

**From:** [Cecilia Tsu](#)  
**To:** [Clerkoftheboard](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Agenda Item #25  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2026 4:48:11 PM

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Dear Clerk of the Board of Supervisors,

Please find below my public comment on Agenda Item #25 for the April 28 Board of Supervisors meeting. Thank you,

My name is Cecilia Tsu, and I am an Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Davis. I am a resident of District 4 and work in District 2. My comment today addresses the FY 2026-27 budget recommendation to cut the Yolo County Archives Library Assistant position from full to half time (Agenda Item #25). Although this seems like a minor budget item in the big picture of how to address the county's serious budget deficit, it is my firm belief that this particular cut will have lasting ripple effects that will impact many members of our community at large. I would like to explain why this is the case and respectfully ask to Board of Supervisors to reconsider the cut to this position.

Since 2024, I have partnered with the Yolo County Archives to establish a public history project that seeks to research local histories of underrepresented groups and to share those stories with the public. "Uncovering Diverse Histories of Yolo County" has brought together UC Davis undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty, along with archivists, local elementary school teachers and students, school district staff, and community members to collaborate on local history research and K-12 curriculum. Beginning last year, UCD students have presented the research we've done on Yolo County history to elementary schoolchildren in Davis, Woodland, and Knights Landing. This year, 11 undergraduates presented to more than 600 students at 12 schools in the Woodland Joint Unified School District for Black History Month. The material was all drawn from our research conducted at the Archives. The response from teachers and students has been tremendous, with many requests for more presentations about local history. We have seen firsthand the power of local history to engage people of all ages.

For UC Davis students, most of whom seldom venture beyond the campus and town in their time here, the experience of visiting the Archives has been truly impactful, even life changing. Prior to going to the Archives in Woodland, most of them had never been to an archive before or knew what it was. Now some of these students want to become archivists themselves or work in a related field. Some became volunteers and interns; others have done research projects on Yolo County history. One graduate student has decided to pursue a dissertation focused on Black history in Yolo County. Some of my students plan to become teachers and have told me that having this experience of learning at the Archives has transformed how they plan to teach their future students. Through our collaboration with the Yolo County Archives, all of these students have gained an understanding of what doing history really means and feel that sense of connection to place, which they will carry with them for the rest of their lives after they graduate.

My students would not have had these meaningful, life-altering educational experiences at the Archives if not for the staff there. I cannot overstate how important the archivists have been,

or how much my students have praised and learned from them. As you are aware, the Archives has a staff of just two individuals, which is mind-boggling given how much they are responsible for. Yet with every patron who comes through, Heather Lanctot and Rachel Poutasse are invariably welcoming, patient, and knowledgeable. They helped guide my students and me to the right sources, brainstorm research strategies, and they pulled endless boxes and volumes at our request. Research always generates more questions, and they have graciously and helpfully answered them all. My students have had extensive interaction with Rachel and can attest to the fact that the position she holds as Library Assistant vastly understates the importance and complexity of the work she does. The wealth of knowledge and expertise she possesses simply cannot be reduced by any degree without sacrificing the integrity of the Archives' public mission.

This is what I mean by the ripple effect: it is one position out of many in the county, but that one position has had so much impact on the lives of students, not just my students at UC Davis, but the elementary school kids they've reached throughout the county, and even the ones they will teach in years to come. Understanding the truth about our past is more important than ever. The Yolo County Archives is place where people can learn about that history for themselves. Maintaining funding for its staff will allow the Archives to continue serving the public and impacting the community in myriad ways. It is a relatively small investment that will bear enormous, lasting returns. I sincerely urge the Board to refrain from reducing the Yolo County Archives staff.

Thank you.

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