The Pachamta Research Project: Archaeology and Heritage in Northwest India

Executive Summary

Introduction. The Pachamta Research Project investigates archaeology and heritage in northwest India through excavation and field survey. The project is part of an ongoing, seven year collaboration between PIs at KSU, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University (Udaipur, India), and Deccan College (Pune, India) that investigates the relationship between economic and environmental processes and incorporates a broad concern for engaging local communities and documenting local and regional heritage. Matching funds are requested from the Institute for Global Initiatives to supplement a National Geographic Research and Exploration Grant that supports an ongoing research program of systematically sampling a related set of archaeological sites. IGI funds will support travel costs for the PI and three participating KSU students. Funding is also requested for basic equipment and supplies, transport in the field and payment to local laborers who will assist in excavation, screening, and washing artifacts.

The Project objectives for the 2014-15 field season include: 1) excavating the site of Pachamta to determine the chronology of the site and to collect material that will allow us to identify economic patterns including exchange networks and subsistence practices; 2) formally surveying previously identified sites within a 25 km radius to collect data regarding regional economic interactions and to identify endangered archaeological sites; 3) training three KSU undergraduate students, three Rajasthan Vidyapeeth graduate students, and three Deccan College graduate students; and 4) continuing our program of outreach to local residents. At the conclusion of the project, the results will be presented at international venues and published in international journals.

Rationale. The Pachamta Research Project supports several goals of the IGI regarding research, education abroad, and engagement. The ongoing research-based international partnership and collaboration with Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University and Deccan College contributes to the internationalization of the research program of KSU. The program addresses a relevant research question regarding the relationship of climate change and economic interaction in the ancient past. The project also provides a non-traditional education abroad experience that is research-oriented and includes a full
cultural immersion for KSU undergraduates. Finally, the field survey portion of the project facilitates community engagement by promoting preservation and documentation of local heritage with and for local communities in northwest India.

**Implementation Plan.** The first quarter of AY 2014-15 will be devoted to logistical planning including preparing and submitting a proposal for an Excavation and Exploration Permit from the Archaeological Survey of India and developing the database framework for collection of data. The second quarter will focus on preparing travel logistics, training KSU students, and traveling to India. The third quarter is devoted to the field season, which includes excavation, field survey, and a two week period for artifact analysis as well as preparation of reports for the ASI, NGS, and IGI. All preliminary analyses will be conducted in the field and artifacts will be housed at the Institute for Rajasthan Studies in Udaipur. Finally, the fourth quarter is devoted to data analysis and the initial preparation of publications.

**Outcomes.** This research will result in two robust databases that will nourish an ambitious publication program over the next few years. The first dataset will examine shifts in economic patterns in the context of climate change in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. The second dataset will address the preservation of heritage by assessing the current state of threatened archaeological sites in the region. Between 2015 and 2018, both datasets will be presented at American and international venues including the Society for American Archaeology annual meetings, the Annual Conference on South Asia, the European Association for South Asian Art and Archaeology (held in Europe), and the Society of South Asian Archaeology (held in various South Asian countries). In the three years following the project, the project team also anticipates publishing the results in prominent anthropology and archaeology journals in India (*Man and Environment, Puratattva*), the UK (*Journal of World Prehistory, World Archaeology*) and the US (*Journal of Field Archaeology, Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory, and Heritage Management*). In addition, 3 KSU undergraduates will present their research at the Georgia Academy of Sciences annual meeting. Finally, this project will also contribute significant data to a book project that I will begin in 2015 and hope to publish with a major university press in 2017. After this project, it is expected that a new five year research plan will be developed by the international collaborative team.