Anthropology brings first human osteology lab to Georgia

In spring 2012 the Department of Anthropology will open its Biological and Forensic Anthropology Laboratory, the only human osteology lab in Georgia. Human osteology is the study of the structure and function of the human skeleton and bony structures.

Local law enforcement will be able to use the services of the lab in order to determine whether bone is human, to identify persons in cases when DNA is no longer available and to help unravel the forces that have acted on skeletal remains. The lab also plans to offer help with forensic excavation and to develop a forensic anthropology training program for law enforcement agencies.

Dr. Kerriann Marden, assistant professor and lab director, hopes the lab will, “bring identity to missing persons and bring justice in cases where there has been foul play.”

Students that work in the lab must take specific courses with Marden. They will gain hands-on experience with forensic anthropology and may have an opportunity to work with Marden on casework at the request of local law enforcement.

“You can’t have people analyzing human bone in a case if they can’t tell a fragmentary left femur from a fragmentary right humerus,” said Marden about the qualifications for working in the lab.

Marden plans to develop a rigorous lab protocol that will meet medicolegal standards of evidence, and hopes that the lab will eventually serve western Georgia and Alabama.
Dean’s Office  **Current & new initiatives drive momentum**

We are now experiencing our very first Fall semester as a new College. As such, I write to share with you news of our new colleagues, news regarding our new initiatives, and news of just some of the things we have done this new semester.

First, in August, we welcomed three new faculty members to our College.

**Dr. Kerriann Marden** joined the Department of Anthropology as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Marden earned her Ph.D. in Physical Anthropology from Tulane University and most recently was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

**Dr. Kathleen S. G. Skott-Myhre** joined the Department of Psychology as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Skott-Myhre earned her Psy.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, MN and was, most recently, a member of the faculty at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

**Dr. Christine Simmonds-Moore** joined the Department of Psychology as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Simmonds-Moore earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Northampton/University of Leicester and most recently was a Senior Research Fellow at the Rhine Research Center in Durham, NC.

Secondly, we continue to invest in those initiatives from a semester ago: (1) our undergraduate program in Criminology that is now offered completely online and (2) our new Ph.D. program, Psychology: Consciousness and Society. We also continue to spend time improving the infrastructure needed to support faculty, staff and student professional development activities.

However, beginning this semester we added more initiatives and completed more tasks. One of our newest initiatives is our Forensics Initiative. As Dr. Todd Matthews, Assistant Dean of the College recently wrote: “The field of forensic sciences (forensics) is a fast growing and diverse area of research and study.” And, some of our most recent tasks were to establish a college-wide grants program and to re-establish the Studies in the Social Sciences journal. We also created a college-wide mentoring program for our faculty colleagues with three or fewer years of service and created our first staff retreat – giving our staff colleagues an opportunity for professional development. We kicked off our first open mic event – an event sponsored by the Student Advisory Committee to the Dean, and we brought together a unique and diverse group of professionals from our local community to establish our Community Relations Board; a Board that will help guide and steer this College in the days and months to come.

As you will read in this newsletter, it continues to be an exciting time for the new College of Social Sciences and, once again, we invite you to join us in any or all of these efforts.

N. Jane McCandless, Professor and Dean

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**Social Sciences gets social media**

Follow, like and subscribe to the newest interactive additions to the College of Social Sciences. Now you can get updates via your favorite social media streams.

Dixie Curley, COSS graduate student assistant, built and maintains the College’s new social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. She launched the College’s accounts in September and updates them regularly with College and community news.

If you are one of our @COSSatUWG tweeps, you probably already know about the Dean’s regular show on Thursday mornings on The WOLF Internet Radio. Follow us for more updates about campus and community activities.

Look for us on Facebook, too: College of Social Sciences at UWG. If you missed the College of Social Sciences Open House earlier this year, browse through our picture album on Facebook.

And when you need to take a mid-day break, don’t be shy about watching our COSSatUWG channel on YouTube. Subscribe and you might catch a short chat with the Dean or see some interesting student projects.

We look forward to seeing you online where the conversation continues.

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**Giving to CoSS**

Consider making a gift to the UWG College of Social Sciences.

Suggested levels of support:

- $250
- $500
- $1,000

Please contact Erin Brannon, Business Operations Specialist, for more information.

678-839-5172 or ebrannon@westga.edu

*Gifts are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

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**Community Relations Board**

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The Center for the Study of Social Dynamics, a qualitative and experimental research lab, begins recruiting for projects this year. Dr. Pam Hunt, assistant professor and director of the Center, will meet with area organizations to learn how the Center can work with the community. The Center offers services such as program evaluation, content analysis and new or existing instrument testing for interviews, focus groups and open-ended survey questions. “I think this is going to be a very successful center within the University and within the community, too,” said Hunt.

Faculty members plan to incorporate service learning activities into their classes. Students will collect and analyze data and provide some of the Center’s services to community organizations. “Service learning activities create an opportunity for the students and organizations to mutually benefit. It is a great way to partner and build relationships,” said Hunt.

Hunt hopes the Center can create a bridge for cross-disciplinary teaching, learning and research, including working collaboratively with the College’s Survey Research Center.

The Department of Mass Communications recently revamped its internship program to further enhance experiences for students and community partners. The program provides mutual benefits by matching students’ knowledge and skills sets with organizations’ needs. “The program is a win-win situation. The organizations give our students practical experience and the ability to apply skills they learn in the classroom. And our students bring energy, enthusiasm, strong work ethic, and a fresh perspective,” said Dr. Patrick Hadley, assistant professor and co-chair of the department’s experiential learning committee.

Students regularly intern with many local businesses, including Southwire Company and Greenway Medical Technologies in public relations, Gradick Communications radio stations, and the Times-Georgian. “The editors and staff at the Times-Georgian saw my potential and challenged me,” said Catalina Trivino, mass communications student. “The experience has made me a better reporter and opened up opportunities.”

One sought-after skill that mass communications students offer local organizations is expertise in social media. “Our students learn in the classroom and through experiential opportunities how to develop and implement effective social media messages and plans,” said Hadley.

The department plans to continue to grow the internship program and welcomes partnerships.

This summer, Dr. Richard Lemke, assistant professor, conducted a survey about community perceptions of parole. Interest in the topic was exceptional and may lead to more studies.

The survey “Re-integration Takes a Community” was sent to 1,000 people in the Northern Georgia region. The survey received a 30 percent response rate, and many sent in letters expressing their interest in this issue.

“As all efforts of effective reintegration ultimately have parolees returning home, an accurate assessment of a community’s beliefs and concerns about parole will allow agencies to help address these concerns to greater benefit the community and those returning back,” said Lemke. Lemke developed his survey after receiving extensive feedback from a few questions included in the Survey Research Center’s 2010 pilot “West Georgia Regional Survey.”

“The re-integration survey can give agencies insight about the public’s view on parole. During times of economic crunch, external agencies can see UWG, specifically the College of Social Sciences and Department of Criminology, as a resource that can be tapped,” said Lemke.

Lemke is also developing a partnership with the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles for future research projects.
Murphy Center’s new location to bring people and government closer

The Department of Political Science and Planning will move the Thomas B. Murphy Center for Public Service to the newly renovated Ingram Library next spring, where it will part of the new Center for Civic Engagement.

Dr. Stan Caress, professor and director of the Murphy Center, hopes the new location will help the Center, “to continue to encourage people to be more involved in government, while also bringing the government closer to the people of the community.”

Since its founding, the Murphy Center has been dedicated to promoting civic education, while providing training and professional development, technical assistance, and applied research to local governments, nonprofit agencies, and other community groups in the West Georgia area.

The Center will continue to offer services including public opinion surveying, environmental impact reporting, and strategic planning to aid local government agencies and other organizations.

The grand opening of the new Center for Civic Engagement will be in spring 2012, and will attract an audience of community and campus officials including past and present Georgia governors, senators, and other political figures.

Perspectives Camp, founded by psychology graduate student Marine Corps Reserve Lt. Col. Margaret Miller Johnson, wrapped up its second year this summer. The court-ordered camp serves adolescent girls in Carroll County who are in trouble for fighting or acting out in school or displaying tendencies against authority.

“Not all girls are completely off of probation, but their behaviors are different, their attitudes are different, their perspectives are different,” Johnson said about the effects of the camp.

The campers partake in team building and character enhancing exercises as well as daily exercise, healthy eating, yoga, meditation and journaling.

Johnson stresses the importance of community involvement and support for this program because camp participants are the future of the Carroll County community. “If [the girls] succeed, we succeed,” said Johnson.

She plans to include boys in the camp as early as next summer and eventually extend the camp to a year-round program.