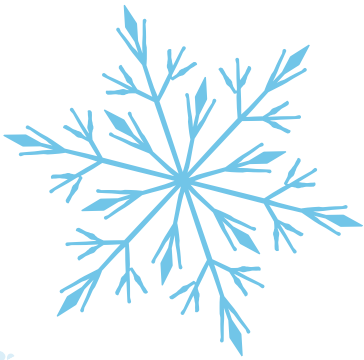


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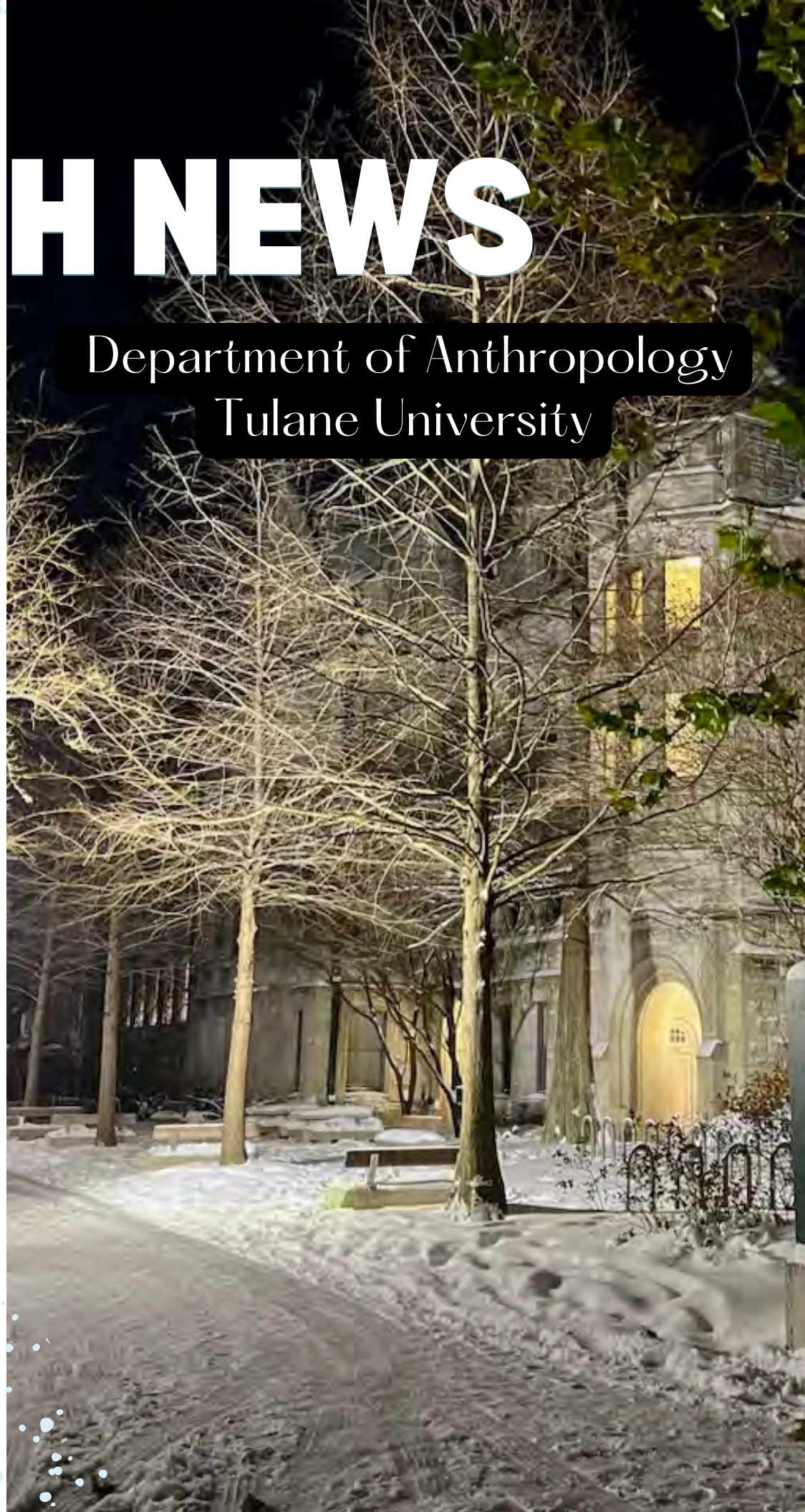
Spring 2025



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- A trip to LSU Campus Mounds
- Snow Day in NOLA
- MARI Celebrates 100
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- Adieu to John Verano
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Department of Anthropology
Tulane University





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Letter From the Chair

Dear Friends,

As we bring the academic year to a close, I want to recognize the accomplishments of our faculty. We bid a fond farewell to Professor John Verano, whose 30-year career was capped by the SLA Outstanding Faculty Research Award at the annual SLA picnic. Assistant Professor Andrew McDowell was recognized as the Outstanding Faculty Member of Newcomb-Tulane College, which includes all Tulane schools with undergraduate programs. At the Society for American Archaeology meetings, Professor Christopher Rodning received the Presidential Recognition Award for his service. Professor Adeline Masquelier and Assistant Professor Katharine Lee both pursued their research at Harvard University. Finally, Professor Marcello Canuto organized a series of events in honor of MARI's 100th anniversary.

In May we will hood seven PhD candidates and cheer on the nearly 50 students who will graduate with an anthropology major or minor. Several of our current students and alumni have secured tenure-track or visiting academic positions, including at the University of Southern Mississippi, William & Mary College, and Northern Arizona University. In August, we will welcome six graduate students into our PhD program.

Our Director of Undergraduate Studies, Nicole Katin, provided students with ample opportunities to meet faculty and learn about our programs. We started with the Open House for Anthropology in August, celebrated Anthropology Day in February, and ended the year with a Carb and Convo event. At the last event, we distributed codes for students to receive a year-long complimentary membership to the American Anthropological Association and registration to the annual meetings, which will be held in New Orleans. Our department also hosted two speakers this year. Lukas Friedl, a biological anthropologist who trained under Trent Holliday, spoke about his research in Portugal. Graduate student Olamide Eniola organized a successful book talk for Ademola Adesola's *Representations of Child Soldiers in Contemporary African Narratives*.

While we celebrate our accomplishments, we should also acknowledge the heightened uncertainty around federal funding and the challenging situation regarding visas for our international faculty and students. I want to acknowledge Shao-Yun Chang's success in receiving an NSF-funded postdoctoral fellowship, although it was ultimately rescinded. In the coming year, we will enhance our programming around career discernment and organize grant-writing workshops to ensure that our students have the tools they need to succeed.

With warm wishes for a productive summer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'A' being particularly large and stylized.

Graduate Profiles

Congratulations to all of our 2025 graduates! This spring, 25 undergraduate students received a BA or BS degree in Anthropology, while 24 were awarded a minor in the discipline. Special recognition goes to Elise Ferguson, the proud recipient of the MA degrees, having completed our 4+1 program.

This momentous year was capped with successful doctoral defenses by our six newly anointed Ph.Ds. A round of applause goes to:



Celine Eschenbrenner, PhD

"Invisible Guests: Security and Solidarity in the French-Italian Borderlands."

Dissertation Committee: Adeline Masquelier (Chair), Allison Truitt, and Andrew McDowell.



Adebimpe Ayooluwa Adegbite, PhD

"Family Reversing Language Shift: Yoruba Proverbs as a Tool for Language Acquisition"

Dissertation Committee: Judith Maxwell (Chair), Marc Zender, Nathalie Dajko, and Adeleke Adeeko (Ohio State University)



Shao-Yun Chang, PhD

"Mediated Belonging: The Politics of Advocacy for Southeast Asian Migrants in Taiwan."

Dissertation Committee: Allison Truitt (Chair), Claudia Chavez, and Sabia McCoy-Torres



Borislava Simova, PhD

"Emerging Social Complexity Among the Maya: Insights from Preclassic Monumental Architecture in Western Belize."

Dissertation Committee: Marcello Canuto (Chair), Jason Nesbitt, Tatsuya Murakami, and Lisa LeCount (Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, University of Alabama).



Luke Auld-Thomas, PhD

"The Pyramids, the Polity, and the People: Socio-spatial Scales and the Problem of Protoclassic resilience at El Achiotal, Peten, Guatemala."

Dissertation Committee: Marcello Canuto (Chair), Marc Zender, and Tatsuya Murakami



Daniel Vincent Sullivan, PhD

"A Case for Increased Collaboration of Forensic Pathologists and Anthropologists: Firearm Projectile Analysis."

Dissertation Committee: John Verano (Chair), Trenton Holliday, and Jason Nesbitt

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest. The trees are mostly green, with some brownish patches indicating dry or dead vegetation. The forest extends to the horizon, where a range of low mountains is visible. The sky is filled with large, white and grey clouds, and a bright sun is shining from the upper left, creating a lens flare effect.

Notes from the Field

Alex Jurado – Field Research

In 2024, I spent June through December in San Matías Tlalancaleca, Puebla, México, finishing fieldwork for my dissertation. I analyzed obsidian, ceramics, and figurines to understand how inhabitants' lifeways were changing at the onset of urbanization at Tlalancaleca around 650 BC. The technological analysis of obsidians shows that prismatic blades were produced on-site. I also used our department's pXRF to geochemically source the obsidian. I found that archaeological obsidian came primarily from the Pachuca, El Paredón, and Otumba sources. Outside my analysis, I enjoyed visiting Cholula and eating dinner during weekdays at the house of the Varilla-Tomé family, who has collaborated with the Tlalancaleca Archaeological Project for years. Their friendship and the pláticas around food are always one of the most enjoyable parts of being in San Matías Tlalancaleca.



Archaeology is not all digging, but also desk work.
Photo credit: Alex Jurado.

Emily Clark – Identifying Sherds

Under the direction of Emily Clark for her PhD dissertation research, Alexandra Brown (sophomore) and Molly Young (senior) learned how to conduct pottery attribute analysis. Analyzing, re-analyzing and correcting sherds from the excavation of Shell Bluff (22Lo530), Alex and Molly differentiated pottery types through identifying temper, production methods, and decorative techniques. Some of these artifacts have never been studied since archaeologists excavated them in the 1970s. Their work will assist Emily with her dissertation research, investigating long-term relations to place within the Middle Tombigbee River Valley. We hope to present the results of this research at the Southeastern Archaeological Conference in Baton Rouge this November.

Nick Chapoy – From the Tropical Forest

Since December, I have been conducting fieldwork in the tropical dry forest of Santa Rosa National Park, Costa Rica. This project investigates the relationship between male dominance rank, testosterone levels, and variation in vocal behavior among white-faced capuchin monkeys. Specifically, I am examining whether alpha males produce vocalizations that differ in pitch, rate, or acoustic structure from those of subordinate males, and whether these differences reflect underlying physiological and social factors.

Most days begin at sunrise and involve tracking monkeys from their sleeping trees, recording vocalizations, collecting fecal samples for hormone analysis, and keeping track of who's where, doing what, and communicating with whom. The recordings will form the foundation for a series of playback experiments that I plan to conduct next year. In these trials, I will broadcast calls from alpha and subordinate males to assess how the capuchins respond to vocal signals based on the caller's dominance rank. This will allow me to test whether dominance-related vocal traits are socially meaningful to group members.

There has been no shortage of classic field work moments: scorpion stings, ocelot sightings, and unexpected monkey poop raining from above. Yet it's the fleeting moments between long, quiet hours of observation that stay with me: watching capuchins form alliances, resolve conflicts, and coordinate responses to threats. I even witnessed a capuchin birth: the infant still slick with fluid, the umbilical cord attached, as the mother sniffed and licked him, unsure of her next move.

This research is supported by the National Science Foundation (DDRIG), the American Society of Primatologists, and the International Primatological Society.



Love is a battlefield for white-faced capuchins. Photo credit: Nick Chapoy

Skylar Morgan – Anthropologizing in the summer

My name is Skylar Morgan, and I am currently finishing my last year at Tulane University. I am double majoring in Anthropology and Classical Studies with a minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies. This summer, with support from the department through the Kenneth G. Opat Award, I had the opportunity to return to Pompeii and participate in Tulane's Pompeii I.14 Project as a Lead Excavator. During the seven weeks on the project, I grew my excavation skills as well as developed the skills necessary for trench supervision, including organizing excavators, documenting excavation proceedings, and managing the trench when the supervisor was absent.

Outside of the project, I was able to collect preliminary research for my honors thesis on the usage of the supernatural by non-elites, specifically in spaces they frequented. After a long week of excavation, I had the opportunity to explore the Bay of Naples, try new foods, and learn some Italian.



Skylar Morgan (Tulane University) shows Mark Robinson (Oxford University), Head of Environmental Archaeology, an interesting find from her trench.
Photo Credit: Allison Emmerson

Faculty spotlight: Jocelyne Ponce



My archaeological research in the Maya region investigates how socioeconomic inequalities are reflected in and shaped by landscapes and everyday life. As a Visiting Assistant Professor, one of my greatest joys has come from teaching GIS (Geographic Information Systems). This is my favorite class to teach because it bridges technical skills with real-world applications. Students often walk in unsure of how mapping software connects to social and environmental issues they care about, such as settlement displacement, urban development, and socio-environmental justice. By the end of the course, they are producing compelling spatial analyses that speak directly to those concerns.

Teaching has taught me that being in front of a classroom is not about being the expert, but about fostering a space for curiosity, analysis, and learning through trial and error. I encourage students to think critically about the broader implications of data and to reflect on how spatial tools can inform real-world solutions. In turn, I am constantly inspired by their insights. Their questions push me to think in new ways and remind me why anthropological approaches are important.

I am thrilled to continue teaching courses in Anthropology and Environmental Studies next year. I look forward to continuing to explore landscapes and communities, both past and present, through anthropological approaches and spatial analysis.



Jocelyne Ponce (PhD 2024) walks the walk and talks the talk in her position as Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Studies.



Faculty Spotlight: John Verano

John Verano joined the Tulane faculty in 1994 and will retire in Spring 2025. He has been an indispensable member of our department, bringing both his dry sense of humor and spirit of generosity to the department. Always the consummate host, he held numerous parties at his house for Halloween and even on the occasion of his retirement. His classes have been perennially popular, drawing students to Dinwiddie to learn more about the intersections of archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology.

Professor Verano is regarded as the preeminent biological archaeologist of ancient Peru and a globally recognized expert on trepanation, the subject of his 2016 book, *Holes in the Head* (Dumbarton Oaks). He is also well-known for his study of mummies. He secured a proper resting place for the infamous Tulane mummies, but it is his study of the Lady of Cao that has made a lasting contribution. Through his examination, he demonstrated that women in Moche culture (100-750) also enjoyed high status and political power. He used his forensic knowledge in Louisiana by serving pro bono as a consultant for the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office and the St. Tammany Parish coroner. In this capacity, he secured the identification of and/or determined manner of death for multiple individuals whose skeletonized remains were discovered in southeastern Louisiana.

While we are well aware of his popularity in the halls of Dinwiddie, we may not fully appreciate his enormous contributions in Peru. Professor Verano's research on human sacrifice and ritual violence in the Andes are considered "a must-read" in college classes, and he filled the room whenever he provided a guest lecture at the University of Trujillo on the north coast of Peru.

We wish John Verano well as he continues to pursue his research and writing on these important topics.



Cheers to John Verano on 30+ years as a professor, mentor, scholar, and friend.

Faculty: Making Waves

Katharine Lee was invited as a Visiting Scholar for spring 2025 to work with the Gender Science Lab at Harvard University, including co-organizing an international exploratory seminar at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute on "Sexed Bodies in Sport: Accelerating Interdisciplinary Research on the Social Dimensions of Female Athlete Health and Injury."

William Balée has recently been working on linking anthropology and architecture through his research in historical ecology. He gave an invited paper co-authored with architect Paulo Tavares on "Approximations: Historical Ecology and Landscape Architecture" in the Symposium "Architectures and Ecologies of Amazonia" at the Stuart Weitzman School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania on February 7, 2025.



Bill Balée gives a talk at a symposium at the University of Pennsylvania in February.

Marcello Canuto was featured in [The Times-Picayune](#) for his groundbreaking use of Lidar technology to map cities, terraces, irrigation systems, and neighborhoods that were formerly "lost," hidden beneath centuries of forest regrowth.



Marcello Canuto in the *Times-Picayune*.
Photo credit: Chris Rodning

Education is Rehabilitation

When I moved to New Orleans in 2018, I began learning about the city's dynamic reputations; some to be celebrated, others to be grieved. It was impossible to ignore the pervasive dialogue on incarceration in the "prison capital of the world" where an estimated one of eighty-six adults is behind bars, double the national average (NOLA.com 2012). I became eager to better understand the state's systemic failures and its impact on individuals. So when the opportunity arose to teach at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) through SoPA's College-in-Prison program, run jointly with Operation Restoration, I eagerly accepted. The past two spring semesters, I was honored to teach a medical anthropology course called Healing Systems. We sat in a sacred circle, listened actively to each other, welcomed laughter, tears, and storytelling that ethnographic texts, especially, provoked. I was inspired by each of their profound wisdom, vivid presence, and strong determination. There was a collective sense that even in a small way, we might be engaged in more than simply studying diverse healing systems; were we, perhaps, healing systems?

Dara Bramson, PhD Candidate



Cohort 1 students, who will graduate this summer, gather for a meeting. Photo credit: Marko Salvaggio

Study reveals vast Aztec trade networks

Archaeological research by PhD candidates Diego Matadamas-Gomora and Julia Sjödahl along with faculty Jason Nesbitt and Tatsuya Murakami has hit the news! The project shows how obsidian – a volcanic glass used for tools and ceremonial objects and one of the most important raw materials in pre-Columbian times – moved across ancient Mesoamerica and shaped life in its capital, Tenochtitlan, shedding new light on the economic networks, rituals, and political influence of the Mexica (Aztec) Empire.

The study, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, analyzed 788 obsidian artifacts excavated from the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan, the main temple and core of the Mexica Empire located in what is now Mexico City. The largest compositional study of obsidian ever conducted at the site, the researchers tracked how obsidian use shifted over time, from the city's earliest phases around 1375 CE through its fall in 1520 CE.

During the empire's early phases, increasingly diverse obsidian sources appeared in both ritual and everyday objects. After the Mexica consolidated power around 1430 CE, obsidian for ritual purposes became almost exclusively sourced from Sierra de Pachuca, suggesting growing religious standardization and centralized control.

The research was made possible through a partnership between Tulane and Mexico's Proyecto Templo Mayor of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), with artifacts analyzed using portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF), a non-destructive method that identifies the geochemical fingerprint of each artifact.



Diego Matadamas-Gomora and Jason Nesbitt analyze artifacts using pXRF.



"This kind of compositional analysis allows us to trace how imperial expansion, political alliances, and trade networks evolved over time," Matadamas-Gomora said.

Photo Credit: Leonardo López Luján

Indigenous Studies Symposium

On March 15, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Program with generous contributions from the Tulane Center for the Gulf South hosted Gulf South Indigenous Studies Symposium. This event brought together scholars and community members from seven Indigenous Nations of the Gulf South along with Tulane faculty, students, and members of the allied public. Panels covered topics such as language revitalization, respecting and honoring tribal elders, tribal sovereignty, the role and power of digitization, and histories of resilience.



One panel, Bochokwa Chahtanumpa Ikhana Lokóli, was presented in Chahta Anumpa, the Choctaw language. The day concluded with a performance of an original ballad by Tulane's own Dr. John DePriest, Chef Menteur, which brought participants to their feet and had them immediately downloading the track from Spotify.

"How do you Anthropologize?" Photo Contest



Excavating at Pampa La Cruz.

Last year, the faculty selected anthropology major Phae Dorsey's slogan, "It's Never too Late to Anthropologize." This spring, Cat Vasquez won the photo contest with her entry.

"This summer, I traveled to Huanchaco, Peru, alongside a group of students and faculty from the University of Florida to attend an archaeological field school. I worked on the site of Pampa La Cruz, which houses the burials of several hundred children and camelids that were part of a series of ritual, mass sacrifice events during the Chimú empire. I had the opportunity to work on these burials and learn how to document and recover remains in the field. We brought all human remains to Dr. Verano in the lab at the Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, and I enjoyed learning more from him about the process of skeletal analysis in a very hands-on environment. This is a picture of me working on a camelid burial that turned out to be a pile of thirteen llamas."

M.A.R.I. Celebrates 100 Years

The Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University (M.A.R.I.) was established in 1924 as one of the first academic institutes to advocate for the study and preservation of the material culture of Indigenous communities in Mexico and Central America. Over the last century, M.A.R.I. has supported scientific archaeological and anthropological fieldwork while also preserving and curating its archaeological, ethnographic, and archival collections.

M.A.R.I. marked its centennial with a program of events celebrating 100 years of pioneering research on indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Institute kicked off the celebration with a Centennial Speaker Series, which brought together distinguished scholars whose work reflects M.A.R.I.'s commitment to indigenous research.

- Marc Zender (Tulane) launched the series on January 24, 2025, with "One Hundred Years of Hieroglyphs: Maya Decipherment at MARI, 1925-2025."
- John Hoopes (University of Kansas) presented "Indigenous Peoples of Precolonial Costa Rica and Their Place within the 'American Mediterranean.'"
- Dan Healan (Professor Emeritus, Tulane) followed on February 21 with "A Tale of Three Cities: The Aztecs and Other Urbanites in Ancient Mexico."
- Judith Maxwell (Tulane) concluded the series on March 14 with "Ajq'ija' Highland Maya Spiritual Guides: Time, Space and the Modern Celebrations."

The culmination of the centennial arrived on March 20 with two significant events. The afternoon featured the inauguration of M.A.R.I.'s new exhibit, "Ancient Rituals, Modern Ceremonies: Celebrations of Indigenous Middle America," on the third floor of Dinwiddie Hall. The basic idea behind this display is "celebration," which highlights different ways ancient peoples of Mexico and Central America celebrated important milestone events. It is divided into four sections: Maya hieroglyphic monuments, material culture of ancient Costa Rica and Panama, prehispanic domestic life in central and west Mexico, and ritual practices from modern indigenous communities. One of the highlights of this exhibition is the display of life-size replicas of Maya monuments for the first time in over a century after being meticulously restored.

The celebration concluded with a reception at Tulane University's President's House at 2 Audubon Place. Tulane leadership, including Provost Robin Forman and Dean of the School of Liberal Arts Brian Edwards, joined M.A.R.I.'s Director Dr. Marcello Canuto, along with Dr. Marc Zender and Dr. Francisco Estrada-Belli, in reflecting on the Institute's remarkable journey from its founding through periods of transformation under directors William Gates, Frans Blom, Robert Wauchope, and E. Wyllys Andrews V.

M.A.R.I. — Part Two

As highlighted in Dr. Canuto's recent manuscript for "The SAA Archaeological Record," M.A.R.I.'s centennial represents "both a moment of celebration and a renewed commitment to its enduring mission." What began as an initiative to study indigenous cultures has evolved into a multifaceted institute that has weathered philosophical debates, financial challenges, and shifting academic landscapes while remaining true to its core mission: advancing the understanding and appreciation of indigenous Middle America.

In another significant development, M.A.R.I. is pleased to announce a new endowment established by Clinton and Yvonne Effinger. This endowment will provide crucial budget support for collections-related activities, complementing the existing Doris Zemurray Stone M.A.R.I. Support Endowed Fund which allowed the Institute to hire its first full-time Collections Manager this year, Dr. Patricia Lagarde. She earned her Ph.D. in Art History and Latin American Studies from Tulane University and brings her expertise back to M.A.R.I. where she previously served as Digital Collections Manager from 2009–2010. Her extensive background includes curatorial work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Walters Art Museum, experience as an archivist at Tulane's Stone Center for Latin American Studies, and a specialization in Indigenous Art of the Americas that will be invaluable in engaging diverse audiences with M.A.R.I.'s collections. The centennial celebrations honored M.A.R.I.'s distinguished past and highlighted its ongoing commitment to archaeological excellence and cultural heritage preservation as it begins its second century of research, education, and public engagement. For additional information about Middle American Research Institute, visit mari.tulane.edu.

Marcello Canuto



Jason McKinley paints a Maya figurine at MARI-Gras, held in February as part of the centennial celebration.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin



Aiyana Thomas, MA at the bone workshop at MARI-Gras.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin



Tulane's Sneaux Day

World Anthropology Day

February 20th is World Anthropology Day, an event organized by the American Anthropological Association to heighten public awareness of the importance of the discipline and to highlight its practical, real-world applications. Anthropology Day provides us with an occasion to share our work with a broader audience. In keeping with that theme, members of the faculty (Nicole Katin, Andrew McDowell, and Allison Truitt), with the assistance of undergraduate students (Cat Vazquez, Julia Miller, and Tejas Walia), tabled in the LBC and engaged passersby in conversations about culture, past, present, and...primate! With various objects on display, including a cast of a human trephined skull, Maya baskets and handicrafts, and artifacts from the Middle American Research Institute (M.A.R.I.), the table attracted students of all ages and backgrounds, from young children to adult professionals, and from Business school students to Theater majors. All were invited to take part in a spin-the-wheel trivia game to win Mardi Gras-themed accessories (bracelets, environmentally safe glitter, and sunglasses) and to select from New Orleans-themed snacks. Thanks to these efforts, those in attendance were not only awarded newfound knowledge and appreciation for the discipline....but were undoubtedly also well-dressed and well-fed while on the parade route.



Cat Vazquez, Andrew McDowell, and Tejas Walia tabling in the LBC.



Nothing to anthropologize about here – Julia Miller converses with a first-year student.



Tejas Walia and Nicole Katin engaging in trivia with inquisitive undergraduates.



Cat Vazquez, Tejas Walia, and Andy McDowell answering questions about the major.

Field Trip to LSU Campus Mounds

Some of the oldest known examples of monumental architecture in the Indigenous Americas are Native American earthen mounds present at several archaeological sites in Louisiana. Such earthen mounds include the world-famous Watson Brake mounds, and the somewhat less famous but similarly important and similarly early LSU Campus Mounds, which may be one of the earliest such examples of Indigenous earthworks, dating as much as 5000 years ago. These sites predate the even more widely renowned Poverty Point earthworks in northeastern Louisiana, near Monroe, which date approximately 3500 years ago. The LSU Campus Mounds and the nearby Monte Sano mound site in Baton Rouge are both located close to what would have been the edges of bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River floodplain thousands of years ago. It is possible these mounds would have been landmarks visible to anybody traveling along the river itself. It is likely that they marked a permanent and a persistent place within the landscape where seasonally mobile groups of people periodically gathered for social interaction and religious ceremonies. Sites with earthen mounds figure prominently in my research as a specialist in the archaeology of the Native American South; they are also topics covered in courses I teach at Tulane on the archaeology of North America and the US Southeast, the archaeology of cultural landscapes, disasters and past societies, and basic courses in world archaeology and archaeological method in theory. During Fall of 2023, I taught a graduate seminar on the archaeology of earthworks.

On February 12, 2025, a group of Tulane faculty members (including me and a colleague from the School of Social Work) and archaeology students (and one one-year-old time traveler) made a field trip to Baton Rouge to visit the LSU Campus Mounds and the LSU Museum of Natural Science on the occasion of a public archaeology day on campus.

We visited the mounds, which are located not far from and within sight of Tiger Stadium. We toured the museum, which curates archaeological collections and maintains exhibits about Native American culture in Louisiana. We had lunch at the Chimes, not far from the edge of the LSU campus, where the Cajun food is really good. We got back to the Tulane campus just before the storm that had been brewing all day.



Sean Peek, Lauren Duncan, Fernando Carranza, MinJoo Choi, Chris Rodning, Natalie Summers and daughter (Charlie), and Diego Matadamas Gomora. Mound A of LSU Campus Mounds in the background. Photo by Catherine E. O'Connor.

“Stay tuned for more field trips, as we can plan them.

Wherever you are, visit the sites.

—Chris Rodning

Field Trip to LSU — Part 2

"Studying archaeology at Tulane has given me valuable real-world experience that I can apply to my future career. The professors have given me advice about internships, job interviews, conferences, and the ins and outs of CRM work. They are always willing to help and have fostered an environment that encourages curiosity and a passion for historical research. Being able to attend events such as the field trip visit to the LSU Campus Mounds helps put what we have learned in the classroom into perspective, allowing us to have a broader understanding of topics we have read about and discussed in class."

—Lauren Duncan, Class of 2025, and recipient of the Department's Robert Wauchope Award



Lauren Duncan viewing the exhibit at the LSU Museum of Nature and Science focused on Native American culture and history in Louisiana.

One of my archaeology professors in college always emphasized the importance of visiting and seeing sites. Yes, read about them, listen to people talk about them, get to know them, but also, as you can, get to them. Another professor of mine from college led many site visit camping trips with students, and on days during field seasons when it was too wet to dig. He often took people to sites or museums. At a recent joint meeting of the Louisiana Archaeological Society and the Mississippi Archaeological Association, my advisor from graduate school gave a talk and led a tour of several fascinating Native American mound sites in and near Natchez, Mississippi. Though I had visited some of these mound sites before, I learned more than I knew already, including an amazing site that I had never had the chance to visit.

"After reading and studying Native American mounds so much in my classes at Tulane, getting to visit a mound site and see a pair of mounds in person gave me a very different perspective, and it was really exciting. It was incredible to see the size and scale of the earthworks and seeing how they are actively cared for, really changed my sense of mounds themselves and what they mean to people in the past and in the present."

—Sean Peek, Class of 2025, and recipient of the Department's Senior Scholar Award



Sean Peek and Lauren Duncan, with Mound A of LSU Campus Mounds in the background.

Coffee, Carbs and Conversation

This year we celebrated our graduating seniors and toasted to another fantastic year in Anthropology with our end of the year undergraduate social event, Coffee Carbs and Conversation. Fueled by caffeine and camaraderie, our students and faculty were primed to enter the final stretch of the semester; ready to study for exams and prepped for presentations and papers. It was an opportunity to bid farewell to those moving forward, whether entering the career world, heading to a graduate program, leaving for a sabbatical, or taking a well-earned break/retiring. While saying goodbye to some, we also welcomed our new majors and minors into the department, showing them exactly what it means TU anthropologize. We look forward to hosting more events in the fall and beyond.



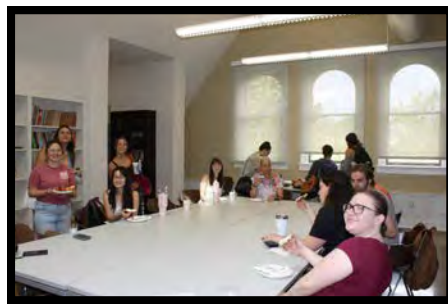
Lauren Duncan, Cat Vazquez, Sophia Hall, and Julia Miller enjoy the camaraderie that comes with an anthropology major – and membership in the anthropology club.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin



Judie Maxwell has stars in her eyes as she marvels at our graduating seniors while partaking in carbs and conversation with Bill Balée at the end-of-year social.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin



Trent Holliday giggles at a joke.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin



It was standing room only, as students and faculty flocked to partake in the festivities, and to unwind after a long semester.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin



Bonding over bagels and celebrating their successes.
Photo credit: Nicole Katin

Awards and Achievements

Dara Bramson was selected as a postdoc at the Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science at UMass Amherst and received a SoPA Distinguished Faculty Award.

Nick Chapoy (Ph.D. Candidate) was awarded an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant and grants from the American Society of Primatologists and the International Society of Primatology.

Hannah Hoover (BA 2018) has been appointed as Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee.

Eugenia Rainey (Ph.D. 2022) has been appointed as Assistant Professor at William & Mary.

Sarah Reynolds (Ph.D. 2024) received a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society to conduct research in Benin.

Adebimpe Adegbite received a research award from the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages – National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Association (NCOLCTL-NFMLTA). He also won the 2024/2025 Tulane Three Minute Thesis competition.

Christopher Rodning received the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Presidential Recognition Award for his outstanding service to the SAA.

Andrew McDowell received the 2025 Outstanding Faculty Award from Newcomb–Tulane College.

John Verano received the 2025 Outstanding Faculty Research Award from SLA.

Allison Truitt received the 2025 Outstanding Faculty Service Award from SLA.

James "Andrew" Whitaker (Ph.D. 2016) has been appointed as Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Cristina Pop (Ph.D. 2014) has been promoted to Associate Professor at Creighton University.

Nelle Kulick received the International Primatological Society Research Award, the American Society of Primatologists Conservation Small Grant, and the Tulane Graduate Studies Student Association Summer Travel Award.

Sarah Van Oss (Ph.D. candidate) was hired as the Assistant Director of Assessment Research at Penn State University.

Anthropology Senior Awards

Zoe Karunakar: The Elizabeth S. Watts Award for Biological Anthropology

Zoe combines biology from her pre-med and ecology & evolutionary biology coursework with an ability to integrate anthropological theory. She is always prepared and willing to be an engaged participant in classes and research meetings. She brings a keen eye and deep empathy to learning about social, structural, and ecological factors that shape human variation, health, and well-being across contexts.

Malaika Subramanian: The Victoria R. Bricker Award for Excellence in Linguistic Anthropology

As a double major in Neuroscience and Anthropology, Malaika has sought to understand the way in which brain and behavior are intricately linked, or more pointedly, how language plays a significant role in how people engage with the world around them. Malaika is a true scholar of cross-disciplinary research; she has shown how theories and methods from the life sciences and social sciences can work together to create a more holistic understanding of human behavior.

Lauren Grace Duncan: The Robert Wauchope Award for Excellence in Anthropology

Lauren was recognized for her strong performance in anthropology coursework, archaeological fieldwork, management of archives, and curation and study of material culture. Lauren is a triple major in English, history, and anthropology, and knowledge and perspectives from each of her majors shapes her interests in archaeology and her approach to the study of human societies in the past.

Sophia Hall: The Arden R. King Award for Excellence in Sociocultural Anthropology

Sophia has consistently pushed herself to grow as a scholar; her class essays routinely exceeded the requirements while offering fresh perspectives and insights. She is an active thinker and an assiduous reader. These qualities have gifted her the unique ability to think critically, innovatively, and compassionately all at once. Her sensitivity to inequality and passion for inclusive knowledge made her a fitting winner for this award.

Sean Peek: The Senior Scholar Award for Excellence in Anthropology

Sean received this honor in recognition of his superb performance in coursework, archaeological research in Greece, and overall commitment to a broad, four-field approach to anthropology. Since his first semester, Sean has demonstrated a deep curiosity about a range of subjects, including primatology, human evolution, Bronze Age Mediterranean civilization, and ancient pottery analysis.



Research and Publications

Nelle Kulick:

Kulick NK*, Farrer EC*, Birnbaum C, Halbrook SR, Bumby CR, Willis C. (2025). Environmental and host plant effects on taxonomic and phylogenetic diversity of root fungal endophytes. *FEMS Microbiology Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/femsle/fnaf030>

Kulick NK*, Jack KM*, Schoof VM, Wikberg EC, Kawamura S, Fedigan LM. (2024). And baby makes three: Postpartum changes in male-female affiliative interactions in white-faced capuchins. *American Journal of Primatology* e23691. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajp.23691>

Adebimpe Adegbite:

Adegbite, Adebimpe. (2025). Effectiveness of Yoruba Proverbs in Acquiring Yoruba Language and Culture. *Modern Language Journal* 109 (1), 255-273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12991>

Katharine Lee:

Ganji, E., Burshell, A., Khicha, A., & Lee, K. M. N. (2024). Bone density in postmenopausal women with scoliosis is associated with markers of degenerative joint disease. *American Journal of Human Biology*, 36(10), e24130. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajhb.24130>

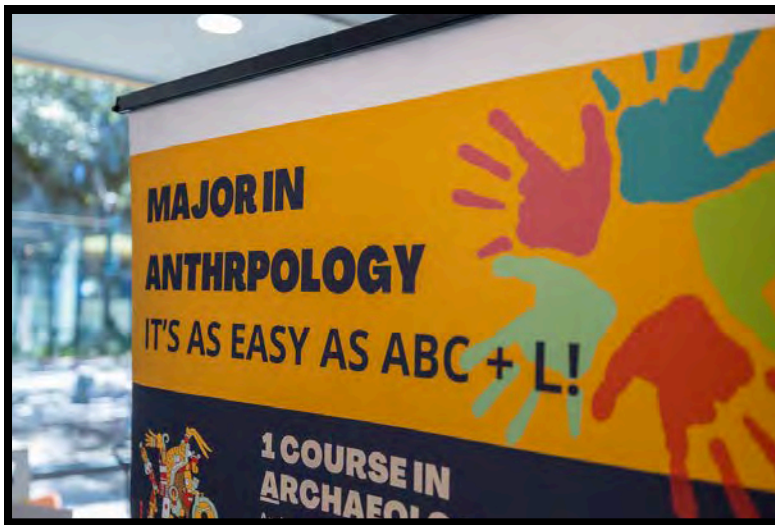
Adieu to TU



John Verano poses in his regalia at the SLA Graduation Ceremony.



Sean Peek, Chris Rodning, and Lauren Duncan at the Newcomb-Tulane College Awards Ceremony.



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