

Palomar College
Archaeology Program
San Marcos, CA

Dear Dr. de Barros:

When I came to Palomar, in the fall of 1988, the Archaeology program was one of only two Associate degree programs in the western states. The other one was on the Pima Reservation, in Arizona, and they would not accept a non-Indian into their school. I was apprehensive in returning to school, as it marked a third career change after obtaining Associate degrees in Computer Programming (1970), Psychiatric Nursing (1977), and Psychology (1988), however Archaeology had been a hobby for many years. In other words, could I re-invent myself in middle age and still compete with classmates half my age?

The Program was then taught by Dr. Dennis O'Neil, with most of the Anthropology courses being taught by Abe Gruber. Steve Crouthamel, a medical anthropologist, was teaching the Indian Studies part of the course. I was amazed at both the degree of competence of these instructors and the degree in which they made the learning curve interesting and formative.

After graduating in 1990 and obtaining my BA (1992) and MA (1993) at CSU Stanislaus, in Turlock, I was accepted at the University of Sheffield, England for my PhD, which I received in 1998. I have always credited Palomar's Archaeology program with giving me the firm foundation to succeed in this chosen field.

While Palomar's Archaeology program was well taught by those instructors at the time, I have seen what the program has become since you have taken over the reins. Your expertise has greatly advanced the foundations of entry-level archaeology, making Palomar's program the premier program which other college's should follow.

While I did not have you as an instructor while attending Palomar, I believe that I "found" you in another way. You took a chance when you hired me as a consultant, and co-Principal Investigator, on the Pacific City project in 2001; only knowing that I was a Palomar graduate and a past student of Dr. O'Neil's. During our four-year stint with that project, I learned so much knowledge from you that had never been taught students in, what I deem, the early days of Palomar's Archaeology program. I can see why so many of "your" students go on to achieve greater degrees of archaeological skill. However, your mentorship of my skills helped me to be the archaeologist that I am today, and to have the position I hold with Terracon Consulting.

It seems that I actually received my Palomar training in two phases - one that started in 1988 and the other that continues when working with you. You, more than any other professional archaeologist that I have worked with, have molded and honed my skill's set to a much higher degree, than what may be gleaned from traditional course work. I don't know of any archaeology professors who become "Teacher of the Year," however, if anyone deserves that title, it would be you!

Thank you for being there to teach a new breed of future archaeologists. You are a true visionary!

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