Department of Anthropology

- In Central Mexico, Dr. Jerry Melbye is using forensic science to examine the famous mummies of Guanajuato—some 100 naturally mummified bodies that have been exhumed from a local cemetery over the last century. His scientific conclusions will help to solve mysteries about their lives and the causes of their deaths.
- In Belize, graduate students in a field school led by Dr. Jim Garber have uncovered important artifacts proving that the Maya are a much older and more developed civilization than was once believed. The students’ work is on exhibit in the Belize National Museum.
- At the Art Institute of Chicago, Dr. Kent Reilly has presented new findings on the supernatural meanings of art from early civilizations in Central and North America. A noted scholar of Mesoamerican and North American Indian art, Dr. Reilly also curated an exhibit of important North American Indian art that has been displayed at the AIC and at the Smithsonian.
- In Texas, graduate students working with Dr. Britt Bousman and the Center for Archaeological Studies are excavating historic and prehistoric sites that yield information about Texas’ inhabitants through the millennia—from 19th-century West Texas forts and ranches to 9,000-year-old campsites at our own Aquarena Springs. Dr. Bousman and his students are also excavating a prehistoric site in South Africa where they hope to gain information that will contribute to our understanding of the migrations of the earliest humans from Africa.
- Soon (December is the anticipated date), Anthropology will open an official State of Texas curation facility where anthropologists from Texas State and elsewhere will curate the collections that are donated to the University or collected through field excavations. The state-of-the-art facility will ensure the collections’ availability to graduate students for thesis projects and to other researchers for many years to come.

Department of English

- Novelist Denis Johnson, holder of the 2006-2007 Mitte Chair in Creative writing, has received the 2007 National Book Award for *Tree of Smoke*, a book written in part during his stay at Texas State.
- Novelist Dagoberto Gilb received the Texas Book Festival’s Bookend Award for co-editing the acclaimed first collection of writings by Mexican-Texans, *Hecho en Tejas*.

Dr. Jerry Melbye measures an unusual mummified fetus in Guanajuato, Mexico

Dr. Kent Reilly speaks in Chicago on American Indian art

Denis Johnson—National Book Award

Dagoberto Gilb—Texas Book Festival Bookend Award
Department of English, continued

- We are holding enrollments to 21 students in our first-year English classes. Small classes are especially important in first-year English because students need one-on-one faculty attention as they learn to write the objective, audience-directed prose used in college and beyond to explain and defend ideas. Moreover, studies of our students over a number of years demonstrate that smaller class size correlates with increased success in first-year writing courses.
- Poet Kathleen Peirce has won the prestigious Guggenheim fellowship to write poetry. Only one other faculty member has won the award: novelist Dagoberto Gilb in 1995, also a member of the Creative Writing faculty.
- Books by two holders of the Mitte Chair in Creative Writing are included in a *New York Times* list of “The Best Books Written During the Last 25 Years.” *Jesus’ Son* by Denis Johnson and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien, both collections of short stories, are among the 22 books on the *New York Times* list.

Kathleen Peirce wins Guggenheim award to write poetry

Department of Geography

- Geography professors have received the nation’s top teaching award in geographic education 14 times—more than any other geography faculty in the country. The award—the Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award—is given annually by the National Council on Geographic Education.
- The PhD program in Geography now enrolls the largest number of graduate students of any PhD Geography program in the nation. At Texas State’s 2007 Commencement ceremony, Geography graduated a record 13 PhD candidates, bringing to 39 the number of Geography PhDs who have graduated since 2000, when Texas State’s first Geography PhD was hooded.
- Geography PhD graduates have won the nation’s top dissertation award two years in a row (2005 and 2006)—the Nystrom Dissertation Award from the Association of American Geographers.
- Byron “Doe” Augustin was among three Texas State faculty members named Regents Professor by the Texas State University System. Other Texas State Regents Professors include Dr. Steven Beebe in Speech Communication and Dr. Nancy Chavkin in Social Work.

Dr. Byron Augustin named Regents Professor

Department of History

- Dr. Frank de la Teja, an expert on Texas history who serves as chair of the Department of History and as president of the Texas State Historical Association, was inducted as Texas’ first State Historian in May. He will advise Gov. Perry and Texas educators on the promotion and teaching of Texas history.
- Universal Pictures has bought the rights to Dr. Victoria Bynum’s book, *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi’s Longest Civil War*, from the University of North Carolina Press. The studio plans to produce a movie tentatively entitled *The Kingdom of Jones*, and Dr. Bynum’s book will be a valuable resource for the writing of the movie’s screenplay. Dr. Bynum will also serve as a consultant for the film.
- Dr. Mary Brennan, known for her research on the history of conservative women, has been invited to write the definitive biography of First Lady Pat Nixon. The biography will be published by the University Press of Kansas as part of the Modern First Ladies Series.

Dr. Frank de la Teja—Texas’ first State Historian

Dr. Victoria Bynum to consult on Universal’s screenplay of her book.

Dr. Mary Brennan to write biography of First Lady Pat Nixon
Under a three-year, $1.57 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Texas State's Department of History will partner with a San Antonio school district and the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies in Washington, D.C., to ensure that Texas teachers get the tools they need to teach American history effectively.

**Center for International Studies**

- Generous gifts from alumni have established student-faculty exchange programs with countries in two hemispheres. A gift from alumnus Ken Wilson and his wife Verena is sending Texas State students and faculty to poverty-stricken Cambodia—and later to Vietnam and Laos—to teach English and provide expertise in areas of need. And a gift from alumna Kitsie Acord has established a student-faculty exchange with universities in Honduras. Initial efforts will send graduate students to Honduras to teach English and bring Honduran faculty to Texas State to improve their English skills.

Ken and Verena Wilson’s gift is supporting an exchange program with Southeast Asia

A gift from Kitsie Acord, left, has established an exchange program with universities in Honduras. The gift was announced by International Studies Director Dr. Dennis Dunn and Texas State President Dr. Denise Trauth.

**Graduate Enrollments**

- From Fall 2006 to Fall 2007, Liberal Arts recorded a nearly 10 percent increase in master's SCh, with increases in master's SCh of 68% in Psychology, 41% in Sociology, 37% in International Studies, 34% in Anthropology, and 21% in Modern Languages.
- Among Texas State colleges, Liberal Arts recorded the largest number of new graduate students in Fall 2007.

Dean Ellis with members of the Liberal Arts Graduate Student Council