

In its current configuration Chucalissa has three areas of focus with respect to history and mission.

Chucalissa, a National Historic Landmark, is a multi-purpose, interdisciplinary unit of The University of Memphis. The mission of Chucalissa is to preserve, study and interpret the archeological site for diverse public and university audiences.

Chucalissa Focus Areas:

1. Site Operation-

Preservation of mound group
Protection of other cultural resources
Facility operations
Museum administration
Collections management
Finance and development

2. Public education-

Museum exhibitions and programs
School programs (onsite and outreach)
Special events
Tour and demonstration programs
Publications

3. Service to University, College and Community

Graduate student research programs
Museum Studies Certificate Program
Community outreach and collaboration
Cultural tourism in Memphis

Budget Hearing Documentation

Chucalissa

January 28, 2004

1. There are currently three focus areas that are central to the mission of the Chucalissa Archaeological Site and its associated C.H. Nash Museum of Anthropology. Chucalissa has experienced a serious decline in visitation and provided limited service to University and College over recent years. The current objective is to develop a plan to stabilize the general operation of museum while expanding the current program of the facility. Development of the facilities and associated infrastructure of the site will be driven by the expansion and enhancement of its education and service programs.

The primary focus area of Chucalisaa is the operation of the archaeological park and museum to provide comprehensive educational experiences for general, student and scholarly audiences. This focus area includes the critical stewardship responsibilities for the preservation of the cultural resources of the site, the mound group and the collections of the museum. Public education is effected at the site through the presentation of museum exhibitions, tours, demonstration programs, outreach presentations and special events. Operation of the museum includes independent budgetary responsibility for the maintenance of a suite of public and residential structures, several support buildings, a nature trail and extensive grounds.

The programmatic focus of Chucalissa is to provide quality educational experiences for the general public, school groups and special audiences. The museum and archaeological park hold great potential as a major factor in Memphis tourism and an arena in which to effect broad education on Native American culture, art and history. The public program of the museum is focused on the permanent exhibitions of the C.H. Nash Museum and a self guided tour of the mound group and nature trail. Current strengths include student tour and demonstration programs and effective school outreach programming. Efforts are underway to restore value and quality to the visitor experience at Chucalissa and to strengthen its financial and administrative support systems. Through a series of special events and programs Chucalissa provides vital linkages to contemporary Native American communities throughout the mid south region.

The third focus of importance at Chucalissa is service to University and College. This is the area in which the unit has great potential and the most work to accomplish. We currently provide training and research opportunities for students in the Archaeology track of the Graduate Student program in Anthropology. In addition we provide instruction and practical experiences for students enrolled in the interdisciplinary Museum Studies Certificate Program. As a public attraction Chucalissa provides an excellent opportunity for University engagement with the broader communities of the Memphis metropolitan area. We are particularly well situated to enhance formal collaborations and partnerships with Native American communities and tribal governments throughout the south eastern region.

2. Many of the programmatic activities currently undertaken at Chucalissa contribute to the strategic goals of the University of Memphis and the College of Arts and Sciences. The site and the museum provide research and training opportunities that enhance the educational experiences of undergraduate and graduate students. The museum and its staff also support the interdisciplinary Museum Studies Certificate Program, providing access to collections, supporting undergraduate research and administering student internships. Chucalissa also provides important linkages to the Native American population of the Memphis metropolitan area and contributes to the educational, cultural and commercial sectors of our community. Efforts to secure additional levels of external support and to develop a dynamic volunteer support organization are expected to increase community and alumni participation in the operation and programs of Chucalissa.