Message from the Chair

2011-2012 was another exciting year in our department. It began with Dr. Augustine Agwuele and Dr. Kerrie Lewis Graham being awarded tenure and promotion and it ended with Dr. Michelle Hamilton and Dr. Kate Spradley starring in the National Geographic series “The Decrypters.” Please read about these and many other faculty and student accomplishments in this newsletter.

We would love to hear from you. If you would like to tell us where you are and what you are doing, and share that information with your former classmates, please email Mary Gibson at m.gibson@txstate.edu. Take care and stay in touch.

Dr. Beth Erhart

Faculty News

Dr. Kent Reilly wins the Everett Swinney Teaching Award

Recipients of the Everett Swinney Teaching Award are chosen on the basis of their dedication to the teaching profession, their influence on the lives of students and their contribution to the university as a whole. They have combined their commitment to teaching with strong records of creative achievement, service and mentoring their peers and students. Congratulations Dr. Reilly! (Photo L to R: President Denise Trauth, Faculty Senate President Debra Feakes, Dr. Kent Reilly)

Dr. Mike Collins receives TAS Lifetime Achievement Award

Research professor Dr. Mike Collins received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Texas Archaeological Society (TAS) in recognition of his commitment to the preservation and study of Texas archaeology. Dr. Collins is renowned for his work at the Gault site, located north of Austin. This site contains artifacts left behind by some of the earliest human inhabitants of the Americas. This site has the oldest dated art in the Americas, images scraped into rocks 13,500 years ago, and a stone floor at the site is considered the oldest architecture in North America. For information on the Gault Project see http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/centers/gault.html

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Dr. Michelle Hamilton and Dr. Kate Spradley helped to solve four unusual cold cases, for the television series “The Decrypters,” which aired on the National Geographic Channel. The National Geographic Channel’s film crew taped Hamilton and Spradley in the Grady Early Forensic Anthropology Lab at Texas State, as they studied the bones. The series tied the investigative methods used by forensic anthropologists to sweeping events in American history by studying the skeletons of individuals who died in America some 150-250 years ago. Each of the skeletons that Hamilton and Spradley investigated was featured in an hour-long episode of “The Decrypters.” They included “The Last Mohican (Albany, NY),” “Body Snatchers (Cincinnati, OH),” “Gold Rush Murder (Sacramento, CA),” and “Cowboy Corpse (Denver, CO).” Hamilton and Spradley’s research on the bones were supplemented with DNA, stable isotopes and radiological testing performed by other experts. Computer-generated facial reconstructions were also done on the skeletons for which there are sufficient remains. Proceeds from the filming of the National Geographic series were used to support multiple incoming graduate student scholarships in Forensic Anthropology. (Photo L to R: Dr. Kate Spradley, Dr. Michelle Hamilton)

Faculty Highlights

Dr. Augustine Agwuele published a new book “Development, Modernism and Modernity in Africa” (Routledge African Studies, 2012). This anthology examines the “unfinished project of modernity” with respect to the unrealized potential for economic, social, and political development in Africa. It also shows how, facing the consequences of modernism, Africans in and out of the continent are responding to these unfinished projects drawing on (a) the customary, (b) the novelty of modernity, and (c) positive aspects of modernism, for the organization of their societies and the enrichment of their lives even as they contend with the negative aspects of modernity and modernism. Dr. Agwuele also developed a field school to Ethiopia this year.

For the second consecutive summer, Dr. Steve Black conducted his archaeological field school in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands of Texas, which was featured in the San Antonio Express newspaper (http://www.mysanantonio.com/default/article/Texas-State-students-digging-into-history-1450799.php). Dr. Black’s research in the Lower Pecos is intended to increase our knowledge and understanding of prehistoric earthen oven plant baking facilities, which groups of hunter-gatherers who roamed this landscape 7,000 years ago used for cooking. Working at the Little Sotol site along the Devils River, students surveyed and excavated these burned rock middens.

Dr. Britt Bousman continues his fieldwork in South Africa. Using evidence from epigenetics, paleodiet, and stone tool technology, Dr. Bousman wants to understand how modern humans adapted to the complex environments faced by people living in Africa between 200,000 and 60,000 years ago, and how these adaptations allowed for successful migration out of Africa. Most of Dr. Bousman excavations are within the Modder River Valley at the site of Erfkroon with Dr. James Brink of the Florisbad Quaternary Research Department at the National Museum in Bloemfontein. Dr. Bousman is also collaborating with Amy Benton from the department’s Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) to expand the marketable training of our undergraduates by designing a sequence of courses for student certification in archaeological curation.
Dr. Emily Brunson joined the department in December 2011 to expand courses and conduct research in medical anthropology. The 2012 fall semester Dr. Brunson will debut a new course in medical anthropology tentatively titled, Disease in Society (or, “What to do When Your Flesh Falls Off”). Her ongoing research focuses on childhood vaccination in the U.S. and currently she is examining the relationship between parental social networking and the relationship between different aspects of social networks and parental decisions on childhood vaccinations.

Dr. Christina Conlee is currently on developmental leave and working on a book titled “The Rise and Fall of Civilizations in the Peruvian Desert: Archaeological Investigations at the site of La Tiza, Nasca” that examines three thousand years of human history in Nasca, Peru. The book is the result of a multi-year excavation project that was focused on the dynamics of complex societies and how people live and thrive in marginal desert environments. She has been presenting the results of this research to the public through her participation in the Archaeological Institute of America Lecture Program and has been giving talks at professional archaeological conferences.

Dr. Beth Erhart continues her lemur research in Madagascar with a new focus on the long-term effects of climatic variability on rainforest phenology and lemur demography. In a 2011 article in Global Change Biology, she and her collaborators showed warmer temperatures and increased rainfall negatively affect the Milne-Edwards’ sifaka lemurs ability to successfully reproduce and rear healthy young, thereby demonstrating that tropical regions can be affected by the same climatic changes felt in temperate zones. This is unfortunate news already pressured by deforestation and hunting. Dr. Erhart also recently created a new field school in Belize with Dr. Conlee called “Monkey Mayhem and Maya Mysteries.”

Dr. Jim Garber’s current research concerns St. George’s Caye, which was the original capital of Belize, where for the past two years his field school students have been excavating a European cemetery. Dating to the early 1700s, in some areas of the cemetery preservation is so good that mahogany coffins and other perishable artifacts have been found. In addition, Dr. Garber and his students have carried out excavations within the British military barracks on the island, and surveyed several underwater shipwrecks. For information on Dr. Garber’s Center for Middle American Studies (CMAR) see http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/cmar/

Dr. Kerrie Lewis Graham was recently selected for the NIMBioS (National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis) Program. Dr. Graham is one of 15 international scholars who are participating in the project, which focuses on taking mathematical and phylogenetic approaches to biological questions. Dr. Graham is working with the group studying “Play, Evolution, and Sociality,” and their next meeting is scheduled in October 2012 (see www.nimbios.org/workinggroups/WG_play for more information). In addition to the NIMBioS project, Dr. Graham is continuing her video gaming research studying the relationship between modern gaming and play behavior.

Dr. Michelle Hamilton recently partnered with a bioarchaeologist from the University of Sweden to re-examine human remains recovered from the Swedish battleship Kronan. The largest battleship of its time, the Kronan sank in the mid 1600s, and it sank so quickly that most of the 750 crew members were unable to escape. Dr. Hamilton re-evaluated the numerous “cut marks” researchers thought were the result of the sailors fighting each other to get off the ship, and concluded the damage was the result of the diving bells used in the late 1600s by the Swedish Navy to recover the ship’s cannons.
Dr. Ana Juárez spent the year conducting research on Mexican-American cemeteries and funerary practices. Dr. Juárez’s research project analyzed grave markers in San Pedro Cemetery, and is titled, “Saving Grave Markers from the Grave: A Database for Cultural, Historical, Iconographic, and Literary Analysis.” She collected a wide range of data on grave markers including demographics, textual inscriptions, marker shapes and materials, plot characteristics, symbols and images, and grave decorations. In addition to recording data on the grave markers, Dr. Juárez also conducted 50 ethnographic interviews regarding cemeteries and funerary practices.

Dr. Jon Lohse, who is the Director of the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS), focuses on the building and refining chronological models for the Central Texas region, including reconstructing detailed understandings of conditions of bison exploitation. Most of his local work involves the Spring Lake site (located on the Texas State campus), a remarkable location for prehistoric occupation spanning over 13,000 years. Additionally, with support from the National Geographic Society, the Waitt Institute, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, Dr. Lohse has undertaken multi-disciplinary work on early (Paleoindian and Archaic) time periods on the western slopes of Guatemala, from the western Highlands to the Pacific Coast. Included in this ongoing effort was an inaugural international conference that brought together researchers active in related Mesoamerican research. For more information on CAS activities and research see http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/cas/

Dr. Jon McGee and his co-author Dr. Rich Warms published the fifth edition of their best-selling book “Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History” (McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 2011). Dr. McGee was also approached to be the managing editor of the “Encyclopedia of Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology” (SAGE Press), with Dr. Warms serving as co-editor. Anticipated to contain more than 60,000 words and over 300 entries, this project will be the largest and most extensive collection of anthropological theory essays ever and will enlist over 275 key senior scholars from major research institutions around the world as authors. Dr. McGee hopes this encyclopedia will be available for purchase within the next two years.

Throughout the year, Dr. Kent Reilly kept busy giving lectures across the country, and hosting the Maya Hieroglyphic Workshop in October and Mississippian Conference in May on campus. Dr. Reilly also has a series of upcoming publications from University of Texas Press including “Picture Cave, Missouri,” “Native American Tattooing,” and the third volume of the Mississippian Iconography Series, “Bundling and Binding the Sacred.” Dr. Reilly was recently chosen as the Field Anthropologist Consultant for the Muscogee Nation of Florida. The tribe hopes Dr. Reilly will be able to offer fresh insight, research material and advice as they seek federal recognition. This is the final phase of a 63-year journey and the tribe asked Dr. Reilly for his assistance in this last step because of his extensive knowledge of Muscogee government, ceremonial cycles and traditions. For more information on Dr. Reilly’s work and his Center for the Arts and Symbolism of Ancient America see http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/casaa/

Dr. Kate Spradley continues to conduct research along the U.S./Mexico border analyzing skeletal remains of supposed Hispanic migrants who died crossing into border. Dr. Spradley has been collecting metric data on Hispanic skeletons in order to create a database to be used in identifying the sex and ancestry of Hispanic skeletal remains. Her upcoming journal article, “Postcranial Sex Estimation of Individuals Considered Hispanic” (Journal of Forensic Sciences, March 2013), is the first publication of metric sex estimation for Hispanic skeletons. Dr. Spradley is also board member Scientific Working Group in Forensic Anthropology (SWGANTH), which establishes best practices and minimum standards in forensic anthropology, and a North American coordinator for FOROST (FORensic OSTeology), which is an open access/collaborative initiative for the free worldwide dissemination of forensic osteology information to academic, humanitarian, and law enforcement agencies.
As always, **Dr. Rich Warms** has been busy writing various books, which include his anthropological theory book with Dr. McGee, their encyclopedia on theory in social and cultural anthropology, and the second edition of “Culture Counts” and the eleventh edition of “Cultural Anthropology,” both with Serena Nanda. Dr. Warms is also writing a new book on anthropological theory that focuses on the time period from the Crystal Palace to WWI. Finally, Dr. Warms has been serving as the department’s undergraduate coordinator, guiding students through program design and preparing them for post-graduate employment. He is in the process of creating a departmental Facebook page to help us stay in touch with our graduates – be on the lookout for it!

**Dr. Danny Wescott** joined the department in fall 2011 as the Director of the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS). His research focuses on developing and testing forensic anthropological methods for reconstructing biological profiles, trauma patterns, and the postmortem interval. Dr. Wescott was recently awarded a $417,175 National Institute of Justice to study the “Graphical User Interface for a Multi-Factorial Age-At-Death Estimation Method Using Fuzzy Integrals.” Additionally, Dr. Wescott was recently selected to serve as the 2012 book review editor for the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. For more information on FACTS activities and research see [http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/facts/](http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/facts/)

**Student News**

**Number of Majors**

We now have approximately 345 undergraduate majors seeking BA and BS degrees and about 45 graduate majors seeking MA degrees.

**Conference Presentations**

Thirty-three anthropology undergraduate and graduate students presented their research at eight professional conferences this year. See [http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/degrees-programs/presentations.html](http://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/degrees-programs/presentations.html) for a complete list. Congratulations to all of these students!

**Former Student Highlights**

Former anthropology graduate student Stephanie Schnorr stands with the famous paleoanthropologist Maeve Leakey at the European Society for Human Evolution meeting in Leipzig, Germany. Stephanie developed an interest in hominin dietary ecology through her master’s work with Dr. Kerrie Lewis Graham on comparisons of dietary practices among modern Western and indigenous human populations. Stephanie is broadly interested in addressing human dietary flexibility as signaled by potential ontogenetic adaptations. More specifically she intends to study the contribution and extraction of nutritional components in cooked versus raw plant foods in the diets of the Hadza of Tanzania. Her larger academic goals are to help improve our understanding of hominin evolution by defining physiological versus technological responses to different environmental pressures as they relate to diet. Stephanie is currently an anthropology PhD student at the Max Plank Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany.

**Wish to see your name in the highlights? Please keep us informed on what you’re doing!**
New Spaces

New Forensic Anthropology Lab

The Osteological Research and Processing Laboratory (ORPL) opened during the fall semester and is located on Texas State’s Freeman Ranch in the new Freeman Ranch Multi-Purpose Facility. The Freeman Ranch Multi-Purpose Facility includes a conference center for training, teaching, conferences, and other outreach services. The Osteological Research and Processing Laboratory is used for forensic anthropological casework and processing donated skeletons for the Texas State Donated Skeletal Collection. This laboratory is equipped with a state of the art autopsy and processing suite, cold storage facilities, digital radiographic and photographic equipment, as well as geometric morphometric and other osteometric equipment.

Departmental Space Expansion

Over the summer, the department moved into its new main office in Evans Liberal Arts, room 266. We also created two new conference rooms, which will allow us to have seminar-style undergraduate and graduate classes. We developed two new labs: (1) a Cultural and Linguistic Anthropology Laboratory equipped with computers, recorders, transcribers, qualitative and quantitative statistical software, and phonetic analysis software, and (2) a new Skeletal Biology Laboratory for undergraduate and graduate courses in osteology, skeletal methods, and paleopathology. We’re thrilled to have more space to spread out in!

Please and see us when you get the chance!