2016 AIA-OC SOCIETY GRANT RECIPIENT

Cinthia Campos, CSULA

Biography
Cinthia Marlene Campos was born to Mexican immigrant parents and raised in Inglewood. The first in her family to go to college, she received her B.A. with Distinction in the Major from California State University, Monterey Bay, where she gained experience as a California archaeologist. She is currently pursuing her M.A. in Anthropology at California State University, Los Angeles with an emphasis in Mesoamerican Cave Archaeology. Her research interests are in the culture of her ancestors, the P’urhépecha of Michoacán. Her project, the Turicato Cave Reconnaissance, focuses on sacred landscape at a newly discovered archaeological cave site located near La Laguna de Tacámbaro in the Tierra Caliente region. At Cal State L.A. Ms. Campos has been awarded a Graduate Equity Fellowship, the ASI Student Achievement Scholarship, and the Golden Eagle Award of Excellence. In addition to her research, Ms. Campos is exploring Ph.D. programs and is working toward a career as university professor and researcher.

Project Summary
The Turicato Cave Reconnaissance Project investigates sacred landscape, in particular ritual cave use, at a newly discovered site near La Laguna de Tacámbaro in the Tierra Caliente region of Michoacán, Mexico. During pre-Colombian times, this region fell within the Tarascan state, a powerful rival of the Aztec empire. A preliminary survey recovered an artifact assemblage that is analogous to those found in the Maya area. Ms. Campos hopes to clarify the nature of cave utilization through site surveying, data collection, and analysis including radiocarbon dating and strontium isotope analysis of human remains uncovered within the cave. This presents a unique opportunity to learn about the religious practices of an understudied Mesoamerican culture.