September 8, 2015

Dan L. Monroe

Peabody Essex Museum

161 Essex Street

Salem, MA 01970

Dear Mr. Monroe,

I want to set forth here Andover Newton Theological School’s position regarding the items from our collection housed at the Peabody Essex Museum.

We do not dispute that Andover Newton is subject to NAGPRA. We intend—and always have intended—to abide by the provisions of NAGPRA.

The question has always been which items in the collection are subject to NAGPRA. Andover Newton is not qualified to make such determinations, so previously we relied on the judgment of the Peabody Essex Museum, which found that 10 of the items in the collection are subject to NAGPRA. As we have investigated this matter and learned more, however, it has become clear that other objects in the collection may also be subject to NAGPRA. That has led us to reassess our plan of action.

It is true that we did explore the possibility of selling some objects in the collection, but since it is no longer clear which items are subject to NAGPRA, we have decided not to proceed with the sale of any items that currently are part of the Native American collection held by Peabody Essex. For the sake of clarity, let me state that in another way: We have no current or future plans to sell items from Andover Newton’s collection of Native American artifacts held by the Peabody Essex Museum.

We will proceed to repatriate artifacts, however, if feasible and appropriate ways can be found to do so. We have already engaged a consultant to help us in that process.

We also reserve the right to find another museum (or museums) that might be a more suitable home for our collection.

In any instance, we are not planning to remove any items from the Peabody Essex Museum until we can determine the most responsible way to proceed.

I hope this summary is helpful.

Sincerely,

Martin B. Copenhaver