The lead article in the January 1997 issue of OIP's International Programs Newsletter featured startling new discoveries being made in the Dominican Republic at an archaeological site inhabited during the 16th century by the Taino Indians, who were probably the first people to meet Europeans in that region. The excavations, centered around a sinkhole, are being carried out jointly by teams of archaeologists from Indiana University and the Dominican Republic.

In May, a delegation of Dominican archaeologists and museum staff brought some Taino artifacts to Bloomington for a one-day seminar at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures, attended by a capacity audience.

Delegation members spoke not only of the rich findings in bowls, vessels, gourds, tools, and cave drawings that have been preserved in the depths of the sinkhole and environs, but also of the newer discovery of five ceremonial plazas and trails around the site, indicating that the area might have served as the Taino capital.

Charles Beeker, director of the Underwater Science program at IU's School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and leader of the IU team, stressed the importance of bringing back to light the Taino culture, of which little is known. Geoff Conrad, Mathers Museum director, said he considered the site to be "one of the largest and most important archaeological sites in the Caribbean."

The Dominican delegation, led by Peter Morales, head of the governing board of the Parque Nacional del Este, included senior archaeological directors of the park, Marcio Veloz and Elpidio Ortega, and Angel Caba, director of the Altos de Chavon Regional Archaeological Museum. The group also visited the Lilly Library to look at its 15th-16th century collections.

They summarized their findings in a private meeting with President Myles Brand and OIP Dean Patrick O'Meara, during which there was an exchange of gifts to celebrate the cooperative agreement between IU and three Dominican institutions.

— RMN