable addressing the painful topics that must be confronted to proactively build safe and inclusive environments. We are all humans, formed and shaped by the institution of archaeological field schools and field archaeology, and we will surely make mistakes as we put forth our best efforts to create safe, equitable, and inclusive spaces that welcomes rather than excludes. Research that focuses on how we attempt to make change and what we learn from missteps can only benefit future current and future field directors and their students [62].

Bending the trajectory of field school learning toward an environment that is a more active and engaged archaeology will only strengthen our discipline and dare we say, make our discipline more human. If archaeology is truly committed to making field schools safer and more inclusive, we must commit ourselves to serve as advocates and proactive agents to push against normalized field school traditions and institutional structures. Developing field schools as more supportive and inclusive “communities of practice” [63] can appear challenging to archaeologists who have been trained in traditional hierarchical field methods. We have suggested practices that can bend this trajectory [7,9] and we encourage the field to modify their pedagogical practices. We continue to advocate for and support new forms of field learning that undo traditional structures and explore active, advocacy approaches to field school teaching and learning.

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