

# ANTHROPOLOGY

Western Washington University, Bellingham Vol. 7 Issue 1

## Letter From the Chair

*Todd Koetje, Chair, Anthropology Department*

As I'm sure is true for most of you 2021 was a challenging year for students, faculty, and support staff in the Department. We transitioned to fully online teaching, and then began a gradual shift back into face to face and hybrid modes. This winter we are mostly back to face to face instruction, with just under half of our classes remaining online or hybrid. All of the transitions went fairly smoothly from my perspective, despite short notice in many cases. This shows the strength, resilience and patience of everyone involved.

In the midst of this we are still focused on the challenge and promise of helping to create a new way to be anthropologists, to decolonize and re-imagine our endeavor.

While all that was going on both Kathleen Saunders and Sarah Campbell retired. Both were major figures in the Department, who contributed immensely to our students' successes. They will be sorely missed, but we wish them well in their retirement.

Dr. Campbell had a substantial impact on PNW archaeology over the course of her career. Not only has she trained an amazingly large number of students at the BA and MA level, she was also instrumental in forging new relationships with local Tribal Nations. Kathleen Saunders was a mainstay in the Department's socio-cultural methods classes, and taught the always popular Cyborg Anthropology course, as well as many Honors College courses.



*Todd at the helm of Hravn June 2021*

I look forward to the chance to celebrate in person all the recent retirements that we've missed because of Covid. Zoom would not make it as a mode of celebration for such matters. Looking forward to this year, we were able to begin the hiring process for two new tenure lines last

Fall, and at the moment it appears that both are nearing conclusions, so that at least one new faculty member will join us next Fall, and another likely the year after. In the meantime, we've had Dr Christopher Moreno join us as a Visiting Assistant Professor. I would also like to commend our non tenure track faculty for stepping up and helping fill our student's curricular and advising needs over the last year. Those contributions have been absolutely crucial. There is also exciting news on the Alumni and Donation front, but I have to keep that as a teaser for future revelation.

Last but not least, I think our students should be commended for their resolve and fortitude. Who would have guessed we would spend two years in a pandemic, and go through so many stressful changes and challenges? We're in an unprecedented situation, many students have had essentially no face to face classes for two years or more. And yet, they hung on, rolled with the challenges and here we are.

-Sincerely, Todd Koetje



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## To Our Generous Donors in 2021:

Grazie

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Toda

감사합니다

Daalu

Gracias

# THANK YOU

Asante

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Terima kasih

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Mahalo

Hy 'shqe

Teşekkürler

T ē n ā koe

Merci

Fa'afetai

## Faculty News

### Yeon Jung Yu

It's been a difficult and busy year that saw an increase in retiring professors and significant changes in the department. Yet, we, as a community, have continued to work closely and adjust to these dramatic changes. One such transformation pertained to the department restructuring and expanding our graduate program under Prof. Sean Bruna's leadership, a process that I've been excited to assist with. I look forward to working with our graduate students more closely in the future. I'm also happy to share that I began my tenured professorship in the department this fall, and I'd like to thank all of the Anthropology and WWU community members for helping these past five years!

Beyond this, I'm excited about my National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for a new project I'm developing. I published three peer-reviewed articles in feminist anthropology and public health journals as well as made conference presentations for the 2020 Law and Society Association (LSA) Annual Meeting and the 2020 Women's Leadership Conference in Oxford. I also participated in the 2020 American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Meeting as a discussant and presented my research at the Anthropology colloquium at Emory University. I'm currently working on my book manuscript, contracted with the Cornell University Press.

I've further developed various collaborative projects alongside my virtual classes. Over the past year, I've continued to run the "WWU Applied Anthropology Lab." I'm so proud of my lab members for their active participation in professional research. Our brilliant undergraduate students—Nick Parker, Hailey Maltempi, Alison Keller, Abigail Landaverde, Emma Cox, Emily Hill, and Bryan Heiner—have been trained in cultural and medical anthropological research while participating in professional research via virtual lab meetings and training sessions. Many lab members have participated in the "WWU-UNLV Human Sexualities, Love & Intimacy" collaborative sub-lab. The extensive collaborative mentoring has been offered by researchers from the University of British Columbia, Canada, and Appalachian State University, NC. Our lab members have participated in presentations in the annual meetings for the LSA and AAA conferences, as well as the 2021 Scholar's Week presentations. The other sub-lab, the "WWU-Manchester Infectious Diseases and Equity



*Photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2021-Shadow of the Sentinels walking path, near Baker Lake*

## Anthropology Club

Anthropology Club welcomes anyone who is interested, to join them at their weekly meetings, special events, or field trips held throughout the year.

**Meetings:  
Wednesdays @ 5pm**

<https://chss.wwu.edu/anthropology/anthropology-club>

[www.facebook.com/WWUAnthropologyClub](http://www.facebook.com/WWUAnthropologyClub)

## Yeon Jung Yu, cont...

Lab,” helmed by two MD/professors at the University of Manchester (Dr. Jiho Cha) and Haverford College (Dr. Young Su Park), have also been productive. We are currently working on World Health Organization (WHO) reports on North Korean primary healthcare systems and global migrant health against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Sean Bruna and I, engaging with our numerous students in the department, have continued our collaborative study on drug use among WWU students. We expect to see the fruits of this long-term collaborative research over the upcoming years. It has been rewarding to witness our lab members develop their skills and achieve success and I’m excited to have

another productive year with them – hopefully one that’s a little easier year once this pandemic is finally behind us!

With strong support from the Anthropology Club, Ms. Lauren Townshend, alumni, and the faculty, our department successfully hosted the 2021 Virtual Scholars Week. We are in the process of rebuilding the Anthro Club with new leadership, and I look forward to seeing various activities and growth of both undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in anthropology!

## Tesla Monson

It’s time to reminisce on another year in the Anthropology Department! It’s crazy to think that I have officially been teaching online quite a bit longer than in person here at Western. But I think the reason that I sometimes forget is because our community is still so strong, even in 2-dimensions. I am always grateful for the sense of purpose, motivation, and, of course, humor that the other faculty members bring to the table. Even though we are still mostly distanced, I truly feel connected to all of you.

Even with the challenges, it’s been a great year in the Primate Evolution Lab. We welcomed my first MA students, Mia Price and Jack Szvetecz, who have been navigating the world of graduate school quite wonderfully in the first year. Mia is interested in forensic anthropology, bioarchaeology, human sexuality and advocating for comprehensive Queer BIPOC-informed sex education. And Jack is focused on primate paleobiology, evolution and ecology, particularly in the



*Tesla enjoying the first snow of the year*

Eocene (56-33.9 mya). I look forward to working with them on these interesting projects and helping them develop their skills as scientists. We also have many strong applicants to enter the lab this fall, so it’s exciting to envision our lab continuing to grow over the next few years.

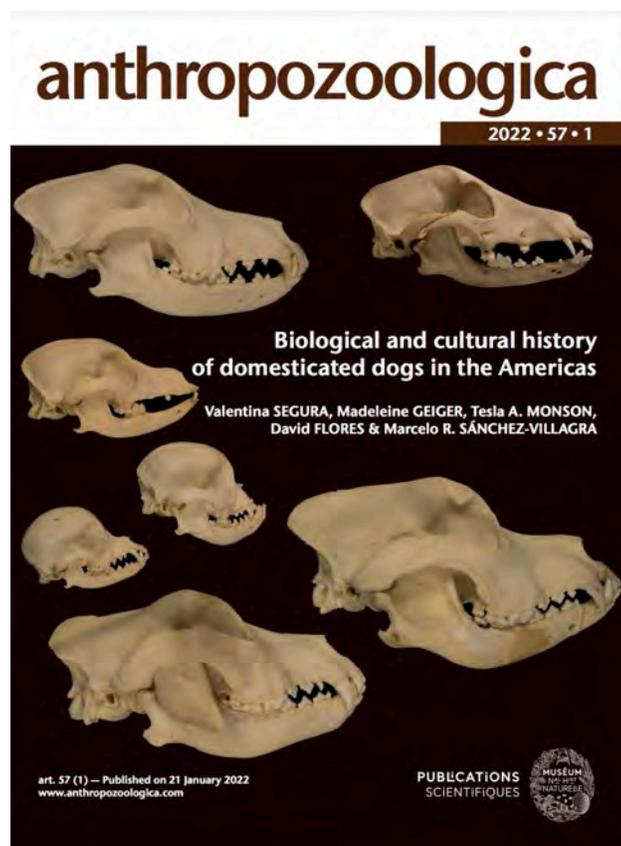
I also have to give a shout out to all of the dedicated undergraduate students who have been putting so many hours into the lab, working with fossil casts, organizing

osteological materials, and generating ideas for future projects. Thank you Julia, Lauren, Jenna, and Hailee!

Another great accomplishment for our lab has been our successful grant award (\$26,401) to purchase a handheld 3D scanner for the Anthropology Department. This scanner will allow us to build virtual collections for students who are off-campus and provide research and training opportunities in digital technologies that will improve accessibility both in and out of the

## Tesla Monson, *cont...*

classroom. We are all currently undergoing training on the machine, and we look forward to sharing 3D scans with the Western community over the next quarters.



Tesla's paper published in collaboration with The Primate Evolution Lab:  
*Biological and Cultural History of Domesticated Dogs in the Americas*

In terms of teaching, I have been trying to come up with new, exciting classes for students in our major. I developed a new capstone course this year, titled The Earliest Art and Culture. And I proposed a new course for Anthropology called Osteology of the Occult. I was also selected to bring Biological Anthropology to the Honors College through a new class for next year - Visions of the Future: Human Evolution in American Sci-Fi Literature. I have really enjoyed designing new ways to teach bioanth and engage our students in these important concepts through fun, interactive classroom experiences.

On the research front, I am happy to announce that a multi-year international collaboration on the domestication of dogs in the Americas has recently been published (Segura et al., 2022).



Photo credit: Tesla Monson- The Cascades Tower Over Bellingham

I also have four papers in review on fossil monkeys in Africa, and the evolution of human pregnancy, so hopefully this will be a great year for getting projects published and out into the world. Fingers crossed that some more funding also comes through – I submitted 3 NSF grants in January alone. If funded, these projects will bring new CT equipment to campus, and fund graduate, undergraduate, and postdoctoral research on the evolution of cranial variation and vision in primates. I will certainly keep you all posted!

On a personal note, it's incredible how I just can't seem to get sick of all the beautiful views around Bellingham and the Salish Sea. As the sun starts to pop out again, and as we start dreaming of Spring and Summer, the shimmering water and towering mountains give me no small amount of inspiration. I am so happy to share this academic and educational journey with you all, and I can't imagine doing it anywhere else. Thank you!



Photo credit: Tesla Monson- A Full Rainbow Shines over Happy Valley

## MJ Mosher

Well, the light at the end of that tunnel may not be an oncoming train after all. Much work in 2019/2020 completed by the Nutrigenomics/Nutrigenetics lab team focused on developing bilingual research tools to address the nutritional component of the KU study entitled “Genetic-Environmental causes of diabetes mellitus 2.0 in Amazonian Populations of Peru. As a result, the grant from KU Diabetes center awarded the WWU lab pilot access to test a substantial nutritional software program. The pilot crew from the University of Kansas traveled to Yurimaguas, Peru, in Feb 2020. Due to unexpected political constraints in the area, the crew concentrated primarily on collecting blood samples to identify the prevalence of DM2 in this population and data collection addressing the nutritional environmental component was minimal. While some of the medical biomarkers were analyzed in Yurimaguas, the specific genetic samples were frozen at an American lab in Lima, as the onset of Covid-19 closed US transfer options. The KU IRB paused all human subject studies while Covid ravaged the Peruvian populations along with many other countries. Now twenty months later, the DNA is ready



*Photo credit: Associated Press- oil spill clean up in the Peruvian Amazon*

for transfer to waiting labs at the UTRGV and Dr. Ravi Duggirala, Professor and Researcher at the South Texas Diabetes and Obesity Institute, to complete a “whole exome” analysis. We wait with bated breath in hopes that the results will provide direction for an in-depth epigenetic study to address issues of pollutants in the local Peruvian food chain, market- based foods, and malnutrition. The results of the Yurimaguas pilot study resulted in three conference papers in 2021: one for Human Biology Association, the American Association of Biological Anthropology, and the American Diabetes Association.

## Jerry Ek

The central theme for the last year has been transitions. The pandemic put most research activities on hiatus and mandated rapid reformatting of courses to remote learning. Our program has also seen a wave of recent retirements of faculty and staff that will be impossible to replace. It was a struggle just to tread water. My goals over the last year have been to restart research projects, get back on campus, and rebuild relationships. This included advancing three research projects and a shift in geographic focus from Mesoamerica to community-based participatory research here in the Pacific Northwest.

Perhaps the most important development in my own career has been a shift towards increasing engagement in research endeavors in western Washington. I am co-directing a new collaborative research project undertaken in partnership with the Stillaguamish Tribe this summer. This indigenous-led program will



*Field Crew for the Proyecto Arqueológico Uxte'tuun*

forefront tribal priorities and concerns in defining research goals, methods, and interpretation. Capacity building is a central goal of this collaboration, particularly in creating opportunities for tribal members and indigenous-identified students in undergraduate

## Jerry Ek, cont...

and graduate degree programs and professional positions in academia, cultural resource management, historical preservation, and cultural heritage. The next chapter of the WWU Archaeological Field School will continue the learning objective of providing participants with practical experience that will make them competitive on the job market. However, the broader goal of the



*Preliminary mapping of the site of Chanmul*

program is to foster a more open and inclusive approach to archaeology based on active partnership and respect for the sovereignty of indigenous peoples over their own past. The first field season of this program will take place in the Summer of 2022.

I also had the privilege to return to the field in Mexico the Maya Lowlands for the pilot season of a new project – the Proyecto Arqueológico Uxte'tuun/ Uxte'tuun Archaeological Project - in the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, in Campeche, Mexico. The Uxte'tuun region was the seat of the expansionist Kaanul (Snake) Dynasty of Calakmul, a Maya kingdom which exerted control over a network of vassal polities during the Late Classic period (630-731 CE). Research conducted in the summer of 2021 focused on ground verification and mapping of undocumented cities identified from satellite imagery that are today located in extremely remote locations within the Calakmul Biosphere. During the summer of 2021 we identified, registered, and produced preliminary maps of the central precincts of three unregistered and previously undocumented Classic Maya cities.

The past year has also seen the advancement of a collaborative project I've conducted in collaboration with faculty and students in WWU's Computer Science program. LiDAR survey – a remote sensing technology implementing active airborne laser scanning – has revolutionized archaeological survey in the past decades, providing an ability to document surface topography beneath dense forest canopy. I've been working with Dr. Brian Hutchinson and a very talented group of students from the CS program to develop an automated archaeological feature identification system leveraging cutting-edge machine learning and computer vision technologies. The system will consist of a convolutional neural network that learns through iterative training and feedback in a manner similar to human beings. We are training the system to identify, digitize, and label archaeological features from LiDAR-derived survey datasets. This system has the potential to automate the time-consuming first stages of processing the very large datasets produced by LiDAR surveys in a more efficient and systematic manner than traditional visual interpretation. Once developed this system will be made available as an open-source platform transferable to other regions.



*LiDAR bare earth image from the site of Mayapan, Yucatan, Mexico. These data – generously shared with us by the Mayapan Archaeological Project – are the foundation for the training and evaluation of an automated archaeological feature identification system in collaboration with students and faculty from the WWU Computer Science program.*

## Jerry Ek, cont...

The return to campus this year has made me appreciate friends and colleagues in the program, including those that have moved into retirement during the pandemic. I miss chatting with Viva Barnes, Joyce Hammond, James Loucky, Kathy Saunders, and Sarah Campbell. My relationship with Sarah extends back to my undergraduate days, and I was lucky enough to work with her in multiple capacities: teacher, advisor, mentor, colleague, and friend. Sarah was the heart and soul of the archaeology program at WWU, and her impacts on both academic research and the broader community of archaeologists in the pacific northwest cannot be overstated. I count myself among a very large group of people upon whom Sarah Campbell has had a major positive impact. I hope that we will be able to have a wave of belated retirement parties in the near future.



*Photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2021- Steamboat Rock S.P.2, Grand Coulee, WA*

## Kathleen Z Young

The last two years have been a time of reflection on the dialectical relationship between anthropology and internal colonization. We have an opportunity in anthropology to question everything we know and consider how it has been propped up and turned around. I am still working on it, the courage to understand what I have been talking about all these years and ways to share the implications. I am still trying to get better at gently shattering the internal colonization that pervades everything from anthropology to the zed in KZY.

“It’s a process.”

## Judith Pine

The shift to online built on skills I have been developing over the past few years. Practices which were intended to be part of “flipped” classes where in-class work is primarily interactive, and lectures are recorded and watched asynchronously became vital as classes went online. I continue to work towards the goal of \*short\* presentation videos knowing that the goal is 8-10 minutes. At present I seem to average 27 minutes for a video presentation. I also think I ought to collect the outtakes for some future purpose, if only to demonstrate the creative use of invective that can result when I mess up for the 5th or 6th time and feel I must start all over again!



*Judy on the rooftop patio of conference hotel, Baltimore in the background.*

## Judith Pine, cont...

The interaction of teaching and scholarly work seems to have been a theme recently, as demonstrated by a couple of highlights.

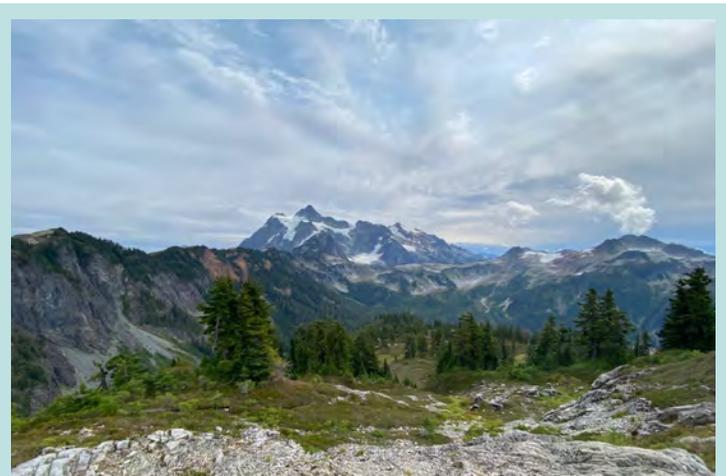


*The three organizers of the SLA 2022 conference. Prof. Dominika Baran (Duke), Prof Colleen Cotter (Queen Mary College, London), and Judy having a planning session about SLA 2022 during AAA 2021 in Baltimore.*

One highlight of 2021 was an invited keynote presentation at the International Conference on “Mobility and Multilingualism in South and Southeast Asia: Impacts of global ecological change on local society.” Although I regret not being able to travel to Assam to present in person, I hope to visit the conference venue in the future. It was very interesting to present to an audience seen over a webcam! The presentation, on the role of water and other emblematic signs in the potential resilience of Lahu language was a wonderful opportunity to think about language ideologies and language shift, a topic I’d been thinking about since I taught ANTH 490: Endangered Languages in Fall. It will become a chapter in the proceedings which will be published sometime next year.

Another highlight was presenting as part of a roundtable at the American Anthropological Meetings in Baltimore. This presentation was on the semiotics of pro-democracy protests in the Milk Tea Alliance and particularly the three-finger salute which has origins in the Hunger Games films, but which has become a powerful sign across the region. I had the opportunity to present on this topic to Anthropology Club in Fall 2021 and the Q&A from that presentation shaped what I presented at Baltimore.

I am especially looking forward to the Society for Linguistic Anthropology conference “Future Imperfect: Language in Time of Crisis and Hope” <http://linguisticanthropology.org/blog/meetings/2022-spring-conference-society-linguistic-anthropology/> which will be held in Boulder, CO and in a Gather.town space 7-9 April 2022. I am co-chair of the organizing committee for this conference which was originally scheduled for April 2020. I will be in Boulder but also in the Gather and imagine the experience in hyflex teaching may come in handy for that process as well!



*Photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2021-Mount Shuksan from Artist's Point*

Western Washington University's main campus is situated on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples, who have lived in the Salish Sea basin, all throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial. We express our deepest respect and gratitude to our Indigenous neighbors, for their enduring care and protection of our shared lands and waterways.

# Annual Anthropology Award for Outstanding Student Research

*The Annual Anthropology Award for Outstanding Student Research recognizes excellent undergraduate research. Faculty nominated papers, posters, presentations or other scholarly endeavors completed the previous Spring quarter through Winter quarter of the current year are eligible. Three selected awardees present their research during Scholars Week each year. We are proud to announce 2021 recipients:*

## Ellery McCaw

### Variation in Rates of Dental Caries: Confounding Factors in Archaeological and Modern Human Contexts

Teeth are primarily inorganic components of anatomy, offering a wealth of information regarding an individual's age-at-death, diet, life history, health, and other essential characteristics, making teeth extremely useful for interpreting the archaeological record. Dental caries, also known as cavities or tooth decay, are an easily identifiable medical condition that is ubiquitous throughout modern and past societies, which occur when the acidic byproducts of bacterial fermentation break down the enamel of a tooth. Since teeth preserve well in archaeological contexts, dental caries are commonly observed in human remains. The rates of dental caries in a population can offer a great deal of insight into cultural traits and trends. Previous work using the rate of dental caries has identified trends toward higher rates of dental caries in diets composed of increased carbohydrate consumption, most notably in agriculture-based societies compared to hunter-gatherer-based societies. Additionally, social factors such as social class and characteristics related to sex, such as division of labor and hormonal differences, are also indicated to display differences in rates of dental caries. Due to the many compounding factors related to the rate of dental caries in a population, it can often be challenging to isolate the exact reasons for abnormal dental carie rates. All potential causes of increased rates of dental caries in a population must be investigated to ensure a clear image of an archaeological population's cultural and survival methods to ensure that all factors are taken into account to prevent an unclear interpretation of past cultures. This article seeks to

present the confounding factors involved in the formation of dental caries and display how differences in rates of dental caries can be interpreted in an archaeological context.

## Mia Port

### Reproductive Genocide: The Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Indigenous Women in America

The topic of reproductive freedom has long been a fount of moral conflict and national debate in America. For decades, the pervasive fight for women's autonomous rights over their own reproductive health has been fraught with judgment, discrimination, and risk. Disproportionately, the reproductive rights of women of color have been mishandled and trampled by executive forces throughout the country with little to no publicity. Set apart by other minority groups, Indigenous women in America represent a distinct category of victims due to cultural and societal realities that left them dependent on governmental jurisdiction and federal funding. Consequently, throughout the 1970s, subdivisions of the United States Department of Health and Human Services committed genocidal acts of abuse against the reproductive freedom of Indigenous women in America.

## Jesse Figueroa-Gaona

### The United States of America: Discrimination Through Racial Disparities

The United States of America has a history of taking advantage of racial minorities, whether that be structural violence or segregation. They are seen as disposable assets the country can profit from; in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic hashtag: #AliensUntilNecessary. In order to maintain this governmental and social hierarchy, political figures have structured the foundation of this country to marginalize. One indirect line of evidence for institutionalized and systematic discrimination towards people of color and impoverished communities can be seen in their experiences regarding loss of life and the lack of coping resources available.