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OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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July 28, 2026

The Honorable James C. Ramos
Chair, Select Committee on Native American Affairs
1021 O Street, Suite 8310
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable John Harabedian
Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 4350
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairs Ramos and Harabedian,

As recommended by the California State Auditor in Report 2024-047, enclosed is a report by the University of California on the costs that Native American Tribes incur related to repatriation under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and California NAGPRA. This report was developed with the input of California Indian Tribes and was sent for a Tribal comment period that concluded on July 19, 2026. No concerns were raised regarding the report.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Best wishes,

Katherine S. Newman
UC System Provost and
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

UC Berkeley Chancellor's Distinguished Professor
of Sociology & Public Policy

Attachment: Report to the State Legislature on Tribal Costs of Repatriation

cc: Vice President Maldonado
Executive Director Motton
Director DeMattos
Systemwide Repatriation Coordinator Echavarri

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Report to the State Legislature on Tribal Costs of Repatriation

The University of California (UC) provides the following report on Tribal repatriation costs as recommended by the California State Auditor (CSA) in its [April 15, 2025](#) on UC's compliance with the [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#) (NAGPRA) and the [California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#) (CaINAGPRA). Specifically, [Recommendation 19](#) of the CSA report states:

To ensure that all campuses provide adequate support to tribes for the expenses related to repatriation, the Office of the President should engage tribes to study the costs the tribes incur, and by January 2026, it should provide a report to the Legislature that includes at least the following information:

- *A full list of the types of tribal costs for which the university proposes to provide funding and the total amount of funding that the university would need annually to pay for such costs.*
- *The total amount of funding required annually to compensate tribes for the time they spend in consultation.*
- *The total amount of funding required annually to compensate tribes for reburial costs.*
- *An accounting of the amount of funding the university has available to provide toward these costs and the amount of funding it needs, if any, from the Legislature.*

At the suggestion of Tribes that participated in listening sessions organized by the UC Office of the President (UCOP), a draft of this report was sent to all California Indian Tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) contact list for a 60-day Tribal review period, which concluded on July 19, 2026. No concerns were raised regarding the report.

Executive Summary

UC engaged Tribes to create a list of the types of costs Tribes incur related to repatriation. The list includes **personnel time, travel and lodging, consultants and services, supplies and equipment, transportation, and land preparation**. UC currently offers funding for all of these expenses or more often, pays for these costs directly, rather than reimbursing Tribes. Campuses estimate that the **annual cost of consultation, including time spent in consultation, will total \$426,500** in Fiscal Year 2025-2026. For reburial costs, UC estimates that a single reburial may cost between \$655 and \$1,047,850 depending on the size of the collection, Tribal preference, or other specialized needs. Campuses estimated a total of **\$216,500 for reburial costs** in FY 2025-2026. With a total contribution by UCOP of **\$3,002,400** for Tribal support for FYs 2025-2028, in addition to campus contributions, UC anticipates it will have sufficient resources to compensate Tribes for expenses related to repatriation in that period. If UCOP Tribal support funding is exhausted, campuses will use other resources to continue funding consultation and reburial costs. Finally, since Tribal needs extend beyond their direct work with UC, **we recommend that the Legislature consider offering a state grant program directly to Tribes** to fund their overall repatriation-related needs.

I. Background

UC is strongly committed to repatriating all Native American ancestors and cultural items expeditiously, respectfully, and in accordance with the requirements of the law¹ and the UC [Native American Cultural Affiliation and Repatriation Policy](#) (UC Policy). To do so, UC must conduct extensive and meaningful consultation with potentially culturally affiliated Tribes. UC also aims to assist with the transfer or reburial of repatriated ancestors and items as requested by Tribes. Consultation, reburials and transfers can be significantly costly, particularly for large and complex repatriations.

As the institution which historically held the largest number of California Native American ancestors and cultural items, it is UC's goal and ethical responsibility to cover Tribal expenses to the greatest extent possible. UC Policy requires campuses to provide for necessary costs incurred by Tribes, including stipends for Tribal and other experts, travel, meals, and overnight accommodations² and offer to assist, as needed or requested, with transfer/repatriation logistics, which may include stewardship agreements, coordinating reburial lands, coordinating with Tribes to identify alternate sources of funding for reburial preparation costs, and applying for federal NAGPRA repatriation grants.³ Some recent examples of campus assistance include arranging for professional packing and air freight for repatriated collections, identifying potential reburial sites located on UC land, renting trucks and excavators, among other services. For FYs 2025-2028, UCOP has designated a total of \$3,002,400 for Tribal compensation for consultation and repatriation. Campuses may additionally supplement this support from other resources.

II. Tribal Listening Sessions

In December 2025, UCOP held three virtual listening sessions on the costs of repatriation for Tribes. All California Indian Tribes on the NAHC contact list were invited to these sessions. The sessions were attended by 21 Tribal representatives from 14 Tribes and 11 UC staff from five campuses.

To initiate discussion, UCOP shared a list of Tribal costs and asked attendees if they had additions to the list or comments on the listed costs. Attendees were in general agreement with the list and emphasized that repatriation is time-consuming and resource intensive.

There were two suggested additions to the list, the first being the cost of storing repatriated ancestors and cultural items. After accepting legal control of a collection, Tribes may not be immediately ready to proceed with reburial of the collection and must identify an appropriate storage space while preparations are being made. At other times, Tribes may need to retrofit or build their own climate-controlled spaces to preserve or display delicate cultural items. The second cost mentioned was that of incinerating museum packaging. Tribes often choose to transfer ancestors and cultural items into containers made of natural materials and may prefer to incinerate the leftover museum packaging.

UC campuses typically offer to temporarily house repatriated ancestors or cultural items before the Tribes are ready for the transfer and to incinerate packaging materials. Tribes that are not ready to physically receive repatriated collections may enter into stewardship agreements with UC to ensure that

¹ NAGPRA ([43 C.F.R. §§ 10.1-10.12](#)) and CalNAGPRA ([H.S.C. §§ 8010-8030](#)).

² [UC Policy](#) Section V.B.1.b.i

³ [UC Policy](#) Section V.B.1.b.m

ancestors and items remain appropriately cared for, and UC can arrange for incineration of leftover museum packaging according to Tribal preference. Although UC directly bears the costs associated with storage on UC facilities and packaging incineration, we added these to the list of Tribal repatriation costs to ensure Tribes know that UC will cover these costs. However, UC does not cover the cost of Tribes' long-term storage needs after repatriation and transfer.

Another barrier raised during the listening session was the funding need for dedicated Tribal staff to manage repatriation matters. Tribes need their own staff to perform research and preparation before they engage with museums. UC pays consultation costs but does not cover Tribes' general staffing needs.

Tribes expressed their desire for greater clarity on how UC would provide funds for costs we cover, and a comprehensive grant program to address the broader Tribal needs that may be incurred before engagement with UC or post-repatriation/transfer. We recognize that these are real needs and are an important reminder of the complex challenges that Tribes face.

Finally, Tribal participants emphasized the need for Tribes to review and comment on this report. Tribes requested that this report be submitted as preliminary pending a Tribal review period.

III. Types of Costs

Using input from UC campus repatriation coordinators and Tribal listening sessions, UCOP has compiled a list of Tribal costs for which the University proposes to provide support. Most of these costs are already being covered by UC. The first two cost categories, personnel and travel, are usually funded with stipends or reimbursements. Some of the services listed under the other categories, such as storage space and incineration, are directly provided by UC at no cost to Tribes. Campuses also typically purchase supplies requested by Tribes and, in many cases, organize reburial logistics (transportation and land preparation) if requested.

Personnel

- Staff time spent in consultation or preparing ancestors or cultural items for reburial or transfer
- Stipends or honoraria

Travel

- Flights, mileage, and other transportation
- Lodging
- Meals and incidentals

Consultants and services

- Specialists e.g. osteologists, conservators
- Testing and/or mitigation of contaminated collections
- Fine art handling, packing, or crating services
- UC storage space for repatriated collections
- Incineration of museum packaging

Supplies and equipment

- Repackaging materials
- Ceremonial supplies

- Event logistics e.g. chairs, tents
- Equipment rental e.g. excavators

Transportation for reburial or transfers

- Cargo van rental
- Air freight

Land preparation

- Land acquisition (options may include using UC land for reburial, coordinating reburial lands, or working with Tribes to identify alternate sources of funding)
- Cultural resource surveying
- Permits

This list should not be considered exhaustive as the repatriation process can be unpredictable and new challenges may arise. Thus, unexpected expenses that are not listed here may also be covered by UC as circumstances allow. We are committed to supporting Tribes through the NAGPRA/CalNAGPRA process.

Broader Tribal funding needs, such as the costs of establishing a Tribal NAGPRA program or building long-term storage for repatriated cultural items, have not been included on this list. However, UC has and will continue to support Tribes in seeking grants or other sources of funding that can cover these types of projects.

IV. UC Budget Planning

UC campuses that hold ancestors and cultural items must submit their NAGPRA/CalNAGPRA budgets to UCOP by April 1st of each year. Budgets must show, at minimum, estimated expenses for UC personnel, consultation (e.g. meals and incidental expenses), Tribal support (e.g. travel, stipends), and transfer and reburial. For FY 2025-2026, UC campuses budgeted a systemwide total of \$643,000 towards Tribal support, consisting of an estimated cost of \$426,500 for consultation and \$216,500 for reburials.

Budgets must also identify funding sources for the year, including campus commitments and funds from UCOP. For FY 2025-2026 campuses committed a cumulative of \$199,200 towards consultation and repatriation costs. The remaining \$443,800 is covered by UCOP.

For FYs 2025-2028, UCOP has designated \$3,002,400 exclusively for supporting Tribal costs of consultation and repatriation.

V. Estimated Funding Needs

a. Consultation Costs

UC estimates that the systemwide cost of Tribal consultation will total \$426,500 in FY 2025-2026 (Table 1). In addition to compensating Tribes for time spent in consultation, UC covers costs of Tribal representatives' travel, lodging, and meals, and has previously paid for external consultants or services requested by Tribes.

Each campus estimated their consultation costs based on planned activities for the year and/or existing timelines already agreed upon with consulting Tribes. The cost of each consultation can vary

widely, depending on factors such as the number of Tribal participants, the location of the Tribe and mode of transportation, the size and complexity of collections being worked on, as well as Tribal preferences and protocols. For example, Tribes consisting of multiple autonomous bands may need a dozen or more NAGPRA representatives to attend a consultation, whereas others may have one designated representative for their Tribe. In cases of virtual consultations, which have become increasingly common, there may be no travel costs incurred.

Campuses have historically taken different approaches in compensating Tribes for time spent in consultation. Some campuses offer Tribes reimbursement at a base hourly rate that can be adjusted as requested. Another method, which received positive feedback during the Tribal listening sessions, is to work with the consulting Tribe to calculate a lump sum that is provided up front. This gives Tribes greater flexibility to cover travel and/or personnel costs at their discretion and is more expedient than transmitting reimbursements. Other campuses offered each participant a modest honorarium but did not typically offer to cover hourly costs, in part due to budget limitations. With new Tribal support funding from UCOP for FYs 2025-2028, all campuses will now offer compensation for the same types of costs, i.e., those listed in Section III above. Greater consistency and awareness of what UC can assist with will help Tribes plan consultation timelines and strategies. UC will continue to honor Tribal preference in how they are compensated for their expenses.

Table 1. Estimated consultation costs for FY 2025-2026 by campus

Campus	Estimated consultation costs
UC Berkeley	\$140,000
UC Davis	\$81,400
UCLA	\$14,400
UC Riverside	\$43,000
UC San Diego	\$44,500
UC Santa Barbara	\$98,200
UC Santa Cruz	\$5,000
Systemwide	\$426,500

b. Reburial Costs

Reburials are complex events with numerous factors that determine the total cost incurred. A dominant factor is the size of the reburial. UC campuses have facilitated reburials ranging from one ancestor to thousands of ancestors accompanied by hundreds of thousands of belongings. Even small reburials may not necessarily be cheaper, as ceremonial needs may be the same regardless of the number of ancestors or items being reburied. The number of burials can also range widely depending on whether Tribes opt to rebury materials from hundreds of archaeological sites in one location, or perform numerous smaller reburials so ancestors can be as close to their original resting place as possible. For ancestors or items originating from shared Tribal territories, multiple Tribes may be involved with reburial, increasing the number of attendees and associated costs.

To explore the full range of potential reburial costs for Tribes, UC developed low-cost and high-cost scenarios for each of the cost types listed in Section IV of this report (Table 2). Calculations were made using information and resources shared by Tribal representatives combined with details from past

campus repatriations. Estimates for a single reburial event range from \$655 if expenses are minimal⁴ to \$1,047,850 if every cost type is incurred.

Table 2. Range of costs for a single reburial in low-cost and high-cost scenarios

Type of Cost	Low-cost Scenario	High-cost Scenario	Determining Factors
Personnel	\$625	\$250,000	Number of hours worked, Tribe's hourly rate
Travel	\$30	\$240,000	Distance from campus or reburial location, number of travelers, days of travel needed
External consultants and services	\$0	\$417,000	Need for specialized services, number of items requiring services
Supplies and equipment	\$0	\$15,850	Cultural protocols, size of reburial ceremony
Transportation for reburial or transfers	\$0	\$40,000	Mode of transport and size of collection
Land preparation	\$0	\$85,000	Need for environmental compliance or permits, size of reburial
Total	\$655	\$1,047,850	

In practice, campuses estimate reburial expenses informed by prior campus reburials and input from the Tribes with which they are planning reburials. Current Tribal consultations indicate that reburials planned for the near future will fall under the lower end of the range. Table 3 shows the amounts campuses budgeted for reburial-related expenses in FY 2025-2026. Some campuses are better able to predict their estimated expenses depending on their collections and the Tribes they work with. A campus that works with a small group of Tribes will have a more reliable forecast of planned reburial activities than a campus that works with hundreds of Tribes.

Estimating costs on an annual basis can be challenging because it is hard to predict what reburials will occur in a given year. The potential complications that influence reburial costs can similarly affect timelines, and there may be new determining factors to consider.⁵ So that funds remain available as soon as a Tribe is ready, campuses usually carry forward unspent reburial funds to the next fiscal year. UC Berkeley has adopted a strategy of accumulating unspent funds as their potential reburial costs are much larger than other campuses and require a bigger reserve to maintain flexibility.

Table 3. Estimated reburial costs for FY 25-26 by campus

Campus	FY25-26 Reburial Budget
UC Berkeley	\$100,000
UC Davis	\$33,300
UCLA	\$17,500
UC Riverside	\$29,500
UC San Diego	\$16,000
UC Santa Barbara	\$18,700
UC Santa Cruz	\$1,500
Systemwide	\$216,500

⁴ Assuming only a few hours of staff time, minimal travel, no need for collections preparation or land-related costs

⁵ Campuses have reported delays of several months if specific weather is needed for the reburial, or even five years if the reburial is part of a Tribe's long-term repatriation plan.

VI. Process for Obtaining Tribal Support Funds

Tribes work with the UC campus to identify the Tribe's needs and estimated costs (e.g., see types of costs listed in Section III of this report). If the campus intends to use the UCOP funds set aside for Tribal support, the campus prepares a request to UCOP with a description of activities, budget, and budget justification. UCOP will evaluate the requests based on equity, availability of funds across the system, need, and appropriateness. If approved, UCOP will transfer the funds to the campus. The campus provides all payments to the Tribe, regardless of fund source.

VII. Recommendations

UCOP anticipates that its new commitment of \$3,002,400 towards Tribal support in FYs 2025-2028, combined with \$199,200 in campus contributions in FY 2025-2026, will be sufficient to cover the costs incurred by Tribes when working with UC on repatriation. After UCOP Tribal support funding is exhausted, UCOP will ensure that campuses find other resources to continue funding consultation and reburial costs.

Instead of providing funds to UC, UCOP recommends that the Legislature consider offering a comprehensive grant program directly to Tribes to fund repatriation-related needs that extend beyond their work with UC. This would parallel federal grants provided by the [National NAGPRA program](#) to support repatriation and consultation. While federal grants are available to both Tribes and museums, UCOP suggests that state repatriation grants exclusively support Tribal NAGPRA programs. State grants could ensure that Tribes have sufficient staff to consult with institutions like UC and assist with long-term, post-repatriation planning for repatriated cultural items not intended for reburial. UC has heard from Tribes that are concerned about preserving delicate items like baskets, or some that have aspirations to display repatriated items in a Tribal museum. Funding for this type of work could see repatriation through to its ultimate purpose of benefiting and healing Tribal communities.

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