

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 9 – 11, 2024**

LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AND VISITOR CENTER

ISSUE: In the heart of the Inland Empire, tucked away between the hills of Riverside and Corona, is the location of an inspiring collection of ancient arts and culture – rare antiquities and traditions from other lands – that have been entrusted to La Sierra University, a liberal arts university established in 1922. Up until now students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors have benefited from plentiful artifactual donations that comprise three major growing collections. Befitting their historical, anthropological, social, and cultural significance, the three world-class collections (the World Museum of Natural History, the Center for Near Eastern Archeology, and the Stahl Anthropology Center) with combined holdings of more than one hundred thousand objects, require permanent conservation, curation, and presentation. Following the University’s due diligence, including a thorough market study, plans have been developed to establish a large aesthetically designed museum that will serve as a destination for local as well as international visitors, students, educators, and scholars.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group supports La Sierra University (LSU) in advocating for the financial resources necessary to complete the working drawings for the proposed Museum and Visitor Center. The capital fundraising campaign could benefit from Federal or national funding in the following ways:

- Support LSU’s request to the House Committee on Appropriations’ Community Project Funding allocation for 2023.
- Support LSU’s request to the Senate Appropriations Committee through the Congressional Direct spending opportunity available to senators.
- Support LSU’s request to elected and appointed officials at the Federal level garnering support for the museum.
- Support LSU’s requests for support to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, including applications for the National Leadership Grants for Museums;¹
- Support LSU’s request for support from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).
- Support LSU request for support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).
- Support LSU’s request for support from the National Science Foundation (NSF).
- Provide introductions to trustees of private, family, and corporate foundations at the national level.
- Participation as a thought partner on capital campaign funding.

BACKGROUND: The three world-class museums, which have been independently developed over decades with each worthy of international acclaim, are physically located in separate departments on the La Sierra University campus. The threads of human history that the museums represent call out to be woven into a tapestry of natural history, archeology, and anthropology that merge with other disciplines and whose contents have for centuries captivated and inspired scholars, teachers, students, and others from diverse walks of life. The three museums are:

- *World Museum of Natural History*, which incorporates one of the finest collections of rare cut and uncut gems in the world, and is joined by extinct, rare, and unusual amphibians, mammals, birds, petrified wood, and mineral spheres. This massive collection benefits from the field research and preservation efforts of faculty members Drs. Lee and Jesse Grismer, who have received international acclaim for their publications that report on discovery and documentation of new species.
- *The Center for New Eastern Archaeology* is home to the tens of thousands of artifacts and research samples mostly excavated by La Sierra researchers and students at archaeological sites across the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and includes more than 10,000 donated biblical-era artifacts comprising the largest collection outside of Jordan. A hallmark of the Center’s contribution to the field is its development of sustainable “community archaeology” practices.

¹ <https://www.imls.gov/>

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- *The Stahl Anthropology Center* contains a wealth of one-of-a-kind rare anthropological materials established in honor of Ana and Fernando Stahl, who shared their medical and educational skills with the peoples of the Amazon and the Altiplano in Peru and Bolivia. Currently in the process of being curated and preserved, these holdings are a treasure trove of materials to be studied to further the understanding of what makes us human.

La Sierra University, in partnership with numerous elected and appointed officials, community stakeholders and leaders, and acclaimed researchers and scholars, have joined efforts to launch a campaign to construct the Museum and Visitor Center for natural history, archaeology, and anthropology. The \$69,591,753 facility will be located on the La Sierra University campus, totals approximately 46,000 square feet, with approximately one-half devoted to exhibit space with the balance for auditorium, restoration workspaces, offices, classrooms, café/catering, and storage. Based on a market analysis, the projected annual attendance for the completed Visitor Center and Museum is approximately 70,000 attendees, derived from an analysis of comparable average utilization for southern California museums, universities, and national museums.

Upon completion of the Visitor Center and Museum, a pro forma for operational expenses (available by request) has been prepared with balanced budget assumptions that include revenue from ticket admission sales, museum store sales, café/food beverages, public programs, facility rental and membership sales.

La Sierra University is requesting Architectural Design Fees totaling \$6.5 million.