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TECHNICAL NOTE

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Forensic archeology as a high-impact practice

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Abstract

High-impact practices (HIPs) are educational modalities that focus on experiential and deep learning to affect student success in higher education, particularly among students matriculating from historically underserved communities. HIPs are designed to provide students with the intellectual and practical skills to succeed in an increasingly unstable global world beyond college. Utilizing a private-public partnership forensic archeological contract project, this paper examines how this venture employed a HIP-based contractor model that hired students as a professional archeological field crew and provided them with a living wage, transportation, and room and board. It also provided students without the means to participate in international fieldwork with the wherewithal to do so, supporting underserved students and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) initiatives. Utilizing this HIP-based contract model resulted in greater student investment and collaboration in a fieldwork situation more akin to the real world, where students learned to solve problems, communicate, and network in an international setting, resulting in new opportunities, such as professional jobs, and academic projects and publications. The paid contractor model ensured students with limited resources could participate, broadening the type of student who can receive this type of training, expanding diversity in forensic anthropology. These models are not limited to forensic archeological fieldwork; they can also be applied to forensic anthropology laboratory projects. Utilizing HIPs and employing a more equitable contractor model contributes to student professionalization, strengthens professional prospects beyond the university, and contributes to DEIB initiatives, all of which benefit forensic anthropology as a subdiscipline.

KEYWORDS
battlefield archeology, equity and inclusion, forensic anthropology, forensic archeology, high-impact practices in education, international fieldwork, professional careers

Highlights

- Educational high-impact practices (HIPs) benefit student academic and professional development.
- Engaging in HIPs improves success in underserved groups, who typically lack funding to participate.
- Hiring students on contract-based models increases group cohesion and professional opportunities.

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- Funded HIPs contribute to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in forensic anthropology.
- Greater DEIB leads to innovation and higher-quality research in forensic anthropology.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the last 15 years or so, colleges and universities have increasingly focused on how they can provide students with the support and learning experiences that will help them acquire the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. Generally, skills learned during education can be split between soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills are rooted in interpersonal interactions and knowledge seeking, which may be learned as part of any educational program (e.g., adaptability, collegiality, communication, conflict management, critical thinking, dependability, empathy, leadership, motivation, problem solving, stress management, teamwork, and time management), while hard skills are more discipline specific (e.g., archeological field methods and osteological laboratory techniques) and are typically learned in various topical, often upper-level courses, or as part of hands-on training programs. Part of the focus of developing these various skills has been directed toward experiential learning, which requires students to engage with the tasks that they would perform in a workplace environment, thus combining soft and hard skill acquisition. These kinds of experience-based learning modalities are part of a larger constellation of learning initiatives known as *high-impact practices* or HIPs.

HIPs are meant to encourage critical reasoning skills, problem solving, self-reliance, cultural exchange, and integrative learning [1, 2]. Their focus on experience and deep learning (i.e., learning that results in a deeper or greater understanding of something than would be otherwise expected [3]) is also meant to act as a scaffold to aid students who arrived at college further behind their peers and/or who belong to communities that have been historically underserved in higher education.

The following study considers the legacy and impact of HIPs before examining how forensic anthropology—specifically forensic archeology—can be utilized as a HIP to encourage students to engage in field-based, experiential learning in a global context. The forensic archeological example discussed here combined global/diversity learning with collaborative project management and "real world" professional work experience, meaning it was designed to treat the students in the same manner as any professional archeological field crew. As such, it included a fieldwork objective—locating and recovering the remains of a United States airman who had been lost during World War II—and all the professional responsibilities that entailed. Importantly, while (forensic) archeological field schools can function as HIPs, the model we present here is different in that it was a more true-to-life contract project where the students were hired as technicians, trained on the job, and compensated for their labor in the same fashion as any group of professional archeologists.

Additionally, one of the continuing issues with HIPs, particularly experiential HIPs that require travel, is that students at a socioeconomic disadvantage who could often benefit from HIPs the most, cannot take part because they cannot afford the lost wages and/or time away from work [1, 4]. Therefore, this paper also discusses how compensating the field crew provided a means of support to students whose circumstances otherwise might not have allowed them to participate in an opportunity that would have furthered their academic and career advancement.

2 | HIPS: WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY BENEFIT STUDENTS

In 2007, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched a decade-long initiative, *Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP): Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College*. Highlighting the AAC&U's initiative and arguing that college students could not reap the full benefits of higher education without "a serious national effort to recalibrate college learning to the needs of the new global century," the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise released a report, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, that outlined their aims, learning outcomes, and guiding principles as they related to a 21st-century university education [5].

Part of the 2007 report was in response to employer feedback that indicated insufficiencies in college student learning. For example, in a 2006 AAC&U LEAP-commissioned survey, 63% of employers reported that too many college students lacked the necessary skills to succeed in the global economy [6]. A 2007 follow-up survey found that employers believed that college students were deficient in global knowledge, self-direction, writing, and critical thinking skills; they also suggested that though college students were ready for entry-level jobs, they lacked the skills they needed for promotion [6].

Thus, it is not enough to simply retain students and make certain they graduate [6]—colleges and universities must also ensure that students learn the skills they will need to succeed once they are outside a university setting. Twenty-first-century students face an increasingly globalized, interconnected, and unpredictable world, so learning outcomes that focus on knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative learning provide them with the skills necessarily to navigate an increasingly unstable global dynamic; this ensures their personal, civic, societal, and economic success beyond college [5, 6].

While each student's college experience is unique and every student will respond better to specific types of learning and certain learning modalities, Kuh has proposed that practices labeled as "high-impact" produce particularly dramatic results for students who begin their academic careers further behind their peers in terms of academic test scores and/or come from communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented in academia [1]. The ten High-Impact Practices that education research suggests affect student retention and engagement the most are as follows:

- First year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity/global learning
- Service learning and community-based learning
- Internships
- Capstone projects and courses [1, 7].

Several studies suggest that these types of HIPs facilitate "deep learning". A deep approach to learning is designed to access the underlying meaning of an issue and requires the learner to apply their knowledge of real-life situations, and to successfully integrate information they have previously learned to understand and reflect on the connections between pieces of information rather than simply memorizing and regurgitating bits of data [8, 9]. Students learn more in these situations because:

1. HIPs require students to devote considerable time and effort to the academic task at hand.
2. HIPs necessitate substantive interactions between students, their peers, and the faculty over extended periods.
3. HIPs increase the likelihood that students will interact with people different from themselves [1].

These kinds of activities also provide the students with positive reinforcement via continuous feedback regarding their work and with opportunities to apply what they are learning in different settings, both on and off campus [1].

HIPs appear to make an appreciable difference in students' academic success. First year students with low ACT scores who engaged in HIPs made up ground in their first-year grades; this was particularly true for African American students, who earned better grades and had higher first-to-second-year retention rates when they engaged in HIPs [1]. Similarly, first year Latino students who participated in HIPs also displayed gains in their first-year grade point averages that were greater than those of their White peers [2]. Moreover, students who participated in any category of high-impact practice reported deep learning gains 4.3 to 8.5 points higher on standardized scales ranging from 0 to 10, than students who did not participate in HIPs; students who participated in a greater number of HIPs also reported consistently higher levels of perceived engagement in deep approaches to learning, as well as gains in general education, practical competence, and personal and social development [2].

A study on community-based HIPs also indicated that these kinds of practices are perceived as beneficial to graduate students, particularly when it comes to research and writing skills [10]. Work by Witkowsky and Mendez found that short-term study abroad programs (8 weeks or fewer) also increased graduate students' intercultural competency, understanding of diversity, and broadened their career considerations [11].

Unfortunately, one of the biggest issues surrounding involvement in HIPs is inclusion. Kuh's initial work on HIPs indicated that while underserved students benefit from HIPs, they do not participate as frequently as other students [1]. For example, while African American and first-generation college students, both of whom fit within the category of "historically underserved" students, benefit from engaging in HIPs in college, they are also the groups least likely to participate in high-impact activities [1]. Finley and McNair found that first-generation college students engaged in significantly fewer HIPs than students who were not first generation, and that Latino and Asian American students participated in significantly fewer HIPs than their White peers [2]. Moreover, experiences, such as study abroad and unpaid summer fieldwork, can be difficult for low-income students, even if their room and board are covered, because the amount of time the student spends working on a summer fieldwork project is also time where they are not earning the funds they may need to ensure they can afford their educational expenses during the academic year [4]. Thus, funding and access can be significant barriers to the very students who could benefit the most from participating in HIPs. To promote equity, educators must work to ensure that students are informed of the merits of HIPs, that they understand how to participate in them, and that financial obligations related to HIP do not place an undue burden on the student, limiting their possibility of participation.

3 | FORENSIC ARCHEOLOGY AS A HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE

Forensic anthropology is the application of anthropological method and theory within the context of the legal system [12]. While practiced differently across the globe, in the United States, forensic anthropology encompasses aspects of not just biological anthropology, but also archeology, linguistic anthropology, sociocultural anthropology. Thus, U.S. forensic anthropologists are routinely responsible for the search, recovery, and analysis of human skeletal remains (archeology and biological anthropology), the effective communication of their work to diverse audiences through such avenues as reports and testimony (linguistic anthropology), and operationalizing forensic anthropology in appropriate ways, often in conjunction with decedent communities and The State (sociocultural anthropology). While there have been some efforts toward building

consensus-based educational objectives for forensic anthropology in the United States [13], forensic anthropology is currently lacking educational standardization [14, 15]. Similarly, there is effectively only one operating program specifically designed to train forensic anthropologists, in this case as a post-doctoral experience at the Forensic Anthropology Division of the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS) [16].

However, the lack of standardized education and training experiences in forensic anthropology does not mean that forensic anthropologists lack education or training [17, 18]. Rather, this reflects non-standardized (individual faculty and institution) approaches to academic (i.e., educational) learning, and experiential (i.e., training) opportunities in the discipline [15]. Most, if not all, academic graduate programs in forensic anthropology, as well as at least three undergraduate academic programs with forensic anthropology concentrations (University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Western Carolina University, and Washburn University) provide students with experiential training opportunities in forensic anthropology alongside their educational course offerings [19]. Due to the unexpected nature of these events (that is, when forensic case consultations are requested and/or when willed-body donations occur or are recovered and processed for curation), it is often difficult to create meaningful experiential training opportunities out of them that would be accessible to a variety of students, because many students have work and other responsibilities outside of class that prohibits their participation in events with limited knowledge ahead of time. However, forensic archeological work, especially larger fieldwork projects, often require a significant amount of planning prior to performing the work, and thus provides an excellent opportunity to act as a more widely accessible HIP.

In general, archeological projects incorporate experiential (i.e., hands-on) learning, which provides students with opportunities to learn and refine soft skills such as adaptability, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and time management; as well as hard skills such as: a greater understanding of archeological method and theory, a recognition of the strengths and limitations of archeological data, a greater awareness of anthropological ethics, an appreciation for cultural diversity via the excavation and analysis of artifacts, ecofacts, and features from other societies that reflect how they lived, as well as a fostering a sense of anthropological professionalism and stewardship [20, 21].

Previous pedagogical work on archeology as a HIP has focused on the service-learning aspects of archeological fieldwork projects, often within the context of archeological field school projects [22–24]. However, here we will discuss a project that was in many ways a hybrid of various HIPs, combining aspects of collaborative assignments and projects (i.e., team-based assignments, cooperative projects), diversity/global learning (i.e., foreign immersion programs, study abroad), internships (i.e., direct, supervised work experience), and service- and community-based learning (i.e., engaging with the public and assisting with community-based projects). To demonstrate the utility of forensic archeology as a HIP, the remainder of this paper will concern itself with a specific forensic archeology project wherein the crew was primarily comprised of upper-level undergraduate and junior graduate students who were intentionally treated as professional, paid archeology technicians.

In 2018, the authors began planning a collaborative forensic archeological fieldwork project between Western Carolina University (WCU) and the Partnerships and Innovations Directorate of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). The DPAA is the Department of Defense (DoD) agency tasked with providing the fullest possible accounting of missing American service personnel from past conflicts to their families and to the American public at large [25, 26]. As part of its accounting mission, the DPAA is responsible for the search, recovery, and identification of the remains of American service personnel lost in past conflicts, primarily WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War; the overall goal being the repatriation and return of individuals to their families. The Partnerships and Innovations Directorate of the DPAA develops public-private partnerships with professionals in academia and other outside institutions as a means of harnessing novel solutions, technologies, methods of expertise, and ways of thinking to achieve its mission; there are currently ~200 of these DPAA partnerships [27]. In this instance, the project involved assembling a forensic archeological team to locate and excavate a grave from a World War II (WWII) loss incident, involving the remains of a single unaccounted-for individual in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The DPAA uses several different models when working with external partners to execute forensic archeological search and recovery (SAR) projects. These external partnerships are typically between academic institutions, or contract archeology firms, and the DPAA. Regardless of the model used, the DPAA is responsible for initiating the partnership. In this case, the DPAA directly reached out to the authors about the possibility of organizing a fieldwork project and presented them with the option of running it as either: a field school with DPAA providing the equipment and the site, or as a contract project with the DPAA providing funding for the contract, as well as the equipment and the site.

The authors chose to run the project using the contract model. This decision was made because field school models require archeological crew members—typically undergraduate students—to pay for their own travel, room and board, and often credit hours, for the opportunity to learn while they participate in the fieldwork project. Usually, field school projects operate this way because: (1) they are primarily research-based, supporting the objectives of the project principal investigator(s), and (2) funding through student enrollment is a simple way to make larger fieldwork projects operational due to limited resources [28, 29]. That is not to suggest that traditional field schools are bad in any way, simply that they have different objectives and funding models to support those objectives than contract or consultation models. Using the contract model, field crew members were hired as paid archeological technicians rather than unpaid (or paying) field school students. Therefore, if the crew includes undergraduate and graduate student workers—as it did in this case—the contract model generates greater equity for participants as students are employed as archeological technicians (i.e., skilled

laborers) and have their work-related expenses covered, meaning students could participate that otherwise would not have been able to, because they would not have been able to afford it. In this case, the pay rate was approximately equivalent to that of a federal GS-5 archeological technician.

As part of the contracted field crew, the students were expected to help set-up the site, conduct a pedestrian survey, establish grid coordinates, measure each 2 × 2 meter archeological unit, excavate and screen each unit, and backfill the units once excavation of that unit was complete. This required precision, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. They were also involved in solving some unexpected fieldwork problems, as they would on any other professional or academic archeological site. For example, the equipment the DPAA provided included hanging screens meant to be suspended from the overhanging beams of a screening station. However, there were no natural objects, such as trees, from which to suspend these screens, thus the crew was required to construct a free-standing screening station without guidance (and very limited experience building structures using hand tools). To ensure that these screens could be used correctly, the crew worked with the principal investigators (PIs) to establish an A-frame screening station that could be erected and disassembled quickly and easily in the field (Figure 1).

3.1 | Forensic archeology HIPs

Collaborative assignments and projects are designed to teach students to work side by side with people who may not share one's life experience or background to solve problems and learn new skills [1]. In this case, students at various stages of their academic careers, from different institutions and disparate backgrounds were all hired to work as a collaborative team on a foreign forensic archeological project, requiring them to work together to ensure the excavation ran smoothy and that all protocols were followed correctly.

Diversity/global learning perspectives are programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews that differ from theirs, often via global programs meant to immerse the student in a community unlike their own [1]. The diversity/global learning aspect of this project related to achieving one's professional objectives while in a foreign setting, in this case, the Federal Republic of Germany.

Internships are designed to provide students with direct work experience, most often in their chosen profession, under the direct supervision of a professional in the discipline, who serves as a coach and a mentor [1]. While the students hired for this project worked as archeological technicians rather than paid interns, the authors propose the spirit and intent are the same. Working as part of the field crew on this archeological project, students acquired direct work experience in forensic archeology while being supervised by professional forensic anthropologists with experience conducting forensic archeological recoveries. For example, the PI (NVP) who served as the Scientific Recovery Expert (SRE) on this mission previously worked for the DPAA for several years before taking a job in academia. As such, he was able to utilize both his teaching skills and prior knowledge of DPAA forensic archeological missions to aid the students as they worked as part of the field crew.

4 | DISCUSSION

Treating the students as paid archeological technicians allowed them more agency and created a situation in which they were invested in the project in a professional capacity. In this case, creating a professional atmosphere encouraged the student technicians to take their work seriously, and we did not experience some of the issues, such as sexual harassment or excessive partying, which are unfortunately common at some field school projects [30–32]. It also fostered a cooperative environment, which was critical

FIGURE 1 Forensic archeology crew screening buckets utilizing hanging screens suspended from the A-frame screening stations which the field crew constructed.

because several of the crew were from different academic institutions, meaning they had never collaborated on a fieldwork project before. All the students on the crew had to apply the forensic archeological and anthropological knowledge they had gained in the classroom to a real-world situation. Working together allowed them to collaborate with peers from disparate backgrounds, fine tune their field skills, and receive feedback and guidance from the project PIs in real time. Students with high levels of fieldwork experience aided those who were novices, an experience that was mutually beneficial because the less proficient students learned new methods and techniques and the more experienced students learned how to convey their expertise in a thoughtful and constructive manner. This may have been particularly beneficial to the graduate students on the project, as research suggests that teaching skills to others improves graduate students essential research skills, such as the creation of testable hypotheses and valid research designs [33]. Working with students from different institutions who were farther along in their academic careers, as well as three professors with PhDs (two as PIs and another as field crew for the experience) with disparate backgrounds in forensic anthropology, also provided the undergraduates with insight regarding educational and training trajectory as well as career advancement opportunities and possibilities [34].

The field crew also applied these skills while working in a setting that required them to utilize their archeological knowledge in an international setting with a language barrier. The international aspect of this project provided a number of challenges, including different approaches to evidence handling and land use permissions. The language barrier of course provided challenges in all aspects of the project. However, in no case was the language barrier insurmountable due to three of the crew—all students—being fluent in German.

Field schools, though highly beneficial and often necessary for admission to graduate school or entry-level archeological work, can be prohibitively expensive, making them inaccessible and contributing to issues of inequality and exclusion [4, 35]. Working from a contract model that hired the students as archeological technicians and paid them an hourly wage, as well as transportation and living expenses, allowed students who would not normally have the means to participate in a fieldwork experience, such as a foreign archeological field school or forensic anthropology summer short course, with the wherewithal to do so [4, 34]. Creating a high-impact fieldwork experience in which students were hired as paid employees ensured that the underserved students who would most benefit from this type of HIP, but often do not participate because of the expense, could afford to be part of the team. This is a benefit to the students because studies suggest that receiving increased financial assistance via fiscal avenues such as grants and work-study programs encourages the retention of first-generation college students—a group also more likely to be historically underserved—than simply increasing student loan debt, a practice known to make them more likely to exit higher education [36]. Moreover, paying a wage ensured that the student field crew did not lose the income they would have accrued from staying in the United States and working [4, 34].

Making the fieldwork partnership more accessible by providing a paid wage also provided an opportunity for greater diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging (DEIB), all of which are issues that forensic anthropologists have highlighted as a problem at every level of the discipline [35, 38]. Echoing findings by Antón et al. that focused on the American Association of Physical Anthropologists as a whole, recent work by Tallman and Bird has suggested that forensic anthropologists at every education level (undergraduate, graduate, faculty, administrative, etc.) believe they have a diversity problem, and that this diversity problem becomes more pronounced as one advances in the discipline [37, 38]. Several respondents indicated that they felt that people of color and/or lower socioeconomic status dropped out of the discipline at the undergraduate level, contributing to continuing decreases in diversity as people advanced in forensic anthropology [38]. Research suggests that including people of different races, genders, socioeconomic status, ethnicities, and backgrounds can drive workplace innovation, competitiveness, and problem-solving, and that diverse teams exhibit more creativity and perform better than homogenous ones [39, 40]. Diversity of thought and background also promotes new and increasingly complex research questions and problems, increasing the quality of scientific work [39]. Therefore, an increasing lack of diversity may significantly impact the breadth and quality of forensic anthropology as a discipline. Paying undergraduate and graduate students in the same manner as contracted fieldwork technicians provides them with tangible work experience which they can add to a resume or curriculum vitae (CV) or in a professional/academic job application, while contributing to the retention of underserved students, such as first-generation college students, students of color, LGBTQIAA+, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students, increasing diversity in the discipline. It also provides the "real world" experience that employers have complained was lacking in students who were not subject to high-impact experiential learning [6]. In addition, the short-term length (under 8 weeks) and monetary compensation of this fieldwork experience puts it in line with other research about international experiences abroad that indicate that short-term compensated programs are more accessible and have greater appeal to first-generation students, students of color, graduate students, non-traditional students with families, and students who work full-time [11, 34, 41–43].

Moreover, participating in this HIP forensic archeological project, produced tangible benefits to the students who worked as contractors on the field crew [44]. For example, an MA student, whose thesis research had stalled, utilized what they learned on the mission to formulate new ideas for a successful master's project, while another was able to parlay their demonstrable international archeological fieldwork experience into an archeological job abroad. Another student discovered that their interests lay more in fieldwork projects, such as forensic archeological excavation and repatriation, than in lab-based forensic anthropological research, reorienting which professional positions they might apply for in the future. The project also resulted in at least one research collaboration between one of the project PIs and a student from a difference academic institution, indicating that HIP projects, such as this one, can create

long-standing networks that may aid students as they progress academically and professionally.

While the mission was successful in providing the students with a paid experiential learning opportunity in a collaborative, global environment, we suggest that future projects such as this one would be better served by including some additional elements designed to prompt the field crew to directly consider and reflect upon their experiences. For example, entrance and exit surveys asking undergraduate and graduate field workers to reflect on their expectations, experiences, and what they learned would provide both the students who participated in the project, and the PIs who designed it, with a tangible means of understanding how these field-based projects facilitate learning and professional growth. They would also offer student workers a way to provide constructive feedback about what could be improved in the future. Moreover, reading student feedback would allow the PIs to redesign or tweak various aspects of the project if exit data clearly indicated that what students were learning or failing to learn was incommensurate with the project's stated aims or goals. Similarly, having students keep journals and/or write reflection papers at the conclusion of the project would likely increase deeper learning [45, 46].

Another consideration to take into account is that a recent study by Johnson and Stage questioned the relationship between the implementation of HIPs and four- and six-year graduation rates at public colleges [47]. In this case, the authors examined public universities with an enrollment of 10,000 students or more because such institutions educate over half of the college students in the United States, and the students who matriculate at these institutions are more likely to exhibit the socioeconomic characteristics associated with a lengthening of time to degree [47]. Johnson and Stage found that while HIPs may increase student engagement, that engagement does not necessarily encourage on-time graduation rates [47]. However, the authors noted that there was a significant positive correlation between student research and graduation rates at public colleges with less-selective admissions programs, a finding they employed to suggest that less selective schools should focus on fewer HIPs that have greater returns rather than the *quantity* of high-impact offerings [47, emphasis added]. Therefore, it seems that HIPs are impactful, but need to be tailored to the academic needs of the types of students matriculating at a particular academic institution, and that there may be diminishing returns based on the number of HIPs.

The authors recognize that a DPAA-university partnership is an ideal situation to support student professionalization in a funded model, and that it may not be applicable in many scenarios. However, we argue this general approach, which attempts to (re)structure training opportunities to focus on HIP experiences while shifting from student-paid (i.e., field schools), to student-paying models (i.e., contracts), will result in more equitable experiences for all involved. For those in academia, many forensic anthropologists currently provide consulting services to law enforcement and medicolegal authorities, which they may, or may not be compensated for [48]. While a greater discussion about compensation for forensic anthropological work is outside of the scope of this paper, we argue that professionals should be adequately compensated for their work, and that moving toward a model of adequate compensation should include compensation for student labor as well [4, 49, 50].

This service-based contract model provides a framework for faculty to use their expertise to resolve problems and answer questions for outside, paying, stakeholders in a way that creates paying positions for their students, while also generating training opportunities for their professionalization, that can be structured as HIPs. These types of partnerships, like those with the DPAA, should be formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or memorandum of agreement (MOA), as appropriate, in order to clarify liability, the nature of the work, and compensation, prior to the beginning of a project. This type of contract model, where forensic anthropology consultancy can fund student labor in a professional context has been used at multiple other academic institutions, to include: Mercyhurst University, Michigan State University, and the University of Florida, however to our knowledge none of these institutions have attempted to structure these experiences as HIPs.

5 | CONCLUSION

Forensic archeological fieldwork projects allow for unique experiences which can be tailored to function as HIPs. Creating HIP forensic archeological field teams which employ models where student crew members are hired as professional field technicians and compensated accordingly promotes greater investment in the project, encourages a professional fieldwork atmosphere, and allows underserved students to participate in fieldwork projects. Student investment and professionalism for fieldwork fosters collaboration and cooperation among the crew, making it easier to run these kinds of fieldwork programs. Following the professional model and paying students a wage, as well as room and board and transportation, also creates greater equity because it allows students who are often unintentionally excluded from fieldwork-based HIPs because of the expense, to participate in a HIP that may further their academic and professional careers. This benefits the discipline of forensic anthropology as a whole because it diversifies the discipline and encourages scholars from different backgrounds and with diverse experiences to continue their academic and professional careers in forensic anthropology. Furthermore, while this DPAA-university contract partnership focused on HIPs and creating greater equity and inclusion via paid fieldwork, these types of wage labor experiences have also been utilized to promote student involvement in laboratory-based casework and forensic anthropological research projects, so the model is not limited to fieldwork.

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